BURLINGTON AT THE CROSSROADS
FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

GREEN FUTURES RESEARCH & DESIGN LAB
University of Washington
College of Built Environments

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REPORT AUTHORS AND EDITORS

City of Burlington

Margaret Fleek, City Planning Director
Kim Osborne, City Planner

University of Washington Green Futures Lab

Nancy Rottle, RLA, ASLA, Associate Professor at the University of Washington in Landscape Architecture, Architecture, and Urban Planning and Design. Director of the Green Futures Research and Design Lab.

Julie Kriegh, AIA, LEED AP, Certified International Passive House Consultant. Licensed architect and principal of KRIEGH ARCHITECTURE STUDIOS.

Cayce James, Lab manager at the Green Futures Research and Design Lab. Master of Landscape Architecture candidate, University of Washington.

Hillary Pritchett, Master of Architecture and Master of Landscape Architecture candidate, University of Washington.

Maria Sandercock, Master of Urban Planning and Master of Science in Environmental and Forest Sciences, Universty of Washington, 2013.

Amanda Bosse, Master of Architecture candidate, University of Washington.

Emily Perchlick, Master of Architecture candidate, University of Washington.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

Working with the City of Burlington and the Urban Land Institute (ULI) Technical Advisory Panel (TAP), the University of Washington Green Futures Lab Team (Team) is proposing actions to parlay the town's strengths, challenges and potentials into an economically robust, socially and culturally responsive, and environmentally healthy city. Through a process that included research and analyses, advice from housing and commercial development experts, and consultation with city residents and leaders, the team has developed urban design proposals that consider Burlington's role in the region, its active commercial core and historical Downtown, and the health and potentials of Gages Slough, especially with regard to stormwater issues and new practices to address stormwater pollution.

PROJECT PROCESS

The research process began by gathering mapped data at multiple scales, and augmenting that data with field explorations of Burlington and its surroundings. The team built an understanding of the city's potentials by interviewing city planners; reviewing planning documents; researching commercial development and green stormwater infrastructure case studies; and holding a Listening Session to solicit knowledge and opinions from Burlington's residents. These findings were consolidated and presented in a *Preliminary Investigations and Listening Session Results* document, which was distributed to the ULI Panel to inform them about Burlington's needs, desires and opportunities. The team then followed the recommendations of the TAP Panel to focus on connections within the town, on Gages Slough and on the historic downtown. The TAP recommendations were expanded and refined in the development of two distinct alternatives for the town's main street, Fairhaven, focusing on the street's intersection with Burlington Avenue (the primary connection with the commercial core) and on the town's heart at the "Y" intersection on Fairhaven and Anacortes streets. To address Gages Slough, the team consulted water quality testing conducted over the past decade; overlaid mapped environmental conditions; and identified potentials for open space connections via the linear wetland. The research and alternatives were presented to Burlington residents in several venues, inviting respondents to indicate features they preferred in each of the alternatives. From these responses, hybrid plans were developed to convey the preferred potentials for regional and local connections, for the Downtown, for entries to the commercial core, and for Gages Slough. These plans are summarized below and presented in detail in subsequent sections.

KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Connections

Located literally at the crossroads of Interstate 5 and State Route 20, Burlington is in an excellent position to grow as an amenity for the Skagit Valley and points beyond. Because Burlington's authentic rural town identity takes many forms, it enjoys a privileged position that is both flexible and responsive to market demands. Assets include: agricultural necessities and services; housing affordability in close proximity to jobs; shopping at big box retail stores and outlet malls, as well as rural mainstreet shopping; regional sports and tournament fields; and recreational destinations including hiking, biking and skiing. By enhancing these assets, Burlington has a unique opportunity to increase its reputation and economic position in the region, thereby providing the city with a solid foundation for smart growth and development.

Several key actions for connectivity are recommended for implementation:

- Conduct a professional marketing study to provide guidance for City and private investments.
- Increase visibility for the town with iconic symbols and signage to capture the interest of a regional economic market.
- Seek synergies and leverage investments in the town's green infrastructure.
- Create safe, interesting, attractive transportation routes within the city itself including: dedicated bike lanes, pedestrian nature trails, and trolley service.
- Mark key intersections where east-west streets meet Burlington Boulevard using green stormwater infrastructure techniques.

The most notable connection lies at the intersection of Burlington and Fairhaven on the northwest end of town and reaches to the central park in the heart of the downtown. Within this several block stretch, there is great potential to develop a compact, walkable, vibrant downtown. Creating a demonstration project in this zone and connecting it to other significant investment projects, such as a Gages Slough nature and bike trail and other green stormwater infrastructure projects, will enhance Burlington's development potential.

Gages Slough

By overlaying mapped conditions of pollution-generating surfaces, soil permeability, and groundwater depth in the basins that drain to Gages Slough, the team identified locations in the city where employing the simplest "Low Impact Development (LID)" or "Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI)" techniques would have the greatest impact and the best chance of success. Informed by predicted feasibility and public preferences, four priority areas with distinct land uses were identified for the application of appropriate GSI methods: the Commercial Core, the Downtown, Residential areas, and West of I-5. The team makes recommendations and provides a menu of graphic examples for implementing GSI features–which often serve multiple functions–and presents sketches of how they might be implemented in these priority areas.

Favored GSI implementation techniques in each area are:

- Commercial Core: biofiltration cells and trees along roadways and in parking areas, vegetated roofs, and creation of a green corridor.
- Residential areas: greater tree coverage, biofiltration cells and residential rain gardens.
- Downtown: biofiltration cells and street trees along roadways, planter boxes, vegetated roofs, and a subsurface wetland, integrating green stormwater into the new street design and into a renovation of "Crossroads Park."
- Western Areas: biofiltration cells within parking lots, vegetated buffers along the periphery, constructed wetlands, and green off-ramps.

The team suggests using both regulations and incentives to achieve implementation of these green stormwater features.

To fortify the health of Gages Slough *a Restoration Overlay District* is proposed for the wetland's riparian areas. The Overlay District addresses appropriate actions within the slough's buffers, such as:

- Maintenance and restoration of native riparian vegetation adjacent to the wetland (0' - 50');
- Pervious surfaces in the mid-zone buffer (50 - 100');
- "Green" development utilizing GSI techniques, zoning to include trail easements, and daylighting and treatment of stormwater outfalls before discharge into the slough in the outer zone buffer (100' - 200').

To convey specific recommended actions, Gages Slough is divided into four "reaches" – the Western Slough, Central Slough, Residential Reach, and Northern Reach. Priority treatments and implementation approaches for health enhancement and public access facilities related to each reach are:

- Western Slough: Protect and increase vegetation along the slough, and extend the Gages Slough trail to Gages Lake and the Skagit River, collaborating with Skagit County.
- Central Slough: Protect the slough's vegetation and create a green, human-scaled corridor beginning with constructing the Gages Slough Trail.
- Residential Reach: Expand the vegetated areas around the slough, and connect to existing and possible future open spaces.
- Northern Reach: Increase vegetation in the riparian area to restore the slough, collaborating with Skagit County.

To achieve a livable and environmentally healthy city, the team proposes a phased approach to implementing these actions over the next two decades.

Development strategies for the Downtown and Commercial Core

The proposed plan, referred to as the Hybrid Plan, aims to foster a vibrant, walkable downtown that will serve a new and essential downtown residential community. Initial and continued investment in the downtown core, where residents live, work, and recreate will promote healthy economic growth and generate enough density to assure community stability. The proposed recommendations incorporate Burlington's existing assets that foster visitorship—such as a pedestrian oriented Main Street with opportunities for dining, shopping, and gathering and a scenic trail along Gages Slough with opportunities for biking and hiking—with new public amenities, such as improved connectivity via integrated bike, transit, and parking solutions and larger, more usable public gathering spaces. The primary goals of the proposed Hybrid Plan are to:

- increase mobility, walkability and connectivity within and around Burlington;
- incentivize mixed-use infill development in the downtown core;
- increase residential capacity within the downtown core;
- increase the housing stock and housing options for residents by offering both rental and for-sale units close to downtown;
- provide public amenities that also attract private development by way of initial infrastructure investments, such as green stormwater infrastructure, open space, public plazas, and parks.

From the key Connector Node at the corner of Burlington Boulevard and Fairhaven Avenue, to the Heart Node at Crossroads Park, the proposed streetscape will prove to be a critical initial investment, initiating compact development that is energetic, pedestrian-oriented, and supportive of ecological function while enhancing the street experience for the community. Fairhaven's 80-foot right-of-way street width provides ample opportunities for widening sidewalks, increasing parking, introducing bike lanes, instituting traffic calming features, implementing GSI strategies such as rain gardens, and planting additional tree clusters in the street right-of-way. This combination of streetscape improvements will support two to four story residential and commercial buildings that will define the street, provide a comfortable pedestrian scale, and create a lively downtown experience.

To increase its viability as the primary downtown public gathering space, the renovated Crossroads Park is designed as a one-way traffic circle on the scale of a city block. The park itself is denoted by a culmination of green stormwater infrastructure features. Notable features include: an interactive water feature, a raingarden to treat runoff from adjacent roads, a green screen along the railroad tracks, food cart vendors, and other park amenities such as trees, benches, tables and chairs. Taken together, these additional features assure that the park is emblematic of Burlington. Most importantly, the park provides a central gathering plaza under a large tree canopy where civic events and public gatherings may occur.

The Hybrid Plan supports a combination of two, three, and four story building heights compliant with Burlington's strong historic fabric, so that accordant building-height-to-street-width ratios afford those traveling along Fairhaven a sense of human scale and enclosure. Three- to four-story residential buildings are located behind two-story mixed-use buildings fronting Fairhaven Avenue, with the aim of increasing residential capacity within walking distance of downtown. Importantly, three- to four-story buildings at the corner of Burlington Boulevard and Fairhaven Avenue are strategically placed to delineate a well-defined downtown entrance and at the key Connector Node. The southwest corner of the Connector Node is proposed as a thriving mixed-use residential block with an internal street supporting such businesses as a natural foods grocery, restaurants, live music, book swap, bike rental, and other lifestyle amenities.

Several recommended key actions for encouraging development are to:

- Amend zoning to allow an internal shopping street at the current Thrifty Foods site
- Incentivize development with bonuses for three- to four-story buildings that require the developer to provide public amenities as well as meet LEED or other green building criteria;
- Revise angled parking on Fairhaven to include GSI features and designate Crossroads Park as the center of a one-way traffic calming circle;
- Lead the way for instituting green development with a demonstration project at Crossroads Park: visible GSI features, educational panels, vendor kiosks, demonstration green roofs, and a green screen along the railroad tracks at Crossroads Park;
- Partner with developers by providing a Development Manual where the town's growth capacity, desires and needs are clear, concise and predictable;
- Require a range of housing unit sizes and building forms coupled with commercial uses.

With this triumvirate of strategies addressing 1) connections to and within the town of Burlington, 2) investment and zoning to attract appropriate development to the historic Downtown to promote visibility and accessibility, and 3) calculated investment in Gages Slough and new stormwater treatment strategies, we believe that Burlington will continue to set an example as a desirable and accessible place to live, work and recreate, and will thrive as an economically robust and environmentally healthy city.

INTRODUCTION, RESEARCH + PROJECT PROCESS

RESEARCH AND PROJECT PROCESS

Over the last half-year the University of Washington Green Futures Lab Team (Team) has worked with the City of Burlington (City) and the Urban Land Institute (ULI) Technical Advisory Panel (TAP) to assess the town's strengths, challenges and potentials to grow as an economically robust, socially and culturally responsive, and environmentally healthy city. This document contains the results of the team's research and analyses, summaries of community meetings with city residents and leaders, and the team's informed ideas for practical steps forward. The focus has been on Burlington's role in the region; its commercial core and the Downtown; and on the health and potentials of Gages Slough, especially with regard to use of new urban design practices to mitigate stormwater issues.

The team began by gathering mapped data at multiple scales, and augmented it in field explorations of Burlington and its surroundings. An understanding of the potentials and challenges was built by interviewing city planners and planning documents, consulting water quality test results, and holding a Listening Session to gather the knowledge and wishes of Burlington's residents. Commercial core redevelopment case studies and contemporary green stormwater infrastructure practices were researched. These findings were consolidated and presented in our "Preliminary Investigations and Listening Session Results" document, which was distributed to the ULI Panel to inform them about Burlington's needs, desires and opportunities. Highlights from the Listening Session are listed below.

The team then followed the advice of the ULI TAP Panel to focus on and enhance connections between the commercial core, Gages Slough, the historic downtown, and the Skagit River. We also consulted reports and a Skagit County Affordable Housing Group to assess the region's housing needs, and met with a representative from RAFN Construction, a regional construction company, to gain the developer's perspective. With this knowledge, we further refined the ULI Panel's recommendations for inner-town connections, and developed two distinct alternatives for the town's main street, Fairhaven Avenue and its connection to the commercial core at Burlington Avenue. The Downtown alternatives focused on the historic main street's intersection with Burlington Avenue and on the town's heart at the "Y" intersection on Fairhaven, including a renovation of the existing park to enable it to function more as a civic center. To address Gages Slough, the team identified areas where pollutants entering the slough were found to exceed acceptable levels; overlaid mapped environmental conditions to discover where Green Stormwater Infrastructure and riparian restoration would be most effective; and identified potentials for open space connections via the linear wetland.

The research and alternatives were subsequently presented to Burlington city residents in a Public Alternatives Forum, inviting respondents to indicate features they preferred in each of the alternatives. From these responses, we developed hybrid plans to develop and convey the preferred potentialities for regional and local connections, for the Downtown, for entries to the commercial core, and for Gages Slough. These proposals are presented in Parts 2 and 3 of this document. Results of the research investigations and public inquiry sessions are described below.

Highlights from the Listening Session: March 5, 2013

The purpose of the Listening Session was to gather information and development preferences from the Burlington community. The team received feedback on favorite places and areas of concern, and ideas for improved tourism and mobility, as well as suggestions for additional amenities.

The team learned that residents think of Old Downtown, the Riverfront, and the Commercial District as favorite places to spend time and bring visitors. Specific venues that provide a sense of community include the new library, local shops and taverns, as well as recreational and nature trails. Residents voiced concern for flooding in the valley along the Skagit River and water quality in the Gages Slough. Both waterways are natural resources and attractions, as well as major elements of the stormwater infrastructure system. As such, community members would like to see improvements in the infrastructure to assure higher water quality. Tourism opportunities centered on the riverfront, sports fields, SR20 bike trails, and the big box commercial retail district. Many community members felt that these areas could be improved by offering additional activities, such as a farmer's market and live concerts. As a whole, community members suggested that mobility could be improved with safer bike and pedestrian routes, nature trails along the Slough and Riverfront as well as increased connectivity throughout the town. Additional affordable housing options of all types were highly sought. With the desire for increased housing units came requests for additional grocery stores, shops, outdoor gathering and open spaces, sustainable and green features for a healthy natural environment, and safe, walkable streets.

The community observations, concerns, and requests were surprisingly similar to those identified by the Urban Land Institute Technical Advisory Panel, the Skagit County Affordable Housing Group, and the RAFN Construction development company, giving heightened credence to the work. Each of the findings and recommendations from these experts are summarized below.

Insights from the Urban Land Institute Technical Advisory Panel: May 2 and 3, 2013

The Urban Land Institute Technical Advisory Panel (ULI TAP) presented their recommendations for smart growth and economic development to the city and community members of Burlington at the conclusion of a two-day workshop. In particular, the ULI panel was struck by how well Burlington is working as a rural town and how much it benefits from the large tax base generated by the big box commercial core. In addition, the town has an authentic historic main street, housing affordability, shopping, a wide variety of shopping options, and a wide range of scenic regional attractions that serve the entire valley.

Their recommendations centered on celebrating what is currently working for the city and making improvements. To determine what improvements the City should make, the ULI panel strongly encouraged the undertaking a professional identity, branding and marketing study. The Gages Slough was cited as a storehouse of natural beauty that could, with improved accessibility, yield large dividends from healthier ecosystems including enhanced quality of life and accelerated economic development. By seeking synergies, the panel believes that Burlington could leverage

Burlington Boulevard and big box commercial core to benefit the traditional main street on Fairhaven Avenue and the natural environment. By making strategic investments in heritage buildings, key sites, sustainable infrastructure, and inner city mobility the City will be able to establish many core elements important for successful residential development and economic growth. Hand in hand with development, changes in zoning tie directly into incrementally greater population densities that will lead to an increase in year round residents, thus creating a demand for low and mid-rise housing developments. To spur this development, Burlington should undertake measures to improve development predictability through clear zoning regulations. Finally, the ULI panel recommends increased visibility. Through strategically placed iconic symbols and signage, Burlington can highlight its authenticity and offerings within the region and beyond.

Strategies from the Skagit County Affordable Housing Group: June 10, 2013

The Skagit County Community Services Department (SCCSD) Report of 2013 identified a significant affordability problem for the region. Only three of five Skagit homes are affordable at 30% of total household income levels and there is currently a waiting list for 500 units of affordable housing. In addition, the 2010 census data indicates a regional housing demand for 1,400 housing units per year over the next 15 years. Taken together, these data identify a major housing shortfall and a substantial opportunity for Burlington to fill the void by providing a variety of housing options.

To meet this need, the SCCSD recommends tapping into efforts that are currently underway to: identify appropriate Farmworker Housing Trust Advisory Council proposals; expand existing homeownership programs; continue to seek small local investments through local businesses, faith based, and non-profit organizations; invest in both renovation and new construction rental projects; and create policies that incentivize affordable workforce housing development.

Recommendations from RAFN Construction Company: June 25, 2013

Heather Bunn, RAFN VP Marketing, identified key development challenges that inhibit growth and gave recommendations to overcome those challenges with specific strategies for predictable development outcomes.

Effectively, infrastructure requirements drive bottom line costs and resultant development densities. Taking these costs into account when planning and instituting zoning regulations and coordinating city infrastructure improvements with development desires can make new projects more economically feasible. To minimize these costs the City can take the lead on producing a Developer's Manual that outlines the development potential of parcels. Knowing the capacity of existing stormwater, waste pick-up, sidewalks, roads, parking, impact fees, and utilities reduces the risk and therefore the cost, to the developer.

The state mandated SEPA Review requirement is an impediment to development not only in terms of potential mitigation costs, but also in terms of time delays and uncertainty. It is possible for the City to create a Planned Action Environmental

Statement within the town limits, rather than require each individual developer to conduct a SEPA review. The uncertainties of zoning create additional hurdles for development. As a mitigation strategy, the City could work with local banks to buy parcels and then reissue the development rights through an RFP process demonstrating specific intent for property development. In addition, properties that benefit from Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) could be identified and a concise process for using TDRs clearly articulated. In short, Burlington can motivate developers with clear policies that incentivize the type of development that is desired by the city. For example, create policies that incentivize affordable housing, and partner with developers by providing key elements in infrastructure, such as street improvements and centrally located parking. Couple the centrally located parking with public transportation to easily move people from parking to shopping to entertainment to housing to provide a vibrant, active, community transportation loop.

Finally, the essential recommendation is for the City to take the lead by providing zoning for both high and low densities along with amenities and public open space. Over time, as the population grows, the City will be able to incentivize development between the downtown and the commercial core. By taking an early lead, the City can initiate the process by creating a central park in the heart of downtown to serve as a water quality demonstration project, leveraging water quality and stormwater infrastructure with public open space. If the project is publicized widely, other development will follow.

Gages Slough Research and Analysis

Gages Slough is a major asset of the town, and is much appreciated by its residents. Its potentials to serve as a key circulation and recreational connector, and to enhance Burlington's image, were easily recognized by the ULI Panel. The slough also provides important ecosystem services including water quality treatment, habitat, groundwater recharge and flood control. However, its shoreline is currently inaccessible to people, and water quality tests indicate that there are excess nutrients, bacteria, hydrocarbons and metals and low levels of dissolved oxygen, all conditions that interfere with the healthy functioning of the wetland. Stormwater runoff carries the pollutants that reduce necessary oxygen levels and limit aquatic health, so filtering stormwater before it reaches the slough can have significant benefits. New, "low-impact" (LID) or "green stormwater infrastructure" (GSI) techniques that use soils and vegetation have been found to be effective at filtering stormwater at its source. Queries posed at the public meetings indicate that Burlington citizens are largely favorable towards employing such methods.

To assess areas of problem and opportunity, the team consulted water quality testing conducted over the past decade, and collated mapped environmental conditions, land uses and impervious pollution-generating surfaces, soil permeability, and groundwater depth in the basins that drain to Gages Slough. The team then asked the public which types of features they felt were most appropriate within the four different land-use types in the targeted sub-basins surrounding the wetland as it courses through the city. To address the slough itself, the team identified existing regulations and mapped various "buffers" that could be enforced or enacted to protect and enhance the wetland environment, and applied these to four separate "reaches" of the slough.

Through public meetings and aerial mapping, the team also identified potentials for open space connections along and to Gages Slough, and in addition to our own informal ground survey, factored in the recent trail planning suggested by Burlington's Non-Motorized Task Force.

Project Objectives and Alternatives

Based on the recommendations and information gleaned from the research outlined above, the team identified three overarching project objectives:

- ***Connections:*** Strengthen regional and local connections by highlighting and linking local and regional assets and services.
- ***Gages Slough:*** Enhance stormwater quality and provide wetland protection in and access to Gages Slough.
- ***Development Strategies:*** Increase economic viability and livability in the Downtown and Commercial Core by infrastructure investments and mixed-use development.

Specifically, the team developed alternatives for increasing connectivity to and within Burlington, for developing the historic Downtown district, and for enhancing Gages Slough by addressing the slough itself as well as the basins that drain into the valued but threatened water body. These alternatives are presented in Section 2.

Public Alternatives Forum: Burlington at the Crossroads

The team presented possible alternative actions at a "Burlington at the Crossroads" Public Alternatives Forum, which invited the public to indicate features they preferred in each of the alternatives. The alternatives encompassed a proposed shuttle and bike loop, street configuration and building heights along Fairhaven Avenue, design features for the two nodes along Fairhaven, favored green stormwater features for the four priority drainage areas, and preferences for features to be included in the central section of Gages Slough. The presentation and response cards were also made available at subsequent Council and Planning Commission meetings and at City Hall, and we received a robust number of thoughtful replies. Graphic summaries of the responses for each of the five response cards—addressing Regional Connections, Connector Node, Heart Node, GSI Preferences, and Central Reach of Gages Slough—can be found in the Appendix. Guided by these responses, we developed hybrid plans to combine and convey the preferred potentialities for regional and local connections, for the Downtown, the commercial core and its entries, and for green infrastructure related to Gages Slough. These plans are presented in Section 2.5 and in Part 3.

PLAN ELEMENTS

CONNECTIONS

Burlington has a history of being at the crossroads. The above historic photo portrays the Burlington train station along the Vancouver line. Image from *Great Norther Flyer, gnflyer.com*.

Burlington at the Crossroads

Located literally at the crossroads of Interstate 5 and State Route 20, Burlington is in an excellent position to grow as an amenity for the Skagit Valley (ULI TAP). The city is situated between several large regional attractions, granting it the potential to benefit economically as a shopping and recreational magnet. To the north and south are the metropolitan areas of Vancouver, BC and Seattle, WA. To the east and west are recreational meccas, the San Juan Islands and the North Cascades. The town's central location between the regional population centers of Anacortes, Bellingham, Sedro Wolley, and Marysville allow the City of Burlington to easily host seasonal events and attractions, such as the Berry Dairy Days. Working in tandem, Burlington and its sister city, Mount Vernon, are uniquely poised to attract entrepreneurs and small businesses, thus engendering a regional center.

Situated in the center of the Skagit Valley, Burlington is well positioned to host shopping, housing, and recreational activities.

Burlington's history as a farming community and its close proximity to agricultural land provides the potential to enhance the town as well as local farms. The town can serve as an incubator for farm-to-table practices, supporting the economic viability of small farms in the area while attracting new restaurants and farmstands to the city. Burlington retains a rural, hometown character on Fairhaven Avenue for families searching for an authentic, small community life. Residential growth in the downtown can provide a walkable neighborhood and a lower cost of living option in this desirable Skagit Valley region (Skagit Housing Authority).

Situated in close proximity to the Cascade Mountains, San Juan Islands, Skagit River, and scenic routes, Burlington offers year-round recreational opportunities including: fishing, biking, hiking, nature walks, canoeing and kayaking. The 51-acre Skagit River Park Playfields, containing over 22 soccer fields, 8 baseball diamonds, 24 horseshoe pits, a playground, concessions and other facilities, hosts regional sports tournaments, making it one of the most utilized sports parks in the Northwest. Located along the State Route 20 Bike trail that crosses the Skagit Valley and links the San Juan Island ferry routes to the Cascade Mountain scenic routes, Burlington is well situated to become a vital biking support center in the region.

Burlington's identity as a shopping center in the Skagit Valley is attributable to the Outlet Mall, the Cascade Mall, the Costco Mall, auto dealerships, and a constellation of big box retail stores located along Burlington Avenue. This revenue-generating commercial core provides Burlington with a solid economic base and foundation for new development. Taken together, Burlington's strong agricultural, recreational, and retail activities, and its scenic beauty provide lifestyle amenities to support new residential development.

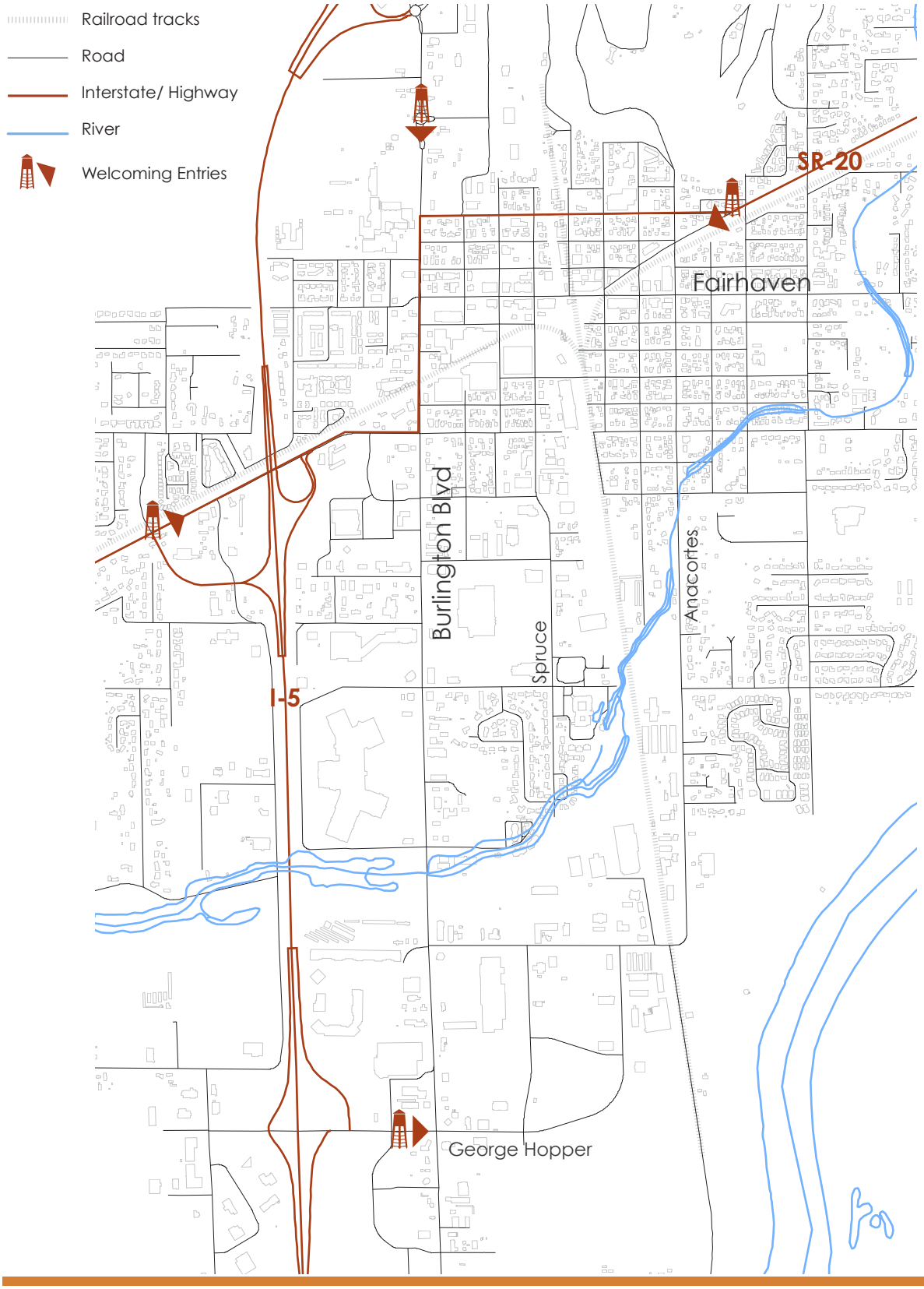
Welcoming Gateways

In order to capture interest from the thousands of cars that, daily, pass Burlington by on Interstate 5 and State Route 20, the city must first strengthen its roadside visibility. By clearly accentuating key access points into the town with iconic symbols and signage, Burlington has an opportunity to draw attention and welcome visitors. The team identified key opportunities to highlight entry points along surrounding freeways and major roadways as described below.

The roundabout silo sculpture that greets those departing Interstate 5 at the city's northernmost exit is an existing example of iconic entry signage. This lone silo could be enhanced by local artists with metal sculpture additions and seasonal decoration, signaling city events. Although not every gateway requires a silo sculpture, a city-wide entry signage language composed of large, iconic sculptures with similar theme and character could strengthen the identity of Burlington from a regional perspective.

There are potential capture points confronting travelers coming from each of the crossroad directions, shown on the map on the following page. Entry signage where State Route 20 enters Burlington will direct visitors to Fairhaven Avenue, Burlington's historic downtown. Signage at Burlington Boulevard and George Hopper Road will not only be visible from Interstate 5, but will signal to drivers and bikers coming from Mount Vernon that they have entered Burlington. To promote better connections with points west of Interstate 5, an entry point into the city can be defined at the intersection of State Route 20 and the I-5 off-ramp, capturing traffic from both highways.

This entry can be enhanced by a local artist. The same materials can be used to make entry signage and entry art at the other gateways into Burlington.



WELCOMING ENTRIES

The red silo icons represent intersections that would benefit from iconic signage.

Regional Recreation Hub

The culture of the Skagit Valley region is heavily influenced by outdoor recreation. Accordingly, Burlington must not only address vehicular entry points, but cycling and other recreational connections as well. The State Route 20 Bike Trail holds much potential as a link in the regional cycling system. The Cascade Trail beginning in Sedro-Woolley to the northeast could become a larger connection, strengthened and extended to join with other bike trails in the region. Burlington is well situated to serve as an essential support center for cyclists by providing bike service and repair, food and lodging, tourist information, and scenic connector bike trails within the town along Gages Slough and the Skagit River.

A trail like the one pictured above is proposed to run alongside Gages Slough and connect to other regional bike trails.

The area adjoining Gages Slough is an ideal opportunity for a new trail connector. An added pedestrian and bike trail will complement the natural beauty of the Slough, and would provide a connection within Burlington from the State Route 20 trail, under the railroad and Interstate 5, to Gages Lake on the west side of town. This trail will also connect via new bike lanes heading south on Burlington Avenue to the Kulshan Creek Trail in Mount Vernon. Future trail extensions could include added links along State Route 20, to the west to the Anacortes Tommy Thompson Trail, and north along Chuckanut Drive, to the Bellingham Interurban Trail. This connection to Bellingham, the "Fairhaven to Fairhaven Trail," will connect the historic downtowns of the two cities with a scenic bike route. The map on the following page shows the potential location of the Gages Slough Trail and the existing SR-20 Trail.

The Gages Slough, Skagit River, and Skagit River Park Palyfields are recreational amenities that provide economic opportunities. As a city that is known in the region for retail shopping, Burlington is well positioned to capitalize on the sporting goods market and hospitality market associated with regional tournaments and seasonal sporting activities. By providing convenient transportation shuttles, bike trails, and pedestrian paths to the downtown and retail districts, visitors will have the ability to explore the variety of Burlington's assets.

Fishing in the Skagit River is just one of the many outdoor activities available in Burlington.

BIKING TRAILS

A trail along Gages Slough could provide an attractive pedestrian and bicycle connection from the SR-20 bike lane to Gages Lake, the Skagit River, and beyond.

Building on Existing Amenities

Burlington has an opportunity to leverage its existing amenities—parks, plazas, historic buildings, and civic buildings—as designated points of interest on a well defined city-wide way-finding map. Landscaping and green stormwater infrastructure (GSI) techniques can be utilized as markers with signage leveraging these materials to designate important civic features, create pleasant environments, and provide ecological function for stormwater capture and treatment.

The Burlington Library is an excellent example of existing civic character. Green stormwater infrastructure along the edges of the sidewalk percolates runoff back into the soil while providing a green edge to the sidewalk that enhances the pedestrian experience as well as the life of the street. The raised intersection slows traffic and prioritizes the pedestrian, while also providing an informal intersection square that could easily transition to an event gathering space. The distinctive architecture, scaled to indicate that it is a public structure, is emphasized by a red street-side sculpture, adding further identity to the space.

The raised intersection outside the Burlington Public Library and its engaging architecture denotes it as a public building, provides pedestrian amenities, and creates a gathering space. Image from City of Burlington.

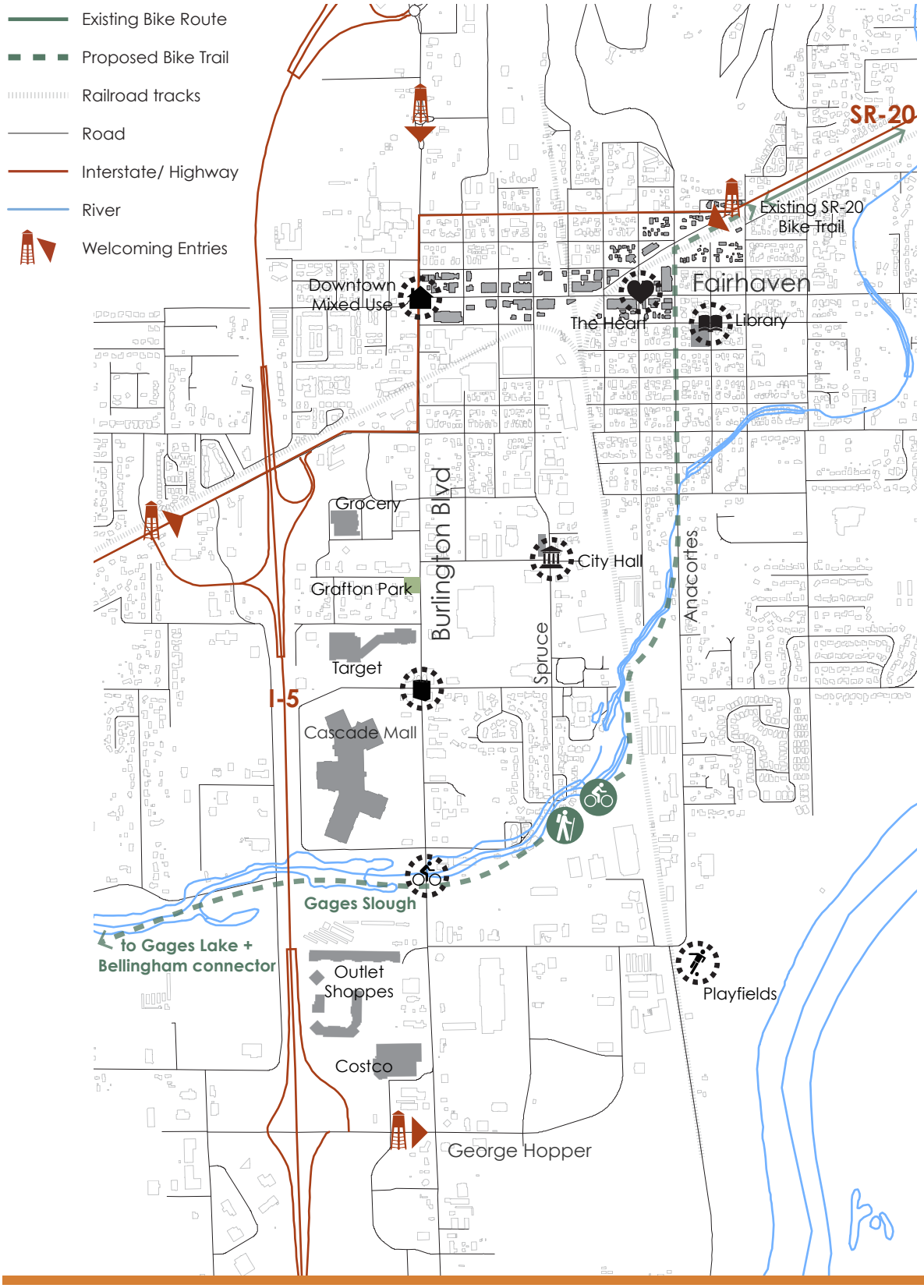
The street and landscape treatments used at the library can be developed into a bold civic language that defines shopping, outdoor recreation, historic sites, downtown, and other neighborhood districts. Each would boast similar elements including a raised intersection, GSI techniques, landscaping, and generous sidewalks. The architecture, signage, and art at each location would vary to reflect the nature of the district.

The team selected the following intersections as major Burlington district nodes based on information gathered during site visits, planning documents, and public input. Below are recommended treatments for each:

- Skagit River Park: Create a distinctive entry point at Anacortes Street and Pease Road to link fields with the greater community
- Gages Slough: Create a well marked street crossing at Burlington Avenue and Gages Slough to call attention to this amenity
- Cascade Mall: Create GSI/landscaped areas to mark points of entry into the commercial district and at mall entrances including Gilkey Road and Burlington Avenue
- City Hall: Create landscaped entry treatments to demarcate the public approach to this civic complex

The most vibrant of the districts, the Downtown District, should incorporate civic character throughout. The most important entry intersection, at Burlington Boulevard and Fairhaven Avenue, is a capture point for incoming traffic off Interstate 5 and State Route 20 from the west, that can promote connections to the larger Commercial District running the entire length of Burlington Boulevard. This corner should include feature buildings to emphasize the main entry into the Downtown District. Developed as a diverse, mixed-use town center, this district would provide a variety of housing choices and public amenity spaces. By encouraging walkable development, the vibrancy, life, and economic vigor of Fairhaven Avenue will increase.

The downtown character should extend from this entry point along Fairhaven Avenue to Anacortes Street and along the Cascade Highway to the entry node on State Route 20. This creates the Burlington "Y" Plan for downtown, referred to in the Downtown Commercial Core section of this report, and strengthens the intersection where the Cascade Highway and Fairhaven Avenue meet. This intersection has been identified as the "Heart" of the downtown, evidenced by information gathered at public input session, as well as the location of new Vistor's Center. The civic and historic character of this building can be emphasized with traffic calming street and intersection treatments. The park across the street from the Visitor's Center can be developed into a large public gathering space centrally located in the Heart of the Downtown District.



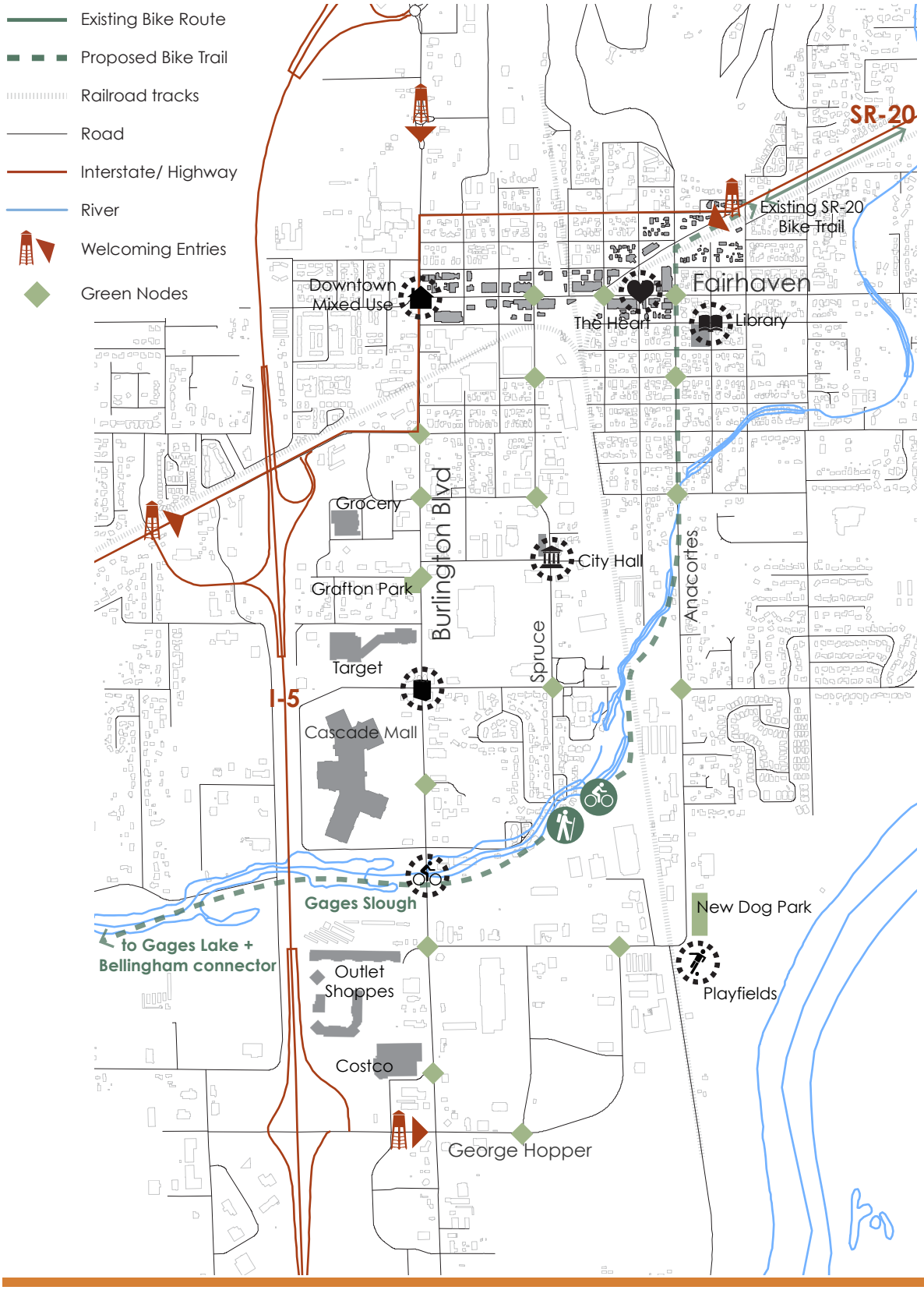
DISTRICT NODES

The black icons note intersections that could become enhanced civic spaces, which could define the character of each district and provide gathering spaces for events.

Local Connections

In order for neighborhood districts to become viable and to allow easy access for Burlington residents, it is important to provide both motorized and non-motorized transportation connections between them. Pedestrian and cycling connections need to be developed as city-wide systems. Sidewalks and parking lots around town should incorporate GSI solutions to foster ecological health and provide wayfinding attributes. The green diamond intersections shown on the map on the follow page identify potential points for enhancement projects, with benches and traffic slowing elements. These would also include secondary signage with a consistent appearance to improve wayfinding around Burlington and extend the character established at larger intersections and nodes along the streets. These points of rest would also provide green entry spaces to key neighborhood districts highlighting the distinct characteristics of each district including: retail, civic, residential, agricultural, and business.

Green infrastructure elements can be used to beautify and lend distinct character to important intersections and business entrances. Street furniture at these nodes provides pleasant places to rest and relax while also imbuing the area with more life and activity.

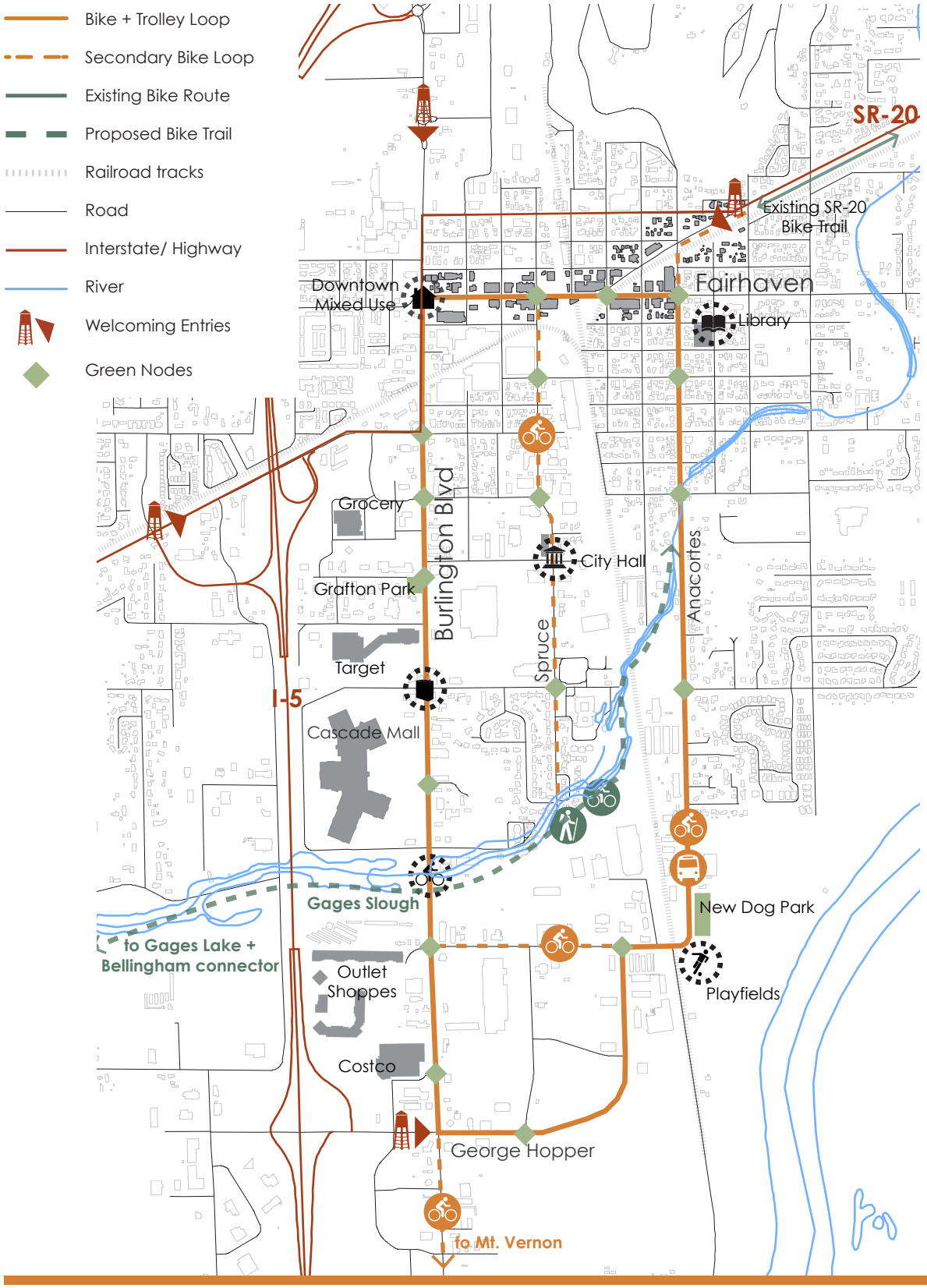


STREET CHARACTER

The green diamonds note locations for greenery, signage, and pedestrian resting points. Their locations correspond with district amenities to direct visitors to those amenities.

Additional recommendations to provide connection within the city are through bike lanes and a trolley route. The suggested major transportation loop would circle Burlington Boulevard, Fairhaven Avenue, Anacortes Street, the Skagit Park Playfields and George Hopper Road. This route connects most of the district nodes and would include pedestrian sidewalks, bike lanes, car lanes, and a trolley line. The trolley line would encourage exploration by recreational tourists and provide easy, fun holiday access to the entire city. An additional bike lane down Spruce Street would connect the Downtown District to City Hall and provide a less congested alternate route to Gages Slough. Gages Slough itself can serve as a noteworthy connection within the town, as it runs partially diagonally, making it easily accessible from the northeast to the southwest. A Gages Slough trail system will provide an essential additional pedestrian crossing over the railroad tracks. The following map depicts how the proposed bike and trolley loop link Burlington's neighborhood districts. The bike route would also connect to surrounding cities and sites in the Skagit Valley.

Trolleys are a convenient, fun, and festive way to navigate and explore a town.



TROLLEY AND BIKE CONNECTORS

The solid orange line marks the primary bike loop and proposed trolley loop. The dotted orange lines identify additional bike lane connectors. The bike loop links to the Gages Slough Trail and to the SR-20 bike trail.

STORMWATER & GAGES SLOUGH

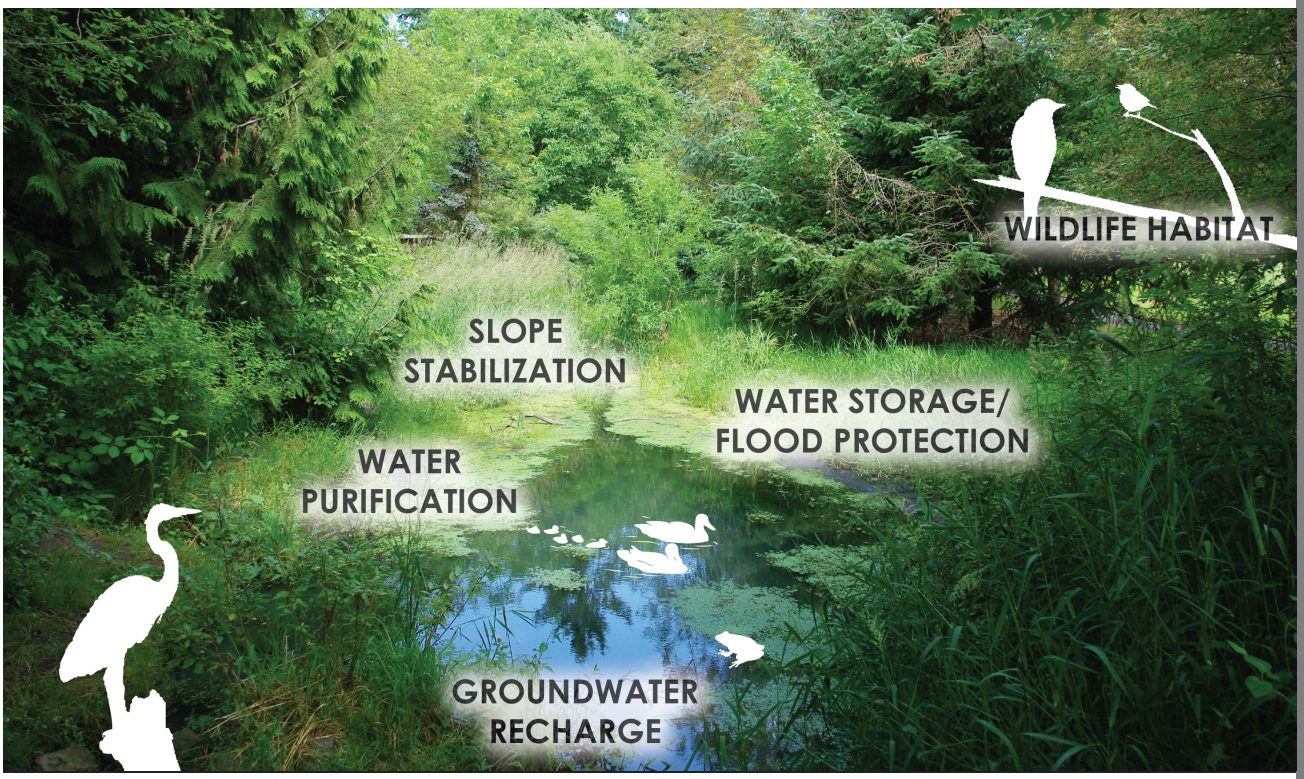
Gages Slough is a major connector through the city, linking residential areas to commercial and industrial areas. It serves as a movement corridor for wildlife in the area, and has the potential to serve as such a corridor for people as well. Maintaining its health will be crucial to maximizing Gages Slough's potential as a city amenity. To that end, the City of Burlington needs to address the water quality of stormwater that drains into the slough.

Introduction to Gages Slough

Gages Slough functions as a series of connected wetlands approximately 7 miles long from the northwest of Burlington through to the Skagit River. It originated as an old meander from the Skagit River. Currently water enters the slough from multiple sources: the Hart Island wetland, hyporheic flow from the Skagit River, groundwater flow, and stormwater runoff. The slough eventually drains into the Skagit River, sometimes with the aid of a pump during periods of high flow.

Gages Slough, as a functional wetland, provides many ecological benefits. During wet months, the slough collects and stores water from the surrounding area, which helps buffer against flooding. It then contributes to groundwater recharge during dryer months. Microbes in the slough enhance the cycling of nutrients, keeping nutrient levels at a healthy level. This helps the growth of vegetation along the slough edge and in its riparian buffer area. This vegetation helps stabilize the slough banks, preventing erosion and providing habitat for diverse wildlife.

In addition to its ecological amenities, Gages Slough also offers aesthetic and recreational amenities. The vegetation and wildlife provide a pleasant and enriching experience for pedestrians. With careful planning and design, a trail along the slough would provide opportunities to exercise and experience nature within the city. The slough could also provide opportunities for environmental education through interpretive signs.



WATER QUALITY IN GAGES SLOUGH

Measures of water quality

Water quality has been monitored in Gages Slough on a semi-regular basis in the last 10 years. The major parameters that have been sampled are temperature, pH, dissolved oxygen, total suspended solids, nutrient concentrations (including ammonium, nitrate, and phosphate) and fecal coliform bacteria. During storm events, zinc, copper, pesticides and petroleum byproducts have been monitored.

All of these parameters affect different aspects of the Gages Slough ecosystem. Dissolved oxygen is necessary for aquatic life, such as fish. When it gets too low, aquatic life dies. A common cause of low dissolved oxygen is high temperatures, which prevent water from holding as much oxygen. Riparian vegetation is critical for shading the slough and keeping temperatures lower. Low dissolved oxygen can also occur when nutrient levels reach high points that lead to algal blooms. As the algae die, the decomposition process removes oxygen from the water, and the blooms push out other vegetation. Excessively high nutrients can also affect biological processes in wildlife and people. Excess nutrients usually come from fertilizers and manure.

Fecal coliform bacteria indicate the presences of pathogens that are harmful to human and wildlife health. Such bacteria usually come from sewage, pet waste, and manure. Metals such as zinc and copper, and chemicals such as pesticides and petroleum products disrupt physiological processes in plants and animals. Except for pesticides, these chemicals originate from cars and build up on roads. During a rain event, water runs over roads, picking up these pollutants and carrying them into Gages Slough.

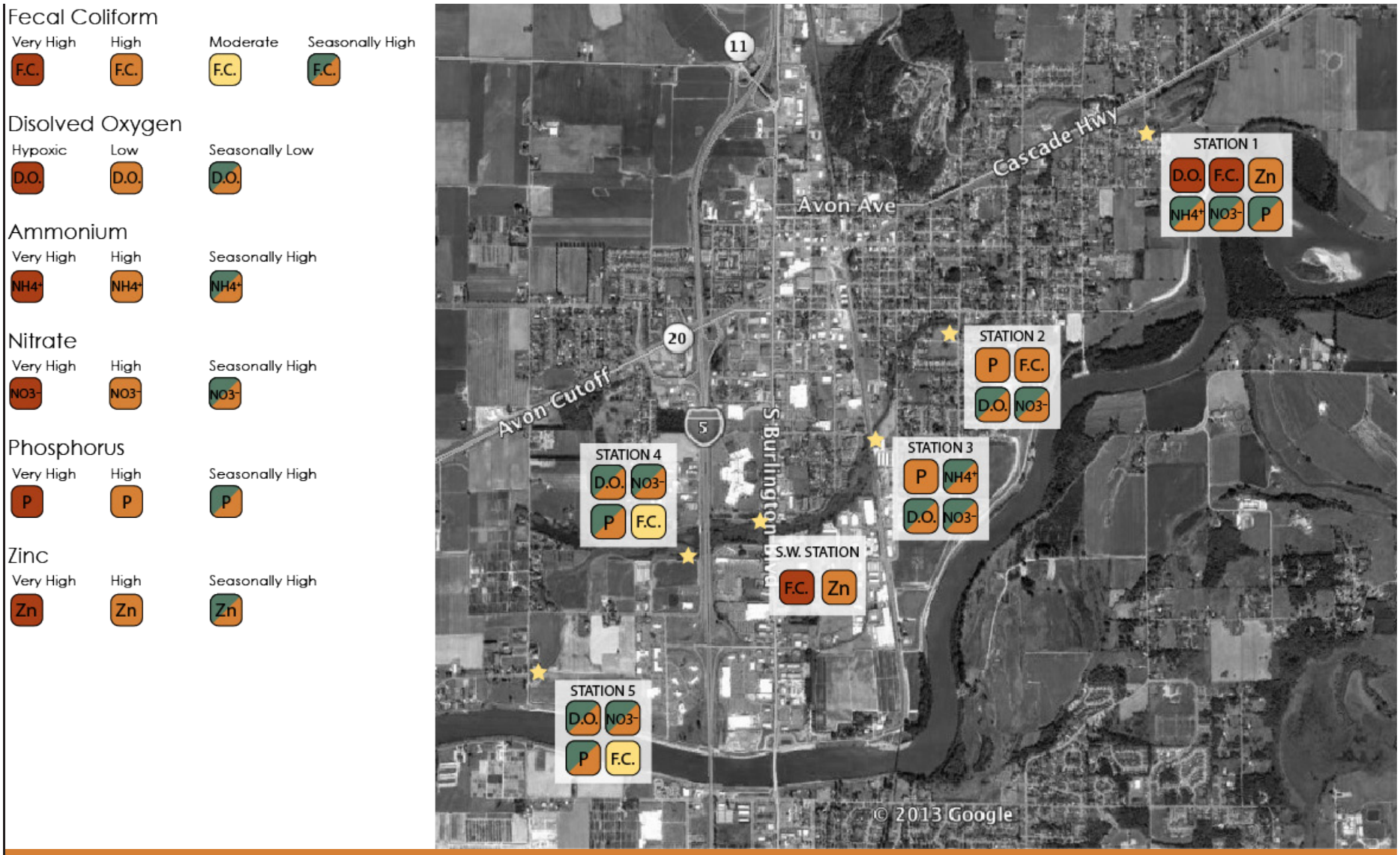
Results of water monitoring

The findings of monitoring efforts along Gages Slough are shown on the following page. They indicate that some parameters are worse than others. Dissolved oxygen, while varying seasonally, rarely reaches the Environmental Protection Agency's recommended minimum of 9.5 mg/L. During the summer, the water becomes hypoxic (meaning it cannot support aquatic life) with dissolved oxygen at 1-3 mg/L. This is exacerbated by high temperatures in the summer, with most stations exceeding the recommended 16°C in June through August.

Nutrient levels vary in different areas of the slough, and throughout the year. Ammonium, nitrate, and particularly phosphorus all reach unhealthy levels at some point during the year. This may be leading to blooms in single-celled algal, as suggested by high levels of total suspended solids. Levels of nutrients decrease as one moves downstream the slough, indicating the slough is still functioning to remove excess nutrients, particularly in areas with healthy riparian vegetation.

Fecal coliform levels are extremely high at Station 1 where the slough enters the city. Levels become lower downstream, although remain above Department of Ecology criterion of 50 colonies/100mL.

Stormwater monitoring found elevated levels of heavy hydrocarbons (such as motor oil), and high levels of zinc and fecal coliform bacteria.



GAGES SLOUGH WATER QUALITY CONCERNS

Water quality monitoring in 2007 found extreme levels of fecal coliform bacteria, dissolved oxygen, nutrients, and zinc throughout the slough.

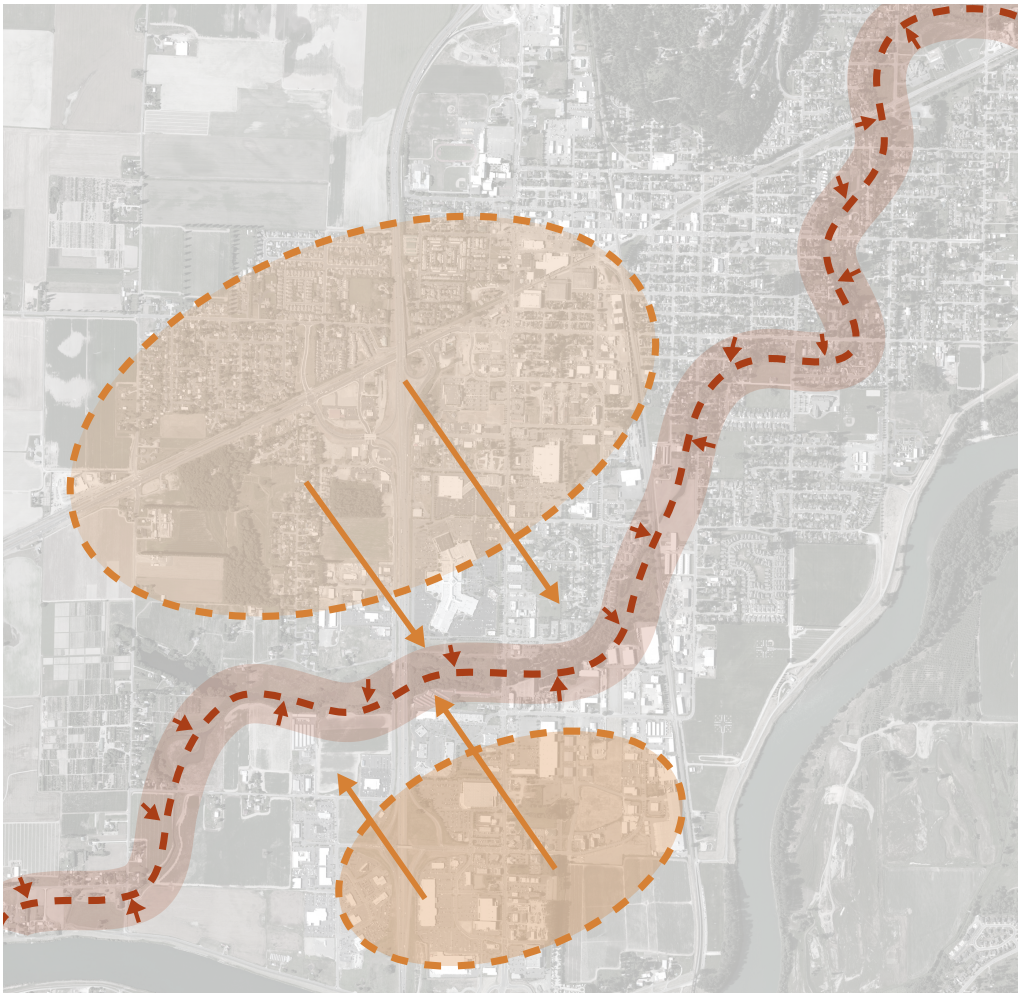
REGULATORY CONTEXT

The City of Burlington is required to obtain a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Phase II Municipal Stormwater Permit by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in order to discharge stormwater into major water bodies. In the State of Washington, the Washington Department of Ecology (DOE) issues these permits and requires cities such as Burlington to develop a Stormwater Management Program to reduce pollutants in stormwater runoff.

The Washington DOE recommends using low impact development (LID) techniques, such as green stormwater infrastructure (GSI) as a method for addressing stormwater quality issues. LID focuses on thoughtful site design that mimics natural drainage processes by increasing stormwater infiltration on site, and decreasing stormwater runoff. GSI involves structures designed to treat stormwater on urbanized sites.

STRATEGIES

The team developed recommendations for addressing water quality issues in Gages Slough at two scales: (1) city-wide to address the quality of stormwater entering Gages Slough and (2) immediately adjacent to the slough to address impaired ecological process along the slough's riparian area. The diagram below shows this approach.

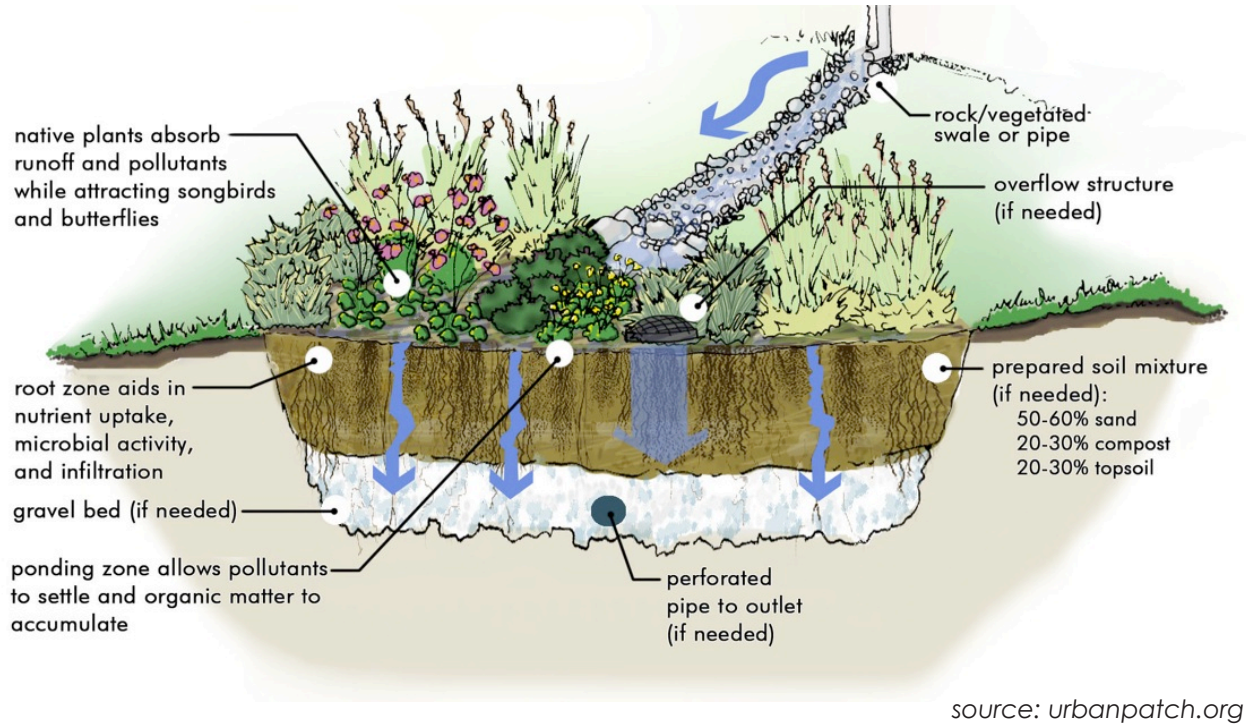


City-Wide Recommendations

To address the quality of the stormwater that enters Gages Slough, a city-wide approach must be used because rain that falls on most of the city eventually reaches the slough. As a result, the team first considered approaches to treating stormwater at the city scale.

GREEN STORMWATER INFRASTRUCTURE

The team identified green stormwater infrastructure (GSI) as the best way to treat stormwater in Burlington before it enters Gages Slough. As mentioned above, GSI is designed to treat stormwater on site by increasing its infiltration into the ground and decreasing the amount the runs over the surface (where it would pick up pollutants). Most pollutants in the stormwater are filtered out as the water flows through the soil. There are many different kinds of GSI and what type to use depends on the conditions of the site. Several types are described below.



source: urbanpatch.org

CURB CUTS, RAINGARDENS & BIOFILTRATION CELLS

Biofiltration cells and raingardens collect polluted runoff from paved surfaces, roofs, and lawns and treat it by filtering it through soil and plant roots. Often, planted areas already exist adjacent to paved surfaces and can be fairly easily transformed into green infrastructure elements by amending soils and cutting through a curb to allow water to flow in.

PERMEABLE PAVEMENT

This pavement is designed to allow rainwater to permeate through to the ground, instead of running over the surface. This reduces the amount of pollution rainwater picks up and allows the water to filter through the soil and be treated before entering water bodies.

FILTER STRIPS & VEGETATED BUFFERS

These techniques involve planting a strip of vegetation at the edge of a pollution-generating surface where runoff is directed. As the runoff passes through the vegetation, pollutants that are attached to solid particles are filtered out by the plant matter. Some runoff also infiltrates through the soil and is treated in the process.

GREEN CORRIDOR

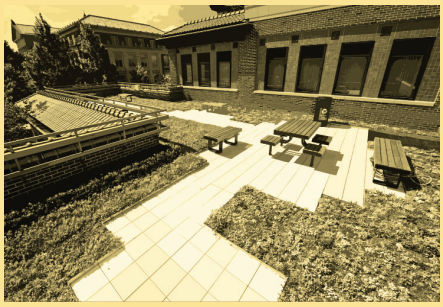
A green corridor can allow a safe and pleasant travel experience for pedestrians and bicyclists. It can also serve as an important habitat corridor for wildlife. If placed in the right location, it can also collect and treat polluted runoff from surrounding areas.

TREES

Trees absorb and evapotranspire rainwater, preventing it from picking up and transporting pollutants. Trees also enhance the aesthetics of an area and can provide a more pleasant experience for pedestrians and cyclists while also providing habitat for wildlife. Increased trees along water bodies shade the water, keeping it cooler and higher in oxygen.

LIVING ROOFS

Vegetation and soil on roofs intercepts rainwater before it can pick up pollution from the roof or pavement below, reducing the amount of polluted runoff flowing into water bodies. Living roofs also provide habitat for birds and other animals and reduce the urban heat island effect. Living roofs can be either extensive, with a thin layer or soil and short vegetation, or intensive, with deeper soil medium and larger vegetation.



LIVING WALLS

A vertical counterpart to living roofs, living walls may also be able to filter polluted water, provide habitat, and decrease building energy demands through thermal regulation. Living walls are particularly effective in denser areas where green space is limited.

CONSTRUCTED WETLANDS

Wetland plant species, and the microorganisms that grow on them, are very effective at improving water quality. Where space allows, wetlands can be constructed to intercept polluted runoff before it reaches other water bodies. They also provide excellent habitat for many species.

SUBSURFACE WETLANDS

In some situations, standing water is not desirable and may cause safety concerns. In such situations, subsurface wetlands can provide all the water quality benefits of a wetland without the need for exposed water. In these systems water flows underground through a gravel or sand medium wherein microorganisms and plants treat the pollutants.

PLANTER BOXES

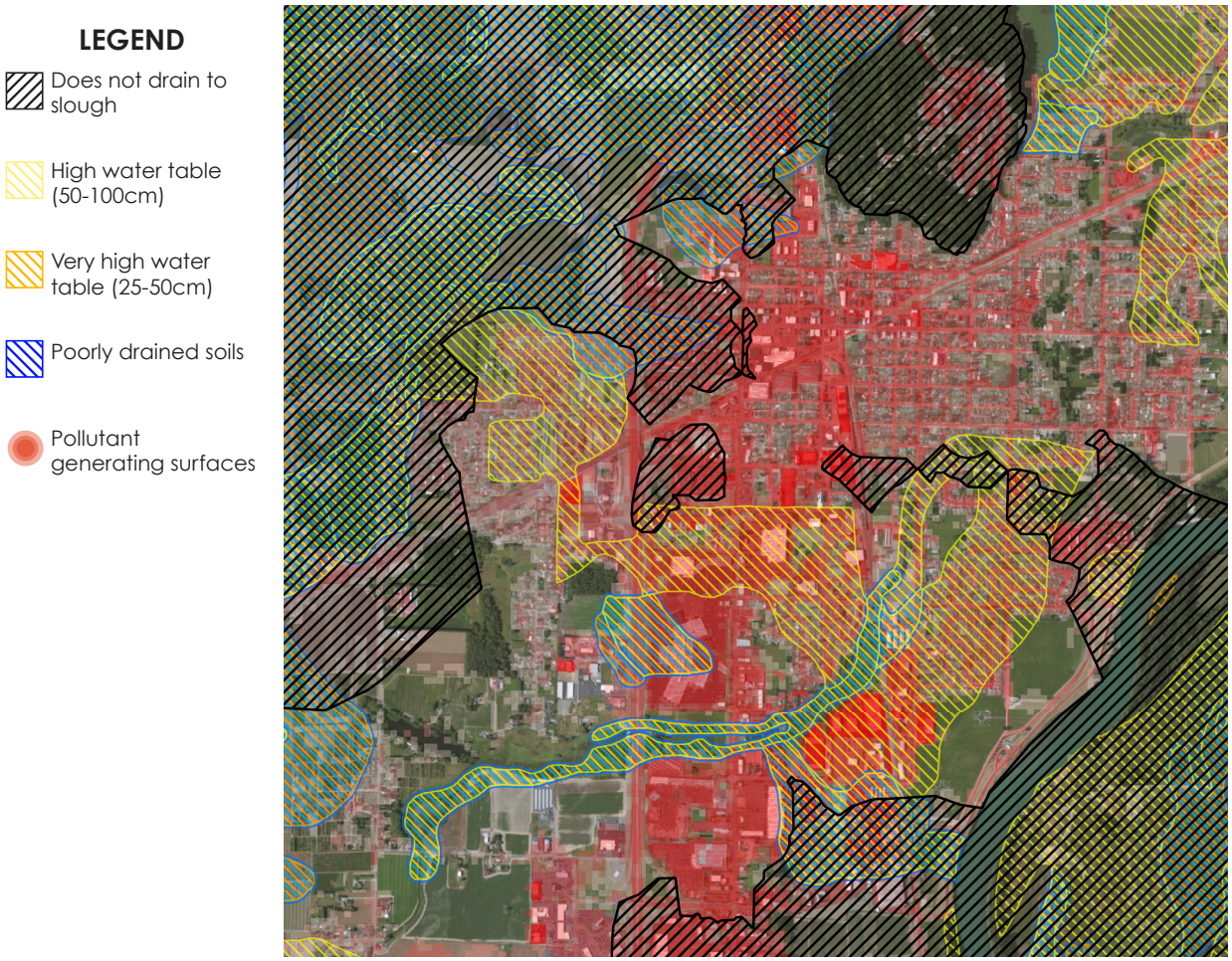
If positioned with a gutter system and downspout, planter boxes can capture rainwater running off roofs and treat the water before it flows into water bodies.

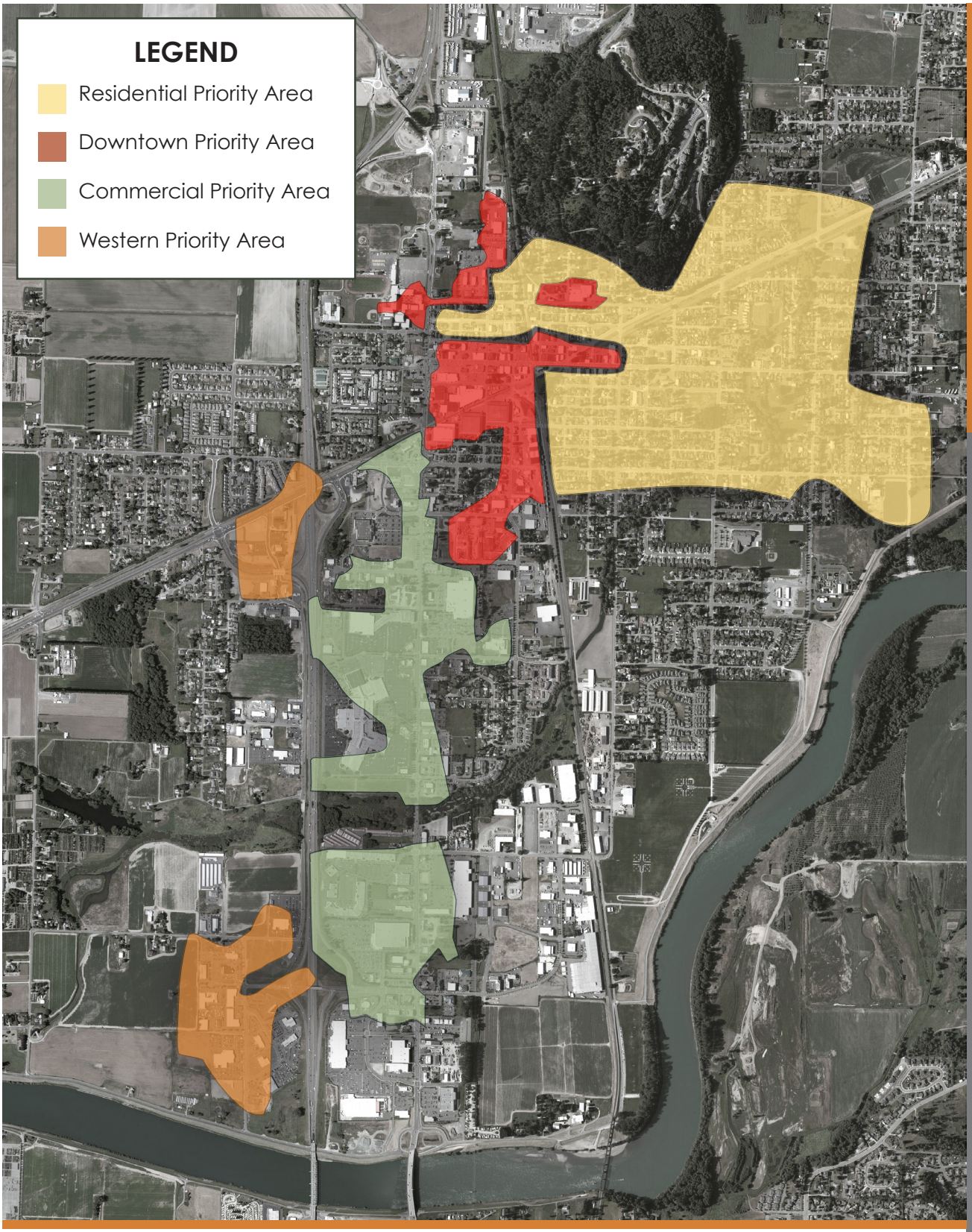
IDENTIFYING PRIORITY AREAS

To identify areas within which to prioritize GSI implementation, the team considered both the level of need and environmental conditions. Level of need was determined by whether the land drained into the slough, contained pollutant-generating surfaces, and/or housed industrial activity. The environmental conditions taken into account spoke to the appropriateness of the land for implementing common GSI techniques. Land that consisted of moderate- to well-drained soils and water tables at least 100 cm deep was considered usable. Land consisting of poorly-drained soils and/or water tables 50-100 cm deep was considered usable under special conditions. The map below shows the results of this process. Usable areas of land were identified and grouped by common attributes.

Four priority areas were eventually designated, as seen on the following page: the downtown area, the residential area, the commercial area, and the western area.

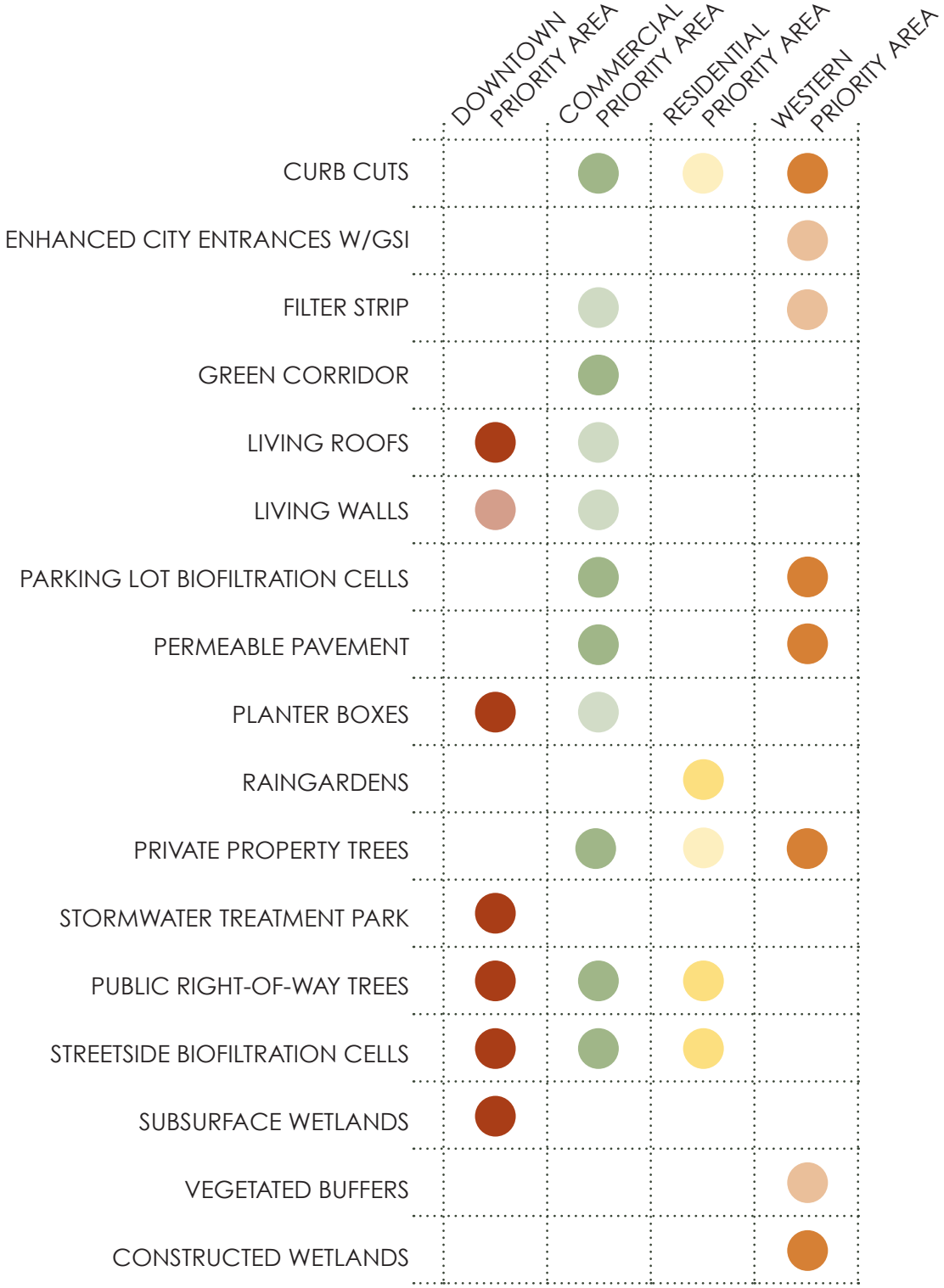
The Downtown Priority Area is characterized by higher density buildings and impervious surfaces comprised of roads and roofs. This area is also the heart of Burlington and serves an important place in the community. The Commercial Priority Area is characterized by large retail stores with extensive parking lots covered in impervious surfaces. The Residential Priority Area generally consists of single-family residential land uses with less impervious surfaces. The Western Priority Area has some agricultural areas as well as an area used by car dealerships. This area also has extensive parking lots with impervious surfaces.





IDENTIFIED PRIORITY AREAS

Based on the analysis shown on the previous page, we identified four main priority areas, each with distinct characteristics and needs.



RECOMMENDED GSI TECHNIQUES

This table shows which GSI techniques would be appropriate for each priority area. The darker dots represent the techniques our team most recommends.

PRIORITY AREA RECOMMENDATIONS

The Commercial Area recommendations focus on introducing GSI techniques such as biofiltration cells and trees to roadways and parking areas with extensive impervious surfaces, actions which both garnered strong support from forum attendees. Additionally, vegetated roofs on large commercial buildings would provide water treatment by intercepting stormwater before it encounters pollutants. A green corridor through the commercial area that allows for both biofiltration and pedestrian and bicycle mobility was also popular at the Public Alternatives Forum.

The Downtown Area recommendations focus on public right-of-ways, where biofilration cells and street trees can be introduced alongside roads. Both of these treatments, along with planter boxes were popular with forum attendees. The commercial and industrial buildings in the area also lend themselves to vegetated roofs, particularly when overlooked by adjacent residential or office buildings. The large expanse of pollution generating impervious surfaces just south of Fairhaven is an ideal location for GSI techniques such as a subsurface wetland. In this location, these techniques could provide much needed water quality treatment while also providing aesthetic enhancement, green space, and educational opportunities in a central location.

The Residential Area has fewer impervious surfaces, but lawns can supply pollution in the form of fertilizers and pesticides. Forum attendees showed a desire for an increased tree coverage both along streets and on residential property, both of which will treat runoff from lawns. Biofiltration cells along the public right-of-way and rain gardens in yards can help address this, and were also popular at the Public Alternatives Forum.

The Western Area has substantial impervious area from the car dealerships. Biofiltration cells within parking lots and vegetated buffers along the periphery are recommended to treat stormwater runoff. Forum attendees showed strong preference for vegetated buffers, and to a lesser extent for wetlands and green off-ramps. Constructed wetlands are another possibility for treating stormwater in this area.

PARKING LOT SWALES

This shows a typical commercial parking lot with GSI features added, including: biofiltration cells, a living roof and planter boxes (under the building awning).

BURLINGTON BOULEVARD

Burlington Boulevard is transformed with streetside bioswales (that also create a protected bike lane), a green corridor, increased tree canopy, and a more pedestrian-friendly environment.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

RESIDENTIAL GREEN STREETS

This shows a typical Burlington residential street with the addition of GSI elements. Streetside bioswales, public and private trees, and private raingardens treat runoff while calming traffic and creating a pleasant environment.

APPROACHES TO IMPLEMENTING GSI

Public Right-of-Ways

For public right-of-ways, the City can evaluate and re-write current street design specifications to incorporate GSI principles into road maintenance and construction. In parking lots for public facilities, the City can use permeable pavement and/or include biofiltration cells. The City can also establish GSI maintenance tracking programs for both public and private lands.

Private Property

Implementing GSI on private land can occur through a regulatory approach, or through an incentive approach, or both. Common regulatory language for GSI includes the requirement that new development infiltrate a certain percentage of stormwater on site. An alternative approach would be that the first inch must be infiltrated. This allows developers to choose the most economical and relevant techniques for their site to accomplish this. However, there is no incentive to go beyond the regulation.

Possible incentives include reduced permit fees, streamlined permitting, reduced drainage utility fees, density bonuses, small grants etc. This approach is more market-based and can be viewed more favorably by developers. It can also be applied to existing residential and commercial developments by providing incentives through the drainage utility or property taxes. For example, Seattle's "Rainwise" program is one example where residents are compensated for installing certified rain gardens.

Additional steps the City can take include providing guidance through a manual or similar product and implementing demonstration projects. In taking these initiatives, the City can show residents and potential developers the effectiveness and economic benefits of GSI.

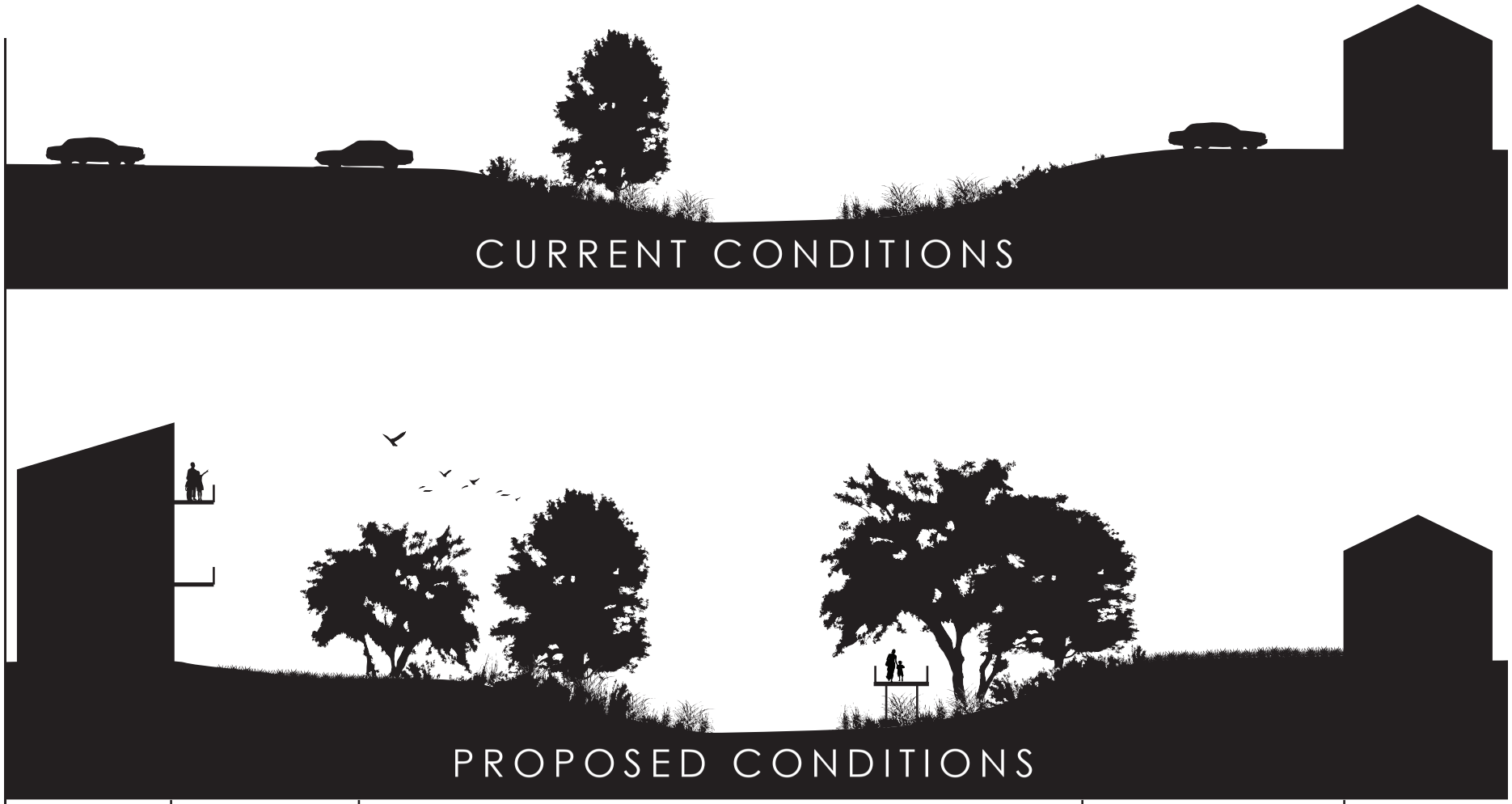
Gages Slough Riparian Areas and Open Space

GAGES SLOUGH RESTORATION OVERLAY DISTRICT

To enhance and restore some of the specific ecological processes that occur along Gages Slough, particular attention to the area immediately around the slough is necessary. The presence of healthy vegetation along the slough would provide both habitat and shade, which keeps the water cooler and more oxygenated. Such a buffer would also treat some stormwater before it enters the slough. Finally, it would provide an enjoyable atmosphere for a walking/biking trail along the slough.

Enhancing the riparian vegetation and providing space for a trail are the main purposes of the Gages Slough Restoration Overlay District. Currently, Gages Slough falls under the purview of the Shoreline Master Plan (SMP), but the Overlay District is planned with the specific needs of the slough in mind, including the implementation of a trail, and can augment existing SMP policies.

The Overlay District would occur around the slough at a set distance determined by the City; the descriptions here suggest 200 feet. In the inner most zone – approximately 0-50 feet from the edge – riparian vegetation would be maintained and enhanced through the planting of native species adapted to wetland environments. No clearing of such vegetation and no construction would be permitted, other than as necessary for the Gages Slough Trail. The next zone – 50-100 feet from the slough edge – would remain pervious to stormwater with no additional impervious surfaces or building construction. The outer zone – 100-200 feet from the slough edge – would contain development that follows GSI techniques, with policies regarding the amount of stormwater to be infiltrated on site. Where the water table is high, underdrains can be installed to prevent flooding. Flexible zoning within the district is also an option, to remove barriers to green development and to encourage implementation of GSI techniques and easements for the trail right-of-way. In some areas, stormwater outfalls could be daylighted and the stormwater treated before entering the slough.



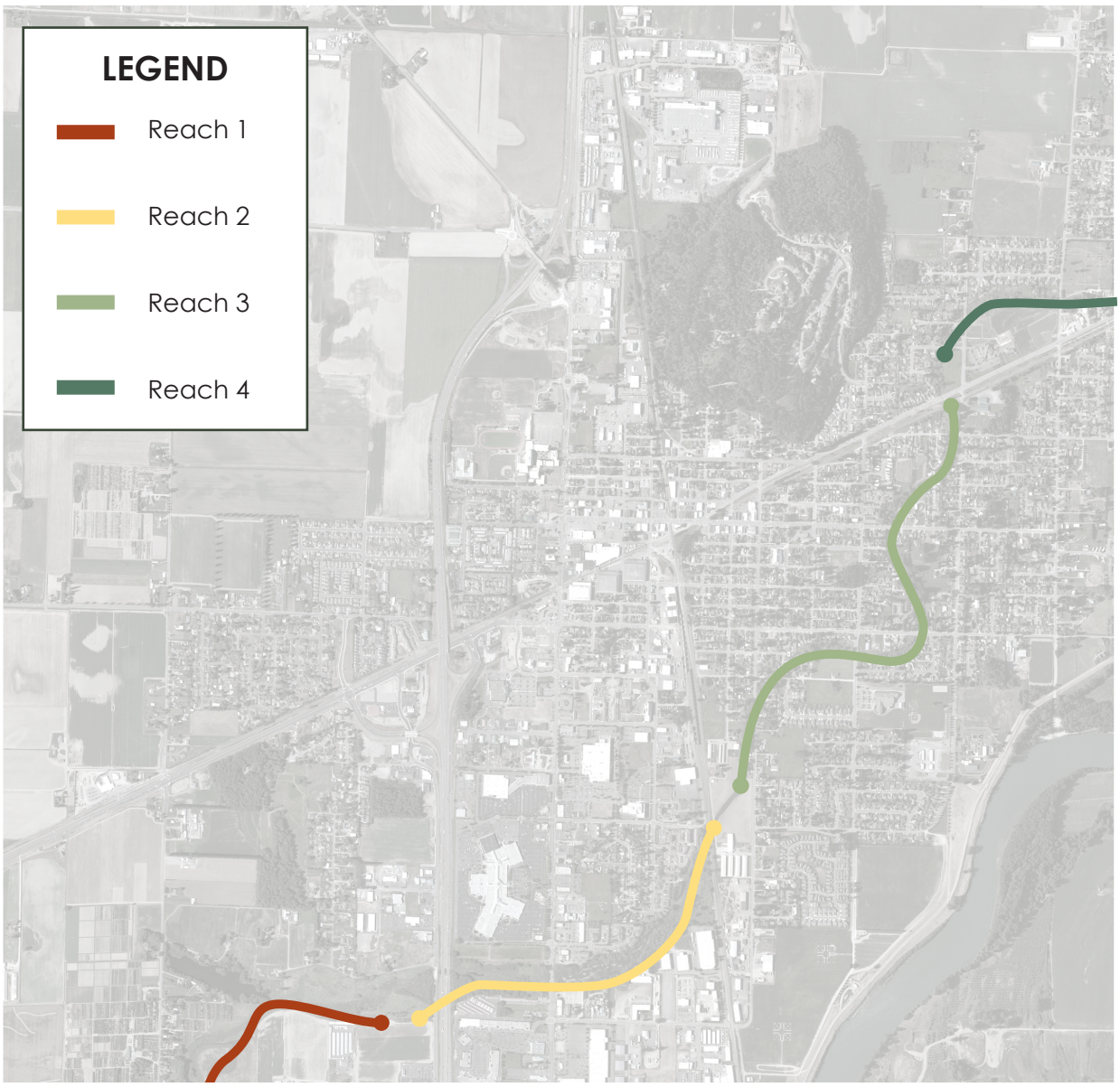
EXISTING AND PROPOSED SLOUGH CONDITIONS

Increasing riparian vegetation around the slough will greatly help to improve water quality, as will increasing pervious surfaces in areas surrounding the slough.

GAGES SLOUGH REACH STRATEGIES

At the community meetings, residents of Burlington indicated a high level of interest in walking and cycling opportunities, as well as environmental education along the slough. A few residents indicated an interest in cafes and dinning opportunities.

To address these interests, and to provide further enhancement to the slough, the team developed strategies specific to different reaches or sections of the slough that compliment our recommendations for the Gages Slough Restoration District. Four reaches were identified, as shown below. For each reach, the team investigated existing conditions, identified priority goals, and developed potential approaches for achieving those goals.



REACH 1- WESTERN REACH

This reach extends from the confluence with the Skagit River to the I-5 bridge. Part of Reach 1 is in unincorporated Skagit County, outside the Burlington city boundary (although still within the Urban Growth Area). Current land use around the reach is mostly agricultural, with some commercial (including storage and car dealerships) closer to I-5. The portions of the reach within Burlington are zoned R-S ("Semi-Public District") and C-2 (heavy commercial). Most of this reach has a significant lack of riparian vegetation.

Priorities

Goals for Reach 1 should include (1) protecting the slough, and (2) increasing access along and near the slough. Increasing vegetation along the slough is the main practice for protecting this portion of the slough. Increased access can occur through the extension of the Gages Slough trail to Gages Lake and the Skagit River and through potential connections to nearby roads, such as Pulver Rd, W Stevens Rd, and McCorquedale Rd.

Implementation Approaches

Different approaches are needed for the portions of the reach that are within Burlington and those beyond. Inside the city, a combination of regulatory and incentive approaches is recommended. A regulatory approach would consist of buffers along the slough where development and/or clearing would not be allowed. Incentives might consist of tax or utility breaks for planting and maintaining vegetation along or near the slough. Additional incentives for providing easements for a trail right-of-way may also be necessary.

For the portion outside city boundaries, the City should collaborate with Skagit County to develop similar strategies for protecting the slough and providing trail access.

REACH 2- CENTRAL REACH

The second reach along the slough extends from the I-5 bridge eastward to Anacortes St. Currently there is a mixture of land uses along this reach – some commercial, some residential and some manufacturing/industrial. The zoning reflects this; most of the area is zoned C-1 and M-1 with a small area of R-1-8.4 along the northeastern portion.

Priorities

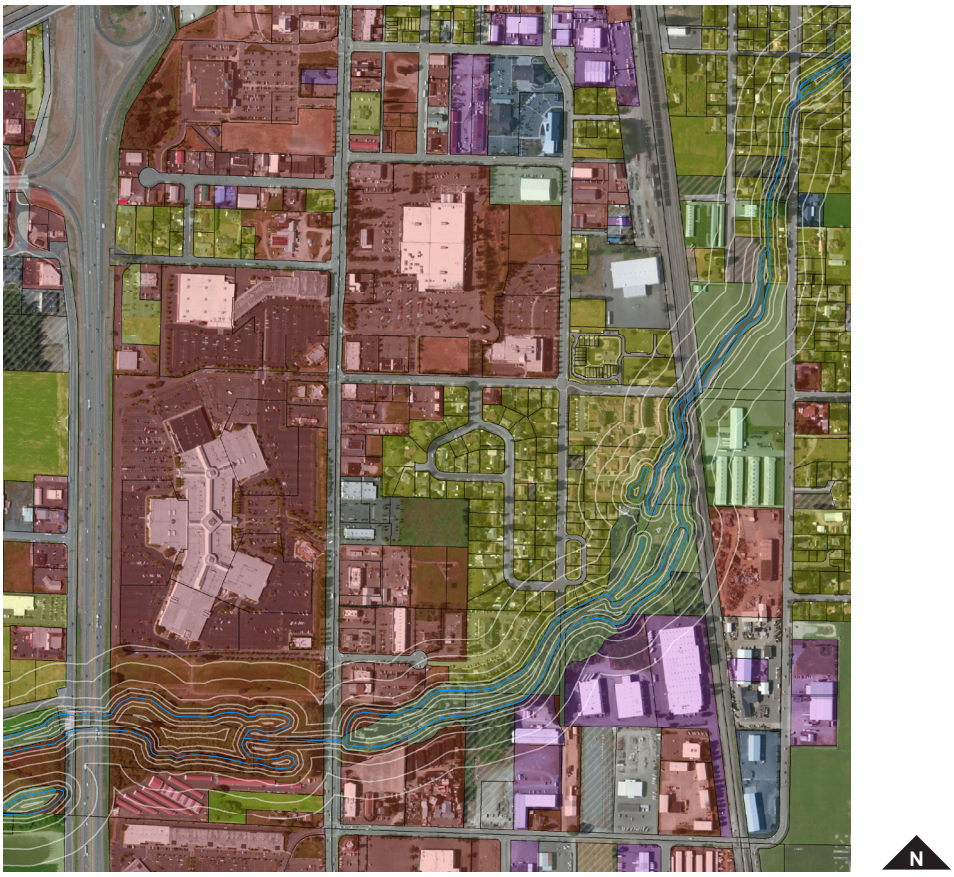
Goals to prioritize along Reach 2 are (1) protecting the slough and (2) creating a green, human-scale corridor.

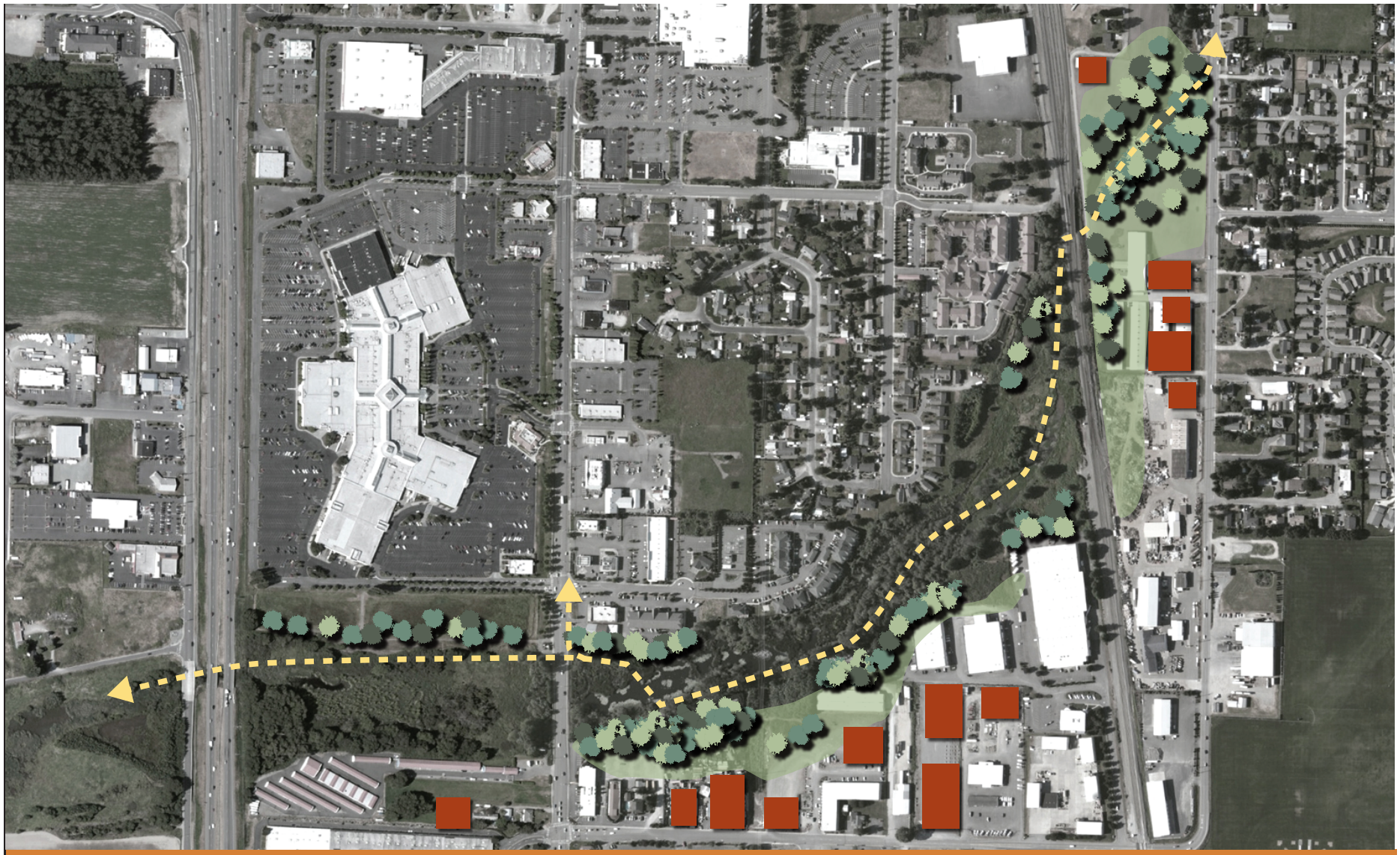
Approaches

Achieving these goals will require a combination of regulatory and incentive-based approaches. Potential regulations could enhance the Gages Slough Restoration District such as by widening the zones along the slough, or by requiring more stormwater to be treated on site.

Incentives include tax breaks and reduced drainage utility fees for re-vegetation along the slough. Density bonuses can be offered in return for trail easements along the slough.

Finally, the City can begin building parts of the Gages Slough Trail to encourage additional support from local landowners and additional investment in the area.





CENTRAL REACH IMPROVEMENTS

N

This graphic depicts how the central reach might transform with added housing, dining, and retail (in red), increased riparian vegetation (in green) and a new trail system (in yellow).

REACH 3- RESIDENTIAL REACH

The residential reach of the slough extends from Anacortes Street to Highway 20. Most of the reach consists of residential land uses and it is mostly zoned as such. Several nearby parks as well as several undeveloped areas can potentially be connected to the slough for pedestrian and cyclist access. There is also existing vegetation immediately adjacent to the slough along this reach.

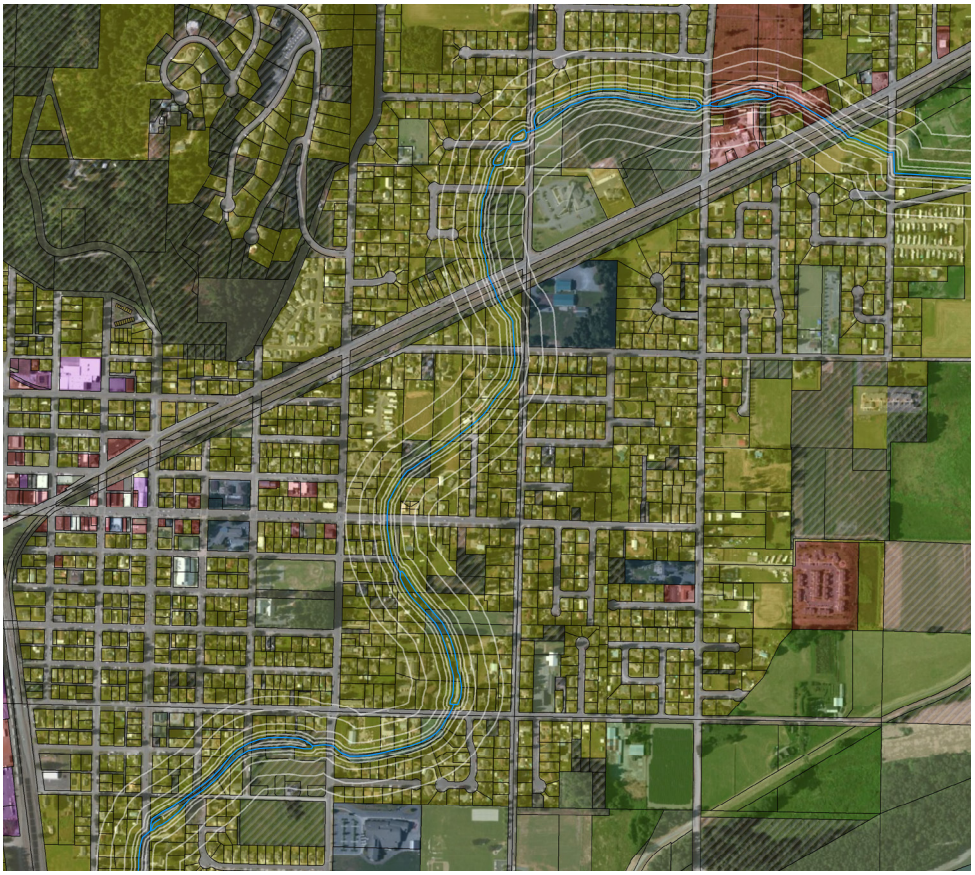
Priorities

The main goal along the residential reach is to protect the slough by expanding the vegetated area around it. Another goal is to consider future access via the Gages Slough Trail and connections to open space.

Approaches

Expanding the vegetation around the slough in this reach will require both an incentive program and an educational program. An education program can provide homeowners with knowledge on how to care for their property along the slough in a manner that protects it. An incentive program can encourage homeowners to plant trees and install rain gardens.

Land that is currently undeveloped may be acquired by the City to designate as open space for future connection to Gages Slough.



REACH 4- NORTHERN REACH

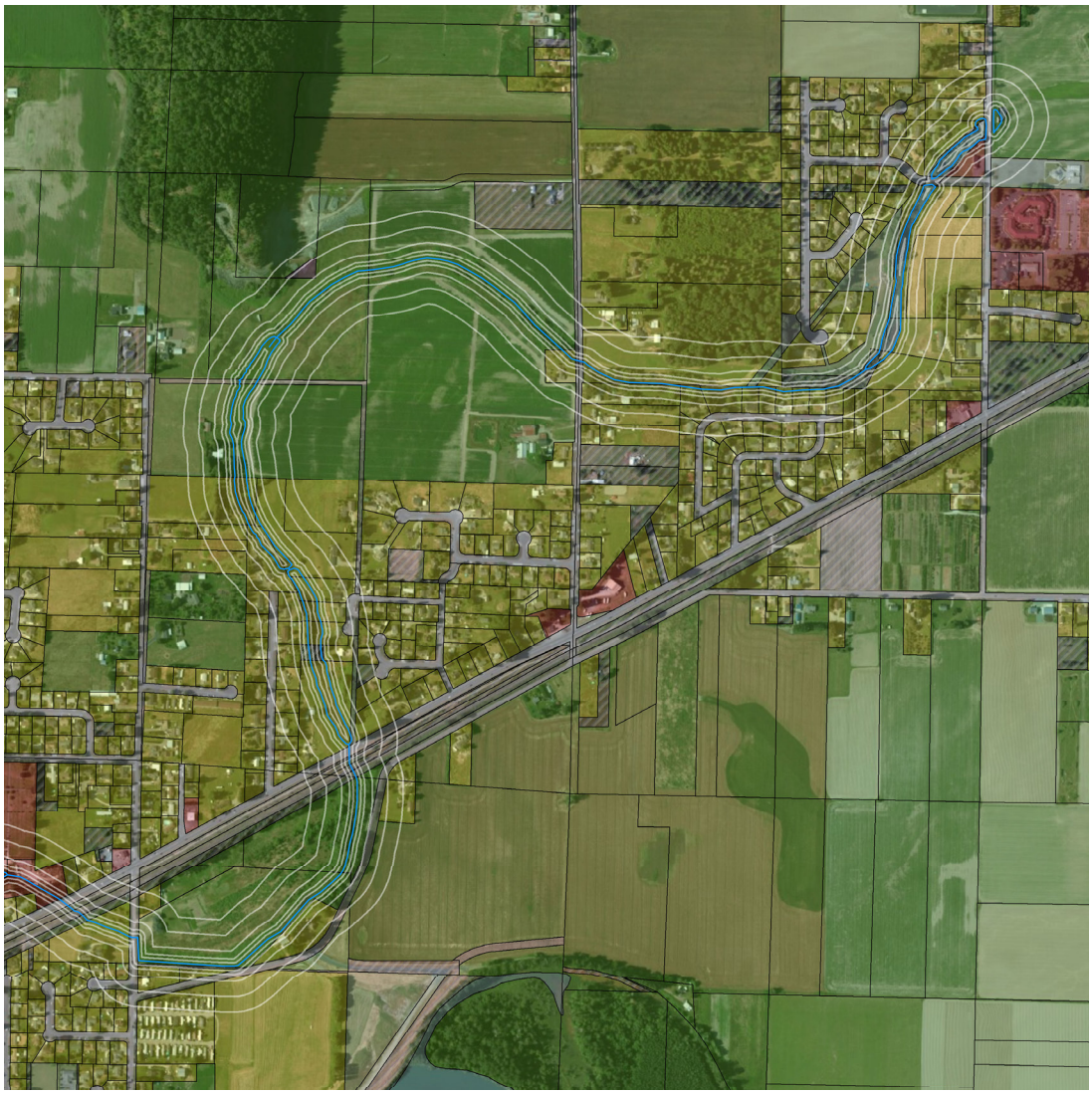
This reach is in the northeastern corner of Burlington and extends away from the city into unincorporated Skagit County. Parts of the reach have residential land uses and other parts have agricultural uses along the slough. Overall, there is little riparian forest. Water quality assessments indicate dangerously high levels of nutrients entering the slough in this upper reach.

Priorities

The main goal for Reach 4 is to protect and restore the slough. This can occur through increasing vegetation in the riparian area.

Approaches

Because a large portion of this reach is outside of Burlington boundaries, the City should consider partnering with Skagit County to develop strategies for restoring the slough along this portion. Doing this in conjunction with Reach 1 may be beneficial.



DOWNTOWN AND COMMERCIAL CORE

Based on findings from the Listening Session and the ULI Technical Advisory Panel, infill development should be focused on Fairhaven Avenue, Burlington's main street downtown. A walkable, mixed-use downtown neighborhood will provide a public amenity within the city, an enhanced authentic main street shopping experience, an increase in housing stock, and connections to the city's commercial core on Burlington Avenue. Many of Burlington's entry points are located in this vicinity, and will serve to additionally define the key entries into the heart of the Downtown District.

To prioritize infill development downtown,the ULI TAP recommends procuring a professional Market Study. Once the Market Study is complete, the team recommends that Burlington:

(1) develop an incentives program for growth and development in the Downtown District;
(2) initiate a TDR Program; and
(3) review existing zoning codes and transition to a Form-Based Code Overlay District for the downtown neighborhood.

The "Y" Plan
Developing Downtown

The team designed a development plan for the Downtown District to serve as a guide for growth and development in this neighborhood. The plan delineates a "Y" shaped area in the core of Burlington's downtown. Beginning at the corner of Fairhaven Avenue and Burlington Boulevard, the plan travels east to Anacortes Street and splits at the fork in the road to include SR20 at Avon Avenue. New development in the "Y Plan" area to increase mixed-use retail and housing, as well as green infrastructure and multi-modal transportation options will not only strengthen Burlington's Downtown District as a vibrant and walkable town center, it will also create much needed connections to other Burlington amenities in the Commercial Core, the Gages Slough, and the Skagit River Front Park.

DOWNTOWN BURLINGTON

Burlington has established shops and cherished restaurants creating small pockets of activity along Fairhaven Avenue. Railroad track crossings and SR-20 traffic in the center of town diminish the walkability of the area.

LIFE-SPACE-BUILDING + INFORMED INVESTMENT STRATEGIES

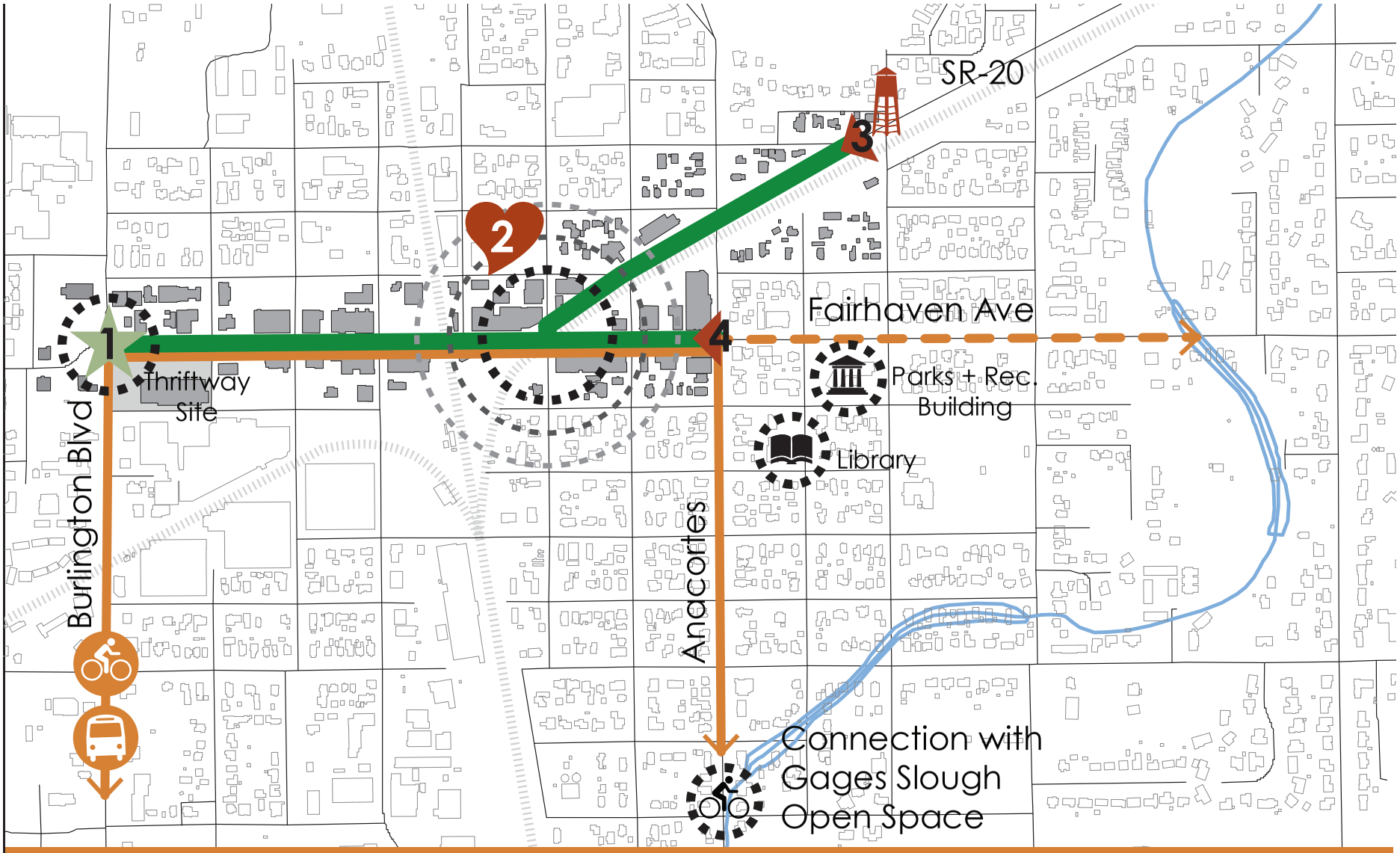
The "Y Plan" uses the guiding principles of the Life-Space-Building methodology created by internationally known Gehl Architects. While standard urban planning typically focuses on placing buildings based on blocks and parcel lines, and determining building size by FAR (floor area ratio) methods, the Life-Space-Building methodology addresses peoples' needs, behavioral patterns, and activities to assess how gathering spaces and buildings can support those needs with building program, form, and location. This methodology focuses on people centered development at the interface between the public and private realms to activate pedestrian friendly streets and public spaces.

Initial City investment in the public spaces and pedestrian amenities will stimulate private investment. Specific initial investment recommendations made by Heather Bunn, VP of Marketing at RAFN Construction Company, included parking infrastructure, utilities, and green stormwater infrastructure. City-provided infrastructure, such as streetscape improvements, street parking, and centrally located parking, will serve to foster valuable partnerships with private developers. A Planned Action Environmental Statement provided by the City of Burlington in tandem with a Developer's Manual outlining parcel development potential will reduce uncertainties for developers and spur development.

Life comes first in community planning.	The quality of life determines the arrangement of the spaces.	The spaces are then thoughtfully framed by buildings

LIFE-SPACE-BUILDING METHODOLOGY

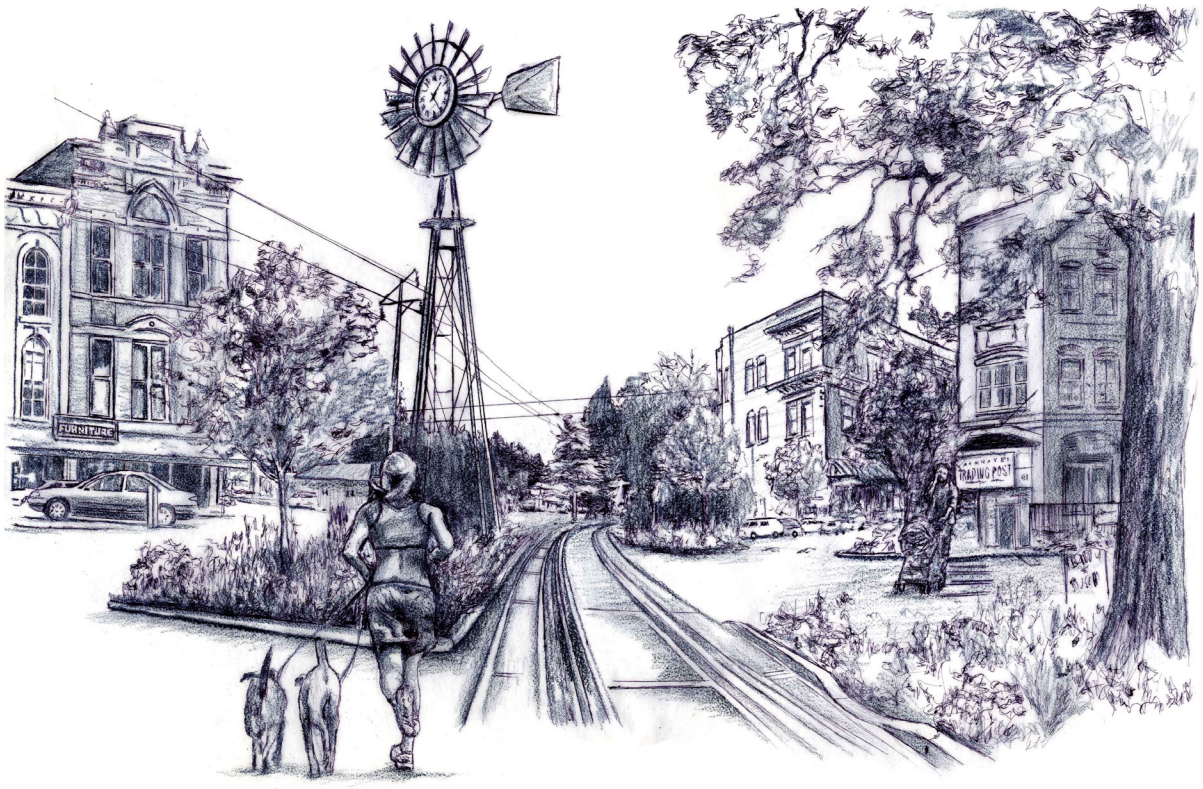
The diagram above depicts the the Life-Space-Building method developed by Gehl Architects.



THE "Y" PLAN

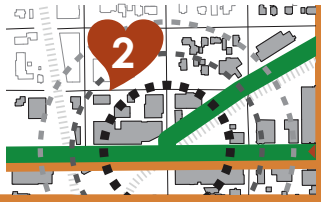
Focusing development on the downtown Y Plan will create a civic space that provides an authentic, small town setting for community and regional events. The infrastructure of GSI, trolley line, and bike lanes will tie the downtown to the rest of Burlington.

ALTERNATIVES A AND B



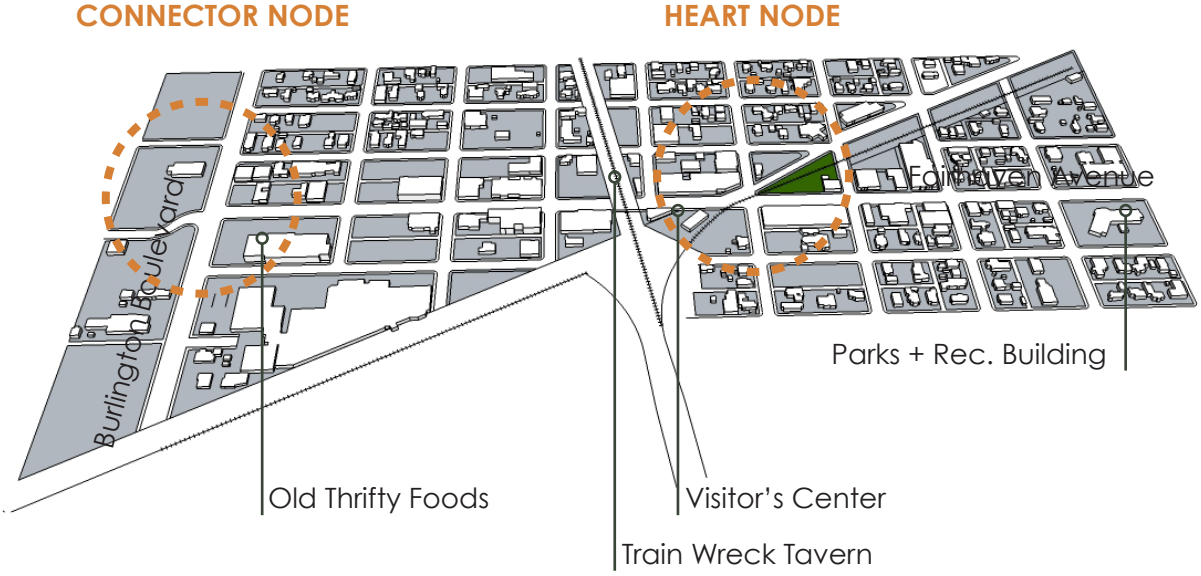
Public feedback was solicited at the July 10, 2013 Public Alternatives Forum, where two alternative "Y Plan" urban design schemes (Alternatives A and B) were introduced to the Burlington community. Both Alternatives were developed according to the Life-Space-Building methodology. The alternatives promote Burlington as a regional services center for shopping, housing, and recreation,

Downtown Nodes



Alternatives A and B each describe options for the two principal downtown nodes, "The Connector" node and "The Heart" node. Icon signage will be implemented to signifiy the importance of the node and to institute a wayfinding device to assist visitors and town citizens alike, throughout Burlington. The first node, at the intersection of Burlington Boulevard and Fairhaven Avenue is termed "the Connector" because it links the Downtown District with the Commercial Core, Interstate 5, and Mount Vernon. This connection also links Fairhaven Avenue in Burlington to Fairhaven Avenue in Bellingham via Chuckanut Drive, a scenic route for cycling and cars. The "Connector Node" is considered the primary entry into the Downtown District and as such, it is a key "capture point" for visitors.

"The Heart" node is literally at the center of the Downtown District. This five way intersection is at the crossroads of Fairhaven Avenue, Cherry Street, and the Cascade Highway which create the boundaries of a centrally located park. Proposed revisions to traffic patterns and expansion of the park to integrate it with the Visitor's Center will create a vital amenity and centrally located public open space.



DOWNTOWN NODES: CONNECTOR AND HEART

Diagram showing the two principal downtown nodes: the "Connector Node" at Fairhaven Avenue and Burlington Boulevard and the "Heart Node" at Fairhaven Avenue and Cherry Street.

Alternative A

Alternative A, the lower intensity option of the two, is characterized by two-story infill development that matches current building height and form in order to enhance the activity of Burlington's downtown while maintaining its authentic, small town character. Repeated green stormwater infrastructure elements inspired by Gages Slough, such as swales and rain gardens, appear throughout the streetscape culminating in an expanded and enhanced public open space and civic plaza. In this plan, raised intersections are incorporated with more frequency in the downtown to denote the whole district as a civic space.

Following the Life-Space-Building methodology, this alternative is developed with the aim of supporting a vibrant walkable downtown "Life," with a pleasant, well-landscaped, "park-like" streetscape. The downtown is designed to foster shopping, recreational, and socializing opportunities. Increased residential capacity downtown further promotes a lively city-center.

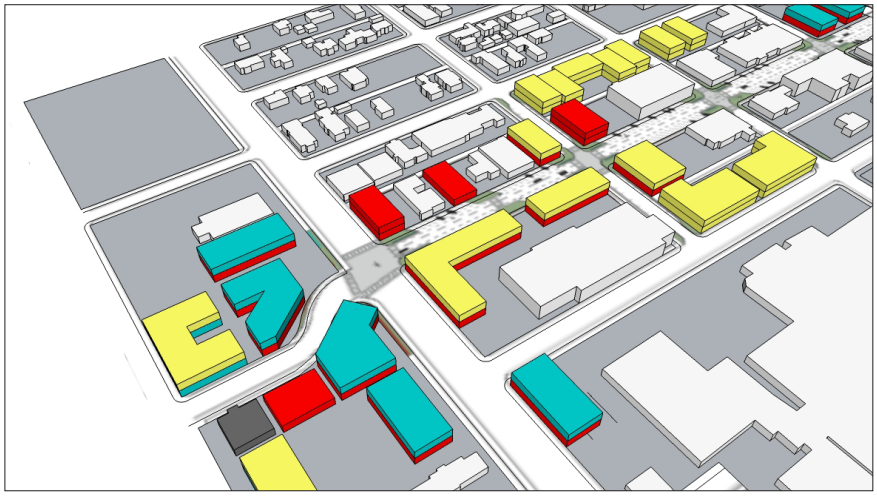
CONNECTOR NODE PERSPECTIVE

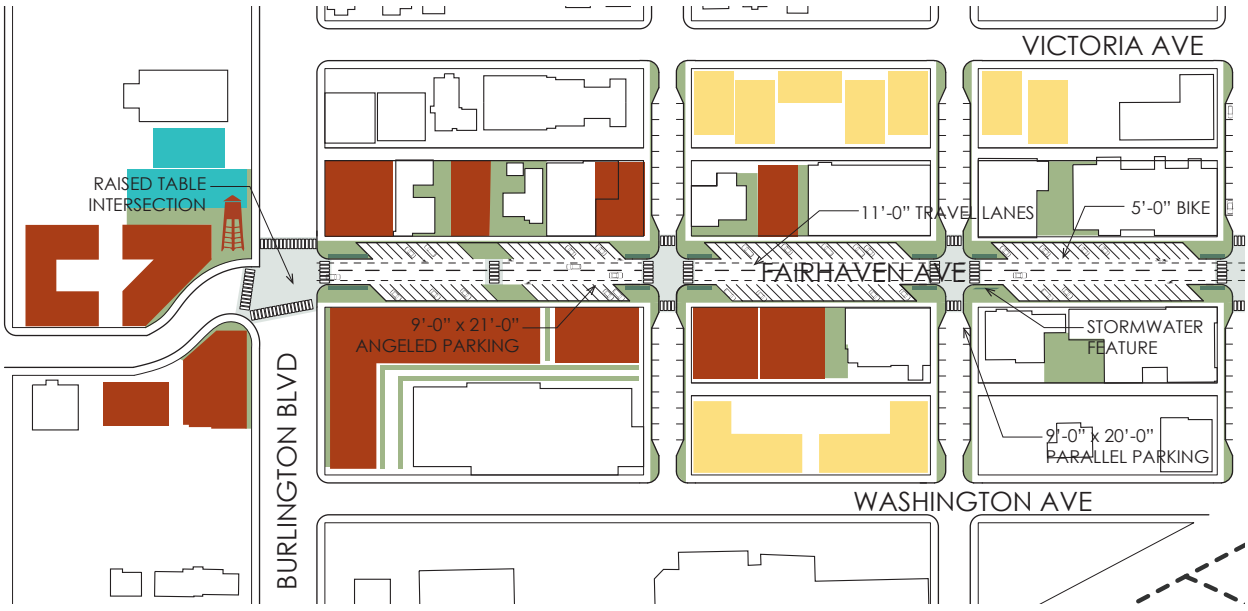
Sketch of the Connector Node at Fairhaven Avenue and Burlington Boulevard for Alternative A. This alternative is lower intensity with a focus on infilling the empty lots with buildings similar in scale to the existing buildings.

CONNECTOR NODE

At the Connector Node, green stormwater infrastructure elements, such as green curb bulbs and planting strips, along both sidewalks and street edges provide stormwater treatment in the existing 80 foot righ-of-way. Repeated tree clusters at street corners and along both sides of Fairhaven offer pedestrians a sense of enclosure and protection from traffic. Five-foot bike lanes in both directions along Fairhaven enhance the existing right-of-way, so that downtown becomes a connector for the Burlington and regional bike loops.

Retail
Office
Residential





CONNECTOR NODE PLAN

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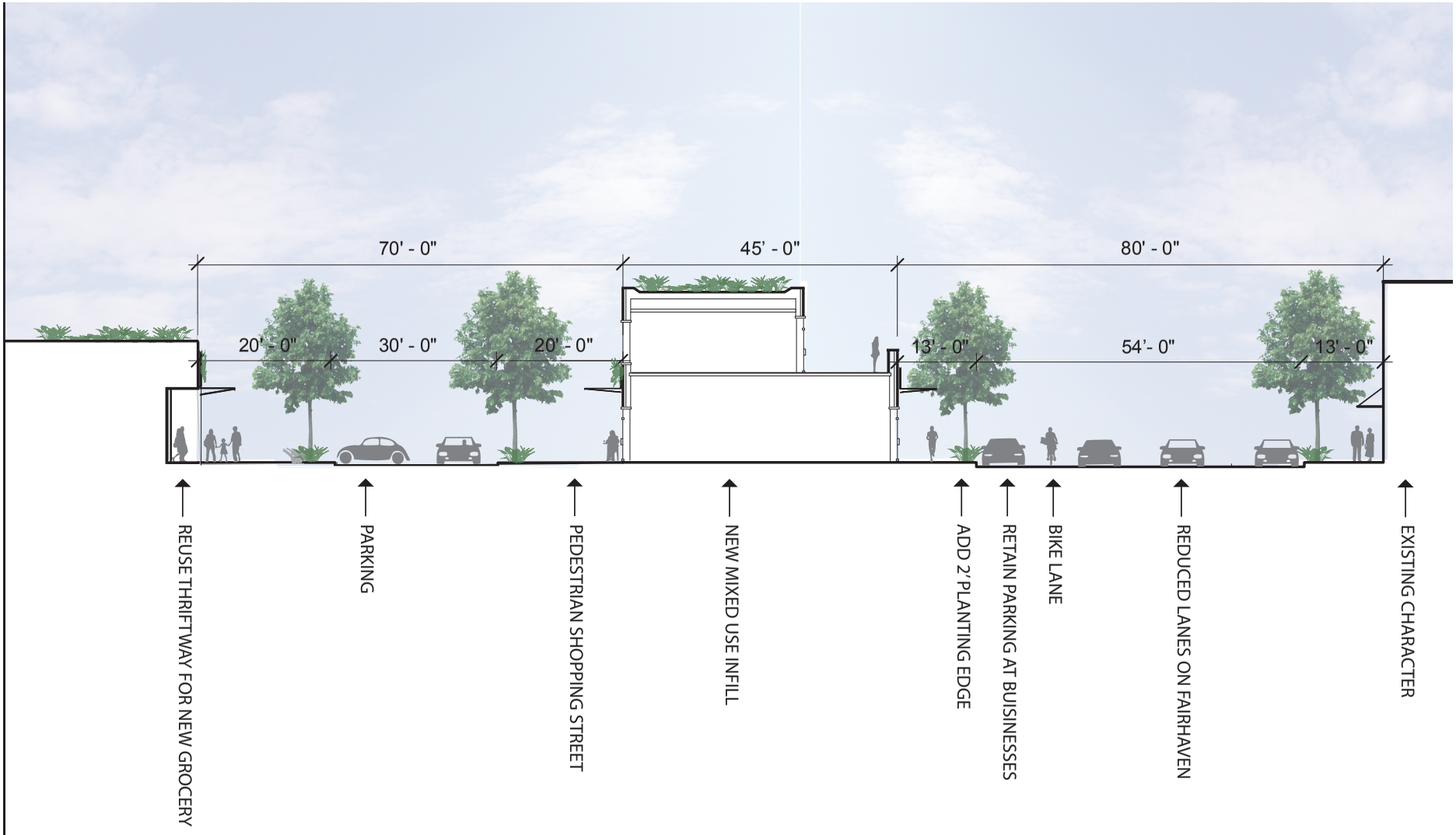
Alternate A: Zoning and plan diagrams demonstrate proposed development oportunities on Fairhaven Avenue.



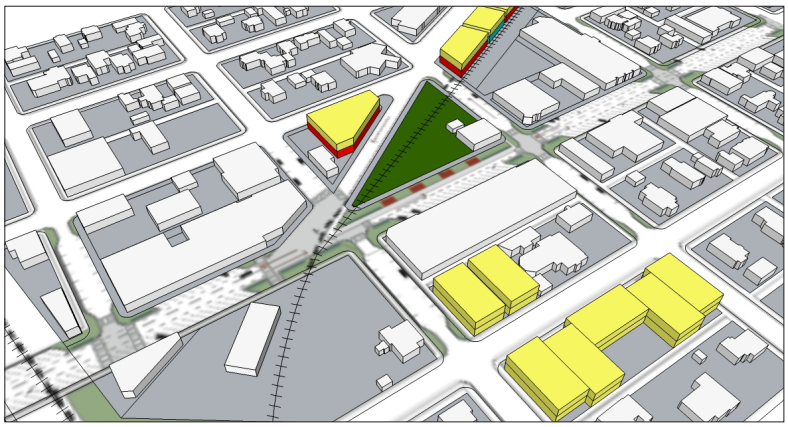
STREET SECTION OF THE CONNECTOR NODE

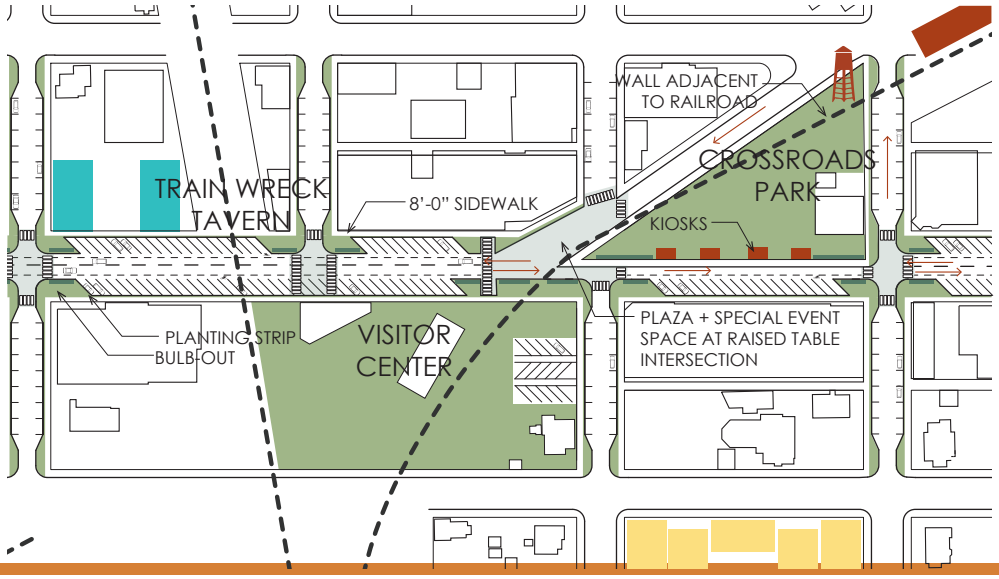
Alternative A creates an internal shopping street on the Thrifty Foods property by adding small, two story mixed-use buildings on Fairhaven and reusing the Thrifty Foods building as a new grocery store.

HEART NODE

Raised paving at the Heart Node, similar to that found outside of Burlington's local library, signals a pedestrian zone and provides a civic plaza for special events. City-wide Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI) features culminate at this city center, in an expanded gathering space at the site of the existing downtown park. Now termed "Crossroads Park," this public open space and civic plaza is enlarged and bordered by one way traffic as a quasi roundabout. Converting to one-way traffic allows the park to expand into the existing right-of-way not only increasing civic open space, but also improving pedestrian safety the at five way intersection. Food kiosks lining the park's Fairhaven street-side, along with moveable tables and chairs, encourage visitors to linger. Lastly, Crossroads Park will expand the existing open space by connecting it with the Visitor's Center increasing opportunities for community events.

Retail
Office
Residential

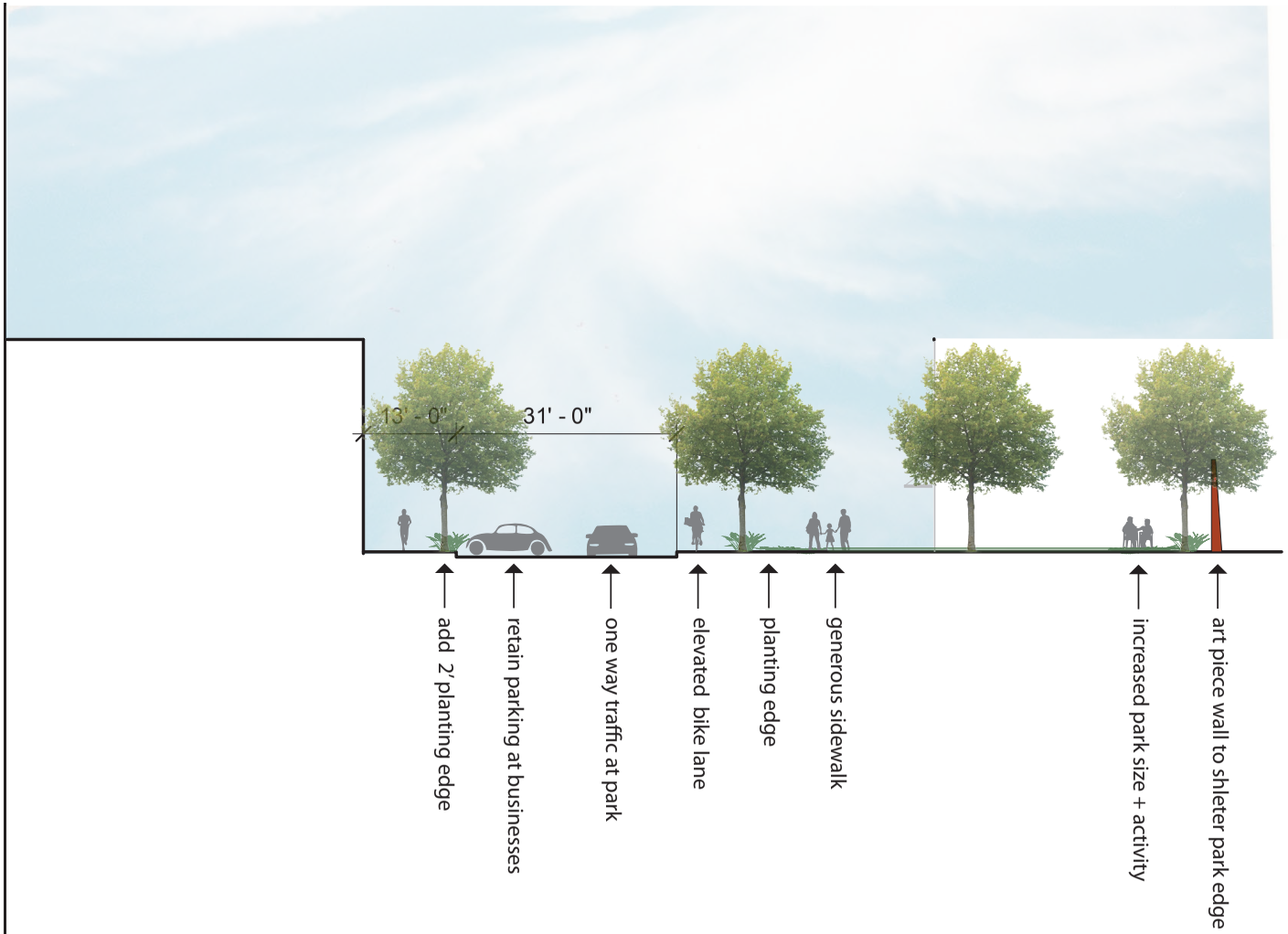




HEART NODE PLAN

N

Alternate A: Zoning and plan diagrams demonstrate proposed development oportunities on Fairhaven Avenue.

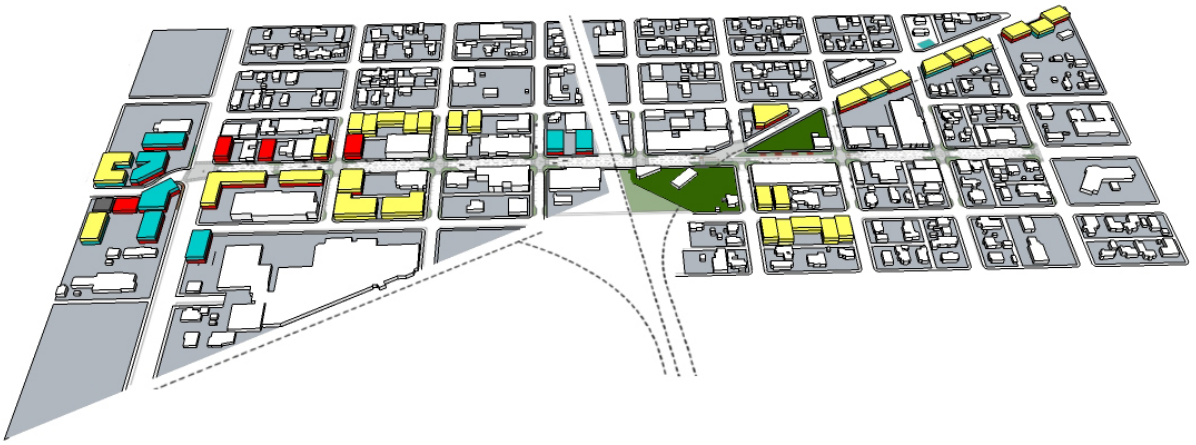


STREET SECTION OF THE HEART NODE

In Alternative A the park is expanded to create a generous pedestrian zone and parking is retained in front of retail.

SUMMARY

Alternative A is characterized by two-story retail and residential development that matches current building height and form. The new development will serve to foster activity of Burlington's downtown while maintaining its authentic, small town character. Repeated green stormwater infrastructure elements inspired by Gages Slough appear throughout the streetscape. Raised intersections are incorporated with more frequency in the downtown to denote the whole district as a civic space. Following the Life-Space-Building method, Alternative A is developed with the aim of supporting a walkable downtown "Life."



Retail
Office
Residential

AERIAL VIEW OF ALTERNATIVE A

Proposed build-out for Alternative A.

Alternative B

Maintaining many of the significant attributes of Alternative A, Alternative B, the higher intensity infill development option of the two, encourages three- to four-story residential buildings directly backing two-story mixed-use buildings along Fairhaven Avenue. This plan provides the dual-advantages of retaining historic building form fronting Fairhaven, while increasing residential capacity in the downtown. This increase in residential units, as compared to Alternative A, will contribute to a compact, walkable downtown where residents can live, socialize, shop, and work.

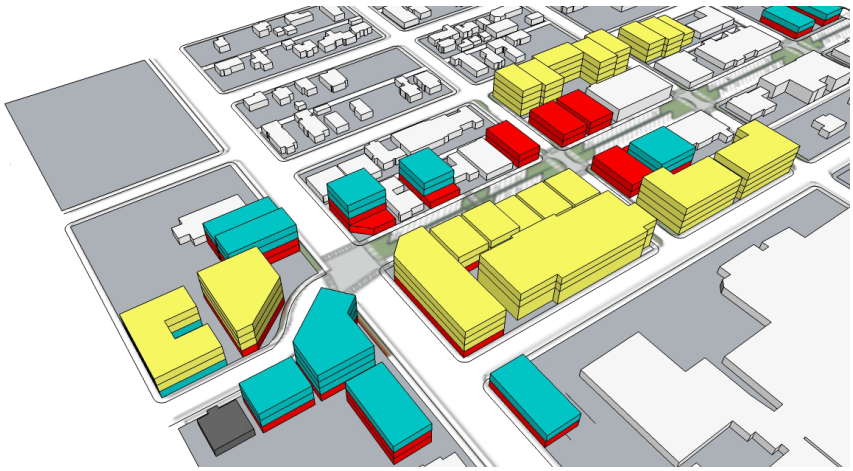
CONNECTOR NODE PERSPECTIVE

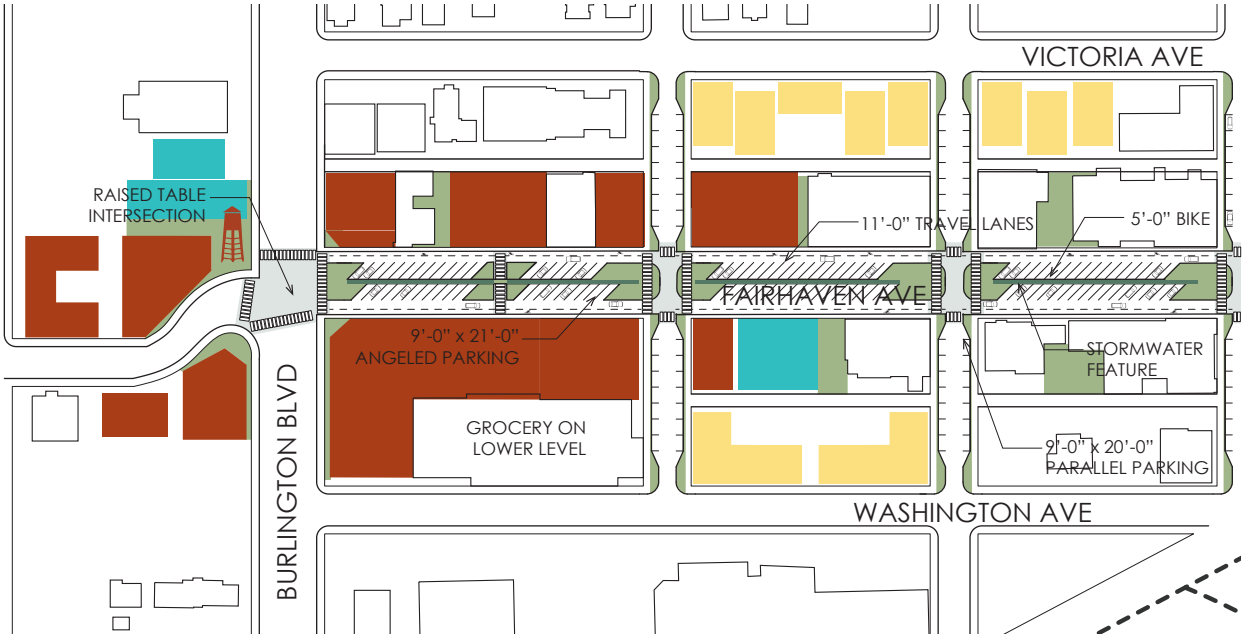
Altenative B: Connector Node sketch depicting the activities at the corner of Fairhaven Avenue and Burlington Boulevard. The taller buildings located at this key intersection signify it as the main entry into the Downtown District.

CONNECTOR NODE

Building setbacks at the corner of Burlington and Fairhaven provide small public pocket parks at the Connector Node, while, similar to Alternative A, this downtown entry is denoted through iconic architecture, signage, green stormwater infrastructure elements, and a raised intersection. These design elements signify a pedestrian zone for those living and working in the Downtown District. In this alternative, taller buildings of three- to four-stories are concentrated at the corners of the connector to signal an intensity of activity on the street, as well as an appropriate human scaled height to width ratio between buildings and street elements.

Retail
Office
Residential





CONNECTOR NODE PLAN

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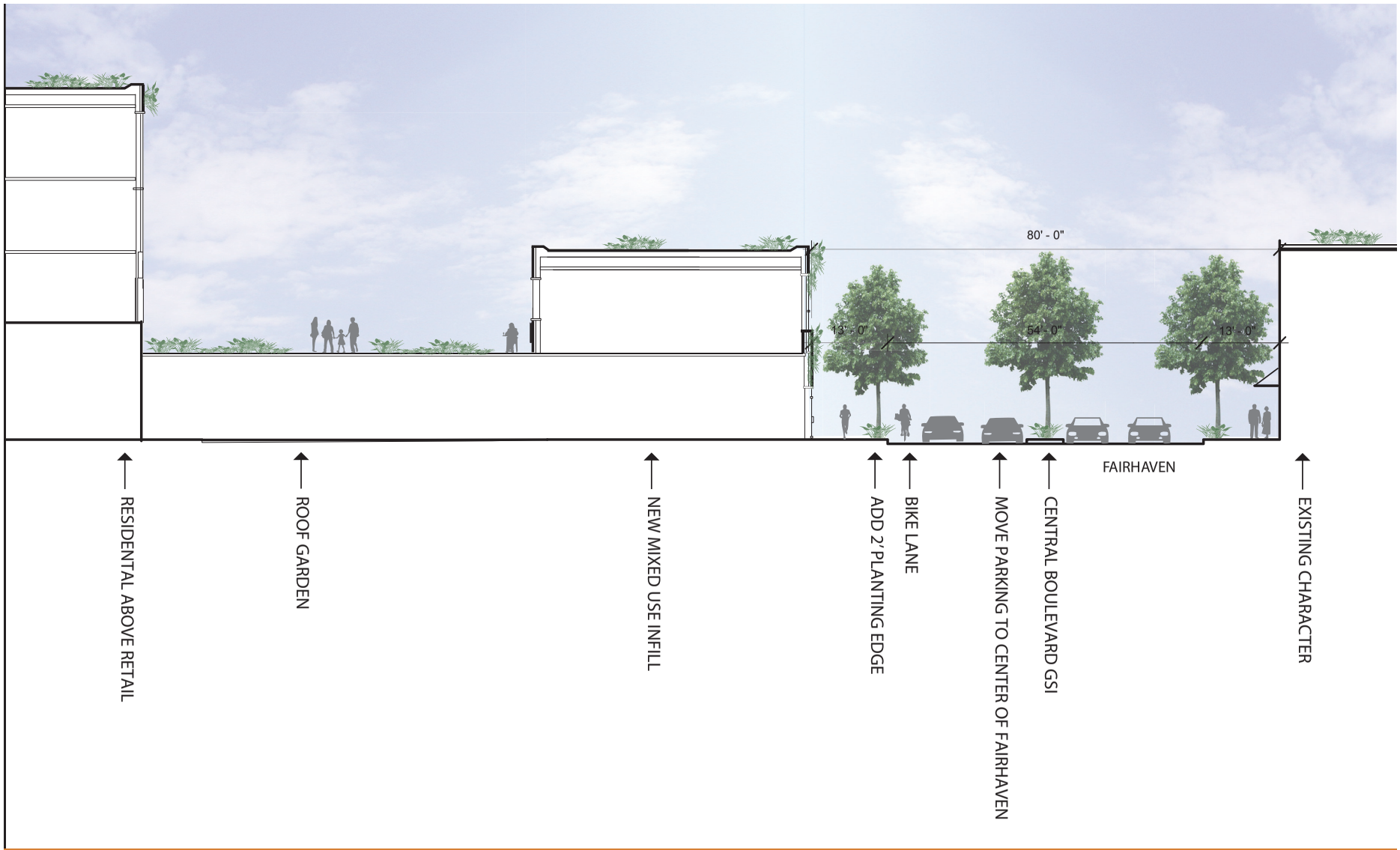
Alternate B: Zoning and plan diagrams demonstrate proposed development oportunities on Fairhaven Avenue.



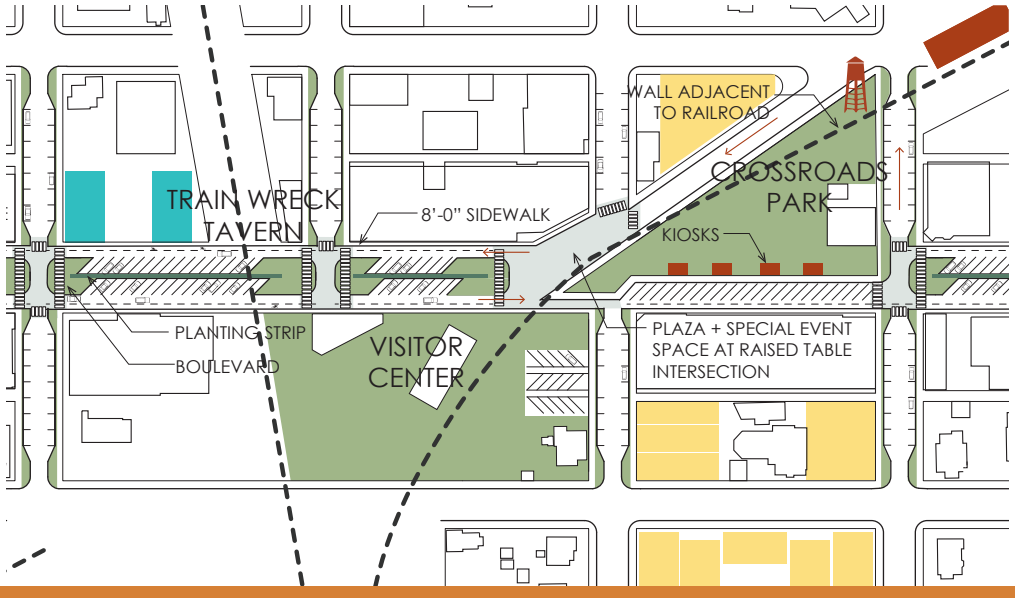
STREET SECTION OF CONNECTOR NODE

In Alternative B, the entire Thrifty Foods site will be replaced by mixed use development with a roof garden for residents.

HEART NODE

A green boulevard along Fairhaven serves to link Fairhaven with the proposed bus and bike loop by providing space for Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI) elements recurring throughout the loop. This green boulevard allows parking in the center of the street and designated bike lanes along the street edges. Locating parking in the center of the street fosters slower traffic speeds for more comfortable pedestrian experience and provides space for a succession of trees along the center median. Similar to Alternative A, the park will expand to create a central public gathering space and civic plaza at the Heart Node, with one way traffic bordering the park to increase pedestrian safety. The park is designed to physically connect to the Visitor's Center with a raised intersection.

Retail
Office
Residential



HEART NODE PLAN

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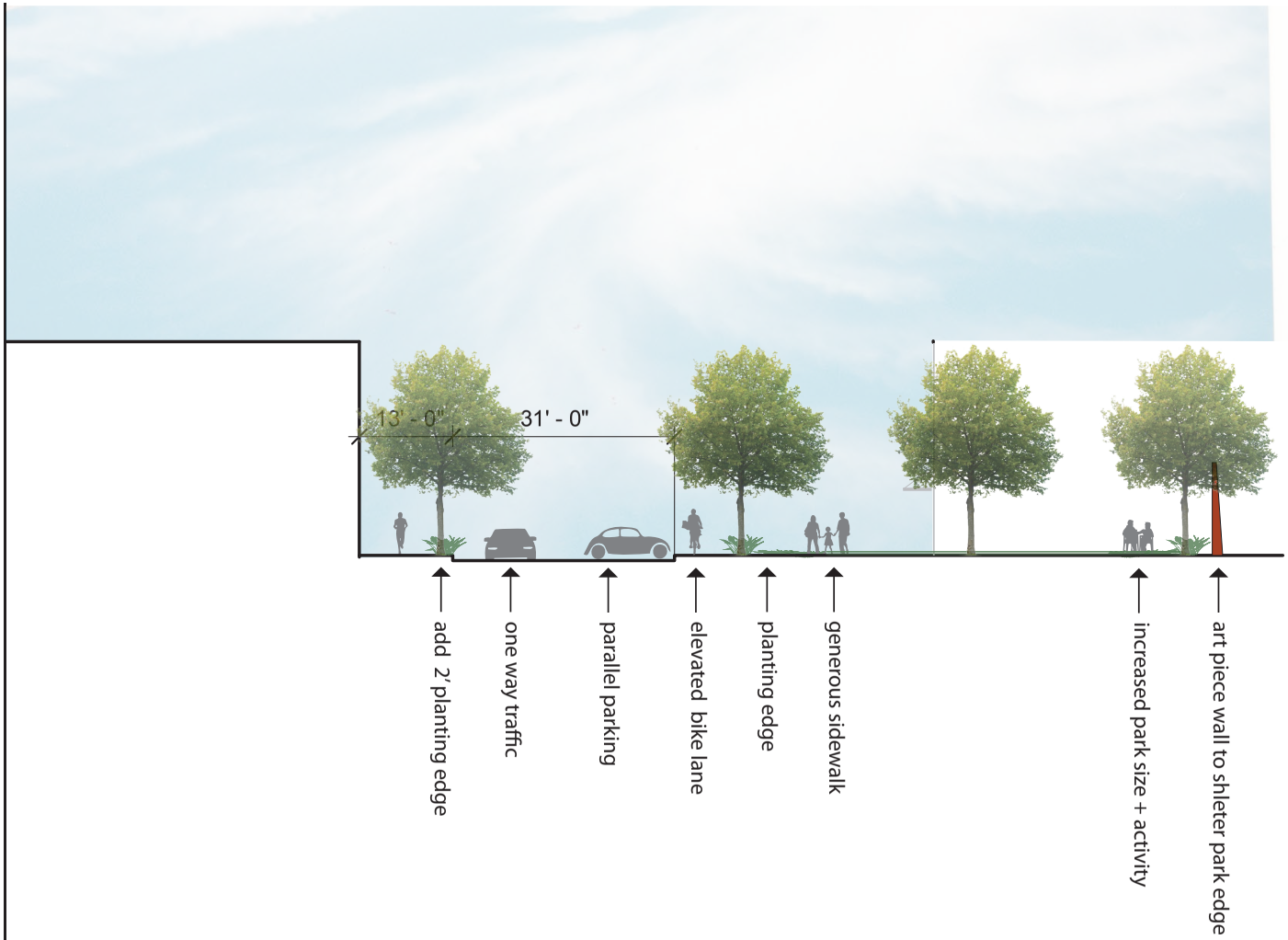
Alternate B: Zoning and plan diagrams demonstrate proposed development oportunities on Fairhaven Avenue.



STREET SECTION OF THE HEART NODE

In Alternative B the park is expanded to be in line with the central boulevard GSI and parking continues from the central boulevard along the side of the park.

SUMMARY

A combination of two-, three-, and four-story buildings engenders a sense of enclosure on the street, supporting the "Life" and "Space" for Burlington. The increased height and scale of the buildings at "The Connector" node intensifies the entry gateway into the Downtown District. The scale of the buildings incrementally decreases from west to east along Fairhaven Avenue. The old Thrifty Foods at the corner of Burlington and Fairhaven is replaced by a four-story residential apartment building that fronts Fairhaven Avenue.

As in Alternative A, at the Heart Node, retail and residential mixed-use buildings frame Crossroads Park to define the park as an outdoor community "living room."

Retail
Office
Residential

AERIAL VIEW OF ALTERNATIVE B

N

Alternative B: Proposed development.

HYBRID PLAN

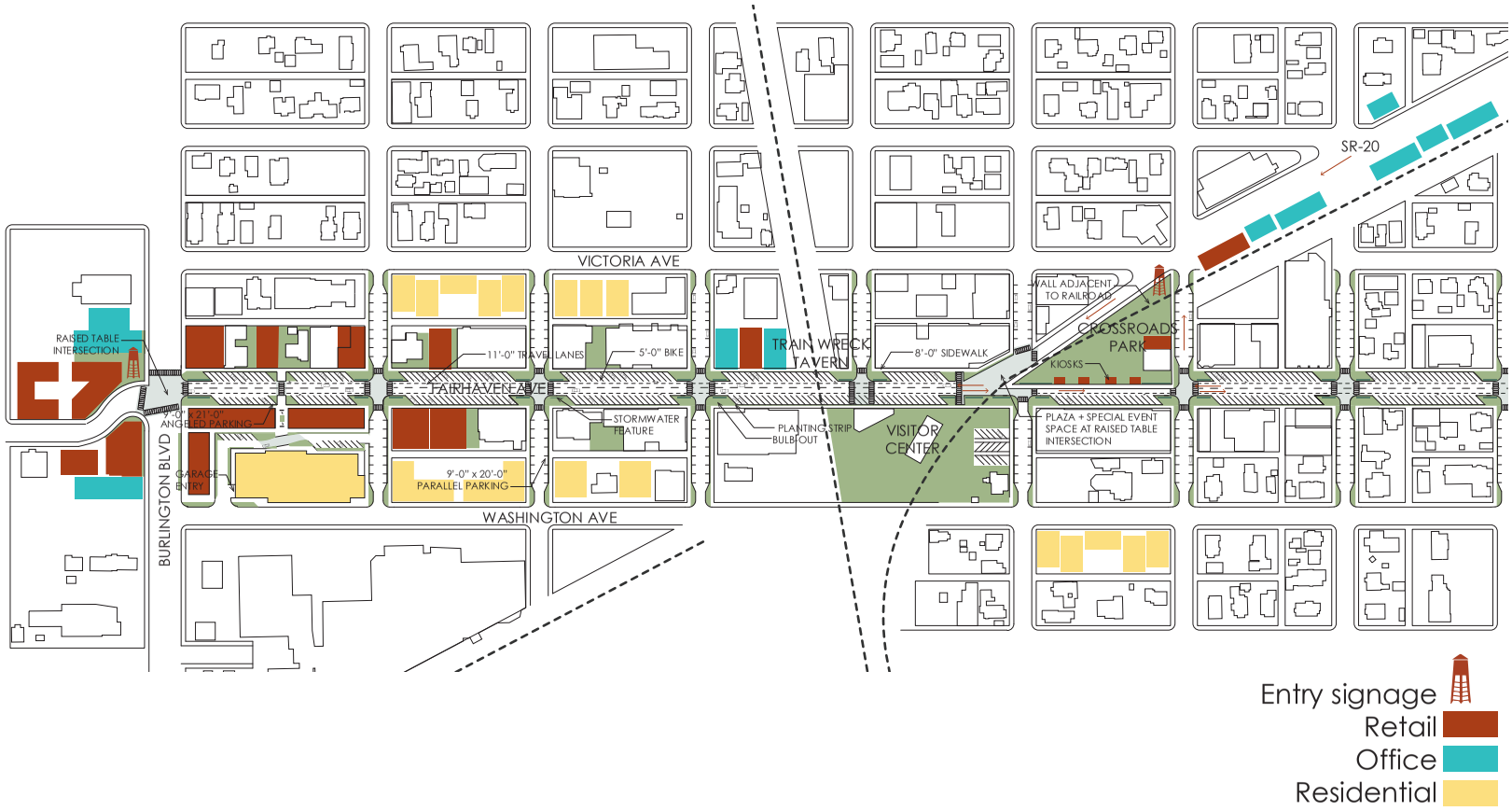
Based on the feedback from the Public Alternatives Forum and input from local policy administrators (City Council, Planning Commission, and Chamber of Commerce members) and downtown business owners, the Hybrid Plan combines the preferred design elements of Alternatives A and B.

INTRODUCTION

Public input was gathered at the July 10 Public Alternatives Forum, where community members provided feedback regarding urban design Alternatives A and B (see Appendix). Depictions of proposed physical improvements, infill, and implementation strategies for each of the two alternatives in conjunction with stormwater treatment approaches spurred positive and lively informal discussions between the team and the public. At several stages in the following week, local policy administrators including city council, planning commission, and chamber of commerce members, as well as downtown business owners offered further input on the two conceptual schemes. The resultant preferred Hybrid Plan merges the favored design elements of Alternatives A and B into a single vision for the Downtown District in the City of Burlington.

Following the Life-Space-Building methodology, the Hybrid Plan aims to foster a vibrant, walkable downtown "life" that will serve a new and essential downtown residential community. Initial and continued investment in a compact downtown core where residents can live, shop, socialize, and work will promote healthy growth and community sustainability. The plan incorporates Burlington's existing amenities to increase visitorship, such as the "Main Street" downtown experience and Gages Slough, and enhanced connectivity via integrated bike, transit, and parking solutions. The primary goals of the Hybrid Plan are to:

1. increase walkability and connectivity within and around Burlington, in particular along Fairhaven;
2. incentivize infill development downtown;
3. increase residential capacity within walking distance of downtown;
4. increase the housing stock and housing options for residents by offering both rental and for-sale units close to downtown; and
5. attract private development by way of initial public infrastructure investments.



HYBRID PLAN

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CONNECTOR NODE

Opinions were largely consistent regarding the empty Thrifty Foods building at the Connector Node intersection. An overwhelming 85 percent of Burlington citizens favored an internal shopping street between the old Thrifty Foods and proposed buildings along Fairhaven over a larger building with no shopping street, while 69 percent supported a three- to four-story building over repurposing the empty Thrifty Foods. Accordingly, the Thrifty Foods building is replaced by four-story residential development with a new farmer-focused grocery on the ground floor to support regional agriculture and local character with internal shopping streets.

Opinions regarding building height and intensity were less concordant. While Alternative B's three- to four-story residential development behind two-story mixed-use buildings bested Alternative A's uniform two-story building height by 55 percent, 57 percent of participants favored Alternative A's consistent two-story building height along Fairhaven over Alternative B's taller buildings concentrated at the corner of Burlington Boulevard and Fairhaven Avenue.

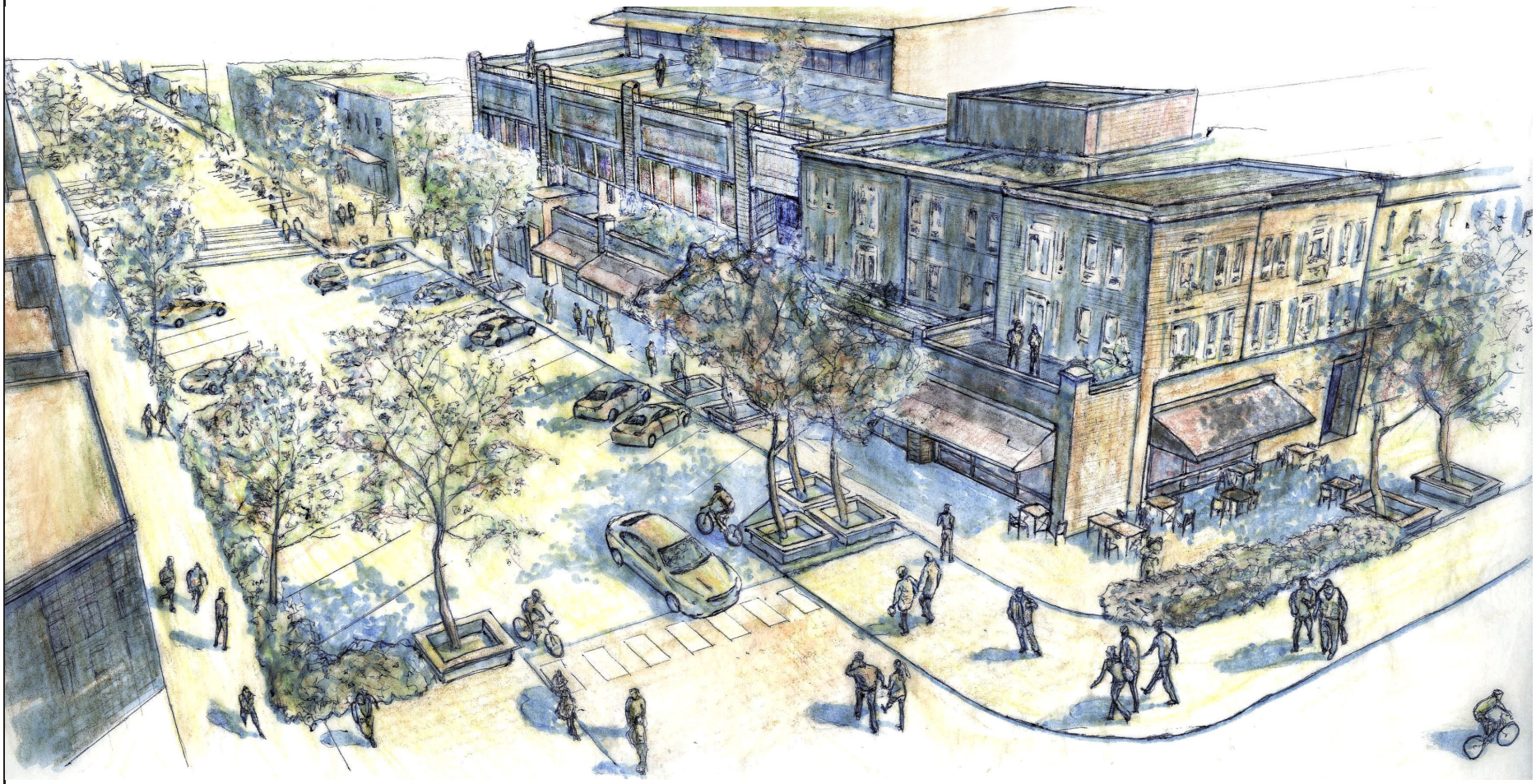
In keeping with the Life-Space-Building methodology, the Hybrid Plan supports a combination of building heights compliant with its strong historic fabric, so that appropriately scaled building-height-to-street-width ratios afford those traveling along Burlington a sense of enclosure. Three- to four-story residential buildings are located directly behind two-story mixed use buildings along Fairhaven Avenue, with the aim of increasing residential capacity within walking distance of downtown while retaining a small town Main Street character. In addition, an increase in building height at the corner of Burlington Boulevard and Fairhaven Avenue will delineate a well-defined downtown entrance. For this reason, buildings situated on corner lots at this location should be allowed an increase in height by one-story beyond that allowed on adjacent parcels, with three stories maximum on Fairhaven and four stories maximum on Burlington Boulevard.

CONNECTOR NODE PERSPECTIVE

Sketch of the Connector Node at Fairhaven Avenue and Burlington Boulevard for the Hybrid Plan

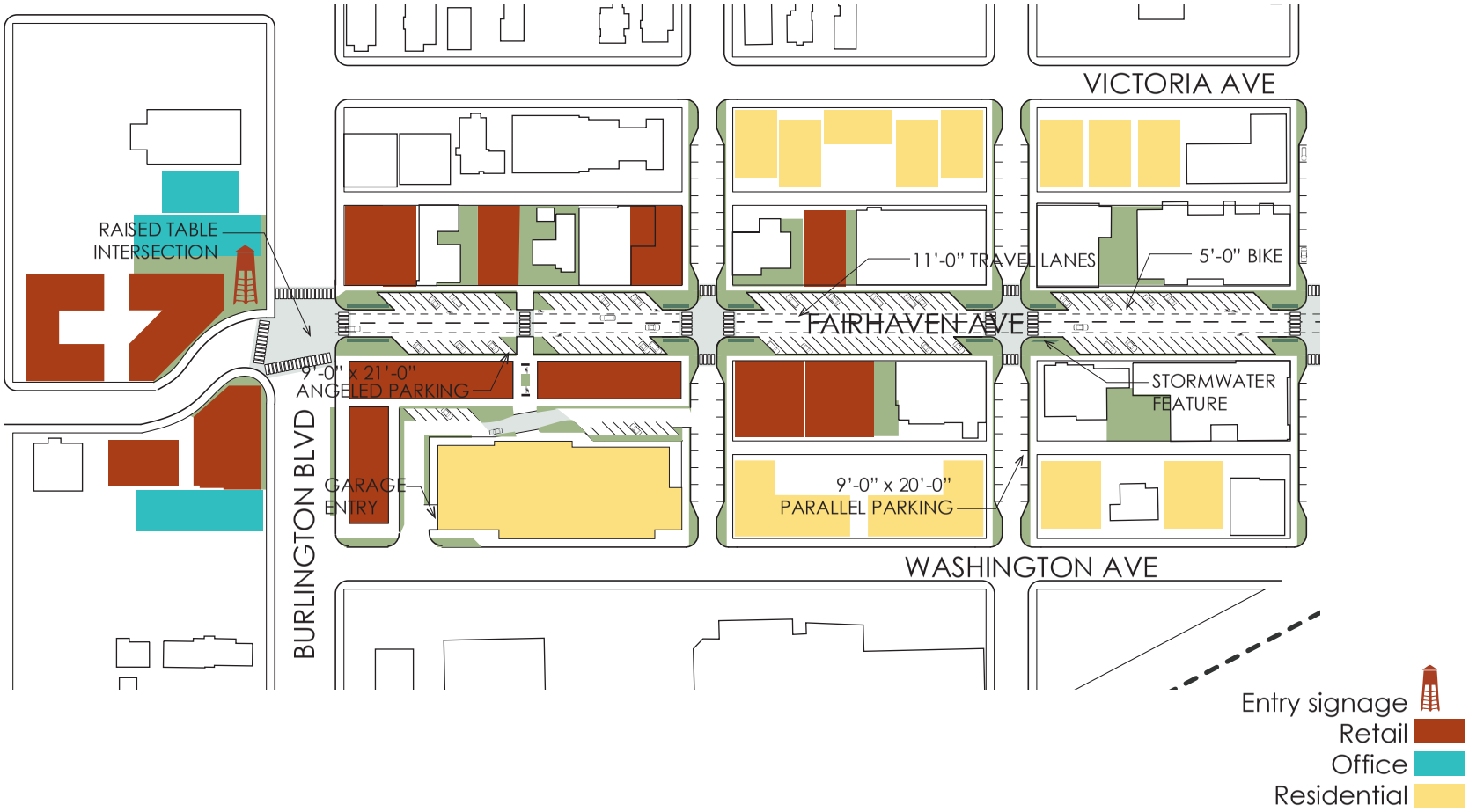
CONNECTOR NODE DIGITAL MODEL

Aerial view of the proposed development and internal shopping street on the Thrifty Foods site at Fairhaven Avenue and Burlington Boulevard.



CONNECTOR NODE AERIAL RENDERING

Illustrative sketch looking down on the corner of Fairhaven Avenue and Burlington Boulevard .



CONNECTOR NODE PLAN

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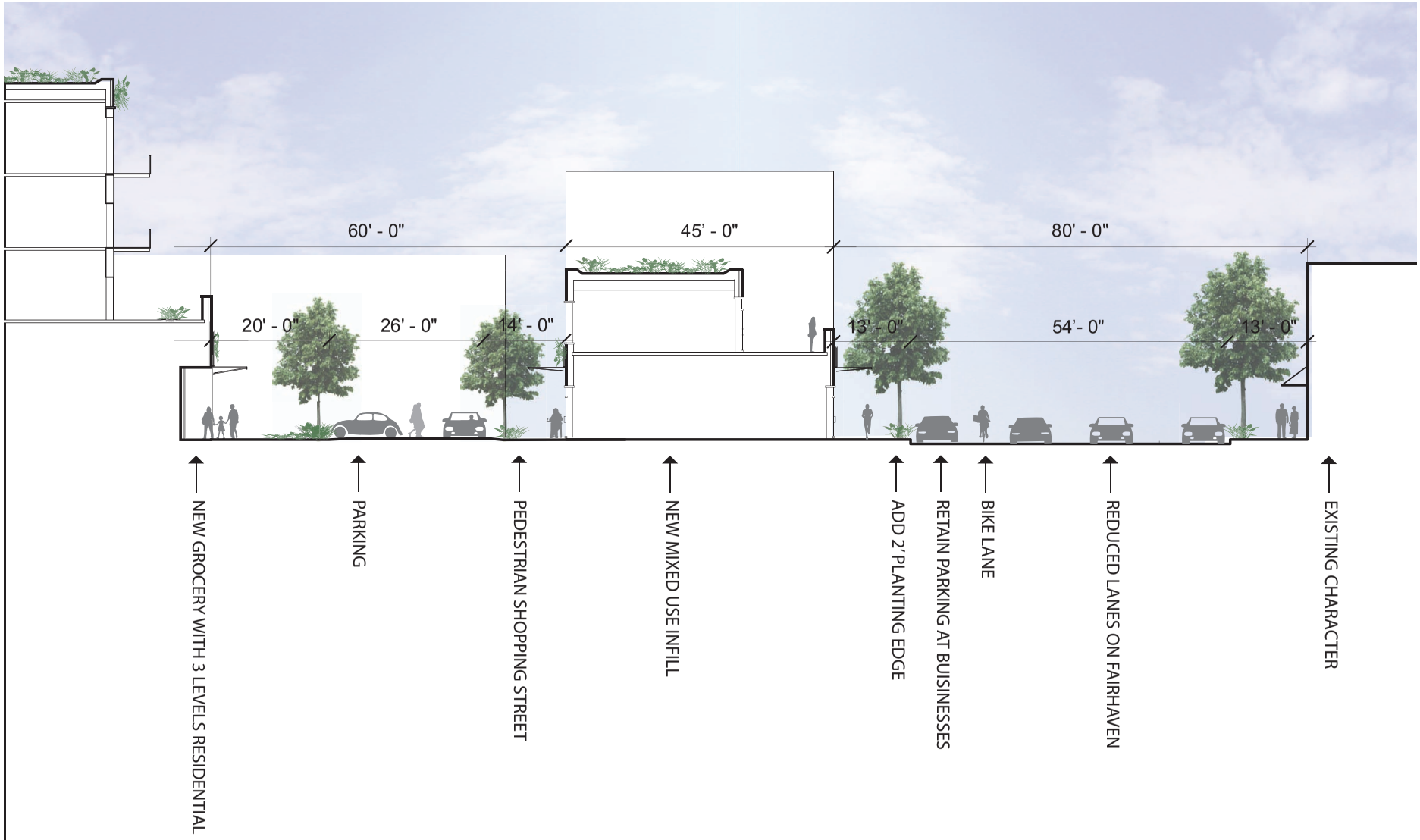
The Hybrid Plan uses building form and landscape architectural elements to create a recognizable egateway into the Downtown District.



STREET SECTION OF THE CONNECTOR NODE

The Hybrid Plan creates an internal shopping street on the Thrifty Foods property framed by a 4 story mixed use building on the south side of the block and 2 story mixed use buildings fronting Fairhaven.

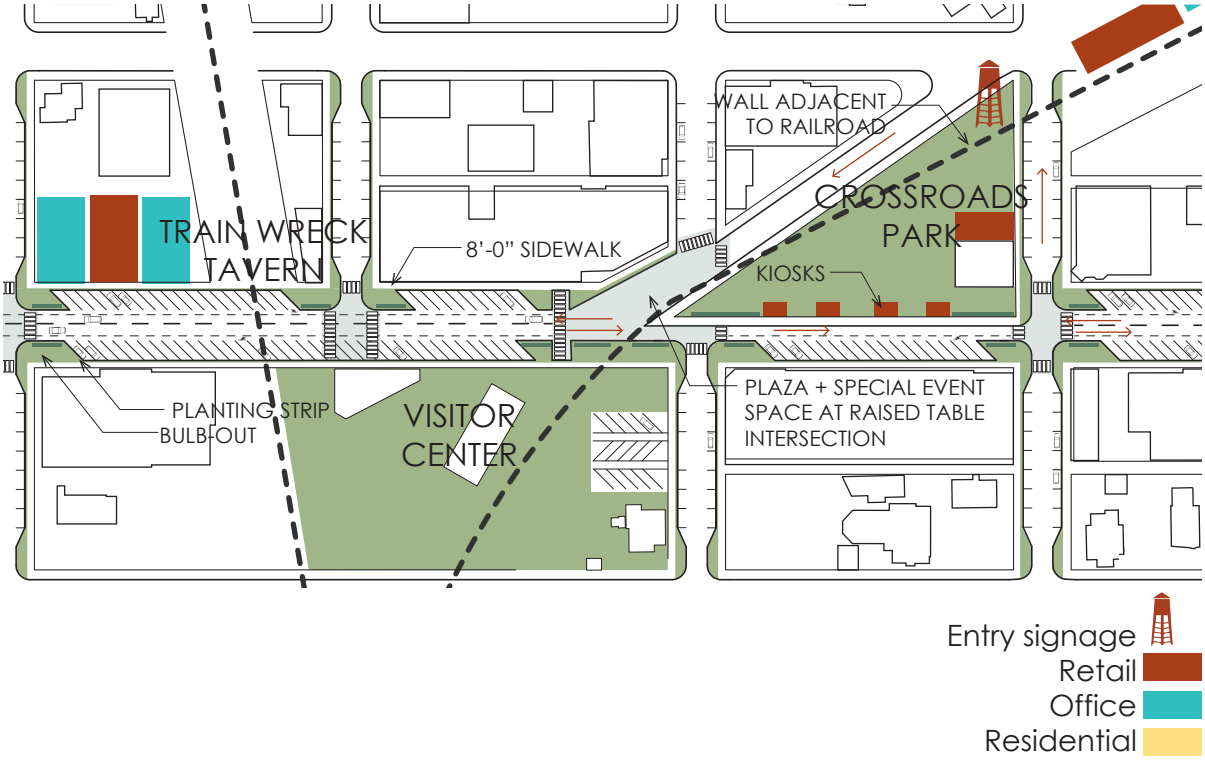
INTERNAL SHOPPING STREET

Sketch of the internal shopping street.

HEART NODE

The new streetscape and Crossroads Park design will prove critical initial city investments, as they provide the first steps in generating an energetic, pedestrian-oriented street scene and public realm. Fairhaven's ample 80-foot street width provides opportunities for implementing GSI strategies such as biofiltration cells, widening sidewalks, increasing parking, introducing bike lanes, implementing traffic calming devices, and planting additional tree clusters in the street right-of-way. This combination of streetscape improvements, including GSI features, and appropriately scaled building forms will define the street, provide a comfortable pedestrian scale, and help to calm traffic. In line with public input, angled on-street parking adjacent to both sidewalks along Fairhaven will be maintained.

To increase its viability as the primary downtown public gathering space, the Crossroads Park design at the Heart Node is denoted by a culmination of green stormwater infrastructure features and an interactive water feature. The three streets enclosing the park transform to one way, thus allowing the park size to expand and create more space for civic gathering. Pavers create a flexible event space in the park that accomodates vendor's kiosks and/or food trucks, while interwoven planting beds infiltrate stormwater on site and imbue the park with color and life. Demonstration green roofs on adjacent buildings provide views to the activity below.



HEART NODE PLAN

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Plan of Crossroads Park and the streetscape at Fairhaven Avenue and Cherry Street.

CROSSROADS PARK (PLAN)

N

By narrowing surrounding streets, Crossroads Park has ample area to become a lively civic space in Downtown Burlington.

CROSSROADS PARK (PERSPECTIVE)

A paved surface creates a flexible space that can host food kiosks, farmers markets, and festivals, while green infrastructure elements such as vertical green screens, ground level and raised planters, and trees create a pleasant, green environement that treats stormwater onsite.

STREET SECTION AT THE PARK

Crossroads Park will serve as a central gathering space for large events in Burlington.

SUMMARY

The Hybrid Plan aims to foster a vibrant, walkable downtown "life" that will serve a new and essential downtown residential community and visitors alike. Initial and continued investment in a compact downtown core where residents can llive, shop, socialize, and work will promote healthy growth and community sustainability. The strategic combination of two-, three-, and four-story buildings adds variety and increased residential capacity within walking distance of downtown while maintaining authentic, historic character.

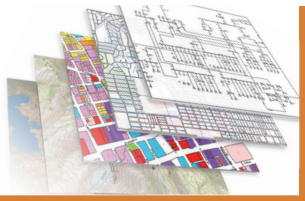
Building height limits that suggest two-story buildings fronting Fairhaven with three to four stories behind will frame a lively public space for the downtown. At the Connector Node, building intensity at the corner of Burlington Boulevard and Fairhaven Avenue will delineate a dynamic downtown entry point, with 2-3 story buildings fronting Fairhaven and taller buildings behind. To create this well-defined downtown entrance, buildings situated at the corner of Fairhaven Avenue and Burlington Boulevard should be allowed an increase in height by at least one-story beyond that allowed on adjacent parcels, for a maximum of 3 stories on Fairhaven and 4 stories behind. This Node will include open space in the form of an internal shopping street at the Connector Node, a grocery and farmers' market at the old Thrifty Foods site, and pocket parks between and behind buildings along Fairhaven Avenue. Building intensity at the corner of Burlington Boulevard and Fairhaven Avenue delineates a dynamic downtown entry point. To increase its viability as the primary downtown public gathering space, Crossroads Park at the Heart Node achieves connections between retail, the Visitor Center, and SR 20, activating the park and community and strengthening the downtown's east end.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Overall, the Burlington at the Crossroads concept and plan incorporates three main components: increasing connections at a local and regional scale, addressing environmental and water quality concerns, and creating a vibrant, walkable downtown community (utilizing the life-space-building methodology).

To connect the Downtown District with the greater Burlington community, the Crossroads Plan recommends developing a trolley loop, as well as a network of pedestrian and bicycle paths and trails connecting existing and new open spaces. The series of maps on the following pages show how such community assets could be phased over the next several years to increase the level of non-motorized connectivity public ammenities throughout the city. Increasing open space will provide opportunities for recreation and public gathering.

Putting It All Together

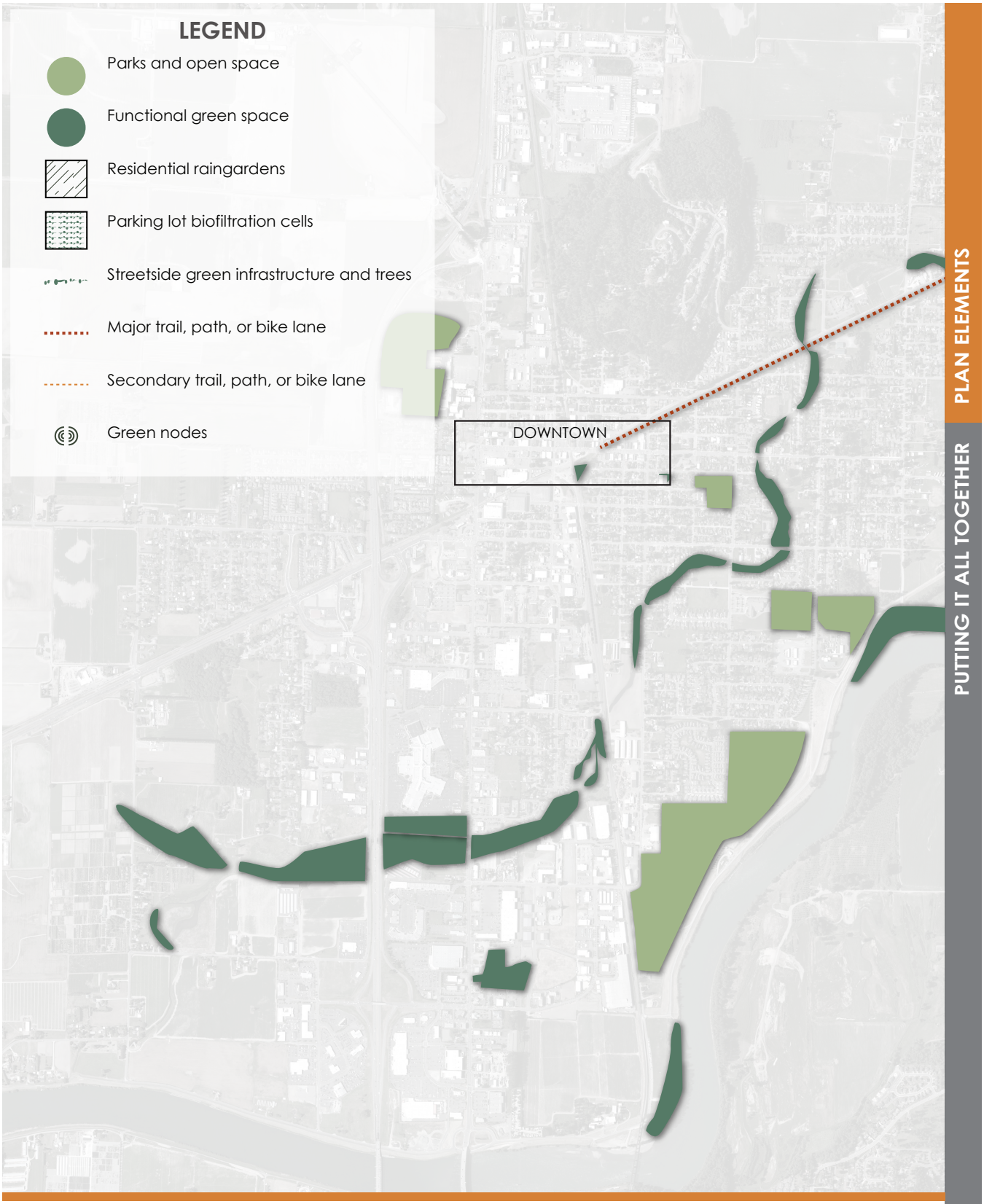


Because Burlington is situated along a major waterway, the Skagit River, and contains an ecologically important series of wetlands, Gages Slough, the City must consider environmental and water quality issues as it moves forward. The Crossroads Plan includes recommendations for implementing green stormwater infrastructure that can treat stormwater on site while also contributing to a more pleasant atmosphere throughout the city. Each area of the city has specific recommended techniques that are well-suited to that area, deliniated on the open space maps. The Hybrid Plan incorporates these stormwater features, fitting the downtown redevelopment concepts into the city as a whole.

The Hybrid Plan also advances the goals of having a walkable, vibrant downtown center. Creating such an atmosphere requires increasing the number of people that live and work there. By concentrating more people in the downtown, more services can be offered in a small area, contributing to walkability and compact development. An important way to accomplish this is through infill development along and near Fairhaven Avenue.

To increase residential capacity within walking distances of downtown, the Plan encourages three- to four-story residential buildings directly behind two-story mixed-use buildings along Fairhaven Avenue. A mix of housing typologies will be important to draw a range of ages and income levels, which is shown in the Figure entitled "Integrating a Variety of Housing Types." The building of these residences may occur gradually over time utilizing a phased development strategy. Buildings of different ages will inherently provide some amount of housing affordability. Another component of increasing livelihood in the downtown area is expanded public space, such as the design of Crossroads Park in the Heart Node.

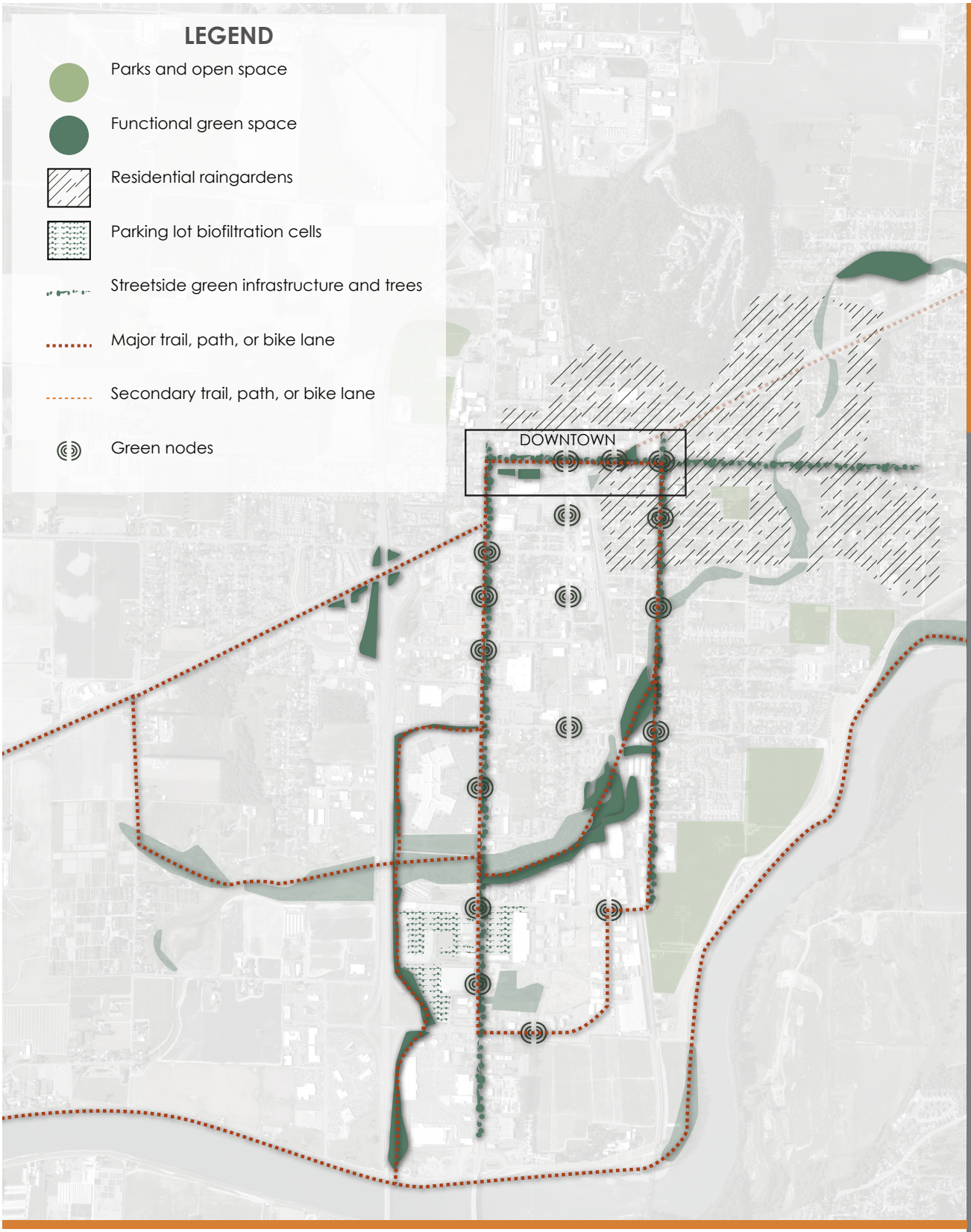
As the City of Burlington invests in the infrastructure necessary for the Crossroads Plan, developers will be attracted to the area. The life-space-building methodology should continue to guide the design process and through thoughtful codes and regulations that consider the potential configuration of buildings and public spaces, the subsequent developments can be shaped to reflect the Crossroads Plan. Complete streets that accommodate vehicular, cycle, and pedestrian traffic and building form that supports an active street life are critical components. Over time, this will firmly establish Burlington as a major destination and anchor in the region.



EXISTING TRAILS AND GREEN SPACE

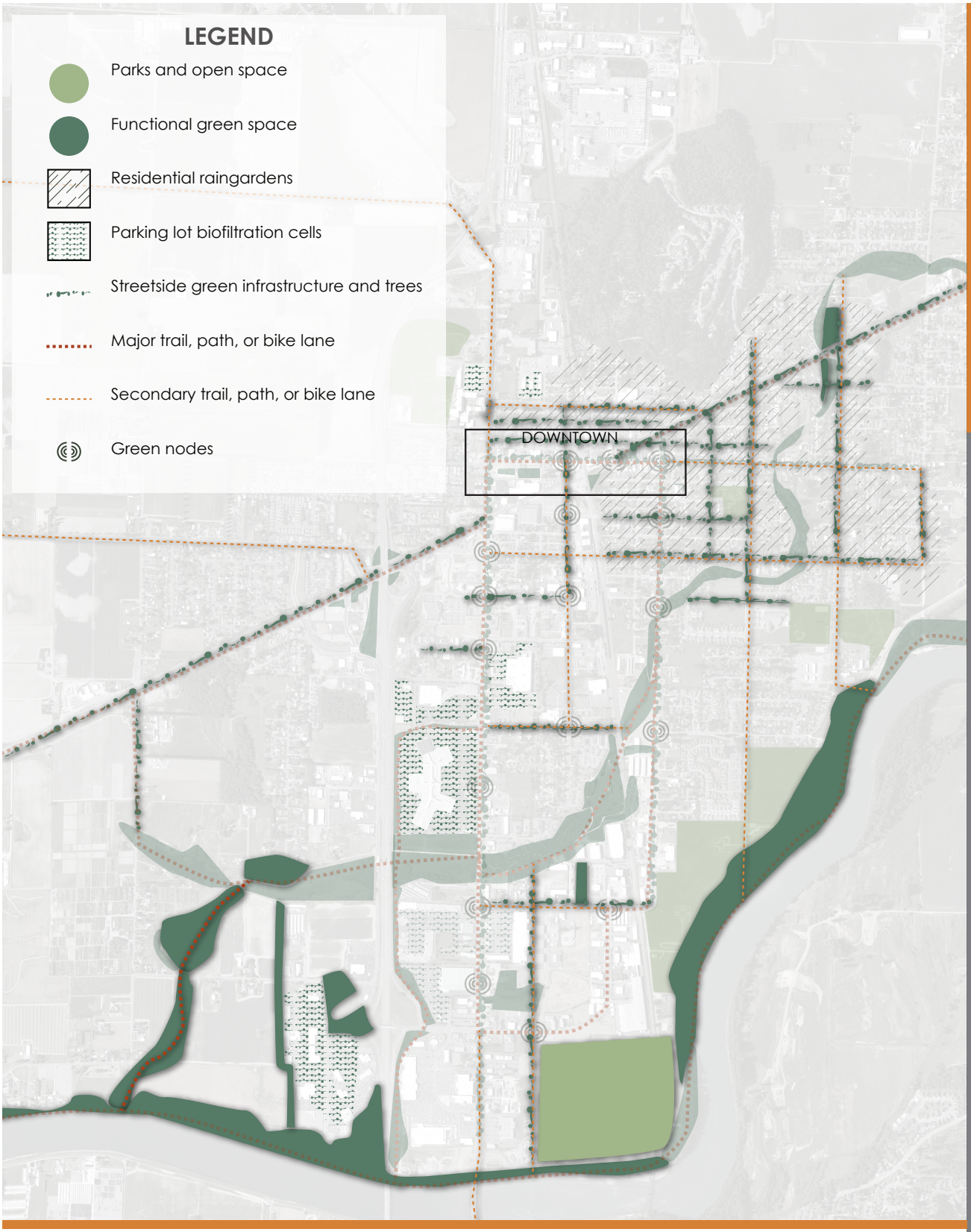
N

Sports fields and Gages Slough compose most of Burlington's existing open space.



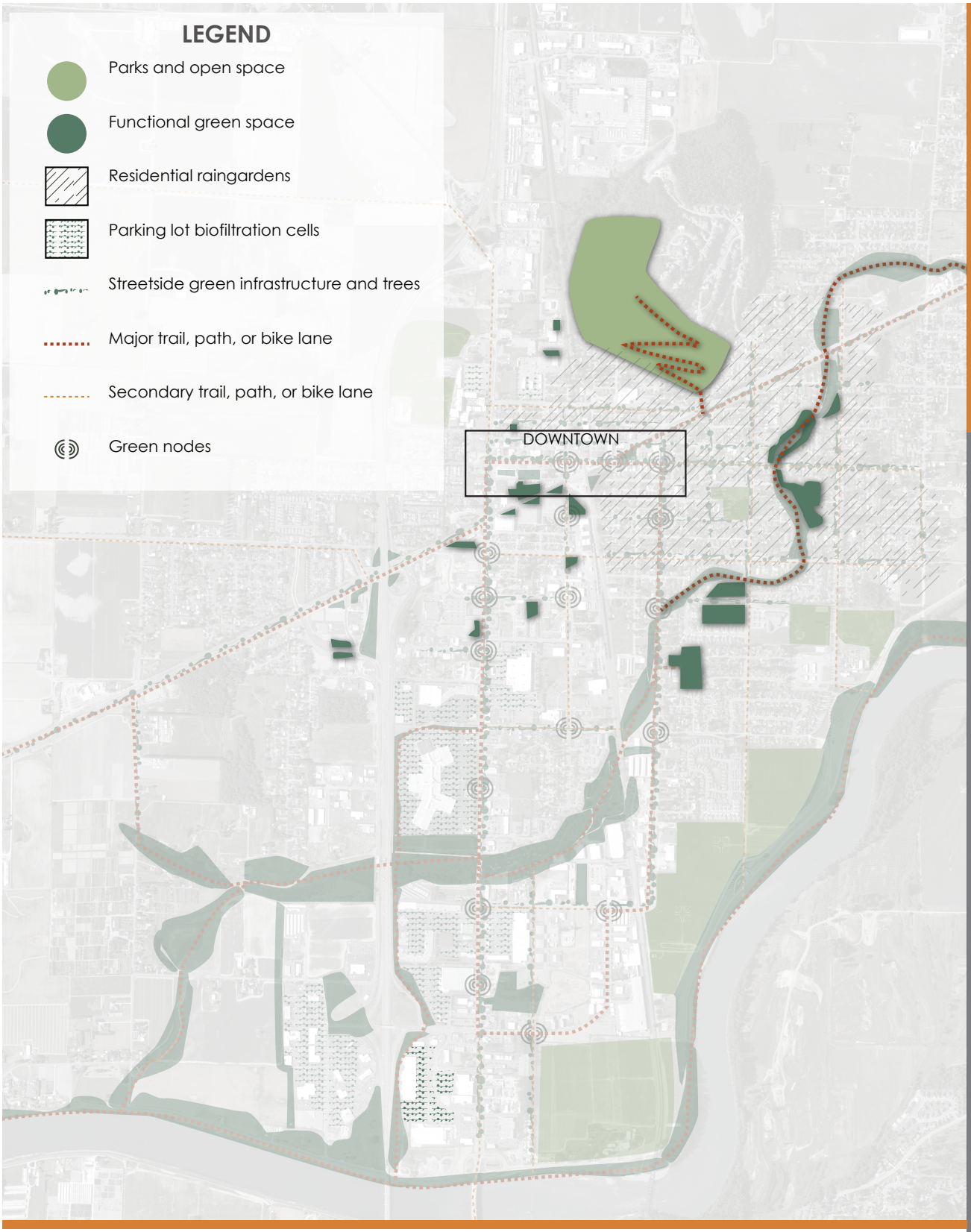
PHASE 1: 2013-2018

In the first phase of construction, major trail loops are constructed along the Skagit River and an enhanced Central Gages Slough. GSI is installed along major roadways, with special treatment at important intersections and entries. A green corridor brings pedestrian connections through the commerical district.



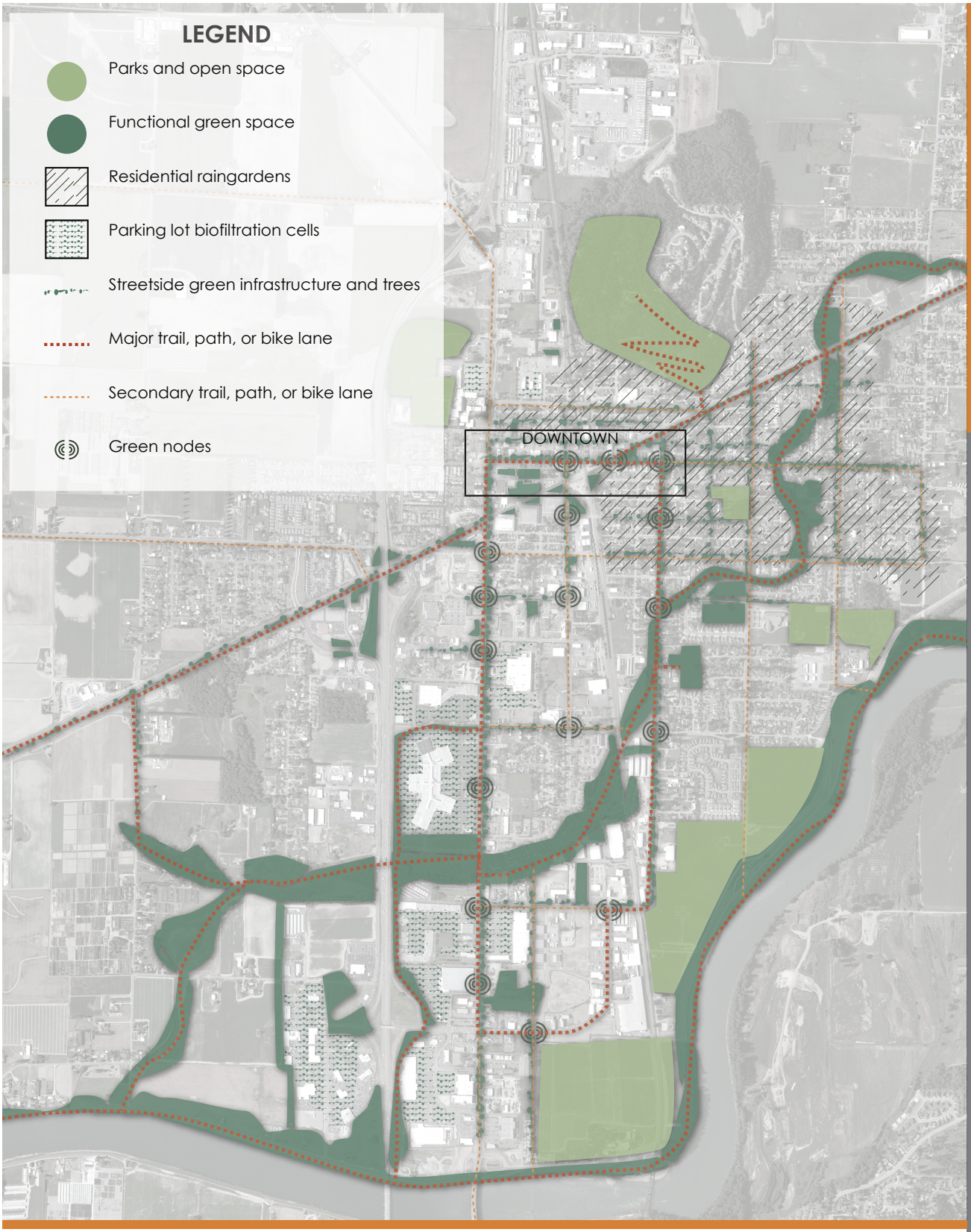
PHASE 2: 2018-2024

The Gages Slough Trail connects to the Skagit river with riparian vegetation restored alongside. Trails, bike lanes, and accompanying green infrastructure are expanded. The southeastern farmland is converted to publicly accessible open space, but may remain agricultural. The riverside is enhanced through ecological restoration.



PHASE 3: 2024-2030

In the final phase, a park and hiking trail are established on the hill. The Gages Slough Trail is expanded to the northern reaches. Ecologically functional green space spreads through the downtown and residential areas.



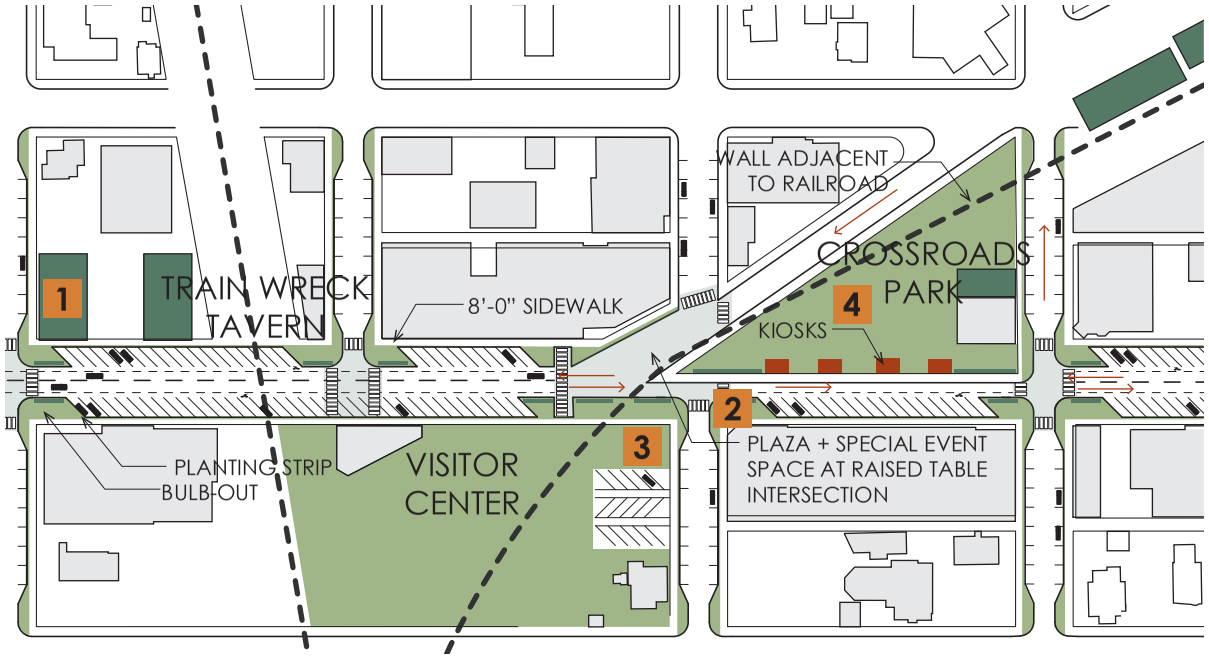
BUILD OUT BY 2030

Burlington with both existing and proposed trails and green space.

1 Green Roofs

2 Swales along the street

3 Green network of Pocket Parks between buildings



4 Crossroads Park

INTEGRATING GREEN STORMWATER INFRASTRUCTURE WITH OPEN SPACE

1 Apartments Above Retail

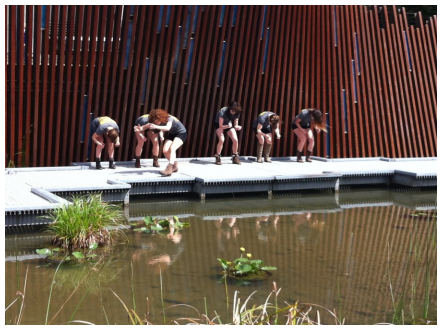
2 Townhomes

3 Senior Housing

4 Live-Work Units

INTEGRATING A VARIETY OF HOUSING TYPES

The Hybrid Plan increases the residential capacity within walking distance of downtown and encourages a diversified housing stock.

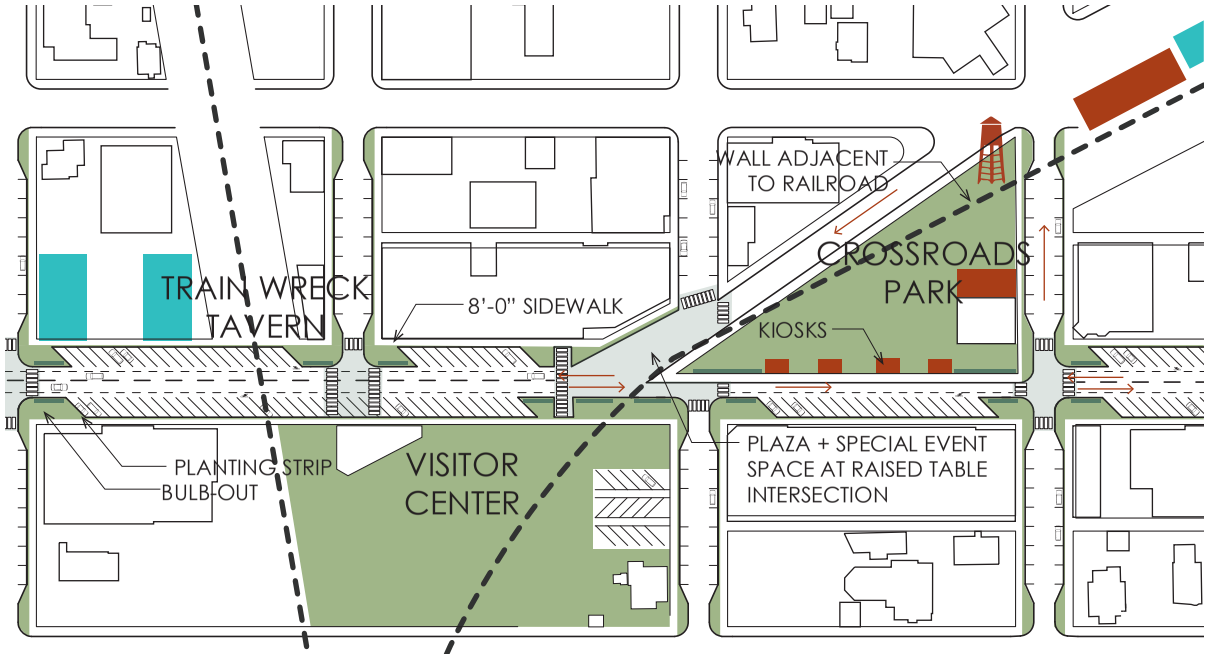


Park Performances

Water-Play Feature

Green Boulevard

Complete Street



Internal Shopping Street

LIFE + SPACE + BUILDING = A VIBRANT DOWNTOWN

An active downtown entry at the corner of Fairhaven and Burlington, with an internal shopping street, is the beginning of a vibrant Main Street experience that concludes at the civic heart of Crossroads Park.

CONCLUSION

In summary, the team's proposals for improving connections, Gages Slough, and development potential focus on celebrating assets and amenities that are currently working for the City of Burlington and making strategic improvements. Key actions to spur development are as follows:

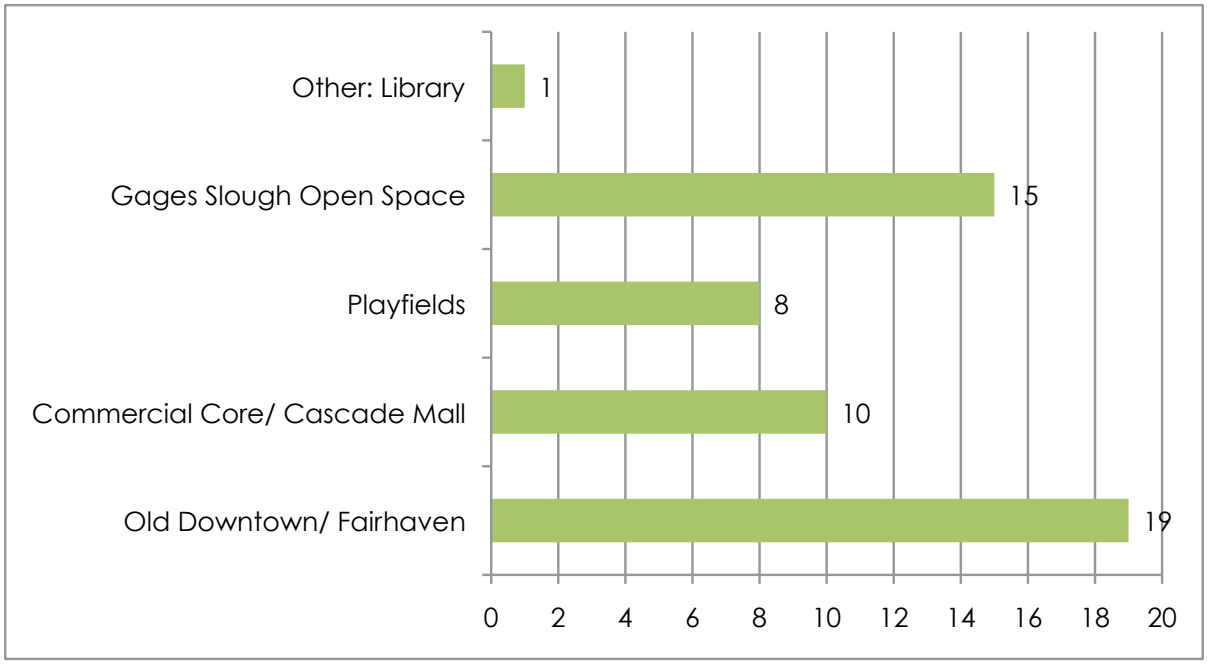
- To determine what improvements the City should make, undertake a professional identity, branding and marketing study.
- To yield large dividends from healthier ecosystems including enhanced quality of life and accelerated economic development, improve water quality through a basin-wide approach, enhance wetland health by encouraging restoration on the slough's edges, and provide pedestrian and possibly bicycle accessibility to Gages Slough.
- To leverage Burlington Boulevard and big box commercial core as a benefit to the traditional main street on Fairhaven Avenue and the natural environment, make strategic investments in heritage buildings, key sites, sustainable infrastructure, and inner city mobility.
- To create successful residential development and economic growth, make changes in zoning that tie directly into incrementally greater population densities leading to an increase in year round residents, thus creating a demand for low and mid-rise housing developments.
- To spur this development, Burlington should undertake measures to improve development predictability through clear zoning regulations.
- To increase visibility throughout the region and beyond, strategically place iconic symbols and signage, highlighting Burlington's rural authenticity and offerings.

APPENDIX

PUBLIC FORUM RESULTS

On July 10, 2013, the project team facilitated a Public Forum to gain feedback from Burlington residents. The five stations at the Public Forum were as follows: (1) Regional Connections; (2) Urban Design Preferences for the Connector Node; (3) Urban Design Preferences for the Heart Node; (4) Green Stormwater Infrastructure; and (5) Central Reach of Gages Slough. The results, as shown in the following pages, express the urban design and green stormwater infrastructure preferences from those participating members of the general public, City Council, Planning Commission, and Chamber of Commerce.

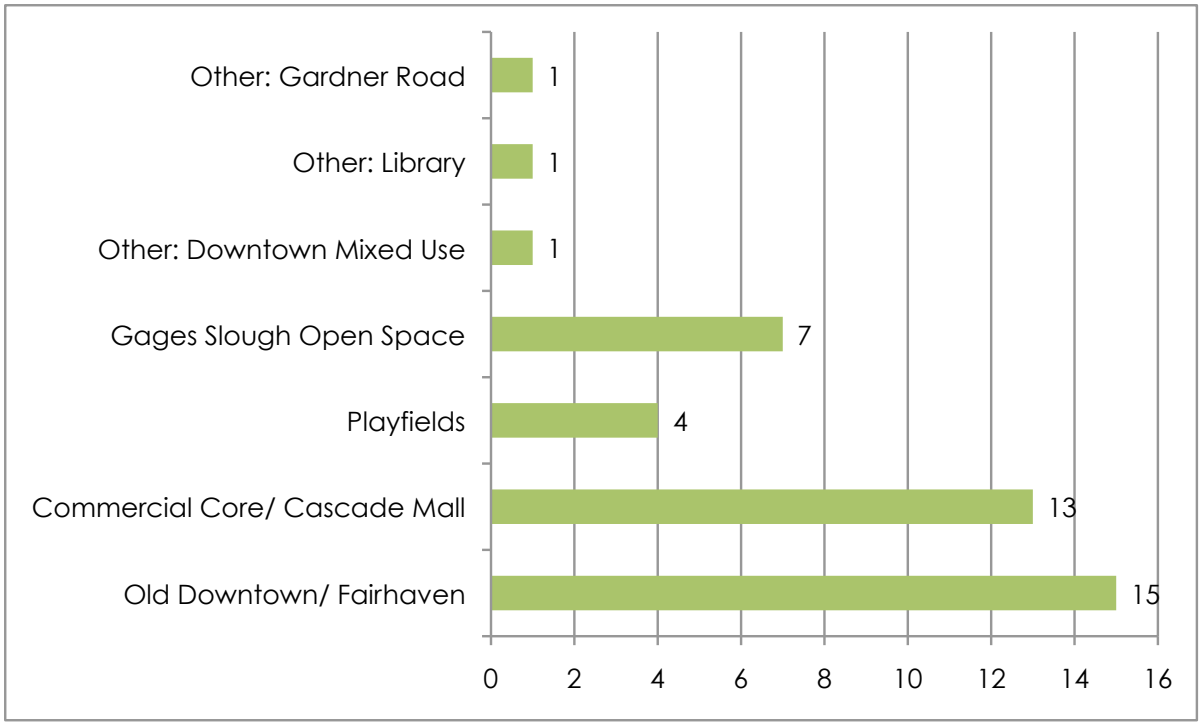
Station 1
Regional Connections



	Total Number of Responses	Percentage (out of 31 responders)
Old Downtown/ Fairhaven	19	61%
Gages Slough Open Space	15	48%
Commercial Core/ Cascade Mall	10	32%
Playfields	8	26%
Other: Library	1	3%

To which destination(s) would you most likely ride the proposed bus/ bike loop TO?

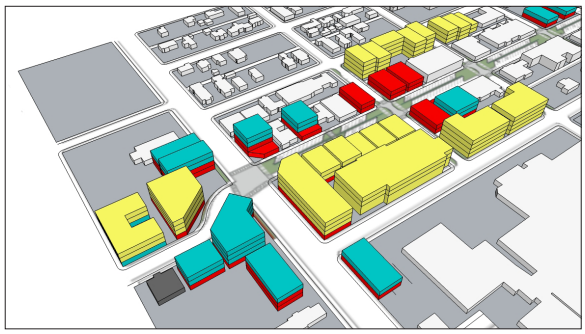
Station 1
Regional Connections



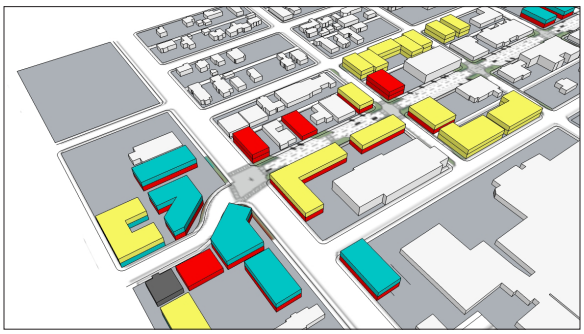
	Total Number of Responses	Percentage (out of 31 responders)
Old Downtown/ Fairhaven	15	48%
Commercial Core/ Cascade Mall	13	42%
Gages Slough Open Space	7	23%
Playfields	4	13%
Other: Library	1	3%
Other: Downtown Mixed Use	1	3%
Other: Gardner Road	1	3%

To which destination(s) would you most likely ride the proposed bus/ bike loop FROM?

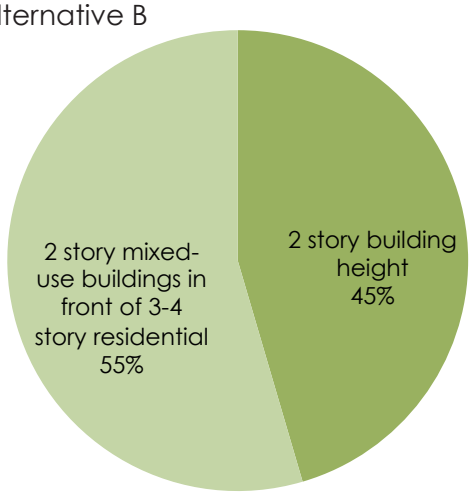
Station 2
Connector Node

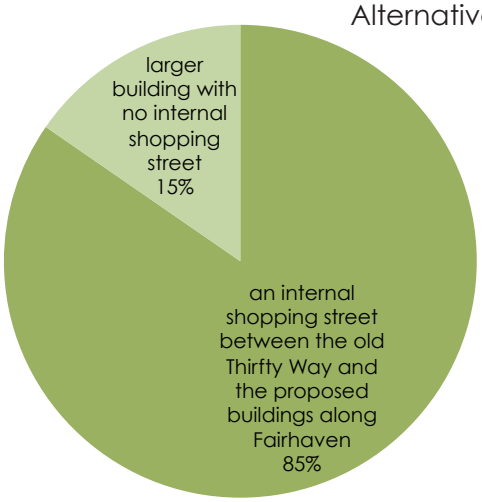


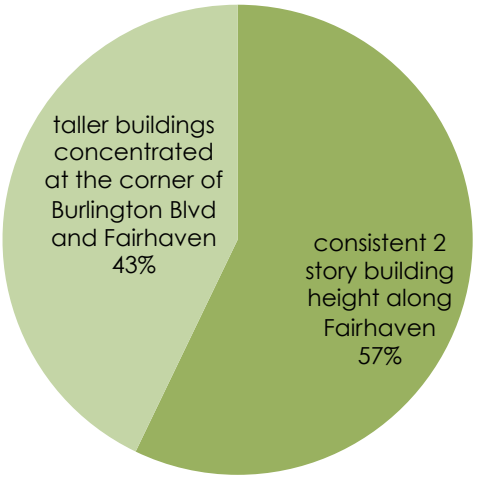
Alternative B

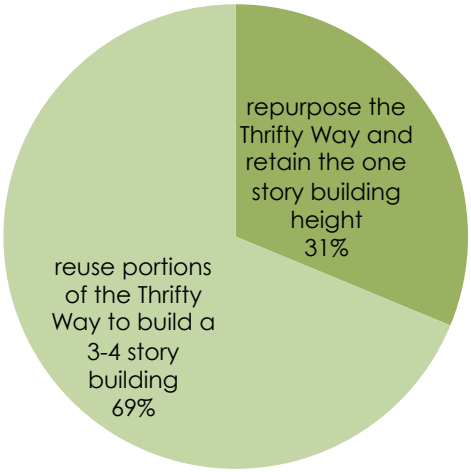


Alternative A









URBAN DESIGN PREFERENCES FOR THE CONNECTOR NODE

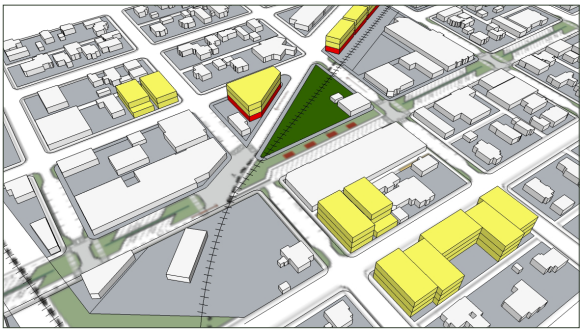
Responders chose between Alternatives A and B

Alternative A

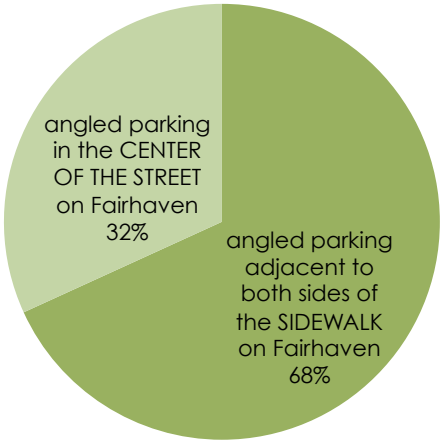
Alternative B

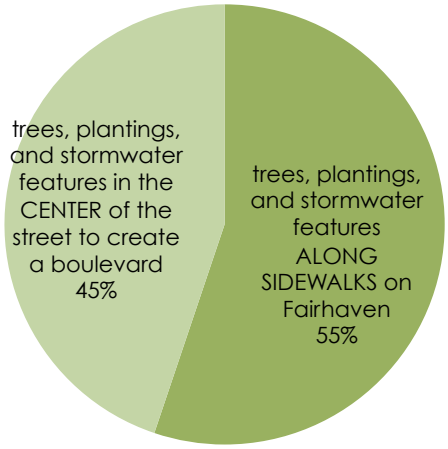
Station 3
Heart Node

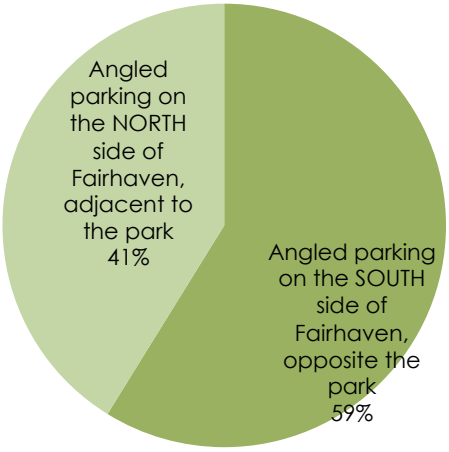
Alternative A



Alternative B







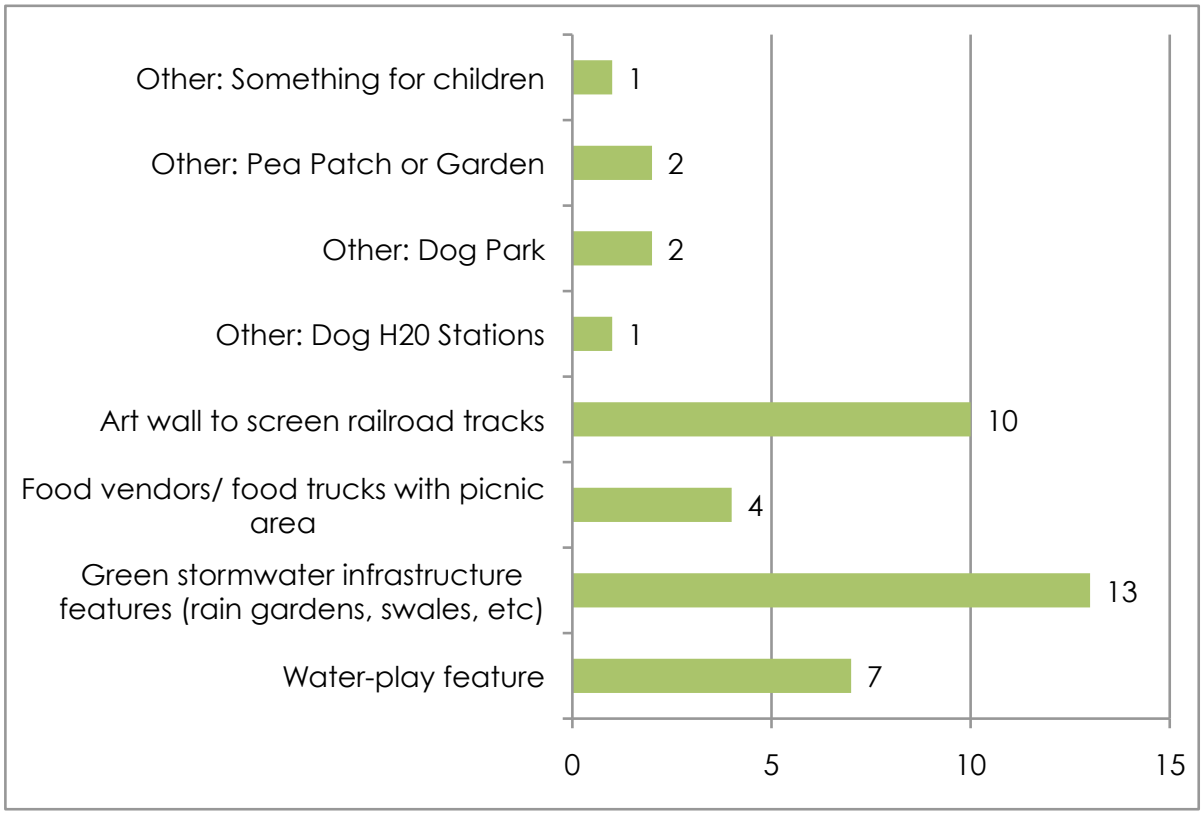
URBAN DESIGN PREFERENCES FOR THE HEART NODE

Responders chose between Alternatives A and B

Alternative A

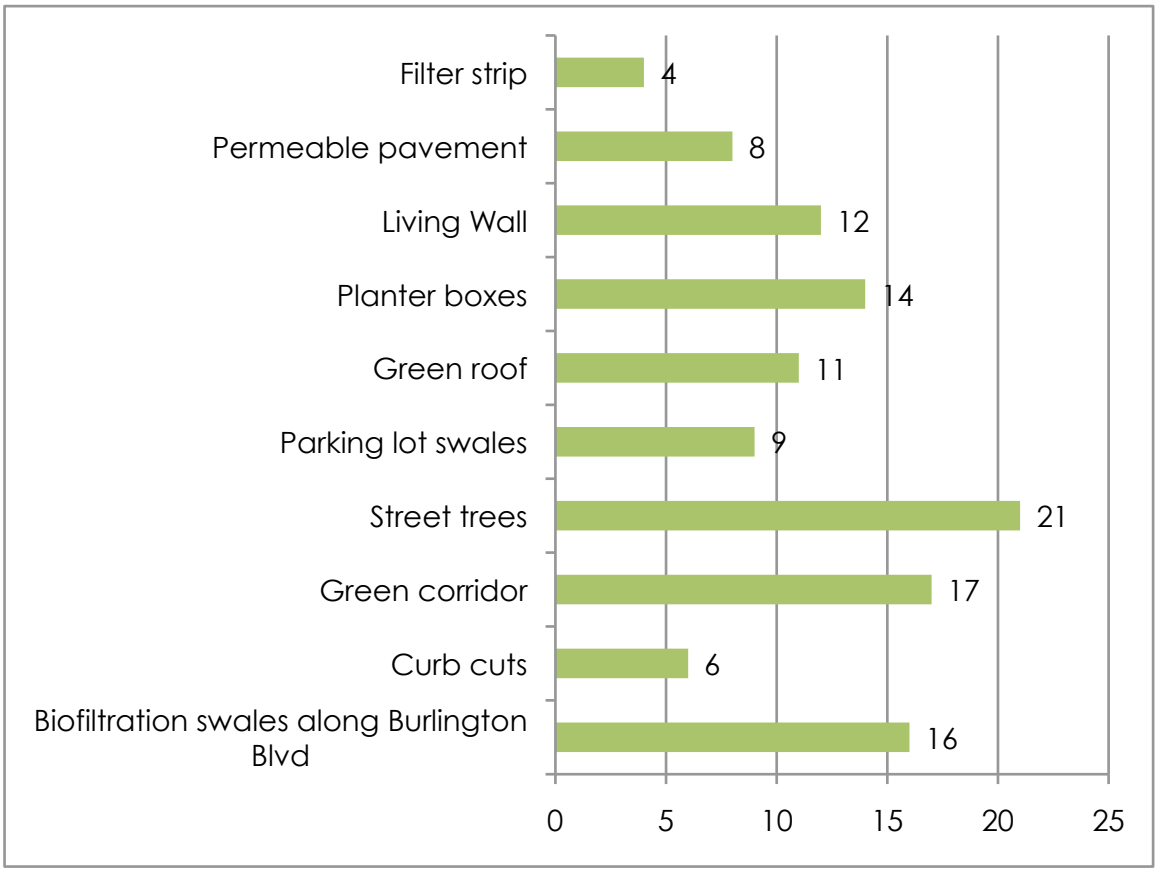
Alternative B

Station 3
Heart Node



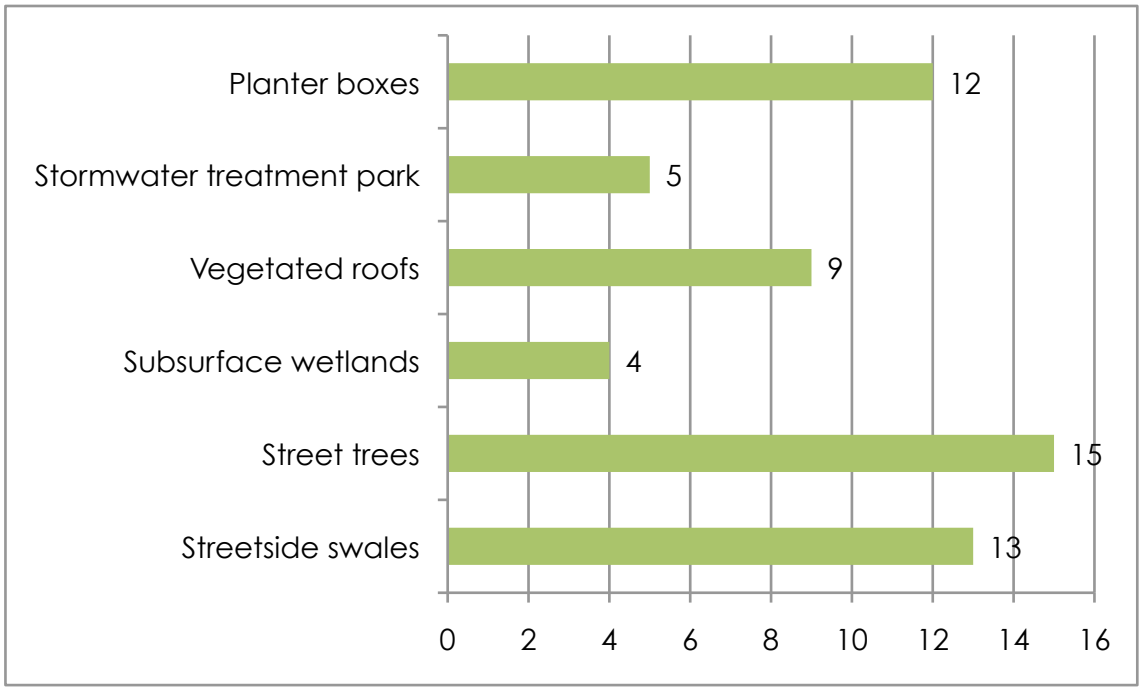
Which features would you most like to see in the proposed Crossroads Park?

Station 4
GSI Preferences



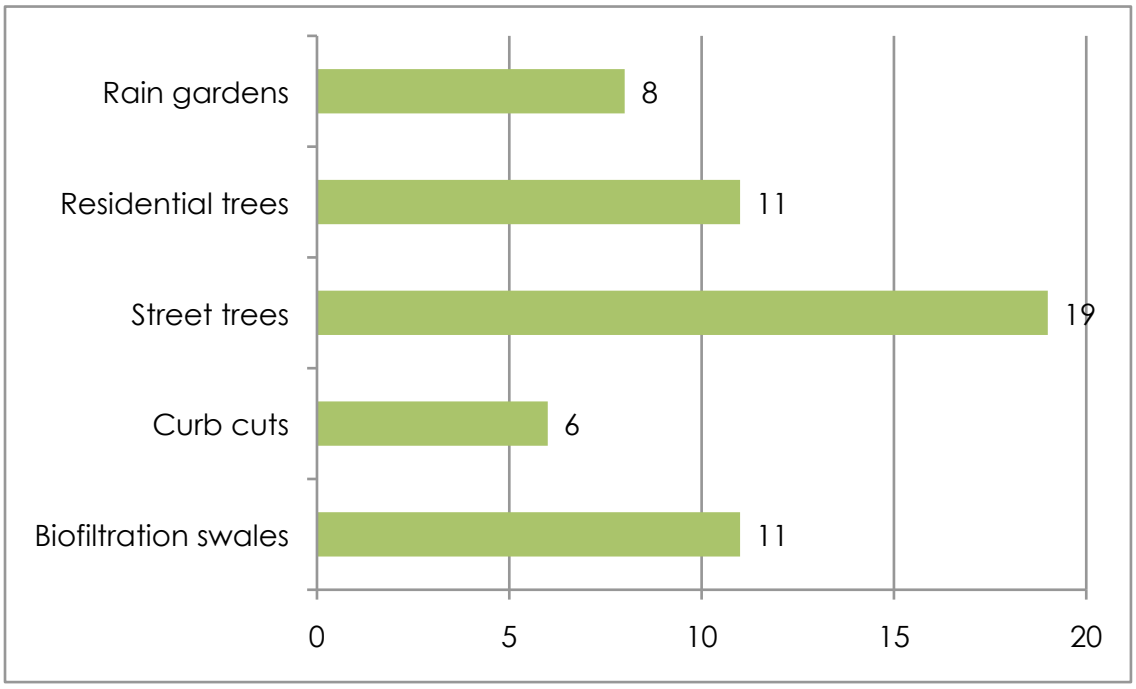
Which are your favorite Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI) techniques for the Commercial Priority Area?

Station 4
GSI Preferences



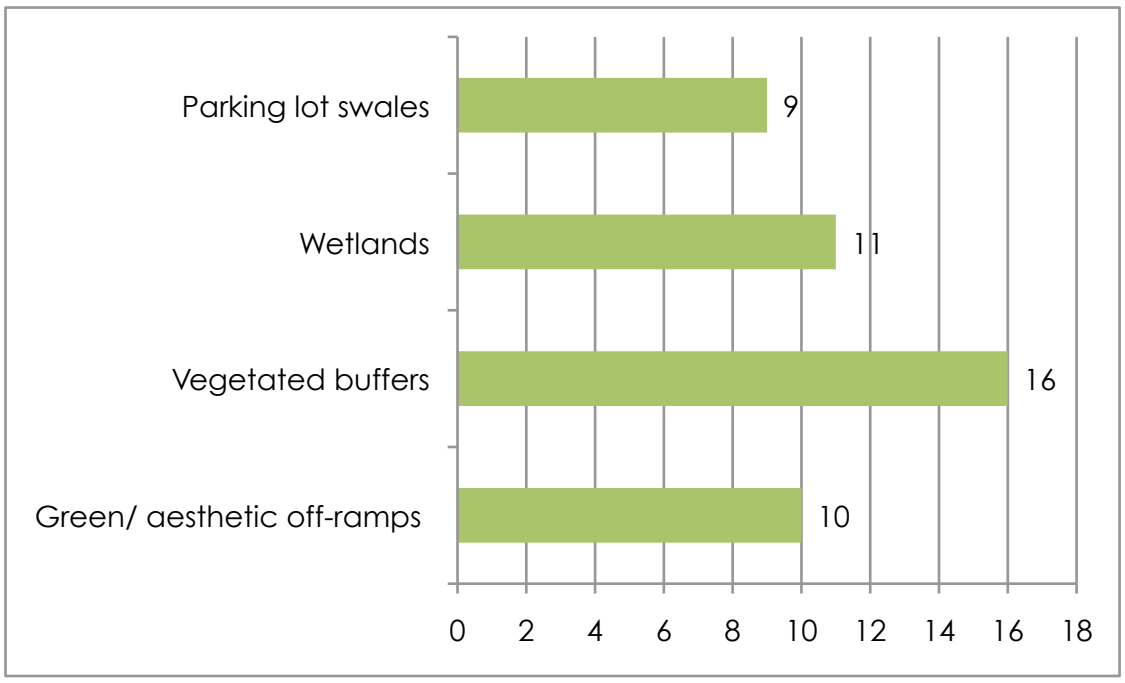
Which are your favorite Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI) techniques for the Downtown Priority Area?

Station 4
GSI Preferences



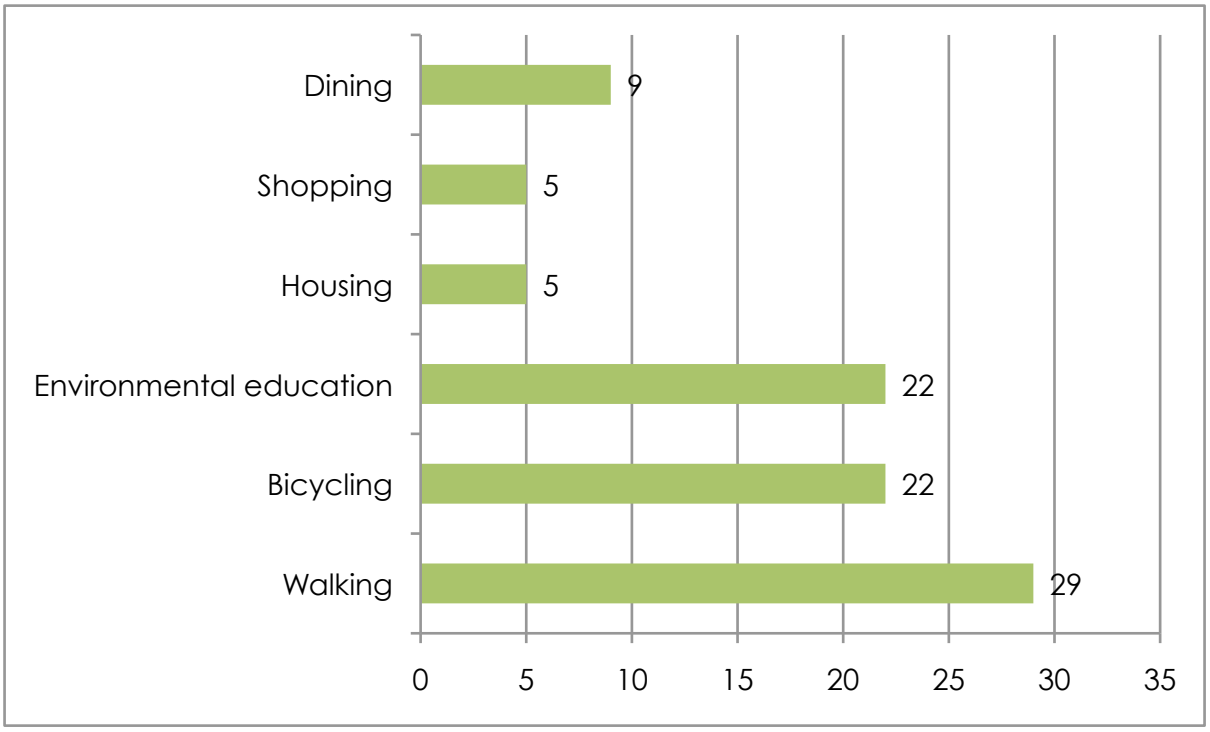
Which are your favorite Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI) techniques for the Residential Priority Area?

Station 4
GSI Preferences



Which are your favorite Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI) techniques for the Western Priority Area?

Station 5: Central Reach of Gages Slough



Responders also wrote in that they would like to see the following at the Central Reach of Gages Slough:

- dog walks
- winery
- no housing along the Slough
- canoeing and water safety education for children
- places to sit, watch people and wildlife
- coffee stand on the trail
- community garden/ edible garden
- bike racks
- bird watching station
- nature walking tour with educated guides
- interpretive panels to read about the Slough itself along with the types of animals/ critters who thrive in this environment and why they are important to our ecosystem

What activities would you like to see near Gages Slough?