



TOWN OF LA CONNER PLANNING COMMISSION **Meeting Notice**

February 18, 6PM

Upper Maple Center, La Conner WA, and Livestreamed
Information is below and on the Town Website

Skagit County Washington
Incorporated 1890
www.townoflaconner.org

Agenda

- I. Convene**
- II. Public Comments** (Topics not otherwise on the Agenda) – Time Limit 3 Minutes
- III. Minutes:** Approve Minutes from the February 4, 2025 meeting.

- IV. Old Business**
 - 1. Status Report – Public Participation Program
 - 2. Draft Review: Introduction – Chapter 1 – Vision Statement
 - 3. Draft Review: La Conner Profile – Chapter 3
 - 4. Draft Review: Capital Facilities – Chapter 9
- V. New Business**
 - 1. Parks and Recreation Element Update
 - 2. Draft Review: Land Use – Chapter 5 – Appendix 5E - Sub-Area Plan
 - 3. Legislative Bill Review
- VI. Closing Comments:**

Live Streaming Info: <https://laconnerwa.portal.civicclerk.com/>

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Planning Commission
FROM: Planning Staff
SUBJECT: Introduction Element – Vision Statement
DATE: February 13, 2025

Last meeting, staff proposed changes to the Introduction Element of the Comprehensive Plan. The bulk of the changes were approved; however, the Commission chose to not vote on the element because they wanted more time to think about the edits to the vision statement.

The visions statement proposed by the staff was as follows:

“La Conner Vision Statement

The Town of La Conner is a waterfront village that seeks to preserve its rural flavor, small town livability and historic authenticity while recognizing its status as a visitor destination and a haven for artists. Keeping a balance between preservation and promotion is the key to maintaining a satisfactory quality of life in La Conner. The goals cited below provide direction toward that balance.”

The use of the phrase “haven for artists” sparked discussion. A community resident suggested the phrase “cultural art.” In an email to staff, Commission Elliott suggested the phrase “while recognizing its status as a culturally artistic community and visitor destination” in part driven by a desire to ensure that we are not excluding individuals within the art community that are not artists. Based on that suggestion, staff is recommending the following:

“La Conner Vision Statement

The Town of La Conner is a waterfront village that seeks to preserve its rural flavor, small town livability and historic authenticity while recognizing its status as a culturally artistic community and visitor destination. Keeping a balance between preservation and promotion is the key to maintaining a satisfactory quality of life in La Conner. The goals cited below provide direction toward that balance.”

Please come prepared to discuss the above changes. Please come prepared to vote on the Introduction Element as a whole, because this was the only change left that we needed to discuss.

CHAPTER 3

LA CONNER PROFILE

Community History and Profile

La Conner is a historic rural town settled in the 1860's that has preserved much of its small-town character. It is located approximately 12 miles southwest of the City of Mount Vernon, Washington between the Swinomish Channel, Sullivan Slough, and Skagit Bay in the agriculturally rich Skagit Valley of Washington State. Most of the community is at or near sea level, indicating that approximately 77% of the town is located within a flood plain. The topography of the Town area is characterized by a basaltic hill with flat agricultural lands to the east and the Swinomish Channel to the west

The arrival of Native American groups in the Pacific Northwest cannot be dated with great precision. However, archaeological investigations at the Manis Mastodon site near Sequim on the Olympic Peninsula indicate man was in the area as early as 12,000 years ago.

Swinomish, Samish, Sauk-Suiattle, and Upper Skagit Indians are the Tribes native to the Skagit River valley and each has reservation lands in the Valley. Swinomish Indian Tribal Community is composed of approximately 900 tribal members with the majority of members residing on the Swinomish Reservation or nearby in Skagit County. Most tribal members reside in the Swinomish Village area located on the southeast corner of the Reservation near the tribal offices. The Swinomish Indian Tribal Community is a federally recognized Indian Tribe that is governed by a Constitution and Bylaws that were originally adopted in 1936 and by the Swinomish Senate, the tribe's governing body, which is comprised of 11 elected members that serve staggered five-year terms.

The Swinomish are a community of Coast Salish peoples descended from groups and bands originating from the Skagit and Samish River valleys, coastal areas surrounding nearby bays and waters, and numerous islands including Fidalgo, Camano, Whidbey and the San Juan Islands. For thousands of years, these Coast Salish tribes maintained a culture centered on abundant salt water resources that included salmon, shellfish, and marine mammals, as well as upland resources such as cedar, camas, berries, and wild game.

They lived in large villages during the winter and in summer encampments that followed the seasonal cycle of resource gathering from the mouths of rivers and streams where salmon was taken, to coastal shorelines where shellfish and herring and other forage fish were taken, to marine waters where finfish and sea

mammals were taken, and to inland forests where wild game and berries were taken.

The Swinomish Tribal Community has a reservation across the Swinomish Channel from La Conner. Members of the community attend schools in La Conner and participate in various recreational opportunities within the town. The Swinomish Tribal Community also has interlocal agreements with Skagit County, the La Conner School District, the La Conner Library, and Fire District 13 regarding assessment, collection, and distribution of taxes on permanent improvement on land owned by the United States and held in trust for the Tribe.

Although the Town of La Conner currently has an official population of **995** people, its infrastructure serves residents outside the Town limits from Pleasant Ridge to Kiket Island (approximately 5,000 people within 30 square miles). The Town is projected to reach a total of **1,191** people by **2045**. La Conner town limits cover approximately 255 acres, of which 51 acres is within a National Historic Preservation District. The La Conner Comprehensive Plan provides for increased population densities by encouraging in-fill. No expansion of the Town limits is planned.

Climate and Geography

Washington State's climate is strongly influenced by moisture-laden air masses created in the Pacific Ocean. The airflow from the Pacific Ocean is interrupted first by the Olympic Mountains and then significantly by the Cascade Mountains. As a result of the mountain ranges, the west or windward sides of the Cascades receive moderate to heavy precipitation. Due to its unique location in the "rain shadow" of the Olympic Mountains, La Conner receives less precipitation than areas outside the "rain shadow", an average of only 30" of rain per year. This location and mild marine temperatures help make La Conner a popular recreation area, and a pleasant tourist destination.

Mean temperatures vary from a high of 70 degrees in July to a low of 40 degrees Fahrenheit in January with extreme variations recorded at -3 to a high of 102 degrees Fahrenheit. The average annual growing season is about 170-190 days. Approximately 80 percent of the precipitation occurs from October through March.

Topography ranges from 0 to about 100 feet above Puget Sound on the hills. The main residential hill, facing the Downtown district, drops off abruptly in places with slopes ranging from 40 to 100 percent.

The Town was established along the Swinomish Channel before it was dredged for navigational purposes and the tidal waters surrounded much of the Town periodically from Sullivan Slough to the Channel. Following the dredging, seawalls and agricultural dikes defined and expanded the Town beyond the rock outcrops. Until recently, this was a stable and predictable defense against natural forces. As weather patterns have shifted in the last ten years, this defense is now

vulnerable. **The town has seen an increase of flooding events in recent years, and is developing plans to address this issue.**

Increased population density and tourist activity will place greater demands upon existing parks, open spaces and public spaces. Additional land for recreational use may be desired but not available or affordable in the future **developed as the property that is currently zoned as Transitional Commercial becomes more accessible.**

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DRAFT

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Planning Commission
FROM: Planning Staff
SUBJECT: La Conner Capital Facilities Element
DATE: January 31, 2025

Please see attached the latest draft of the Capital Facilities Element. Attached is the Capital Facilities Plan.

For the sake of space, because there were no questions on them, the following documents are NOT attached to this draft of the Capital Facilities Element:

6-Year Transportation Improvement Program
20 Year Transportation Horizon
2025 Storm Water Capital Improvement Plan
2025 Water Capital Improvement Plan

Please note that all of the above plans have been previously approved by Town Council in 2024.

Please come prepared to vote on this element.

CHAPTER 9

CAPITAL FACILITIES ELEMENT

Introduction

The Capital Facilities Element sets policy direction for determining capital improvement needs and for evaluating proposed capital facilities projects for the next twenty years. It also establishes funding priorities and a strategy for utilizing various funding alternatives. This element represents the community's policy plan for the financing of public facilities for the next 20 years, and includes a six-year financing plan for capital facilities from 2024-2030.

Level of Service (LOS) Standards

Standards are provided in Appendix 9-A.

Major Capital Facilities Considerations and Goals

The Capital Facilities Element is the mechanism the Town uses to coordinate its physical and fiscal planning. On-going coordination between the Public Works Director, Sewer Plant Manager, Finance Director, and the Planning Director is essential to identification, prioritization, and efficient management of capital facilities needs and improvements. The Town revises the Six-Year Capital Facilities Plan annually. The Capital Facilities Element of the Comprehensive Plan guides the development of the Six-Year Capital Facilities Plan and the goals as outlined in the Vision Statement Chapter 1. The Six-Year Capital Facilities Plan is incorporated into the Capital Facilities Element as Appendix B.

The Six-Year Capital Facilities Plan for La Conner School District determines the School Impact fees assessed to new residential development. This plan is revised within a 6-year timeframe and impact fees are adjusted accordingly. [In order for La Conner to assess the School Impact Fee, La Conner School District is required to submit an updated School Capital Facilities Plan every six-year.](#)

GOALS AND POLICIES

GOAL A

Protect the value and maximize the use of existing facilities.

Policies

- 9A-1 Develop and use cultural and community facilities with other government or community organizations in areas of mutual concern and benefit.
- 9A-2 Encourage capital improvement projects which promote the conservation, preservation or revitalization of commercial, industrial, residential areas, and the environment in La Conner.
- 9A-3 Invest in facilities, which if left unimproved, will cost more in the future or will require higher expenditures for operations and/or maintenance.
- 9A-4 Require public facilities to incorporate energy generation when and where possible
- 9A-4 Eliminate capital investments toward new construction in present and future vulnerable/hazard-prone areas, while investing in retrofitting facilities already existing in these areas to be more resilient.

GOAL B

Correct existing deficiencies to replace worn out or obsolete facilities and to accommodate future growth, as indicated in the Six-Year Schedule of Improvements of this element (Appendix 9-B)

Policies:

- 9B-1 Evaluate and prioritize capital projects using the following guidelines. The project must:
 - a. Be identified in the 6-Year Capital Facilities Plan
 - b. Meet one of the following criteria:
 - i. Correct existing deficiencies, replace facilities, or provide facilities needed for future growth to maintain Level of Service standards
 - ii. Remove or mitigate a public hazard
 - iii. Correct any existing condition of a public facility that would create a capacity deficit.
 - c. Be financially feasible
 - d. Conform to future land uses and needs based on projected growth patterns

- e. Assess impact on the local budget
- 9B-2 Identify all capital projects greater than \$10,000 in value.
- 9B-3 Adopt an annual capital budget and a six-year capital improvement plan as part of the budgeting process.
- 9B-4 Advocate for renewable energy when replacing or upgrading aging infrastructure.
- 9B-5 Use recycled materials in the renovation of facilities or construction of new infrastructure where possible.

GOAL C

Future development shall bear a fair share of facility improvement costs necessitated by development in order to achieve and maintain adopted Level of Service standards.

Policies:

- 9C-1 Implement funding mechanisms such as SEPA mitigation, impact fees and utility development fees for future capital improvements.
- 9C-2 Verify that Level of Service standards and concurrency have been met by a permitted development prior the issuance of a Certificate of Authorization.
- 9C-3 Expansion or extension of public facilities and services must be provided by new development through Uniform Development Code concurrency requirements. These facilities shall meet adopted Level of Service standards.

GOAL D

Manage Town fiscal resources to support needed capital improvements for all development.

Policies

- 9D-1 Secure grants or private funds whenever available.
- 9D-2 Maintain indebtedness below that which would endanger any Level of Service standards in the town.
- 9D-3 Meet capital facilities needs in the most cost-effective manner.
- 9D-4 Apply for grants and loans for capital facilities from state and federal agencies rather than rely solely on commercial sources.

GOAL E

Coordinate land use decisions and financial resources with a schedule of

*capital improvements to meet adopted
Level of Service standards.*

Policies

- 9E-1 Allocate Town sewer and water connection fee revenues primarily for capital improvements related to expansion of those facilities.
- 9E-2 Ensure that fiscal policies are consistent with other Comprehensive Plan elements to direct expenditures for capital improvements.

GOAL F

Ensure consistency between the Capital Facilities Plan, the Comprehensive Plan and the Shoreline Master Program.

Policies

- 9F-1 Comply with the La Conner Shoreline Master Program for the provision or extension of capital facilities in shoreline areas in accordance shoreline uses.
- 9F-2 Ensure the Capital Facilities Plan meets the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan and the La Conner Shoreline Master Program.
- 9F-3 Update the Capital Facilities Plan annually to maintain consistency with other plans.

Town Facilities Inventory & Needs Assessment

Please see the Six-Year Capital Facilities Plan, attached as appendix B, for the Town Facilities Inventory & Needs Assessment.

Plan Implementation and Monitoring

Implementation

The Six-Year Schedule of Improvements is the mechanism by which the Town can stage the timing, location, projected cost, and revenue sources for the capital improvements identified for implementation in the other Comprehensive Plan elements.

Appendix 9-B lists the capital improvement projects by facility type, indicates which projects are needed to correct existing deficiencies, and provides estimates of project costs by year. Projects less than \$10,000 and not related to Level of Service standards are excluded. Top priority is generally given to projects that correct existing deficiencies.

When projects require impact fees to be collected, identification of public facilities on which the money is spent must be provided in accordance with state law.

Monitoring and Evaluation

This is essential to ensuring the effectiveness of the Capital Facilities Plan Element. This element will be reviewed annually and amended to verify that fiscal resources are available to provide public facilities needed to support LOS standards.

The annual review will be the responsibility of the Mayor, Administrator, Financial Director, Public Works Director, and the Planning Director. The review will include an examination of the following considerations in order to determine their continued appropriateness:

- a. Any corrections, updates, and modifications concerning costs, revenue sources, acceptance of facilities following dedication which are consistent with the element; or the date of construction of any facility enumerated in the element.
- b. The Capital Facilities Element's continued consistency with the other elements and its support of the Land Use Element.
- c. The priority assignment of existing public facility deficiencies.
- d. The Town's progress in meeting needs determined to be existing deficiencies.
- e. The criteria used to evaluate capital improvement projects in order to ensure that projects are being ranked in their appropriate order of priority.
- f. The Town's effectiveness in maintaining the adopted LOS standards.

- g. The Town's effectiveness in reviewing the impacts of state agencies that provide public facilities within the Town's jurisdiction.
- h. The effectiveness of impact fees or fees assessed on new development for improvement costs.
- i. Efforts made to secure grants or private funds, whenever available, to finance the provision of capital improvements.
- j. The criteria used to evaluate proposed plan amendments and requests for new development or redevelopment.
- k. Capital improvements needed for the latter part of the planning period, for updating the Six-Year Schedule of Improvements.
- l. Concurrency status, following any annexation or rezone.

APPENDIX 9-A**LEVEL OF SERVICE (LOS) STANDARDS**

The Town will use the following LOS standards in reviewing the impacts of new development and redevelopment upon public facility provision:

1. Community Parks: 6 acres per 1,000 residents (now have minimum of 12 acres for Pioneer Park).
2. Open Space: 25% of total Town area.
3. Drainage: Stormwater Management System to retain the runoff from a 25-year, 24-hour storm event at peak discharge rates. Development will be regulated to ensure the post-development runoff to the Town system does not exceed the pre-developed discharge volume and/or rate to ensure the level of service of the existing stormwater system is not compromised.
4. Traffic Circulation: Roadway link specific for all streets in the Town. The LOS of grade C is desirable for major access streets during peak traffic times. LOS designations are listed in the Transportation Element.
5. Sanitary Sewer: 85 gallons per capita per day; 300 milligrams per liter strength (BOD).
6. Potable Water: 170 gallons per capita per day at 55 psi; with a minimum of three days storage reserve.
7. Fire flow: Minimum of 1,000 gallons per minute.



Town of La Conner

Six-Year
Capital Facilities Plan



2024-2030

Table of Contents

Purpose and Definitions	2
Section 1 Goals, Policies, and Statutory Requirements	4
Section 2 Population Impact	7
2.1 Population History	7
2.2 Population Projections	8
Section 3 Level of Service Standards and Forecast Demands	9
Section 4 Capital Facilities	10
4.1 Water Systems	10
4.2 Wastewater System	18
4.3 Composting Operation	21
4.4 Stormwater System	23
4.5 Street Systems	26
4.6 Parks	28
4.7 Town Facilities	31
Section 5 Overall Financial Capacity	34
5.1 Debt Capacity	34
5.2 Current Expense Fund	34
5.3 Revenue/Expenditure Trends	34-35
Section 6 Selection of Projects	36-38
Appendix A – Funding Sources	39
Appendix B – Street Inventory	43

Introduction

The Town of La Conner is located on the shores of the Swinomish Channel adjacent to the Skagit River delta and the Swinomish Tribal Community. The Town provides utility functions for sewer, water and stormwater. In addition, public services for fire protection, parks, and recreation are provided by the Town. Police and public safety services are provided under contract with the Skagit County Sheriff's office. Library services are provided through the La Conner Swinomish Library. Capital outlays in La Conner have varied from year to year, depending on need and the ability of the Town to secure grants to fund particular projects. In the past, La Conner has not typically allocated General Fund revenues for large capital projects. Instead, these projects have been funded through bond issues, state and federal grants, and revenues from enterprise funds such as water and sewer revenues. For example, when the Town built the sewer system in the early 1970's, it used 90% grants from the federal and state governments, and issued unlimited general obligation bonds for the balance.

The first La Conner Comprehensive Plan compliant with the Growth Management Act (GMA) was adopted in 1996. It included a Capital Facilities Element and a 6-year Capital Facilities component. The first Capital Facilities Plan, separate from the Comprehensive Plan, was adopted by the Town Council in 2006 and is updated annually. The annual updating process includes Departmental reviews, Council review, Town commissions (Parks and Planning), public workshops, State Environmental Protection Act (SEPA) review and a Town Council public hearing. The next update of the Comprehensive Plan is due in 2025.

Purpose and Definitions

This Capital Facilities Plan (CFP) is an update of the Capital Facilities Element in the Town's Comprehensive Plan. The objectives of the CFP are to:

- Complete a physical inventory and catalogue of existing capital facilities and equipment, including green infrastructure;
- Provide goals and policies to support appropriate public investment in these facilities;
- Provide and coordinate the list of current and future projects to be undertaken in utilities, infrastructure and facilities over the next twenty years, to be reviewed annually by Town staff, the Mayor and the Town Council, as part of the budget process;
- Tabulate the costs and optimum financing methods to ensure that those improvements that are most important to public health and safety are achieved, considering the Town's limited ability to pay; and
- Provide a projection of financing for a six-year plan cycle and identify funding sources. Coordinate funding requests with other plans (i.e. Comprehensive Water System Plan, Comprehensive Sewer and Facility Plan, Stormwater Management Plan, 6-Year Transportation Improvement Plan, Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan, Parks and Recreation Plan). Look for grant combinations for matching local funds, grants and loans.

This plan is intended to outline the improvements necessary to keep the Town's facilities in full compliance with county, state, and federal laws and regulations, maintain and improve public services to citizens, and accommodate orderly growth. Major investments to be completed within the next six years include water, street and stormwater projects. In 1996, the Town completed more than two

million dollars worth of work on their wastewater collection and treatment system. In 2003, as part of a Skagit County project, storm water utility and street improvements on Morris Street were completed and the project reflected sensitivity to maintaining the small town appearance of the town's streets. The project included a stormwater treatment facility adjacent to the wastewater treatment facility in the Urban Growth Area east of Town. [As of 2025, La Conner is in the middle of updating its Comprehensive Water Systems Plan.](#)

DEFINITION OF CAPITAL PROJECT

The Capital Facilities Plan covers needed improvements that are of relatively large scale, are generally non-recurring, and which may require multi-year financing. For the purposes of this plan, a capital item or project is defined as one requiring expenditures greater than \$10,000 with a life span of at least ten years.

Abbreviations [for funding sources and agencies](#) are as follows:

<u>BOD</u>	Biochemical Oxygen Demand
CCWF	Centennial Clean Water Fund
CDBG	Community Development Block Grant
CERB	Community Economic Revitalization Board
CTED	Washington Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development
DOC	Department of Commerce
DOE	Washington Department of Ecology
DOH	Washington Department of Health
DOT	Washington Department of Transportation
EPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
<u>ERU</u>	Equivalent Residential Unit
IAC	Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation
LCGF	Town of La Conner General (Current Expense) Fund
LCSF	Town of La Conner Sewer Funds
LCDF	Town of La Conner Drainage Funds
LCStF	Town of La Conner Street Funds
LCPPF	Town of La Conner Park & Port Funds
LCWF	Town of La Conner Water Funds
<u>LOS</u>	Level of Service
PWTF	Public Works Trust Fund
RCO	Recreation and Conservation Office
SRF	State Revolving Funds (Water and Wastewater)
TIB	Transportation Improvement Board
TIA	Transportation Improvement Account, Department of Transportation
USDA/FS	U. S. Department of Agriculture/Forest Service
USDA/RD	U. S. Department of Agriculture/Rural Development

Section 1. Goals, Policies and Statutory Regulation

The Goals and Policies of the La Conner Capital Facilities Plan per the Capital Facilities Element of the La Conner Comprehensive Plan are as follows:

Goals:

1. La Conner shall endeavor to provide needed public facilities to all residents within its jurisdiction in a manner that protects investments in and maximizes the use of existing facilities.
2. Capital improvements shall be provided to correct existing deficiencies, to replace worn out or obsolete facilities and to accommodate future growth, as indicated in the Six-Year Schedule of Improvements of this element.
3. Future development shall bear a fair share of facility improvement costs necessitated by development in order to achieve and maintain adopted level of service standards and measurable objectives.
4. The Town shall manage its fiscal resources to support the provision of needed capital improvements for all development.
5. The Town shall coordinate land use decisions and financial resources with a schedule of capital improvements to meet adopted level of service standards, measurable objectives, and provide existing and future facility needs.
6. The Town shall implement a Shoreline Master Plan for the provision or extension of capital facilities in shoreline areas in accordance with existing and future shoreline uses, and the carrying capacity of the shoreline ecosystem.

Policies:

1. Capital improvement projects costing more than \$10,000 identified for implementation shall be included in the Six-Year Schedule of Improvement of this element. Capital improvements costing less than \$10,000 should be reviewed for inclusion in the Six-Year Capital Improvement Program and the annual capital budget.
2. Proposed capital improvement projects shall be evaluated and prioritized using the following guidelines as to whether the proposed action would:
 - a. Be needed to correct existing deficiencies, replace needed facilities, or to provide facilities needed for future growth
 - b. Mitigate a condition that contributes to a public hazard
 - c. Negatively contributes to any existing condition of public facility capacity deficits

- d. Be financially feasible
- e. Conform to future land uses and needs based on projected growth patterns
- f. Generate public facility demands that exceed capacity increases planned in the Six-Year Schedule of Improvements
- g. If left unaddressed, would have a detrimental impact on the local budget

3. Town sewer and water connection fee revenues shall be allocated primarily for capital improvements related to expansion and/or rehabilitation of those facilities.
4. Appropriate funding mechanisms and development's contribution of a fair share of other public facility improvements for (such as recreation and drainage) will be considered for implementation as they are developed by the Town.
5. Prior to the issuance of Certificates of Occupancy, the Town and/or developers shall provide for public facilities at the level of service standards needed to serve development for which development permits were previously issued.
6. The Town shall continue to adopt an annual capital budget and a six-year capital improvement program as part of its budgeting process.
7. Efforts shall be made to secure grants or private funds whenever available to finance the provision of capital improvements.
8. Fiscal policies to direct expenditures for capital improvements will be consistent with other Comprehensive Plan elements.
9. The Town and/or developers shall provide for the availability of public facilities and services needed to support development concurrent with the impacts of such development subsequent to the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan. These facilities shall meet adopted Level of Service Standards.
10. The Town will support and encourage the joint development and use of cultural and community facilities with other governmental or community organizations in areas of mutual concern and benefit.
11. The Town will emphasize capital improvement projects, which promote the conservation, preservation or revitalization of commercial, industrial, and residential areas in La Conner.
12. The Town shall ensure the Capital Facilities Plan meets the goals, objectives and policies of the Comprehensive Plan and the Shoreline Master Program.
13. The Town government or Town Council will not incur any indebtedness that would endanger any level of services in the town.

Statutory Requirements

This Capital Facilities Plan (CFP) is consistent with the provisions of the current La Conner Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan is due to be updated in 2025. Capital Facilities planning is cited in RCW 36.70A Growth Management Act (GMA). The CFP is consistent with the requirements of the GMA, as outlined [in RCW 36.70A](#), [in the CTED publication, Making Your Comprehensive Plan a Reality](#), subtitled “A Capital Facilities Plan Preparation Guide.” The La Conner CFP will also meet the requirements of those state and federal agencies that mandate a thoughtful process for prioritizing projects as a prerequisite to offering loans and grants to solve infrastructure problems. Consistent with the requirements of the GMA, the planning period for this CFP is 2024 - 2030.

State mandated programs, such as the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), are not under direct local control, but require annual updating. The Town undertakes an annual update of the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) to identify capital projects for the Town’s infrastructure.

Capital Facilities Plan Amendments and Updating

The Capital Facilities Plan is updated annually as a component of the annual budgeting process. The process begins with the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for the Town’s utility infrastructure and departmental budget reviews. Completed projects are removed from the plan and new projects are identified for maintenance of the Town’s infrastructure and responding to changing conditions.

Once the draft plan is complete, a SEPA review notice is issued with a Threshold Determination. Following a comment period, the Town Council conducts a public hearing. Following the SEPA comment period and public hearing, the Town Council determines the final content of the Capital Facilities Plan and adopts the annual CFP by resolution.

Section 2 - Population Impact

2.1 Population History

Although the Town currently has an official population of 995 people, its infrastructure serves residents outside the Town limits from Skagit Beach to the Swinomish Tribal Community (approximately 5,000–7,000 people within 30 square miles). The Town has a potential growth of 1,191019 people by 2045. [The most recent Residential Land Use Capacity Analysis is attached as an appendix to the Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Plan.](#) 25⁴ and a total residential capacity of 1,226. In addition, La Conner is a popular tourist destination with an average daily visitation of 1,400 people (500,000 annually). La Conner town limits covers 255 acres, of which 51 acres is within a National Historic Preservation District. The La Conner Comprehensive Plan provides for increased population densities by encouraging in-fill, and no expansion of the Town limits is planned.

YEAR	POPULATION	CHANGE
1890	398	
1900	564	+166
1920	516	-48
1940	624	+108
1960	638	+14
1980	660	+22
1990	690	+30
2000	761	+71
2001	765	+4
2002	775	+10
2003	760	-15
2004	785	+25
2005	795	+10
2006	839	+44
2007	901	+62
2008	886	-15
2009	870	-16
2010	870	0
2011	885	+15
2012	895	+10
2013	890	-5
2014	895	+5
2015	895	0
2016	905	+10
2017	925	+20

⁴Population and Land Use Analysis Updated 2017, John Doyle

2.2 Population Projections

Population Changes

The analysis of population projections for the next 20 years are based on the 2023 Skagit County Population, Housing and Employment Growth Allocations as directed by the Washington State Department of Commerce. The full methodology of the 2023 Skagit County Population, Housing and Employment Growth Allocations is included in the Land Use Element Appendix 5D. La Conner has been projected to experience 1% population growth between 2022 – 2045, resulting in a projected population increase of 211 people, resulting in a 2045 population target of 1,191 people. La Conner's population has increased slowly but steadily over the past 50 years as shown in Table 5-3 below.

TABLE 5-3
HISTORICAL POPULATION GROWTH

(US Census and OFM Official Count)

Year	Population	Change
1890	398	
1900	564	166
1920	516	-48
1940	624	108
1950	594	-30
1960	638	44
1970	639	1
1980	660	21
1990	686	26
2000	761	75
2010	870	109
2022	980	110
Population Trends 2000-2017		
2000	761	-39
2001	765	4
2002	775	10
2003	760	-15
2004	785	25
2005	795	10
2006	839	44

*Town of La Conner**2024-2030 Capital Facilities Plan*

2007	901	62
2008	886	-15
2009	870	-16
2010	870	0
2011	885	15
2012	895	10
2013	890	-5
2014	895	5
2015	895	0
2016	905	10
2017	925	20
2022	980	55

No analysis of the components of population change (births, deaths and migration) has been done for the Town. It is so small and influenced so heavily by nearby employment centers that the proportional share of County population is probably as good or a better indicator of population growth. The County's estimate is provided by the Office of Financial Management and summarized by Employment Security, which has taken into consideration many indicators including natural increase, migration and economic factors.

Infill strategies are used by the Town of La Conner for accommodating growth within the Town limits at densities consistent with current zoning. New development in the small area outside the existing Town limits will only be served in a manner consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, the Water System Plan, the Sewer Comprehensive Plan and Capital Facilities Plan.

Section 3 - Level of Service Standards and Forecast Demands

La Conner Municipal Code (LCMC) 15.135.030 - Concurrency Management Systems And LOS Standards.

Level of service ([LOS](#)) standards ([LOS](#)) are established in the LCMC in the Administration and Enforcement section of Chapter 15 (LCMC 15.135). The current LOS standards are:

Adopted [LOS Levels of Service Standards \(LOS\)](#). The town shall use the following LOS standards in reviewing the impacts of new development and redevelopment upon public facility provision:

- (a) Community parks – Six acres per 1,000 residents (now have minimum of 12 acres for Pioneer Park).
- (b) Open space – 25 percent of total town area.
- (c) Drainage – Storm water management system to retain the runoff from a 25-year, 24-hour storm event at peak discharge rates. Development will be regulated to ensure that the post-development runoff to the town system does not exceed the pre-developed discharge volume and/or rate to ensure the level of service of the existing storm water system is not compromised.
- (d) Traffic circulation – Roadway link specific for all streets in the town. The LOS of [grade C](#) (occasional backups may develop, but delay to vehicles is short-term and still tolerable) is desirable for major access streets during peak traffic times. LOS designations are listed in the transportation element of the comprehensive plan.
- (e) Sanitary sewer – 85 gallons per capita per day; 300 milligrams per liter strength [Biochemical Oxygen Demand](#) (BOD).
- (f) Potable water – 170 gallons per [Equivalent Residential Unit](#) (ERU) / per day at 55 psi; with a minimum of three days storage reserve.
- (g) Fireflow – Minimum of 1,000 gallons per minute.

Currently, La Conner meets all the LOS standards.

Section 4 – Capital Facilities

4.1 Water System²

Overview

The City of Anacortes is the historic and current source of water for the Town. The Town of La Conner provides retail water service to five areas:

- Within the Town of La Conner Limits
- Skagit County Platted Residential (Skagit Beach)
- Swinomish Tribal Reservation (Shelter Bay)
- Skagit County Commercial/Industrial (Port of Skagit County and La Conner properties within the La Conner UGA)
- Skagit County Agricultural (Surrounding Farmlands)

Skagit Beach

The Town provides water for the Skagit Beach (Channel Drive) area outside the Town limits. Skagit Beach is a small community of residential lots on the eastern bank of the Swinomish Channel. Skagit Beach Development deeded its water system to the Town in 1996. Under the terms of their agreement, the Town operates and maintains the system, including routine repairs. The property owners are responsible for paying for major improvements to the system and for system expansion.

Port of Skagit County & La Conner UGA

The Town of La Conner has established a 14 acre UGA east of the Town which contains the Fire Department, Sewer Treatment Plant, Composting Facility and a 3-acre Stormwater Detention Facility. The stormwater utility currently has approximately 2000 linear feet of 24 inch force main, 3000 linear feet of 12 inch collector pipe, installation of a construction infiltration pond and settling basin begun in 2002 and completed in 2003.

In addition to the UGA facilities, the Port owns approximately 35 acres of industrial and commercial properties within the Town limits. The Port has a separate stormwater system. The Town provides water to the Port through a meter at North Third Street, just south of the new marina, which measures the Port's water use.

Agricultural Lands

The Comprehensive Water System Plan assumes that all the agricultural use will remain so. The Town of La Conner's current Comprehensive Water System is in the middle of an extended update process, with the final updated document expected to be approved by Town Council in 2025.

Shelter Bay

The Town is a wholesale purveyor of water to the Shelter Bay Community. The Town and Shelter Bay Community have signed a new agreement for 2011. The service area shall be the roughly 942 platted lots and the marina/clubhouse complex of Shelter Bay, plus the plat of Eagles Nest and a portion of the Dr. Joe Division #2 lots. The Customer agrees not to expand its service area in a manner that would increase its water requirements by more than 10 percent

² The Town of La Conner completed an update to its Comprehensive Water Plan in 2010.

without prior approval by the Town. It is agreed that, if the Customer develops needs for water over and above the ability of the Town to supply, then the Customer shall have the right to seek other sources of water. The service is provided through a six-inch master meter located on the east side of the Swinomish Channel. In the 2011 Water Supply Agreement with Shelter Bay, the Town agreed to supply a peak load of 75 million gallons per year. This agreement excludes the Town from providing fire flow prevention requirements to Shelter Bay and any liability associated with fire flow requirements. Shelter Bay Community, Inc. serves their individual customers. Shelter Bay owns, operates, and maintains the entire water system on their side of this master meter.

SOURCE

The Town's water supply source has been from the City of Anacortes since the 1930's. In the 1960's, Anacortes constructed a water filtration plant and since then has been providing treated water to the Town, the Swinomish Tribe and its other major customers such as the City of Oak Harbor, the Refineries and the Whidbey Naval Air Station and upgraded the plant in 2013.

Over time, the supply line from Anacortes has been increased in diameter and included booster pumps to increase its capacity. In 1969, a 14-inch line was constructed from the Anacortes transmission line to the La Conner system, paralleling an 8-inch supply line that had been built in 1951, making booster pumps unnecessary. Between the two transmission lines, they provide additional reliability for the Town's customers and transmission capacity of approximately 3,000 gallons per minute.

The parallel transmission mains continue from SR 20 to the town along La Conner-Whitney Road. The 10-inch Skagit Beach line runs along Downey Road about 2000 feet and serves Channel Drive via 4 inch asbestos cement line.

For the past twenty years, the estimated amounts of water and costs to provide it have been incorporated in annual amendments to the basic contract between the Town and the City of Anacortes. Water charges are based on a three-year moving average of capital costs and a combination of fixed costs and costs that vary depending on prospective water usage. In the agreement signed in May 1999, the parties agreed that the Town purchased 143,696,420 gallons of water in 1998. In 2006, the agreement was revised and Anacortes agreed to commit to provide 162,000,000 gallons per year. The meter equivalency for the Town is 933 in 2007. In 2014, La Conner reduced the committed volume to 150,000,000 gallons per year.

Anacortes will remain as the long-term supplier of water for the Town. However, Skagit County PUD has water supply lines within reach of the Town if it becomes necessary to seek an alternate supplier.

STORAGE AND QUALITY

A 1,500,000-gallon steel, above-grade reservoir constructed in 1979 and renovated in 2001³ in Pioneer Park provides the Town's water storage. According to CHS Engineers, "steel reservoirs are typically not subject to rupture. Steel tanks such as La Conner's are designed to flex and possibly even deform, but seldom fail during severe earthquakes." This tank has been valued at \$1,572,300.⁴ Its full volume is available for the water system because the bottom

³ The service life is estimated to 2020.

⁴ Provided by the Washington Cities Insurance Authority 2017.

elevation of the tank is above the highest point in the service area. It is an auxiliary water supply and pressure balancing in the Town's system and is filled directly from the Town's 8-inch transmission main.

The reservoir was evaluated in 1993. Several suggestions were made for structural and coating improvements to the tank. During the summer of 1999, additional inspection and testing was performed. Repairs were completed in 2001 with roof support beam replacement and interior and exterior coatings replaced.

CHS Engineers analyzed all of the storage requirements established in law and regulation by health and fire officials. After reviewing operational, equalizing, standby, and fire suppression requirements, CHS has concluded that the Town's storage facility has sufficient capacity and years of life to serve at least until 2020. The Town's storage capacity and reservoir strength will be reviewed during the ongoing Comprehensive Water System Update, due in 2025.

Distribution System Inventory

The mains, distribution piping and service lines within the water system are of varying ages and varying types of pipe. The distribution system includes approximately 20 miles of 3/4" to 14" diameter water mains and a variety of appurtenances described on the next two pages. Lines extending to Skagit Beach are inadequate for fire flow.

Water System Inventory Summary (by CHS Engineers) PIPING

		Lineal Feet				
Diameter	Material	Town	Service Area	Total	*Unit Cost	Replacement Value (\$)
3/4 in.	Iron and PVC	190				
1 in.	Iron and PVC	330				
1 1/2 in.		690		1,210		Will be replaced by 4 in. or larger pipe
2 in.	Iron and PVC	4,500 100	2,600	7,200		"
3 in.	Steel and PVC	120		120		"
4 in.	Iron and PVC AC	1,520 800	11,300	13,620 (22,150)	32	\$ 708,800
6 in.	AC & DI	10,025 580		10,600	40	\$ 424,000
8 in.	AC, DI, PVC	16,270 1,650 1,670	19,800	39,390	45	\$ 1,772,550
10 in.	DI & PVC	4,645 1410	1,960	8,015	52	\$ 416,780
12 in.	AC	2,590		2,590	64	\$ 165,760
14 in.	AC	4,520	19,200	23,720	73	\$ 1,731,560
Total water system piping		106,465 lineal feet (20.2 miles)				
<i>* Unit cost excludes surface restoration</i>						

Appurtenances

Part	Size	Town #	Service Area #	Total #	Unit cost (\$)	Replacement Value (\$)
Regular (Isolation) Valves	2 in.	9		9		Will be replaced by 4 in. or larger valves
	4 in.	8	5	13	\$700	\$ 9,100
	6 in.	27		27	\$1,000	\$ 27,000
	8 in.	41	4	45	\$1,200	\$ 54,000
	10 in.	10		11	\$1,600	\$ 17,600
	12 in.	4		4	\$1,800	\$ 7,200
	14 in.	5	6	11	\$2,100	\$ 23,100
Pressure Reduction Valves		6	1	7	\$15,000	\$ 105,000
Air Release Valves		2		2	\$2,500	\$ 5,000
Fire Hydrants		70	4	74	\$4,800	\$ 355,200

All fire hydrants have a single “pumper” port and two 2.5 inch ports. All valves are checked by Town staff and kept functional. Hydrants are exercised every six months and valves annually in conformance with national (American Water Works Association) and state (Department of Health) guidelines. Town staff are currently replacing out-of-date fire hydrants on a cost-dependent schedule, while maintaining appropriate convertors for each type of fire hydrant.

Water Meters

The Town has approximately 600 connections (meters), sized as follows:

Diameter (inches)	Number	2006 Unit Cost (\$)	Replacement Value (\$)
3/4	599	\$275	\$ 164,725
1	67	\$325	\$ 21,775
1 1/2	9	\$465	\$4185
2	19	\$925	\$17575
3	6	\$1,800	\$10,800
4	0	\$2,600	\$0
6	1	\$3,400	\$3,400

The Town has specialized water system equipment valued at \$20,000 and material stock valued at \$10,000.

Because it is impossible to predict how or when undeveloped property will be improved, new mains will need to be designed and constructed at the time the actual property layout is determined. All new water mains should be designed in accordance with the Town design criteria as described in the Water System Plan and good engineering practices. All improvements must be designed by a professional engineer and constructed in accordance with the current policies and procedures of the Town.

The Town continues to plan to maintain and improve fire flow. Interior service within the Town should be constructed with a minimum sizing of eight-inch mains that are looped so that the flow patterns are relatively short within a given area.

In 2004, the Town purchased and began the installation of an automated meter reading system. That system is an ORION/ Badger Meter Automated Reading System purchased for \$30,000. The system includes: In 2014 The ORION/Badger Automated Reading System had \$18,000 of hardware and software upgrades

- Hardened laptop with touch screen
- GPS system for locating the reading vehicle and meters
- GIS data base for meter reading
- Map base user interface
- Unread meter list interface
- Monitors meters for potential leak and tampering
- ORS –ORION reading software
- RADIX hand held data collector
- 625 meter transmitters

From 2005 to 2007, the Town purchased and installed annually “Badger” meters with transmitters. The installations are complete. The Public Works staff will still have to manually read the larger meters (1.5” and greater) with the handheld. There are a total of 47 larger meters. Town has contracted with an asset management company to enhance the ability to collect data and monitor needed repairs to capital facilities, including water meters.

Projected Demand

CHS Engineers prepared the original 2001 Water Comprehensive Plan, they collected data about the amount of water bought from Anacortes and the amount sold to customers through master and residential meters. After correction, the loss of water through maintenance and unaccounted for water losses annually is below 10%. This amount is acceptable to analysts of municipal water systems. The Comprehensive Water Plan was updated in 2009 and approved in 2010.

The system loss also indicated to CHS that the “overall system is in acceptable condition with isolated locations requiring repair. The majority of system repairs have been made on the Town’s oldest pipes and service lines.”

In 1998, CHS performed a hydraulic capacity analysis on the La Conner water system. They used data describing the system and placed hypothetical demand on it by using actual customer water use records. By modeling the system and using special software, they were able to identify areas in need of upgrades.

For planning purposes the demand forecast for residential water service connections is 800 gallons per connection per day. Based upon historical water usage and conservation efforts, future water usage by residential connections should be less than 600 gallons per connection per day.

Future water usage by non-residential customers will also be impacted by conservation efforts (e.g., special summer rates and a conservation education program as recommended in the Water Comprehensive Plan). For planning purposes, the forecasts for non-residential water usage is based upon published demand formulas provided by the Washington State Department of Ecology.

Future demand forecasts are expressed as:

- Maximum Instantaneous Demand - Fire flows, designs of booster pumps, and line sizing
- Average Daily Demand - General planning purposes and obtaining water rights
- Maximum Daily Demand - Design of source and storage

Water System Improvement Program Summary

Please see attached the 2025 Water Capital Improvement Plan.

4.2 Wastewater System

Overview

La Conner owns, operates, and maintains a domestic wastewater collection and treatment system. Much of the system was constructed in the mid 1970's to replace the on-site septic systems and old sewer lines that drained directly to the Swinomish Channel, without treatment. The Town joined many other communities at that time in obtaining 90% grants directly from the federal government to build wastewater systems. Almost the entire Town has sanitary sewer service.

The collection system has two main interceptors. One extends west of the Wastewater Treatment Plant to the intersection of Maple and Morris Streets. A 21" line continues south southwesterly along Maple Avenue while a 12" line continues west along Morris Street. This 12" line transports most of the downtown flows and the pumped wastewater from the Tribal connection and the marina area. Other sewer lines (typically 8") branch off these two interceptors to form the rest of the collection system. Individual residences are connected to the collection system by gravity side sewers. Side sewer connections are tied into the main with 6-inch risers. The length of side sewers is not shown in the Town's collection system inventory below since they are on private property and are privately owned and maintained.

COLLECTION INVENTORY

CHS Engineers inventoried the collection system as follows:

Piping	Diameter in inches	Length in feet
Gravity Pipe	8	20,049
" "	10	0
" "	12	2,974
" "	15	1,696
" "	18	256
" "	21	7,143
Pressure Pipe		30
Total Length		32,148

The system has 136 utility access manholes.

There is one lift station, located near N. 3rd Street and Dunlap Street, with a pumping capacity for each of two pumps of 225 gpm/16' head. The station is wet well mounted, with a vacuum prime.

Sewer Plant Facilities Inventory

Facility	Value
Influent Well	\$200,000
Office / Lab	\$200,000
Aeration Basin	\$720,000
Screening Area	\$100,000
Secondary Clarifier	\$450,000
Aerobic Digester	\$130,000
UV System	\$96,000
Lift Station	\$30,000
Total Value	\$1,926,000

As part of their preparation of the Town's Sewer Comprehensive Plan and Facility Plan in 1996, CHS Engineers performed a computerized analysis of the hydraulic capacity of the wastewater collection system. The results indicated that most of the system is using less than half of its capacity "with most lines having 70% or more available capacity." The Sewer Plant Manager estimates that the system is still operating at half its capacity.

The analysis indicated that the 12-inch interceptor line in Morris Street should be replaced between the lift station and Maple Avenue. CHS has analyzed this system subsequently and concluded that the Tribal flow could be redirected as an alternative to replacing this pipeline. The hydraulic model indicated that the Town's lift station was operating well below design capacity. A telemetry system has been installed at the lift station so that staff at the Treatment Plant could be notified there of any problems at the lift station. This has saved frequent trips to the lift station for personal examination of its operational status.

Data review suggests that Inflow and Infiltration remains a significant portion of the wastewater flows. Video inspection was performed in 2015 to identify pipe repairs and further visual inspection is scheduled to help identify the specific areas of I/I contribution.

Current Treatment

The Wastewater Treatment Plant is located east of La Conner, on the south side of Chilberg Road. The Town's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit from the Environmental Protection Agency through the Department of Ecology describes the wastewater treatment process prior to the significant plant improvements referred to under "Treatment" (below).

A new permit has been issued to the Town incorporating the changes and increasing the allowed capacity of the plant. The new NPDES permit allows for a maximum monthly flow of 520,000 gallons per day and loading of (BOD₅) of 1,300 pounds a day.

Potential Collection System Improvements

As mentioned elsewhere in this plan, Morris Street is a new collector. A recent analysis has determined that if flows from the Tribe or multi-family housing or commercial/industrial uses in the south end of Town require it, a by-pass to Caledonia Street may be required and the new development will pay for the by-pass costs.

As noted elsewhere, there are a number of utility access holes in the low-lying areas of the town, which get direct storm flow. By sealing the frames and covers of the access holes, Town officials will prevent this flow and minimize inflow into the wastewater collection system. This will reduce treatment costs at the Wastewater Treatment Plant. The Town's contracted wastewater operator is performing this sealing and although it could be characterized as capital cost, it is being managed as an operational expense.

The Town will evaluate the wastewater system to determine if Inflow and Infiltration improvements will qualify as capital projects and seek appropriate funding for system improvements.

Treatment

In the 1996 Sewer Comprehensive Plan, improvements to the Wastewater Treatment Plant were identified and completed in 2001.

If federal or state standards mandate that the treatment standards be increased to a significantly higher standard than at present, the next stage of improvements to the plant would be a third clarifier. Without the benefit of design, the rough cost estimate for such a facility would be \$400,000 in 2000 dollars.

Wastewater System Improvement Program Summary

<u>Project Name</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Cost est.</u>	<u>Finance Source</u>	<u>Year</u>
Plant Improvement	Rebuild Clarifier	\$110,000	Sewer Rates and Reserves	2019
Influent Screening	Upgrade	\$220,000	Sewer Rates and Reserves	2020
Plant Technical Upgrade	Next generation upgrade of water	\$550,000	Sewer Rates and Reserves	2022
	Total	\$880,000		

La Conner has contracted with [Wilson Engineering David Evans and Associates](#) in 2023 to perform an updated inventory and analysis of the Wastewater Treatment Plan which will include potential options for expansion.

4.3 Composting Operation

Overview

LaConner produces Class A Exceptional Quality (EQ) Biosolids Compost. EQ is a category used by Washington State Department of Ecology to designate biosolids which have met Class A pathogen reduction requirements. LaConner complies with all Department of Ecology requirements which are more stringent than EPA Part 503 requirements.

In recent years, the composting operation has expanded its use of the Wastewater Treatment Plant site. This has been done for two reasons:

1. Marketing and quality control review by industry experts has indicated that an increased curing time improves the compost quality and market acceptance. An increased curing time requires additional space and site improvements.
2. After an initial increase in septage receiving in 2008-2010 and a commensurate increase in biosolids production, septage receiving and compost production are steady at 2,000 cubic yards per month.

Inventory

Facility	Value
Yardwaste Slab	\$300,000
Belt Filter Press and Building	\$300,000
R.A.S Building	\$70,000
Compost Site	\$50,000
Front-End Loader	\$170,000
Photovoltaic Array (10kW)	\$120,000
Total	\$860,000

Treatment

Class A Biosolids Compost undergoes advanced treatment to further reduce pathogen levels. Heat drying, composting, and high-temperature aerobic digestion are treatment processes that typically achieve Class A pathogen reduction requirements. Class A biosolids may be sold in bags or in bulk and can be beneficially used without pathogen related restrictions at the site. La Conner's compost also meets vector reduction requirements and EPA concentration limits for metals. This Class A EQ biosolids compost can be used to improve soil quality and add nutrients similar to any other fertilizer or soil amendment product.

Potential Facilities Improvements

The site reconfiguration reveals several needed improvements and activities. The old public works area must be reconfigured for use in the composting operation. The old public works building must be demolished and the fuel tank relocated. Added curing space on the east side of the facility will be a priority.

Compost Improvement Program Summary

<u>Project Name</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Cost est.</u>	<u>Finance Source</u>	<u>Year</u>
Site Improvements	Reconfigure Public Works Site and East Pad Addition	\$258,000	Septage Receivables and Reserves	2018
Solar Photovoltaic	5,000 square foot array installation	\$60,000	Septage Receivables and Reserves	2018
2 Septage receiving areas	Add 2nd septage receiving dump station with screen	\$50,000	Septage Receivables and Reserves	2019
Septage Screen	Upgrade septage screening	\$45,000	Septage Receivables and Reserves	2020
Compost Cover	Cover for pads 1 and 2	\$115,000	Septage Receivables and Reserves	2021
	Total	\$528,000		

4.4 Stormwater System

The most significant climactic impact on the Town's capital facilities are problems associated with ponding from excessive stormwater. In summer, rainfall is typically light, but rain is frequent throughout the rest of the year. The mean annual precipitation at the nearest weather station (the Washington State University Research Station west of Mount Vernon) is 34.20 inches, with a maximum rainfall of 44.20 inches (1990) and a minimum of 20.71 inches (1987.) Temperatures are moderate ranging from an average of 60 F in summer and 37 F in winter, but extremes of hot and cold are rare. The average frost-free season is from 160 to 210 days per year.

In 1992, the Town engaged Sturdy Engineering to complete a storm water management plan. The Stormwater section of the Capital Facilities Plan relies heavily on the Sturdy plan but uses cost estimates that were revised by CHS Engineers. The Town has adopted the most recent edition of the Stormwater Management Manual for Western Washington, a publication of the DOE for standards to be applied to all stormwater mitigation and development.

La Conner's geography creates three natural drainage systems:

- Maple and Caledonia Streets area that drains the south and east portions of the town,
- Morris Street area that drains Morris, portions of the hill and areas north to the Drainage District 15 Slough. The School District is within this basin and maintains a separate storm drainage system.
- Port area north of Drainage District 15.

The Port and the School District systems were not included in the Sturdy study and are not therefore included in this Capital Facilities Plan.

As discussed in the beginning of the Capital Facilities Plan, the Town is, for the most part, at sea level and has for many years experienced localized flooding during modest storm events. The flooding is due to the town's geography, its proximity to the Swinomish Channel, its high water table and what Sturdy Engineering called "an inadequate storm drainage system." In 2022, La Conner experienced a major flooding event. This led to the creation of the Emergency Management Commission (EMC). The EMC has reviewed flooding protocol in the La Conner Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan, which has been adopted by Town Council.

Current System

In the Maple Avenue area, the Town built a storm water collection system in 1986. This system provides street storm connections. New development is required to connect to the existing street structures. This piping is crucial since much of the land in this area is below the elevations of the adjacent roadway. As a result, water ponds in low-lying areas until it can percolate into the ground water. In many instances, the Town's system does not collect stormwater from these low-lying areas. For Maple Avenue, Sturdy Engineering determined that the piping systems and pump stations that have been installed in La Conner would be unable to handle a 25-year storm event of 2.7 inches in a 24-hour period.

A new system has been installed in the Morris Street area. The main trunk line follows Center Street from First Street to Sixth Street, then south to a pump station on Sixth Street between

Morris and Road Streets. This station is designed so that it will handle all storm water from the east, west, north and a portion of the south parts of the Town. (The storm water to a treatment facility located southeast of the wastewater treatment plant on Chilberg Road.) The treatment facility consists of a settling pond and an infiltration pond.

Proposed Projects

Sturdy Engineering used computer-based hydrologic modeling to determine the impact of a 25-year storm event on the Town's limited storm water management facilities. The plan proposed by Sturdy and incorporated into theis Capital Facilities Plan includeds upgrading the drainage management system in the Maple-Caledonia area.

The Town updated the Stormwater Management Plan in 2007. The plan specifies the detention/retention basin to filter the storm water through specially designed grass swales that will remove oil, grease, chemicals and sediments before discharging the storm water into Sullivan Slough. This system eliminates the storm water discharge that currently flows from the First and Morris Street pump station directly into Swinomish Channel.

The Town plans to use the updated study as the basis for improvements within budgetary constraints. Projects of smaller scope will be performed by Public Works personnel where appropriate, coordinating with the Town's engineering firm to replace and repair aging structures, and extend drainage into prioritized areas.

The Town's numerous pump stations require that a depreciation schedule be implemented to fund replacement of pumps and control equipment over a finite amount of time. Under the Town's UDC, new development is responsible for installing new and upgrading existing systems serving those areas.

Stormwater System Improvement Program Summary

The 2025 Storm Water Capital Improvement Plan is attached to this document.

Funding Sources for Stormwater Utility Improvements:

1. The Town created a stormwater utility in 2002. The current system rate for funding stormwater projects is \$11.55- \$16.12/residential water meter per month. Commercial customers are charged an Equivalent Residential Unit (ERU) based on 2,100 square feet of impervious surface. These accounts raise \$135,955- \$189,748 annually
2. Real Estate Excise Tax
3. Department of Ecology stormwater program grants.

4.5 Streets and Sidewalks

Current System

Streets and sidewalks

The La Conner street system consists of arterial streets, collector streets and local access streets. The majority of the streets are asphalt with some concrete streets and a handful of gravel alleys. As part of the development of this Capital Facilities Plan, an inventory of the town's streets was completed.

CHS Engineers prepared a map that reflects the inventory, indicating the condition of all of the streets. It also shows the location of stop signs, street lights, and sidewalks. The projects listed in the Town's Six Year Street Plan, as required by the Department of Transportation are also shown on the map. The map is the basis for ongoing plans for improving the streets and sidewalks. [See TIP Program.]

Please see attached the 2025 6-year Transportation Improvement Program, as well as the 20 year Transportation Planning horizon.

4.6 Parks

The Town of La Conner, La Conner School District, Skagit County, and other public and private agencies have assembled land devoted exclusively to park, recreation and open space uses within or adjacent to La Conner.

These lands provide a variety of park, recreation and open space activities including picnic facilities, athletic fields and playgrounds, community centers, and related park supporting administrative and maintenance facilities.

Approximately 24 acres (Pioneer Park and waterfront sites) or 60% of the park total, recreation and open space inventory are regionally significant sites. City and County residents, regardless of where they reside within La Conner or the surrounding region, use these sites. Out-of-area visitors and tourists also use a significant portion of these regional sites and facilities.

The remaining 16 acres, or 40% of the total park, recreation and open space inventory, are locally significant sites and properties used by residents who reside within the immediate area.

For a full list of the park facilities within La Conner, please see the Parks and Recreation Element.

4.7 Town Facilities

INVENTORY AND PROPOSED PROJECTS

Town Hall

Town Hall, located at Second and Douglas, is a historic building. The building was built in 1883 as a bank. It is valued at \$350,000. The Town has performed major remodeling to the east portion of the building. It is presently used to house the La Conner Sheriffs Detachment. Although there is no handicapped access to the upper two floors of the building, none could be constructed without major damage to the architectural integrity of this handsome historic structure.

Maple Hall / Maple Center

Located next to Town Hall on property donated by the Louisa A. Conner family, Maple Hall has served as a community center for nearly three-quarters of a century. In recent years, the Town obtained grants and invested local funds to rebuild and remodel the building to make it extremely attractive for community social and cultural activities.

Within Maple Hall is a substantial auditorium. It can accommodate three hundred and fifty people who are standing and somewhat fewer people in theater and table seating arrangements. There is a full service kitchen and an attractive fireside room, including a gas-fired fireplace. Maple Hall has full conference facilities.

Adjoining the Maple Hall complex is the Maple Center. It includes seating for twenty-five people, with tables, with direct street and courtyard access in the Lower Maple Center. Upstairs has elevator access and has additional seating area for forty people. The Maple Hall / Maple Center facilities are valued at \$500,000.

Fire Station

The Fire Station is located east of Town on 12154 Chilberg Road. The building houses the fire fighting equipment owned by the Town of La Conner. The Town acquired sole ownership of the Fire Station in 2017.

The Town houses at the station a 1996 Freightliner pumper with a 1,000-gallon storage tank and a 1,500 gallon per minute pump. Also owned by the Town and housed at the station are nine self-contained breathing apparatuses (SCBA), each valued at \$1,800, fifteen sets of turnout gear (boots, helmet, pants, coat, hood, gloves), each valued at \$1,100 and a considerable amount of hose of various lengths and miscellaneous.

The building is valued at \$1,100,000. They valued the contents at only \$25,000. This value does not include the individual fire apparatus.

Public Works Building

This building located at 604 North Third Street serves as the office for the Public Works Department, as a facility to perform vehicle maintenance and for the storage of public works equipment. The site is leased from the Port of Skagit County and includes a shop facility. The Town owns a one story 510 square foot mobile commercial office. It is valued at \$36,000.

Pioneer Park Kitchen

The Town owns and maintains a small kitchen facility for public use in Pioneer Park. It was constructed in the 1930's, re-roofed with a metal roof in 2000, and will need major repairs/replacement within 20 years. It was valued at \$27,689.

Public Restrooms

The Town maintains three public restrooms:

- South First – 613 South First Street valued at \$50,000
- Morris – 304 Morris Street valued at \$50,000
- Pioneer Park valued at \$50,000

They are wood frame buildings.

Civic Garden Club Building

The Town acquired the Civic Garden Club, a key structure from La Conner's early history, as a gift in 2000. The building dates from 1875, when it was built as a grange hall. It served as the first federal courthouse north of Seattle, the District Court for Whatcom County and as the first Courthouse for Skagit County. Later it became a schoolhouse, a church, a lodge building and a community center. Major foundation work and restoration was done in 2002, with the building being moved away from a rock fault and a new concrete foundation added. The Garden Club building is valued at \$125,000.

TOWN EQUIPMENT**INVENTORY****Public Works:**

Year	Vehicle	Condition	Price
1988	310-C John Deere back hoe	Fair	\$18,000.
1999	F-550 Ford Service Truck	Good	\$20,000
1994	Ford New Holland 445-D tractor	Good	\$25,000.
1994	Chevrolet C2500 Pickup Truck	Fair	\$1,000.
1995	International 4900 Dump Truck	Good	\$30,000
1995	Ford New Holland Tractor	Fair	\$17,913
1988	Ford Tymco Sweeper 7000	Good	#25,000
1992	GMC C2500 P/U	Poor	\$2,500
1994	Chevrolet C3500 Pickup Truck	Good	-\$16,000.
2004	Kubota KX161-3 Excavator	Excellent	\$45,000
2006	Elgin Crosswind St Sweeper	Fair	\$81,810
2007	Spilvæ System	New	\$38,000
2014	Ford F-150 Pick-up	New	\$20,000
2009	Dodge Ram 2500 Snowplow	Good	\$37,000
2012	Dodge Ram 1500	Fair	\$25,000
2014	Ford F-150 Pick-up	New	\$20,000
2016	John Deere X735 Riding Mower	Good	\$12,879
2017	Ford F250	Good	\$39,868
2022	Chevrolet Silverado 2500HD	Good	\$60,139
2022	John Deer 310L Backhoe	Good	\$104,752
2024	Ford F550	New	\$113,000

Fire Department:

Year	Apparatus	Condition	Value
1995	Freightliner Pumper Truck with 1,000 gallon storage and a 1,500 per minute pump.	Fair	\$ 195,000
2009	Floating Moorage	Excellent	\$ 14,000
1985	Aid Van	Fair	\$ 1
1982	Support Aid Van	Fair	\$ 1,900
2015	New Pumper Truck	Good Excellent	\$ 421,344

Proposed Fire Department Capital Projects:

New fire and rescue boat ~\$360,000.00**PROPOSED EQUIPMENT AND SOURCES OF FUNDING**

Long-term equipment needs can be anticipated and planned for, with appropriate levels of reserve funds being appropriated to replace equipment. Water and stormwater are enterprise funds fully capable of meeting these demands with proper management. Equipment service life needs to be ascertained and prorated to determine replacement schedules.

Section 5 Overall Financial Capacities

5.1 Debt Capacity

There are two major methods of municipal borrowing; these are general obligation (GO) bonds and revenue bonds. General obligation bonds are backed by the value of the property within the jurisdiction. Voter approved GO bonds increase property tax rate and use the increased revenue to repay bondholders. Councilmatic bonds (also called limited-tax general obligation bonds) do not increase taxes and are repaid with general revenues, usually property tax revenues. State statute and the state constitution limit the amounts which can be raised through these bonds to 1.5% of the total assessed value for Councilmatic bonds, and an additional 1% for voter-approved bonds. However, since these bonds do not raise taxes, the Town must consider its capacity to make payments from existing revenue. A Councilmatic bond will only be issued if a project in progress requires funding not available from alternative sources, if matching fund monies are available which may be lost if not applied for in a timely manner, or if emergency condition exists. It is also considered prudent to keep some Councilmatic bond capacity in reserve for emergencies, though this is not required by statute.

In La Conner's case, there is approximately 3.7 million dollars of GO bond capacity available.

Town policy on bond debt limitation states that the following individual percentages shall not be exceeded in any specific debt category:

- General Debt - 2.5% of assessed valuation
- Utility Debt - 2.5% of assessed valuation
- Open Space and Park Facilities - 2.5% of assessed valuation

Revenue bonds are financed directly from the income of the utility which benefits by them. Interest rates tend to be higher than for general obligation bonds, and issuance of the bonds may be approved by the Council without a voter referendum. There is no statutory limit on the amounts of revenue which may be raised in this way; however, utility rates must be raised sufficiently to cover the cost of bond repayment.

Current Expense Fund

The Current Expense Fund is the revenue source for the Fire Department and general government operations of the Town Hall. The primary sources of Current Expense Fund revenue are general property taxes and retail sales taxes. There are also smaller revenue sources; some of these are under the Town's control but many are not.

The following table shows Current Expense revenue trends for 2017 to 2024.

Current Expense Fund Revenue History – Table 1

Revenues/Year	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Formatted: Centered
Taxes	\$809,574	\$860,795	\$905,360	\$842,807	\$998,915	\$1,052,057	\$1,178,930	\$1,174,024	Formatted Table
License, Fees and Permits	\$103,313	\$70,397	\$79,002	\$83,740	\$100,050	\$134,086	\$43,850	\$45,111	Formatted: Centered
Miscellaneous	\$30,432	\$11,599	\$103,434	\$245,046	\$750,767	\$134,781	\$55,369	\$345,844	Formatted: Centered
Total Revenue	\$943,319	\$942,791	\$1,087,796	\$1,171,593	\$1,849,732	\$1,320,924	\$1,278,149	\$1,564,985	Formatted: Centered

Town of La Conner

2024-2030 Capital Facilities Plan

Change per year	-5.6%	-0.1%	15.4%	7.7%	57.9%	-28.6%		← Formatted: Centered
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This table shows that Current Expense Fund revenue has increased between 2017⁷⁶ and 2024⁴², primarily as a result of the increase of retail sales tax, even though there was a decrease in grants acquired by the Town.

In order to budget for capital purchases for the departments which use the current Expense Fund, it is first necessary to determine how much must be budgeted for the ongoing operations of each department. The following table shows trends in maintenance and operations costs of each of the Current Expense Fund departments, not including capital improvement costs.

Current Expense Fund 001: Expenditures History – Table 2

Revenues/Year	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	← Formatted Table
Mayor/Admin	\$314,930	\$400,938	\$367,398	\$418,074	\$411,276	\$439,326	\$467,007	← Formatted: Centered
Fire Department	\$128,149	\$154,300	\$109,169	\$101,159	\$141,112	\$185,333	\$194,971	← Formatted: Centered
Total Law Enforcement Exp.	\$309,300	\$312,127	\$317,628	\$329,620	\$331,154	\$375,232	\$401,177	← Formatted: Centered
Miscellaneous	\$100,887	\$48,562	\$86,932	\$112,270	\$567,636	\$163,964	\$127,279	← Formatted: Centered
Total Expense	\$853,265	\$915,928	\$881,128	\$961,123	\$1,451,179	\$1,163,855	\$1,190,437	← Formatted: Centered
Change per year	-2.3%	7.3%	-3.8%	9.1%	51.0%	-19.8%		← Formatted: Centered

Section 6 - Selection of Projects

Decision Criteria

As with all jurisdictions, La Conner has to prioritize projects and funding sources to ensure infrastructure and services are maintained. Priorities are first established by the Department Heads. Departmental budgets were presented in August. This year department heads were requested to budget expenditures and capital expensed at a minimum viable to maintain service.

The Town undertook a utility rate study to determine current and future rate revenue coverage of operating and capital expenses. The Town Council will make a determination based on the rate study whether or not to ramp utility rates to meet budget demands.

Please see the attached approved improvement programs to view the priority projects for capital facility management or improvement.

Appendix A – Funding Sources

This appendix identifies the historic and potential funding sources for the Town of La Conner. They include federal, state and local sources. Most projects include multiple funding sources (i.e. grants requiring a local match).

Local Funding Sources

Local funding for projects will generally come from either taxes or reserve funds generated from utility revenues. The Town periodically considers the need for bonds and levies to meet long term financial obligations. The following sources are typically used:

- Debt Financing
- Local Multipurpose Levies
- Local Single-purpose Levies
- State Grants and Loans
- Federal Grants and Loans

Debt Financing

Short Term Borrowing: Borrowing from local banks is sometimes necessary if short-term financing is needed to complete a project or bridge to receipt of long-term funding. La Conner does not use this mechanism historically.

Revenue Bonds: Bonds financed directly by those benefiting from the capital improvement. Revenue from these bonds typically finance public owned facilities, such as parking areas, port facilities etc.

General Obligation Bonds: These bonds are backed by the value of property within the jurisdiction and are voter approved. They increase property taxes and are dedicated to the repayment of the bonds.

Local Multi-Purpose Levies

Ad Valorem Property Taxes: The tax rate in mills (1/10 cent per taxable dollar value) for La Conner is 1.7141 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation. The Town is prohibited from raising its levy more than 1 % of the highest amount levied in the last three years before adjustments for new construction and annexation. A temporary or permanent excess levy may be assessed with voter approval. The revenue may be used for new capital facilities or maintenance and operations of existing facilities.

Local Option Sales Tax: Retail sales and use tax of up to 1%. Local governments that levy the second 0.5% may participate in a sales tax equalization fund. Assessment of this option tax requires voter approval. The revenue may be used for new capital facilities or operational expenses of existing facilities.

Utility Tax: Taxes may be assessed on gross receipts of utilities such as electric, gas, telephone, cable TV, water, sewer and stormwater. La Conner collects for electric, gas, telephone and cable. However, we do not assess a utility tax on Town delivered utilities (water, sewer and stormwater). The Town can assess as much as a

6% tax on the receipts of each utility. Voter approval is required to increase the rate above 6%. Revenues from this tax may be used for either capital or operational expenses.

Real Estate Excise Tax: The original tax authorized for general purpose is .25 %. Additional increments of .25 % have been authorized for capital facilities. Revenue use is restricted to finance new capital facilities or maintenance and operations of existing facilities, as specified in the Capital Facilities Plan.

Local Single-Purpose Levies

Motor Vehicle Fuel Tax: Tax paid by gasoline distributors. The town receives 11.53% of total tax receipts. State shared revenue is distributed by the Department of Licensing. Revenues must be spent for highway (town streets, county roads, and state highways) construction, maintenance, or operation; policing of local roads; or related activities.

Local Option Fuel Tax: A county-wide voter approved tax equivalent to 10% of statewide Motor Vehicle Fuel Tax and a special fuel tax of 2.3 cents per gallon. Revenue is distributed to the town on a weighed per capita basis. Revenues must be spent for highway (town streets, county roads, and state highways) construction, maintenance, or operation; policing of local roads; or highway related activities.

Local Non-Levy Financing Mechanisms

Reserve Funds: Revenue that is accumulated in advance and earmarked for capital improvements. Sources of funds can be surplus revenues, funds in depreciation reserves, or funds resulting from the sale of capital assets.

Fines, Forfeitures and Charges for Services: This includes various administrative fees and user charges for services and facilities operated by the jurisdiction. Examples are franchise fees, sales of public documents, fines, forfeitures, licenses, permits, income received as interest from various funds, sale of public property, rental income, and all private contributions to the jurisdiction. Revenue from these sources may be restricted in use.

User Fees and Program Fees: Fees or charges for using park and recreational facilities, solid waste disposal facilities, sewer services, water services, and surface water drainage facilities. Fee may be based on measure of usage, a flat rate, or design features. Revenues may be used for new capital facilities or maintenance and operations at existing facilities.

Special Assessment District: District created to service entities completely or partially outside of the jurisdiction. Special assessments are levied against those who directly benefit from the new service or facility. The districts include Local Improvement Districts, Road Improvement Districts, Utility Improvement Districts, and the collection of development fees. Funds must be used solely to finance the purpose for which the special assessment district was created.

Lease Agreements: Agreement allowing the procurement of a capital facility through lease payments to the owner of the facility. Several lease packaging methods can be used. Under the lease-purchase method the capital facility is built by the private sector and leased back to the local government. At the end of the lease, the facility may be turned over to the municipality without any future payment. At that point, the lease payments will have paid the construction cost plus interest.

Privatization: Privatization is generally defined as the provision of a public service by the private sector. Many arrangements are possible under this method ranging from a totally private venture to systems of public/private arrangements, including industrial revenue bonds.

Impact Fees: Fees paid by new development based upon its impact to the delivery of services. Impact fees must be used for capital facilities needed by growth, not for current deficiencies in levels of service, and cannot be used for operation expenses. These fees must be equitably allocated to the specific entities which will directly benefit from the capital improvement, and the assessment levied must fairly reflect the true costs of these improvements. Impact fees may be imposed for public streets and roads, publicly-owned parks, open space, recreational facilities, school facilities, and fire protection facilities (in jurisdictions that are not part of a fire district).

State Grants and Loans

Community Development Block Grant: Grant funds available for public facilities, economic development, housing, and infrastructure projects which benefit low and moderate income households. Grants are distributed by the Department of Commerce to applicants who indicate prior commitment to project. Revenue is restricted in type of project and may not be used for maintenance and operations.

Community Economic Revitalization Board: Low interest loans (rate fluctuates with state bond rate) and occasional grants to finance infrastructure projects for a specific private sector development. Funding is available only for projects which will result in specific private developments or expansions in manufacturing and businesses that support the trading of goods and services outside of the state's borders. Projects must create or retain jobs. Funds are distributed by the Department of Commerce primarily to applicants who indicate prior commitment to a project. Revenue restricted in type of project and may not be used for maintenance and operations.

Historic Preservation Grants: On an annual basis, the state Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP) makes available grants to local historic preservation programs for four purposes: (1) historic preservation planning; (2) cultural resource survey and inventory; (3) nomination of properties to the National Register of Historic Places; and (4) public education and awareness efforts. To be eligible for grants, communities must be a Certified Local Government (CLG) as approved by OAHP. In addition, when funds are available, OAHP awards grants for acquisition or rehabilitation of National Register listed or eligible properties. Grant awards are predicated on the availability of funds and require a match.

Public Works Trust Fund: Low interest loans to finance capital facility construction, public works emergency planning, and capital improvement planning. To apply for the loans the town must have a capital facilities plan in place and must be levying the original 1/4% real estate excise tax. Funds are distributed by the Department of Commerce. Loans for construction projects require matching funds generated only from local revenues or state shared entitlement revenues. Public works emergency planning loans are at 5% interest rate, and capital improvement planning loans are no interest loans, with a 25% match. Revenue may be used to finance new capital facilities, or maintenance and operations at existing facilities.

State Parks and Recreation Commission Grants: Grants for parks capital facilities acquisition and construction. They are distributed by the Parks and Recreation Commission to applicant with a 50% match requirement.

Urban Arterial Trust Account (UATA): Revenue available for projects to alleviate and prevent traffic congestion. Entitlement funds are distributed by the State Transportation Improvement Board subject to UATA guidelines and with a 20% local matching requirement. Revenue may be used for capital facility projects to alleviate roads that are structurally deficient, congested with traffic, or have accident problems.

Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA): ISTEA provides grants to public agencies for historic preservation, recreation, beautification, and environmental protection projects related to transportation facilities. These enhancement grants are administered by the state Department of Transportation and regional transportation planning organizations (RTPO's).

Transportation Improvement Account: Revenue available for projects to alleviate and prevent traffic congestion caused by economic development or growth. Entitlement funds are distributed by the State Transportation Improvement Board with a 20% local match requirement. For cities with a population of less than 500 the entitlement requires only a 5% local match. Revenue may be used for capital facility projects that are multi-modal and involve more than one agency.

Centennial Clean Water Fund: Grants and loans for the design, acquisition, construction, and improvement of Water Pollution Control Facilities, and related activities to meet state and federal water pollution control requirements. Grants and loans distributed by the Department of Ecology with a 50%-25% matching share. Use of funds is limited to planning, design, and construction of Water Pollution Control Facilities, stormwater management, ground water protection, and related projects.

Water Pollution Control State Revolving Fund: Low interest loans and loan guarantees for water pollution control projects. Loans are distributed by the Department of Ecology. The applicant must show water quality need, have a facility plan for treatment works, and show a dedicated source of funding for repayment.

Federal Grants and Loans

Federal Aid Urban System: Revenue available for construction and reconstruction improvements to arterial and collector roads that are planned for by an MPO and the Federal Highway Administration. Funds may also be used for non-highway public mass transit projects. Funds are distributed by Washington State Department of Transportation with a 16.87% local match requirement.

Federal Aid Safety Programs: Revenue available for improvements at specific locations which constitute a danger to vehicles or pedestrians as shown by frequency of accidents. Funds are distributed by Washington State Department of Transportation from a statewide priority formulae and with a 10% local match requirement.

Federal Aid Emergency Relief: Revenue available for restoration of roads and bridges on the federal aid system which are damaged by extraordinary natural disasters or catastrophic failures. Local agency declares an emergency and notifies the Washington State Department of Transportation, upon approval entitlement funds are available with a 16.87% local matching requirement.

Farmers Home Administration Water Project Support: Funding through grants, loans, and loan guarantees for water projects serving rural residents. Funds must be used for capital facilities construction and related costs or projects which serve rural residents in cities of less than 10,000 people. Funds are distributed by the Federal Farmers Home Administration with a 45% to 25% local matching requirement.

Department of Health Water Systems Support: Grants for upgrading existing water systems, ensuring effective management, and achieving maximum conservation of safe drinking water. Grants are distributed by the state Department of Health through intergovernmental review and with a 60% local match requirement.

Appendix B – Street Inventory

<u>Street Name</u>	<u>Length in feet</u>
Maple Ave.	2595
Morris	1898
Center	1898
State	1898
Whatcom	1774
Sixth	1680
N. Third	1870
Washington Ave.	1337
2nd, State-Douglas	1360
Caledonia	920
Sherman Ave.	912
Douglas	700
Moore&3rd-Caledonia	626
Hill	497
4th, Douglas-Caledonia	482
N. First	458
Total	20905

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Planning Commission
FROM: Planning Staff
SUBJECT: Parks and Recreation Element
DATE: February 13, 2025

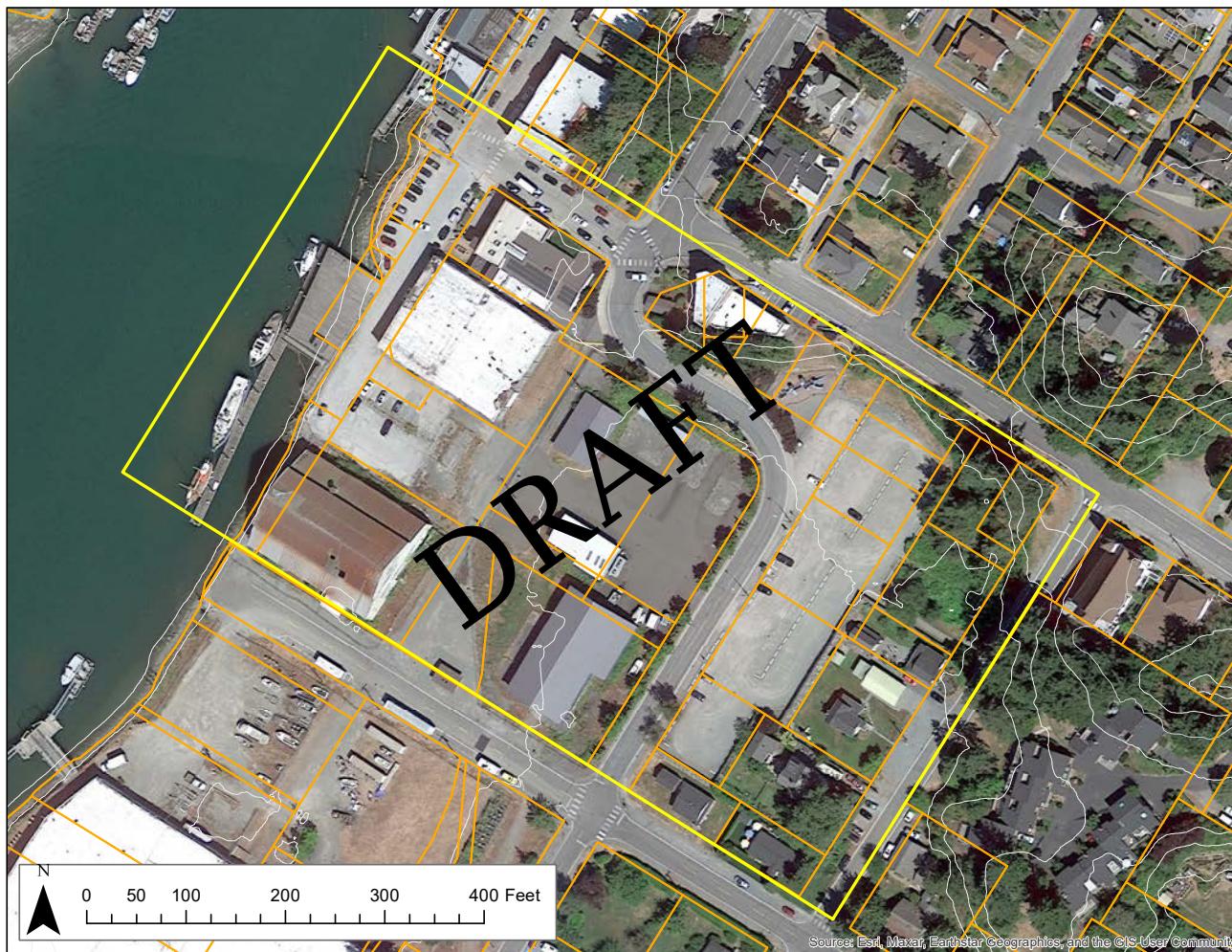
The Parks and Recreation Element is still being considered by the Parks Commission. The Planning Commission has the authority to adopt a recommendation on a Parks and Recreation Element without the input of the Parks Commission, but I would like to give them one more month to deliberate.

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Planning Commission
FROM: Planning Staff
SUBJECT: Sub-Area Plan Draft
DATE: February 13, 2025

Please see attached the draft sub-area element for the Commercial Transition Zone. We are not asking you to take final action on this sub-area, but instead provide any edits or considerations you would like the staff to include or take note of regarding this sub-area plan.

Town of La Conner Moore Clark Subarea Plan



11 February 2025

Town Council

Mayor	Marna Hanneman
Position 1	Anne Taylor
Position 2	Ivan Carlson
Position 3	Rick Dole
Position 4	MaryLee Chamberlain
Position 5	Mary Wohleb

Planning Commission

Position 1	Cynthia Elliot
Position 2	Carol Hedlin
Position 3	Bruce Bradburn
Position 4	John Leaver
Position 5	Summer Holt

City Staff

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Planning Director Planner	Michael Davolio AICP
Assistant Planner	Ajah Eills

Consultants

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Economist	Eric Hovee
Development	Michelle Connor
Architect	Julie Blazek AIA LEED
Landscape Architect	Jennifer Kiusalass ASLA LEED
Arts & Culture	Missi K Smith
Structural Engineer	Tim Garrison PE
Civil Engineer	Eric Scott PE
Traffic Engineer	Michael Read PE
GIS	Jennifer Hackett

The Moore Clark Subarea Plan was financed with a \$45,000 grant from the Washington State Department of Commerce Planning Grants and matching staff work from the Town of La Conner.

Contents

Historical context

Native peoples – the Swinomish	1
La Conner (Swinomish) Settlement	2

Existing conditions

Property ownerships	7
Existing use	8
Floodplain	10
Storm drainage	12
Shoreline	12
Utilities	12
Traffic	14
Parking	15

Previous plans and projects

La Conner Associates LLC	17
Triton America LLC	19
Town of La Conner	21

Community/stakeholder outreach

Mingle	25
Online survey	25
Outreach interviews	29

Redevelopment concepts

Traffic	31
Parking	31
Waterfront activities	31
Destination facilities	34
Mixed-income housing	34
Trails and open space	37

Implementation

Public infrastructure, amenities, facilities costs	41
Public financing options	41
Private mixed income housing costs	43
Implementation options	44
Implementation approaches	44
Immediate actions	45
Possible implementation agents	
Public Development Authority (PDA)	47

Forterra

48

Appendix

Mingle workshop notes	
Online survey open-ended comments	
Property ownerships	
Development cost estimates	
Action plan with financing sources	
Example downtown buildings for design	
Triton LLC profile, local ownerships	
Forterra profile	
Public Development Authority (PDA)	
Blight RCW and determination	
CHAS housing data	
Middle housing	
Transitional Commercial Zone	
Planned Action SEPA	



Historical context

Native Peoples – the Swinomish

Native peoples have lived in Skagit County and its environs for nearly 10,000 years. Sometime around 1300, a new group migrated down from the interior, possibly using the Skagit River, and came to be known as the Coast Salish.

These tribal groups were largely extended families living in villages in cedar plank houses. They had active, viable communities that socialized and traded far beyond their villages and region. They fished for salmon, collected clams and mussels, and use fire to encourage bracken fern and camas to grow on natural prairies.

John Work, a trader with Hudson's Bay Company, traveled through the area in 1824 and noted several "Scaadchet" villages as he crossed Skagit Bay and went up a winding Swinomish Channel. In 1850 there were 11 different tribal groups in Skagit County. As Work did, Euro-American settlers called them all Skagit Indians not seeing the differences.

The Swinomish were closely related to the Lower Skagits but were a separate people and inhabited portions of northern Whidbey Island and all the islands in Similk Bay and northern Skagit Bay including Hope, Skagit, Kiket, Goat, and Ika, as well as Smith Island at the mouth of the Snohomish River and Hat Island in Padilla Bay. The Swinomish spoke the northern Lushutseed dialect of Coastal Salish.

The Swinomish were a marine-oriented people collecting as much as 70% of their subsistence from salmon and other fish and marine life. They also gathered berries, and after contact with white fur traders, raised potatoes.

The Swinomish maintained permanent villages composed of longhouses built of cedar planks during winter months. During other seasons, they roamed to outlying fishing and camping sites of various degrees of permanency.



The more-or-less contiguous Swinomish villages were relatively independent of each other composed of several families under leaders whose positions were determined by material wealth and standing. None of the leaders had complete control over all the villages. Potlatch and other ceremonies established social standing and helped maintain social contacts among the villages.

Epidemics in the 1800s seriously reduced the Swinomish populations by as much as 80% in some areas. In 1855 territorial representatives estimated the Swinomish numbered between 150 and 200 people.

The Swinomish were among the tribes who located in the Sneeooseh village on the 7,449-acre Swinomish Reservation which was set aside near the mouth of the Skagit River on Fidalgo Island on the Swinomish Channel under the Point Elliott Treaty in 1855. Most members of the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community on the Swinomish Reservation are descendants of the Swinomish proper, the Lower Skagits, and the Lower Samish.

The Swinomish Tribal Community is a federally recognized Indian Tribe and a sovereign nation. The enrolled membership is about 778 and the Indian population living on or near the reservation are approximately 1,000. The executive governing body is the 11-member Swinomish Indian Senate, whose members are elected to 5-year terms.

La Conner (Swinomish) Settlement

The first non-native or Euro-Americans venturing into the region were Spanish, British, and Russian explorers, and fur traders. A few occupied Fidalgo Island in the 1860s.

Swinomish (renamed later as La Conner) was one of the first settlements on the mainland north of Seattle and had 28 people living here by the 1860s. The settlement was situated on a hill on the east side of the Swinomish Channel and was surrounded by marsh and wetlands – boats being the main mode of travel. The Swinomish Channel, which prior to being diked, naturally over-flowed east into the surrounding marsh lands and Skagit River delta surrounding the hill and settlement.

Michael Sullivan and Samuel Calhoun began diking the marshy flats near La Conner in 1863. At first ridiculed, they proved that with diking, agriculture was possible on what was thought to be useless wetland.

The first Euro-American settler to occupy the area of La Conner (also spelled LaConner) was Alonzo Lowe, who established the Swinomish Trading Post on the west side of the Swinomish Channel in now Sneeoose village in 1867. Finding business unprofitable, Lowe abandoned the post after 14 months.

Shortly thereafter, trader Thomas Hayes took over the Swinomish trading post, which also became a designated post office, and moved it across the Channel into the Swinomish settlement.

In 1869, John S Conner and his wife Louisa Ann purchased the trading post from Thomas Hayes and turned it into a General Merchandise Store. In 1870, Conner renamed the post office station, and thereby the town, from Swinomish after his wife Louisa Ann, by adding the initials of her first and middle names to the family name.

Conner's cousin James Conner platted the future town site in 1872, but John bought and eventually owned most of the settlement and surrounding farmland becoming the town's pre-eminent developer.

In 1873, Conner sold the General Merchandise Store business to James and George Gaches, who had migrated to La Conner from England. The business became known as Gaches Brothers and was operated by the Gaches along with a warehouse on the waterfront. The store eventually burned to the ground.

John Conner promoted the town as a steamboat hamlet, and as a result La Conner rapidly grew into a center for transportation, commerce, government, agriculture, and fishing. La Conner was the major port between Seattle and Bellingham when steamboats played a vital role in connecting the communities on Puget Sound. Located adjacent to rich farmlands, La Conner became the key shipping and supply point for the nearby rural area.

Beginning at about the time of the founding of La Conner, settlers on the frequently flooded Swinomish or La Conner flats began diking and draining the wet marshlands and river delta. The dikes were built by hand using shovels and wheelbarrows to a height of 3 to 7 feet in places. A flood in 1874, however, destroyed the 3 miles of dikes that had initially been erected by Michael J Sullivan.

Reconstruction of dikes began anew; as John Conner diked his complete farmland holdings. Eventually, these pioneer reclamation projects and subsequent efforts resulted in the construction of 200 miles of dikes, the reclaiming of 25,000

“As a commercial hub, with a deeper waterway, La Conner was selected by The Albers Company, known for its Old-Fashioned Rolled Oats breakfast cereal, to erect a granary for the storage and loading of locally grown crops. Situated a short distance south of the main business district, this enormous structure reaching the height of 65 feet, has dwarfed the town’s other buildings ever since.

Many an old-timer can remember the excitement of large wooden ships and barges loading heavy sacks of grain by hand, across shaky gang planks. Of course, when the tide was low, maneuvering the steep planks took a strong, agile man. Occasionally the hand truck would spill its load in the slough. Some sacks would sink immediately, others would float long enough to be retrieved.

As a young lad in the 1930’s, living on the hill overlooking the granary, I can remember watching trucks unloading their heavy sacks. If one fell from the loading dock spilling oats on the ground, my mother would send me down to scoop up the remaining grain to bring back home to feed our flock of chickens.

Things gradually changed after WWII, however. Transportation was no longer dependent upon inland waterways. Farmers began growing other crops. The building remained unused until Moore-Clark expanded their adjacent fish food processing plant. For some 20 years fish food pellets were manufactured in the facility and sold to hatcheries and fish farms throughout the West. Providing well-paying wages to resident employees, that operation was moved to Canada about 1990.

Except for prefab lumber storage, the building remains underutilized and continues to deteriorate, much to the town’s disappointment. Many of us are proud of the important economic role that this structure once played in La Conner’s history, and we look forward to a new and viable plan that will make this building a center of future commercial activities.”

Bud Moore, former Mayor, May 2006



Inserts:

Top - La Conner in 1890 courtesy UW Special Collections with the George S Starr sternwheeler

Bottom - Sternwheeler Skagit Queen, Skagit Bay Navigation, Photo by Oliver S Van Olinda, Courtesy UW Special Collections

acres of land, and the creation of a multimillion-dollar hay, grain, and truck farming industry.

La Conner was incorporated on 20 November 1883, and 8 days later became the first seat in Skagit County. In 1884, however, the county seat was moved to Mount Vernon. As a result, the residents of La Conner passed a petition repealing incorporation in 1886 feeling that they had been hasty in assuming cityhood. By 1888, however, La Conner was again incorporated.

In 1898 the Albers Company constructed the Albers Warehouse (sometimes called the Blue Building) at the south end of First Street in the industrial area. The warehouse was the tallest building at 65 feet constructed and became a town landmark. The Albers Company stored grain harvested in Skagit County in the warehouse for shipping by steamboat for processing for food products in Tacoma.

By the 1900s, La Conner had a population of about 1,000 residents, and it became apparent that a much-anticipated railroad connection was never going to materialize extending instead into nearby Anacortes. La Conner was destined to remain a "steamboat" town. However, this era was a high point of prosperity and most of the structures in the historic districts were constructed at this time.

Most of the historic buildings in La Conner remain unchanged, though a score has disappeared. Many of the structures on the waterfront extend on pilings over the slough and eventual channel, reflecting the town's early and important ties with water related industries.

The styles of the buildings are characteristic of the commercial architecture common of the turn-of-the-century. Few new structures have been built to replace the 20 or so historic buildings that are gone. Consequently, there is considerable open space between structures at the north end of First Street.

The south end of First Street, however, has few gaps and the buildings remain closely compacted as they were when they were originally developed.

Most of La Conner's buildings are wood false front design with 5 brick and masonry structures. The most common type of structure in the downtown district is the smaller false-front and square-faced wood frame buildings. The front facades usually have full length windows and a top portion capped by bracketed frieze bands and decorated cornices.

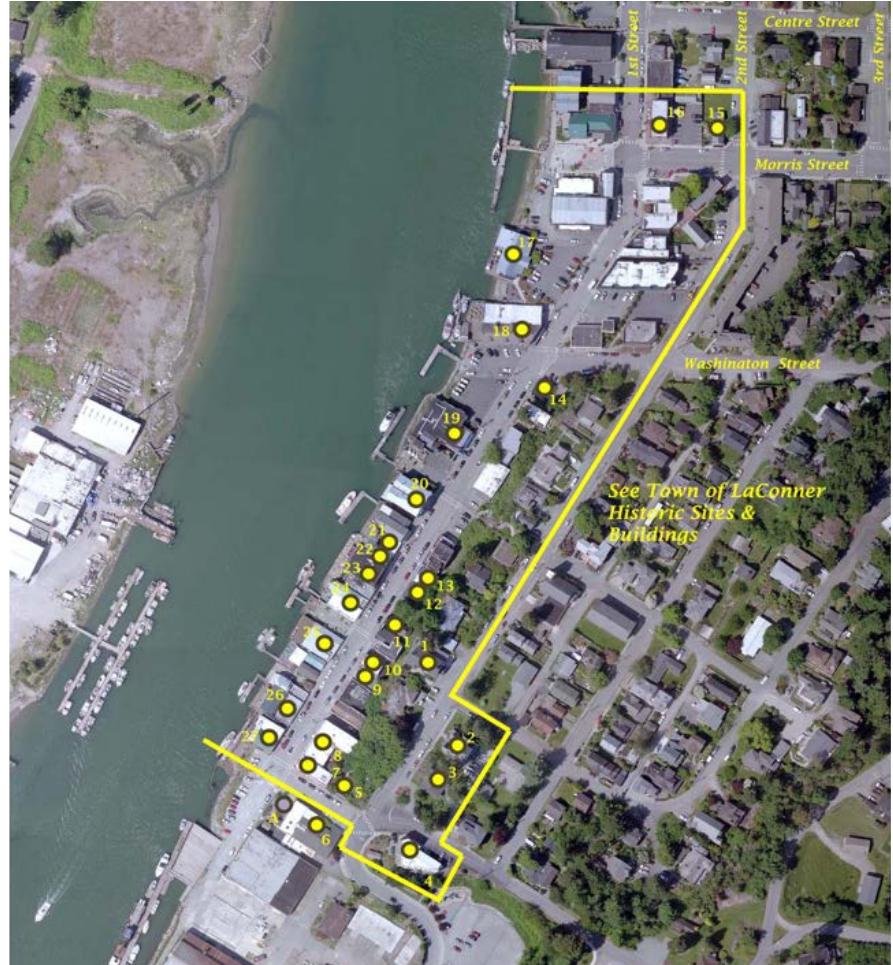
La Conner's downtown was designated a National and State Historic District extending along First Street from just north of Morris Street and along First Street to just south of Columbia Street with a portion of Second Street from Moore Street north to Calhoun Street and including 27 structures. Over 200 other structures in town are also identified as historic that were built in the same time frame. The Albers Warehouse, however, though eligible, was not so designated.

By 1960 La Conner downsized to 640 residents as the town's port functions declined. La Conner remained a hub for commercial, agriculture, and fishing activities for the surrounding region, but tourism and pleasure boating became major pursuits.

Painters took an interest in La Conner and began moving into the area as early as 1937. Artists and writers followed establishing an artist colony in nearby Fish Town that was an offshoot of the 'Northwest School' that eventually resulted in the establishment of La Conner's Museum of Northwest Art (MoNA).



National & State Historic District —
Town of LaConner Historic Sites & Buildings



National & State Historic District
Downtown LaConner National Historic District

Inserts:

Left - designated historic structures in town and Swinomish village.

Right - designated historic structures in the downtown national and state historic district.

1300	Coast Salish
1855	Swinomish Reservation established
1863	Michael Sullivan and Samuel Calhoun dikes
1867	Alonzo Lowe/Thomas Hayes Swinomish Trading Post
1869	John Conner store and post office
1874	Flood destroys 3 miles of dike
1883	La Conner incorporated

1884	County seat moved to Mount Vernon
1888	La Conner incorporated again
1937	Artist colony in Fish Town
1984	Museum of Northwest Art (MoNA)

Existing conditions

Property ownership



Moore Clark subarea and adjacent properties are owned by Triton America LLC, Dunlap Towing, and the Town of La Conner.

- Triton America LLC - owns 2.7669 acres, 44,332 square feet of buildings, worth \$3,549,490 including Albers Warehouse built in 1898, Freezer Building built in 1960, the waterfront wharf built in 2008, a residence converted into offices built in 1984, and a storage building built in 1982.

- Dunlap Towing - owns 230 linear feet of waterfront worth \$388,100 owned currently used for parking at the south end of First Street on the west boundary with the Moore Clark subarea.
- Town of La Conner - owns 0.4278 acres, 4,600 square feet of building worth \$872,293 for a stormwater pump station located north of Caledonia Street within the Moore Clark subarea.
- Town of La Conner - owns 1.1969 acres worth \$724,600 for a public parking lot located east of Third Street.
- Town of La Conner - owns 0.2826 acres worth \$418,100 of wetlands located west of Fourth Street and adjoining the public parking lot.
- Town of La Conner - owns 0.3167 acres, 2,500 square feet of building, worth \$607,000 including Maple Hall built in 1995 located at the south end of First Street adjoining the north boundary of the Moore Clark subarea and a Town Hall built in 1900 and a playground located north of Moore Street on the north boundary of the Moore Clark subarea.

Owner	Parcel	Acres	Bldgs	Yr built	Value
Triton	974496	0.4500	14,960	1898	\$442,300
	P74495	0.2870			\$234,400
	P74494	0.0344			\$28,100
	P74057	0.3839	14,144	1960	\$489,000
	P74470	105 lf	5,988	2008	\$733,600
	P74469	105 lf			\$88,600
	P74053	0.0895			\$73,100
	P74046	0.0620			\$50,600
	P74051	0.5372	2,400	1984	\$506,800
	P74047	0.3857			\$346,500
Dunlap	P74392	0.5372	6,840	1982	\$556,490
		2.7669	44,332		\$3,549,490
	P74468	115 lf			\$116,400
	P74467	115 lf			\$271,700
					\$388,100

Town	P74471	0.1633			\$151,300
Pump	P74063	0.2645	4,600	1995	\$840,200
		0.4278	4,600		\$991,500
Town	P73971	0.2000			\$113,800
Parking	P73972	0.2066			\$126,600
	P73974	0.2066			\$126,600
	P73975	0.2066			\$126,600
	P73976	0.2273			\$139,200
	P120642	0.1498			\$91,800
		1.1969			\$724,600
Town	P73970	0.0826			\$102,400
Wetlands	P73971	0.2000			\$113,800
	P73969	100 lf			\$201,900
		0.2826			\$418,100
Town	P74063	0.2600	4,600	1995	\$840,200
Maple &	P74049	0.0826			\$86,400
Town	P74056	0.0275			\$26,900
Halls	P74055	0.0390	2,500	1900	\$309,900
	P74054	0.0413			\$51,600
	P74048	0.1263			\$132,200
		0.5767	7,100		\$1,447,200
		2.4840	11,700		\$3,581,400

Source: Skagit County Assessor

The Town's total holdings include 2.4840 acres, 11,700 square feet of buildings, worth \$3,581,400 located in and adjoining the Moore Clark subarea.

Existing use

Triton's America LLC - property is largely unused:

- The metal buildings located in the southeast corner of the property are in relatively good shape and store some aircraft parts and other equipment.
- The wood 1-story residential structure was converted and

improved to provide office space though the building is not occupied.

- The Freezer Building has been emptied since Triton acquired the property and is in very poor condition. The structure is divided into 2 contiguous bays with a bearing wall separation running north to south and a single bay entry on the east end. The 30-foot tall, unreinforced concrete block building could not be retrofit for a new use without installing a steel supporting seismic frame. The existing roof contains large wood beams that could be reused. There is a possibility that interim use for wood building component manufacturing deposited toxic materials.
- Albers Warehouse is a 65-foot-tall wood piling supported structure that included a partial mezzanine office space along the lower south wall with large bay doors on the north and east ends. The concrete floor and supporting pilings are below flood level and fill during highest high tides. A portion of the structure is located on First Street right-of-way. The warehouse has been allowed to deteriorate, is a safety concern even with surrounding security fencing, and must be demolished. The structure includes some old growth timbers that could be reused.
- The metered pay parking area between the Freezer Building and Albers Warehouse was occupied by a metal cannery building that was demolished when the property was acquired by La Conner Associates LLC (Vaughn Jolley) in 1996. The site has not been evaluated for potential hazardous materials.
- The wood wharf is empty except for a shack that temporarily housed a kayak rental business. The pier is rented by liveaboards.
- Second Street originally extended south through the property from Moore Street to Caledonia Street. Access is curtailed at Moore Street next to Maple Hall and the remaining right-of-way is thought to have been vacated.



*Top - Albers Warehouse
Left - Freezer Building interior
Bottom right - house/office and metal storage building*



Dunlap Towing - waterfront parcels are currently used for on-street parking for the commercial businesses located at the south end of First Street and for activities in Maple Hall. Dunlap is in the process of developing plans for the construction of a 2-story structure that could house reception and possible retail space on the first floor and corporate offices on the second floor.

Town of La Conner - stormwater pump station services the Moore Clark properties and the neighborhood located east along Caledonia Street and south to Sherman Street. The triangular parcel extends north into Triton property boundaries though the building is located along Caledonia Street. The parcel's boundaries could possibly be adjusted for redevelopment of the Triton property.

The ---- stall gravel public parking lot supports businesses located at the south end of First Street and activities in Maple Hall. Future downtown property developments can buy stall space in the lot in lieu of developing on-site parking. The parking lot is currently pay parking with a central kiosk that generates \$---- on an annual basis since 20--.

Maple Hall is a former retail store that was retrofit and reconstructed to provide a performing stage with changing areas, adjacent kitchenette, flat floor assembly area, commercial kitchen, lobby with bar, and meeting room on the first floor that access an entry courtyard overlooking Swinomish Channel. The upper floor accessible by stairs and elevator, provides a mezzanine overlooking the stage and assembly area, and meeting room. The stage could support major theater productions if temporary seating risers were erected on the flat floor assembly area.

Town Hall, which was originally constructed for a bank, provides a reception lobby and counter, workstations, copy and storage area, and small conference room on the first floor, and offices on the upper floor. While the historic features of the

building have been retained including the bank vault, the interior space is inefficient and unfunctional for a municipal use.

The property below Town Hall along the north side of Moore Street has been improved to provide a site for the historic ----- cabin, a shelter for an original Swinomish canoe, some benches, and a young children's play structure that will all be retained.

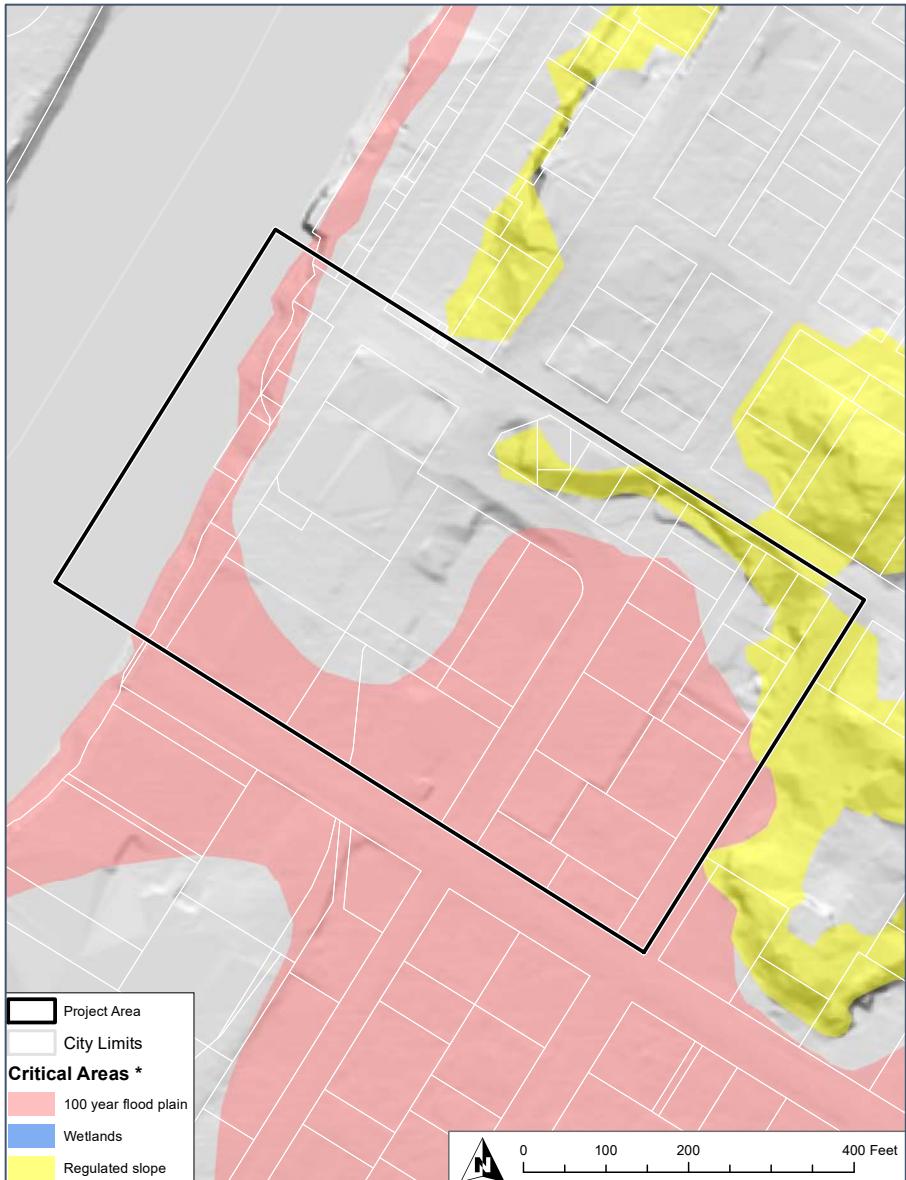
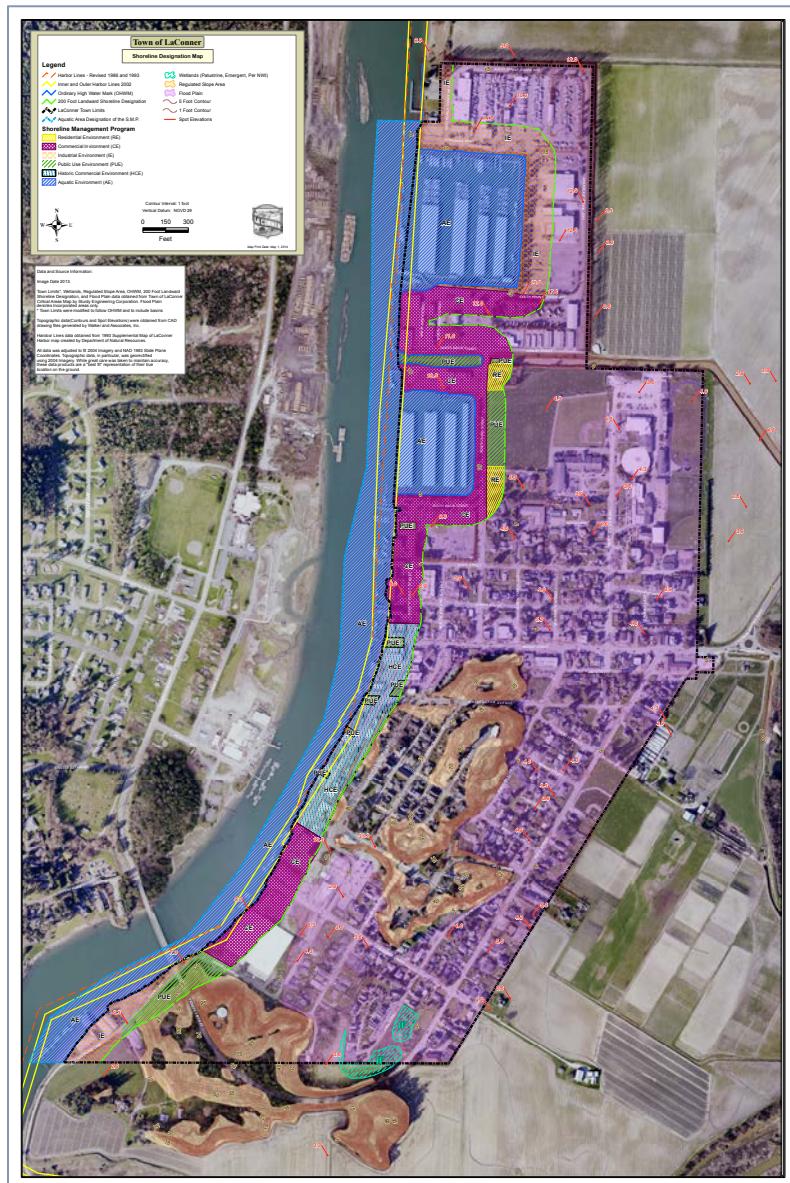
Floodplain

La Conner, except for the higher ground on Second and Third Streets and Pioneer Park, flooded regularly from the North Fork of the Skagit River and Swinomish Channel before early settlers began building dikes.

Dike districts composed of private property owners currently maintain a series of dikes that control flood waters from the North Fork of the Skagit River along the town's eastern boundary with Sullivan Slough. Portions of the town shoreline were filled or otherwise raised to provide some protection from highest high tides along the Swinomish Channel.

The full boundaries of the town, however, are not protected including the south and east portions of the Moore Clark subarea and most of the adjacent residential neighborhood east along Caledonia Street and south to Sherman Street. The Swinomish Channel recently overflowed this area in December 2022 when a storm event occurred during a highest high tide.

The current flood threshold for the downtown and Moore Clark subarea is 10 feet above MLLW, at 12.8 feet water laps the floorboards of structures along the west edge of First Street next to the Channel, at 14 feet floodwaters fill streets and damage buildings.



As a result of climate change, flooding is projected to be common by 2050 when La Conner can expect to see up to 4 moderate floods per year compared with 3 minor floods now. La Conner is currently impacted by Channel overflows 14 times a year that last 0.5-5 days per event. Sea level rise, including the Swinomish Channel, is projected to increase at least 4 and possibly by 6 feet by the year 2100.

Several scenarios are under consideration by which to manage flooding along the Channel including one option that would increase the capacity of the stormwater pump station on Caledonia and pipe overflow to Sullivan Slough bypassing the wetlands and wastewater treatment plant located on Chilberg Road on the northeast town boundary. A tide gate would be installed at the mouth of Sullivan Slough to retain flood waters until the Skagit and Channel subsided.

Another, and more feasible interim option, would raise the shoreline along or under a First Street extension from Commercial Street at Maple Hall south past the Moore Clark subarea to Caledonia and then past the Upper Skagit Tribe's industrial property to Sherman Street to manage annual high-water overflows. The shoreline elevation could be permanent or supplemented with temporary flood walls during highest high tide 100-year storm events.

Under all options, however, any redevelopment of the Moore Clark subarea should expect some flooding event to send water through the site. Structures should be constructed so that any residential uses are located above flood elevation to allow flood water flow-through.

Storm drainage

Stormwater along Douglas Street and the hilltop neighborhoods flow south from Douglas and Fourth Street to be retained by the town's wetlands northeast of the public parking lot.

Stormwater generally flows south through the Moore Clark subarea towards Caledonia Street where it is collected by storm pipes along Moore Street, Third Street, and Caledonia Street and then to the Caledonia pump station. The Caledonia station pumps stormwater from Moore Clark and the adjacent residential neighborhood along Caledonia Street into the Channel at the west end of Caledonia Street.

The central portion of the Triton property and the south end of First Street flow east to be collected by stormwater pipes along Third Street or pond on site.

This collection-distribution system does not work, however, when Swinomish Channel tide is above the Caledonia pump station outlet pipe, a problem common to the rest of the downtown district along First Street as well.

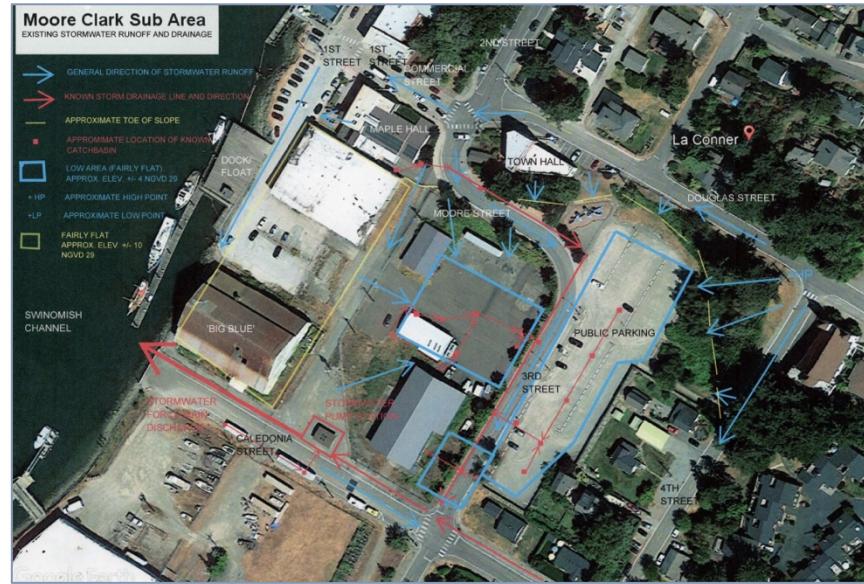
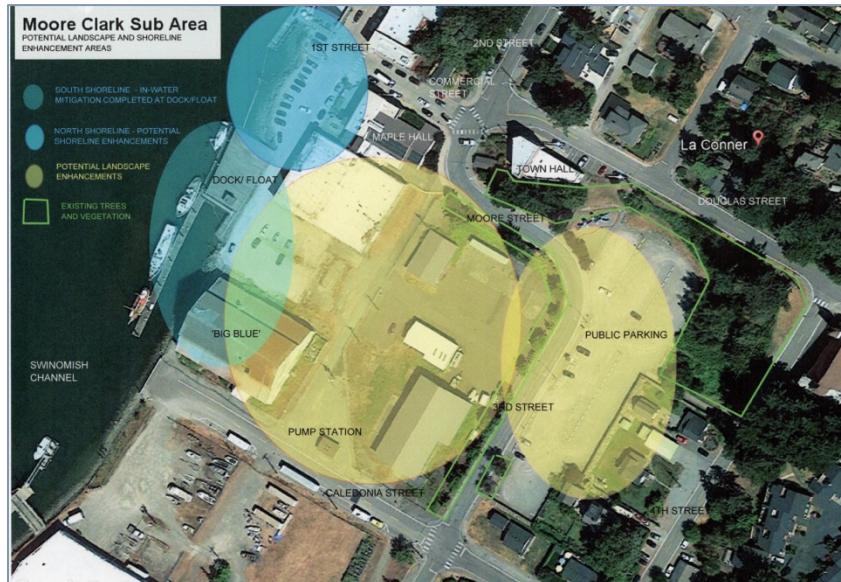
Shoreline

The existing shoreline surface from Commercial Street and the end of Channel Passage, the overwater boardwalk, is littered with gravel, rocks, logs, and other drift debris that does not support fish or water-dependent wildlife habitat.

Native vegetation and soft bank improvements should be installed to restore habitat features and capabilities through the Moore Clark subarea in conjunction with any floodplain improvements.

Utilities

Water supply lines located in First Street, Douglas Street, Third Street, and Caledonia Street rights of way service businesses in the downtown district, industrial uses at the Upper Skagit Tribe's industrial park, and the surrounding residential neighborhoods.

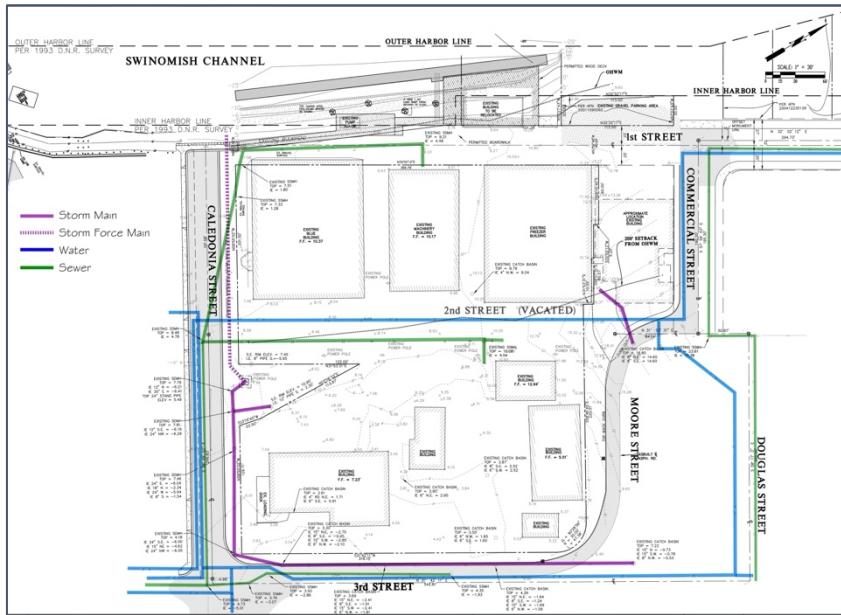


Top left - principal storm drainage areas in Moore Clark and waterfront.

Top right - existing storm drainage routes and collection pipes.

Bottom - photos of existing shoreline in front of Moore Clark including waterfront wharf.

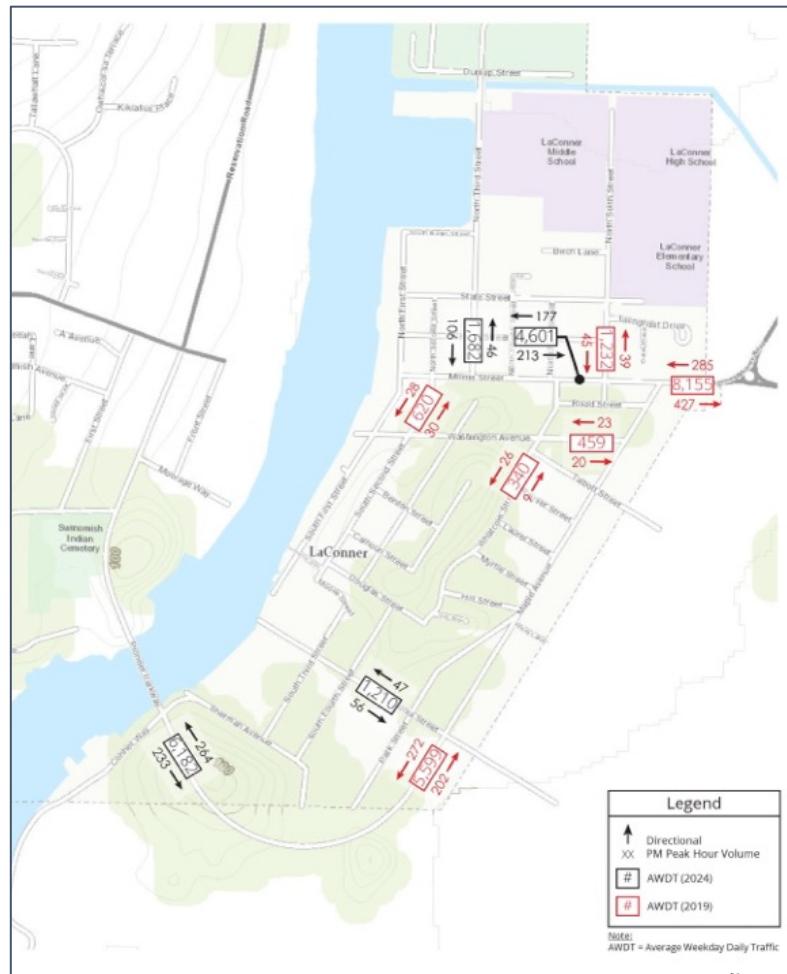
A water supply line is also located in the vacated portion of Second Street that services the Moore Clark subarea.



Sewer mains located in First Street, Commercial Street, Douglas Street right of way service the downtown district and upper hilltop neighborhoods. Sewer stub lines located in a portion of the south end of First Street and the vacated portion of Second Street flow to Caledonia, and then south along Third Street that service the Moore Clark subarea, Upper Skagit Tribe industrial park, and south residential neighborhood.

Traffic

Traffic counts were taken in 2019 and 2024 of the principal streets in town and downtown business district though the counts were taken on different and not the same streets.



According to the 2019 count the average weekday daily traffic (AWDT) on Morris Street west of the roundabout was 8,155 vehicles of which 5,599 drove south of Maple Avenue towards Rainbow Bridge, 1,232 drove north on North Sixth Street towards La Conner schools, and 620 ended up on First Street in the business district.

According to the 2024 count the average weekday daily traffic (AWDT) was 4,601 on Morris Street of which 1,682 drove north on North Third Street towards the Port's marina and industrial area. According to the 2024 count 1,210 vehicles drove both ways on Caledonia from the town's public parking lot and 6,182 vehicles drove across Rainbow Bridge towards Shelter Bay and Swinomish village.

Under both counts, the largest volumes are through town on Maple Avenue to Rainbow Bridge, or north on North Sixth Street to the schools, or north on North Third Street to the marina and boatbuilding businesses using Morris Street as a connector.

Traffic on First Street in the downtown was relatively low, likely due to the limited street width for 2-way traffic, but higher on Caledonia as an exit from the public parking lot and activities in the south end of town.

The town designated First Street one-way south in 2024 making the street safer for vehicles and pedestrians. Parking capacity remains the same but the impact on traffic volumes is yet to be determined.

Access to the downtown and then the Moore Clark subarea remains primarily from Morris Street to First Street then south to Commercial Street, then east on Moore Street, then south on Third Street to Caledonia Street, then east to Maple Avenue and north back to Morris Street.

While some traffic may use Second Street as a couplet access for a repeat on First Street and some traffic may use Douglas to connect back to Maple Avenue, the loop identified above remains the principal downtown and Moore Clark access.

Parking

Existing parking capacity includes 132 public and 61 private or

193 total stalls on South First Street within the downtown district and 115 in the public pay parking lot, 19 in Triton's pay to park lot, and 24 on-street on Dunlap shoreline parcels or a total of 158 in Moore Clark subarea.

	Public*	Private	Total
South First Street	132	61	193
Public parking lot	115		115
Triton pay to park lot	19		19
Dunlap/Maple Hall on-street	24		24
Total	290	61	351

Public includes 9 ADA, 2 EV, and 20 pay to park.

Downtown public on-street includes parallel parking on both sides of South First Street which is generally full during day and weekend peak shopping and tourist visitor days.

The public parking lot fills to capacity along with Triton's pay to park lot between the Freezer Building and Albers Warehouse, and the on-street parking in front of Maple Hall and on Dunlap Towing waterfront parcels during major events.

Activities and events in Maple Hall, like the annual Arts Alive event, fill the on-street stalls on First Street in front of the building, Triton's pay-to-park lot, and the town's public parking lot with some overflow on First Street downtown and Second Street in the hilltop residential neighborhood.

This capacity may not be sufficient if redevelopment of the Moore Clark subarea adds a performance theater use to Maple Hall, adds a fine and performing arts annex to Maple Hall, and a festival hall use in place of Albers Warehouse.

Previous plans and projects

La Conner Associates LLC (Vaughn Jolly) 1996-2012

La Conner Associates LLC acquired the Moore Clark property 3 October 1996 for \$1,050,000 from Moore-Clark Company Inc. La Conner Associates LLC was owned by Vaughn Jolly, a developer who also had property to be developed in Twisp. Vaughn, a pilot, alternated between Twisp and La Conner while he made plans for both properties.

Vaughn conducted a series of due diligence studies of the properties in the following years including geotechnical and structural, among others as well as extensive meetings with town staff including John Doyle, Town Administrator/Planner at the time, Planning Commission, and Town Council.

In 2006, Vaughn obtained site plan approval for the following proposed improvements to the property:

- Demolition of the cannery building between the Freezer Building and Albers Warehouse currently used for pay-to-park lot.
- Development of the waterfront wharf or landing along with a side pier on the Swinomish Channel to eventually retain the existing crab shack and possible restaurant. The waterfront landing was constructed in accordance with town approval.
- Proposed retrofit of Albers Warehouse for a boutique hotel designed by NBBJ Architects to be sold as condominium suites for time-share within the building footprint including the portion of the building that extends into First Street right-of-way.
- Proposed demolition of the Freezer Building and the development of mixed-use retail/housing units adjacent to Maple Hall.
- Proposed development of townhouses focused on a central courtyard extending from First to Third Street.

- Proposed extension of Second Street from Moore Street through the site and courtyard to Caledonia Street.
- Proposed extension of First Street in front of the mixed-use retail/housing units to connect with the extension of Second Street.
- Proposed development of a waterfront pedestrian street from the end of First Street south past the boutique hotel retrofit of Albers Warehouse to Caledonia Street.

The town adopted a Commercial Transition Zone codifying the approved site plan and development:

Permitted uses:

- Childcare including daycare
- Art, dance, music, martial arts schools
- Theaters, auditoriums, recreation centers, gyms
- Farmers markets
- Financial institutions
- Restaurants, delis, ice cream parlors
- Gas sales and service stations
- Lodging including hotels and inns
- Marinas, boat launches, repair, storage
- Medical offices, clinics
- Playgrounds, picnic areas
- Professional offices
- Retail stores and services
- Service businesses

Conditional uses:

- Transitional housing
- Residential
- Light industrial, artistic
- Taverns, nightclubs

The Commercial Transition Zone limited building heights to 60 feet and the total number of residential units on the site to 38.



Top left - aerial photo showing Maple Hall, Freezer Building, Cannery (since demolished), Albers Warehouse in the foreground and house/office and metal storage buildings in the background.

Top right - La Conner Associates proposed site plan.

Bottom - La Conner Associates proposed retrofit of Albers Warehouse for a boutique hotel.



Vaughn completed subsequent site plans, and some building design concepts, as well as the waterfront wharf improvements but did not complete or file for final permit and development applications.

Housing market, and especially the boutique hotel feasibility, deteriorated during the economic recession weakening Vaughn's financial ability to complete the project as proposed.

As a result, Vaughn leased the Freezer Building and Albers Warehouse to Alpac Components, a company that fabricated wood building components to provide cash flow for bank loans. Resulting revenues, however, were not sufficient to avoid foreclosure and Vaughn entered into a lease/purchase agreement with Triton America LLC in 2012.

Triton America LLC (Tom Hsueh) loaned Vaughn Jolly money to help Vaughn settle defaulting bank loans on the property in exchange for title to the property in case Vaughn could not pay Triton back. Vaughn could not replay Triton and the company acquired the property for \$2,340,000 on 15 March 2012.

Triton America LLC 2012-present

Tom Hsueh is President, Chief Engineer, and Owner of Triton America LLC the parent company of Triton Aerospace, Bayview Composites, and Iflyairplanes.com with factories and offices in Anacortes, La Conner, Mount Vernon, Mosier, Oregon, and Shuhai, China. Triton America is a composite tooling design and manufacturing company specializing in large high-temperature composite tooling for aerospace, boat, and wind energy industries.

Triton's multi-station layup rooms and design stations have built: 50-meter long high-temperature wind turbine blade tooling for General Electric, Boeing 787 tooling, high-speed water borne target drones for USN as well as tooling for various

composite aircraft and yacht manufacturers. Currently, Triton is in serial production of several types of high-speed attack boats for French Navy Special Forces.

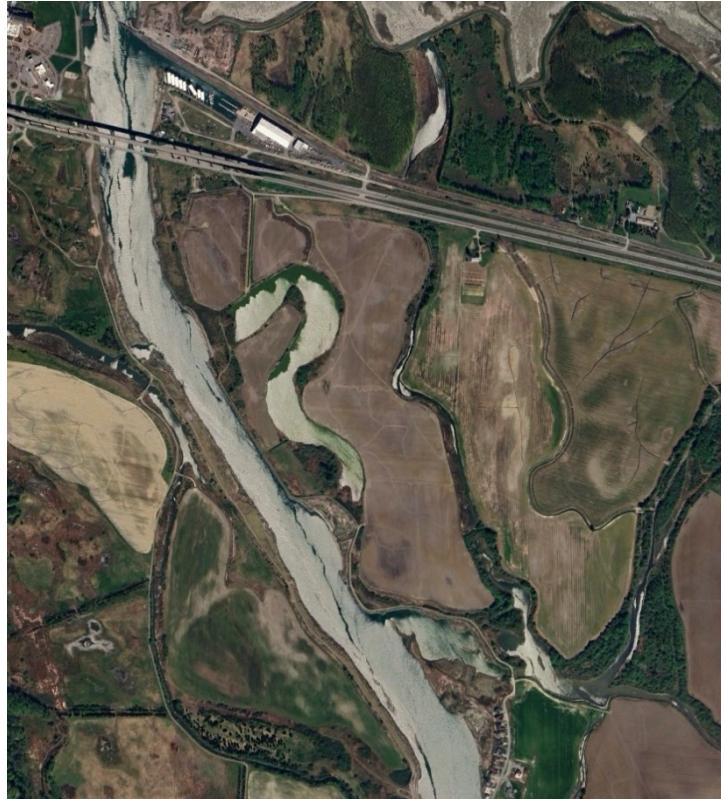


In 2009, *Triton America* dba *Triton Aerospace* acquired all the intellectual and hardware assets of *Adam's Aircraft*, an aircraft computerized paperless design, development, and manufacturing company that successfully built and certified a twin-engine, 6-seat pressurized all-carbon composite FAR 23 aircraft and also partially completed the certification for a twin jet powered 8 seats FAR 23 aircraft. *Triton America* is the consolidation of several manufacturing elements all directed by the vision to inspire, develop, and maintain general aviation around the world.

With extensive aircraft developing tools, equipment, and instruments, the nearly 400,000 square foot Adam's factory was relocated from Denver Colorado to the *Triton Aerospace* aircraft design and testing facilities at the Bayview Composite facilities at 13593 Bay View Edison Road (1077 SR-20).

Triton's main vision is to establish general aviation in China and to help revive general aviation in the United States by providing affordable, well-engineered, and solid-built SLSA aircraft that meet the demands of flight schools. The Skytrek is the first SLSA certified by CAAC and the FAA, made in China.

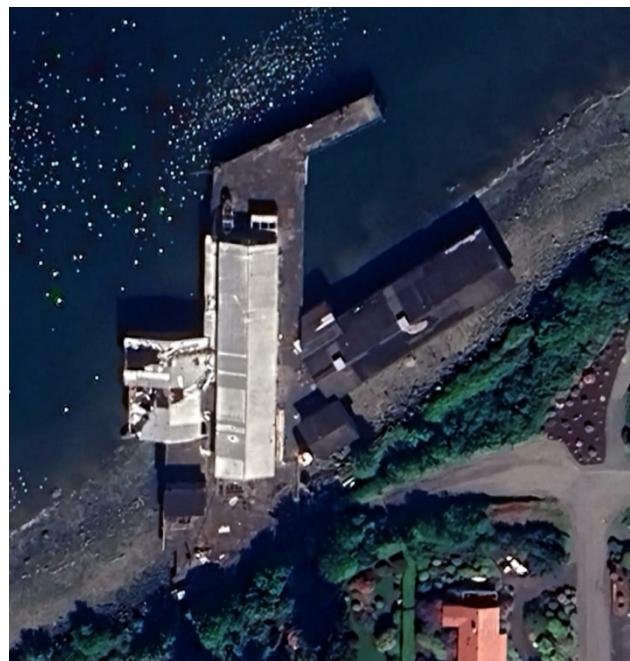
Triton America LLC offices are operated from two residences located at 5704 and 5708 Kingsway in Skyline neighborhood in



Top left - Swinomish Channel properties south of SR-20 bridge.

Top right - Composite Company aircraft design and testing facility located on Bay View Road.

Bottom right - Triton-America Pier located on Anacortes waterfront.



Anacortes (mailing address care of PO Box 641 La Conner).

Triton's local property holdings include:

- **Swinomish Channel** - a 155.45 acre, 3 parcel slough, wetland, and pastureland worth \$827,100 purchased September 2004. Triton purchased the property with the intent of developing a marina of the site. The proposal was turned down by the Skagit County Community Development & Planning Department, Planning Commission, and Board of Commissioners for environmental reasons.
- **Bayview Composite** - a 1.68-acre, 16,000 square foot aircraft design and testing facility located at 13593 Bay View Edison Road (1077 SR-20) worth \$2,941,200 and purchased 10 March 2005. The facility houses Triton's aircraft design and testing facility.
- **Triton-America Anacortes Pier** - a 2.17-acre, 6 parcel waterfront property located at 1904 7th Street in Anacortes west of the Guemes Island Ferry Terminal with 20,460 square feet of structures on the pier worth \$1,576,100 and purchased in February 2014. The pier was built in 1914 and previously owned by various cannery companies including Shannon Point Seafoods.

Triton purchased the section of the pier located on privately-owned tidelands after the previous owner went bankrupt. Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) owns the portion of the pier on state-owned aquatic lands. After portions of the pier fell into the water, DNR labeled the pier one of the "Filthy Four" derelict structures in the state and will use state funds to remove it. The structures on Triton's portion of the pier are vacant and deteriorating.

- **Pioneer Point Cannery** - a waterfront site located at 1218 Conner Way just south of Rainbow Bridge and below Pioneer

Park owned by the Town of La Conner worth \$1,423,900 that once housed Pacific Ocean Seafoods Company. The cannery deteriorated and some portions fell into the Channel before the town demolished the structures.

Triton entered a 6-month due diligence lease with the town to determine if the site could support a boat building facility, marine services, and marina to augment Pioneer Point Marina which Triton already leased from the town. After study, Triton withdrew from the lease offer after paying the town \$50,000 towards demolition costs.

- **Moore Clark** - a 2.77 acre, 11 parcel (including 2 shoreline), 44,332 square feet of buildings, worth \$3,549,490 acquired because of a default of La Conner Associates LLC's lease/purchase for \$2,340,000 on 15 March 2012. Current structures include the Albers Warehouse built in 1898, Freezer Building built in 1960, storage building built in 1982, residence built in 1984 converted for office use, and the waterfront wharf built in 2008.

Triton spent \$135,000 after acquiring the property to remove building component materials including wood, insulation, glue, concrete, pilings, and some hazardous materials from the Freezer Building and Albers Warehouse to comply with town building and safety codes.

Triton has not studied or developed plans for redevelopment of the site despite numerous meetings with La Conner's mayor, administrator/planner, and other interested parties including offers by the town to help with planning and sale. Albers Warehouse deteriorated beyond salvage requiring the site to be fenced for safety and the Freezer Building looks to be next.

Town of La Conner 2011 and 2014

- **Artspace** - the Town of La Conner commissioned a \$10,000

study by Artspace, a nonprofit specializing in artist live/work housing development to conduct a feasibility study for a project within the town in 2011. Artspace analyzed numerous sites within town but settled on the Moore Clark property as the most feasible.

Artspace concluded that “*...the creation of affordable live/work and non-residential space for arts and creative uses in downtown La Conner is a reasonable goal. The project could take the form of a phased, affordable, 24-30 live/work unit, mixed-use project that would be a potential catalyst for other development. A market survey would be necessary to confirm the number of units that would be supportable in La Conner. If a market for a project of this scale and type were not proven, a smaller scale or scattered site project using funds other than affordable housing tax credits, along with studio/workspace and/or multi-tenant spaces throughout downtown, would be a good fit.*”

“Overall, we feel that the Moore Clark site offers the Town of La Conner the greatest opportunity for strategic development and growth of its downtown. As identified by the Town, it is a preferred site given its central location to the historical downtown district, waterfront access, development capacity, troubled development history, and the opportunity of creating a larger mixed-use cultural/arts activity center.”

Artspace did not pursue a project of their own as the number of units was much smaller than the company focused on (typically 60-100 units).

- **Cultural Arts Initiative** - concurrent with Artspace’s study, the town conducted a public charrette or brainstorming workshop with local artists, performing arts organizations, affordable housing developers, and residents to identify potential redevelopment options for the Moore Clark property as La Conner Associates LLC was facing foreclosure.

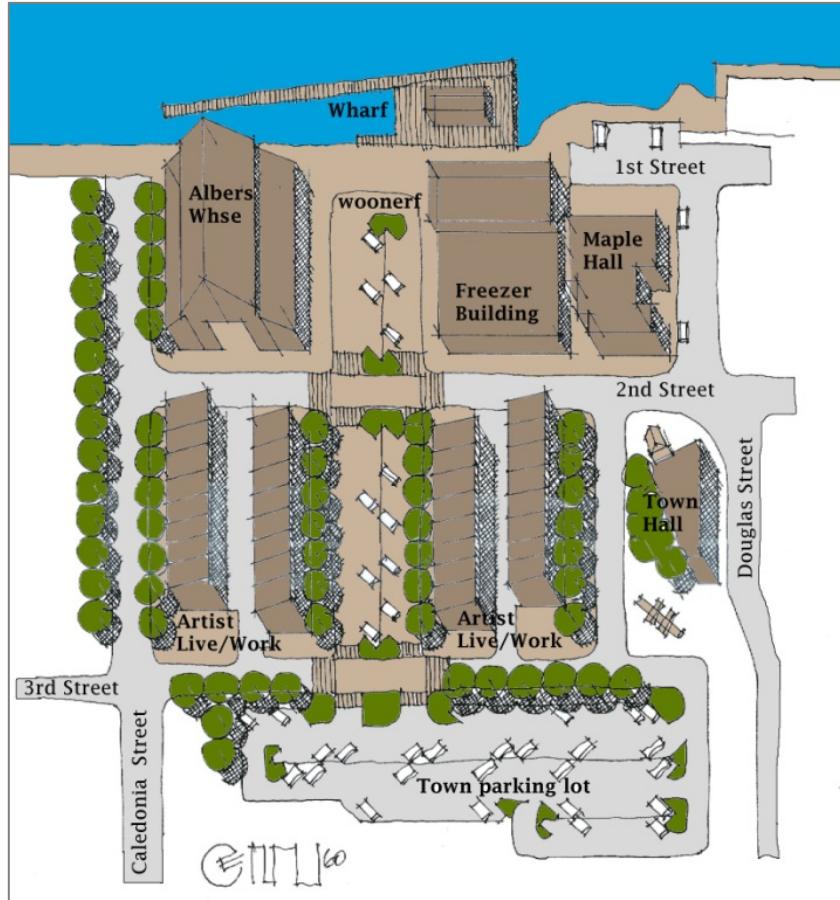
The proposed strategy delineated a “Cultural Arts Initiative” that would combine fine and performing arts workshops, studios, classrooms, and programs as well as artist live/work housing on the site.

The design concept proposed to reuse the Freezer Building as a Maple Hall Annex that would house workshops, studios, and classrooms and the Albers Warehouse (which was still salvageable) as a kayak, boat, and woodworking incubator. Up to 38 artist live/work housing units with ground floor parking and studios, and upper floor living units would be developed around a central parking courtyard or “woonerf” that could be closed to accommodate special events. Waterfront wharf or landing would be marketed for excursion boats, and kayaks.

The proposed concept was tested by an online survey that was conducted of resident artists in Oregon, Washington, and Vancouver, British Columbia. 132 responding artists indicated an interest in the project, but not as year-round residents as most felt they could not support themselves in the local economy. However, almost all responding artists indicated they were interested in hosting classes and residing in the project for extended stay seminars and sabbaticals.

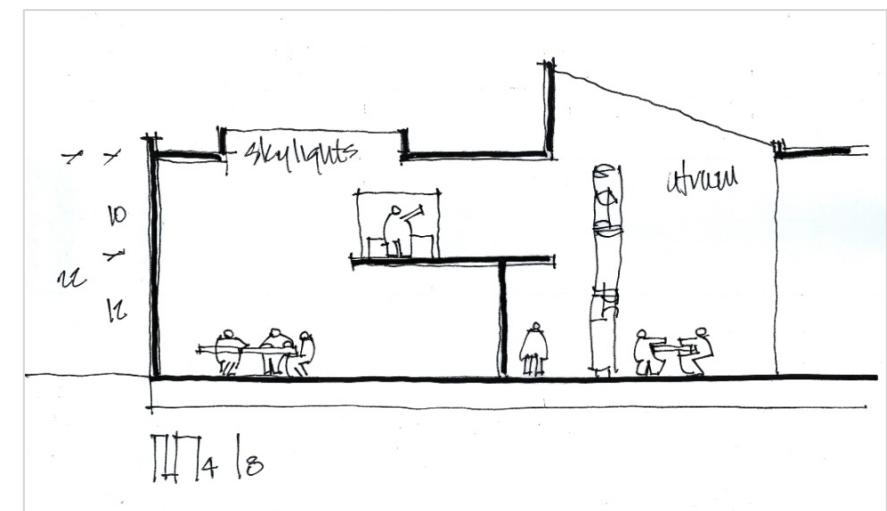
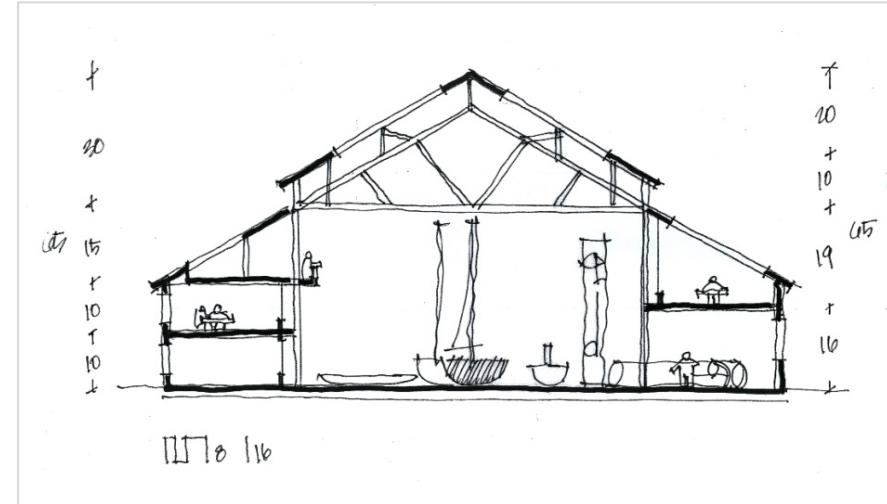
- **National Endowment for the Arts (NEA)** - grant applications were submitted for the Our Town program in 2012 and updated and submitted again in 2014 based on the results of the Artspace study, Cultural Arts Initiative, and online artist survey.

Both grant requests under the Our Town program were for \$100,000 for consultant services to be matched with an equal value of in-kind contributions by town staff, museum board members and staff, Skagit County fine and performing arts organizations, and other interested parties.



*Top left - redevelopment concept for NEA application
reusing Albers Warehouse and the Freezer Building when
the structures were still salvageable.*

*Top right - illustrative of Albers Warehouse reuse
Bottom right - illustrative of Freezer Building reuse*



The NEA grant requests were well received but ultimately turned down because the town did not control the Moore Clark property.

Public outreach

Mingle

A mingle or public workshop was conducted in Maple Hall to review existing conditions and brainstorm ideas about Moore Clark subarea redevelopment opportunities. The mingle was attended by 20 participants who broke into 3 groups to brainstorm. The major brainstorming proposals were:

- An addition or annex should be developed to Maple Hall for performing arts activities including workshops, studios, classrooms, black box or recital spaces, and rehearsals. Temporary riser should be installed in Maple Hall to support major theatrical and performance events.
- The annex or addition should provide space for fine arts, crafts, and technologies including workshops for culinary, woodworking, metals, glass, pottery, and jewelry, among others.
- Mixed-income housing with affordable or workforce allocations should be developed to provide for young and old adult households who cannot presently afford to buy or rent or find age-appropriate housing options in La Conner.
- Public gathering spaces should be developed to link Moore Clark subarea to the waterfront, downtown, and other attractions as well as create opportunities for outdoor markets, art and farmers' fairs, public performances, and other indoor/outdoor events.
- Channel Passage, the overwater boardwalk, should be extended from Commercial Street to the wharf, and a shoreline walking trail to extend from the wharf south past the Upper Skagit Tribe's industrial park to Pioneer and Waterfront Parks.

- An Albers Warehouse replica should be built to retain the aesthetic and visual landmark's importance to the site and town's heritage. The replica should provide space for major indoor and outdoor activities to anchor the waterfront and extended downtown site.
- First Street should be extended south through the site to connect with Caledonia Street and provide an expanded grid access street network between the downtown, public parking, and exiting to Maple Avenue. The street extension should be a "woonerf" flexible treatment able to be closed for pedestrian activities during major gatherings and events.
- Waterfront activities should be increased including the option of transporting major event participants and tourists to La Conner from Seattle or Bellingham by charter boat to the wharf landing.

Online survey

An online survey was conducted of La Conner residents, downtown property and business owners, tourists, and other interested parties. The survey was completed by 104 households or about 14% of the 489 resident households.

Survey respondent characteristics

Where do you live?

Answered: 102, Skipped: 2, Comments: 9

La Conner	66%	Anacortes	2%
Shelter Bay	14%	Bay/Edson	1%
Swinomish Res	9%	Other Skagit County	2%
Mount Vernon	3%	Burlington	0%

Implications

89% of the respondents were from the Town of La Conner, Shelter Bay, or the Swinomish Reservation and are, therefore, very familiar with and very interested in Moore Clark prospects.

Are you a property owner, business owner, employee, resident of the downtown La Conner area (First, Second, and Morris Streets)?

Answered: 95, Skipped: 9, Comments: 34

Property owner	21%	Resident	19%
Business owner	12%	Other	64%
Employee	12%		

Implications

33% of the respondents were downtown property or business owners, 12% employees, and 19% residents.

How often do you frequent downtown La Conner stores and activities?

Answered: 102, Skipped: 2, Comments: 17

	Never	1-2/mo	1-2/wk	3-5/wk	Daily
Retail stores	2%	26%	25%	30%	18%
Café/restaurant	0%	33%	39%	22%	6%
Parade, firework	7%	63%	7%	5%	18%
Other	7%	27%	20%	20%	27%

Implications

48% of survey respondents spent money in retail stores 3-5 times a week or daily, 28% in cafes or restaurants.

How much do you spend on the following items in La Conner on a monthly basis?

Answered: 99, Skipped: 5, Comments: 4

	\$25- \$0	\$75- 50	\$125- 100	\$175- 150	\$200+ 200	
Food, grocery	4%	11%	24%	10%	24%	40%
Retail store	7%	30%	35%	11%	13%	17%
Café, restaurant	1%	14%	17%	19%	16%	46%
Services	28%	25%	24%	10%	3%	11%

Implications

40% of survey respondents spent over \$200 monthly in food and grocery, 46% in cafes and restaurants. Conversely, 28% do not spend money monthly for any personal or business services.

What age group are you in?

Answered: 102, Skipped: 2, Comments: 0

14-18	0%	45-54	12%
19-24	1%	55-64	26%
25-34	4%	65+	46%
35-44	11%		

Implications

46% of the respondents were over the age of 65, and 26% between 55-64 which is similar to the Census profile for the town.

What is your gender?

Answered: 100, Skipped: 4, Comments: 0

Male	41%	Female	57%	Other	2%
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Implications

57% of the respondents were female which is somewhat typical of survey responses.

In summary, survey respondents were primarily from the La Conner, Shelter Bay, and Swinomish Reservation, owned property and businesses, worked and lived in the downtown, frequented retail stores, cafes, and restaurants on a weekly basis, spent over \$200 a month on food, groceries, cafes, and restaurants, were age 55-65+, and proportionately female.

Moore Clark subarea priorities

What priority would you give for the following types of indoor activities to be considered in the development of the subarea plan?

The weighted average was determined by multiplying the number that rated lowest by 1, low by 2, moderate by 3, high by 4, and highest by 5 and dividing by the number that answered the questions. A weighted average of 2.50 or below is low, 3.00 is moderate, 3.5 or higher is high.

Answered: 103, Skipped: 1, Comments: 31

	Weighted average
Art galleries, studios, and classrooms	2.90
Music, dance studios, and classrooms	2.97
Maple Hall rehearsal and storage spaces	2.43
Commercial kitchen and teaching classrooms	2.80
Local meat, cheese, and vegetable sales	3.35
Art, fiber, historical, and Native museum exhibits	2.91
Coffee and ice cream shops	2.13
Cafés and restaurants	2.69
Breweries and wine tasting	2.57
Clothing and gift retail stores	2.42
Craft, kitchen, and furnishing stores	2.35
Kayak and marine sales and services	2.84
Bike and e-bike sales and services	2.75
Glass and metal fabrication studios	2.68
Wood carving and craft studios	2.87
Kayak and wooden boat building	2.79
Beauty, barber, dental, medical services	2.11
Legal, accounting, business services	1.79
Incubator/startup manufacturing spaces	2.20
Incubator/startup office spaces	2.17
Affordable, workforce housing	3.30
Market rate housing	2.54
Boutique hotels, hostels	2.47
Extended stay suites	2.05
Other	3.79

Implications

- Moderate to high scores were given to local meat, cheese, and vegetable sales (3.35) and affordable, workforce housing

(3.30).

- Conversely, very low scores were given to legal, accounting, and business services (1.79) and beauty, barber, dental, and medical services (2.11).
- Most indoor activities were given below moderate to low scores.

What priority would you give for the following types of outdoor activities to be considered in the development of the subarea plan?

Answered: 103, Skipped: 1, Comments: 17

	Weighted average
Kayak and canoe launch	3.28
Excursion boat landing	2.78
Float plane landing	2.18
Farmers' market and festival space	3.94
Art market and festival space	3.71
Other public performing space	3.63
Other public gathering space	3.53
Sculpture and artworks	3.16
Kinetic wind or water accent features	2.78
Historical interpretive exhibits	3.29
Group picnic areas	3.16
Children playground	2.95
Other	3.18

Implications

- High to highest scores were given to farmers' market and festival space (3.94), art market and festival space (3.71), other public performing space (3.63), and other public gathering space (3.53).
- Conversely, very low score was given for a float plane landing (2.18).
- Generally, the scores gave higher priority to the above outdoor spaces than for any indoor activities other than local meat, cheese, and vegetable sales (3.35) and affordable, workforce housing (3.30).

What priority would you give for the following access improvements to be considered in the development of the subarea plan?

Answered: 103, Skipped: 1, Comments: 15

	Weighted average
Extend First Street to Caledonia Street	3.15
Extend Second Street to Caledonia Street	2.87
Create an interior vehicle access from First to Third Street and the public parking lot	2.55
Create interior pedestrian path between public parking lot and First Street	3.82
Make Commercial Street pedestrian at Maple Hall between First and Second Street	2.81
Integrate public parking lot into Moore Clark development	3.16
Extend waterfront path through Moore Clark to Pioneer Park	4.36
Incorporate EV charging stations	3.25
Other	3.62

Implications

- Highest scores were given to extending waterfront path through Moore Clark to Pioneer Park (4.36) and creating an interior pedestrian path between public parking lot and First Street (3.82).

What priority would you give for the following access infrastructure improvements to be considered in the development of the subarea plan?

Answered: 103, Skipped: 1, Comments: 9

	Weighted average
Floodproof the site from rising Channel tides	4.23
Extend floodproofing, if feasible, for Caledonia neighborhood	4.13
Collect stormwater and store off site	2.87

Collect and store stormwater on site if feasible	2.94
Underground power lines through the site	3.91
Other	3.89

Implications

- Highest scores were given to floodproofing the site from rising Channel tides (4.23), extending floodproofing, if feasible, for Caledonia neighborhood (4.13), and undergrounding power lines through the site (3.91).

What priority would you give for the following design concepts to be considered in the development of the subarea plan?

Answered: 103, Skipped: 1, Comments: 12

	Weighted average
Restrict building heights along the extension of First Street to 30 feet the same as downtown structures	3.73
Retain, if feasible, portions of the historic blue warehouse for outdoor activities	2.90
If not feasible to retain the historic blue warehouse, consider a similar durable structure for accent and outdoor activities	3.20
Locate low-density development adjacent to the single-family homes along Fourth Street	2.82
Locate moderate-density development under the hill along Douglas Street	2.76
Adopt design standards that complement the historic downtown but allow innovation	4.13
Incorporate solar, green roofs, and other smart energy concepts	4.03
Incorporate bio-swales and other stormwater filtering improvements	3.82
Restore native plant materials along the shoreline	3.88
Install trees and other native planting materials	4.26
Other	4.00

Implications

- Highest scores were given to adopting design standards that install trees and other native planting materials (4.26), complement the historic downtown but allow innovation (4.13), incorporate solar, green roofs, and other smart energy concepts (4.03), restore native plant materials along the shoreline (3.88), incorporate bio-swales and other stormwater filtering improvements (3.82), and restrict building heights along the extension of First Street to 30 feet the same as downtown structures (3.73).

In summary, the highest-high priorities were given in rank order to:

- Extend waterfront path through Moore Clark to Pioneer Park (4.36)
- Install trees and other native planting materials (4.26),
- Floodproof the site from rising Channel tides (4.23),
- Extend floodproofing, if feasible, for Caledonia neighborhood (4.13),
- Complement the historic downtown but allow innovation (4.13),
- Incorporate solar, green roofs, and other smart energy concepts (4.03),
- Provide farmers' market and festival space (3.94),
- Underground power lines through the site (3.91).
- Restore native plant materials along the shoreline (3.88),
- Create an interior pedestrian path between public parking lot and First Street (3.82).
- Incorporate bio-swales and other stormwater filtering improvements (3.82),
- Restrict building heights along the extension of First Street to 30 feet the same as downtown structures (3.73).
- Provide art market and festival space (3.71),
- Provide public performing space (3.63),
- Provide other public gathering space (3.53).

Open-ended comments

What is downtown La Conner's best feature?

Answered: 100, Skipped: 4, Comments: 100

What would you most like to improve about the Moore Clark property?

Answered: 95, Skipped: 9, Comments: 95

Do you have any suggestions or recommendations concerning the development of a subarea plan for the Moore Clark property?

Answered: 76, Skipped: 28, Comments: 76

If you would like to be added to the email list to receive future information on the Moore Clark subarea planning activities, please provide your email address.

Answered: 75, Skipped: 29, Comments: 74

If you would like to be included in the \$250 lottery drawing of completed survey responses, please provide your name, phone number, and email address.

Answered: 80, Skipped: 24, Comments: 80

Outreach interviews

Email communications and interviews were conducted with the following potential stakeholders, agencies, organizations, and developers. Outreach emails are continuing through the remaining and following tasks to inform potentially interested parties and maintain liaison with those who indicated an interest in participating, renting, and/or conducting fine and performance arts events.:

Stakeholders – included workshops with Triton American LLC and Dunlap Towing as well as mingles, workshops, online

survey, and open houses with La Conner residents, businesses, and property owners.

Public agencies - included workshops with the Port of Skagit and email outreach with the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community, Upper Skagit Indian Tribe, Skagit County, Economic Development Agency of Skagit County (EDASC).

Organizations - included workshops with the Chamber of Commerce, Skagit County Historical Museum, La Conner Quilt & Fiber Arts Museum and email outreach with the La Conner School District, Museum of Northwest Art (MoNA), Skagit Valley College, WSU Northwest Research & Extension Center (NWREC), Peterson Conservatory of Music & Arts, La Conner Institute of Performing Arts, Gail Harker Creative Studies, and Skagit Artists Together.

Local developers - included workshops with Community Action of Skagit County, Home Trust of Skagit, Skagit Habitat for Humanity and email outreach with Skagit/Island Counties Builders, Landed Gentry, Conner Homes, and Gilbane Development.

Regional developers - included workshops with Forterra and Watermark Development, and email outreach with Blokable, Low-Income Housing Institute (LIHI), Northwest Association of Housing Affordability (NAHA- formerly Catholic Charities), GMD Development, Bridge Housing, DevCo, Homesight, Vitus, TWG Development.

A summary of the reactions and proposals includes the following:

- There is interest - in renting contents of a Maple Hall Addition for fine arts, performing arts, crafts, and an Albers Warehouse reconstruction for major events and festivals.
- Provide flexible building spaces - don't over-finish or define rehearsal halls, studios, workshops, classrooms, and other spaces as they may not fit each potential user, and the use interest may change over time.
- Delegate marketing/programming to potential users - don't recruit or program top-down, as each potential user has their own programs, instructors, and student followers.
- Provide temporary lodging - as some classes may run 2-7 days and instructors and students need temporary housing for the longer class sessions.
- Package programs with lodging and transportation - to make it easier and more feasible for tenant uses to advertise and recruit students particularly when some students2. will come from elsewhere in the US and abroad to follow an instructor.
- Be different/unique - create public spaces, buildings, and programs that distinguish La Conner offerings in the marketplace.

Redevelopment concepts

The following concepts are based on the assessment of existing conditions, the results of the mingle, online survey, and outreach interviews, and past development proposals.

Traffic

The traffic concept will complete the downtown street grid with:

- **First Street extension** - demolishing Albers Warehouse and extending First Street south to Caledonia Street to provide a direct exit to Maple Avenue. First Street's extension will be designed as a "woonerf" with flat surfaces so that the street can be closed to vehicles during public events and gatherings. Most of the time the street will remain open to traffic as the volumes on normal or off-peak days are not substantial enough to justify a permanent closure.
- **Second Street extension** - reopening Second Street south from Moore Street to Caledonia Street to provide interior access to Moore Clark properties and accommodate traffic when First Street is closed for events.

Parking

The parking concept will increase parking capacity in the Moore Clark subarea with:

- **On-street parking** - adding 45-degree on-street parking stalls on the east side of First Street in front of Maple Hall and the rebuilt Albers Warehouse, on both sides of reopened Second Street, on the north side of Caledonia Street, and on both sides of Third Street to provide public parking for destination activities and guests of residential developments.

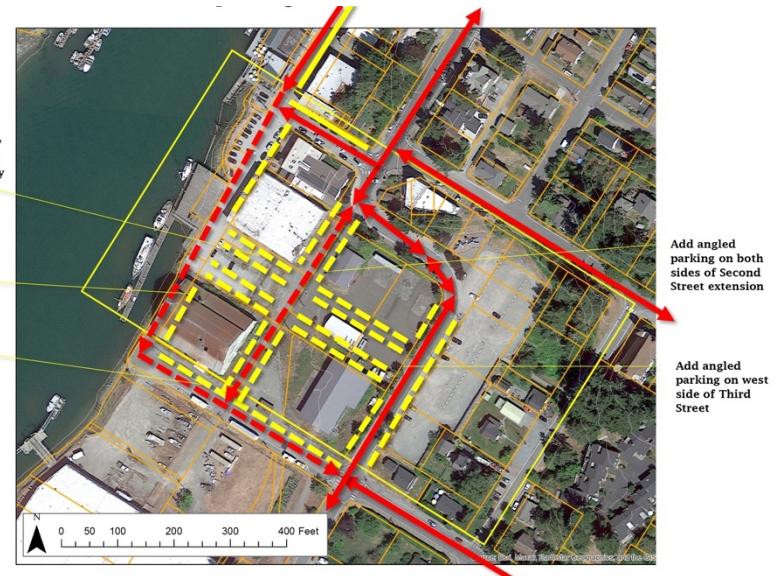
The proposal will increase parking capacity from 27 stalls in the Triton's pay-to-park lot between the Freezer Building and Albers Warehouse to 151 on-street or by 124 stalls. On-street parking will also calm traffic through the Moore Clark subarea.

- **Public parking lot** - relocating the 115-stall public parking lot to the center of the Moore Clark site between First and Third Streets to directly support activities in Maple Hall, Maple Hall Addition, Albers Warehouse reconstruction, and the waterfront. The proposal will provide 112 parking stalls or 3 less than is currently provided.
- **Special event parking** - coordinating 703 off-site special event parking shuttles with buses or vans or water shuttles from lots located at Mavric Marine (143) on Pearl Jensen Way, Port of Skagit (151 + 36 + 63 or 250) at Dunlap Way and North First Street, Swinomish Yacht Club (48) at North First Street, Town of La Conner (85) at East State Street, and La Conner School District (99 + 43 + 22 + 13 = 177) along North Sixth Street from the elementary, middle, and high school lots.

Waterfront activities

The concept will create a destination focus on the waterfront with:

- **Waterfront landing** - activities will be expanded on the wharf and pier including music and other performances, kayak and canoe races and other Channel events, and special event cruises from Seattle and Bellingham for programs in Maple Hall, a proposed Maple Hall Addition, and the reconstruction of Albers Warehouse.
- **First Street and west end public parking lot** - will be closed for special events including music and other





Seattle Bell Street Park and Pioneer Square woonerf examples

- performances, Channel oriented activities, and farmers' and art markets.

The maximum capacity for gathering on the wharf, First Street, and west end of the relocated public parking lot is 2,013 people assuming buskers, vendor booths, concessions, and other services are included or 4,315 people if all the space is filled to standing room only – which is greater than may ever be generated at the Moore Clark site and downtown.

The closure of First Street to traffic may be more than sufficient to support most events.

Destination facilities

The concept will create new fine and performing art, and festival event destinations with:

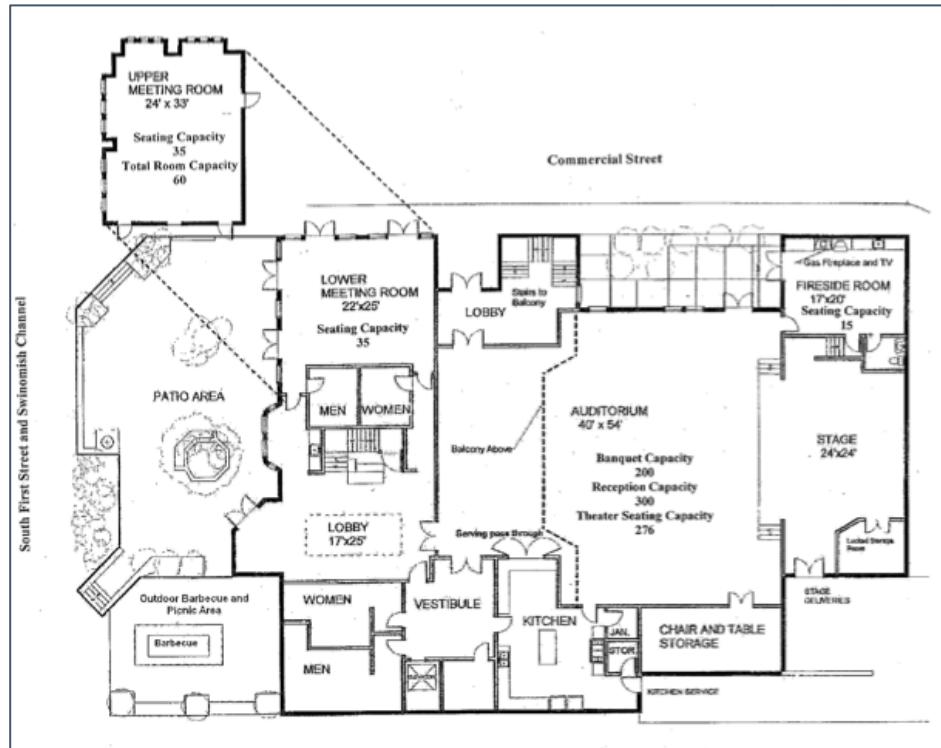
- **Maple Hall Improvements** – including lighting and sound systems, changing rooms, stage props and scenery, and seating risers to support music, drama, lectures, and other performances in the main auditorium. Reconfiguring the outdoor entry to provide a gathering area, terrace, and seating areas to support outdoor events and performances.
- **Maple Hall Addition** – demolishing the Freezer Building and constructing a 2-story addition to Maple Hall to house studios, workshops, classrooms, rehearsal areas, galleries, teaching kitchens, and other incubator spaces to support paint, pottery, glass, metal, jewelry, wood, culinary, and other fine arts and music, dance, drama and other performing arts activities.
- **Albers Warehouse Reconstruction** – demolishing the derelict warehouse and replacing it with an aesthetically similar 60-foot structure to provide a festival hall to support major events like the guitar festival, poetry readings, Arts Alive, and others. The warehouse/festival space will support 411 people in

a dining format, or 800 in a lecture or presentation format, or 960 people in a gathering format with exhibits and vendors, or 2,057 in a standing room only format.

Mixed income housing

The concept will develop mixed income residential on the balance of the Moore Clark property and for the redevelopment of the town public parking lot with:

- **Envelope-based allowances** - up to 30 feet tall (40 feet on the north end of the public parking lot), covering 80% of the lot (90% if structures include green roofs), with residence parking under the building and residential units above parking and the flood elevation. Building envelopes will allow more flexibility than density-based allowances.
- **Middle housing prototypes** - will be encouraged including duplex, triplex, fourplex, sixplex, townhouse, courtyard, and live/work buildings to provide a transition with single-family neighborhoods east of Third Street and south of Caledonia Street and retain a profile consistent with the 30-foot height limit.
- **Smaller residential units** – are expected averaging 408 square feet for a studio, 651 square feet for 1-bedroom, and 939 square feet for 2-bedroom to accommodate small young and older households for which there is a severe housing shortage in La Conner and the surrounding area market. This does not preclude larger units if developers consider larger units to be more marketable provided the larger units do not exceed the building envelope.
- **Parking ratios** – will remain 1.25 stalls per unit consistent with parking requirements for the rest of town. This does not preclude developers providing higher parking ratios provided the increase in parking stalls does not cause the structure to



Top left - Maple Hall floor plan.

Top right - Jansen Arts Center performance space in Lynden

Bottom - pottery and woodworking workshops in Jansen Arts Center and Bainbridge Artisan Resource Network (BARN) on Bainbridge Island.



Pybus Market example of a festival hall in Wenatchee

- exceed the building envelope.
- **Affordable housing ratio** - will be 15% to remain permanently affordable for households of 30-80% of Area Median Income (AMI) threshold for all residential development provided within a building. Units may be made permanently affordable using a variety of methods including resale deed restrictions or sale to a nonprofit housing agency or other methods approved by the town attorney. Affordable units must be provided within the building rather than transferred to another housing project or by a fee paid in lieu of construction to the town to ensure Moore Clark and town parking lot housing will be mixed income and that affordable construction remains feasible and meets the town's intent.
- **Housing capacity** - could be 236 housing units in total including 35 permanently affordable on the Moore Clark and town parking lot if the building envelopes are built out with smaller units and limited parking as proposed above. Actual capacity will likely be less should developers built larger units with higher parking ratios than specified.

Trails and open spaces

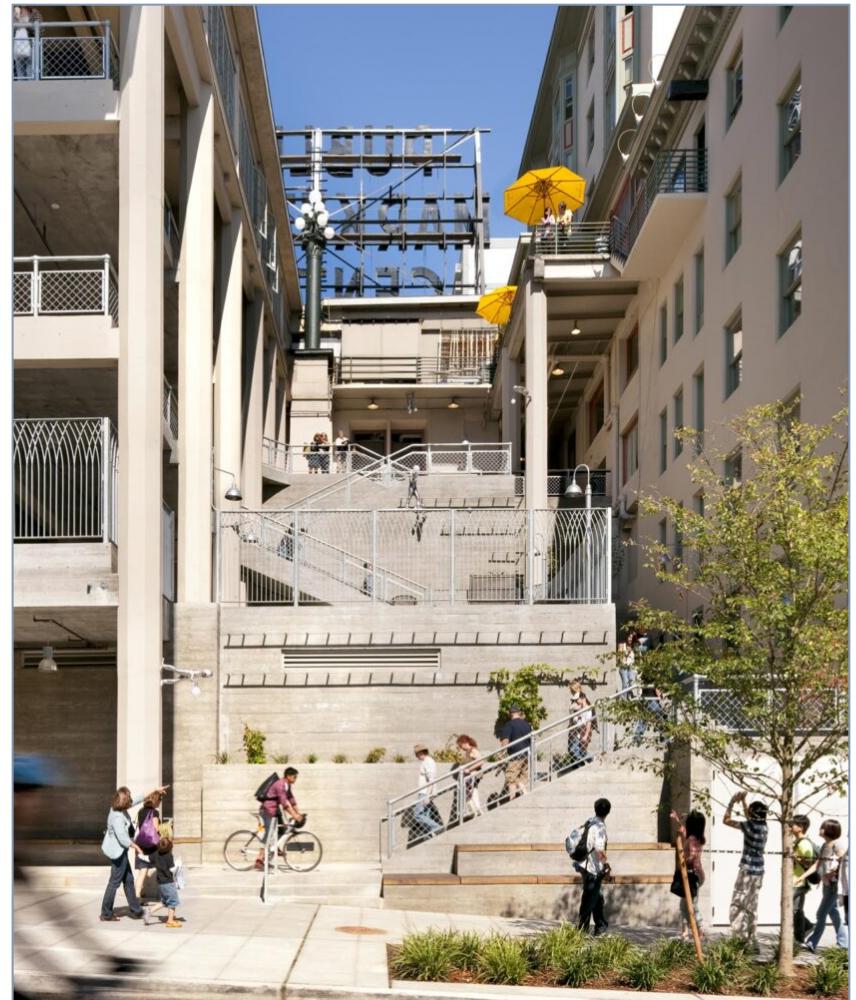
The concept will integrate and expand trail and open space connections with the waterfront and downtown by:

- **Terraces** - will reconfigure the outdoor plaza in front of Maple Hall and develop indoor/outdoor terrace in front of the Maple Hall addition, and possibly in front or alongside the reconstructed Albers Warehouse to provide outdoor seating and viewing areas for performances and events on the waterfront and in the wooneerf treatment of the west end of the relocated public parking lot.
- **Channel Passage** - will extend the overwater boardwalk south from Commercial Street to the waterfront landing or

wharf at Moore Clark.

- **Moore Clark interior trail** - will be developed from the existing trail along the south edge of the wetland at Fourth Street west through Moore Clark and along the relocated central parking lot to the waterfront landing.
- **Waterfront trail** - will extend a pedestrian and bike trail from the waterfront landing at Moore Clark south along the shoreline through the Upper Skagit Tribe's industrial park to the public boat launch to Waterfront and Pioneer Parks.
- **Third Street hillclimb** - will construct a stairway or hillclimb with viewing stations from Douglas Street to Moore Street to connect residential neighborhoods on the hill to the Moore Clark interior trail and waterfront activities. The hillclimb could connect with upper story residential housing, including rooftop gardens, to be developed in the north end of the existing town public parking lot.
- **Kayak launch** - will be developed from the west end of Caledonia Street to access to the Swinomish Channel for hand-carry craft.
- **Bio-swales and rain gardens** - will be installed along the west side of Third Street, north side of Caledonia Street, and through the relocated public parking lot in the center of Moore Clark to collect and filter stormwater. The rain gardens and green roofs could be supplemented with cisterns and other collection systems to retain stormwater for use for irrigation and other internal site needs.
- **Smart and green development** - will install solar panels as well as green roofs and EV charging stations in on-street parking stalls and within the relocated public parking lot.





Top left - trail and open space plan.

Top right - Pike Place Market hillclimb example
Bottom - raingarden in Port Townsend example

Implementation

Public infrastructure, amenities, and facilities costs

Development cost estimates include direct construction costs and indirect or soft costs including 8.6% sales tax of construction costs, 12% design and engineering fees of construction costs, 8% financing costs of construction and sales tax and design fees, and 15% contingency of construction and sales tax and design fees and financing costs. All cost estimates are based on current 2024 market prices.

Development cost estimates also include land acquisition necessary to complete each project based on assessed value.

Public infrastructure

First Street Extension	\$1,145,407
Second Street extension	\$2,232,612
Third Street expansion west side parking*	\$819,997
Caledonia Street northside parking*	\$616,141
Woonerf - First-Second Streets*	\$1,165,889
Woonerf - Second-Third Streets*	\$1,596,031
Subtotal public infrastructure costs	\$7,576,077

Public amenities

Hillclimb Douglas to Third Street	\$566,008
Maple Hall terrace/plaza reconstruction	\$580,272
Channel Passage extension to wharf	\$1,680,890
Interior trail from Fourth to First Street	\$319,941
Caledonia kayak launch	\$449,356
Subtotal amenity costs	\$3,596,467

Destination facilities

Freezer demolished, Maple Hall Addition	\$15,394,174
Albers Warehouse demolished, rebuild	\$10,940,311
Subtotal destination facilities	\$26,334,485
Total infrastructure, amenities, facilities	\$37,507,029

* Includes sidewalks, bio-swales, and rain gardens

As shown, public infrastructure improvements will cost \$7,576,077, amenities \$3,596,467, and destination facilities \$26,334,485 or total costs \$37,507,029.

Not all improvements, however, must be accomplished at the same time nor are all improvements necessary to initiate development of all the other projects listed or of mixed income housing projects. For example, the highest priority projects are:

- **Extension of First Street** - south to Caledonia Street to provide a direct and safe route on Caledonia Street to Maple Avenue for downtown and Moore Clark access for \$1,145,407.
- **Albers Warehouse rebuild** - to create a festival hall of sufficient capacity to attract and host special events of a regional and new market opportunity that are not possible for the town for \$10,940,311.

The highest priority as well as all the other infrastructure, amenity, and facility projects will not rely on the same funding source.

Public financing options

There are several competitive state and federal grants that are available to towns and nonprofit organizations to finance public infrastructure, amenities, and facilities. The programs have different eligibility requirements, schedules, and some have matching fund or like-kind contributions. Following is a summary of grants available for each type of project.

Infrastructure

- **Community Economic Revitalization Board (CERB)** - grants from the Department of Commerce (DOC) to towns for

construction projects that encourage private business development and expansion.

- **Public Works Board** - grants or loans from the Department of Commerce (DOC) to towns for the planning, acquisition, and construction of streets, water, stormwater, and sewer services
- **Stormwater Public Private Partnerships** - grants from the Department of Ecology (DOE) to develop public-private partnerships for stormwater retrofit projects.
- **Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) General Purpose** - grants from US Housing & Urban Development (HUD) to eligible towns for community development projects that principally benefit low and moderate-income persons including water, wastewater, streets, sidewalks, and affordable housing.

Maple Hall reconfiguration and addition, Albers Warehouse reconstruction

- **Capital Grant Program Equity** - grants from the Department of Commerce (DOC) to non-profit organizations for planning and predesign services for the preparation of capital grant opportunities and applications to elected officials for inclusion in the state's annual budget.
- **Building for the Arts (BFA)** - grants from the Department of Commerce (DOC) to non-profit organizations for performing art centers for up to 33.3% of eligible capital costs for acquisition, construction, and/or major renovation.
- **Creative Districts Capital Projects** - grants from the Washington State Arts Commission to towns for small-scale capital projects to enhance and promote the district.
- **Heritage Capital Projects** - grants from the Washington State Historical Society to towns for capital projects at public

accessible facilities that interpret and preserve Washington's history and heritage.

- **Community Facilities Direct Loan Guarantees and Grants** - from the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) to towns for public improvements operated on a nonprofit basis, for the orderly development of a rural community.
- **Rural Community Development Initiative** - grants from the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) to towns and community development organizations for community facilities and community and economic development projects.
- **Remedial Actions** - grants and loans from the Department of Ecology (DOE) and the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to cities for the planning of the clean up contaminated areas.

Waterfront, shoreline, trails, and other amenities

- **Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account (ALEA)** - grants from the Recreation & Conservation Office (RCO) to towns for the purchase, improvement of aquatic lands for public purposes and for providing access.
- **Boating Facilities Program (BFP)** - grants from the Recreation & Conservation Office (RCO) to towns for the acquisition and development for motorized boating facilities including guest moorage.
- **Boating Infrastructure Grant Program (BIGP)** - grants from the Recreation & Conservation Office (RCO) to towns for the development or renovation of guest boating facilities for craft over 26 feet.
- **Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)** - grants from the Recreation & Conservation Office (RCO) to towns to acquire,

develop, and provide access to outdoor recreation resources including trails and parks.

- **Conservation Resources Enhancement Program Riparian Funding** - grants from the State Conservation Commission to landowners to restore streamside habitat for salmon.

Affordable housing

- **Connecting Housing to Infrastructure Programs (CHIP)** - grants from the Department of Commerce (DOC) to cities for sewer, water, or stormwater improvements for new affordable housing projects - requires town or county to impose the sales and use tax for affordable housing.
- **Housing Finance Commission Land Acquisition Program (LAP)** - loans from the Department of Commerce (DOC) to towns for the purchase of land for the eventual construction of affordable housing at 1% interest for up to 8 years.
- **Housing Trust Fund** - grants or loans from the Department of Commerce (DOC) to towns for affordable housing construction including pre-development technical assistance.

Smart, green, and other projects

- **Community Solar Resilience Hubs** - grants from the Department of Commerce (DOC) to towns for solar deployment and battery storage at publicly-owned community buildings.
- **Community EV Charging** - grants from the Department of Commerce (DOC) to towns for community electric charging infrastructure and equipment.

General purpose

- **Lease to Own (LTO)** - facility development projects where

private or nonprofit developers construct and maintain a facility and the town acquires the facility through a lease over a purchase period. The facility may be of any type or use and the lease/purchase agreement can be of flexible duration and payment schedules.

Financial terms for nonprofit developers are like what a town would pay for a conventional municipal bond funded project. Financial terms for private developers are like any privately funded project with private interest and profit included. (Note - Washington State legislation does not consider lease to own agreements to be debt though market credit ratings do).

Nonprofit developers have financed, developed, and maintained public buildings for state agencies, counties, and cities including administrative offices, student housing, research, parking garages, and other public facilities.

- **Contributions and donations** - can and have previously contributed to creative endeavors like what is envisioned in the Moore Clark subarea plan. Interested individuals, foundations, corporations, and other public jurisdictions should be approached once the subarea plan has been adopted and ready to be implemented.

Private mixed income housing costs

Mixed income housing development cost estimates include hard and soft costs as well as land acquisition.

Mixed income housing

Moore Clark 2 northeast parcels	\$24,926,810
Moore Clark southeast parcel	\$22,431,039
Public parking lot 3 north parcels	\$31,578,752
Public parking lot 2 central parcels	\$20,225,007
Public parking lot south parcel	\$6,274,554
Total mixed income housing developments	\$105,436,162

As shown, the total development cost for all mixed income housing projects is \$105,436,162. If mixed income housing is developed under the average size and parking ratios described previously, the average cost will range between \$356,689 to \$360,591 per unit not including developer profit. Average costs for studios will be lower and for 2-bedroom units higher than the average per unit cost shown.

Permanently affordable units may be developed with smaller size and parking ratios and with less expensive but functional interior finishes. The units may continue to be owned and leased by the developer, or by a nonprofit agency partner, or sold under resale agreements limiting inflation to remain affordable, or other methods approved by the town attorney.

Each mixed income housing parcel could be sold and developed independently or in multiple blocks depending on housing market conditions and developer interest.

Implementation options

There are several options available for moving forward on the implementation of Moore Clark's redevelopment including:

- **Do nothing** - if Triton America LLC continues to own Moore Clark properties, the Albers Warehouse and Freezer Building will continue to deteriorate and the remaining property will continue to be undeveloped, underutilized, and a continuing blight on the Town based on Triton's 12-year ownership history of Moore Clark as well as Triton's history with other properties in the local area.
- **Litigate demolition of Albers Warehouse** - on town right-of-way to eliminate the safety risk posed by the deteriorated structure and allow the extension of First Street south to Caledonia Street. While this would eliminate the immediate safety risk posed by the deteriorated Albers Warehouse, the

Freezer Building will continue to deteriorate, and the remaining Moore Clark property will continue to be undeveloped and underutilized.

- **Condemn and acquire First Street frontage parcels** - including the wharf, Albers Warehouse, and Freezer Building to allow the development of destination activities and facilities. While this would allow for the development of waterfront amenities, Maple Hall Addition, and Albers Warehouse rebuild as a festival hall, the remaining Moore Clark property will continue to be undeveloped and underutilized especially for mixed-income, affordable housing.
- **Condemn complete Moore Clark properties** - using a blight on the town justification, to allow development of destination activities and facilities and free up mixed income, affordable housing parcels for private market development.

Implementation approaches

The following considerations affect how the town can proceed and structure an implementation strategy for the Moore Clark properties:

- **Town of La Conner** - lacks the financial capacity and experience to implement an aggressive redevelopment of portions of or all the Moore Clark property and would not be shielded from financial or other risks.
- **Establish a Public Development Authority (PDA)** - as one option available where the PDA rather than the town assumes all responsibility for acquisition and development and shields the town from financial or other liabilities.
- **Approve an agreement with a developer or placeholder** - like Forterra, to provide capital for the purchase of portions or all the Moore Clark properties and provide the necessary cash

flow for site preparation for waterfront destination development and the packaging of mixed income, affordable housing parcels. The developer or placeholder like Forterra, will be repaid as each Moore Clark parcel is financed by grants for public projects or sale by for-profit or nonprofit housing developers.

- **Conduct competitive request for proposals (RFPs)** - for the development of the mixed income, affordable housing parcels where the first phase narrows developer submitted qualifications to 3 teams and the second phase where 3 teams prepare binding redevelopment proposals. The preferred developer's concept will be selected based on the design quality and public benefit of the winning proposal.
- **Initiate waterfront destination development** - by demolishing Albers Warehouse and Freezer Building, developing Albers Festival Hall and Maple Hall Addition as grants and donations allow.

Immediate actions

An initial action the town and Chamber of Commerce should initiate is to apply for a Creative District classification and the designation of the Chamber of Commerce as a Washington Main Street organization.

- **Creative District designation** - state-certified by the Washington State Arts Commission, is a vehicle to support artists and creative innovators within the La Conner area while expanding the town's outreach as an art and cultural center.



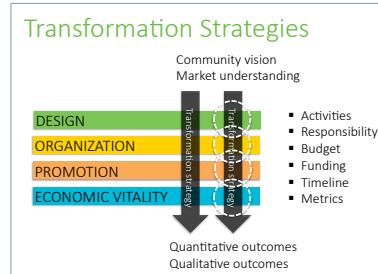
Creative districts are defined areas where there's a high concentration of cultural attractions and programs. Each district has its

own experiences, from art walks and live music to museums and galleries, all generally within a walkable distance. The Washington State Arts Commission has designated 18 districts in the state thus far including Anacortes, Coupeville, Langley, Port Townsend, and Twisp, among others.

To be eligible, La Conner must delineate the boundaries of the creative district and the Chamber must propose to be the operating agency.

When approved, which can take up to a year, the Chamber, as the designated district agent will be eligible for a \$10,000 startup grant along with a \$50,000 capital project funding grant and technical assistance. The monies can be spent for the design and installation of promotional signage listing La Conner as a Creative District along with other marketing and promotional materials and programs including support of artist live/work housing.

- **Main Street designation** - managed by the Washington Trust for Historic Preservation, a statewide nonprofit organization under contract to the Washington State Department of Archaeology & Historic Preservation (DAHP).



Main Street is a comprehensive, incremental approach to revitalization built around a community's unique heritage and attributes. Using local resources and initiative, the program helps communities develop strategies to stimulate long term economic growth and pride in downtown. Main Street programs have been established in 40 Washington communities including Anacortes, Mount Vernon, Coupeville, Langley, Port Townsend, and Bellingham, among others.

A Main Street designation can take up to a year and requires the Chamber be:

- Committed to comprehensive downtown revitalization (which can include the Moore Clark property),
- Have a public and private historic preservation ethic,
- Provide evidence of public and private sector investment in the downtown district, and
- Demonstrate a financial commitment to implement a broad and long-term program.

The Main Street Tax Credit Incentive Program (MSTCIP) provides a Business & Occupation (B&O) or Public Utility Tax (PUT) credit for private contributions given to eligible downtown organizations. Once a business' donation request is approved by the Washington State Department of Revenue (DOR), the business is eligible for a tax credit worth 75% of the contribution donation up to \$250,000 per contributor.

Possible implementation agents

Public Development Authority (PDA)

Under RCW 35.21.730, local government may establish “public corporations, commissions, or authorities” or PDAs. PDAs are often created to manage the development and operation of a single project, which the city determines is best managed outside of its traditional bureaucracy and lines of authority. The project may be entrepreneurial in nature and intersect with the private sector in ways that would strain public resources and personnel.

For example, the Pike Place Market is a City of Seattle PDA and essentially acts as the landlord to scores of retail establishments and nonprofit services provided in a series of historic buildings. The City of Seattle determined that day-to-day operations of such an enterprise is best managed by professionals independent of the city, given the untraditional nature of the enterprise and the importance of responding to the unique needs of the private retail marketplace.

PDAs are created to 1) administer and execute federal grants or programs; 2) receive and administer private funds, goods, or services for any lawful purpose; and 3) to perform any lawful **public purpose of function**. The specific undertakings of a PDA are specified in the PDA charter by the creating jurisdiction. PDAs are frequently created to undertake a specific project or activity requiring focused attention. PDAs tend to be more entrepreneurial than their sponsoring municipality, involving private sector participants as board members or partners. PDAs allow municipalities to participate in projects that they may be otherwise disinclined to partake in due to project risks and competing priorities of the municipality.

Powers - of a PDA are provided in RCW 35.21 and include:

- Own and sell real and personal property,
- Contract with a city, town, or county to conduct community renewal activities,
- Contract with individuals, associations, corporations, Washington State, or the US,
- Sue and be sued,

- Loan and borrow funds and issue bonds and other instruments evidencing indebtedness,
- Transfer funds, real or personal property, interests, or services,
- Engage in anything a natural person may do, and
- Perform all types of community services.

Formation - of a PDA is by the city passing an ordinance approving the PDA's charter. The charter will define the scope of the project or purpose, the term of the PDA, and board characteristics. The charter may provide for municipal oversight and will limit the liability of the creating municipality. Because PDAs are separate legal entities, all liabilities are satisfied exclusively from the assets of the PDA. PDA creditors do not have the right of action against the creating municipality, or its assets, on account of any PDA debts, obligations, liabilities, or acts or omissions.

Governance - the RCW does not require any particular board composition. Therefore, the creating city has board latitude in crafting a governance structure suited to the PDA's purpose. Typically, PDA boards are often composed of persons with technical expertise in financing, construction, or legal and persons who represent key stakeholders.

Duration - the PDA charter determines the term of the PDA and may include a sunset provision, which may automatically dissolve the PDA upon completion of the project or its financing - or provide a broader mandate encompassing numerous phases of an ongoing project or a general-purpose endeavor for an indefinite period.

Oversight - the creating municipality will have limited control (and liability) over the PDA but will not be relieved of all oversight responsibility. By statute, the city is required to oversee and control the PDA's operations and funds in order to correct any deficiency and to assure that the purpose of each project are reasonably accomplished. Accounting and other responsibilities may be spelled out in the PDA's charter.

Types of projects - may include any “public purpose” specified in the PDA's charter and that is a lawful public purpose or undertaking of the creating municipality. Examples of projects include:

- Seattle Art Museum,
- Museum of Flight at Boeing Field in King County,
- Mercer Island City Hall,
- Officers' Row in Vancouver,
- Pike Place Market in Seattle,
- Bellevue Convention Center,
- Tacoma's Foss Waterway Development,
- Bellingham PDA Downtown, Waterfront, and Old Town
- Hurricane Ridge PDA in Port Angeles

Limitations – PDA's do not have the power of eminent domain or the authority to levy taxes. A PDA may borrow funds or issue tax-exempt bonds – though PDA financing is generally project specific. To facilitate access to financial markets, PDA project finances are often backed by a city guarantee, typically in the form of a contingent loan agreement. Real property and operating funds are frequently transferred to a PDA at the time of PDA creation, but the creating municipality may define controls and place terms and conditions on a PDA's use of such assets.

Disadvantage – a potential disadvantage in forming a PDA is the relatively low level of control the creating city has over the PDA or project. Although the creating municipality has oversight responsibilities for PDA operations to assure the purposes of the PDA are fulfilled, generally the creation, management, and facilitation of the project is in the hands of the PDA's governing board. PDAs are autonomous despite contract or charter provisions providing for oversight and control over the PDA.

Advantage - the lack of control over the project and the PDA, however, may be beneficial for a city for it reduces liability and financial risk for the city. A PDA also provides a vehicle for a city to support a project without diverting city staff to the undertaking and to attract private citizens to serve on the PDA board with the skill sets necessary to make projects feasible.

In the opinion of many municipal attorneys, a PDA is best used for unusual endeavors, which for a variety of reasons the municipality would not want to undertake itself.

Forterra

Forterra is a federally approved 501(c)(3) non-profit organization established in 1989 as the Seattle King County Land Trust to introduce a new approach to land conservation, one that bridged the gap between public and private entities. Forterra drives land stewardship, management and planning, innovative programs and policies, farming and forestry approaches, community ownership opportunities, and development solutions.

Cities for all initiative

Forterra's expertise in land—negotiation, acquisition, land banking—helps communities accommodate new growth and create a high quality of life for diverse residents. Working with cities, landowners, and community partners Forterra envisions new uses for land in community hubs and partner with financial institutions and developers to build healthy, green mixed-use projects, s.

Community real estate and planning

Forterra invests in towns and cities across the state leveraging land holdings and working in partnership with towns, cities, developers, and communities to improve infrastructure, housing, and cultural institutions.

Land infrastructure program

Conceived and developed by Forterra and passed into state law in 2011, this program combines Transfer of Development Rights (tdr) with a financing option that creates incentives for both land conservation and community support investment. The outcome is conservation of farms, forests, and natural areas combined with financing for municipalities to fund plazas, sidewalks, bike lanes, and more to ensure cities will be vibrant, attractive places to live and work.

Forterra has engaged with over 81 communities

Forterra's projects extend from the rural town of Roslyn to the rapidly changing neighborhood of Hilltop, Tacoma, and from the estuaries, farms, and forests of Washington's coast to the shrub-steppe of the Yakima basin. Examples include:

- **Roslyn** - In partnership with the Roslyn Planning Advisory Team, the larger community, and other community stakeholders, Forterra is exploring how to develop a 30-acre parcel in a way that reflects Roslyn's history and the community's desire to live sustainably, honor Roslyn's historical character, incorporate wetlands and greenspace within the site, and provide public parking, developing commercial space, and other community attractions.
- **Tacoma's Hilltop neighborhood** - Forterra facilitated the reclamation of an entire city block at 1105 MLK, with Black culture and businesses. The Strong Communities Funds purchased the property and are seeking qualified developers capable of addressing needs of Hilltop community members for housing and community spaces.
- **Hamilton** - Forterra purchased a 48-acre upland parcel for a new neighborhood ("Hamilton Center"). Together with Hamilton residents they are working to create a design that embodies sustainability and honors the town's rich history, culture, and natural assets.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Planning Commission
FROM: Planning Staff
SUBJECT: 2025 Legislative Bills
DATE: February 13, 2025

Attached are reports on four different bills that have been proposed for the 2025 Legislative Session in Washington State. These reports are meant to be non-partisan and fact based. Obviously, these bills would have a significant impact on La Conner. Scott Thomas, the Town Administrator, is looking for stories from commissioners on how these bills would impact La Conner, so that he can pass them along to legislators. Please think about how these bills would impact La Conner if they are codified into state law and come prepared to share a story about that impact.

Local Government Committee

HB 1299

Brief Description: Concerning minimum parking requirements.

Sponsors: Representatives Peterson, Fitzgibbon, Berry, Street, Simmons, Reed, Macri, Ramel, Nance and Doglio.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Limits the number of parking spots that cities and counties may impose for residential and commercial buildings of a certain size.
- Prohibits minimum parking requirements for specified building types.

Hearing Date: 2/4/25

Staff: Elizabeth Allison (786-7129).

Background:

Minimum Parking Requirements.

Cities and counties have broad authority to regulate parking in their jurisdictions. Cities and counties are subject to certain minimum parking requirements, such as parking minimums for certain types of housing within a specified distance of a transit stop and restrictions on parking requirements for accessory dwelling units within a specified distance of a transit stop. Some affordable housing incentive programs offer incentives for parking reductions.

People with disabilities are granted access to accessible parking spaces. Such individuals receive special license plates or placards that must be hung in their vehicles to park in accessible spaces.

Summary of Bill:

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Cities and counties may not require any minimum parking requirements for the following:

- existing buildings undergoing change of use, including vacant buildings;
- residences under 1,200 square feet;
- commercial spaces under 5,000 square feet;
- affordable housing;
- senior housing;
- housing for people with disabilities;
- facilities that serve alcohol;
- child care facilities; and
- commercial spaces in mixed-use projects.

Code cities may not require more than one parking space per residential dwelling unit, and counties and non-code cities may not require more than 0.5 parking spaces per residential dwelling unit. Cities and counties may not require more than one parking space per 1,000 square feet of commercial space.

These requirements do not apply to accessible parking spaces in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Minimum parking requirements for cities and counties planning under the Growth Management Act are repealed. Cities with a population of at least 10,000 that are within a county with a population density exceeding 100 people per square mile may not require off-street parking as a condition of permitting development of multifamily homes, middle housing, or accessory dwelling units that are located within one-half mile walking distance of transit service.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 29, 2025.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1195

As Reported by House Committee On: Housing

Title: An act relating to compliance with siting, development permit processes and standards, and requirements for permanent supportive housing, transitional housing, indoor emergency housing, or indoor emergency shelters.

Brief Description: Concerning compliance with siting, development permit processes and standards, and requirements for permanent supportive housing, transitional housing, indoor emergency housing, or indoor emergency shelters.

Sponsors: Representatives Peterson, Macri, Alvarado, Ryu, Berry, Ramel, Fitzgibbon, Mena, Callan, Obras, Farivar, Doglio, Gregerson, Simmons, Street, Duerr, Nance, Berg, Davis, Ormsby and Hill.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Housing: 1/21/25, 1/30/25 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Requires a city or county to use an administrative process for reviewing a project permit application for indoor emergency shelters, transitional housing, indoor emergency housing, or permanent supportive housing (STEP housing).
- Requires the Department of Commerce (Commerce) to facilitate the resolution of disputes between a city or county and a project applicant or developer of STEP housing.
- Authorizes Commerce to issue a finding of noncompliance if dispute resolution is unsuccessful and the city or county has denied a project permit or development agreement, or enacted a zoning ordinance or development regulations, that prevent the siting of STEP housing.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Peterson, Chair; Hill, Vice Chair; Richards, Vice Chair; Entenman, Gregerson, Lekanoff, Reed, Thomas, Timmons and Zahn.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 6 members: Representatives Jacobsen, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Manjarrez, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Barkis, Connors, Dufault and Engell.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 1 member: Representative Low, Ranking Minority Member.

Staff: Serena Dolly (786-7150).

Background:

Siting of Shelters, Transitional Housing, Emergency Housing, and Permanent Supportive Housing.

A city may not prohibit indoor emergency shelters, transitional housing, indoor emergency housing, or permanent supportive housing (STEP housing) in certain zones as follows:

- A city may not prohibit transitional housing or permanent supportive housing in any zone where residential dwelling units or hotels are allowed.
- A city may not prohibit indoor emergency shelters or indoor emergency housing in any zone where hotels are allowed, unless the city has adopted an ordinance authorizing indoor emergency shelters and indoor emergency housing in a majority of zones within a one-mile proximity to transit.

A city may impose, by ordinance, reasonable occupancy, spacing, and intensity of use requirements on STEP housing for public health and safety purposes. Requirements may not prevent the siting of a sufficient amount of STEP housing to accommodate each city's projected need under its comprehensive plan.

Dispute Resolution.

The 2023-25 Supplemental Operating Budget provided funding for the Department of Commerce (Commerce) to provide dispute resolution services to help resolve disputes between local governments and service providers attempting to site STEP housing. By March 1, 2025, Commerce must report to the Legislature on the status of any disputes resolved.

Design Review.

Design review is a formally adopted local government process by which projects are reviewed for compliance with design standards for the type of use adopted through local ordinance. Design review focuses on the appearance of new construction, site planning, and

items such as landscaping, signage, and other aesthetic issues.

Administrative design review is a type of design review in which a project is reviewed, approved, or denied by the planning director or the planning director's designee.

Administrative design review is based solely on objective design and development standards and is generally conducted without a public hearing.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

Siting of Shelters, Transitional Housing, Emergency Housing, and Permanent Supportive Housing.

The comprehensive plan or development regulations of a city or county fully planning under the Growth Management Act (GMA) may not deny or preclude a permit application for STEP housing if the project is located in a residential or commercial zone within an urban growth area that includes or is contiguous with a city. A city may not approve a permit application for STEP housing in any area zoned for industrial use. A city or county must review any permit application for STEP housing using an administrative process only.

If a permit applicant is unable to site STEP housing due to a city or county's comprehensive plan or development regulation, the applicant may seek a waiver from the requirements.

The permit application must describe any local permit processes, development standards, or permit conditions that the applicant asserts would deny or preclude the siting, construction, or operation of STEP housing. If the permit applicant and the city or county disagree about the assertions, either party may seek dispute resolution services through Commerce.

Dispute Resolution.

Commerce must provide services to facilitate the timely resolution of disputes between a city or county and either: (1) an applicant seeking a project permit or development agreement to site or construct STEP housing; or (2) a developer alleging that a city or county's zoning ordinance or development regulations prevent or preclude the siting of STEP housing. A city, county, applicant, or developer may request dispute resolution services from Commerce.

If dispute resolution is unsuccessful, the city or county must submit the project permit application, any development agreement, any zoning ordinance and related development regulations, and any other relevant documents to Commerce for review. The city or county must also submit a statement of:

- the reason for any denial, rescission, or conditions of approval;
- the requirements necessary to fulfill the development agreement or development regulations; or
- how the adopted ordinance and development regulations comply with requirements to allow the siting of STEP housing.

If Commerce finds that a final decision on a permit application, development agreement, or another permitting process violates requirements to allow the siting, construction, or operation of STEP housing, Commerce must reverse the city or county's final decision and return it for corrective action within 60 days.

If Commerce finds that a zoning ordinance or development regulation violates requirements to allow the siting, construction, or operation of STEP housing, Commerce must issue a determination of noncompliance and return it for corrective action within 120 days.

Commerce's final determination and any corrective action required are exempt from appeal under the GMA or the State Environmental Policy Act.

If a city or county fails to take corrective action within the required timeframe, Commerce must notify the State Treasurer. Upon notification, the State Treasurer must withhold the following revenues from the city or county: the motor vehicle fuel tax, the transportation improvement account, the rural arterial trust account, the local sales and use tax, the liquor profit tax, and the liquor excise tax. The State Treasurer must resume distributions of withheld revenues when the city or county issues the project permit application or amends its zoning ordinance and related development regulations.

An applicant submitting a project permit application, a development agreement, or other documents for STEP housing may submit a copy of the documents to Commerce or request Commerce's review of any denial, rescission, or conditions for approval by a city or county.

Design Review.

A city must process a permit application for STEP housing under an administrative design review process.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill prohibits a local comprehensive plan or development regulation from denying or precluding a permit application for STEP housing only if the project is located in a residential or commercial zone within an urban growth area that includes or is contiguous with a city. The substitute bill also prohibits a city from approving a permit application for STEP housing in any area zoned for industrial use.

The substitute bill requires a city or county to review for compliance, rather than approve, any permit application for STEP housing using an administrative process only.

The substitute bill extends the time by which a city or county must amend a zoning ordinance or development regulation after a Commerce finding of noncompliance with STEP housing requirements from 60 to 120 days.

The substitute bill removes the definition and all uses of the term "preclusive effect."

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) STEP housing is housing with a very significant need in every community in our state. It is a type of housing that keeps people off the streets and is an important step to help address the urgent homelessness crisis in our state. Cities have a state mandate to accommodate housing for all economic segments of the population, including the people who need STEP housing. Siting STEP housing in communities can be politically challenging for local elected officials. Developers face significant opposition. This is especially true when trying to bring single adults who are sleeping on the streets inside. Last year, a campaign of misinformation targeted a city council and jeopardized a fully funded shovel-ready project. The goal is to treat all housing the same. Developers of market rate apartments generally do not have to appear before the city council for building permits. They do not have to make the case for why their future residents deserve the chance to make that city their home. This bill will help streamline development for new supportive housing and prevent costly disruptions that can arise from public opposition. It will help resolve local disputes by allowing Commerce to offer dispute resolution services. The penalties in the bill are designed to apply only when a city or county continues to not comply with state regulations.

(Opposed) None.

(Other) The penalties in the bill are concerning and may harm the vulnerable populations that the bill is intended to help. The penalties include withholding sales tax, and counties often use sales tax to fund affordable housing and the very programs that the bill is seeking to improve. If the state really wants more shelter capacity created, then the most important thing it could do is fund it. Cities and counties do not have enough money to build STEP housing and have been asking for revenue for at least five years without progress. The bill contains technical errors.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Strom Peterson, prime sponsor; Joe Tovar; Bryce Yadon, Futurewise; Michele Thomas, Washington Low Income Housing Alliance; Sarah Dickmeyer, Plymouth Housing Group; Charles Schaefer; Dan Wise, Catholic Community Services ; Chloe Gale, REACH; and Joe McDermott, State Relations Director, King County.

(Other) Curtis Steinhauer, Washington State Association of Counties; and Carl Schroeder, Association of Washington Cities.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1443

As Reported by House Committee On: Housing

Title: An act relating to mobile dwellings.

Brief Description: Concerning mobile dwellings.

Sponsors: Representatives Gregerson, Barkis, Peterson, Low, Duerr, Reed, Parshley, Nance, Bernbaum, Ormsby, Hill and Simmons.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Housing: 1/27/25, 2/6/25 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Requires a city or county fully planning under the Growth Management Act to allow one mobile dwelling per residential lot if certain requirements are met.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 12 members: Representatives Peterson, Chair; Hill, Vice Chair; Richards, Vice Chair; Low, Ranking Minority Member; Barkis, Entenman, Gregerson, Lekanoff, Reed, Thomas, Timmons and Zahn.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 1 member: Representative Dufault.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 4 members: Representatives Jacobsen, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Manjarrez, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Connors and Engell.

Staff: Serena Dolly (786-7150).

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Background:

The Growth Management Act (GMA) is the comprehensive land use planning framework for counties and cities in Washington. The GMA establishes land use designation and environmental protection requirements for all Washington counties and cities. The GMA also establishes a significantly wider array of planning duties for 28 counties, and the cities within those counties, that are obligated to satisfy all planning requirements of the GMA. These jurisdictions are sometimes said to be fully planning under the GMA.

Counties that fully plan under the GMA must designate urban growth areas (UGAs), within which urban growth must be encouraged and outside of which growth may occur only if it is not urban in nature. Each city in a county must be included in a UGA. Fully planning jurisdictions must include within their UGAs sufficient areas and densities to accommodate projected urban growth for the succeeding 20-year period.

The GMA also directs fully planning jurisdictions to adopt internally consistent comprehensive land use plans. Comprehensive plans are implemented through locally adopted development regulations, and both the plans and the local regulations are subject to review and revision requirements prescribed in the GMA. When developing their comprehensive plans, counties and cities must consider various goals set forth in statute. Fully planning counties and cities must review and, if necessary, revise their comprehensive plans every 10 years to ensure they comply with the GMA.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

A mobile dwelling is a tiny house on wheels or a type of vehicle primarily designed for recreational camping or travel use that either has its own motor or is mounted on or towed by another vehicle; this includes: travel trailers, fifth-wheel trailers, folding camping trailers, truck campers, and motor homes.

A fully planning city or county must allow at least one mobile dwelling on each lot zoned for residential use if the following conditions are met:

- the lot has at least one existing housing unit;
- the lot is located within an urban growth area; and
- the mobile dwelling is not located in a designated critical area, natural resource land, or shoreline of the state.

The mobile dwelling must be connected to electrical service through a dedicated outlet. If a mobile dwelling has internal plumbing, it must be connected to potable water and sanitary sewer services. If a mobile dwelling does not have internal plumbing, the occupants must have access to potable water, toilets, and showers in an existing housing unit on the lot.

Cities and counties must use standard permitting and inspection procedures for new utility

hookups for mobile dwellings, including electric, water, and sewer cleanouts. Cities and counties may not require inspection of the mobile dwelling itself.

A common interest community may not enact any new restrictions that would prohibit at least one mobile dwelling on each residential lot.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill (SHB) changes the term "home on wheels" to "mobile dwelling" and clarifies that a mobile dwelling includes a tiny house on wheels. The SHB removes language related to a city or county determining that a housing development cannot be adequately served by water, sewer, stormwater, and transportation systems. The SHB requires cities and counties to use standard permitting and inspection procedures for new utility hookups for mobile dwellings, including electric, water, and sewer, and specifies that any water connections to the mobile dwelling must be certified for potable use. The SHB allows a city or county to prohibit mobile dwellings in designated critical areas, natural resource lands, or shorelines of the state.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) The state has been working on building housing supply in areas where people already live. Mobile dwellings create immediate and extremely affordable housing. They do not change the neighborhood characteristics. People are already living in mobile dwellings in neighborhoods, and this just ensures standards are in place. It is legal to live in a recreational vehicle (RV) in an RV park. It is also legal to live in your RV on your own lot. This bill combines those two things. The City of Portland has already enacted this policy. There has been no negative news coverage. There have been no major complaints. It just has not created a lot of issues. People who live in mobile dwellings sometimes have nowhere else to live. This is a type of housing that may allow people with disabilities to live independently. It can provide affordable and dignified housing for the homeless. Mobile dwellings can give people privacy and pride of ownership. The mobility of the units provides flexibility in choosing where a person ultimately wants to settle. Water and sewer are not a problem with mobile dwellings. A mobile dwelling can be good for people who have issues with mold because they can take care of any problems on their own.

(Opposed) None.

(Other) Mobile dwellings raise significant concerns about water and sewer issues. They may not meet Department of Health guidelines. Spigots need to be connected to potable water. Cross-contamination can occur with RVs. Mobile dwellings may create clogs and other issues if connected directly to sewers. This can lead to bigger infrastructure problems. There may be value in having the State Building Code Council establish standards. Cities will still be able to charge connection fees, which may make mobile dwellings less affordable. This may result in de facto mobile home parks in neighborhoods. There is concern about how mobile dwellings interact with other housing density requirements.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Mia Gregerson, prime sponsor; Kol Peterson, Tiny Hookups LLC; Dan Bertolet, Sightline Institute; Tim McCormick; Joe Wykowski, Community Vision; Zachariah Giffin, Operation Tiny Home; Todd McKellips, Washington Tiny House Association; Gwyn Howat, Mt. Baker Ski Area; Lisa Tenney; and M. Natalie S.

(Other) Joren Clowers, Sno-King Water District Coalition; Carl Schroeder, Association of Washington Cities; and Kelsey Hulse, Washington State Association of Counties.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5184

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Housing, February 5, 2025

Title: An act relating to minimum parking requirements.

Brief Description: Concerning minimum parking requirements.

Sponsors: Senators Bateman, Trudeau, Frame, Krishnadasan, Lias, Nobles, Pedersen, Salomon, Shewmake and Stanford.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Housing: 1/24/25, 2/05/25 [DPS, w/oRec].

Brief Summary of First Substitute Bill

- Prohibits cities and counties from requiring more than 0.5 parking space per residential dwelling unit.
- Prohibits cities and counties from requiring more than one parking space per 1000 square feet of commercial space.
- Prohibits cities and counties from requiring any minimum parking requirements for existing buildings undergoing change of use and various other categories of residential and commercial buildings.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5184 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Bateman, Chair; Alvarado, Vice Chair; Goehner, Ranking Member; Orwall, Salomon and Trudeau.

Minority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senator Gildon.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Staff: Benjamin Omdal (786-7442)

Background: Growth Management Act. The Growth Management Act (GMA) is the comprehensive land use planning framework for counties and cities in Washington. The GMA also establishes a significantly wider array of planning duties for 28 counties, and the cities within those counties, that are obligated to satisfy all planning requirements of the GMA. These jurisdictions are sometimes said to be fully planning under the GMA.

The GMA also directs fully planning jurisdictions to adopt internally consistent comprehensive land use plans. Comprehensive plans are implemented through locally adopted development regulations, and both the plans and the local regulations are subject to review and revision requirements prescribed in the GMA. A comprehensive plan must be reviewed and, if necessary, revised every ten years to ensure that it complies with the GMA.

Minimum Residential Parking Requirements. In counties and cities fully planning under the GMA, minimum residential parking requirements mandated by municipal zoning ordinances are subject to certain requirements. Requirements are dependent upon:

- whether the housing units are offered as affordable to very low-income people or extremely low-income people, are specifically for seniors or people with disabilities, or are market rate multifamily housing units; and
- the proximity of the housing units to a transit stop that receives a certain frequency of transit service.

Limits on Minimum Residential Parking Requirements. For affordable housing units that are affordable to very low-income or extremely low-income individuals and located within 0.25 miles of a transit stop receiving transit service at least two times per hour for twelve or more hours a day, minimum residential parking requirements may be no greater than one parking space per bedroom or 0.75 space per unit.

For housing units that are specifically for seniors or people with disabilities and located within 0.25 miles of a transit stop receiving transit service at least four times per hour for twelve or more hours a day, a city may not impose minimum residential parking requirements for the residents of such housing units. A city may require a developer to record a covenant that prohibits the rental of a unit subject to this parking restriction for any purpose other than providing housing for seniors or people with disabilities.

For market rate multifamily housing units that are located within 0.25 miles of a transit stop that receives transit service from at least one route that provides service at least four times per hour for twelve or more hours per day, minimum residential parking requirements may be no greater than one parking space per bedroom or 0.75 space per unit.

A city may establish a requirement for the provision of additional parking space per bedroom or per unit if the jurisdiction has determined particular housing unit to be in an area with a lack of access to street parking capacity, physical space impediments, or other

reasons supported by evidence that would make on-street parking infeasible for the unit.

A city that is required or chooses to plan under the GMA may not:

- require off-street parking as a condition of permitting development of middle housing within one-half mile walking distance of a major transit stop;
- require more than one off-street parking space per unit as a condition of permitting development of middle housing on lots smaller than 6000 square feet; and
- require more than two off-street parking spaces per unit as a condition of permitting development of middle housing on lots greater than 6000 square feet.

Summary of Bill: The bill as referred to committee not considered.

Summary of Bill (First Substitute): A city, code city, or county may not require more than 0.5 parking space per residential dwelling unit.

A city, code city, or county may not require more than one parking space per 1000 square feet of commercial space.

A city, code city, or county may not require any minimum parking requirements for:

- existing buildings undergoing change of use, including vacant buildings;
- residences under 1200 square feet;
- commercial spaces under 5000 square feet;
- affordable housing;
- senior housing;
- housing for people with disabilities;
- facilities that serve alcohol;
- child care facilities; and
- commercial spaces in mixed-use projects.

Parking restrictions do not apply to accessible parking spaces in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act or to portions of cities, code cities, and counties within a one-mile radius of a commercial airport in Washington with at least 9 million annual enplanements.

Current minimum residential parking requirements for cities planning under the GMA are repealed.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY HOUSING COMMITTEE (First Substitute):

- Prohibits cities, code cities, and counties from requiring more than one parking space per 1000 square feet of commercial space, rather than 1000 feet of commercial space.
- States that the restrictions on minimum parking requirements do not apply to portions of cities, code cities, and counties within a one-mile radius of a commercial airport in Washington with at least 9 million annual enplanements.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony On Proposed Substitute: *The committee recommended a different version of the bill than what was heard.* PRO: This bill is designed to increase supply of housing by updating our outdated and archaic parking requirements. Parking requirements are actively contributing to our housing supply crisis. Parking spaces take up space that could be used for housing. Developers can build further parking spaces if they desire. The bill aligns the needs between housing and the market. The bill gives developers the ability to build to market needs. Adjusting parking mandates gives entrepreneurs a greater ability to create and develop without onerous government limitations. Reducing parking minimums is an important step in reducing building costs and increasing housing supply. Parking rules are all over the place across jurisdictions in Washington. The bill allows builders to provide as many parking spaces that they would like. The bill applies equally and fairly across the state, allowing builders to get relief from these regulations. Space that is currently being used for parking could be used to build more units, increase density, and maintain our urban tree canopy.

The vast majority of jurisdictions that have undergone parking reform are not transit-oriented. Many cities, organizations, and labor groups have signified their support for this bill. The policy and politics of this bill are widely supported. Parking reform alone can increase housing production. We must be willing to make reforms so that current generations are able to take advantage of the same opportunities as prior generations when housing was more available. Far too often parking mandates serve as an impediment to housing construction. The bill would allow reforms to be applied equitably across the state, eliminating the historical injustices that permeate current restrictions. The bill helps maximize the number of units being built, while working in multiple areas within a city. The market cannot adjust to market signals when minimums are higher than market demands.

The bill removes unnecessary and arbitrary barriers to housing construction. Restrictions were made in an era with unlimited space for parking. Developers will likely choose to include parking, but requiring them to decrease the supply of subsidized, affordable housing. These mandates are costly, arbitrary, and inconsistent. Few jurisdictions can give justifications for their parking regulations. Cities can price parking, create permit restrictions, and use other tools for managing on-street parking. Conventional parking minimums contribute to higher rents and mortgage costs. No parking mandates will encourage people to walk, bike, or take transit. Parking mandates reduce the number of units that are being constructed, undermining recent legislative efforts. The first thing

architects do for projects is determine the amount of parking needed. In too many jurisdictions, small numbers of people against reforms stifle progress, requiring state leadership. Parking minimums, even when waived for individual projects, can present impediments for numerous types of projects including affordable housing. Excessive parking mandates make affordable housing financially infeasible. These requirements force developers to utilize valuable land to parking mandates, eliminating the ability to provide more housing for those that need it.

This bill would allow developers to provide the right amount of parking for each individual project. Parking requirements reduce the unit size in affordable housing projects. Larger parking requirements lead to increased conflicts between vehicles and pedestrians. When you get parking correct, a lot of pieces of the transportation puzzle fall into place. There needs to be a shift in thinking around parking, as many people already walk to obtain services. Eliminating parking requirements in local jurisdictions have been supported by bipartisan and diverse coalitions. Neighborhood parking solutions can help alleviate citizen concerns. Parking requirements have led to reduced capacity in childcare centers and the abandonment of building projects. Minimal parking requirements allow for the flexibility to feasibly restore vacant buildings. Current vibrant, walkable communities would not be able to be built under current parking regulations. Parking mandates are at the heart of residential sprawl, increasing costs and reducing the effectiveness of services. Parking minimums have made some communities not viable for certain businesses. Parking requirements have led to idle usage of land. Language could be added to further define what constitutes a commercial space. Reducing parking requirement will increase the use of infill in residential neighborhoods. Parking is the single-most expensive requirement in developing housing.

CON: The bill does not contain an exemption for housing within a one-mile radius of commercial airports, where parking requirements are retained to support travelers and workers, thereby overlooking gig workers who depend on personal transportation to sustain their income while contributing to our region's economy. Parking requirements are best tailored by local governments who understand their community's unique needs. Parking requirements should take into account the availability of on-street parking. Lack of parking availability leads to greater congestion and unsafe conditions when cars block rights-of-way.

OTHER: There are concerns that an unintended result is greater use of shoulder parking, especially in areas where it is not allowed or safe to do so. The bill should be limited to areas that can safely accommodate shoulder parking. There is no magic ratio, but the approach should be finely tailored to cities' needs. The bill should be amended to address unique community needs in cities where many of the citizens rely on their vehicle for work. The bill may result in less ADA-compliant parking.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Jessica Bateman, Prime Sponsor; Joe Kunzler; Catie Gould, Sightline Institute; L Harrison Jerome; Scott Bonjukian; Jesse Simpson, Housing

Development Consortium; Ali Taysi; Bryce Yadon, Futurewise and Transportation Choices Coalition; Alex Hur, Master Builders Association of King and Snohomish Counties; Paul Rometsch; Ethan Robinson, Habitat for Humanity Seattle-King & Kittitas Counties; Sandy Wolf; Blake Lyon, City of Bellingham, WA; Michone Preston, Habitat for Humanity of Washington State; Michele Thomas, Washington Low Income Housing Alliance; Ron Davis, Sightline; Riley Benge, Washington REALTORS; Eric Hamilton; Ty Stober, Council Member, City of Vancouver; Cary Westerbeck, westerbeck | archite; Sonja Max; Daniel Herriges, Parking Reform Network; Carston Curd, Councilmember, City of Bothell; Kelli Refer, Move Redmond; Zack Zappone, City of Spokane; Wes Stewart, Sierra Club Washington; Susan Davenport, Thurston Housing Land Trust; Nicholas Carr, Office of the Governor; Jace Cotton; Amy Anderson, Washington Childcare Centers Association; Kevin Troutt; Sarah Dickmeyer, Plymouth Housing Group.

CON: Salim Nice, City Mercer Island; Mariya Frost, Kemper Development Company.

OTHER: Karl Almgren, City of Lynnwood; Amina Abdalla, City of SeaTac; Kelsey Hulse, Association of Washington Cities and the Washington State Association of Counties.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.