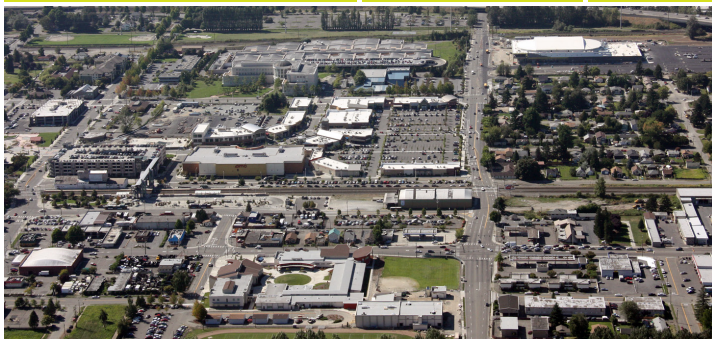




# Downtown Subarea Action Plan



[VentureDowntownKent.com](http://VentureDowntownKent.com)





# **CITY OF KENT**

## ***DOWNTOWN SUBAREA ACTION PLAN***

Ordinance No. 4090

Adopted by the City Council of Kent, Washington  
on  
November 19, 2013



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## CHAPTER ONE

# INTRODUCTION

## PURPOSE

Since the days when Kent was a valley agricultural community, Downtown Kent has served as the civic and commercial focus of the City. In recent decades, however, suburbanization has given rise to several outlying retail centers and regional shopping centers that have shifted economic activity away from Downtown. Recognizing the challenges urban sprawl has created for Downtown, the City has supported proactive planning and public improvements in an effort to maintain Downtown's vitality. The designation of Downtown as a regional urban center under the Growth Management Act (GMA) acknowledges Kent's commitment to the future of Downtown. Public buildings have been constructed, infrastructure improvements made, and a regional transportation system built over the past few decades have made Downtown attractive to private development. Ensuring Downtown Kent remains the heart and civic center of the community requires a great amount of planning, investment, and stubborn vigilance.

The City of Kent Downtown Subarea Action Plan (the Plan) pursues a dense, mixed-use urban center that complements transit, as described in the Comprehensive Plan, and as expressed in this document. By translating the Comprehensive Plan's general objectives into a redevelopment strategy consisting of an integrated set of civic actions, the Plan serves as a basis for developing the urban center and implementing the Comprehensive Plan. Grounded by an extensive community participation process, the Plan outlines methods for encouraging infill and redevelopment compatible with the economic, environmental, and planning goals of the community. The Plan also provides a framework for project-level planning and development supported by a Planned Action Ordinance and Infill Exemption discussed later in this chapter.

To ensure alignment with the Regional Growth Strategy, the Plan is updated under the guidance of the GMA (RCW 36.70A), King County Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs), and Puget Sound Regional Council's (PSRC) VISION 2040 and Transportation 2040. The Plan addresses the policy areas in VISION 2040. The Plan strives for a balance in jobs and housing targets through policies and action items to increase density and mix of uses. Diversity of housing options for all incomes is encouraged. New construction will employ environmentally-friendly development techniques. All modes of transportation are emphasized in the Plan by strengthening the pedestrian and bicycle connections to adjacent neighborhoods, regional trails, nearby parks, and the Sound Transit Commuter Transit Center.

Design standards to increase the livability throughout Downtown focus on human scale of streets and structures. The economic development element supports the creation of jobs and bringing a mix of services and housing into the urban center.

The Plan intends to strengthen the link between this policy document and the Kent Comprehensive Plan, as well as acknowledge changes in Downtown that have occurred since the 2005 Downtown Strategic Action Plan (2005 DSAP). The Plan revises the goals, policies, and actions based on input from the community and leadership. In the current updates, the boundaries of the Downtown study area have expanded to acknowledge the connection these surrounding commercial and residential areas have with Downtown. The Downtown Design Guidelines will influence development within the expanded boundaries, ensuring design continuity with an emphasis on multimodal transportation options, pedestrian-friendly development, and environmental sustainability.

## **BACKGROUND**

Downtown Kent was established as the commercial center of Kent in the early 1900's when it served as a market town for a thriving agricultural valley. The pattern of retail trade and office development has changed in Kent since that time. Suburbanization that has been occurring over the past 50 years has challenged the economic vitality of Downtown. Traffic created by a burgeoning suburban population has also not been kind to Downtown, congesting streets with pass-through commuters. With all the challenges, Downtown is the host for a variety of community activities and festivals, a walkable historic core, and civic services, providing an emotional reminder that Downtown is still the heart of the city.

This feeling of the prominence of Downtown has existed in Kent since the first downtown plan – the 1966 John Graham Plan – nearly a half century ago. At that time, the City sought to enhance the downtown core by rezoning properties and diverting through traffic. Many changes have occurred in Downtown since the Graham Plan was adopted. The City and the Kent Downtown Partnership (KDP) have worked diligently to maintain the vitality of the historic commercial core. To follow up on the 1966 John Graham Plan and local efforts, the 1989 Downtown Plan, 1997 Downtown Strategic Action Plan (DSAP), and 2005 DSAP Update outlined goals, policies, and actions to address the changes that were occurring in Downtown. These plans also attempted to direct change itself. It is this latter objective that drives the current update of the plan; that is, that change is not necessarily random or uncontrollable. By engaging the community, creating purposeful goals and actions, and diligently pursuing implementation, the future can be influenced.

The Plan is more than a collection of actionable strategies, however. It is a subarea plan, complete with goals and policies that address land use, transportation, parks and open space, economic development, urban design, and other elements. These goals and policies have

been taken from a number of sources, including the Comprehensive Plan document, reviewed and revised by staff to reflect the vision for Downtown as expressed in the Planning Principles and community input.

## **PLANNED ACTION**

The Downtown Subarea Action Plan provides the foundation for a Planned Action for a portion of Downtown. Planned Actions and their associated EIS process is a relatively new component of environmental law in Washington State that is gaining popularity as it becomes more well-known. The process is straightforward, and more and more cities are utilizing it as a proactive economic development incentive. Local jurisdictions with an adopted comprehensive plan can opt to develop a 20-year vision for a subarea or neighborhood and create a subarea plan based on a Planned Action EIS. The Planned Action EIS evaluates the significant adverse impacts and reasonable mitigation measures associated with the development proposed in the subarea plan. Whenever a Planned Action ordinance (PAO) is adopted, an agency reviewing any subsequent project proposal in the planning area must first determine that the project is consistent with the earlier subarea plan Planned Action EIS. Typically, this means that a submitted development proposal, or proposals, are consistent with and do not exceed the thresholds of uses and intensities established in the PAO. The agency must also determine that the Planned Action EIS has adequately addressed the significant impacts of the development and identified mitigation measures. Consistency is determined by a review of four areas: (1) type of land use allowed, (2) level of development allowed, (3) infrastructure, and (4) character of the proposed development. The benefit of this approach is that project-level development proposals may have a streamlined amount of environmental review if they are consistent with the adopted PAO. The purpose of creating an integrated plan and environmental assessment process is to serve as an incentive for development that is consistent with the City's vision.

In 2002, the City of Kent adopted its first Planned Action Ordinance. The planned action area was located in downtown and included the area bounded by James Street on the north, Harrison Street on the south, 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue on the west, and 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue on the east. Today, this area is occupied by Kent Station, Town Square Park, and the proposed city center apartment project. The 2002 PAO anticipated a specific level of development (or capacity) which, over the 10-year period since ordinance adoption, has mostly been utilized by development of over a half million square feet of commercial, retail, and residential space.

The updated Downtown Subarea Action Plan and Supplemental EIS will provide the basis for a second generation of a Downtown PAO. Upon adoption, the new PAO will provide additional capacity for new Downtown development, and will allow projects which are consistent with the Plan to take advantage of a streamlined environmental review process.

## **INFILL EXEMPTION**

The Downtown Subarea Action Plan and Supplemental EIS can be applied to an exemption under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) for infill development where the existing density and intensity of use are lower than called for in the Plan. The infill exemption applies to residential, Mixed Use, and non-retail commercial up to 65,000 square feet in size. Once adopted by the City, the SEPA infill exemption would apply to the Downtown Subarea Action Plan study areas outside the Planned Action area. Like the Planned Action, probable adverse environmental impacts that are considered in the subarea plan and Supplemental EIS, can take advantage of a streamlined environmental review process.

## **ORGANIZATION OF REPORT**

The Downtown Subarea Action Plan is organized to aid both public and private interests in making decisions concerning development and investment in the Downtown. Chapter One - *Introduction* is a summary of the purpose, background, and the planned action process. Chapter Two – *Existing Conditions* considers the environment, demographics, potential growth estimates, and community services. Chapter Three – *The Vision* articulates today’s vision for the Downtown and includes a summary of the City’s community involvement efforts. Chapter Four – *Framework for Downtown* describes the Downtown districts with a focus on their strengths and potential, followed by a section on the goals, policies, and actions for Downtown and an associated Land Use Plan Map. There are several Appendices to the Plan that give additional details on anticipated housing and employment growth, results of the community outreach efforts, and the Supplemental EIS.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> These documents can be attained at the City of Kent Economic and Community Development Department

## CHAPTER TWO

## EXISTING CONDITIONS

The examination of existing conditions provides the foundation to understand the opportunities and challenges within Downtown. This section examines the environmental conditions, followed by demographic and business conditions, growth estimates and expectations, and concludes with community services.

### ENVIRONMENTAL

When Kent incorporated in 1890 it was 1.6 square miles in size. Today Kent is 34.5 square miles, and at its widest part, 8.5 miles across. The Downtown Subarea Action Plan's study area is less than 1 square mile (552 acres) and is primarily located within the boundaries of the historic town of Kent. Within the Downtown study area is the 302 acre (.47 square mile) Kent Regional Growth Center.<sup>1</sup> The Downtown study area stretches west of SR-167 to 64<sup>th</sup> Avenue South and east to Kennebeck Avenue North. The northern boundaries are approximately South 234<sup>th</sup> Street along Central Avenue and Cloudy Street with Willis Street (SR-516) forming the southern boundary (see Figure 2.1).

Downtown is an urban environment with vegetation consisting of ornamental landscapes associated with development, streetscapes, and parks. Downtown is intensely used with a mix of professional services, commercial activities, and civic and residential uses. Downtown is located on the Duwamish/Green River Valley, a seismic hazard area due to the potential for liquefaction of the river-valley floor during a prolonged seismic event. The Lower Mill Creek runs through the Downtown and portions of the creek are located in the 100-year floodplain. Mill Creek is also a salmonid-bearing stream. There are a couple of small isolated wetlands inventoried along SR-167. Inventoried creeks, rivers, wetlands, and FEMA flood zones within Downtown are illustrated in Figure 2.2.

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<sup>1</sup> The Regional Growth Strategy is presented in the Puget Sound Regional Council's VISION 2040 and refined in the 2012 King County Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs). The Centers section of the CPPs contains a land use framework for an efficient and effective regional transit system. To be a designated Urban Center, the location must provide for Mixed Use zoning, infrastructure, and concentrations of services and amenities to accommodate both housing and employment growth. Designated Urban Centers are the foundation for a regional high-capacity transit system

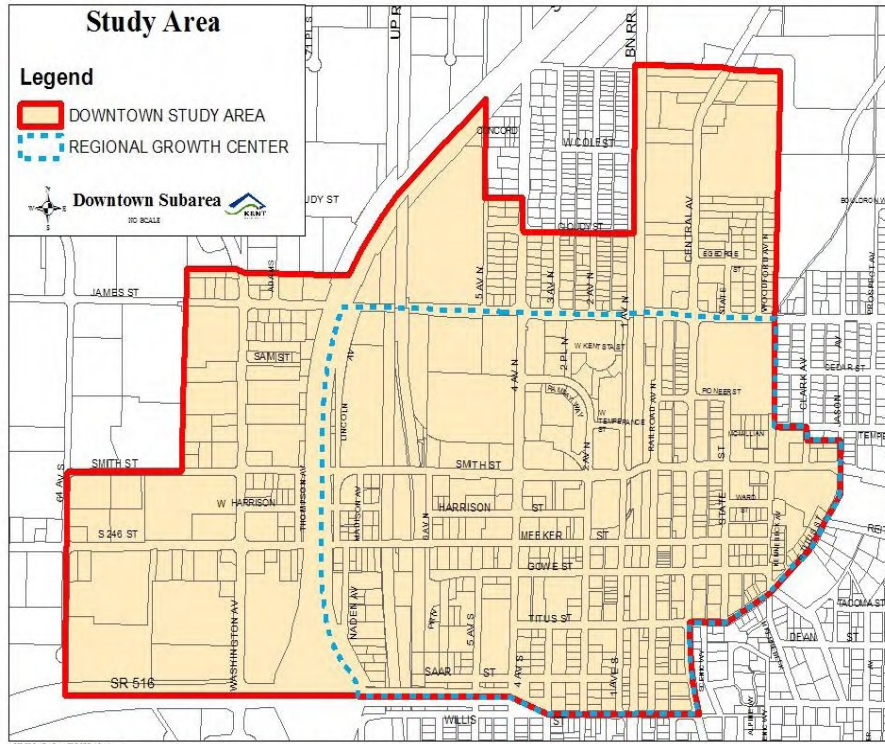


Figure 2.1: Downtown Plan Study Area.

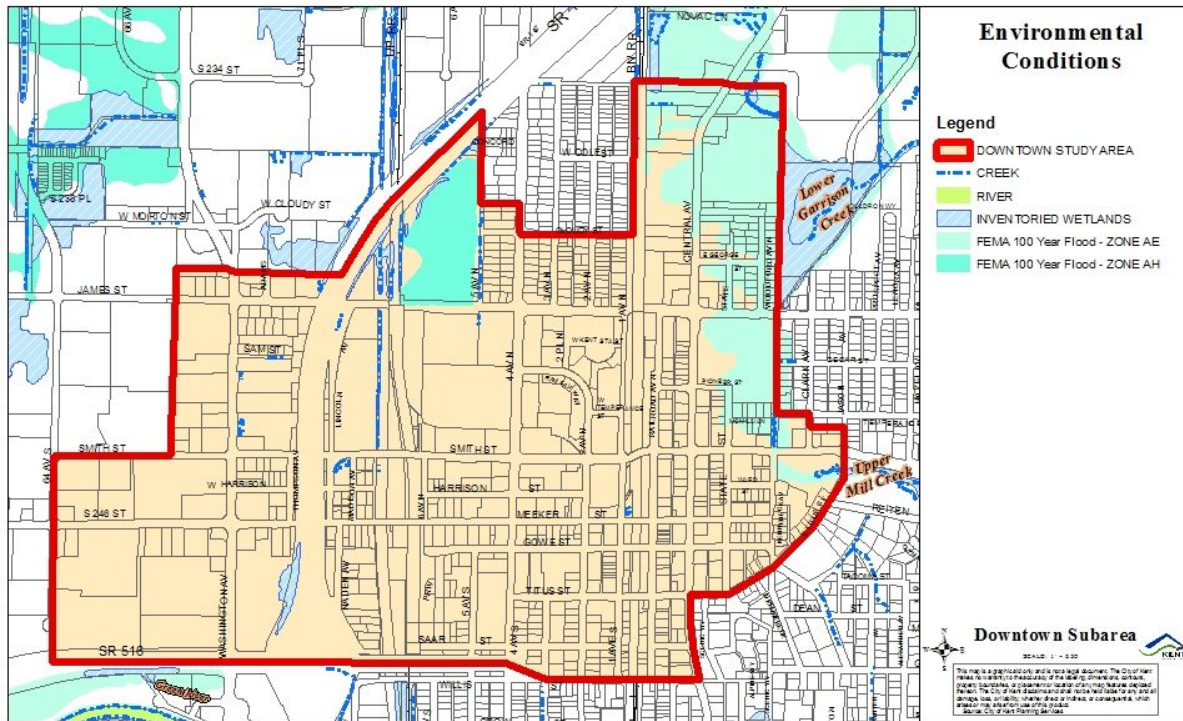


Figure 2.2: Downtown Environmental Conditions.

## DEMOGRAPHICS AND ECONOMICS

Kent is a diverse and family-oriented community that contributes to the economic vitality of South King County and the Puget Sound Region as a whole. This section provides an overview of population and employment trends drawn from a variety of resources.

### POPULATION TRENDS

Kent is a fast-growing suburban city in South King County. The City of Kent is the third largest city in King County and the sixth largest in Washington with a 2013 population of 120,500. There are 45,846 households in Kent (2013 OFM Population Estimate), with 53.3% of them owner-occupied, an average family size of 3.9 persons, and a median age of 33 years (2010 Census, adjusted to include the Panther Lake Annexation). Kent is an ethnically mixed community with 58.8% white, 0.6% American Indian, 10.8% African American, 16.2 Asian, 12.4 Latino, and 2.1% Pacific Islander. Much of the population growth over the years in Kent has been via annexations.

Understanding population trends in the Downtown has been made difficult because the 2010 Census has yet to release the population, age, ethnicity and household size data at smaller geographies useful to this effort. However, it is known that there has been no new housing built in the Downtown study area since the 2000 Census at which time the population was 2,173 with approximately 950 households. In Kent's Urban Center, the 2000 Census population was 922 with approximately 658 households (PSRC – 2002 Regional Growth Centers Report: Kent). Downtown is predominately commercial and service activities, and housing is reflected in several complexes that cater to seniors. There are little more than a dozen single-family and duplex housing types in the Downtown.

### EMPLOYMENT TRENDS

Kent is an employment center that contributes to the regional economy an estimated 61,858 jobs with an average annual wage of \$47,813.<sup>2</sup> In Downtown, there are an estimated 8,767 jobs.<sup>3</sup> Downtown employment is dominated by the services and government sectors (approximately 70%) as defined by the North American Industry Classification System.<sup>4</sup> Kent's Regional Growth Center, the core of the Downtown study area, contained some 3,014 employees in 2000.<sup>5</sup> Kent Station contributes additional retail, restaurant, and entertainment sector jobs. Green River Community College – Kent Campus, Kent Elementary, and Mill Creek Middle School contribute jobs as well as students to Downtown.

<sup>2</sup> 2011 Puget Sound Regional Council - Covered Employment Estimates by Jurisdiction and by Major Section.

<sup>3</sup> 2006 PSRC – Covered Employment; baseline analysis for Kent's 2008 Transportation Master Plan.

<sup>4</sup> 2012 PSRC Covered Employment Estimates by Census Tract

<sup>5</sup> PSRC – 2002 Regional Growth Centers Report: Kent

Government and civic sector employment is prominent in Downtown with Kent City Hall and Police Station, the Senior Activity Center, Kent Commons Recreation Center, and Kent Library. The King County Maleng Regional Justice Center (RJC) employs over 700, and many nearby law firms, bondsman, and other services support the RJC. Another important employment sector in Downtown is health care and social services, including private offices and the Multicare Health Clinic.

## **ECONOMIC TRENDS**

Since 2008 when the Economic Development Strategic Plan was adopted, multiple goals and actions have been accomplished including, Kent Station, ShoWare Center, Green River Community College, and 189 urban style apartment units under construction. In an effort to identify goals and strategies for the next five to ten years, Kent contracted with Community Attributes International (CAI) in 2011. The effort started with Kent staff and leadership, and a broad range of business and industry stakeholders. Collectively, they engaged in a variety of strategic planning activities and workshops to identify priorities and strategies for Kent. When asked, the business and industry stakeholders see the success of the Downtown Kent as important to the overall vitality of all economic sectors in Kent. The stakeholders support the overall strategic goal to: *Position Downtown as a complete community by integrating quality residential development and continuing to support Downtown as a destination.* Another Economic Forum is meeting later in June, 2013 and the additional information CAI gathers from the event will further their market analysis of Kent and the Downtown. These results and strategies will be included in the update of the Comprehensive Plan.

Analysis conducted by CAI found that in 2010, business in Downtown provided \$38.2M (million) in taxable retail sales or 5.5% to the total sales profile within Kent. Leading the trend in Downtown was dining, at 26% of taxable sales compared to 19% citywide.<sup>6</sup> To grow the Downtown's economic success, the strategic economic planning effort identified two priorities:

- Establish Downtown as an active residential, retail, entertainment, and commercial hub, and
- Establish strong marketing campaign to reposition Downtown's image and increase business and consumer awareness of its assets.

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<sup>6</sup> Community Attributes International (CAI) March 2012: City of Kent Economic Development Plan – Themes, Goals and Priorities.

## **GROWTH ESTIMATES AND EXPECTATIONS**

The Downtown Subarea Action Plan (the Plan) advances a sustainable approach to growth and future development. It is anticipated that the existing development potential in the Downtown will accommodate a substantial amount of future housing and employment growth. This section will focus on the planning horizons and assumptions of the Plan, forecast and target methodologies, and the population and employment forecasts

### **PLANNING HORIZON & ASSUMPTIONS**

Development potential in Downtown and the Regional Growth Center aligns with the regional direction of Puget Sound Regional Council's (PSRC) VISION 2040 and King County's Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs). The amount of development potential on vacant and redevelopable land in the Downtown, and the amount of housing and jobs growth are estimates. The new growth will be supported by broad multimodal transportation choices, such as rapid mass transit, regional bike trails, and pedestrian access to retail, health services, and entertainment within easy walking distance. The minimum growth target Kent's Regional Growth Urban Center (i.e., Urban Center) would need to accommodate 2,975 households and 7,437 employees (Kent 2004 Comprehensive Plan). In 2006 there were 895 households and 5,371 employees in the Urban Center.<sup>7</sup>

Regional growth forecasts not finalized at this time. The Puget Sound Regional Council Transportation Policy Board is scheduled to endorse the Land Use Forecast and Local Targets Representation sometime in mid-2013. PSRC provided the City preliminary draft forecast numbers in Forecast Area Zones (FAZ) that were used in this Plan and the Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS). The City's 2006-2031 countywide Growth Targets were ratified in the 2012 Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs) and are incorporated herein.

### **METHODOLOGY & OUTCOMES**

The methodology to determine development potential in Downtown used a modified Buildable Lands technique, adjusting the capacity based on local market factors. Vacant and redevelopable land was identified, density assumptions based on development standards were applied, and numbers of households and jobs were determined. The additional growth, plus existing households and jobs, represent future growth to 2031 among all alternative development scenarios. The results were compared to PSRC preliminary draft forecast numbers. Puget Sound Regional Council forecasts for Kent and the Downtown Subarea Action Plan to the year 2031 are illustrated in Table 2.1. For details on the City's methodology, data sources, and outcomes of potential employment and housing growth, refer to Appendix A.

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<sup>7</sup> 2010 Kent Comprehensive Plan EIS Update. Households were adjusted downward in the SEIS to reflect the difference in geography of the Meeker/Washington Center and Corridors Study and the Downtown Subarea Action Plan Study Area

**Table 2.1**  
**PSRC Draft Preliminary Household and Employment Forecasts 2031**

City	Households	Employment
Kent	47,673	69,773
Downtown	3,596	6,470

Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs) provide a countywide vision that serves as a framework for planning efforts of jurisdictions, and one product of the CPPs is the jurisdictional growth targets. The Growth Management Planning Council (GMPC), a formal body consisting of elected officials from King County, is responsible for developing and adopting the Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs). On June 6, 2012, the GMPC approved the 2012 CPPs.<sup>8</sup> The CPPs housing and employment growth targets for Kent reflect the entire city and potential annexation area (PAA) (see Table 2.2). The update to Kent's Comprehensive Plan will determine the allocation of housing and employment growth targets in the Downtown Urban Center.

**Table 2.2**  
**King County Jurisdiction Growth Targets 2006-2031**

City	Households	PAA Households	Employment	PAA Employment
Kent	9,270	90	13,280	210

## **DOWNTOWN GROWTH ALTERNATIVES**

The Downtown Subarea Action Plan Supplemental EIS (DSAP SEIS) considers three (3) alternatives in housing and employment growth. All alternatives are consistent with GMA goals and the intent of VISION 2040 and the CPPs to promote compact growth in downtowns served by multiple transportation modes. The DSAP SEIS considers the citywide impacts expected from increased vehicle traffic, demand for parks services, and changes to land use patterns associated with the future proposed development that would be accommodated with the alternatives, together with mitigation measures for the Downtown. Below is a brief description of the alternatives followed by Table 2.3 Growth Alternatives for the Downtown Subarea Action Plan:

Alternative 1 – No Action: The No Action Alternative implements Kent's current Comprehensive Plan, the 2005 Downtown Strategic Action Plan, and zoning at growth levels consistent with assumptions in the Kent 2008 Transportation Master Plan (TMP). This

<sup>8</sup> King County Council adopted Ordinance 17486 on December 3, 2012 and the King County cities ratified the 2012 CPPs March 4, 2013

alternative is required to be analyzed under SEPA. Generally, this alternative assumes more growth in jobs than households in Downtown and applies PSRC forecasts relative to development capacity analysis conducted by the city at the time of the TMP.

Alternative 2 – Moderate Growth: This alternative adopts the Downtown Subarea Action Plan, the Planned Action Ordinance, and Mixed Use/Residential Infill Exemption to facilitate and promote economic and housing growth opportunities and streamline permitting in Downtown.

This alternative promotes more Mixed Use development with a closer balance between housing and jobs (compared with Alternatives 1 and 3) supported by non-motorized facilities and park amenities. Alternative 2 contains new actions to promote economic vitality, urban livability, pedestrian priority, enjoyable outdoor space, environmental sustainability, and neighborhood compatibility. Growth assumptions are revised based on policy choices and regional forecasts. Zoning Districts and Land Use Plan Maps of the Alternative 2 can be found the DSAP SEIS (see Appendix C). Refer to Chapter 4 - *Framework for Downtown* for a map of the Downtown Districts referred to below.

Zoning map and text amendments and a Comprehensive Plan land use map amendment are necessary to support this moderate growth alternative. Alternative 2 would amend the Comprehensive Plan and expand the Urban Center (UC) land use plan map designation to the West District and North District north of James Street, and amend the northern portion of the Central Avenue District where the Mixed Use (MU) land use plan map designation would change to Industrial (I) based on the Limited Industrial District (M2) zoning district boundaries. Implementing zoning would also change with the addition of General Commercial Mixed Use (GC-MU) in the majority of the West District, portions of the Central Avenue District between Titus and James Street, and portions of the North District north of James Street and west of 5<sup>TH</sup> Street. Implementing zoning would also change a portion of the South District with the addition of Downtown Commercial Enterprise (DCE) along Meeker Street between 4<sup>TH</sup> Avenue South and the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) rail line. The SR-167 north-bound onramp from Willis Street will have a land use plan map designation from Industrial (I) to Urban Center (UC) and rezoned from Limited Industrial District (M2) to Downtown Commercial Enterprise (DCE) to conform with city GIS mapping protocol.

Alternative 3 – High Growth: This alternative assumes and adopts some elements of the Downtown Subarea Action Plan, the Planned Action Ordinance, and Mixed Use/Residential Infill Exemption, and adopts some of the Comprehensive Plan and zoning changes. This alternative assumes growth would be concentrated in the existing Urban Center where the DCE zoning district has few height restrictions except when it abuts single family residential. The West District would also provide capacity for growth from a more Mixed Use land use

pattern. Alternative 3 has an emphasis on employment rather than housing and its growth levels are based on a prior 2011 EIS.

Zoning map and text amendments and an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map are necessary to support this alternative. Alternative 3 would address mapping errors in the West and Central Avenue Districts where Land Use Plan Map designations do not support the existing zoning district (i.e., in the West District: Industrial [I] to Medium Density Multifamily [MDMF] and Mixed Use [MU] to Medium Density Multifamily [MDMF] and in the Central Avenue District: Mixed- Use [MU] to Industrial [I]). Implementing zoning would change with the addition of General Commercial Mixed Use (GC-MU) where the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map designation is Mixed Use (MU) in the West District. Alternative 3 would differ from Alternative 2 by not expanding the Urban Center (UC) land use plan map designation into the West District and north of James Street in the North District. Additionally there would be no change in zoning in the North District north of James or in the South District.

**Table 2.3**  
**Net Growth Alternatives for Downtown Subarea Action Plan**

<b>Growth Type</b>	<b>Base Year 2006*</b>	<b>Alternative 1 No Action</b>	<b>Alternative 2 Moderate Growth</b>	<b>Alternative 3 High Growth</b>
Households	2,984	618	5,419	3,498
Employment	5,370	4,703	3,489	9,239
Total Activity Units	8,354	5,321	8,908	12,737

\* The original base year estimates were prepared for the 2010 EIS Update for the Comprehensive Plan. The Downtown Subarea Action Plan boundaries have been modified and are 164 acres larger than originally considered. When considering the larger area of the Downtown Subarea Action Plan, total activity units are estimated to be 10,293 with a nearly even split between housing and employment. See the Downtown Subarea Action Plan SEIS for more information.



The high amount of vehicular traffic within Downtown impacts the pedestrian and bicyclist environment. Existing wide sidewalks and street trees mitigate the pedestrian experience along busy streets and provide a comfortable experience on streets less traveled. Those quiet streets are inviting for cafés and restaurants that provide seating for community socializing. The TMP, as well as the DSAP SEIS, identify several sidewalks within the study area that need to be upgraded. These documents also identify deficiencies in the bicycle network in Downtown. The upgrades to the sidewalks and bicycle network will be addressed in the TIP and CIP throughout this decade.

Both the TMP and the DSAP SEIS identify several transportation action items to improve the roads, sidewalk, and train traffic passing through the Downtown. The action items are concerned with maintenance, aesthetics, and safety. The City will continue to focus on creating stronger connections to important facilities within Downtown or to surrounding neighborhoods. The City will also continue to work toward solutions to the impacts the railroads have on the movement of traffic through the Downtown, and the noise to the community from the train horns.

## **POLICE & FIRE**

Kent's Police Department provides a variety of patrol, investigative, and community education services. Police Headquarters is located on the City Hall campus at 232 Fourth Avenue South. There are six (6) substations, a training center, and a corrections facility serving the City of Kent and neighboring jurisdictions as appropriate. During the summer months, bike patrol provides additional coverage in the Regional Growth Center of the Downtown. The LOS standard for police response is six (6) minutes or less to scene from receipt of emergency call (2004 Kent Comprehensive Plan). The Kent Police Department has been periodically re-accredited by the nationally-recognized Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies.

In 2010, the Kent Fire Department merged with Fire District 74 to form the Kent Fire Department Regional Fire Authority. Since then it has expanded to serve the City of SeaTac. Fire Station 71 is located at 504 West Crow Street just south of the Downtown. It contains one engine and one aid car and is a very busy station, assisting Station 76 located in the industrial center. The Kent Fire Department has been accredited by the Center for Public Safety Excellence's Commission on Fire Accreditation International since 2004.

## **WATER & SEWER**

Downtown is served by Kent-operated water and sewer service that was upgraded in the past 20 years. The 2010 Water System Plan and Draft 2012 Sewer Plan have been coordinated and interface with other City of Kent planning documents, especially the Kent 2004 Comprehensive Plan (and amendments thereto). Both plans are primarily based on ultimate development scenarios, and for the 2010 Water System Plan, fire flow needs are also considered.

Conservation has changed consumption of water. Behavioral changes and improved hardware solutions will likely continue to decrease the amount of average water consumption over time. The expectation of increased residential uses in Downtown was considered in the 2010 Water System Plan. While consumption is relatively stable due to conservation, impact from increased fire flow demand needs to be monitored. Firefighting requirements are 7,000 gpm for 4 hours. To ensure fire flow in Downtown, the 2010 Water System Plan identified pump station improvement scheduled for 2014 to replenish fire storage capacity within 72 hours while delivering maximum daily demand and to deliver average daily demand when the largest source pump is off-line. These improvements are to ensure that when the system is functioning under stress, it can deliver. Under normal consumption, Kent's water service in Downtown can meet expected growth.

Downtown Kent had its first sewage collection and interceptor system in 1909. In 1967 Kent joined METRO (a.k.a. King County Wastewater Treatment Division) and converted the sewage lagoon into the Green River Natural Resource Area, a stormwater detention facility that also functions as wildlife habitat, fisheries enhancement, and recreational open space. Two METRO interceptor lines run through or along the Downtown's boundary, providing excellent service. The sewer mains in Downtown were some of the first to be upgraded, and the 2012 Draft Sewer Plan lists no rehabilitation or reconstruction projects in Downtown. The existing system was sized to accommodate the potential growth within the Downtown Commercial Enterprise (DCE), Downtown Commercial (DC), and General Commercial Mixed Use (GC-MU) zoning districts.

## **EDUCATION**

There are several schools within Downtown. Kent School District serves nearly the entire City of Kent and extends east to serve portions of Covington and unincorporated King County. Mill Creek Middle School (located at 620 N Central Avenue) and Kent Elementary School (located at 24700 64<sup>th</sup> Avenue South) are located within Downtown. The population they serve is as diverse as the community of Kent. Green River Community College, also located in downtown provides higher education opportunities at Kent Station.

Mill Creek Middle School was recently rebuilt using energy efficient building materials and techniques and has a building capacity of 700 students. It currently is over capacity, and serves 887 students attending 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades. Kent Technology Academy is a school within a school, which adds to the student population. The academy is open to all 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders within the Kent School District, and those who apply are selected by lottery. It is a project-based learning environment that uses technology in innovative and motivating ways to teach students. There are 50 different languages spoken at Mill Creek Middle School with 24% being Spanish, Somali, Punjabi and Arabic. There are several community groups that provide after school programs, including Kent Parks and Recreation, Latino Leadership Organization, and Communities in Schools which provides tutoring and mentoring.

Kent Elementary School has a capacity to serve 657 students. The programs include preschool for 3 and 4 year olds, and classes for grades K – 6. Kent Elementary is over capacity with 666 students attending school. There are over 30 languages spoken by the student population. The school provides Highly Capable Programs for 3<sup>rd</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> graders. The after-school programs include Boeing After School Program, After School Energy, soccer, track, choir and many others.

Green River Community College opened a Kent Campus in 2005. Located within Kent Station, the campus is close to the Sounder Commuter Station and the transit center. The course work offered includes basic and pre-college classes, professional education, job skills training, and a variety of customized training, including small business counseling, business computers, and technology. In 2012, there were over 3,700 students attending the Kent Campus.

## **PARKS & OPEN SPACE**

Downtown contains a variety of parks and recreational opportunities, ranging from baseball fields to tot lots. Many of these facilities are located along the periphery of the Downtown. In Downtown's center, there are a collection of small, somewhat linear parks adjacent to the BNSF rail line and a couple of small pocket parks scattered within the South and Historic Districts. Park and open space within Downtown totals 25.1 acres (see Table 2.4).

There are notable parks and recreational facilities within Downtown. A new focal point is Town Square Plaza (located to the west across from the Kent Library along 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue) with an interactive water feature that is a wonderful attraction for families or children of all ages throughout the summer. One of the attractions is a huge granite sphere balanced on a constant stream of water. The water allows children to easily rotate the heavy granite ball to their delight. Town Square Plaza is also the location for the popular Saturday Farmer's Market. Kent Commons Community Center (located at 525 4<sup>th</sup> Ave North) provides a variety of activities for all ages throughout the day and evening seven (7) days a week. Along with the ball courts, conditioning/weight room, and locker rooms, there are meeting rooms, reception halls and a kitchen facility. Kent Senior Activity Center (located at 600 E Smith St) provides meeting rooms for a variety of activities during the day and evening, and a full kitchen serving lunches five (5) days a week. Just outside the Downtown study area is the location of the Greater Kent Historical Society Museum. A collection of artifacts, furniture, and public art are housed within this historic home (circa 1908) located off Smith Street.

The Interurban Trail runs through the middle of the Downtown and connects the cities of Auburn, Tukwila, Renton and Kent. Commuters and recreational cyclists use this facility regularly.

**Table 2.4**  
**Downtown Parks**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Park Classification</b>
Kent Memorial Park	11.2	Athletic Complex
Uplands Playfield	7.5	Community Park
Commons Neighborhood Park	3.0	Neighborhood Park
Burlington Green	0.9	Community Park
Town Square Plaza	0.8	Community Park
Kaibara Park	0.5	Community Park
Kiwanis Tot Lot Park #2	0.4	Neighborhood Park
Rosebed Park	0.3	Community Park
Kherson Park	0.2	Community Park
Titus Railroad Park	0.1	Community Park
Gowe Street Park	0.1	Neighborhood Park
First Avenue Plaza Park	0.07	Community Park

There are other recreational facilities within a little more than a mile or less from the center of Downtown (see Table 2.5). They can contribute to the recreational opportunities of those who live and work in Downtown. Riverbend Golf Complex has an 18 hole and a Par 3 course, covered driving range, and miniature golf. Russell Road Park is an athletic facility with five (5) lighted baseball/softball fields, a play area for smaller children, a jogging trail, and picnic shelter. The Mill Creek Earthworks Park is located just to the east of the Downtown and provides walking paths, picnic shelters, and the potential for much more on the 100 acres of open space that contains Mill Creek and the surrounding ravine. The Green River Trail is another bike and walking trail that hugs the Green River from Auburn to Tukwila and provides a cool riparian environment for pedestrians and bicyclists.

**Table 2.5**  
**Parks Near Downtown**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Size</b>	<b>Classification</b>	<b>Distance from Dwnt.</b>
Riverbend Golf Complex	160.0 ac.	Recreation Facility	1.25 miles
Mill Creek Earthworks Park	100.0 ac.	Natural Resource	0.6 miles
Russell Road Park	30.4 ac.	Athletic Field	1.1 miles

## KING COUNTY REGIONAL JUSTICE CENTER

The Regional Justice Center (RJC) opened in March of 1997 and employs 300 corrections staff. The RJC also contains King County Superior and District Courts, King County Sheriff's Office, the Office of the King County Prosecuting Attorney, and various licensing offices for an additional 400 employees. In 2012, King County converted 22,000 square feet of existing offices into four (4) new court rooms. The facility draws jurors, visitors, and people doing business.

## SOCIAL SERVICES

Kent is recognized as a leader in South King County in the human services arena. The city has been funding nonprofit human service agencies to provide services to its residents since 1974, allocating the maximum allowed of its federal Community Development Block Grant dollars to human services. In 1989, the city took a major step by allocating one (1) percent of its general fund revenue to fund human services. Programs the city provides are home repair, adaptive recreation, senior center, and referral services.

There are 12 human service providers within Downtown. The services include food bank, health, education, youth programs, substance abuse and prevention counseling and fellowship, housing referrals, and a senior center (see Table 2.6).

**Table 2.6**  
**Downtown Human Service Providers**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Address</b>
City of Kent Housing & Human Services	220 4 <sup>th</sup> Avenue S.
The Alliance Center	515 W. Harrison Street
Catholic Community Services	1229 W. Smith Street
Health Point	403 E Meeker Street
Department of Social & Health Services	1313 W. Meeker Street, Suite 102
Kent Youth & Family Services	232 2 <sup>nd</sup> Avenue S., Suite 201
Kent Senior Center	600 E. Smith Street
Valley Cities	325 W. Gowe Street
South End Fellowship – AA Hall	321 3 <sup>rd</sup> Avenue S.
New Connections	412 W. Titus Street
Kent Police Department	220 4 <sup>th</sup> Avenue S.
Social Security Office	321 Ramsay Way, Suite 401

## CHAPTER THREE

**THE VISION**

The Kent City Council recognized the uniqueness of downtown when it endorsed eight planning principles for the Downtown Subarea Action Plan update. According to these principles, the downtown is envisioned to be an “extraordinary place” that is the “Heart of Kent”. Economic vitality is of utmost importance, and the vision calls for a complement of retail and service businesses that serve as the economic backbone of Downtown. Downtown is recognized as a desirable place to live with a variety of housing choices including stylish apartments and condominiums. Well- designed open spaces, convenient services and retail shops, and entertainment opportunities contribute to the neighborhood feel of Downtown. Transportation options give people choices to leave the automobile parked. The increasing population of Downtown supports existing businesses and creates a need for new ones, contributing to the economic vitality of downtown.

**VENTURE DOWNTOWN IN 2030**

If this plan is successful, what will Downtown Kent be like, say, 10 or 15 years in the future? What will it look like, feel like, and what will be the character of Downtown?

Downtown is a buzz of activity. There are as many people who live in Downtown as work here. Coming to Downtown to live are young people who like the convenience of hopping the Commuter Rail and older adults who are tired of taking care of the lawn. Businesses are thriving with a demand for a coffee in the morning and a bite to eat and some entertainment in the evening. There is a grocery to serve the new residents and to serve those who are passing through. Downtown no longer closes up at 5 p.m.; rather, it comes alive.

Downtown is where you get around easily by foot or bike, as well as automobile. Sidewalks and streets are designed with the pedestrian in mind, creating a comfortable and safe feeling for those who walk or ride a bike. Downtown has great connections to the surrounding neighborhoods of North Park, Mill Creek, Scenic Hill, and South of Downtown. Well-designed gateways located around Downtown’s perimeter announce that you have arrived. There is a strong connection between the west and east sides of Downtown along beautifully landscaped, well-lit, and clean underpasses that make the walk seem effortless and the drive pleasant.

Downtown is a gracious place to relax and play. Outdoor public spaces – like pocket parks, urban plazas, passageways, sidewalk cafes, and large and small green spaces are very popular with residents and shoppers alike, adding another dimension to urban living. They provide a

backdrop for community festivals, music, and farmers markets popular with everyone, even those who are here only to visit. There are clear signs directing you to the Interurban and Green River trails, and for those on the trail, directions to Downtown.

Downtown is a compatible neighbor. The transition from Downtown to its surrounding neighborhoods is gentle and gracious. Environmental quality and aesthetics are paramount. There is a set of development codes and urban design guidelines to encourage high quality building, landscaping, and site development. The convenience to specialty shops, services, entertainment, and transportation options is an attraction to those who want to live in a single-family home, but have easy access to all that an urban environment offers.

Downtown is built with sustainability in mind. The use of green technology and low impact development techniques is promoted. New development embraces LEED techniques. Stormwater is handled in creative ways, adding an attractive element to the landscape around new buildings. Electric vehicles have the ability to charge themselves in public and private facilities. Train noise is abated.

Historic Downtown is upgraded. The wonderful character of the streetscape remains intact, and the facades of the lovely turn-of-the-century buildings are well maintained – ready for another 100 years. Inside these structures you will find new interiors, wiring for internet, and upgraded infrastructure connecting to public services available in the street – all attractive to new businesses and residents alike.

Downtown is simply different from other areas of the City. It is, quite simply, a “special place”.

## **PUBLIC OUTREACH**

The update of the 2005 Downtown Strategic Action Plan (2005 DSAP) was initiated by the Kent City Council in the development of its strategic plan in 2011. Many of the actions listed in the 2005 DSAP had been accomplished – the development of Kent Station and Town Square Park, to name a couple of prominent ones. Certain other actions had become anachronistic or irrelevant. The 2005 DSAP needed to be refreshed in order to truly be a reliable guide for decision-making.

The public outreach effort was broad and utilized many different methods to find out what people thought (see Appendix B for details and results). One of the first steps in the update process was a series of staff-conducted interviews of 25 downtown stakeholders – merchants, property owners, realtors, business organization representatives, and shoppers. Interview questions touched on a wide range of issues including economic vitality, urban livability, public art and open space, transportation, and the like. A summary of results was published in September, 2011 and served as the basis for eight (8) Planning Principles which

were adopted by the Kent City Council in June, 2012. These principles provide the framework and direction for the Downtown Subarea Action Plan update. These principles are:

1. Memorable Downtown Experience
2. Economic Vitality
3. Urban Livability
4. Pedestrian Priority
5. Enjoyable Outdoor Space
6. Neighborhood Compatibility
7. Environmental Sustainability
8. Commitment to Implementation

To guide development of the Plan update, a Downtown Steering Committee was created. This 13-member group evaluated the strengths and weaknesses of Downtown, offered their suggestions for improvements and public investment, and reviewed and rated potential actions for inclusion in the Plan. To connect the public-at-large with the workings of the steering committee, two online surveys were conducted. The first survey sought the public's ideas about potential changes to improve livability in Downtown; the second asked the public to rate the importance of proposed actions identified either in the first survey or by the Downtown Steering Committee itself. In total, over 500 responses were received from the two surveys. The results of the surveys helped inform the steering committee in its review and evaluation of proposed actions. Staff also assisted in this process and identified technical zoning actions that would help to attain plan goals.

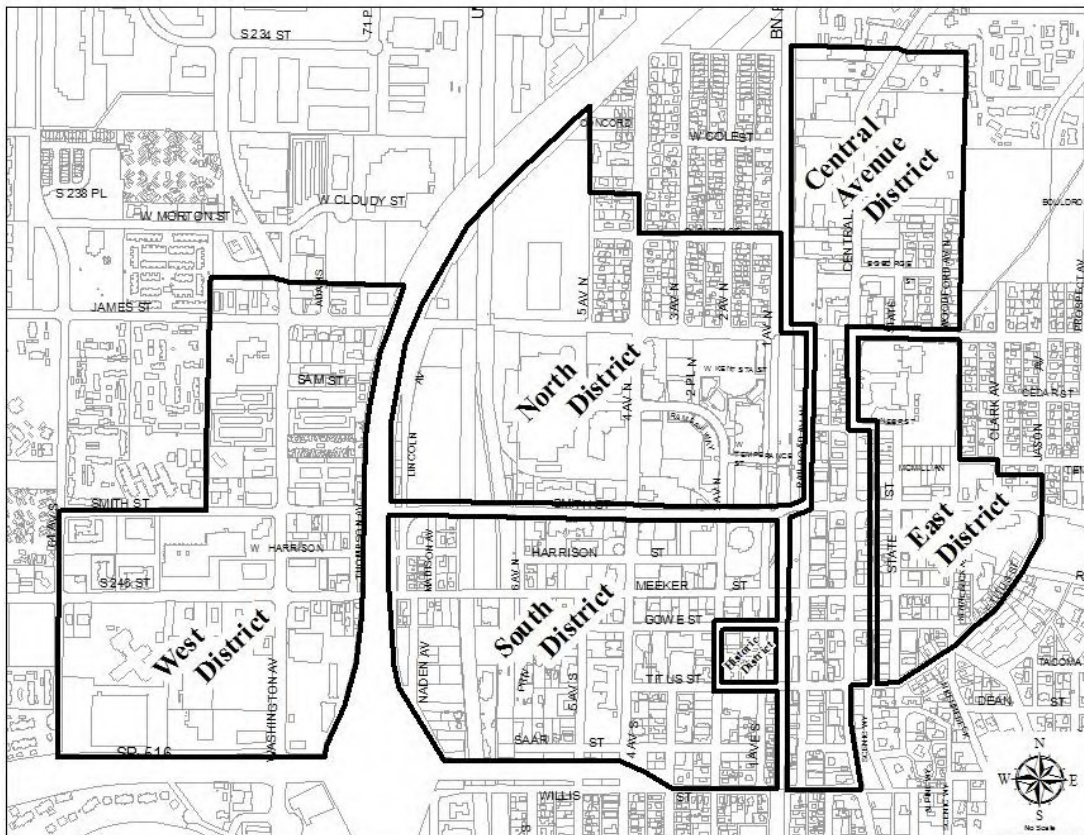


## CHAPTER FOUR

# FRAMEWORK FOR DOWNTOWN

The study area for the Downtown Subarea Action Plan (the Plan) extends beyond boundaries previously studied. The expansion reflects the relevance of areas located west and north of current boundaries to the economic vitality of, and synergy with what is traditionally considered the Downtown. The downtown districts have distinct characteristics. The following descriptions of the districts illustrate their uniqueness and provide a brief description of redevelopment strategies based on action items identified in the goals, policies, and actions section. The goals, policies, and actions are the framework by which the 20-year vision for the Downtown will be implemented.

## KENT DOWNTOWN DISTRICTS



The recent planning process modified existing downtown districts to reflect the expanded subarea and their distinct characteristics. These districts are the geographic foundation for the Downtown Subarea Action Plan (the Plan). This chapter describes the six downtown districts

and highlights input received through the Steering Committee, meetings with neighborhood councils, and public surveys. The goals, policies, and actions are the result of this extensive community visioning effort, and are guided by principles outlined in the Growth Management Act, Kent's Comprehensive Plan, Vision 2040 and King County Countywide Planning Policies.

## **WEST DISTRICT**

The West District is auto-oriented with Meeker Street, James Street and Washington Avenue moving the bulk of the vehicular traffic. Meeker Street and James Street are designated as Minor Arterials with three to five lanes moving traffic east/west. Washington Avenue is a Principal Arterial with five to six lanes of north/south traffic where it turns into the West Valley Highway cutting into the heart of Kent's industrial area. The auto-oriented nature of this district supports large and small strip shopping malls that contain a variety of retail and service-oriented businesses. There are auto sales, indoor storage, a mobile home park, an elementary school, and the U.S. Postal Service Distribution Center located within the West District. There are also a few multifamily residential uses along the edges of the district and some single-family structures converted into businesses that are the scattered remnants of historic uses in the Kent Valley. The West District is bordered long the south by SR-516 (which turns into Willis Street) and to the east the border is SR-167. James Street, Meeker Street and Willis Street traverse under SR-167 and connect this district with the rest of the Downtown Subarea

The most prominent zoning district designation within the West District is General Commercial (GC), followed by General Commercial Mixed Use (GC-MU). The purpose of GC is to provide a range of trade, service, entertainment, and recreational uses along certain major thoroughfares. With the mixed use overlay designation in the Comprehensive Plan, housing can also be allowed. There is also a Mobile Home Park (MHP) and two areas zoned Medium Density Multifamily Residential (MR-M). The Land Use Plan Map designation is primarily Mixed Use (MU).

Most of the streets within the West District provide sidewalks, but few are tree lined and none have planter strips that provide separation between the pedestrian and motorist. Thompson Avenue North and West Harrison Street are identified in the City of Kent Transportation Master Plan (TMP) as needing pedestrian improvements. There are existing bike lanes on Meeker Street and James Street west of Washington Avenue. However, the eastern portions of these two streets have been identified in the TMP as needing bike network improvements. Washington Avenue south of Meeker has also been identified as needing bicycle improvements. There are opportunities to increase the mix of uses by rezoning the majority of the district to General Commercial Mixed Use (GC-MU). Increasing the allowed building height for GC-MU in Downtown would be an incentive for redevelopment. Additional housing within a walkable distance to existing commercial uses would reduce vehicular trips and support businesses

## **NORTH DISTRICT**

The North District is a diverse place with retail, offices, services, recreational, entertainment, and residential uses contained within its borders. Many of the newest developments in Downtown are contained within this district. James Street runs east/west and carries large volumes of traffic through the North District, as does Smith Street along the district's southern border. SR-167 is the western boundary of the North District and the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad is the eastern boundary. Downtown Commercial Enterprise (DCE) is the dominant zoning district. The furthest northern edge of the district is a transitional area intended to buffer the single-family North Park Neighborhood from the more intense uses south of James Street. The zoning is DCE along James Street, transitioning to Multifamily Townhouse (MRT-16) along Cloudy Street.

Significant new developments have occurred within the North District, namely Kent Station which opened its doors in November, 2005. Kent Station is a new kind of shopping center, contemporary in design with an open-air, urban village feel. It is made up of 300,000 square feet of local, regional, and national merchants; a 14- screen state-of-the-art AMC theater; and Green River Community College has a 60,000 square foot satellite campus incorporated into the complex. In 2009, the ShoWare Center opened for the first season of the Seattle Thunderbirds hockey team. With a 6,200 seat capacity, the facility is also a venue for concerts, trade shows, graduations, and community events. Town Square Plaza – a mostly hard- surfaced urban park – opened in 2008 with a unique water fountain system that delights children of all ages, big and small. The plaza compliments the Kent King County Library across the street, adds value to the new Platform Apartments being built to the west, and provides an attractive draw for patrons of Kent Station into Old Town. The development trend in the North District started in 1997 when the Regional Justice Center opened its doors to King County Superior and District Courts, King County Sheriff's Office and the Office of the King County Prosecuting Attorney. This facility brought a need for office space and services for the increase in employment into Downtown.

In an effort to protect the North Park neighborhood from the bustle of activities and traffic along James Street to the south, the 2005 DSAP rezoned the blocks along the south side of Cloudy Street. The zoning allows for a strong edge of high-quality Mixed Use development along the north side of James Street, transitioning to multifamily residential townhouse development along Cloudy Street. There are a number of action items identified for this area. Downtown Design Guidelines apply to this portion of the Downtown. This part of the North Park Neighborhood will be designed for the pedestrian, filled with interest expressed in the urban form. Modifying existing regulations to support this pedestrian form is an action identified in the Plan. Expanding the Mixed Use development to Cloudy Street along the edge of the ShoWare Center will complement the activities there and bring services and restaurants closer to the neighborhood. ShoWare and the area to the west are zoned Limited Industrial (M2). This zoning district is a historical remnant that worked when there were

agricultural processing uses downtown in the 40's and 50's. Downtown has evolved and industrial uses no longer fit. Today, and looking toward the future, existing industrial uses should transition toward an urban form that connects with the vision for downtown Kent as a compact, Mixed Use, vibrant neighborhood.

Many of the strategic actions identified in past downtown plans have been completed. There are, however, a few vexing issues. The first is the need to create a stronger visual connection from Kent Station to Old Town. The pedestrian facilities are in place along 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, but the distance between Kent Station and Old Town seems long because of gaps between retail activities. Also, there are few visual cues to tell a newcomer that there is something of interest two blocks away. There is also a need within the district for prominent gateways. Gateways will signal to those who travel along Central Avenue that they have arrived in Downtown. Another issue identified during the visioning process is along SR-167, where the unkempt, poorly-lit roadways crossing under the freeway can be a barrier for pedestrians and the weedy embankments unattractive for motorists. The Sounder Station and METRO Transit Center were identified as needing improvements for safety and expansion of available parking.

## **CENTRAL AVENUE DISTRICT**

Central Avenue comprises the Downtown's auto-oriented strip. As such, it provides a setting for convenience stores, large-lot enterprises, and fast food vendors. On the other hand, the District's collage of billboards, pole signs and under-maintained structures do not provide an attractive entrance into Downtown. For this reason, the Plan identifies a redevelopment target area beginning at the intersection of James Street south to Titus Street. The vision for this area is to shift the auto-oriented form of development to a Mixed Use development that allows a diversity of commercial and residential uses at a greater density. Over time, the area would redevelop into a more pedestrian-friendly form, becoming a gateway into Downtown Kent rather than a passageway. This type of major arterial redevelopment has proven effective in areas such as Lake City Way in Seattle and Central Way in Kirkland.

Since the 2005 DSAP update, Central Avenue has been upgraded with new sidewalks along many sections of roadway, some utilities placed underground, turn pockets at James and Smith Streets expanded, and several intersections upgraded with new signals (i.e., James Street, Pioneer Street, East Meeker Street, East Gowe Street, Titus Street and Willis Street). Regrettably, some trees needed to be removed and the street environment still feels hostile to pedestrians traversing Central Avenue. The Plan identifies a set of actions to make Central Avenue more pedestrian-friendly and recognizes the need for prominent gateways at important entry points into Downtown. The Plan also recognizes the need to update the Downtown Design Guidelines to ensure a more aesthetically-pleasing architectural form within the Central Avenue District.

## **EAST DISTRICT**

The East District includes a diverse mix of commercial activities and health care providers, interspersed with single and multiple-family residences. Mill Creek Middle School and Kent Senior Center are prominent facilities that draw people to the district. Mill Creek Earthworks Park, a unique park that functions as a stormwater detention dam and a modernist open space masterpiece, was designed by Bauhaus master Herbert Bayer and lies immediately to the east of East Titus Street. The district is part of the Urban Center and is zoned Downtown Commercial Enterprise. James Street is the district's northern boundary, East Titus Street wraps it to the east and south, and State Street is primarily the western edge. Despite the development opportunity provided by the zoning and proximity to the Sounder Station, the East District remains much like it has been for decades.

Public input identified the East District as a bridge that connects the adjacent Mill Creek and Scenic Hill neighborhoods to Downtown. Improving access to the Downtown core was identified as a need, particularly across Central Avenue to the Sounder Station. Pedestrian improvements along East Gowe Street would provide a strong access route to Mill Creek Earthworks Park for residents and visitors. Ensuring safe routes to school continues to be a priority.

## **SOUTH DISTRICT**

The area immediately south of Smith Street consists of a variety of businesses, banks, social services, churches, single-family houses, apartments, and senior housing. Kent City Hall and Police Station, plus a private school housed in a historic Kent School District building are the largest uses in this district. The Interurban Trail (located on Puget Sound Energy property) traverses north/south through the South District adjacent to Uplands Playfield. To the west of the Union Pacific Railroad tracks and north of Willis Street is a large tract of vacant land ready for a new use. The zoning is Downtown Commercial Enterprise and Downtown Commercial which allow a mix of uses and design guidelines that ensure new construction tucks up to the edge of the sidewalk, making a comfortable pedestrian- friendly streetscape.

Willis Street provides a pleasant greenbelt on the south and was identified in the 2005 DSAP for gateway enhancements at 4<sup>th</sup> and Willis. The uses within and along the southern edge of the South District frame the Downtown, and as such are critical to the image projected to visitors. Future development along this edge needs to be sympathetic to its critical role in projecting a good image. The railroads affect both the eastern and western margins of the district, and development along these edges is less substantial. The area is already an attractive in-town neighborhood because of good automobile and transit access, public services, and pleasant streets. For this reason, vacant and underdeveloped properties in the district form a Mixed Use redevelopment target area. Connections to the regional trail provide an amenity for local residents and bring visitors and commuters into Downtown. The parks along the railroad provide a lovely green buffer between activities in Downtown and rail traffic passing

through, but do not provide the kind of urban respite attractive to residents, employees, and visitors. The community recognizes the need for green open space that enhances the livability of the Downtown.

Meeker Street – between 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Railroad – is part of the historic central business district of Kent and needs to be highlighted here. It is home to specialty shops, restaurants, offices, and housing and has walkable streetscape lined with trees and colorful planters. Traffic is slowed by angled parking. The recent economic downturn, however, has created challenges for commercial business along Meeker Street. There continues to be a perception that a stronger pedestrian connection along 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue from Kent Station to Meeker Street is needed to regain economic vitality to the area. There is also the perception that property owners need to invest in their buildings. Simple maintenance or a full remodel that upgrades plumbing and wiring would help attract new tenants. The city can take action is to create incentives for redevelopment of properties along Meeker Street.

## **HISTORIC DISTRICT**

The Historic District faces 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenues between Gowe and Titus. It is a charming place with lovely turn-of-the-century buildings, cozy sidewalks and mature street trees. Traffic is slow and the pedestrian is protected by parallel parking. The historic Post Office built in the 30's has a substantial presence along Gowe and fits well with its neighbors. The Historic District has a connection to Meeker Street – the two streets are considered by many as Downtown Kent. For the most part, the Historic District and Meeker Street in the South District have continuous storefronts that abut the sidewalk. There is street parking and the roads are narrow which slows traffic. The Historic District, however, contains a preponderance of Kent's historic commercial buildings that are listed on the state and local registry. Another difference between the Historic District and Meeker Street is that the buildings in the Historic District have been cared for over the years, many with substantial interior remodeling. Consequentially, the storefronts in the Historic District are filled with specialty shops, restaurants, spas, and night spots.

With all its charm and commercial success, the Historic District would benefit from an improved pedestrian connection with Kent Station. The district also would benefit from the creation of new public open space opportunities and additional parking. As part of the Urban Center, the zoning in the Historic District is Downtown Commercial which acknowledges the unique character of the district. The Downtown Design Guidelines also recognize the historic nature of the district.

## **DOWNTOWN GOALS – POLICIES – ACTIONS**

The Downtown Subarea Action Plan (the Plan) is guided by Kent's Comprehensive Plan Framework polices and the goals and policies found within elements of the Comprehensive Plan. The Plan's vision for the Downtown also addresses the policy areas in VISION 2040.

The Plan calls for compact development that expands housing opportunities, supports economic development and employment in Downtown, embraces multimodal transportation options, designs green streets and open spaces, and advances environmental sustainability. The following goals, policies, and actions are specific to the Downtown and are the result of extensive community visioning efforts and the Downtown Planning Principles established by the Kent City Council. They are consistent with the Growth Management Act, Countywide Planning Policies, VISION 2040, and Transportation 2040. These goals and policies set the stage for the actions that when implemented will achieve the goals. They are summarized in Table 4.1 at the end of this chapter.

## LAND USE ELEMENT

The vision for the Downtown is a dense, mixed use urban center with a ‘pedestrian first’ orientation and a range of complementary uses. There are multiple options to get around that are attractive to the new urban resident, including commuter rail. Downtown Kent will be an extraordinary place for those who live, work, shop, or play there.

**Overall Goal:** To create a well-designed, pedestrian-oriented, and economically vibrant urban center with a mix of uses and activities for those who live, work, or shop in Downtown Kent.

**Policy LU-1:** Focus a proportional amount of residential and employment citywide growth targets into the Urban Center in support of the Countywide Planning Policies and VISION 2040 growth strategy.

**Policy LU-2:** Encourage medium- and high-density development in Downtown through development regulations and design standards to provide an attractive, livable and high-quality residential Mixed Use urban environment.

- **Action LU-2.1:** Expand the diversity and density of uses in Downtown to support a vibrant urban environment and ensure regulatory consistency.
  - a) Amend the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Plan Map and Zoning Districts Map to encourage a diversity of urban uses and building forms.
  - b) Amend the development regulations to increase allowable building height for General Commercial Mixed Use (GC-MU) within Downtown to ensure a more dense mix of office, retail, and housing options.
- **Action LU-2.2:** Ensure development regulations support a livable, economically vibrant, and well-designed Downtown.
  - a) Revise the *Mixed Use Overlay Development Standards* to ensure that the form of infill development is in keeping with the community’s vision, including minimizing the environmental impacts on adjacent residential uses.

- b) Revise the multifamily development regulations to provide viable, urban- style housing options within Downtown.
- c) Revise the Downtown Design Guidelines and development regulations where appropriate to reduce the visual impact of surface parking along pedestrian designated streets.
- d) Revise the sign regulations to reinforce a pedestrian-oriented urban streetscape in Downtown (e.g., encourage blade signs, discourage sandwich board signs).

## **URBAN DESIGN ELEMENT**

Downtown Kent is growing with Kent Station and ShoWare Center as examples of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Architectural design. The form and function of new public and private investment in Downtown is guided by policy direction in concert with development standards and design guidelines. Together they ensure an aesthetically pleasing urban environment that blends with surrounding neighborhoods and emphasizes the ‘pedestrian first’.

Overall Goal: To create an aesthetically pleasing Downtown where building materials, details, and scale weave together into a rich architectural fabric; the public realm is comfortable and safe, projecting a ‘pedestrian first’ message; and this urban form is compatible with adjacent neighborhoods.

Policy UD-1: Maintain and enhance a strong ‘pedestrian first’ character throughout the Downtown where interest, comfort, and protection from traffic is created through the design of streets and sidewalks. Where appropriate, add street trees, landscaping, water features, pedestrian-scaled lighting, street furniture, pavement treatments, or other softening treatments.

- Action UD-1.1: Apply appropriate Downtown Design Guidelines and updated development standards to the entire downtown consistent with the vision.
- Action UD-1.2: Revise the Downtown Design Guidelines ‘Pedestrian Plan Overlay’ to guide right-of-way use in a manner that will promote a safe, attractive environment for both motorized and non-motorized users.
- Action UD-1.3: Review and revise where necessary the programmatic documents and design manuals to ensure pedestrian and bike accessibility within and adjacent to Downtown is created, enhanced, or preserved.

- a) Develop standards for ‘street-seats’, identify appropriate locations within the

pedestrian designated streets for their consideration, and establish a process for interested businesses to expand their business activities into parking spaces adjacent to their location.

- Action UD-1.4: Strengthen the pedestrian connection between Kent Station and Historic Downtown Kent through good design, public investments, and private efforts.
  - a) Install year-round street tree lighting between Kent Station and Historic Downtown.
  - b) Add seasonal planters and hanging baskets along 2nd Avenue between Kent Station and Historic Downtown.
  - c) Consider a covered pedestrian walkway along 2nd Avenue between Kent Station and Historic Downtown to provide a visual draw and weather protection in an effort to attract pedestrians day or night.
  - d) Work with Kent Downtown Partnership to ensure businesses and property owners promote pedestrian-oriented activities and visual interest along 2nd Avenue (i.e., generous entries, interesting and changing display windows, building decoration, and lighting).
- Action UD-1.5: Establish and promote a coordinated design standard for streetscape elements and lighting (i.e., benches, bike racks, trash containers, planters).
  - a) Establish a working group to review existing streetscape design standards and revise the standards as necessary.
  - b) Identify where to apply the streetscape design standards and implement them through a lasting mechanism.
- Action UD-1.6: Ensure that public streetscapes and private properties in Downtown are well maintained.
  - a) Establish and commit to a maintenance standard and schedule for the public streetscape.
  - b) Establish an initiative with the private sector to encourage a minimum maintenance standard of properties.

- c) Work with Kent Downtown Partnership to encourage property owners associated with the organization to renovate and restore their buildings.

Policy UD-2: Consider the relationship of building intensity and design to support visual interest and pedestrian comfort and safety.

- Action UD-2.1: Revise the Downtown Design Guidelines and development regulations to promote ground floor building façade treatments and uses that will generate pedestrian interest and comfort (i.e., large windows, canopies, arcades, plazas and outdoor seating).
- Action UD-2.2: Encourage the use of durable, high quality building materials to lower maintenance and replacement needs and ensure the aesthetic appeal of new development.
- Action UD-2.3: Revise the Downtown Design Guidelines and development regulations to identify locations for continuous building facades, building setbacks, and historic preservation.
  - a) Incorporate design options to ensure the historic architectural character of the urban pedestrian streetscape is maintained while balancing preservation with renovation and redevelopment.
  - b) Consider the creation of design options to mitigate for the environmental effects of building height and bulk in areas where commercial Mixed Use development abuts residential neighborhoods.
- Action UD-2.4: Establish development regulations to prohibit the development of new drive-through businesses located on Class A designated streets identified in the Design Guidelines.

Policy UD-3: Support connectivity between public spaces and semi-public spaces on private land in the Urban Center.

## **HOUSING ELEMENT**

New housing will be stylish with a variety of housing choices, including apartments, condominiums, and townhouses. There is a commitment to create a balance of housing and jobs within the Urban Center supported by rapid mass transit, local services, entertainment, and parks. People living in downtown will create a vibrant new neighborhood.

Overall Goal: Provide for well designed and constructed medium- and high-density residential development that integrates into or is located near commercial activities, supports a livable

pedestrian-oriented urban community, and adds to a variety of housing types for all income groups and special needs.

Policy H-1: Encourage a variety of quality urban residential housing types and densities in the Urban Center.

Policy H-2: Allow residential uses to occur in Mixed Use structures or complexes or as stand-alone uses where appropriate.

- Action H-2.1: Provide incentives to residential development in Mixed Use structures or complexes.

## **TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT**

The transportation system supports Kent's land use vision for the Downtown. Downtown exemplifies a complete street system, where all users are considered in the planning, construction, and maintenance of this interconnected network. The anticipated multimodal urban form will generate fewer auto trips than the suburban form of low density development. People living in Downtown will create a vibrant new neighborhood where the sidewalk and the pedestrian environment is increasingly important.

Overall Goal: To provide for a safe and efficient multimodal transportation system to and within Downtown, in support of the existing land uses, associated activities, and anticipated growth in households and employment.

Policy T-1: Enhance pedestrian circulation systems and bicycle routes in the Urban Center. Place emphasis also on pedestrian and bicycle circulation systems which link adjacent neighborhoods to the Urban Center.

- Action T-1.1: Establish levels-of-service (LOS) for multimodal facilities (i.e., sidewalks, bicycle infrastructure, transit service) which facilitate medium to high-density development and the associated residential and employment uses in Downtown.
- Action T-1.2: Evaluate and ensure pedestrian and bicycle connectivity between adjacent neighborhoods and the Downtown.
- Action T-1.3: Secure and design safe and attractive pedestrian connections throughout the Downtown and to adjacent residential neighborhoods.
  - a) Repair, beautify, and maintain Gowe Street east of Central Avenue to Temperance in an effort to enhance connectivity of the adjoining neighborhoods to Earthworks Park and the Downtown.

- b) Program existing traffic signals at Willis/4th Avenue, James/2nd Avenue, Central/James Street, and Central/Smith Street to respond quickly to pedestrian activation.
  - c) Ensure that all City departments implementing the streetscape standards identified in the Downtown Design Guidelines pedestrian plan overlay coordinate to meet the aesthetic and functional expectations for public rights-of-way.
  - d) Plant and maintain street trees as identified in the Downtown Design Guidelines and fund a lifecycle replacement program.
  - e) Consider wherever practical replacing paved medians with decorative pavers, landscaping, or a pedestrian safe-haven whenever road improvements are made.
- Action T-1.4: Implement design solutions to transform Central Avenue into an attractive place that provides a sense of pedestrian safety.
    - a) Examine traffic speeds along Central Avenue and consider options to ensure a more pedestrian-friendly environment.
    - b) Install small physical urban design elements to the existing sidewalk along Central Avenue (i.e., planters, decorative bollards, etc.) to provide a sense of separation from vehicular traffic.
    - c) Create pedestrian refuges at intersections where there are opportunities to do so.
  - Action T-1.5: Work with the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to improve pedestrian safety and aesthetics of the underpasses of SR-167 along the east/west corridors of Willis, Meeker, and James Street in the Urban Center.
    - a) Establish regular clean-up and maintenance for all underpasses (i.e., trash, graffiti, lighting, bird management, weeding, etc.).
    - b) Make the existing west bound pedestrian facility at Willis/SR-167 safer by restriping, adding lane markers, and pedestrian lighting.
    - c) Install woody drought-resistant ornamental landscapes to provide seasonal color and interest on underpass embankments of Meeker and James Streets.

- d) Establish an ‘Adopt-a-Street’ program for the maintenance of the SR-167 under-passes.
- Action T-1.6: Create prominent and distinctive pedestrian-friendly/auto-oriented gateways into Downtown.
  - a) Conduct an interdepartmental study, develop schematic design, and prioritize potential gateway locations.
  - b) Develop preliminary engineering design options and construction estimates for each recognized gateway location.
  - c) Appropriate funds for implementation of the priority gateways.

Policy T-2: Take actions to ensure that adequate public parking is available to support existing uses and facilitate future development in the Urban Center. This includes efficient management of on-street spaces and future development and enhancement of structured, off-street parking.

- Action T-2.1: Conduct a parking study to determine parking needs for all users, including public handicap-accessible parking, and implement recommendations of the study.
- Action T-3.2: Consider the location of additional parking structures be located adjacent to the railroad for the purpose of noise abatement.

Policy T-3: Reduce the impacts of heavy gauge rail on the economic vitality and livability of Downtown.

- Action T-3.1: Continue to work towards grade separation of vehicles and trains.
- Action T-3.2: Work with the railroads to establish a ‘Quiet Zone’ in Downtown.
- Action T-3.3: Conduct a noise study to determine the value and feasibility of soundproofing new construction along the rail tracks.

## **PARKS ELEMENT**

Well-designed and maintained public spaces in a busy urban environment offer many opportunities for respite and recreation. Open areas with trees for shade, paths to stroll along, and places to sit and gather with neighbors, friends, and co-workers make an important contribution to the livability of the Downtown. The parks and open space network, whether

formal or informal, public or semi-public, is essential to a lively, successful, and healthy downtown.

Overall Goal: To encourage public spaces that enhance the experience and livability of Downtown and provide a stage for art and community events.

Policy P-1: Develop, maintain, and operate high-quality parks in Downtown.

- Action P-1.1: Improve parks and recreation facilities to achieve a safe, livable, and economically successful downtown.
  - a) Evaluate existing park assets to create attractive gathering places for all users and to further downtown livability.
  - b) Include public safety considerations in landscape design and maintenance practices.
  - c) Strengthen the pedestrian and bike connections to recreational facilities surrounding the Downtown (i.e., Green River Trail, Golf Course, Ice Rink, Interurban Trail, Earthworks Park, etc.).
  - d) Enhance the recreational value of Town Square Plaza as a gathering space.

Policy P-2: Look for opportunities to expand the presence of public spaces in the Urban Center, as well as ways to partner with the private sector to increase engagement between public spaces and their surrounding private interests.

- Action P-2.1: Study repositioning existing park assets to increase recreational opportunities in the Urban Center.

Policy P-3: Support cultural events and public art projects in Downtown.

- Action P-3.1: Pursue public art to enhance the Urban Center.
- Action P-3.2: Promote and support community events for cultural entertainment throughout the year (i.e., music festivals, art shows, plays, etc.).

## **ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY ELEMENT**

Land use and transportation choices play a critical role in how growth impacts the environmental and social systems. There is a connection between human and ecosystem health when considering environmental sustainability. Success in attaining environmental

sustainability will be achieved by ensuring the Urban Center develops into a compact vibrant community supported by broad transportation options, built with energy efficient and sustainable building materials, and designed around resource conservation options.

Overall Goal: To integrate the natural and developed environments into a sustainable urban center with clean air and water, and a comfortable and secure place for people to live and work.

Policy ES-1: Reduce automobile dependency and greenhouse gas emissions by implementing growth management strategies that fully integrate land use and transportation within the Urban Center.

- Action ES-1.1: Investigate car-share and bike-share opportunities in the Urban Center to encourage car-free living.

Policy ES-2: Utilize best management practices and available technology to demonstrate effective environmental stewardship and long-term fiscal responsibility in city projects.

Policy ES-3: Encourage the wise use of renewable natural resources and support technology that reduces atmospheric pollutants that contribute to global atmospheric changes.

- Action ES-3.1: Establish minimum standards for electric vehicle chargers in residential development.

Policy ES-4: Utilize low impact development techniques in new development and redevelopment to improve water quality and reduce runoff from streets, parking lots and other impervious surfaces in an effort to maintain or restore the natural hydrology of the Green/Duwamish watershed.

- Action ES-4.1: Establish low impact development standards for development in Downtown.

## **PUBLIC SAFETY ELEMENT**

A key to making a place livable is to ensure the safety of people and property. As the Downtown densities and uses increase over time, it is important to maintain adequate response times for public safety functions. Public safety services may be delivered in a number of ways and will be further explored as the need arises. The design of the built environment can offer a feeling of safety.

Overall Goal: To provide the expected public safety services to the residents of a changing and growing Downtown.

Policy PS-1: Provide adequate fire and life safety services in the Downtown commensurate with increases in population and employment.

Policy PS-2: Enhance the feeling of personal safety along public rights-of-way, parks, and civic facilities in Downtown.

- Action PS-2.1: Identify key pedestrian routes in Downtown and ensure they are well-lighted.
- Action PS-2.2: Add pedestrian lighting to the mid-block passageway off 1st Avenue between Titus and Meeker Street.
- Action PS-2.3: Amend public civility laws to allow for more effective enforcement.
- Action PS-2.4: Work with Sound Transit to increase security at the Sounder Rail Station and Sounder Parking Garage.
- Action PS-2.5: Provide appropriate lighting in Downtown parks.

## **UTILITIES ELEMENT**

Downtown growth will increase demand for utilities necessary to conduct business and maintain a household. The city and private providers will need to work together to ensure that adequate services are available for anticipated growth.

Overall Goal: To furnish the necessary infrastructure, in partnership with the semi- public suppliers, that attracts and supports the desired residential and employment growth within Downtown.

Policy U-1: Eliminate where possible the aesthetic and physical impacts to pedestrians caused by above ground utility equipment within the sidewalk.

Policy U-2: Establish 21<sup>st</sup> Century delivery systems for utilities within Downtown.

- Action U-2.1: Designate and underground utilities within Downtown.
- Action U-2.2: Develop a high speed fiber-optic internet system through public/private partnerships.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT**

Downtown is a key asset to the Kent's business community, residents, and work force. The City has achieved multiple redevelopment goals. Kent Station is an exciting new entertainment and shopping destination and ShoWare attracts people from around the region. Proximity to Kent's manufacturing/industrial center, major freeways, and commuter rail service makes Downtown an attractive place to do business. Incorporating a strong residential

component will position the Downtown as a complete community and ensure success for all in Downtown.

Overall Goal: Promote the economic health and the planned growth of Downtown through private/public partnerships, pursuit of incentives, and aggressive promotion.

Policy E-1: Promote and encourage retail uses which serve the residential population in, and adjacent to, the Urban Center.

Policy E-2: Actively support economic development opportunities through promotion, partnerships, and strategic planning efforts.

- Action E-2.1: Continue to work with the Kent Downtown Partnership in support of its efforts to revitalize the Downtown. Work cooperatively to:
  - a) Recruit additional anchor stores and key retailers into the Urban Center.
  - b) Recruit a diversity of businesses to create a synergy among uses that will increase business activity for all.
  - c) Encourage businesses to increase store hours into the evening.
  - d) Identify and promote an entertainment district within the Urban Center that encourages evening activity.
- Action E-2.2: Adopt and implement a Planned Action Ordinance and Infill Development Ordinance to facilitate redevelopment in Downtown.
- Action E-2.3: Propose development incentives for economic revitalization within an identified portion of the Downtown to stimulate property investment and create new space for businesses and other uses.
- Action E-2.4: Work with Sound Transit to develop retail along 2nd Avenue in front of the Sounder Parking Garage.

Policy E-3: Provide voluntary incentives for the replication or protection of historic facades or other significant design features when redevelopment occurs.

Policy E-4: Encourage a balance of housing and employment opportunities within the Urban Center using a variety of tools.

- Action E-4.1: Expand existing residential development incentives to include all of the Downtown.

- Action E-4.2: Promote and encourage retail uses which serve the residential population in, and adjacent to, the Urban Center.
- Action E-4.3: Create site specific incentive packages for targeted commercial, residential and Mixed Use development which can include infrastructure investments, marketing support, training, and real estate site advertising, among other possibilities.

Policy E-5: Work with business owners, property owners, and the brokerage community to better understand business operational needs to inform development initiatives and leasing strategies.

- Action E-5.1: Create interim strategies for vacant lots (i.e., clean-up, beautification, and interim activity-generating uses).
- Action E-5.2: Encourage businesses and landowners to improve the maintenance and aesthetics of properties in Historic Downtown.

### LAND USE PLAN MAP

The Land Use Plan Map for the Downtown Subarea Action Plan (see Figure 4.1) establishes the framework for amendments to the City’s official Zoning Districts Map. All designations will be incorporated into the Kent Comprehensive Plan.

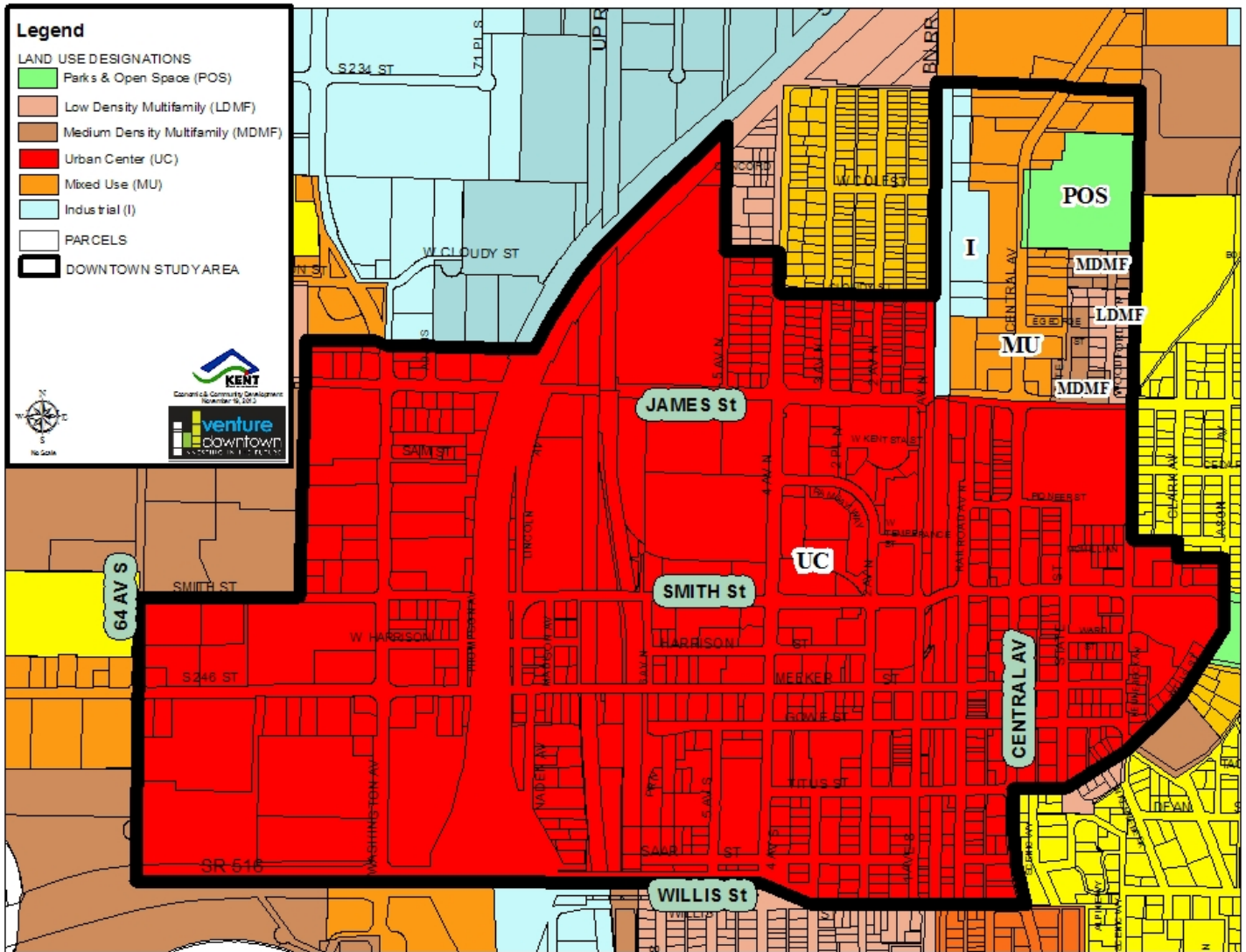


Figure 4.1: Downtown Land Use Plan Map.

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**TABLE 4.1 PHASING of ACTIONS**

The action items that require a capital investment will be prioritized with city-wide projects. Funding sources will be identified and will include a variety of city sources, state and federal funds, and special funds such as Local Improvement Districts and Impact Fees.

RECOMMENDATION	Strategic Time Frame				Funding Implications	Considerations
	0-2 yr	2-5 yr	5-10 yr	10-20 yr		
<b>LAND USE ELEMENT:</b>						
1	Action LU-2.1: Expand the diversity and density of uses.				Existing Staff	
	a. Amend the Land Use Plan and Zoning Districts Maps.				Existing Staff	
	b. Increase height for General Commercial Mixed-Use .				Existing Staff	
2	Action LU-2.2: Ensure developmnet regulations support a livable, economically vibrant, and well designed Downtown.				Existing Staff	
	a. Revise the Mixed-Use Overlay Development Standards.				Existing Staff	
	b. Revise the multifamily development regulations.				Existing Staff	
	c. Revise Design Guidelines and development regulations.				Existing Staff	
	d. Review and revise the sign regulations.				Existing Staff	
<b>URBAN DESIGN ELEMENT:</b>						
3	Action UD-1.1: Apply Design Guidelines and development standards to the entire Downtown consistant with the vision.				Existing Staff	
4	Action UD-1.2: Revise Design Guidelines 'Pedestrian Plan Overlay'.				Existing Staff	
5	Action UD-1.3: Revise programmatic and design manuals to ensure pedestrian and bike accessibility.				Existing Staff	
	a. Consider standards for 'street-seats'.				Existing Staff	
6	Action UD-1.4: Connect Kent Station and Historic Kent.					
	a. Install year-round street tree lighting.				\$50 - \$150K	\$5K Annually
	b. Add seasonal planters and hanging baskets.				\$10K Annually	
	c. Consider a covered pedestrian walkway along 2nd Avenue.				\$1.6 - \$2.2M	Maintenance Costs
	d. Promote pedestrian-oriented activities and visual interest.				Existing Staff	
7	Action UD-1.5: Establish a streetscape design standard.				Existing Staff	
	a. Establish a working group to review streetscape standards.				Existing Staff	
	b. Identify where to apply streetscape standards.				Existing Staff	
8	Action UD-1.6: Ensure that public streetscapes and private properties in Downtown are well maintained.				Existing Staff	
	a. Maintain public streetscape.				New 2 FTE	
	b. Encourage the private sector to maintain properties.				Existing Staff	
	c. Work with KDP to encourage property owners to renovate and restore their buildings.				Existing Staff	
9	Action UD-2.1: Revise Design Guidelines and development regulations to promote 1st floor façade treatments and uses.				Existing Staff	
10	Action UD-2.2: Encourage use of high quality building materials.				Existing Staff	
11	Action UD-2.3: Revise Design Guidelines and development regulations to identify locations for continuous buildings.				Existing Staff	
	a. Maintain historic architectural character of the urban pedestrian streetscape.				Existing Staff	
	b. Consider design options to mitigate building height and bulk to adjacent residential neighborhoods.				Existing Staff	
12	Action UD-2.4: Establish regulations to prohibit the development of new drive-through businesses on Class A streets.				Existing Staff	

RECOMMENDATION	Strategic Time Frame				Funding Implications	Considerations
	0-2 Yr	2-5 Yr	5-10 Yr	10-20 Yr		
<b>HOUSING ELEMENT:</b>						
13	Action H-2.1: Provide incentives to residential development in mixed-use structures or complexes.				Existing Staff	
<b>TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT:</b>						
14	Action T-1.1: Establish LOS for multimodal facilities.					Consultant
15	Action T-1.2: Ensure pedestrian and bicycle connectivity.				Existing Staff	
16	Action T-1.3: Design safe & attractive pedestrian connections to adjacent neighborhoods.					
	a. Repair& beautify Gowe St from Central to Temperance.				\$7M - \$8M	
	b. Program existing traffic lights along Central.				Existing Staff	
	c. Departments coordination when implementing standards.				Existing Staff	
	d. Plant and maintain street trees, ensure lifecycle funds.				\$100K Annually	
	e. Beautifying paved medians with road improvements				\$200K Annually	
17	Action T-1.4: Transform Central Ave into a place for pedestrians.				Existing Staff	
	a. Examine traffic speeds along Central Ave.				Existing Staff	
	b. Consider possible elements for pedestrian safety and comfort.					Cost contingent on solutions
	c. Evaluate improvements to sidewalks at street corners.				\$150K	
18	Action T-1.5: Work with WSDOT to improve pedestrian safety and aesthetics of the under-passes of SR-167.					
	a. Clean up and maintain underpasses of SR-167.				\$50K Annually	New 1 FTE
	b. Explore pedestrain improvements at Willis/SR-167.				Existing Staff	
	c. Install drought-resistant ornamental landscapes.				\$200K	\$75K Annually
	d. Establish an 'Adopt-a-Street' program for the maintenance.				Existing Staff	
19	Action T-1.6: Create gateways into Downtown.				Existing Staff	
	a. Design and prioritize potential gateway locations.				\$30K	
	b. Develop engineering design options and cost estimates.				\$50K Annually	
	c. Appropriate funds for implementation.				\$200K - \$500K	
20	Action T-2.1: Work towards train grade separation of vehicles.				\$25M	
21	Action T-2.2: Work to establish a 'Quiet Zone'.				\$2M	
22	Action T-2.3: Determine the value and feasibility of new construction soundproofing along the rail tracks.				\$25K - \$40K	
<b>PARKS ELEMENT:</b>						
23	Action P-1.1: Improve parks and recreation facilities to achieve a safe, livable, and economically successful Downtown.				Existing Staff	
	a. Evaluate park assets to create attractive gathering places.				Existing Staff	
	b. Include public safety considerations in landscape design.				Existing Staff	
	c. Strengthen connections to surrounding recreational facilities.				To be Determined	
	d. Enhance recreational value of Town Square Plaza.				To be Determined	
24	Action P-2.1: Study repositioning existing park assets to increase recreational opportunities.				To be Determined	
25	Action P-3.1: Pursue public art to enhance the Urban Center.				Existing Staff	
26	Action P-3.2: Promote and support community events.				Existing Staff	
<b>ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY ELEMENT:</b>						
27	Action ES-1.1: Investigate car- and bike-share opportunities.				Existing Staff	
28	Action ES-3.1: Standards for residential electric vehicle chargers.				Existing Staff	
29	Action ES-4.1: Establish low impact development standards.				Existing Staff	

RECOMMENDATION	Strategic Time Frame				Funding Implications	Considerations
	0-2 yr	2-5 yr	5-10 yr	10-20 yr		
<b>PUBLIC SAFETY ELEMENT:</b>						
30	Action PS-2.1: Ensure key pedestrian routes are well-lighted.				\$200K	
31	Action PS-2.2: Add lighting to the 1st Ave mid-block passageway.				\$75K	
32	Action PS-2.3: Amend public civility laws and enforce.				Existing Staff	
33	Action PS-2.4: Security at Sounder Rail Station and Garage.				Existing Staff	
34	Action PS-2.5: Appropriate lighting in Downtown parks.				\$100K	
<b>UTILITIES ELEMENT:</b>						
35	Action U-2.1: Underground utilities in Downtown.				\$20M	
36	Action U-2.2: Develop a high speed fiber-optic internet system.				Existing Staff	
37	Action U-3.1: Conduct & implement a parking study.				\$20K	
38	Action U-3.2: Consider the locations for parking structures.				Existing Staff	
<b>ECONOMIC ELEMENT:</b>						
39	Action E-2.1: Work with the KDP to revitalize Downtown.				Existing Staff	
	a. Recruit additional anchor stores and key retailers.				Existing Staff	
	b. Recruit a diversity of businesses.				Existing Staff	
	c. Encourage an increase of store hours into the evening.				Existing Staff	
	d. Identify and promote an entertainment district.				Existing Staff	
40	Action E-2.2: Adopt and implement a Planned Action Ordinance and Infill Development Ordinance.				Funded 2013-14 Budget	
41	Action E-2.3: Propose development incentives for economic revitalization within an identified portion of Downtown.				Existing Staff	
42	Action E-2.4: Encourage Sound Transit to develop retail space along 2nd Ave in front of Transit Garage.				Existing Staff	
43	Action E-4.1: Expand existing residential development incentives.				Existing Staff	
44	Action E-4.2: Promote and encourage retail uses.				Existing Staff	
45	Action E-4.3: Create site specific incentive packages for targeted commercial, residential and mixed-use development.				Existing Staff	
46	Action E-5.1: Create interim strategies for vacant lots.				Existing Staff	
47	Action E-5.2: Encourage businesses and landowners to improve the maintenance and aesthetics of historic properties.				Existing Staff	

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## APPENDIX A

# HOUSING AND EMPLOYMENT GROWTH ANALYSIS

The City utilized various data resources and methodologies to predict future growth of households and employment. The Downtown Subarea Action Plan (the Plan) utilized the best available data to determine growth potential in Downtown and where to distribute growth targets. The data sources and methodologies used are explained below, followed by a breakdown of growth by housing type and job sector based on the Plan's vision.

## DATA RESOURCES

Modeling for future growth relies on state, regional, and county agencies using numerous available data sources. The Washington State Office of Financial Management (OFM) has produced a statewide population forecast for 2040 using 2010 Census data. Those projections are utilized by Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) to model future growth to update Transportation 2040. The future growth in housing and employment will also be used by King County jurisdictions for their Comprehensive Plan updates. The Puget Sound Regional Council's Transportation Policy Board was scheduled to endorse the Land Use Forecast and Local Targets Representation in June 2013. Due to the complexity of the modeling, the final products are presently delayed. Updated existing household and employment numbers from PSRC were also not available at the time of this writing.

The Plan required existing and forecast data to complete the SEIS. The housing and employment data were derived from several previous planning efforts. The DEIS & FEIS City of Kent Comprehensive Plan Review and Midway Subarea Planned Action Environmental Impact Statement, completed September 2011, provided 2006 Baseline (a.k.a. existing) household and employment data as geo-coded point data based on address and applied to Kzones.<sup>1</sup>

It was determined that the existing point data were relevant to this effort due to the depth of the 2008 recession and slow local recovery made to date. Any new housing in Downtown was identified through the City's permit system. For the purpose of the project's SEIS and transportation model, no changes to existing household and employment data were made citywide.

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<sup>1</sup> Employment baseline data were provided by PSRC and originate from the Washington State Employment Security Department, 2005 extract. Household baseline data were extracted from housing permits submitted by the City of Kent as of 2005 and geo-coded by PSRC. PSRC relied on existing zoning and recent development to determine growth forecast to 2031. A Kzone is a geographic area used for transportation modeling.

The DEIS & FEIS also provided the Plan's data for the 'No Action' option and represents the 2031 Forecast data originated from PSRC and organized within the geography of PSRC Transportation Analysis Zones (TAZ) for the 2008 Transportation Master Plan (TMP) - adopted June 17, 2008 (Ordinance 3883). Distribution of the 2031 Forecast to the smaller geography of city-defined Kzones is accomplished mathematically based on percent of Kzone within a TAZ. The forecast numbers reflect market trends within the region and do not represent the capacity available to absorb households and employment.

Puget Sound Regional Council is responsible for the allocation of the region's growth targets that are tied to the regional growth strategy adopted in VISION 2040. It is anticipated that the central Puget Sound region will absorb an additional 1.5 million people and 1.2 million jobs by 2040. Kent's downtown Urban Center is intended to absorb the majority of residential growth; and along with the Manufacturing/Industrial Center, downtown will absorb the majority of jobs. The City's downtown planning preceded PSRC's forecast. To accommodate Kent's efforts, PSRC provided preliminary Draft Forecast Household and Employment numbers in Forecast Area Zones (FAZ). These numbers were compiled, analyzed, and distributed within Kzones and utilized in the subarea's considered alternatives.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The methodology utilized to determine the existing households and employment differs from determining forecast and plan growth. The analysis was conducted using the City's Geographic Information System (GIS), a graphic analytical computer program that utilizes King County tax parcel shapefiles and their associated data to determine vacant and redevelopable property, impacts of environmentally sensitive areas on said property, and developable square footage that ultimately is calculated into number of dwelling units and employees.

The existing household and employment numbers were determined using point data from PSRC that fell within the downtown study area and adjusted for any new construction permits completed since 2006. Future buildout was determined using the Buildable Lands Program methodology to determine capacity for growth. The methodology is based upon land use intensity achieved by actual development within the previous five (5) years, and modified by the potential capacity based on market factors, economic probability of building height, and proposed development incentives. Staff slightly modified this buildout scenario and factored in the vision for Downtown to achieve compact, dense urban development and considered recent market trends to determine potential development capacity. An FAR 1 (floor area ratio) was used in the West District and an FAR 2 was used elsewhere in the downtown study area. 800 square feet per dwelling unit and 500 square feet per job were applied to all new and re-development, and the distribution of these activity units was again based on market trends anticipated to 2031. Additional capacity is available as the market increases demand for higher density of development.

The Draft Forecast Household and Employment numbers from PSRC were distributed into the City's Kzone geography and used in the transportation model. The distribution of the forecast numbers into the smaller geography of the Kzone is mathematically based on a percent Kzone within the larger geography of the FAZ. Staff reviewed the results and adjusted them according to existing land use and development potential. This same methodology was utilized when portions of the study area were not fully contained within a Kzone (see Figure 1). Where the study area consisted of a few tax parcels, the analysis was site-specific.

## **POTENTIAL GROWTH**

The analysis of housing and employment growth was completed using the geography of the Downtown study area and the geography of the planned action study area. Housing and employment are broken down by sector. There is nearly a 50/50 split of housing and jobs. The Downtown study area for 2031 results in 55.5% housing and 44.5% employment (see Table 1). The planned action study area reverses the trend with 45.9% housing and 54.1% employment by 2031 (see Table2). Generally, both study areas have a 72% growth in housing and 38% growth in employment from the 2006 base year numbers.<sup>2</sup> There remains additional capacity for growth in all sectors based on demand. The Downtown Commercial Enterprise (DCE) zoning district allows unlimited building height. The present capacity analysis was based on an FAR 2 in DCE. Additional capacity can be attained in the DCE zone as market demand increases over time. The increased building height in the General Commercial Mixed Use (GC-MU) zoning district may become attractive to property owners in the future, creating additional redevelopment capacity in Downtown.

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<sup>2</sup> Refer to the Downtown Subarea Action Plan Draft Supplemental EIS for additional information

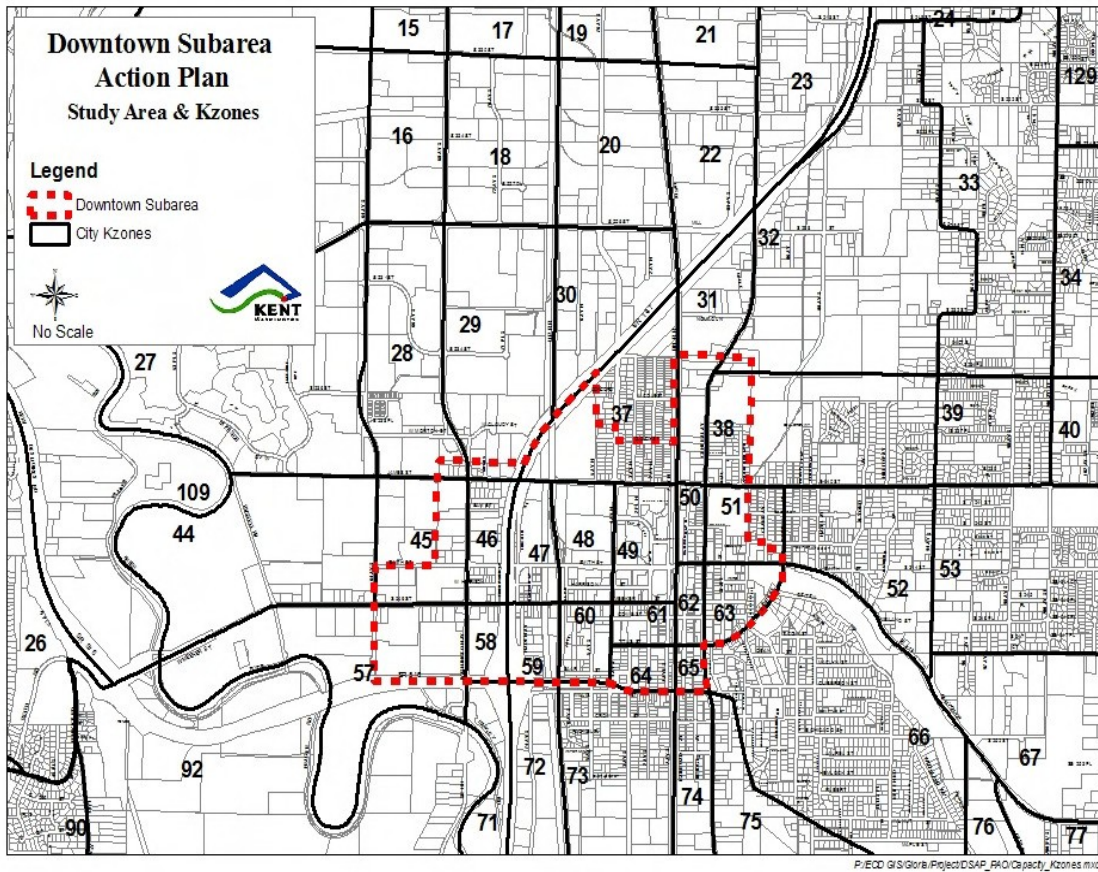


Figure 1: Downtown Subarea Study Area and Kent Kzones.

**Table 1**  
**2031 Downtown Subarea Growth by Kzone**

KZONE	SFDU	MFDU	RETAIL	FIRES	GOV	SVC	EDU	WTCU	MANU	HOTEL
28	148	208	33	2	0	6	0	0	0	0
29	0	68	49	4	0	4	0	0	0	0
31	5	524	90	148	0	109	0	0	0	0
32	255	1689	99	13	0	19	0	0	0	0
37	268	748	37	67	0	94	0	0	0	0
38	331	543	105	57	0	16	0	0	0	0
45	0	1337	174	303	0	45	0	0	0	0
46	0	147	266	331	0	38	0	0	0	0
47	0	0	72	40	0	63	0	0	0	0
48	0	331	74	313	708	78	0	0	0	0
49	0	220	160	167	0	134	180	0	0	0
50	0	22	109	53	0	22	0	0	32	0
51	49	339	75	19	0	47	88	0	0	0
57	50	1962	265	233	322	82	0	0	0	0
58	0	20	136	11	0	15	0	0	0	0
59	0	482	15	197	0	119	0	0	0	100
60	0	414	59	165	0	42	0	0	0	0
61	0	67	197	286	513	17	0	0	0	0
62	0	34	128	38	0	27	0	0	0	0
63	17	247	182	455	50	107	0	6	0	0
64	11	30	25	67	0	11	0	0	0	0
65	4	91	74	8	0	32	0	0	14	0

TOTAL 1,138 9,523 2,426 2,977 1,593 1,125 268 6 46 100

TOTAL HOUSING 10,661

TOTAL EMPLOYMENT 8,541

**Table 2**  
**2031 Downtown Subarea Planned Action Growth by Kzone**

KZONE	SFDU	MFDU	RETAIL	FIRE	GOV	SVC	EDU	WTCU	MANU	HOTEL
37	268	748	37	21	47	94	0	0	0	0
47	0	0	72	9	31	63	0	0	0	0
48	0	331	74	310	73	78	0	0	0	0
49	0	220	38	90	48	134	180	0	0	
59	0	482	15	141	56	119	0	0	0	100
60	0	414	59	149	16	42	0	0	0	
61	0	67	112	193	513	17	0	0	0	
64	11	30	19	67	6	11	0	0	0	
TOTAL	279	2,292	427	979	790	558	180	-	-	100

TOTAL HOUSING                      2,571

TOTAL EMPLOYMENT                3,034

## A P P E N D I X B

# VENTURE DOWNTOWN KENT COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

A key to the update of the 2005 Downtown Strategic Action Plan (2005 DSAP) was to reach out to the community and engage them in an exploration of what was needed in Downtown Kent to ensure its success. Staff employed various methods to understand what was important, what was missing, and what needed to happen over the next 20 years to attain the vision the community had for the Downtown. This section provides additional details of the community engagement portion of the Downtown Subarea Action Plan (the Plan) effort, including the project's Planning Principles, responses to the staff-conducted interviews, and copies of the web surveys and response summaries. For full survey results, contact the City of Kent Economic and Community Development Department.

Community outreach engaged residents, stakeholders, and visitors to understand their thoughts and opinions about the future of Downtown Kent. The staff conducted interviews provided the basis for eight (8) Planning Principles adopted by the Kent City Council in June, 2012. A Downtown Steering Committee was formed to guide the project over the course of a year starting in July, 2012. The 13-member committee included business owners, downtown business associations, developers, and citizens who frequent downtown. In July 2012, the city launched the VENTURE DOWNTOWN KENT website to ensure early and continuous information on the project's efforts and progress was accessible. Property owners, businesses, and tenants within the study area, and leadership of the surrounding neighborhood councils were notified by mail of the project's website and the City's interest in knowing what they thought about Downtown.

Based on the project's Planning Principles, the City created a survey to better understand what would make Downtown Kent a more livable place. The first survey was launched on the website in late July, 2012. There were 368 respondents and over 16,000 words written about what the public thought about the Downtown. A second survey was created based on the responses from the first survey along with input from the Downtown Steering Committee, staff, and leadership. The second survey was launched in November, 2012. People who had responded to the first survey and provided the city with their email were notified of the second survey. The focus of the second survey was to rank possible action items intended to move the Downtown towards a livable, memorable, and economically thriving place. There were 200 respondents to the second survey. The results from the second survey informed the policies and action items found within the Framework for Downtown chapter.

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## **DOWNTOWN SUBAREA ACTION PLAN 2012 UPDATE PLANNING PRINCIPLES**

### **1. Memorable Downtown Experience**

The plan will help to make downtown Kent an extraordinary place whether one lives in downtown or comes to shop or visit. It is attractive and safe, with year-round activities that contribute to its interest. It is the heart of Kent.

### **2. Economic Vitality**

The plan's proposed actions will contribute to the economic vitality of the downtown. Downtown should provide a mix of service and retail businesses that are important to the local community, including those who reside in downtown. The success of business in downtown is key to the area's future growth.

### **3. Urban Livability**

The plan will recognize that downtown is a desirable place to live. A variety of housing choices are available, including stylish apartments and condominiums. With well-designed open spaces, convenient services, and entertainment opportunities close-by, downtown truly becomes its own neighborhood.

### **4. Pedestrian Priority**

The plan will strive to create a downtown where the built environment suggests a "pedestrian first" message. It will be easy, comfortable, and safe for those who walk or ride a bike, and there will be strong connections to surrounding neighborhoods.

### **5. Enjoyable Outdoor Space**

The plan will encourage a system of public as well as private outdoor spaces that enhances the downtown experience for people. Larger open spaces and small pocket parks combined with urban plazas, passageways, sidewalk cafes, and other outdoor opportunities add another dimension to urban living.

### **6. Neighborhood Compatibility**

The plan seeks to connect surrounding neighborhoods with the activities and opportunities of downtown. The transition in urban development from downtown to its surrounding neighborhoods should be gentle and gracious.

### **7. Environmental Sustainability**

The plan should seek to minimize adverse environmental impacts. Best practices for sustainable building and land management should be part of the plan.

### **8. Commitment to Implementation**

The downtown planning effort should include an implementation strategy that leads to the fulfillment of the vision.

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**SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW RESULTS:  
DOWNTOWN KENT STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS**

**by**

**Fred N. Satterstrom, AICP**

**Planning Director**

**City of Kent**

**September 1, 2011**

## DOWNTOWN KENT INTERVIEWEES

Prior to undertaking an update of the City of Kent's Downtown Strategic Action Plan (DSAP), I decided to interview a number of stakeholders in order to get a better understanding of issues and expectations. Between April 28 and July 25, 2011, I interviewed 25 persons who I would categorize as "downtown stakeholders." Downtown stakeholders consisted of property owners, merchants, realtors, business organization representatives, and downtown shoppers as well as the Department directors of the City's Public Works and Parks Departments. The interview was built around 15 questions ranging from issues as broad as peoples' visions of downtown Kent in 20 years to specific questions about parking, public art, open space, economic vitality, redevelopment, etc. While the questions provided a common framework for each session, the interview itself generally came off as a friendly and free-flowing discussion of ideas and hopes.

I want to thank the persons listed below for participating in the interviews. I sensed a genuine enthusiasm in their willingness to take part. No one canceled an appointment with me and no one was late. It seemed like I touched upon one of their favorite subjects.

*Barbara Smith, KDP Ex. Director*  
*John Hinds, Kent Station Manager*  
*Jeff Watling, Kent Parks Director*  
*Tim LaPorte, Kent PW Director*  
*Kirk Davis, GRCC*  
*Bruce Anderson, Property owner*  
*Todd Anderson, Property owner*  
*Mike Miller, Valley Bank*  
*Mike Hanis, H-I-P Law Firm*  
*Sue Froyd, Merchant*  
*Chad Gleason, Commercial Real Estate*  
*Suzanne Cameron, Around-the-Clock*  
*Dawn Colston, President, KDP*  
*Mark Handman, Wild Wheat*  
*Pat Ensign, Pat's Bar & Grill*  
*Frankie Keyes, Property owner*  
*Lark Ohta, Shopper*  
*Dave Hokit, Curran Law Firm*  
*Dana Beckley, Investor*  
*Kent Morrill, Property owner*  
*Mark Albertson, Albertson Law*  
*Dee Smith*  
*Rita Bailie*  
*Barbara Hallock*  
*Pauli Shaffer*

What follows is a summary of over 50 hours of interviews. I apologize in advance for any key specific piece of information or insight I may have excluded.

## SUMMARY OF RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS

### *1. What is your vision for downtown Kent 20 years into the future?*

Overall, there is a fairly consistent vision for downtown Kent into the future. It is a positive vision of an economically vibrant and socially active downtown.

In physical terms, it is taller and more dense than it is today, with buildings ranging from 3 to 5 or 6 stories. Most describe this environment as pedestrian-scale. A few envision downtown with buildings as tall as 10 to 20 stories. Certain existing historic buildings have been retained, and the built environment is clean and well-maintained. Downtown streets are “pedestrian friendly,” with safe and well lighted sidewalks.

From a use perspective, the most noticeable difference is that there are many people living in downtown. Urban residential living units, both apartments and condominiums, have become a smart housing choice for transit-oriented commuters or those who simply want urban amenities. These new residents now populate the streets both day and night. Residential use has occurred in a mixed-use configuration, where living units are situated above retail and professional office uses at the street or ground level. Much of the parking is structured because land values have escalated and structured parking is now cost-effective.

With new residents living in downtown, there are new customers for downtown retail businesses. As a result, certain uses which cater to these new residents – such as restaurants and specialty retail shops – have flourished. There is a wide mix of businesses, with different kinds of retail stores as well as a complement of professional and business offices. The regional draw of downtown has given rise to hotel and convention center space. Downtown open space and parks have a heightened importance; they play an integral role in the everyday life of downtown residents while providing an opportunity for businesses.

Downtown has become a “place to go,” a “gathering place” for a socially diverse population. There is more night life in downtown, a product of new residents and the emergence of entertainment activities. In the words of one interviewee, downtown has become “a fun place to be.”

*Note: For a further discussion of how housing fits into the vision for downtown please see the answer to Question #7 on p. 10.*

### *2. What do you see as the main challenges to realizing your vision?*

The economy played a role in responses to this question. The general optimism about downtown and its future was tempered to some degree by a slowed economy. Nevertheless, it was quickly noted that little could be done about the state of the economy and that there were other challenges over which there was more local control.

Several interviewees mentioned that Kent and its downtown have an image problem. They detected a negative regional view or impression of Kent that has to be overcome. The image

problem is exacerbated by the number of vacancies in downtown storefronts, the unfinished Springboard garage, as well as the media's portrayal of Kent as an unsafe city. They felt it is a reputation that is undeserved and has to be dealt with through education, marketing, and other efforts.

A host of other issues were cited as posing a significant challenge to their vision. It was noted that there is competition from other cities for the same type of development – urban residential, entertainment, lifestyle shopping areas - that Kent covets. In order to attract certain development, Kent has to demonstrate that it has advantages and opportunities that other cities like Renton, Covington, and Federal Way do not. The circulation constraints of the two railroads in downtown with their attendant noise problem were cited as limiting factors. Further, some interviewees observed that certain property owners are unwilling to invest in improvements to their buildings; they would “rather keep it empty” than invest money in their buildings.

### ***3. What are the opportunities you see that downtown Kent could capitalize on?***

In answering this question, everyone seemed to subscribe to the realtor's creed about success being related to “location, location, location.” Downtown's location in the Kent community, centrally located on the Valley floor equidistant to East and West Hills, was cited as an asset. Kent's location in the region, located midway between Seattle and Tacoma with great accessibility by road, highway, transit, and rail, was recognized as important to downtown's ability to attract new businesses and residents. The commuter rail garage and transit center make downtown a hub of transportation.

Kent Station was cited many times as providing a “regional draw” to the area, something on which downtown should capitalize. Kent Station was seen as an attractive amenity as well as a shopping center, and further connections should be made to tie this area to the historic core. ShoWare Center, too, was seen as bringing visitors to the area who might not otherwise come here, providing a marketing opportunity for downtown businesses.

It was interesting to note how many times interviewees simply stated that it was great for Kent to have a downtown - a downtown district that everyone, without argument, agreed was the core area...the “heart” of the city, if you will. One person said, “You can't find it anywhere else in the city.” Downtown has been around for over 100 years, it's walkable, and has all the advantages of a shopping mall without the mall.

### ***4. What do you feel could be done to increase the economic vitality of downtown? Are there “missing” uses in downtown?***

Responses to this question were all over the map. Some were rather simplistic like offering business training to merchants; others were more complex and daunting such as improving the image of downtown (and the City). There were a couple of themes, however, that threaded their way through responses. The first was to get people to live downtown through the development of market-rate condominiums and apartments. With a greater density of population living in downtown, there would be a greater demand for local goods and

services. This demand would help existing businesses as well as create a market for new ones. The second theme was that the City would continue to be a partner in getting things done in downtown. It was felt the City could help economic development in downtown by partnering with KDP to recruit new and retain existing businesses, keeping its own operations in downtown, and making certain changes to ordinances and regulations to allow for the most beneficial use of downtown properties.

**5. *What redevelopment opportunities do you see?***

The most common response to this question was to redevelop the abandoned garage site at 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Smith Street, the former Springboard garage site. Virtually all those who mentioned this site felt it should be redeveloped with urban residential or mixed use. Residential condominiums were preferred, but market-rate, “quality” apartments were also a good alternative. Several interviewees felt the abandoned garage site had a blighting effect on the rest of downtown, further eroding the image of downtown as a viable place to do business.

Another potential site for redevelopment that was mentioned often is the area at the southwest corner of 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and Meeker Street where three buildings were burned to the ground in 2006. It was felt this site is a critical location in the center of downtown and it should have priority for redevelopment. Mixed use was thought to be a viable use for this site as well. Similarly, the City-owned properties along Naden Avenue were also thought to be a suitable area for mixed use.

There were several individual buildings or parcels that were thought to be ripe for redevelopment, including the BNSF train depot, 105 Building, Post Office Building, and the old IOOF Building.

**6. *Are there any uses currently located in downtown (or that could potentially locate here) that you would not want to see?***

Collectively, most interviewees were fairly tolerant or inclusive when it came to answering this question. One person offered the following: “Kent is so diverse that it requires unique uses to serve everyone.” But, when prompted to think further about it, they did have some preferences, and several interviewees stated they desired a “family friendly” downtown.

Among the uses that respondents did not want to see were adult entertainment uses, pawn shops, bail bonds, tattoo parlors, packaged liquor sales, and expansion of work release at the Regional Justice Center. Also, there was a general consensus that downtown already had enough senior and low-cost apartment units and “...too many second-hand stores.” One person stated, facetiously I think, that they wanted “no more banks.”

Though it was not asked, many offered suggestions on uses they wanted to see in downtown. At the top of the list was a grocery store (like Trader Joe’s) that could provide food and other goods to those who lived downtown. Other uses that were high on the priority list were:

good restaurants, wine shop, general merchandise store (department store), and entertainment opportunities.

**7. Does housing fit into your vision of downtown Kent? If so, what does it look like and what importance is it to downtown?**

Nearly everyone was in agreement on the answer to this question. Yes, housing not only fit into their vision of a future downtown Kent but it was an essential element in that vision. It mattered little whether they were apartments or condominium units. But, they had to be “quality” units. In terms of building height, the housing structures were between 4 and 5 stories, some even said 10 to 11 stories, with mostly structured parking. There was a mix of styles and project sizes which helped to give them an identity. The addition of these residential units “...reshaped the look and feel of downtown.”

The majority of interviewees felt that additional residents downtown would provide additional customers for downtown stores and restaurants, increase the sense of security (more eyes on the streets), and help to revitalize the downtown area. One stated, “Downtown residents are key to retail viability,” while another offered, “It’s not just a good thing, it’s a critical thing.”

**8. How important is historic preservation to downtown? If you think it is important, what types of things would you like to see preserved?**

Responses to this question were quite divided. About half of all respondents thought that historic preservation was important, but didn’t think there was a lot to preserve in downtown Kent that was architecturally significant. They felt some of the oldest buildings were not well-maintained, that it was costly to restore or retrofit such structures, that the buildings were susceptible to earthquake damage, and that historic preservation regulations may get in the way of their re-use. While some interviewees would “honor” the historic nature of these buildings, they may favor the development of a new project that requires the building’s demolition. One person summed it up by saying each case should be considered on its own merits.

On the other side of the coin were those who felt that historic preservation was fundamental to “placemaking.” They felt the preservation of certain areas or structures in downtown helped to define the community and added “charm” to the area. One person stated that history “cannot be re-created.” Meeker Street and especially First Avenue (between Gowe and Titus Streets) were most often cited as the areas where preservation efforts should be concentrated. As far as buildings are concerned, the ones mentioned the most were Titusville Station, the Creamery building, and the Post Office.

**9. Do you have a feel for what the current design standards are for new buildings in downtown? Looking at recent buildings (such as Kent Station and Valley Bank), do you think this type of building design is attractive or suitable?**

This question turned out to be a complicated one. It was intended to ferret out people's attitudes about the design of structures built under the City's downtown design guidelines. However, most of the respondents admitted they knew very little about the design standards but if Kent Station and Valley Bank were built in conformance with these guidelines, then their impression of the standards was positive.

Generally, those who were interviewed like the variety of building design that has occurred in downtown. They saw Valley Bank as more traditional in design and Kent Station as contemporary. While they see variety, they also see continuity. Several persons described downtown as "eclectic" in terms of building design and stated that different styles "created a synergy." Whether it was because of the downtown design guidelines or good project architects, the new construction in downtown seemed to meet or exceed their expectations.

***10. What do you think of the current assortment of open spaces in downtown? Are these open spaces appropriate, sufficient? Are certain types of open spaces missing, in your opinion?***

There were as many opinions about downtown parks as there were interviews. Some felt the parks were wonderful and cozy while others felt they were "tired" and underutilized. Some thought there was a sufficient number of parks and open spaces, while some thought there needed to be more, perhaps even a larger "central park."

There were points of agreement among the respondents, however. Town Square Park was one of them. Most felt this park was a standout and helped to give an identity to downtown. All stated it was well maintained and highly utilized (especially in the summer), and some mentioned that it could benefit by a little more "green."

Other points of agreement included adding picnic tables to certain parks, such as the open spaces along the BNSF tracks. Benches were another. Several persons thought there should be more benches in downtown, strategically located where pedestrians might wish to rest while shopping or walking around downtown.

There was a general acknowledgement that parks and open spaces are critical elements in the livability of downtown. If downtown Kent hopes to attract urban residents, it must have well-maintained, safe, and appropriate open spaces that lend themselves to a variety of activities.

***11. Do you feel safe in downtown? If so, why? If not, why not?***

Respondents generally stated they felt safe in downtown. In the words of one person, "downtown is no less safe than any other part of the City." The Police Department with its bicycle patrol of downtown was given high marks for helping to establish a safe environment. One person offered that he "...doesn't have to look over my shoulder" when walking around downtown.

Respondents were aware that Kent and its downtown are not necessarily viewed by the region as safe environs. This was thought to be more perception than reality.

There was an acknowledgment that time of day as well as area of downtown did make a difference in how safe people felt. For example, the transit station on Smith Street was cited by several interviewees as potentially unsafe, especially after dark. Also, certain alleys between Central and Railroad Avenue which were frequented by the homeless were to be avoided at night. Despite these reservations, most interviewees did not think these issues were much different than those in any other urban area.

Respondents felt two things might help as far as downtown safety is concerned. The first was lighting. Certain areas and streets in downtown could be better lighted, either by street lights or by lights on buildings. The second was more people downtown. Adding residential units in downtown would put more people and “eyes on the street,” both day and night. Busier sidewalks and streets were thought to be safer.

***12. Do you consider the public art in downtown to be an asset? Why or why not? Is it appropriate or sufficient?***

If “beauty is in the eye of the beholder,” then public art in downtown Kent falls into the same category. Responses to this question ran the spectrum from “there’s not enough of it” to “it’s a waste of money,” from “it’s a good start” to “it’s better than nothing.”

However, there were some points of agreement or consensus. Most felt that public art, if it were substantial enough, could create a draw to the area. Public art that “told Kent’s story” was preferable to other art. Variety in artwork was favored, though several felt the murals – particularly those by Danny Pierce – should be expanded. It was noted that public art has not been vandalized (by graffiti) in the past and that it adds culture and identity to downtown.

***13. What about transportation? Is traffic congestion a problem? Is there a lack of transit? What about parking?***

There was a consensus in the answers to the first two parts of this question, regarding traffic and transit. The third part, regarding parking, sparked quite a different response.

As far as traffic congestion is concerned, most do not feel there is a substantial problem in downtown except for Central Avenue in the afternoon peak hour. This problem is exacerbated by the railroad tracks. Trains passing through the downtown, especially the freight trains which take a longer time to clear the crossing, back up traffic and impede local circulation. In the words of one respondent, the trains “do not make for a good neighbor” with their noise and potential for traffic delay. Nevertheless, the train problem was thought to be primarily a commuter peak hour problem and not generally a major, inhibiting factor for downtown shoppers.

Transit in downtown was viewed to be good. Whether it was Metro bus service, the shopper shuttle, or Sounder commuter rail service, interviewees felt positive about all forms of transit. Several thought this to be a key factor in attracting downtown residential development.

Responses to the parking issue varied considerably. There were those who felt there was no parking issue at all. In their opinion, there was adequate, convenient, and free parking within a short distance to any place in the downtown. They even felt that a parking problem was a “healthy” sign, where lots of customers were competing for a limited number of parking stalls. One person said that a parking problem “was a good problem to have” and another offered that “the sooner we can have a parking problem, the better.” On the other side of this issue were a number of persons who felt there was a shortage of easy and convenient parking. The 2-hour limit on parking stalls in downtown was criticized as being too short to allow shoppers adequate time to have lunch and shop for goods and services. The parking problem varied depending on location in downtown. First Avenue and Kent Station were cited the most often; the vacant storefronts on Meeker Street were thought to alleviate any parking problem.

***14. What about the street environment itself? Street trees? Street furniture? Street lights?***

The streetscape needs some improvement was the consensus response to this question. Street lighting needed to be improved and expanded in certain areas of downtown; pedestrian-scale lighting was favored over taller, cobra-head lights. The general view was that there were not enough benches in downtown, and that the ones that do exist are not in the right places. There were not enough trash containers, and their design was criticized for being impractical. There were also not enough planters on the sidewalks, and several respondents expressed a desire to bring the hanging planters back. These elements were thought to add a valuable aesthetic element to the overall shopping experience.

While most appreciated the trees in downtown and wanted them extended to areas that did not presently have them, there was a dissenting view. With street trees came the responsibility of dealing with leaves and the partial blockage of business signs.

***15. Is the maintenance of buildings (or the lack thereof) a problem from your perspective? If this is a problem, what do you think could be done about it?***

Most respondents feel there is a building maintenance problem in parts of downtown, particularly where there are vacant storefronts. It is perceived that property owners are unwilling to invest in buildings when they do not have tenants. This creates a vicious circle, since it is felt that potential tenants may be apprehensive about leasing in such areas. On Meeker Street, where there are considerable vacancies, the problem of building maintenance is pronounced. Some of these vacant storefronts do not screen the windows, and those on the sidewalk have a clear view of the deteriorating conditions inside the building. Several persons suggested window treatments that would screen this view and thereby improve the overall appearance of the building. Some suggested that stronger measures be implemented.

One of these was the adoption of minimum building maintenance standards, or incentives for the same.

It should be mentioned here that the abandoned garage site at 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Smith Street (currently the subject of a City-sponsored Request for Proposals) was singled out for its blighting effect on all of downtown, due largely to its prominent central location.



# Kent Downtown Subarea Plan - Survey #1

Select Language  
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## The Official Website of the City of Kent

Home (/index.aspx) > City Hall (/cityhall/) > Departments » Venture Downtown Survey

# VENTURE DOWNTOWN SURVEY

(Note: This survey takes 9 minutes to complete)

1. Are you a resident of Kent? (Select)
2. What is your age? (optional) (Select)
3. How often do you spend time in Downtown Kent? (Select)
4. Once you are in Downtown Kent, how do you get around town? (select all that apply)
  - Drive
  - Walk
  - Bike
  - Other:
5. As a pedestrian in Downtown, how important are the following factors in making that a safe and pleasant experience?

	Not Important			Very Important	
Conditions of sidewalks	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Street lights	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Landscaping	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Well marked crosswalks	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Slower traffic speeds	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Traffic lights responsive to pedestrians	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Window shopping opportunities	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5



10. If you lived in Downtown Kent, what sort of housing would you want to live in?  
(Select) |

11. In your opinion, what big changes need to happen to make Downtown Kent an even better place than it is today?

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12. If you would like to be informed of the progress of our downtown planning efforts, please give us your email address (optional): |

[Submit Form](#)

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## KENT DOWNTOWN SUBAREA ACTION PLAN VENTURE DOWNTOWN SURVEY #1 - SUMMARY

368 Respondents

Field	Value	Count	Percent
Age	<20 yrs	4	1.1%
	>69	23	6.3%
	20-29	22	6.0%
	30-39	63	17.1%
	40-49	77	20.9%
	50-59	80	21.7%
	60-69	90	24.5%
Do you feel safe downtown in evening	(Select)	19	5.2%
	No	160	43.5%
	Yes	189	51.4%
How do you get around downtown	Bike	25	6.8%
	Drive	251	68.2%
	Walk	274	74.5%
How often do you spend time downtown	(Select)	4	1.1%
	Fairly Often	103	28.0%
	Nearly Daily	104	28.3%
	Occasionally	67	18.2%
	Often	64	17.4%
	Rarely	26	7.1%
Important Living Downtown Adequate Parking	1	3	0.8%
	2	14	3.8%
	3	37	10.1%
	4	97	26.4%
	5	170	46.2%
Important Living Downtown Architecture	1	9	2.4%
	2	11	3.0%
	3	58	15.8%
	4	115	31.3%
	5	131	35.6%
Important Living Downtown Business Variety	1	4	1.1%
	2	3	0.8%
	3	35	9.5%
	4	99	26.9%
	5	179	48.6%
Important Living Downtown Entertainment	1	10	2.7%
	2	12	3.3%
	3	68	18.5%
	4	108	29.3%

Field	Value	Count	Percent	
		5	121	32.9%
Important Living Downtown Green Space	1	4	1.1%	
	2	19	5.2%	
	3	50	13.6%	
	4	109	29.6%	
	5	141	38.3%	
Important Living Downtown Places for Friends	1	1	0.3%	
	2	11	3.0%	
	3	35	9.5%	
	4	121	32.9%	
	5	155	42.1%	
Important Living Downtown Redirect Trucks	1	19	5.2%	
	2	33	9.0%	
	3	48	13.0%	
	4	85	23.1%	
	5	135	36.7%	
Important Living Downtown Sidewalk Cafes	1	12	3.3%	
	2	14	3.8%	
	3	56	15.2%	
	4	95	25.8%	
	5	145	39.4%	
Important Living Downtown Traffic Flow	1	3	0.8%	
	2	9	2.4%	
	3	55	14.9%	
	4	118	32.1%	
	5	137	37.2%	
Important Living Downtown Transportation	1	18	4.9%	
	2	24	6.5%	
	3	69	18.8%	
	4	87	23.6%	
	5	123	33.4%	
Important Living Downtown Tree Lined Streets	1	10	2.7%	
	2	38	10.3%	
	3	81	22.0%	
	4	92	25.0%	
	5	102	27.7%	
Important Living Downtown Variety Housing	1	12	3.3%	
	2	10	2.7%	
	3	62	16.8%	
	4	110	29.9%	
	5	123	33.4%	
Important Ped Safety Factors Bicycle Police	1	18	4.9%	
	2	30	8.2%	
	3	108	29.3%	
	4	93	25.3%	

Field	Value	Count	Percent	
		5	102	27.7%
Important Ped Safety Factors Crosswalks	1	1	0.3%	
	2	9	2.4%	
	3	44	12.0%	
	4	102	27.7%	
	5	208	56.5%	
Important Ped Safety Factors Landscaping	1	9	2.4%	
	2	20	5.4%	
	3	87	23.6%	
	4	159	43.2%	
	5	87	23.6%	
Important Ped Safety Factors Other	1	2	0.5%	
	2	1	0.3%	
	3	7	1.9%	
	4	9	2.4%	
	5	40	10.9%	
Important Ped Safety Factors Sidewalks	1	3	0.8%	
	2	9	2.4%	
	3	35	9.5%	
	4	131	35.6%	
	5	186	50.5%	
Important Ped Safety Factors Slower Traffic	1	16	4.3%	
	2	43	11.7%	
	3	104	28.3%	
	4	96	26.1%	
	5	106	28.8%	
Important Ped Safety Factors Street Lights	1	5	1.4%	
	2	8	2.2%	
	3	30	8.2%	
	4	116	31.5%	
	5	206	56.0%	
Important Ped Safety Factors Traffic Lights	1	7	1.9%	
	2	16	4.3%	
	3	72	19.6%	
	4	119	32.3%	
	5	150	40.8%	
Important Ped Safety Factors Window Shopping	1	13	3.5%	
	2	30	8.2%	
	3	75	20.4%	
	4	122	33.2%	
	5	123	33.4%	
Living Downtown Quite the Train Noise	1	33	9.0%	
	2	38	10.3%	

Field	Value	Count	Percent
Living Downtown Quite the Train Noise (continued)	3	67	18.2%
	4	55	14.9%
	5	130	35.3%
Resident Of Kent	(Select)	0	0.0%
	No	71	19.3%
	Yes	297	80.7%
Someday living in downtown	(Select)	10	2.7%
	No	208	56.5%
	Yes	150	40.8%
Type of Housing Wanted Downtown	(Select)	27	7.3%
	Apartments or Condominiums over Ground-floor Retail	149	40.5%
	None of the above	49	13.3%
	Stand-alone Apartments or Condominiums	49	13.3%
	Townhouse	94	25.5%
Would spend more time downtown if	Events	192	52.2%
	Police presence	197	53.5%
	Safe parks	170	46.2%
	Shops open after 5 pm	241	65.5%
	Small venues with entertainment	200	54.3%
	Variety of restaurants	266	72.3%

## KENT DOWNTOWN SUBAREA ACTION PLAN UNEDITED COMMUNITY COMMENTS FROM SURVEY #1

### RESIDENT

#### **No Age:**

You need to re-think your survey. What is important to me DOES NOT MEAN I want the City of Kent to anything about. The City of Kent should provide basic services and let the free market economy and the citizens of Kent create the solutions.

Commuter traffic through James Street and Central Avenue (East Valley Highway) need improvement. I try to avoid downtown Kent at these times because of the high volume of traffic on these streets.

Incentives to get empty nesters, retirees, and singles to live downtown and develop a vibrant and eclectic community.

it seems to me there needs to be creatvie mix of business perhaps a way to encourage small entrepreneurs to sell their wares. It needs people ineracting with each other in all sorts of activities to eat to play to make things together and for the city to stimulate and reach out to help that happen

needs all of the above answers

Restrictions on building height. I grew up in Ballard and in recent years the construction of huge highrise living spaces that have no street setback have totally ruined the ambiance of the small area.

#### **< 20:**

Kent Station and Historic district need to be better connected. The plaza currently serves more to separate the area than function, as I presume it was intended, like a "town green." It seems to me the biggest obstacles to that are pedestrian unfriendly W Smith and the fact that the plaza is surrounded by streets, instead of buildings.

Patrol needs to be spread out more and increased. More clean and safe parks. More cheaper places to go. More events. More local band performances.

Safety Guards and Police Officers need to regulate gang activity. Being in Kent after it gets dark is a bit frightening- I would never let my kids or my family be down there during that time of night.

#### **20-29:**

more quality restaurants

High rises

I think Kent is extremely diverse and we need to embrace that. Rather than trying to create another U- village we need a diverse place that is acceptable and affordable to all cultures in the Kent Valley. Kent Station shouldn't just be for white rich folks.

Maybe a renovation - some of the older businesses are not appealing and look so run down. I think it would really benefit the city as a whole.

More areas like Kent Station

Some parts of downtown Kent look really run down and almost on the trashy side. It would be nice to make the city look not so run down and give it some life again. I would also like to feel safer and have more cops that are out to protect.

The buildings need to be renovated, so it feels cleaner and newer in historic downtown. Right now, there is too much contrast between Kent station and the Historic district. We also need more resources for the homeless community. If we can offer them better shelters and places to eat and clean up, they will not come around begging for money. They are wonderful people and are definitely part of our community, so we should find a way to help them out rather than pushing them out.

The security downtown is pitiful. I've been assaulted and nearly mugged by mentally unstable homeless junkies at the bus stations, and I won't even go near the library anymore as it constantly reeks of body odor, piss, and pot smoke.

There needs renters for all the vacant space. The vacant space gives it a depressing atmosphere so it is more lively.

There needs to be more effort to reduce crime. In the evening there are a lot of young gang members loitering around downtown. As a female, I don't feel safe walking around downtown at night, away from Kent Station. There is great police and security presence at Kent Station, but not throughout the rest of downtown. We need a facility for the homeless near downtown, so they wouldn't be forced to sleep on the sidewalks on near store-fronts. As it is now I would never consider living in downtown.

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There needs to be more shops and restaurants. Also, it would be nice to have bike lanes and places to safely park and lock up my bike while I enjoy down town Kent. Better nightlife and more things to do inside in the winter.

### **30-39:**

get rid of loiters outside of library, encourage more businesses to rent space downtown, make roads more pedestrian friendly with overpasses or better lights

More police officers, specifically the bike cops

Where the "Parking Garage" structure was taken down, put in it's place a really NICE park w/ green space and a Big Toy for my kids. The part of the park that exists is nice but gets boring after 10-20 minutes.

more shopping & restaurants

I currently live in the north park neighborhood just north of kent station-- I walk my child and dog through downtown everyday. The intersection of James and fourth is a very busy one for pedestrians and it needs to be better patrolled by police. I am super aware of my surroundings when I walk through and have been nearly hit many many times when I had the right of way with a pedestrian light. Also- codes being enforced in the northpark neighborhood would make the neighborhood look better. When trying to entice people to buy townhomes/condos in downtown there needs to be assistance in making the existing neighborhoods look better. In Northpark our sidewalks are old and crumbling, there is no curb and drainage could be improved. changes in making our neighborhood look better will help "sell" the downtown area to higher priced condos/townhomes. The majority of residence in our neighborhood want to help and make our neighborhood look better. I hope that as kent's downtown vision is created we do not forget to work with the existing residence in the neighborhood in making the current living spaces more enticing before adding more housing to the mix. Forgetting about the North Park neighborhood as well as the neighborhoods near the police station and south of Willis will not make the down town as a whole a valuable place to live.

There needs to be some revitalization of downtown Kent. The place doesn't have a lot of great shopping--it's mostly small ethnic markets and little trinket stores. Something more like Kent Station would be really great--I spend a lot of time at Kent Station, and would spend more time in Downtown Kent if it were more like Kent Station, because I like giving my money to local establishments (versus national chains), and I visit Wild Wheat quite often. But I have no interest in bead shops, overpriced yoga/pilates, used bookstores, etc. I think our downtown should look more like First Avenue, with the restaurants and the bars--it's the only street that has people on it after 5 pm. Some trendier shopping would be good, too. Antiques stores just don't cut it.

Kent has a large homeless problem. As a parent I don't feel comfortable taking my kids to the library due to this or even some of the parks. There is also a lot of adolescents that hang around in groups smoking and making general disturbances. There seems to be a lot of graffiti and gang activity also. The older part of downtown needs to be torn down and rebuilt. The outer architecture should reflect the history of older kent but the buildings need to be built to current standards and allowed to be higher.

Apartments or condos need to be high end and above market rentals in order to attract people more likely to spend money at businesses and be involved in the community. I'd be concerned if the housing is below market rates as it is more likely to result in problems now being faced by many apartment communities on the East Hill.

Better lighting, and that includes not just sidewalks, but also all adjacent areas. No dark alleys, doorways, etc. Businesses other than Mexican restaurants and thrift shops would be good too.

There is a huge disconnect between Kent Station and ShoWare and Sound Transit. We can't even think of parking at Kent Station for games, which makes us avoid Kent Station BEFORE games, even for food. Kent Station could do more to attract the people who ride Sound Transit.

Unfortunately there seems to be a sizable transient presence. Just going to the library, I feel slightly unsafe walking from the parking lot to the doors. Once inside, it is lovely, but outside is unpleasant. I don't currently feel safe enough to walk around by myself (I'm a young woman) given the people who mill around. I also would not think about going there in the dark alone. I don't know what the answer to this is but it is a serious issue.

All the violence & gangs bring the city down. I currently live here and hate that almost nightly there is break-ins & thefts all over. Our neighborhood has been a HUGE target lately and makes me want to move out of here. We live in one of the nicest parts of the City but the garbage comes

to our part to steal from. Also all the homes in downtown Kent need to be updated & have nicer quality homes built. Because the homes are all small & run down/rentals it brings in unnecessary garbage & detracts from what a beautiful city we have here.

Better traffic flow patters. East hill is getting horrendus for traffic and the on ramp to 167 by Washington Ave. More old school houses like a small town environment. Build up the town better using the vacant lot across from Shari's by golf course. Get rid of trailer parks. Perhaps another over pass over the tracks near kent staion that goes directly up to East hill.

I think having more free activities in the park would be a good thing, to help build a better sense of community. There should also be more independent shops and restaurants. Kent Station is mostly geared for teenagers and upper-middle class stay-at-home moms. There is little to interest someone in their early 30s, like me.

More variety of businesses, restaurants and shops open later, enhanced police presence, more community events.

The surrounding parks need to be cleaned up. Not necessarily in downtown Kent, but on the East Hill.

Modifications to traffic flow.

Silence the trains at least at night. No one wants to live with constant noise day and night. As a home owner living near the train it will be the primary reason I move.

Assume that downtown will flourish, and tackle the infrastructure problems (many of which you've got listed above) that would prevent us from being able to support more businesses and consumers coming downtown. I don't see us attracting a fancy grocery store and a slew of fun retail shops/sidewalk cafes when it's obvious that we can't handle increased parking and traffic demands. I think downtown is looking fantastic. I love the parks, public art, farmers market, I even love the hanging flower baskets! But those aren't the things Whole Foods or PCC will take into consideration, so any real growth is going to require some serious planning & investment.

Better integration of old Kent downtown and Kent Station. Sounder and rail station should not mess up car traffic as badly as it does during rush hour.

-Grocery Store is needed.

I feel like Downtown Kent really needs to have more of a core downtown area. It seems that right now there's only Kent Station and the Historic area...but other than that there's just a bunch of rundown/empty/random lots that just give downtown Kent a really depressing feeling. I really do think it has a lot of potential and would love nothing more than to see the area turn into a vibrant downtown area where I can walk with my family and feel safe and have fun/healthy things to see and do. I'd love to see a nice grocery store too. It's so sad to me that Safeway is the only option...which is why I choose to grocery shop elsewhere. I'd be more inclined to grocery shop and do my other errands in Downtown Kent if there were better options, especially if they were within walking distance to Kent Station/historic area and if I felt safe walking with my son.

I have been living above a retail store off meeker for 2 years and recently it's become so overwhelming all the people sleeping between cars and in every doorway. It scars me walking behind the library (where I have to park my car) seeing the amount of homeless people and the belongings stashed in bushes and the smells. I have an 8 year d son and I'm considering moving

because it seems to be increasing in people and the cder weather will bring them to sneak inside the building live in and sleep in the stairwells and next to the dumpsters out back.

I love living in Kent. The downtown area is great but a little on the limited side. When I think of "downtown" I think of Kent station and Showare Center. Most of the shops at Kent Station are on the expensive side (the clothing ones). I think more variety of shops and restaurants would make this area better.

I'd personally like to see better bicycle infrastructure, but having a more pedestrian friendly design is probably more important. The giant oceans of parking aren't conducive at all to actually walking around. You park, do one thing, get in car, drive to another place, park, do another thing, etc.

It seems the homeless population has increased. There is a beautiful park downtown with water but I don't always feel safe ther with the transient population. If the rest of downtown Kent was like Kent Station that would be PERFECT!

It would be nice to see more parks and community events like movies in the park.

Kent is well positioned to become a successful transition town. Kent has all the right ingredients - Farms, commuter rail, education, high tech and local entrepreneurs. This combined in the right way could create a resilient sustainable core. I suggest bringing elements of permaculture to any new development. Integrating local food production, reclamation of compostable materials, and use of alternative energy systems. I also believe Kent should have a business incubator to attract and retain more start-ups, may be in cooperation with Green River Community College or another university. I think a creating a cycle of start up support and moving these businesses at maturation to our existing stock of business and industry buildings, retaining them because we have also built a community they would not want to leave.

Modern buildings with attractive grounds and storefronts.

More restaurants!

Per all your questions, ask yourself, what does Bellevue have?

Programs to get & keep youth off the streets and engaged in safe & healthy activities. Our kids need low cost or free places to hang out, where they can avoid getting into crime, gangs, and unhealthy activities (drugs, sex, etc.), and where they can access services if they need them. The increase in small crimes in the Scenic Hill neighborhood seems to be perpetrated primarily by young people - if they had places to go and things to do that were more positive, I think that would help prevent some of them from getting into crime as a method of getting things they want and of occupying their time.

The homes next to Showare scare people, and the motel/crackhouse next to the train tracks is awful. Replacing some of the dilapidated housing would be #1. Driving out/relocating the residents that cause the issues and make the neighborhood look unsafe would benefit everyone. Following the model of downtown Renton is key.

Traffic congestion must be relieved for getting in/out of downtown. This hinges largely on east/west routes that are not subject to railway traffic.

Upgrades to existing structures, more things to do with family and friends, safer feel

Why go to Seattle or Renton or Tukwila when everything I need is home in Kent. That is the easiest way for me to put it. I really like the variety at the landing in Renton and really wish Kent Station had the same while still being unique. I think fixing up some of the older broken down parts of Kent would be good while keeping its charm I remember as a child. My husband and I are always looking for new restaurants close to home and are tired of fast food and would love to see a larger variety downtown.

get rid of the gangs and hoodlums

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## **40-49:**

As mentioned above - the homeless issue needs to be addressed plus the landlords need to be a little more picky about the type of business that they allow. We have some great shops but also some really sketchy shops. BUT don't become just another mall - don't run the small businesses out of town.

Better atmosphere and culture that is less violent and less lower income. Raise rents, remove old crime-ridden apartments, increase family atmosphere, discourage and PUNISH graffiti offenders, discourage baggy-pants wearing thugs by having a heavily patrolled downtown, and allow trees to mature WITHOUT cutting them down once they get to a majestic age.

Bringing in residences along with increased police presence would create more people being out and about during the day and evening, enhancing the feeling of safety and community. The train noise is an issue, buildings would require extra sound proofing and vibration damping.

Clean up Central Avenue and for the Love of God lure a real pub somewhere in downtown. Good enough food, excellent beer, and good service is not difficult but is apparently impossible in Kent. The blue print is in Seattle and Renton (Whistle Stop, The Collins, The Pine Box, etc.). It's impossible to get a selection of good beers in this town.

Close Ramsay Way to vehicle traffic. Enforce speed limit, get reputation for strict enforcement downtown (like some Eastern cities). Encourage street vendors and performers to add variety and some sort of freshness to downtown offerings. Educate downtown businesses that it is their responsibility to maintain their storefronts and sidewalks. I never see downtown merchants cleaning in front of their stores, and many could use some cleaning. We need some live music venues and place to go after a ShoWare visit to wind down. Offer incentive for someone to develop interurban trail cafe to bring bike traffic and tax dollars to Kent, this would also act as a mini Kent Visitor Center.

Don't be afraid of a little density. Kent Station (both the train platform, and the shopping center) is the best thing that has happened to Kent. Optimize its benefits by including some denser housing downtown, with some ground floor retail on the best arterials (though it should not be a requirement elsewhere). This should include primarily market rate housing at first to create the demand for downtown living - then workforce and affordable housing components could be addressed as part of additional development. Not the other way around. The other concern would be changing the perceived crime problem. The blocks directly east of the train platform, and to some degree the garage and platform/transit plaza itself, have become a breeding ground for drug transactions day and night. Either we could put a zoning plan afoot to redevelop that area along Central between James and Willis with more density (probably more commercial than residential given proximity to tracks), or dramatically increase police presence. Perception is reality, and this contributes to a currently unfavorable perception of downtown safety. Kent Station got us off to a great start. The "bones" are there for something great to grow into over the next 10-20 years if we can plan carefully.

High end condos above retail space. Higher end townhouses. No low income housing. Something needs to be done about the homeless people. It keeps people away from the library, parks, shops, etc. Good restaurants.

Revitalization, need more businesses and restaurants. I bypass downtown to go to Kent Station because of the variety of restaurants and shopping - downtown needs more of what Kent Station offers. The area where the parking garage was going to be built isn't even being utilized. What is happening there? What will you build there now that the parking garage has been removed?

More variety of shopping/venues--more ethnic variety, [maybe really good and affordable Italian, Middle- Eastern, Filipino restaurants--authentic, not "trendy" chain-styles], places that understand many of our folks have food allergies and can adapt to their needs; a grocery like Trader Joe's or an excellent gluten- free bakery. A whole lot more green space or at least some good landscaping plans.

I moved to Kent 2.5 years ago. Living here, the most appealing aspects are:

The biggest thing is more parking we need a public parking garage. To make it Easier to get to events. I live on the Est hill and really like it.

Bike paths and trail systems to link various areas of downtown Kent. (Turn Meeker and Gowe into 1 way traffic with single lane for bikers - Dreaming big!!) Family centers - aquatice center/YMCA etc

Better integration of historical downtown Kent and Kent Station. Perhaps sandwich historical Kent between Kent Station and new shopping center to south and/or east?

We need parking that lasts for longer than 2 hours. Two hours is not enough time to have lunch and go shopping with friends. If you want more people in old downtown Kent, you need to make parking options better. There is nothing worse than spending money in locally owned businesses and supporting the neighborhood than finding a parking ticket on your car when you go back to it. I rarely go to Kent Station, so I don't want to park there and walk 4 blocks to visit the stores and restaurants that I prefer. Even increasing the time to 4 or 5 hours would leave parking for shoppers available and hinder commuters from parking on the streets.

I am open to lifting the height limit on buildings to 4-6 stories, to create a denser environment. We need more living quarters and a variety of businesses to encourage folks to move downtown. A grocery store, that people can walk to, is a must!

first off let me applaud you on the the Showware center and Kent station! I really enjoy Kent station and the old downtown area by the wild wheat and it would be great if they somehow flowed together more. I love small business and that areas charm and could use a lift i think... what about allowing some street vendors and street musicians in that area? there is a parking garage in old tacoma in the antique area that allows kids and artist to paint the walls and floors on the weekend and it is an amazing thing to go and watch. the artist and taggers appreciate that they have a place to do it and as a result they are responsible and play by the rules. people love to watch people being creative..

Make it safer. I do not feel safe being in downtown Kent after dark at all. I have lived in Kent my entire 40 years (East Hill area) and crime is horrible in all areas. The transit station should have not been built so close to Kent Station Shopping. I refuse to take my family to Kent Station after dark.

Less homeless

better pedestrian access, better information on activities/events, more events

Link old downtown Kent to Kent Station. Clearly marked, featured and inviting entrances to old Downtown area. For people driving, giant steel archways over roads from Kent Station, from 4th from Central and HWY 516.

Police presence and beautification of shops. It would be nice to take back the library from the vagrants too. More food and less crafts at farmers market. Get a big name store, like Trader Joes to move in. Kent does not need another thrift store or apartment complex.

We need a Whole Foods or Trader Joe's.

There doesn't really need to be big changes to Downtown Kent, other than affordable housing. People want to live in Kent because it is the way it is, not because we are trying to become like Downtown Seattle.

Except for Kent Station, there are not enough stores or businesses downtown. We need critical mass, fewer vacant storefronts, and more shops that appeal to a greater audience (not just a quilting or skating audience, for example. Restaurants and shops often in the evenings would also be nice. Downtown Kent has seen some big improvements, but there are still opportunities -- cleaning up the debris left by the homeless on street corners, picking up litter and drug and alcohol paraphernalia left in parks, parking lots, etc.

City council needs to share vision with residents, businesses, and property owners. Housing crash and affordability issues need to be resolved. Tax base broadened. City budgets are not stable. Schools need improvement to draw in families.

I think it's a fine place as it is. Just seems quite deserted after work hours.

quality retail stores, safety, business friendly

Downtown has extremely limited parking. Any new structure would require adequate parking to be a part of the construction. However, the new planned apartments with retail below will not have enough spaces for the apartment occupants, let alone any retail visitors. Having two bedroom apartments, and allowing for only one parking space per unit is ridiculous, then to only have twenty some spaces for retail? Where will these workers park? Where will shoppers park? Where will the remaining 100 or so tenants park. They surely can't all run around moving their cars every two hours in what is the only available parking in downtown. It is a huge deterrent for attracting dedicated workers, as well as why many people do not come into the main downtown area. The city, because it can do what it wants, did not abide by the same restrictions as any other building owner would have to. How can the city continue to grow and expect to be a "destination" without some dedicated parking?

expand outward from kent station, showare is an awesome place and it would be cool to have some kind of park/shopping/entertainment all in one place although that would be hard to do because of the existing housing etc. Overall I love kent station, I really never go to the downtown area, nothing really interests me there, it seems like it needs to be updated.

Fewer empty store fronts. More shopping opportunities downtown.

From a resident's interpretation:

Have the carousel running during the day AND evening THROUGH the holidays, as well as through the summer. We have a lot of active parents with small children in this community and the carosel IS a great resource the city isn't putting to good use.

Higher income shops, housing, and jobs that would attract a different crowd. Kent Station is a great start. It would be nice to be able to hang out after work or on the weekends at restaurants or coffee shops that have a welcoming feel to them. There are many businesses in old downtown do not feel inviting.

I think first we need to get a good quality grocer in downtown that would start bringing the people in a bit more- then we add the housing- condos- preferable middle to higher end living- add these above some store front shops that could be beneficial to all would be nice. They have these situations in many cities now- West Seattle/Renton/and many other areas. That would be a huge boost to downtown Kent and bring in the people. We have great public transpiration access and we should build close by and utilize that positive. The existing storefronts need a facelift. Some building owners have done this already and it looks so much nicer. When a street looks run down it is a big turnoff as opposed to a street filled with quaint old buildings that have been kept up with nice flowers and plants along the sidewalks.

It feels like a place that is made for adults. However, the plaza by Kent Station and Library is an improvement in the area of family friendliness. We like to do things with our kids, and anticipate wanting to do things with future grandkids. Things that would make downtown Kent better for us would be a great water park (we love the Federal Way indoor pools/park that is part of their Parks and Recreation center). Would love to see more trees/shade in or by the plaza by the Library.

We'd like to see the parking lots improved around Kent Station. We don't know if the gravel lots behind Kent Station are part of the KS property, but would like to see those paved, and improved access in and out of those lots. We were disappointed to hear the parking garage at KS is at capacity and that there was consideration of charging for parking there. For those of us who go to Kent Station for activities or shopping, paid parking would be a disincentive on busy days.

It needs to feel clean and safe. If you venture outside of Kent Station after dark or in the morning, it does not feel safe at all. There are too many drunks and crowds of homeless people at the water park and in old downtown. I can easily walk downtown from my house on Scenic Hill, but I don't feel safe downtown after dark anymore. I constantly see people urinate (and worse) on the streets, even in broad daylight. I can't imagine anyone wanting to open a business in downtown Kent until this problem gets under control.

Downtown kent could really be great if we could make it feel safe.

It would be nice to see some specialty stores and cafes in the older part of town and feel safe to visit. One can get tired of the same old offerings. Puyallup has done a great job with their downtown. I will drive to Puyallup just to experience their downtown. I would hang out in Kent more often if it looked more inviting and I felt safe.

I've lived in Kent all my life and there have been so many changes to downtown Kent. It used to be fun to shop on Meeker St at the Golden Blend, JC Penney and Ben Franklin and the antique shops. We need

more shops to keep people enticed to go there. Some kind of "anchor" stores. Too many come and go.

Shops like a Bartell, a book store, and other variety shops would give folks more to come down there for. We've got a good choice of restaurants, (unfortunately Bittersweet closed), so let's get more shopping and parking and make it more of a destination area.

Keeping commercial vehicles out of the Downtown core is really important. Semi traffic down Central, thru Kent to Auburn is too much and holds up traffic, not to mention that the traffic lanes between James and Willis are very narrow making it dangerous to drive side-by-side. Bike lanes would be really great since so many bicyclist travel through the city on the Interurban Trail. Maybe they would stay if we were more bike friendly.

Kent needs to encourage more small business owners to move in downtown. Especially ethnic diverse businesses and restaurants. People would come downtown and stay several hours at a time if there were more places to dine, drink and watch live music. Maybe an art gallery or two would also be fabulous! Kent Station is a great start at improving Kent, but downtown is in sad shape and needs a cosmetic facelift to attract more people. I do hope that the historical part of Kent is preserved and maybe a theme downtown based on that would be the trick!!

make some of the side streets one-way so it i easier to park and make the fronts of the buildings more inviting with lights and landscape

More events like live music, weekend markets and even daily markets in the summer.

More green spaces. The new water park is nice, but there's no shade around and it's concrete. Arts - galleries, businesses, and things with more high-quality art.

More variety and upscale shopping. Particularly when it comes to living downtown, you need to have the "basics" close at hand. Such as full service grocery store within walking distance.

Safeway on Washington is too far and the small ethnic stores, while great, do not serve all needs. Other things like laundry/dry

cleaning, hardware, an honest to goodness butcher shop, etc. And while we are on the subject of food, an upscale grocery store anywhere in Kent such as Whole Foods or PCC is desperately needed. As is more upscale dining. Not upscale chain restaurants like Dukes or Ram, which are great for Kent Station, but a variety of smaller venues with good food, seasonal menus that change frequently, etc. I certainly don't mind paying higher prices for great food!!

Needs more parking, sometimes there is nowhere to park! Needs police presence, specially on weekends. Needs more events to happen for people to go down there besides eating and watching a movie. Maybe more family oriented stuff. Better stores like Barnes & Noble, Starbucks too. Housing wise, accessibility to transportation, lighted sidewalks, facilities so that it will be a place where everything is there, no need to go far. Thanks!

Positive - Grocery is the Future. Supercenters are more efficient have more variety and provide better pricing. Walmart or a Costco is needed. Costco is great for employees. Costco provides 1% profit sharing for employees with employee shopping discounts. A happy employee is a happy place to shop at. Negative - A Mixed Use development are the WORST!!! The only shops that are in there are 7-Eleven type shops, an overprices Hair and Nail center, a Video Store, a cheap clothing or boutique store with OVERPRICED Rent and prices for customers. One of the WORST solutions to promote tax revenue and comfortable living. Positive - Hotels bring are doing HUGE investments right now considering the lack of jobs available. Hotels are going to great over the next 5 years considering how many people are moving around to find work. Hotels pay huge Water and Energy taxes to move in and to sustain. Positive - YOU NEED TO HAVE A PLACE FOR THE 13-18 year olds. KEEP THE KIDS ACTIVE AND OFF THE STREET MAKES A SAFER AND HEALTHIER ENVIRONMENT. Negative - Ice Skating rings are a drain on the Water. Too expensive to run and a waste of the most important natural resource we have on our planet. Negative with a Positive. Many vacant retail shops on Meeker Street. P-The Building need a Face Lift. Positive - If you want to increase housing, it's best in a Historical Community. People that buy homes in Historical Communities have a preservation mindset. You need an Enclosure for the people at Kent Station standing outside in the rain waiting for their train. Just to name a few things.

Safer pedestrian access from the core to the radius neighborhoods (within 1/2 mile of core). It has been improving, but lighting combined with heavy traffic can make for dangerous pedestrian travel. Reduction in train noise would be very helpful as it can be very uncomfortable being near the core when the trains blow through town.

The downtown area currently has a limited selection of clothing stores especially mens clothing. For downtown Kent to be more of a live/work/play area we need a grocery store with good selection. Kent commons has some limited fitness opportunities. Better marked routes to the Interurban and Green River bike trails.

The homeless/transient population needs to improve. Whether they are harmless or not, their presence evokes fear in some people and makes the downtown area less desirable.

The old train station -- the \*original\* Kent Station, should be renovated, perhaps into a restaurant. (I'm thinking of Bert Grant's brewpub in Yakima -- the first in Washington state -- as an example.) The current parking lot could be converted into more of a square. Even turning this into a railway museum would be an improvement from the negative space it is today.

There are a lot of questionable people in the library, the parking lots, on the sidewalks and in the housing areas near Downtown and up on 104th. It's also very rundown, and while I'd like to check

out Canyon park, I've heard it's a bad place to go. I occasionally go to the Farmer's Market and sometimes to a movie at Kent Station. But when I go to the movies at night, I don't walk through certain parts of Kent Station because people have told me it's unsafe and I believe them since there are a lot of loiterers. I also used to go to GRCC for a few classes, but when I swung by there a few months ago to pick up some paperwork for a continuing ed class I noticed they also had acquired the kind of "guard station" attitude you get working in an undesirable area. Maybe it's the presence of the Social Security administration (with all their guards and only one allowable way in). Maybe if you worked to make it safer (word gets around), with less dark places, safer parks, fewer alleys. And more useful stores (little boutiques like Apple and Ann Taylor are great for occasional shopping, but Target/Walmart/Safeway and Home Depot are where you can never find parking because of the sheer volume of people inside) I'd rethink my objections.

expand outward from kent station, showare is an awesome place and it would be cool to have some kind of park/shopping/entertainment all in one place although that would be hard to do because of the existing housing etc. Overall I love kent station, I really never go to the downtown area, nothing really interests me there, it seems like it needs to be updated.

make some of the side streets oneway so it i easier to park and make the fronts of the buildings more inviting with lights and landscape

More variety and upscale shopping. Particularly when it comes to living downtown, you need to have the "basics" close at hand. Such as full service grocery store within walking distance. Safway on Washington is too far and the small ethnic stores, while great, do not serve all needs. Other things like laundry/dry cleaning, hardware, an honest to goodness butcher shop, etc. And while we are on the subject of food, an upscale grocery store anywhere in Kent such as Whole Foods or PCC is desperately needed. As is more upscale dining. Not upscale chain restaurants like Dukes or Ram, which are great for Kent Station, but a variety of smaller venues with good food, seasonal menus that change frequently, etc. I certainly don't mind paying higher prices for great food!!

We need to turn around the downtown mental state that it is old and not a place to go. We need new ownership of shops and buildings to bring in incentive to change and grow. We need to control homelessness, we need to add activities and we need to start acting like we are a big city- we are no longer the farming town south of Seattle.

The homeless/transient population needs to improve. Whether they are harmless or not, their presence evokes fear in some people and makes the downtown area less desirable.

Safer pedestrian access from the core to the radius neighborhoods (within 1/2 mile of core). It has been improving, but lighting combined with heavy traffic can make for dangerous pedestrian travel. Reduction in train noise would be very helpful as it can be very uncomfortable being near the core when the trains blow through town.

Have the carousel running during the day AND evening THROUGH the holidays, as well as through the summer. We have a lot of active parents with small children in this community and the carosel IS a great resource the city isn't putting to good use.

More information about the jail; what time of day are prisoners released, what kind of prisoners are in there, when are visiting hours and should I be afraid of the visitors too? Where do criminals or soon-to-be-charged criminals park to go to court there? City of Kent should consider cameras at the Kent Station to better deter bad behavior.

More events like live music, weekend markets and even daily markets in the summer.

**50-59:**

Add free and low cost activities for kids and youth. A youth center would be a great addition and is much needed.

An array of ethnic businesses, restaurants and entertainment

Better place than it is today? What part of downtown Kent are you referring to? Other than Kent Station during early morning daylight hours only, most of it looks like some third world hellhole, complete with all the human trash that inhabits those third world hellholes. You want to make Downtown Kent "an even better place than it is today"? Get rid of the trash by any means necessary.

Business infill, a drugstore, maybe a closer grocery store, LOTS more restaurants - more breakfast/lunch places as well as dinner venues. We are lacking daily-type stores for everyone to visit. Nail stores are great but not a daily go-to place; need haircutters for everyone. What about a candy store? There also are not any near cleaners. What about a shoe store??

a better police presents around the library and adjacent park by the railroad tracks

control and removal of the gangs is number 1. I no longer even go to cornacopia days because of the gang activity - it is not safe. Revitalization of downtown is number 2. outside of the kent station, intimate pilates & rain & co and wild wheat - our city doesn't have much to offer. A grocery would be good - like an italian market or a mom and pop store that we could support.

Control Homeless population and street crimes

convenient parking for historic district, perhaps Harrison street could be a one-way street with angle parking on either side. Or pedicab service from outlying parking areas. Live performance community theatre would be awesome! It could also serve as a venue for smaller concerts and stage acts that don't require a place as big as Showare (about the size of the Met Theatre in Spokane).

Downtown Kent just seems so dark and run down. Tired is the best way to describe. I don't know how you fix this. I like Kent Station but that is limited. I like that we have ShoWare - an ice rink - a place to hit some balls (golf or baseball). I do ride a bike and fear very few streets but prefer the quieter ones. I take the train to work or ride the trail to Tukwila / Seattle by bike. Kent is perfectly located. I like that we are a city that is actually trying and I appreciate it. On a narrow minded point - religious refugees - I'm tired of them. I am willing to help those who want to help themselves, but not those trying to have me conform to them.

Downtown Kent needs better grocery shopping, ideally an upscale market like Trader Joes -- preferably in the blank space currently between Smith and Meeker, and a year-round indoor farmer's and flea market like the public market at Pike Place in Seattle to draw train commuters to stick around and do their marketing, and to make living in downtown more plausible.

draw crowds away from kent station and into the neighborhoods.

Either shoot Kent with some financial development dollars, or just shoot(kill) it.

Eliminate low quality signage + storefront design - establish + enforce guidelines for these

get rid of homeless and halfway house, too many of them came out from jail and hanging around down town. ( put them somewhere else.)

get something built in the area that was partial built and torn down. More places open on Sundays and until 8 or 9. Not sure how you would get Kent Station/ Showare people to walk a few blocks to the downtown area. Perhaps a very well lit pedestrian pathway that is lined with art/plants/ enjoyable thing to look at (benches and such.) Make more parking for 3+ hours..a movie and dinner can take a while.

I do not go downtown in the evenings especially on a Friday night or weekends. Too much fighting and yelling between people going on. I would like to be able to stroll in the evening do some shopping and not worry about a gang of people chasing each other. Thanks!

need to connect Historic downtown with Kent Station. Need a smooth transition between the two.

Less gangs, less crime, no homeless shelters, no halfway / recovery houses, better street lighting, police presence

More police presence in the parking area. Less kids in the shadows after dark. Makes me scared!! Better parking. Have to park a long distance from where I need to be. More/better handicap parking would help.

More shopping, more available FREE parking, rerouting major traffic around town rather than through the center, lower speed limits and better timed traffic lights. Pedestrian crossing OVER train tracks to prevent fatalities, better crossing barriers at train tracks.

More streets like Meeker and 1st. More restaurants. At least one rail underpass or flyover near downtown.

Needs some type of grocery store/specialty grocery store (in line with Whole Foods),clothing stores to draw women and young teens, at least one nice/large restaurant, ice cream/candy store, and finally,an allergy or ENT specialist at Kent MultiCare would be an added bonus--then I wouldn't have to travel to Auburn or Renton or Covington.

Old downtown needs to be revitalized. Needs an anchor store.

Other than the Common's there really isn't a lot TO downtown. We need to attract more businesses. I know- DUH! :-)

Require a minimum standard for old homes, duplexes, businesses, etc.so the city doesn't look so run down in places. Do not build more apartments downtown or anywhere else in Kent for that matter. Bring in permanent residents rather than transient we currently have!!

Revitalize Meeker Street and First Avenue with more restaurants, shops, doctors offices or any type of business that brings people to the area.

The Station is great. Downtown is not bad, just dark and the parks are usually fill of homeless people. Most shops are closed early also so nor need to go down there in the evenings.

Upgrade the Historic area and less emphasis on the big venue called Kent Station. It is too commercial and crowded.

We need a higher quality of stores and restaurants.

We need the business we have to stay open till 9 or 10 pm, we need to attract more restaurants like Federal Way has, we need real stores like department stores, shoe stores, not antiques which are fine for a few, bed & bath, home goods, you name it, Kent needs it.

I've lived in the Kent Scenic Hill area for over 20 years. Since that time, the quantity of rail traffic has increased. With the increased number of trails, comes the increase in the noise every time the trains approach and pass through intersections. Living almost two miles away, this noise actually wakes me from my sleep. Sometimes the horns blast for the entire passage through Kent. With the possibility of further rail increase by coal-carrying trains will only make matters worse. I cannot see any quality living space being preferred by possible tenants until the noise from the trains is substantially reduced. In addition, this noise affects every business and event in downtown Kent. To improve the quality and livability of Kent, I feel this is a major issue that must be fixed.

More police presence in the parking area. Less kids in the shadows after dark. Makes me scared!! Better parking. Have to park a long distance from where I need to be. More/better handicap parking would help.

The main streets with their shops need curb appeal. Streets like central and smith should draw people in to our city. They now look shabby and uninviting. Kent station does great business because it looks inviting and people want to walk around there. I am not opposed to taller buildings in downtown. Living in a condo in a tall building with great views and access to shops and the transit center would be desirable. The trains are really loud, and with all of the precautions Kent takes at crossings, there must be a way to minimize the whistle noise. Condos right by the tracks will be noisy if they don't find a way to quiet some of the trains. There needs to be a solution to the amount of transients/homeless people around the library and core area. It would be uncomfortable to have children of an age to go to the library alone spending time around so many adults who are homeless. Adults can handle themselves, but children are more vulnerable. Also, we need to seek solutions to the needs of the homeless for their sake. It is sad that we can't find ways to fill the empty business areas. When Meeker Emporium left, I thought it was due to high rent. That area has been empty all this time since, when it seems that it would have paid to lower the rent. I know lots of people who made plans to come eat breakfast in downtown Kent and then go to Meeker Emporium. Not just the emporium lost out, but the restaurants as well. Tacoma is having some kind of revival of their empty areas with arts groups. I hope the city checks into what creative ideas other communities have. I always feel bad for our old downtown area. A few places do well, but it is hard to get people to roam over from Kent Street Station. Get the feeder roads updated and fill up those empty business areas with something fun like Tacoma is doing as a start.

The train noise is pretty rough and the streets on the outlying areas surrounding Kent Station are in disrepair. It is very unsightly. I also have noticed an increase in drug and gang activity in my direct neighborhood (south of Willis between Central and West Valley). The scariest part of Kent is going to a 7/11 late at night.

I don't feel safe going to Safeway downtown Kent past 7:00 pm. Too much "riff raff" hangs out there! You need to have someone patrol handicap parking in Kent!! This is a HUGE abuse and I see it EVERYWHERE! I will apply for that job and it would bring HUGE revenue to the city! We need a Trader Joe in Kent! Nature's Market is TOO expensive! How about a Round Table Pizza downtown, we need another pizza place regardless of what kind! And NOT "cheap fast food" pizza. Implement a teen curfew (18 and under) at the Kent Station, no "hanging out!" Too many idiots hang out there and it is very uncomfortable for age 45+ to mingle down there! We don't need the skate park down there either!

Police presence.

Old Town Kent is a diamond in the rough. It needs to be revitalized, the shopping mall is ok but it doesn't have the same or attractiveness that a walkable, beautified Old Town would have. Think of Old Town Bellevue, or Wallingford or Greenlake or Ballard. Much much better places to be. I've heard over and over again from my friends and neighbors how much they wish the area between Meeker and Harrison from 4th to 1st could be revitalized - turned into a vibrant shopping and eating local. Don't put more malls or high rise condos in that area -please- help those businesses out by making it an attractive place to gather for folks.

The image of Kent. Surrounding communities find Kent undesirable and unsafe. Start with cleaning up the landscape by becoming a Tree City USA

Cycling lanes away from cars. Central square with restaurants / fountain / trails / benches

To be honest - lower taxes. Fix the traffic problems, get the trains off the city street like they did in Renton by West Valley Hwy. The trains are huge problem at rush hour. Plus I'm tired of pedestrians walking out in the middle of the road whenever they want (think west on James Street past the Commons). Just scarey down there at times, and actually all over Kent. We'll be looking to move out of Kent/King County ASAP. Reasons: Crime, traffic, high taxes, neighbors, noise, too much Seattle influence on everything (especially taxes), housing market here will never bounce back and my home will never be worth what I paid for it 8 years ago, sick of paying for everyone else! I'm taxed to death with everything, I can barely afford my own stuff let alone paying for people that won't get a job.

More variety of shops: Men clothing stores, special type grocery store (Trader Joes), book/music store, Top Pot doughnut store.

Limit the signage that businesses can put up.

More shopping. Target, Costco, Bookstore. Additionally, having shops located close enough to park in one place and walk.

Help support the local independent shops and restraunts so they can stay in buisness. Make it more attractive to pull in tourists.

Parking longer than 2 hours. I can't get a haircut & Color, or a massage & haircut within two hours.

Retail spaces filled with a variety of different businesses.

The KDP is doing a great job of making mid-town look nice. Our first impression is horrible, however. We need to make the portals of Kent vital and beautiful to draw people into midtown. I used to love Broadway (years ago) when it was a mix between restaurants and bars with music that flowed out onto the street and funky fun shops that were open late into the night so you could go to a restaurant and still wander the shops after you ate. We need a mix of shops. We need mensware, a children's store, a good shoe store. If I had one wish it would be something unique for Kent. I know it's an over the top example but San Antonio made a restaurant area on rivers. The river was created and the restaurants followed. It gave them a personality that tourists travel to see from far and wide. SF has it's trolleys, Memphis has it's music and ducks, Charleston has it's architecture and the pineapple symbol, Napa it's wine and Tacoma it's glass. With a little creativity I think Kent can come up with that special thing that makes it unique. The best idea I've seen in a while for a city was in Louisville. They have bike racks everywhere that

you can put your credit card into and it unlocks a bike you can use to get around town on. With our bike trails I think this would be great. You are charged by the hour for its use and if you don't bring it back your card is charged for it.

More shops open on Sundays, more places to take children for entertainment

#1 - Commercial rail traffic must be separated from street traffic

Needs to be more pedestrian friendly

better shopping beyond kent station. More and better restaurants. A competitor for grocery shopping, e.g., trader joes or PCC.

More shopping, more available FREE parking, rerouting major traffic around town rather than through the center, lower speed limits and better timed traffic lights. Pedestrian crossing OVER train tracks to prevent fatalities, better crossing barriers at train tracks.

Indoor Water park like FedWay that is open year around. Mega play land indoor for rainy season like bouncy place at supermall and with play structors like in our parks today. We need places to burn energy for our kids during 9 months of rain. We can pay a user fee to help with costs. Way too much crime at Sound Transit's Kent Station, we need many more Cops at this transit hub and at the retail side of Kent Station where over flow crime occurs. All of Metro & Sound Transit's big facilities are MAJOR crime hubs, we avoid Sound Transit's Kent Station WITHOUT EXCEPTION, 24/7/365.

Control and removal of the gangs is number 1. I no longer even go to cornacopia days because of the gang activity - it is not safe. Revitalization of downtown is number 2. outside of the kent station, intimate pilates & rain & co and wild wheat - our city doesn't have much to offer. A grocery would be good - like an italian market or a mom and pop store that we could support.

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get rid of homeless and halfway house, too many of them came out from jail and hanging around down town. ( put them some where else.)

Business infill, a drugstore, maybe a closer grocery store, LOTS more restaurants - more breakfast/lunch places as well as dinner venues. We are lacking daily-type stores for everyone to visit. Nail stores are great but not a daily go-to place; need haircutters for everyone. What about a candy store? There also are not any near cleaners. What about a shoe store??

The Station is great. Downtown is not bad, just dark and the parks are usually fill of homeless people. Most shops are closed early also so nor need to go down there in the evenings.

## **60-69:**

I often leave the area to shop. I buy at discount stores and like quality goods. I would LOVE to have more options for grocery shopping such as Whole Foods and/or Trader Joes. It is a shame that QFC decided Kent was not a profitable place to be.

We need a Whole Foods or Trader Joe's. Property owner should do more to support small businesses. I prefer and support independent businesses and non chain restaurants downtown. It's a disappointment that so many small businesses have been forced out of business.

I do not go to downtown Kent. What I need is on the east hill of Kent. I have lived in my house for 22 years and only went to Pennys when it was there. Downtown Kent is old and needs to be updated. I would go to the Starbucks but it is not a drive thru.

Renew the older parts of the downtown areas left behind by the new development. Close or sell Showare to stop the deficit spending on that facility. Improve transportation to the valley from the East Hill. Stop collecting taxes for a fire department that is no longer your responsibility.

access to clean bathrooms, available drinking water, garbage cans, seating for elderly, better crosswalks, slower traffic speeds, removal of garbage off of streets, removal of weeds or tree branches that make walking in sidewalk difficult, occasional police presence to discourage speeding and encourage cars to stop at crosswalks and fill in low spots with gravel to prevent falls. Discourage public intoxication

Is 'Downtown' the older part of Kent, excluding Kent Station? Mamma's and Wild Wheat are the only restaurants that draw me to historic Kent. I miss Bittersweet. There needs to be a good 'lunch' spot. I miss Mark's Square and have not been to the new bakery there. I just noticed it a week or so ago. If I think of historic Kent now I think of some 'antique or second hand stores', Mamma's, Blue Iris Beads and Shindig Martini Bar. I go to Sumner for their little shops such as the A Picket Fence, Alley on Main, New England Saltbox, Simple Tidings Kitchen store. Maybe an old fashioned Ice Cream, Soda shop....where you could sit and chat with a friend and have coffee or ice cream and maybe a piece of homemade pie?? What are some options? You would have to have people drawn to the area for a new business to survive but without the business you won't get the people.....?

Difficult to say. Kent Station and the AMC Theatre, along with the Showare have been tremendous boosts for our city. The downtown core, Meeker between First and Fourth in particular, need a facelift. I know there have been discussions in the past regarding closing it partially to just foot traffic with perhaps cobblestones. This was also in conjunction with two large retail stores anchoring each end - like a Macy's, Nordstrom's or Kohls. Of course this was like 25 or so years ago and I don't exactly know why it was scrapped - loss of interest by the major retailers maybe. But I still thought the idea of closing off even a block to make a plaza might perk things up and invite more walkers in the core area which has been so sorely lacking. Just a rambling old thought from a longtime resident.

Stores that I would need. A hardware store like ACE. Trader Joe's, A gift store that has a great buyer...something like, Home Goods or Pier 1 or World Market. A drugstore. I don't think there is a baby store... It would be great to have a YMCA or a place for kids to hang out. How about a place where people can meet and play board games or cards. How about a Comedy Club or a stage for plays and performances. More spots like the fireplace to sit read and watch people! A place to rent bikes. A place on the Green River to take a boat trip to Tukwila near the Mall. A compacr Nursery similar to the West Seattle Nursery.

Housing and performance venues (music, theater, etc.)

HAVE THE TRAINS NOT USE THE TRAIN NOISE AS MUCH.

Less homeless loitering, multi condos over businesses which stay open later, desirable businesses, tech businesses, less low rent occupancy to make better quality housing desirable, good lighting, secured parking for residents.

more opportunities to shop and eat in downtown Kent, yet keep our quiet streets and older buildings that give Kent its comfortable feel.

Redevelopment efforts in the historic downtown to replace structures that burned or are outmoded.

More parking; better variety of restaurants; interesting shops

something needs to be done about traffic. Its bad enough with the trains, but even if you don't get stuck behind one, it takes forever to get anywhere. It takes anywhere from 20 minutes to a half hour to get through town. Also, I'm afraid to park my car downtown for fear it will be broken in to.

The first need is residential and larger businesses (workplaces) to get people downtown during the day and night.

Parking is always a problem in downtown. I would suggest making Meeker street between 2nd and 4th avenues

There needs to be an upscale food center, so that we would have more choices than just Safeway.

There needs to be a grocery store and Target.

More activity and diverse business especially after 5 pm

The City needs to promote downtown with more community activities possible updated the Kent Commons for more Civic functions or the use of the middle schools auditorium. More attention to the aesthetics of the area most of Central ave & old town look run downed other than the station the city looks old & uninviting .That's not to change all the store front but a theme needs to take over. For far to long the city just looks blah there is no link to the small parts of downtown and the neighborhoods of North Park or South Kent or East Hill. Have the business owners & city owned to take pride of their property Clean up the Graffiti from Train Station Area the buildings along the Train tracks from St Route 167 thru town.

Traffic is horrible. We need an under or over the track road--James or Willis? And more parking. I especially avoid Kent when anything is at Showare!

More housing, more retail shops, Trader Joe's or equivalent, better maintenance of sidewalks and trees (please take out the magnolias). Fill the empty spaces and develop the "fire" area on 2nd and Meeker, the NW corner of 2nd and Meeker and the former Penny's building. More venues like Airways and the new bakery. Businesses staying open after 5 p.m. We need to maintain our landscaping in DT Kent as well or better than we maintain our parks.

Quiet train noise.

Get people living in the city core and provide full services within walking distance (grocery, salons, bars, hardware, etc)

Upgrade the historic area and tie it to Kent Station. More stores in historic area with more pleasant streets that are tree lined. More cohesiveness in downtown area with some upscale amenities.

So many stores are out of business it looks like a very depressed area. Several of the stores that are there cater to kids or the poor. The historic area is so depressed it's an embarrassment. We used to enjoy going downtown but not anymore.

The Downtown/valley portion of Kent has an over abundance of housing for the lower income levels. There needs to be more of a balance. I would love to see condominiums with retail on the ground floor included with larger retail stores. Ideally this (Kent Station North?) could be built on the west side of James between the ShoWare Center and Central Avenue.

The homeless problem is worse everyday. I am in the library quite often and sometimes I do not even feel safe going in there. It's even worse outside and in the park across the street. Something needs to be done.

There are too many empty storefronts on "main street" of Kent. I was a client of a service that was on 1st Street, the bldg was so old and uncomfortable. The sidewalks were not kept, you had to be careful walking. Even during the daytime there are quiet a few "homeless men" roaming around the parks. They haven't bothered me, but it does make me feel uneasy.

#### VARIETY IN SHOPPING OPTIONS

Variety of businesses; more restaurants, especially ethnic ones; more shops open in evening

We need a drugstore, and an ice cream parlor! If there were more restaurants in downtown area that would be great too. There are too many places like nail salons or antique stores, need shoe stores, a closer grocery store, and evening events.

Year round monthly gatherings in parks and Kent Station.

You really need to get Trader Joe's to move in. That would bring people in (we drive all the way to Burien every 2 weeks) and it would encourage people to live downtown.

Down town Condos with views.Two bedrooms and two baths.Parking.

I think adding a Trader Joe's would bring more people to downtown Kent. I live at the Lakes and the only grocery store is Safeway on Washington. I do not like to go to East Hill to shop because of the traffic and you have to get in your car to go from one strip mall to another. I do go to the Burien Trader Joe's, (I'm single) I like what they sell and the smaller portion they offer. I'd rather spend my money in Kent.

I'm not even sure what is considered "Downtown Kent". I never venture over east of the railroad tracks because Central is kinda scary in the evening and there is nothing there that interests me. To me "Downtown" is the Kent Station area and the older area to the south along Meeker and First avenue. I think that the changes need to be made to connect these two areas so that people can walk, shop and live there. Finishing the condo/apartment/retail project where the parking garage was would be a major step in that direction.

Lacking money and transportation, I seldom go there--no reason. My daughter takes me to Blue Iris Beads but we found the sidewalks too difficult to transit. I have a motorize wheelchair now, and I worry about those sidewalks.

More Police (bike/foot patrol)!

options! Restaurants, lots of restaurants, traditional types. Shops, how about a JC Penneys. Hair and nails shops. Thanks for asking.

Revitalize the many small businesses that have left town

Right now the crime rate is way up in scenic hill, east hill and other residential areas, and it is causing the value of the homes in these areas to go down and than in 10 years you will be dealing with slums as if homes are going for less than \$200,000 and 2 or 3 families living in them or the whole area becomes rental.....these will be the people within walking distance and will not have the money to spent on shopping etc.....the parks in downtown Kent have been taken over by the drug sellers, and the library area, parks, library parking lot, .....spend time off and on for several months .....most families with children would prefer to go to covington because of the negative activity....

Stop development immediately adjacent to Kent Kangley and James Street. They are the only way off the East Hill. The transit center, Kent Station and the money loosing auditorium are in the wrong place. Don't pile in more stuff there unless you can figure out a way to handle traffic. We drive in and through this town. We have to because we live in the area and have to work, shop, go to medical appointments, run errands Etc. both in Kent and other surrounding communities. We can't get to Tacoma, Burien, SeaTac, Renton, Federal Way, Des Moines with out going through Downtown Kent. Putting it bluntly you have built a hell of a mess.

The stores need to stay open later at night so people can come downtown and shop at least till 9pm or 10pm, they also need to be aware of their competitors pricing and not charge and arm and a leg for their wares. A lot of my friends don't shop in downtown or eat because of prices, we need more restaurants in Kent like they have in Federal Way that's where most of us go to eat out, we need to encourage business to come to Kent with outlets that will draw more people downtown, would like to see more than one bakery in the downtown area, their prices for most of us are unrealistic way too high to purchase from them, I guess they aren't in tune with the economy.

Better parking. More upscale restaurants

The Downtown/valley portion of Kent has an over abundance of housing for the lower income levels. There needs to be more of a balance. I would love to see condominiums with retail on the ground floor included with larger retail stores. Ideally this (Kent Station North?) could be built on the west side of James between the ShoWare Center and Central Avenue.

Most important is Owner Occupied housing in Downtown Kent. Owner Occupied reinforces a more stable community with less transience than Renters. Low rent housing brings transient families with little "community investment". Children from rental housing burden our schools since their parents offer little tax support for schools and education. Transience also hurts children who shuffle through schools with little continuity of curriculum. Higher end rentals or owner occupied housing would bring those who might commute to Seattle via bus or train. Commercial lots just North of Kent Station should be Cottage Housing. We need a Trader Joe's and Metropolitan Market near Kent Station so downtown residents can walk to shop for groceries. Services like shoe repair, hair salons, cleaners etc are within walking distance in Old Town Kent. Design Continuity in store fronts in Old Town Kent would create cohesiveness. Retailers would have incentives to upgrade their store displays and merchandise. All amenities should enhance our "walking score".

Update the front of the vacant store. It makes the city, especially the center of Meeker st., look like a city on the way out. Carolyn Ayers

Control traffic, increased police presence, variety of venues, increased lighting, welcoming presence with pleasant, well-groomed open spaces and good landscaping, safe places to walk around the area, especially around the transit areas.

Clean up (redevelop) the neighborhoods to the north and south of the downtown area. Get rid of all the advertising boards sitting in the sidewalks that make it look like a cheap hamlet. Clean up the area and give it some class. Keep junk out of the sidewalk area and streets. Make it an attractive place for people to live. Plant flowers next to the buildings and between the sidewalks and the street. Keep restaurants and stores open until at least 9:00. Cater to adults rather than teens and 20-somethings.

There are too many empty storefronts on "main street" of Kent. I was a client of a service that was on 1st Street, the bldg was so old and uncomfortable. The sidewalks were not kept, you had to be careful walking. Even during the daytime there are quiet a few "homeless men" roaming around the parks. They haven't bothered me, but it does make me feel uneasy.

Better parking near shops. More fun shops that keep pricing down so more is affordable.

More coverage/shelters for our weather especially in the park area where a lot of events

Develop the vacant lot where the old parking structure was started.

Housing combined with retail

Attract new businesses somehow.

Market-rate housing. More of the same!

Get the old part of town to come together with Kent Station

Clean up Meeker Street - blend it (the old) with the Kent Station via paths and pedestrian friendly walks (some covered and some open) with shopping and a customer encouraging environment. Keep the high rise apartments and buildings in and around the Kent Station. The high density area boarding the historical neighborhoods should be buildings and architecture that complement the homes in that area and do not destroy their neighborhoods and environment. Have tree lined streets in the historical neighborhoods flow to the central area. Small neighborhood parks/green areas to encourage families to gather. If apartments and condos are built in the core area, have individual play areas/courtyards contained within the complex. Buildings and shopping to encourage middle class population to want to live/shop in Kent.

Not safe enough.....too much crime!

More Variety

Better shopping. Kent Station isn't my kind of place. Too many young people, noise, and chains. The "real" downtown Kent could be if it had more boutique shops for browsing. I was just in Michigan over the weekend, and fell in love with several small towns with thriving downtown areas. One-off coffee shops (not chains), bakeries, special-interest shops, antique stores, toy stores, some boutique clothing stores. No chains in sight. They felt really livable and the kind of place you'd spend an afternoon meeting friends and supporting local merchants.

Instead of scattered development, development in cohesive pods, with a variety in them then move outward.

Taking care of the homeless and more police presence to handle all of the panhandlers that are appearing all over Kent.

Reduce volume of traffic, reduce crime and increase police presence. Better aesthetics, ie trees, grass, flowers, more pedestrian friendly. Maybe some streets closed to traffic completely.

Find the homeless a place away from the library. Easier and safe bicycling. More parking at low cost. More attractive buildings without destroying historical buildings.

## >69:

There needs to be more upscale businesses, restaurants, etc. that will draw people to downtown. What is there now doesn't offer too much to me. It is a shame that we can't get a retail business that is popular to go into the old Penney's store.

Downtown Kent needs to have more and nicer landscaping. Needs more gardeners to make walking along the sidewalks and driving through Kent's downtown more pleasant. Business/property owners need to take better care of their property. Sidewalks need replacing in places. Needs a general clean- up (spruce up). Downtown Kent looks uninviting. Keep the homeless people out of the parks, library, and in general - out of the whole downtown. More condos and apartments for working people and senior citizens. Do something with the vacant lot on Meeker. Make downtown Kent more upscale. If there is a problem with people feeling safe at night in downtown Kent, have a higher police presence. Keep drugs and other illicit activity off the streets, and let it be known that Kent doesn't tolerate these activities (step up the police patrol).

There are only a few locations that even look like the city cares about maintaining its property. For heavens sake, doesn't the city have rules about property owners being responsible for maintaining their property. Has anyone ever looked at the overgrown weeds on privately owned property within one or two blocks of downtown. Trash, weeds, unkept buildings; looking like a ghetto. What business would want to be anywhere near this environment and who would want to live in or near.

Clean it up. Bring in some worthwhile businesses. It now looks worse than a street in some 3rd world country

options! Restaurants, lots of restaurants, traditional types. Shops, how about a JC Penneys. Hair and nails shops. Thanks for asking.

Lacking money and transportation, I seldom go there--no reason. My daughter takes me to Blue Iris Beads but we found the sidewalks too difficult to transit. I have a motorize wheelchair now, and I worry about those sidewalks.

Right now the crime rate is way up in scenic hill, east hill and other residential areas, and it is causing the value of the homes in these areas to go down and than in 10 years you will be dealing with slums as if homes are going for less than \$200,000 and 2 or 3 families living in them or the whole area becomes rental.....these will be the people within walking distance and will not have the money to spent on shopping etc.....the parks in downtown Kent have been taken over by the drug sellers, and the library area, parks, library parking lot, .....spend time off and on for several months .....most families with children would prefer to go to covington because of the negative activity....

More Police (bike/foot patrol)!

We need additional residents with dollars to spend on services and products.

Revitalize the many small businesses that have left town

Down town Condos with views.Two bedrooms and two baths.Parking.

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Stop development immediately adjacent to Kent Kangley and James Street. They are the only way off the East Hill. The transit center, Kent Station and the money loosing auditorium are in the wrong place. Don't pile in more stuff there unless you can figure out a way to handle traffic. We drive in and through this town. We have to because we live in the area and have to work, shop, go to medical appointments, run errands Etc. both in Kent and other surrounding communities. We can't get to Tacoma, Burien, SeaTac, Renton, Federal Way, Des Moines without going through Downtown Kent. Putting it bluntly you have built a hell of a mess.

## **NON-RESIDENTS**

### **20-29:**

More housing affordable to the local workforce should be available, so people can afford to live and work in Downtown Kent. People dependent on transit to get around should be able to afford to live in downtown Kent.

Clean up the ghetto presence, eliminate gangs, etc. Take back the city before it gets worse than it already is.

Downtown Kent needs more variety of restaurants open during the day and night. I would also love to see Kent clean up the downtown to really accentuate its historic charm.

### **30-39:**

Improve safety. Cut down on homeless. Eliminate all of the feces all over downtown. Enforce public drinking and intoxication laws. Get rid of the transients and mental health clients that wander around, drinking and causing alarm when they approach you.

More options for day to day living, such as a grocery store. More quality dining options for the evening.

Have a modern look like downtown Bellevue.

More businesses that are varied, not just thrift stores. Activities, restaurants, bars and music venues. Activities and shopping that I could engage in either after work, or if I lived downtown on a full time basis.

Creating connection (as planned) between historic downtown and Kent Station would help a lot.

All areas of downtown need to be safe including the intersection of Central & Smith to the historical district of old downtown. Right now, I only feel safe in the Kent Station area.

Railroad crossings need to be grade-separated. Central Ave is a traffic disaster--especially at Smith. Banish vagrants/homeless/beggars--been approached too many times and some get mean when you turn them away. Better parking. More higher-end shopping--similar to Downtown Bellevue and Redmond Town Square.

Significant public investment in improving aesthetics and livability.

Expand Kent Station North with commercial businesses, restaurants, retail, and modern living

## **40-49:**

Get rid of the transients.

Continue with the retail growth of Kent Station and move the homeless and thugs out of the downtown core. The library attracts many unsavory types that detract from the experience of downtown Kent

Get the parking garage eyesore developed, convince a Trader Joes to come here - economic development work on this. At least another grocery store somewhere in town

Small businesses that provide a needed service. Change of attitude from owners to stay open later. More food choices and a few more upper scale pubs to compliment each other. Storefronts that are attractive and consistent. Some buildings either need to go away or get cleaned up. Clear out the folks who are not helping the image. Town Square Plaza and the library are attracting the wrong crowd. Time to get those people headed somewhere else.

transport for pedestrians, food carts - there is plenty of foot traffic at train/bus station, enough critical mass of people to support food carts. If they hang out a little longer, and have ways around town and back to train/bus (like a loop bus or trolley)they would stick around and spend money.

A drug store like Bartells

By far the biggest issue is the homeless population and the general trashiness. Economic development, like fewer empty store fronts, would also be a big help. But I don't think that's realistic if the type of people who would support shops and restaurants are too scared or disgusted to walk in the area.

Clean it up and make it more pedestrian friendly. I'm 50 years old and am thinking about a place I want to retire. I would love to be able to retire to a condo or townhouse somewhere nearby that I feel is safe and convenient for walking to where ever I need to go. Right now Kent doesn't feel like that kind of place. I currently live in Covington and although they have made downtown a mess they have great access to medical and dental facilities, I don't know of any major medical facilities in downtown Kent. I think Kent has the potential of being a great place for baby boomers who can't afford places like Seattle, Mercer Island, or Bellevue a nice place to retire to if you can somehow make the investment now for the near future.

Kent station has taken over DT Kent and the old businesses in town suffer from it. I'm not sure if there is a tax break for the older businesses in DT not at Kent Station but there should be or businesses choosing to reside in Kent Station need to pay more. The lighting in old DT is the

biggest factor I see. People do not want to walk down here at night because there are so many dark corners and alleys full of hiding places for the homeless. It is just human nature to fear this whether or not things happen...which they do. I've thought about this much since I work here and know the area well. First, more lighting near the parks by the railroad tracks with a constant presence of police. And when I say lighting, I don't mean a few street lights. The parks need to have every space lite so there's nowhere to hide. Okay, here's my crazy idea. There are properties that are vacant both west and east of the main DT portion of Meeker street. Buy those and make parking lots out of them. Close off Meeker from 4th going east to 1st. Make this area similar to Pioneer Square in seattle. Where businesses can have outdoor seating. Make a law there is no pan handling or loitering in this area whatsoever. Now the crazy crazy idea. In Las Vegas there is an area that has an overhead show, I believe it's called Pioneer District??? If that could somehow, even just a portion of meeker, be implemented into the development of the area, people would come. As time goes on, eventually that whole section of closed off meeker would become the hottest spot in Washington to spend the evening. Especially, with the assurance it was safe. And I would call it, "The Meeker District." Further, with the overhead show, a smaller version could be put in the park over by Spiros, in between the buildings. Old downtown is rich with culture and can thrive just like Kent Station but it will never happen without some drastic moves like my ideas. Not saying mine are the best but the old saying, "If you build it, they will come," is truer than ever in DT Kent's future. Oh and just one more thing, there been a push for a town branding going around that says, "Kent, the town that smiles." How about we continue to push the original saying I heard when I came here, "Kent! A great place to live, work and play!" LOL...the town that smiles...LOL...That guys bike taxi business would thrive with my ideas!

More street lights, wider sidewalks, police presence at night, Starbucks in Kent Station.

Stop putting in low-income draws (like the rehab center and low-income apartments). Attract more software/internet companies, which would increase upscale demographics. Kent station seems to be doing a good job - if downtown could attract cute, diverse shops, I think you'd see better pedestrian traffic.

There are too many social services in the downtown core. The businesses that are currently there have a very difficult time keeping their areas clean and safe. I don't want to shop where transients have been making their beds at night. If the downtown was cleaner, more businesses would flourish and there would be a more eclectic stable of places to go. Throwing a couple of police bikes downtown will not solve the problem. Help the businesses out by doing something substantial to eliminate the chronic problem downtown that has plagued this area as long as I've known. I would not start a business here with this climate.

## **50-59:**

Elevate the train tracks above the roadways to decrease the traffic interruption throughtout the day. The trains traveling through Kent is the number one deterant for me to go to Kent.

Keep going with revitalizing the core downtown area! When JC Penney's moved out and was replaced by a second hand clothing store it felt very "ghetto" to me. Please keep current businesses in business and attract new shop owners. Encourage more unique boutique type shops. More cities are closing their core areas to traffic and creating plazas that encourage foot traffic and bicyclists. A stronger sense of community ( where residents are meeting their neighbors) is developed making our city more attractive to those considering relocation to the Kent area.

Keep the empty store fronts occupied. nothing says old and rundown than empty vacant stores. bring in more upscale business, restaurants and events. kent station/showare center is a good start. bring updated looks to existing business' so the area has a look of cohesiveness.

Kent is currently on the right path to development to bring residents to the downtown core by offering walkable streets, restaurants, nightlife, etc. Kent Station provides a great atmosphere already, but old Kent needs a complete renovation with new vibrant shops and owners that currently operating in a killer environment with a lot of potential. Let's get some "new" interest and investment in the area and create a jazz alley feel with small outstanding bistros, coffee houses, pubs, etc.

Something needs to be done about the homeless people. They ask our customers for money and make them feel uncomfortable. They should not feed them in the park. They sleep there and make downtown look horrible.

The houses south of downtown need to be upgraded. The freight trains have to be moved before that, though, but we need the trains, just not downtown. Keep the Sounder, that's one of the main reasons I come downtown so often.

There needs to be a complete drug store in the downtown area - not having to go to Rite Aid on Washington if you are on foot.

To promote good health and wellbeing of families living in large apartment complex's, it has been my life long experience that having a large park adjacent to these type of complexes that offers a place for kids to play Basketball, Baseball, Handball etc. will help promote a healthy environment for children to grow up in, and help make family happier about living in Kent. Such an area should also include trees around it parimeter, and possibly a couple of benches for parents to sit at. In the 40's, 50's and 60's many large apartment complexes were built adjoining an elementary school, so that kids could walk to school, and have a place to play after school or on weekends. Some of those same apartment complexes built so long ago, are still around today.

Keep going with revitalizing the core downtown area! When JC Penney's moved out and was replaced by a second hand clothing store it felt very "ghetto" to me. Please keep current businesses in business and attract new shop owners. Encourage more unique boutique type shops. More cities are closing their core areas to traffic and creating plazas that encourage foot traffic and bicyclists. A stronger sense of community (where residents are meeting their neighbors) is developed making our city more attractive to those considering relocation to the Kent area.

Jazz clubs would be nice. A butcher shop with seafood. A few more non starbucks type coffee houses. Another bakery open for breakfast like wild wheat is. More police presence at the transit station.

More police at night and enforce the no showare parking at Kent Station. My wife and I come to Kent Station often to eat at Duke's, Mama Stortine's... The last three times we came down to eat there were events at Showare. The Kent station lot was clearly marked no event parking but people continue to park at Kent Station for events. My wife and I now do not try to dine at Kent Station in the evening due to the last three times not being able to park. We left and ate in Federal Way. I've talked with others and they have experienced the same problem.

I work in Kent and drive through it every week day. As I sit, frustrated in traffic, I often catch myself growling, "This town is going NOWHERE until they get rid of these train crossings." Though I know they are very expensive and not easy to build, The One Biggest Change that would

improve downtown Kent as far as I'm concerned is to have one or two more east-west corridors with grade separations from the RR tracks. People who need to drive through could easily drive through. People who wanted to be in town could more easily get between the tracks to their north-south "corridor" and have less congestion when they get there. They all could stop planning an extra 10-20 minutes into their trips just in case they get stopped by a train, or two, or (yes, it can happen!) three.

Faster X-ing on Willis and 2nd. Complete Kent Station in gravel parking lot behind BOA.

More police presence in the parking area. Less kids in the shadows after dark. Makes me scared!! Better parking. Have to park a long distance from where I need to be. More/better handicap parking would help.

Clean up the crime. Get people to shop in the historic area & not just support Kent Station.

The houses south of downtown need to be upgraded. The freight trains have to be moved before that, though, but we need the trains, just not downtown. Keep the Sounder, that's one of the main reasons I come downtown so often.

## **60-69:**

Kent is really a good place to shop.....The "Historic" area is great. The Wild Wheat anchors that area down. The City Frame shop is really nice too. We need more specialty stores that would give that area some "identification". Think Levenworth Wa. where they developed a theme to the city. Kent Station has great choices, it just doesn't seem safe at night if you are not in a group. Keep up the good work!

Need direct connection between Kent Station and downtown - perhaps a bridge-cross over from the parking garage to Library side of street to create better pedestrian flow to and from the Sounder/Bus transit areas and to better connect the Kent Station area to downtown.

Definitely need a large dose of residential development to bring round-the-clock activity to the downtown area. Also need a grocery store and some retail that carries men's clothing and items of interest to men. Enough already on the women's and teen stores!

Instill a sense of pride in the area by the individuals using and living here. It seems our transient population considers many parts of downtown their own private bathroom, and that deters families and older residents from using the areas.

## **>69**

I would never want to live in the downtown area of any city or town.

I live in the Fairwood area but I come to Kent almost every week (as opposed to Renton). I use the Senior Center. I shop at Carpinitos and eat at Kent station and see a movie on occasion. PLEASE find a way to get a Trader Joe's in Kent. They have the best food at reasonable prices and there is not one anywhere handy -- Burien, West Seattle and Issaquah. I have no reason to go to any of these places on a regular basis. With so many empty commercial locations I would think it would be easily possible. The one in Burien is in a dumpy strip mall and no one seems to mind.

## ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

If I knew Kent when I purchased a home 6 years ago, I wouldn't have chosen Kent as a city to live. Unfortunately, I can't sell now.

If more housing is being put in downtown then walking distance grocery will help alot. Safeway is close, but the walking time might be too much for busy people or for refrigerated items.

If we have apartments or condos and retail at the ground-floor, it will be nice but not too high like bellevue. if the buildings are too high, it makes downtown kent out of place.

In addition, I feel very uneasy about visiting the library. I was treated "poorly" by a man hanging outside the doors asking for money and when I ignored him, he made terrible remarks to me (he did not look homeless). I refuse to go to the library when there are a lot of people hanging outside the doors. I will drive to other KCLS libraries for materials.

In general, the flat "Anvil of God" desert-like parking lots have to go. Again, they're killing the life of the place.

It would be great if there was a designated place for "Saturday Market" to have them around from Friday afternoon through Sunday and more than three months; Saturday Markets have great gift ideas for the holidays.

Keep up the looks, appearance of bldgs, parks, sidewalks, etc.

-Leverage the surrounding neighborhoods like Mill Creek, Scenic Hill... Encourage folks to walk downtown. Downtown Kent is a nice flat area with sidewalks to walk. Make a "walk downtown" route map. Figure out a loop that puts people through the downtown area and keeps them on sidewalks. Make a "flyer" that shows the different routes through downtown and the length of all of the walks.

-Leverage the surrounding neighborhoods like Mill Creek, Scenic Hill... Encourage folks to walk downtown. Downtown Kent is a nice flat area with sidewalks to walk. Make a "walk downtown" route map. Figure out a loop that puts people through the downtown area and keeps them on sidewalks. Make a "flyer" that shows the different routes through downtown and the length of all of the walks.

Lighting/sidewalks/groceries/and.....skyscraper towers full of job opportunities!!! Industry is off- shoring to cheaper labor countries, capitalize on attracting service based industries (think no cost/stream-lined permitting, acquired and donated land (free to lease for 50 years) to build on and discount tax rates--Please think intelligent and long-term, including revenues and quality of environment). Stop being the anchor armpit of S. King Co

Men's clothing shops; Restaurants that serve healthy breakfast (e.i., vegetarian, turkey and egg white alternatives); decent brunch.

More destination locations. The AMC theater and ShoWare center are good starts, but more is needed.

More parking added to the Kent Station garage or another garage built. Especially when the lot that's currently being used for parking by the fountain is turned into retail/living space with it's TEN (unbelievable, seriously???) parking spots is completed.

More well-known establishments would draw people to the area.

Multi-use housing that attracts a med-high income. No more low-income housing!

Need a grocery store, would like a natural foods grocery store. Whole Foods? Trader Joe's? Could be smaller store, but able to get organic type staples--if I lived there. And I would love to live there...close to trains, buses, library, my church (HSP), city offices, etc

Once in a great while I attend a movie.

Park and open spaces are very open-the empty lot where the parking garage was, would be a nice park (though having more residents in that space is important).

Prior to the previously mentioned ideas happening, it is vital to complete the parking garage project west of the park.

-Promote Downtown Activities. It looks like the First Ave Block party was last Friday (where was the advertising/communication for this event?) Downtown is also a great place to go for breakfast - Nashville's, Wild Wheat, Maggie's (something that is not available at Kent Station).

Sell the auditorium down town. Stop bleeding money and using the economy for an excuse.

Start paying attention to the essential infrastructure and services. There are few marked cross walks on the major streets on the East Hill. We live four blocks east of QFC but we usually drive because there are no obvious corner to corner crossings of 240th until 132nd street. Paint a few.

Stop subsidizing or limit the populations that cannot or do not contribute to the Kent tax revenue. It tends to bring an undesirable element. In fact, why should it become the cities burden when organizations/churches make the choice to support these populations on a permanent basis? I do not see or hear examples of them giving back. In fact, they probably add to the issue of homelessness and abandoned pets. thank you for giving me a chance to tell my opinion. That is my rant for the day.....

The 105 Building on Smith seems like an ideal target of opportunity for a public market-- if it were renovated to support multiple shops/booths inside and had direct pass-through pedestrian access to the train platform vendors that were open on weekday mornings (especially coffee and quick breakfast vendors) could do very well, and flower and vegetable stands would do good business in the afternoons and evenings.

The area around the transit part of Kent Station is a bummer. All of the transit is on the west side of the tracks. You have to climb 3 flights of stairs or walk around a chain link fence to get to Kent Station. Good transit-oriented development would have more than a cold storage facility and a tattoo parlor next to the major transit hub.

The trains that come through are a big turn off with all the noise it brings - day and evening. I live about a mile from downtown and I can hear the cargo trains at night - windows open or closed.

There needs to be better pedestrian flow between Kent Station and the rest of the downtown area -- right now there is not much of a 'bridge' of interest between the South end of Kent Station

(which is sadly dominated by its parking lots) and Meeker Street, except on Saturday mornings when the farmer's market is a going concern. If there were food and merchandise vendor carts regularly stationed in the park opposite the library that might be one good way to encourage better pedestrian flow. Also putting in ground level retail in the empty lot beyond the park, preferably including a cafe that opens directly onto the park and has cafe tables out on the edge of the park in good weather, would help create a bridge toward Meeker.

There needs to be regulation on the type of businesses within the zoning guidelines that come into downtown. Otherwise, we end up with 5 tattoo parlors, thrift shops or quick cash businesses on one block. Not to mention rehab centers along main streets and multiple transition and flop houses in a neighborhood.

Trains too noisy....too many

What you need to do is Clean up traffic flow on Central to and from the 167. Either clean up flow on Kent Kanley and James, or make 212th a major, wider thoroughfare. Another option would be to figure out a way to make a circuferential road around the mess using exiting roads and avoid the profusion of stoplights that have cropped upon the original main roads over the last few years.

You have asked for my e-mail address so you can inform me about downtown planning efforts. I didn't provide it because I don't like what I see and I don't know what to do about it. If you asked me for my e-mail address to tell me what you our planning for the rest of us I would have provided it.

Apartments with secure entry to an inside hallway would make people feel safe in their own homes and be convenient to the freeway and transit. Behind Kent station, there are so many buildings that are abandoned. This could be prime real estate for apartment-type buildings.

are held. Open areas are nice but May and June are not always great clear days. What about events being held in Oct, Nov and Dec.....halloween activities, thanksgiving, xmas. If it is raining, how many would still come if they cannot get under some type of cover somewhere.

Attract higher quality retail/services

b. Modifications to the intersection at Central and James to incorporate a 100' (or so) right hand turn lane on Southbound Central Ave. By the same token, \*something\* has to go into the SW corner of Meeker and 2nd, and it would be really good to get the building in the NW corner into use, too.

c. Placing a northbound and/or southbound 167 exit ramp at Meeker or James St. Seems there is ample room to do this at least on Meeker (Northbound). This would help reduce the massive mile+ backup from the Central Ave off ramp to E Smith, affecting all the arterials in-between. -Celebrate the history of the historic buildings

d. If possible getting whoever owns the tracks to fix the road on East Smith so cars don't feel like they will break their axle going faster than 2mph.

David Sucher's "3 Rules" from his book "City Comforts" are applicable. Rule 1: Build to the sidewalk (i.e., property line); Rule 2: Make the building front "permeable" (i.e., no blank walls); Rule 3: Prohibit parking lots in front of the building. So, for example, the parking lots in an L shape surrounding the Wells Fargo building should have \*something\* else on the streetfronts. The empty space there kills the flow.

-Do something to encourage the night life in downtown. Do some kind of promotion for the bars, pubs, and restaurants, like a downtown pub night. Have some type of incentive for patrons to visit multiple locations over a particular night/month. Maybe have some type of card that if they visit three different locations and get their card stamped at three downtown places they can be entered in a drawing for a prize.

Downtown Kent will end up with the same traffic and visual impairments as Ballard if the restrictions on building are not enforced. Height restrictions and set back rules keep an area inviting.

e. Vastly improving the pedestrian flow across Railroad and E Smith. There is literally a block long area from Railroad Avenue to the tracks where pedestrians bail across the road, most notably after getting off the train but also from the bus area. In fact I don't believe there is even a crossing sign there.

Enforce upkeep/appearance of vacant storefronts

f. Expanded accessible parking for Wells Fargo on E Smith and 4th ave. As the existing lot is perpetually full traffic often is blocked from people turning onto 4th from Smith, turning from 4th (Southbound) into the lot, and people traveling North on 4th.

g. A stoplight on the northern side of Kent Station. Lack of one causes vehicles to traverse completely around Kent Station. Since the throughway that runs behind Kent Station (East) isn't advertised as such traffic gets dumped back onto Central Ave.

get more businesses. check downtown Bellevue. we can do better than what we become right now.

Having lived in this area all my life, I remember Kent as an industrial and fairly rough part of town. It has come a long way and is quite inviting now. Keep up the good work.

I enjoy the concerts in the summertime, and the park across the street when there's an event going on.

I recommend the "Walkable Town Center" posts at the following site: <http://www.placemakers.com/tag/town-center/> I'm also a strong supporter of design principles similar to Christopher Alexander's "A Pattern Language."

I visit Kent Station mostly for the restaurants and the Mac Store. I also shop the clothing and other stores but not often.

I work hard for my money and volunteer my time and give money where it is appreciated as well as license my pets. I walk when I can and try to buy local. I recycle and use a recycled bag when I shop. Geesh! I am tired of people being so used to handouts that they feel they are entitled to free services. This not where I want my tax dollars to go.

i.e. Housing above retail shops with small/tiny parks or greenscape tucked inbetween for sitting and visiting, larger parks on the perimeter. As well as retail shops, hobby shops that teach classes, galleries (painting, oil/water, pottery, glassworks) that have guest artists, fabric stores, knitting stores, all that have classes. The old cracker barrel, pot belly stove general store, think Port Gamble; part store, and part museum in the old town part. Fill up empty spaces with reduced rent and taxes for an incentive to get started and be able to keep going. Lots of restaurants, coffee shops, soda fountains, with drug store (good prices on prescriptions would draw people). Then the modern elements in the sleek buildings. Computer classes for anyone, but seniors

especially. Reasonable priced furniture stores, shop with refinishing, and/or reupholstering. Ask the 30's, 40's, 50's what they would like to see downtown. What would draw them; sports shops, bicycle, motorcycle, fitness, taverns?... (this one I hesitate on) Then the Children; indoor science experience, maybe sponsored by Green River College, science and early education majors. They could sponsor/charge for classes in dance, movement, health... What else.....Enforce signage, quality, placement etc., upkeep of exterior of the building around the entrance at least, no one wants to go through a run down dirty entrance and see what is inside.....PARKING, PARKING - PARKING There is so much more but I've been long enough.

2. The pavilion that houses the farmer's market is underutilized. Even when open outside of Saturday it doesn't field a lot of traffic. How about Sun – Fri or just Sun or whatever make it a place for food carts. Hopefully this would downsize the amount of traffic around gas stations and comparable areas to a downtown destination.

2. Improve historic downtown. Currently it's a hodge podge of empty store fronts and businesses that don't relate. Why not make it a destination place for antiques or vintage shopping? Or fill it with quirky one of a kind shops. How about a specialty food district?

3. Seeing if anything can be done to purchase / replace the warehouse eyesores on 1st Ave S that block the view of Kent Station. Yes, it's probably a noise buffer but so ugly.

3. Improve the historic home area that surrounds both sides of downtown. Run down apartments and duplexes are ruining the face of Downtown. They need to be eliminated and replaced with something that fits the character of the neighborhood. At the same time owners of historic homes need to be encouraged to preserve and update. Perhaps the city could offer grants?

4. Adding an entrance / entryway to the Library on E Smith to do a better job of incorporating that building into the surrounding environment.

5. Trees along Central and bottom portion of E Smith. Greedily I'd ask for Washington too. Not sure if any of these locations are considered downtown.

A "big city" does not have to have these traits on a large scale and residents are going to have to realize they have to help their community become a better place by getting engaged and have a voice. Become educated with the process.

a bookstore like UW Bookstore

A dog park would be great. The one on 3rd and Bell St in Seattle is an excellent example.

A lot of the businesses look drab, like there is no investment in their appearance.

a. Optimally a train tunnel through the downtown core for the Easternmost tracks along Railroad Ave.

Also, MORE activities for the youth. It seems the youth have no parental supervision and they need a central location to hang out. Like a patrolled skate park. The community center is great, but has no appeal for kids with nothing to do. An ice cream parlor. A garden nursery shop. Trader Joes would be spectacular, but parking could be a problem. Pet grooming shop. French bakery.

Another thing that would help draw people downtown in the evenings and on weekends is more activities right in downtown. Using existing buildings that do not have current tenants as temporary community center space for arts classes, craft classes, knitting or quilting group

meetings, book group meetings, games and game tournaments -- bridge, backgammon, poker, roleplaying game tournaments, wargame tournaments, or even for social dance classes, square dance classes, yoga classes, etc. would give people a reason to be downtown and would give local retailers more of a reason to be open evenings and Sundays to cater to those people. Basically, it's important to fill the empty eyesockets of buildings that have no occupants, and renovate buildings that are not currently usable, and fill in empty lots with attractive retail and community gathering places. Right now, while there are plenty of attractive places to go downtown (the library, Airways Brewing, Wild Wheat Cafe, Maggie's Cafe) they are too widely separated by blank space and unoccupied buildings or buildings that are not in any way friendly to pedestrian browsing to get a real pedestrian flow going. Downtown needs better density of interesting destinations.

Traffic flow

Convenience of accessing businesses

Sense of community

Sense of history and preservation

Safety

Changes I'm in favor of: Seeing Kent expand & modernize west of Central with one exception- The historic homes scattered around downtown, (not just the Mill Creek neighborhood,) even those south of Willis, should be encouraged to preserve the aesthetic. And the new buildings should be encouraged to architecturally compliment the old buildings. Kent is charming. I would like to see that charm enhanced, maximized and become a draw to the community.

A lot of people might be mad at me for saying this but it needs to be dealt with. - The streets and sidewalks of the neighborhoods surrounding downtown need to be redone. Do I want to pay for it? Of course not. Our house is on 4 lots. Ouch! Meanwhile, the risk of someone tripping & getting hurt on many of the sidewalks is very high. And the old sidewalks, drainage, holy streets, etc... impact our property values. This needs to happen. I understand that the houses will each take on the expense of sidewalks and the city will have to fund the streets. It needs to get put into the plans.

We used to be Kent and have recently been annexed to Auburn. our hearts are still with Kent and are employed in Kent. but the east hill is poorly maintained especially the new event center area & carriage mall area.

Too much signage is low class and takes away from the natural beauty of a building.

I'd like to see a day shelter for homeless women, children or families to be able to use to help ease their lack of places to accommodate their needs for telephones and internet access and meals, showers etc. A resource center for those families in Kent who need a hand up to get back on their feet. Possibly the use of the old Panther Lake Elementary for such a day center would be wonderful.

Raze Meeker street old town and revamp, get fire dept. to fix up their dumpy building and clean up lot or develop Meeker and 2nd at burnt lot.

For pedestrians, maps on kiosks or poles telling what retail and restaurants are where. Maybe a pole with various arrows pointing the way to old downtown Kent. I feel Kent station is a success. Let's make old Downtown part of that success. I like the unique non big box stores there.

Trader Joes, hint, hint.....

Next would be service type businesses to meet the needs of the residents and workers.

a one way, one lane street traveling east. This would free up space on the south side of the street to add more parking where all the empty storefronts are. ie. (The old Kent Cafe, Old Ben franklin building etc). Respectively, Marina Serena

Another thing would be the ongoing improvement to nearby schools and their reputations, as some families may not want to move to that area if they don't want their kids going to those schools.

One other thing would be if a clean, well run, and honest grocer were to set up shop within easy walking distance to current and planned downtown housing.

I was actually looking forward to the new condos, that never materialized.... a friend's parents had placed a down payment on 2 units and I was going to sublease one. Had even toyed with the idea of getting my own unit.

#2 - A light-rail line that that goes up the Green River valley from Auburn or even Puyallup to Renton and eventually Bellevue/Redmond.

#3 - A paved bike path that parallels the light-rail idea (in #2) above.

Maintenance workers driving around in city owned trucks, two or three city employees, just driving around, 5 mph, visiting, stopping, look in bed of truck, get back in turn corner, stop again.

-There are too many empty buildings and vacant lots in the historic part of town. Either incentivize the district to be rebuilt, or tear it down and extend Kent Station. As it stands it is a real embarrassment.

-How about apartment projects like Renton's Landing has?? Not just the one dinky one going up on the old parking lot. More mixed use buildings with better landscaping and public areas.

Oh, the one thing this region lacks is a city with a square that is lined with shopping/restaurants. Westlake Center sort of fits that bill, but really, a public park/fountain with eateries around it can't go wrong... can it? Perhaps we are just too built up to restart...

We need to find a way to build new retail buildings at 2nd and Meeker, on the northwest corner as well as the southwest corner. There must be some way for the City to have influence to make it profitable for these two properties to be developed. We also need to find a long term tenant for the old JC Penny building.

Create a special district where property owners would contribute toward a fund and we could employ a manager (Like John Hinds) who would oversee the old downtown in much the same way as John manages Kent Station. I know that this has been proposed before long ago before Kent Station. Lots of resistance then, probably lots now too, but some of the building ownerships have changed and if it were introduced very skillfully perhaps this could happen. As it is now we flounder, we have no control as to the types of business that we attract and no support for a new business to help them get started.

KDP has limited influence because of its structure and cannot serve the same purpose as a manager. We need KDP as well as the manager position and they could certainly work together very well.

Meeker Law Building has been very successful -- so retail on street level and offices above seems like a good way to go for new development.

I work hard for my money and volunteer my time and give money where it is appreciated as well as license my pets. I walk when I can and try to buy local. I recycle and use a recycled bag when I shop. Geesh! I am tired of people being so used to handouts that they feel they are entitled to free services. This not where I want my tax dollars to go.

A "big city" does not have to have these traits on a large scale and residents are going to have to realize they have to help their community become a better place by getting engaged and have a voice. Become educated with the process.

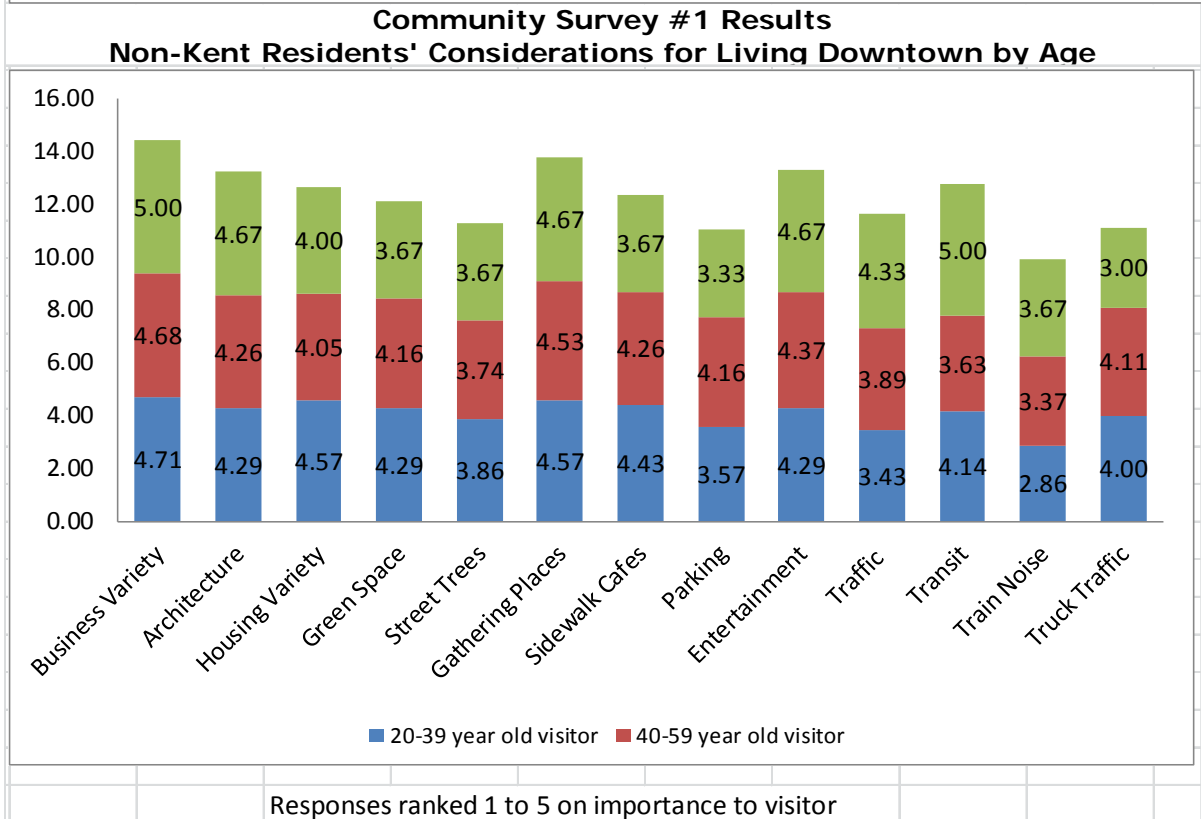
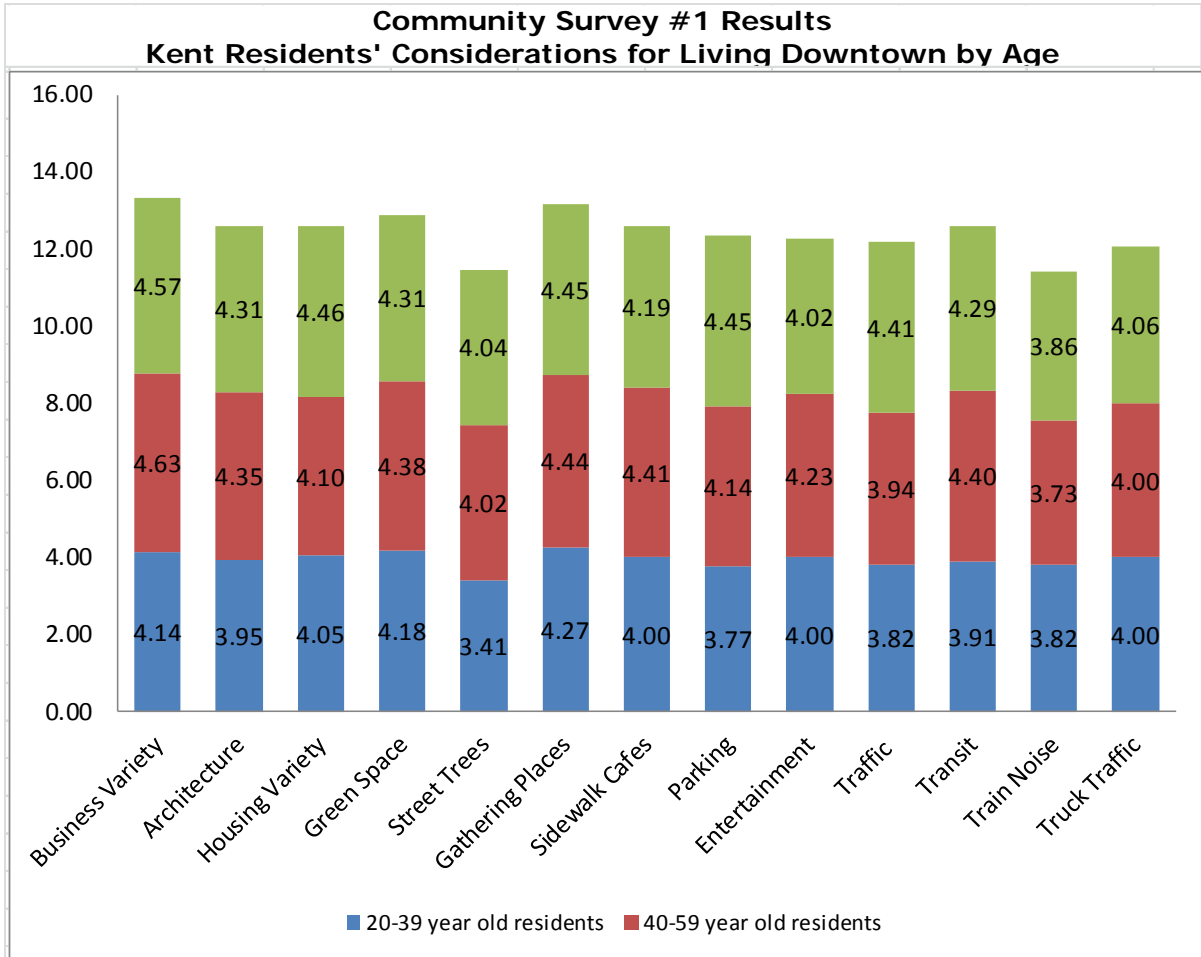
Keep up the looks, appearance of bldgs, parks, sidewalks, etc.

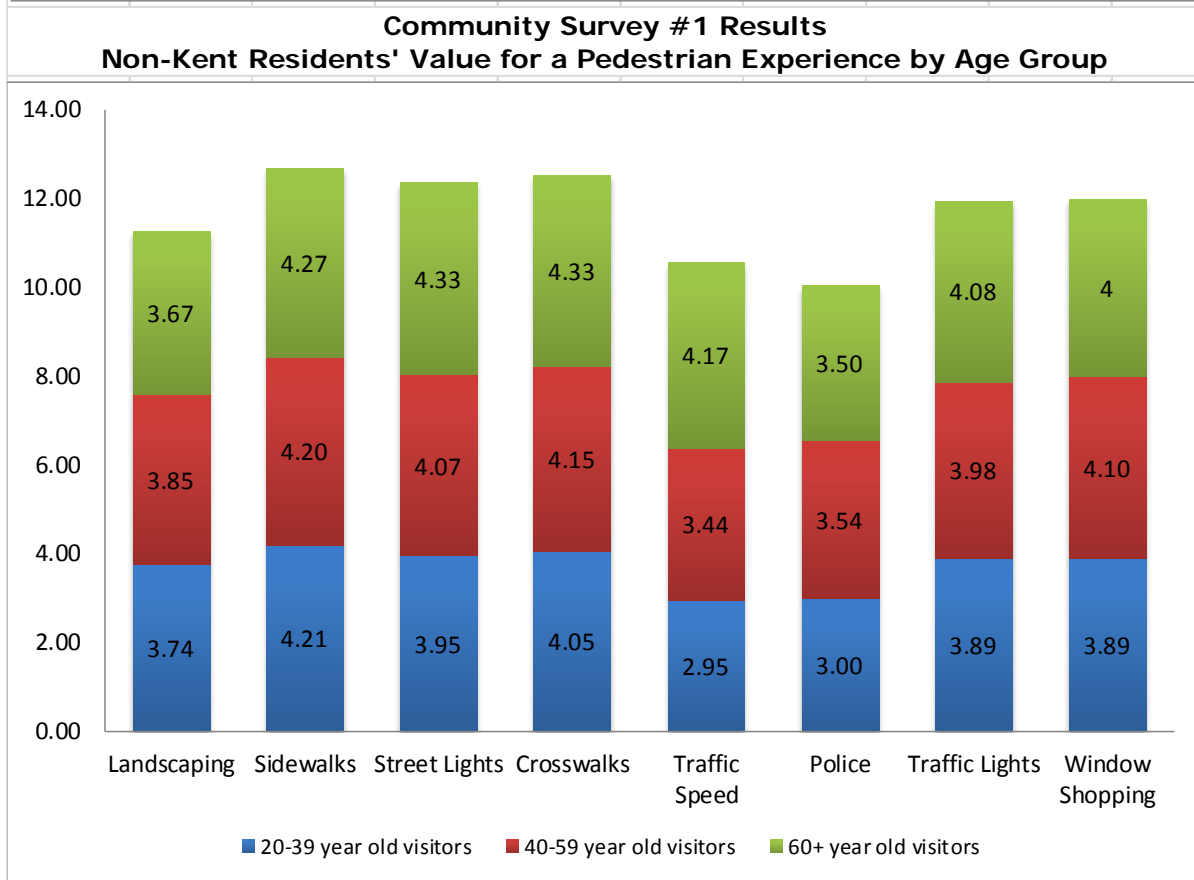
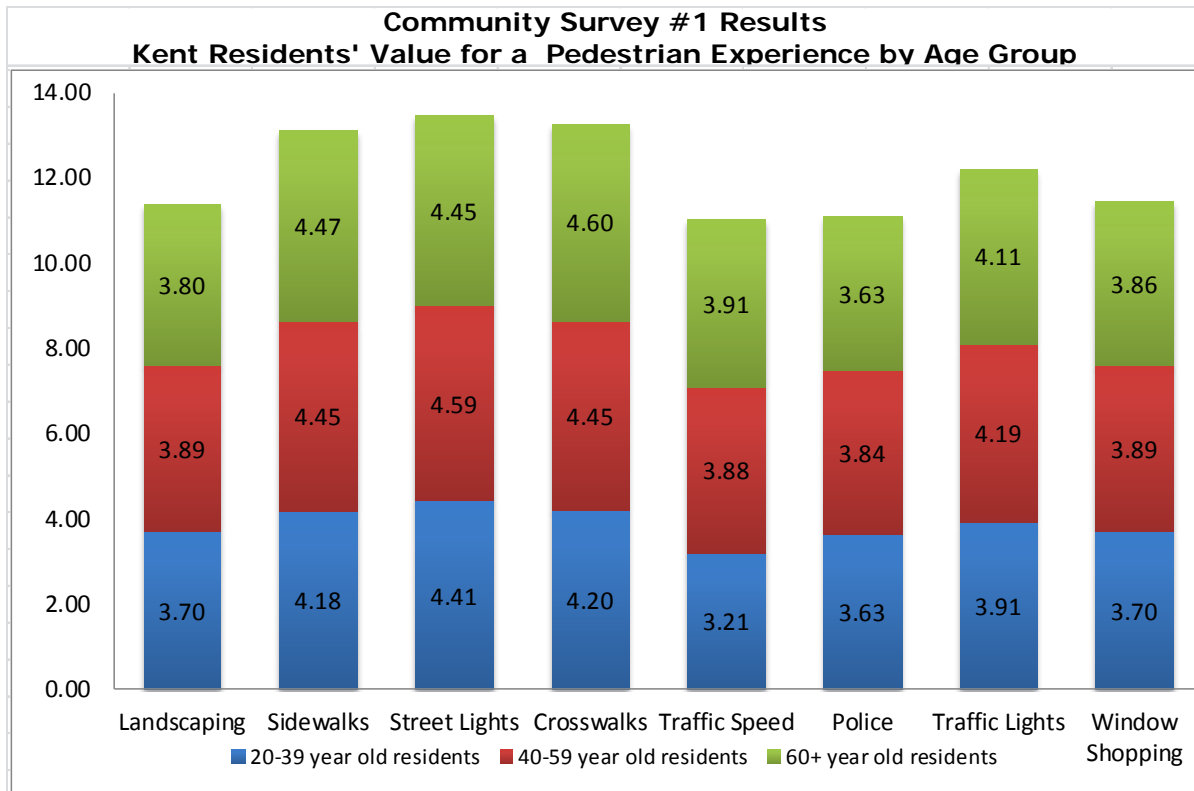
The area around the transit part of Kent Station is a bummer. All of the transit is on the west side of the tracks. You have to climb 3 flights of stairs or walk around a chainlink fence to get to Kent Station. Good transit-oriented development would have more than a cold storage facility and a tattoo parlor next to the major transit hub.

are held. Open areas are nice but May and June are not always great clear days. What about events being held in Oct, Nov and Dec.....halloween activities, thanksgiving, xmas. If it is raining, how many would still come if they cannot get under some type of cover somewhere.

In addition, I feel very uneasy about visiting the library. I was treated "poorly" by a man hanging outside the doors asking for money and when I ignored him, he made terrible remarks to me (he did not look homeless). I refuse to go to the library when there are a lot of people hanging outside the doors. I will drive to other KCLS libraries for materials.

**END OF REPORT**





Average of responses ranked 1 to 5 on scale of importance

## **DOWNTOWN SUBAREA ACTION PLAN**

### **VENTURE DOWNTOWN KENT**

### **COMMUNITY SURVEY #2**

### **POTENTIAL DOWNTOWN KENT ACTIONS**

The following statements represent potential ACTIONS the City, non-profits, business owners or property owners may take to further Downtown Kent.

#### **How would you prioritize the following ACTIONS?**

Rank the ACTIONS below using a scale of 1 through 10 where

**1 is the Lowest Importance and 10 is the Highest Importance.**

Rank the ACTIONS below in the small box.

This survey should take 5-7 minutes.

#### **Design & Beautification**

1. Strengthen the pedestrian connection between Kent Station and Historic Downtown
2. Add seasonal planters and hanging baskets in Downtown
3. Add more benches in Downtown
4. Establish a coordinated design of waste containers, benches, and pedestrian lighting
5. Increase maintenance of the sidewalks, planters, and street trees
6. Make Central Avenue more attractive for pedestrians
7. Renovate and modernize buildings in Historic Downtown
8. Increase artwork in Downtown

#### **Parks & Open Space**

1. Explore opportunities to expand the size of Kaibara Park
2. Redesign Kaibara and Rose Garden parks to be more welcoming and safe
3. Add more lighting in Downtown parks
4. Add more year-round community events in Downtown parks
5. Add more seating, trees, planters, and activities in Town Square Plaza
6. Create a strong pedestrian connection between Downtown and Earthworks Park

#### **Transportation & Connectivity**

1. Improve pedestrian connections of the adjacent residential neighborhoods to Downtown
2. Add planters and bollards along the sidewalks of Central Ave for pedestrian safety
3. Ensure traffic signals along Central, Smith, and James respond quickly to pedestrians
4. Increase on-street handicapped parking in Downtown
5. Add bike lanes along SR-516/Willis
6. Create prominent, noteworthy gateways into Downtown
7. Clean-up and beautify the SR-167 underpasses in Downtown
8. Add pedestrian lighting within Downtown alleyways

9. Conduct a parking study to determine parking needs in Downtown
10. Work with the railroads to lessen train noise in Downtown

### **Zoning & Land Use Policy**

1. Ensure new construction fits the architectural style of Historic Downtown
2. Encourage blade signs in Downtown
3. Discourage sandwich board signs in Downtown
4. Do not allow new drive-thru businesses in the Downtown Core
5. Allow a mix of uses (i.e., retail + residential) in the entire Downtown study area
6. Enforce health, safety, and building codes
7. Establish Building Codes to increase sound-reduction for buildings next to railroad lines
8. Establish building maintenance regulations to address mildew, rot, etc.
9. Expand the use of Downtown Design Guidelines in strategic locations of the study area
10. Allow stand-alone multifamily housing in the Downtown study area

### **Safety**

1. Add surveillance cameras at the Commuter Rail Station and METRO Transit Center
2. Enforce public intoxication laws
3. Find a solution to homelessness in Downtown
4. Increase lighting along streets, alleys, and parks

### **Economic Development**

1. Continue to support the Kent Downtown Partnership and its efforts to revitalize Downtown
2. Recruit additional anchor stores, key retailers and support services for Downtown residents
3. Encourage businesses to increase store hours into the evening
4. Encourage building aesthetics and maintenance of properties in Historic Downtown
5. Encourage boutique and cottage retailers in Downtown

### **Bold Ideas**

1. Close Meeker (between 4th & 2nd) to vehicular traffic and create a pedestrian mall
2. Make Meeker and Harrison (between 4th & 2nd) a one-way couplet with angle parking
3. Create a large (2-5 acre) central green park
4. Make the Green River a public asset accessible for recreation and connected to Downtown

5. Create a new livable community west of SR-167
6. Build a high speed fiber-optic internet system in Downtown

**Parking Lot of Ideas**

1. Create an *Entertainment District* (possibly along the Meeker pedestrian plaza or 1st)
2. Recruit better and diverse businesses and more high-end restaurants
3. Encourage market rate housing in Downtown
4. Provide public restrooms in Downtown
5. Assess the potential for a performing arts venue

If you want to be kept apprised of this project, please provide your email address.

Thank you! The results of this exercise will be considered for inclusion in the Downtown Subarea Action Plan.

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## Downtown Subarea Action Plan

### Downtown Steering Committee Survey #2 Results

#### Potential ACTION Items

Responses Ranked 1 to 10 on a Scale of Importance

Color	Very Important
Coding	Moderately Important
	Not Important

<b>Design &amp; Beautification</b>		<b>Median</b>
1.	Create a strong visual connection to Kent Station with Historic Downtown	9
2.	Plant and maintain street trees	7
3.	Add seasonal planters and hanging baskets	6
4.	Create a coordinated streetscape (i.e., waste containers, benches, pedestrian lighting, etc.)	6
5.	Increase streetscape maintenance	6
6.	Add more bike racks	2
7.	Clean-up Central Ave	8
8.	Re-purpose historic BNSF train station	3
9.	Renovate buildings in Historic Downtown	7
10.	Install Kiosks with map of Downtown & list of current activities	3
11.	Celebrate existing Art and increase Art in Downtown	5
12.	Replace asphalt paved medians with pavers or landscaping	6
13.	Gateways should have a consistent image but reflect the different parts of Downtown	7
14.	Activate mid-block pedestrian connections (i.e., lighting, artwork, etc.)	7
<b>Parks &amp; Open Space</b>		<b>Median</b>
1.	Make small parks feel more connected to each other	3
2.	Explore vacating a portion of 1 <sup>st</sup> Ave to expand Kaibara Park & connect to Town Square Plaza	5
3.	Open-up Downtown parks to the street to make more welcoming and safe	7
4.	Add more lighting to parks for safety	8
5.	Add more year-round community events	7
6.	Make Downtown parks attractive gathering places for visitors & residents	7
7.	Expand teen activities	4
8.	Town Square Plaza needs more seating, trees & diversity of activities	6
9.	Town Square Plaza needs to feel more enclosed and separated from streets (i.e., planters with seating)	3
10.	Connect Downtown to Earthworks/Canyon Park	4
11.	Make Canyon Park trails more accessible and safe	6

<b>Transportation &amp; Connectivity</b>		<b>Median</b>
1.	Improve pedestrian connections to the adjacent residential neighborhoods	7
2.	Improve sidewalks within adjacent residential neighborhoods	7
3.	Ensure speed limit (30 MPH) on Central Ave is enforced	3
4.	Add bollards and planters along Central for pedestrian safety	6
5.	Time signals along Central, Smith, James to respond to pedestrians	7
6.	Increase on-street handicapped parking	5
7.	Maintain sidewalks (i.e., remove branches, leaves, garbage, fix heaved sidewalks)	7
8.	Allow some parking spaces to be closed off for outdoor dining purposes	9
9.	Add bike lane along SR-516	6
10.	Create GATEWAYS into Downtown	
	o Central/James	8
	o Central/Meeker	8
	o James/SR-167 underpass	7
	o Meeker/SR-167 underpass	8
	o Willis/4th	7
11.	Clean-up & beautify SR-167 underpasses at Meeker & James	7
12.	Add pedestrian lighting within alley-ways	7
13.	Improve design of METRO bus shelters	4
14.	Conduct a parking study	4
15.	Work with railroads to create noise-free zone	4

<b>Zoning &amp; Land Use Policy</b>		<b>Median</b>
1.	Ensure modern structures fit the architectural style of Historic Downtown	8
2.	Encourage blade signs & discourage sandwich board signs	9
3.	Eliminate drive-thru businesses in Downtown Core, and no grandfathering	7
4.	Look for greater opportunities for mixed-use development	8
5.	Enforce codes for safety and health on buildings	8
6.	Create sound-reduction building codes for buildings next to railroad lines	6
7.	Strengthen existing building maintenance regulations	7
8.	Apply Design Guidelines in all of the Downtown Subarea	8
9.	Revisit Design Guidelines to ensure they reflect the expanded Downtown Subarea	7
10.	Allow stand alone multi-family in Downtown Subarea mixed-use zoning districts	8

<b>Safety</b>		<b>Median</b>
1.	Add surveillance cameras at Commuter Rail Station	9
2.	Enforce public intoxication laws	9
3.	Find a solution to homelessness in parks, library, and alleyways	10
4.	Increase lighting along streets, alleys, and parks to feel safer	9
<b>Economic Development</b>		<b>Median</b>
1.	Continue in look for incentives for compact residential development	7
2.	Continue to support the Kent Downtown Partnership and its efforts to revitalize Downtown	10
3.	Recruit support services for Downtown residents	7
4.	Recruit key use such as a grocery store	9
5.	Encourage stores to maximize hours of operation	8
6.	Recruit anchor stores and develop new retail on Meeker Street	9
7.	Encourage building and landowners to improve maintenance and aesthetics of properties in Historic Downtown	7
8.	Focus on small business needs and encourage boutique and cottage retail	7
9.	Pursue incentives to assist landlords improve properties	8
<b>Bold Ideas</b>		<b>Median</b>
1.	Close Meeker and create a pedestrian mall	2
2.	Make Meeker and Harrison a one-way couplet with more parking	4
3.	Create a signature central green park	5
4.	Make the Green River a public asset like San Antonio River Walk	8
5.	Create new livable community west of SR-167	7
<b>Ideas On-Hold</b>		<b>Median</b>
1.	Control window displays	4
2.	Create incentives to invest in building upgrades	7
3.	Create an <i>Entertainment District</i> (on Meeker pedestrian plaza)	8
4.	Bring in better businesses, more high-end restaurants, diversity, less chains	7
5.	No dark alleys or doorways	9
6.	Extend business hours later into the evening	7
7.	Create high-end rentals vs. below market housing	8
8.	Historic District needs an anchor retail store	8
9.	More teen activities & shops	5
10.	Provide public restrooms in Downtown	5
11.	Assess the potential for a performing arts venue	7

## Downtown Subarea Action Plan Community Survey #2 Results - Potential ACTION Items

Responses Ranked 1 to 10 on a Scale of Importance

Color	Very Important
Coding	Moderately Important
	Not Important

### **Design & Beautification** **Median**

1.	Strengthen the pedestrian connection between Kent Station and Historic Downtown	8
2.	Add seasonal planters and hanging baskets in Downtown	5
3.	Add more benches in Downtown	4
4.	Establish a coordinated design of waste containers, benches, and pedestrian lighting	5
5.	Increase maintenance of the sidewalks, planters, and street trees	6
6.	Make Central Avenue more attractive for pedestrians	7
7.	Renovate and modernize buildings in Historic Downtown	6.5
8.	Increase artwork in Downtown	3

### **Parks & Open Space** **Median**

1.	Explore opportunities to expand the size of Kaibara Park	4
2.	Redesign Kaibara and Rose Garden parks to be more welcoming and safe	5
3.	Add more lighting in Downtown parks	7
4.	Add more year-round community events in Downtown parks	6
5.	Add more seating, trees, planters, and activities in Town Square Plaza	6
6.	Create a strong pedestrian connection between Downtown and Earthworks Park	5

### **Transportation & Connectivity** **Median**

1.	Improve pedestrian connections of the adjacent residential neighborhoods to Downtown	6
2.	Add planters and bollards along the sidewalks of Central Ave for pedestrian safety	5
3.	Ensure traffic signals along Central, Smith, and James respond quickly to pedestrians	5.5
4.	Increase on-street handicapped parking in Downtown	4

<b>Transportation &amp; Connectivity</b>		<b>Median</b>
1.	Add bike lanes along SR-516/Willis	4
2.	Create prominent, noteworthy gateways into Downtown	6
3.	Clean-up and beautify the SR-167 underpasses in Downtown	6
4.	Add pedestrian lighting within Downtown alleyways	6
5.	Conduct a parking study to determine parking needs in Downtown	5
6.	Work with the railroads to lessen train noise in Downtown	5

<b>Zoning &amp; Land Use Policy</b>		<b>Median</b>
1.	Ensure new construction fits the architectural style of Historic Downtown	7
2.	Encourage blade signs in Downtown	3
3.	Discourage sandwich board signs in Downtown	3
4.	Do not allow new drive-thru businesses in the Downtown Core	5
5.	Allow a mix of uses (i.e., retail + residential) in the entire Downtown study area	8
6.	Enforce health, safety, and building codes	8
7.	Establish Building Codes to increase sound-reduction for buildings next to railroad lines	5
8.	Establish building maintenance regulations to address mildew, rot, etc.	7
9.	Expand the use of Downtown Design Guidelines in strategic locations of the study area	5
10.	Allow stand-alone multifamily housing in the Downtown study area	4

<b>Safety</b>		<b>Median</b>
1.	Add surveillance cameras at the Commuter Rail Station and METRO Transit Center	8
2.	Enforce public intoxication laws	8
3.	Find a solution to homelessness in Downtown	8
4.	Increase lighting along streets, alleys, and parks	9

**Economic Development****Median**

1.	Continue to support the Kent Downtown Partnership and its efforts to revitalize Downtown	8
2.	Recruit additional anchor stores, key retailers and support services for Downtown residents	9
3.	Encourage businesses to increase store hours into the evening	7
4.	Encourage building aesthetics and maintenance of properties in Historic Downtown	8
5.	Encourage boutique and cottage retailers in Downtown	8

**Bold Ideas****Median**

1.	Close Meeker (between 4 <sup>th</sup> & 2 <sup>nd</sup> ) to vehicular traffic and create a pedestrian mall	4
2.	Make Meeker and Harrison (between 4 <sup>th</sup> & 2 <sup>nd</sup> ) a one-way couplet with angle parking	3
3.	Create a large (2-5 acre) central green park	5
4.	Make the Green River a public asset accessible for recreation and connected to Downtown	6
5.	Create a new livable community west of SR-167	5
6.	Build a high speed fiber-optic internet system in Downtown	5

**Parking Lot of Ideas****Median**

1.	Create an <i>Entertainment District</i> (possibly along the Meeker pedestrian plaza or 1 <sup>st</sup> )	6
2.	Recruit better and diverse businesses and more high-end restaurants	8
3.	Encourage market rate housing in Downtown	5
4.	Provide public restrooms in Downtown	5
5.	Assess the potential for a performing arts venue	5