



Skagit County Washington  
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## ***TOWN OF LA CONNER PLANNING COMMISSION***

### **Meeting Notice**

March 4<sup>th</sup>, 6PM

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

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### **Agenda**

#### **I. Convene**

#### **II. Public Comments** (Topics not otherwise on the Agenda) – Time Limit 3 Minutes

#### **III. Minutes:** Approve Minutes from the February 18, 2025 meeting.

#### **IV. Old Business**

1. Status Report – Public Participation Program
2. Draft Review: Land Use – Chapter 5 – Appendix 5E - Sub-Area Plan

#### **V. New Business**

1. Introduction of Youth Advisor Page
2. Public Hearing: LU25-07HDR
3. Draft Review: Comprehensive Plan Chapter 2 – Public Participation et al.
4. Draft Review: Comprehensive Plan Chapter 12 – Climate Element.

#### **VI. Closing Comments:**

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

**TOWN OF LA CONNER  
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING  
February 18, 2025**

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The Planning Commission meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

Commissioners present: Sommer Holt, Bruce Bradburn, John Leaver, Cynthia Elliott, Carol Hedlin

Commissioners absent: None

Staff: Michael Davolio, Ajah Eills

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**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mayor Hanneman spoke about state legislative bills regarding parking that are moving through the House and Senate. These bills would have adverse impacts for La Conner, and she asked those present to submit public comment about the bills.

Linda Talman asked about the decision process that the Sub-Area plan will go through. Staff spoke regarding the adoption process of the Sub-Area plan, the difference between plans and regulations, and a potential public information campaign that would help citizens understand these processes.

Kari Marr updated the Commission on the progress of La Conner Community News (LCCN). LCCN will offer two different community news products, one of which will be focused on tourism around La Conner and the surrounding area. LCCN is not currently offering print subscriptions, but is planning on offering them as soon as possible. Marr emphasized that LCCN will focus on reaching readers where they are, and thanked those who donated to LCCN.

Planner Davolio shared that Commissioner Elliott is now the new Chair of the Arts Commission. The Arts Commission will begin to look into developing a Creative District application.

**MINUTES:**

Commissioner Hedlin moved to approve the minutes with corrections from the February 4, 2025 meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Bradburn. **Motion to approve the minutes with corrections carried unanimously.**

**OLD BUSINESS:**

Staff shared that Youth Advisor Page will start at the March 4<sup>th</sup> meeting. Staff will interview summer interns from Western Washington University during the first two weeks of March. Staff have been considering a public information campaign that would cover basic planning concepts and terminology, with an overall goal of encouraging informed public comment.

Staff proposed an edited La Conner Vision Statement for Commission review. The Vision Statement is contained within Chapter 1, the Introduction Element. Commission Bradburn moved to recommend to Town Council approval of the Introduction Element, including the edited Vision Statement. Seconded by Commissioner Holt. **Motion carried unanimously.**

Staff presented Chapter 3, the La Conner Profile Element, to the Commission. There was brief discussion. Commission Bradburn moved to recommend to Town Council approval of the La Conner Profile Element with changes discussed. Seconded by Commissioner Hedlin. **Motion carried unanimously.**

Staff presented a second draft of Chapter 9 of the Comprehensive Plan, the Capital Facilities Element. Commissioner Hedlin requested clarifying the language regarding population projections. A brief discussion followed. Commission Hedlin moved to recommend to Town Council approval of the Capital Facilities Element with changes discussed. Seconded by Commissioner Holt. **Motion carried unanimously.**

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

Staff informed the Commission that the Parks Commission has not yet referred the Parks and Recreation Element to the Planning Commission for review. Staff has informed the Parks Commission that they have one month to develop a recommendation for the Planning Commission, otherwise the Planning Commission will move forward with their review absent of a Parks Commission recommendation. The Commissioners and the Mayor discussed the fish slide, and Mayor Hanneman clarified that the Town was not paying for the restoration. There was brief continued discussion.

Staff presented the draft of the Moore-Clark Subarea plan. Commissioner Holt said that the Town should be extremely careful with the vision for this area, and that she is concerned about the bills moving through the state legislature regarding parking minimums. She would like to look into scaling down or removing the residential use because parking is an important consideration for residential use in La Conner.

Jerry George made a comment regarding previous development that he has seen in other communities. He is concerned about the social implications regarding the community of La Conner. There was continued discussion regarding the sub-area plan. Staff will present another draft of the plan during the March 4<sup>th</sup> Commission meeting.

Staff presented a memo regarding bills currently moving through the state legislature. Staff shared that the bills would result in the Town being unable to require off-street parking as a condition of some developments. Commissioners shared concerns regarding parking and grant fund availability. Staff asked the Commissioners and those present to make public comment to our representatives in the state legislature.

### **COMMISSIONER COMMENTS/STAFF COMMENTS:**

Mayor Hanneman encouraged those present to contact the legislature regarding the parking bills. With no further business Commissioner Bradburn moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:56 p.m. Seconded by Commissioner Holt. **Motion carried unanimously.**

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Chair

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Date

## MEMORANDUM

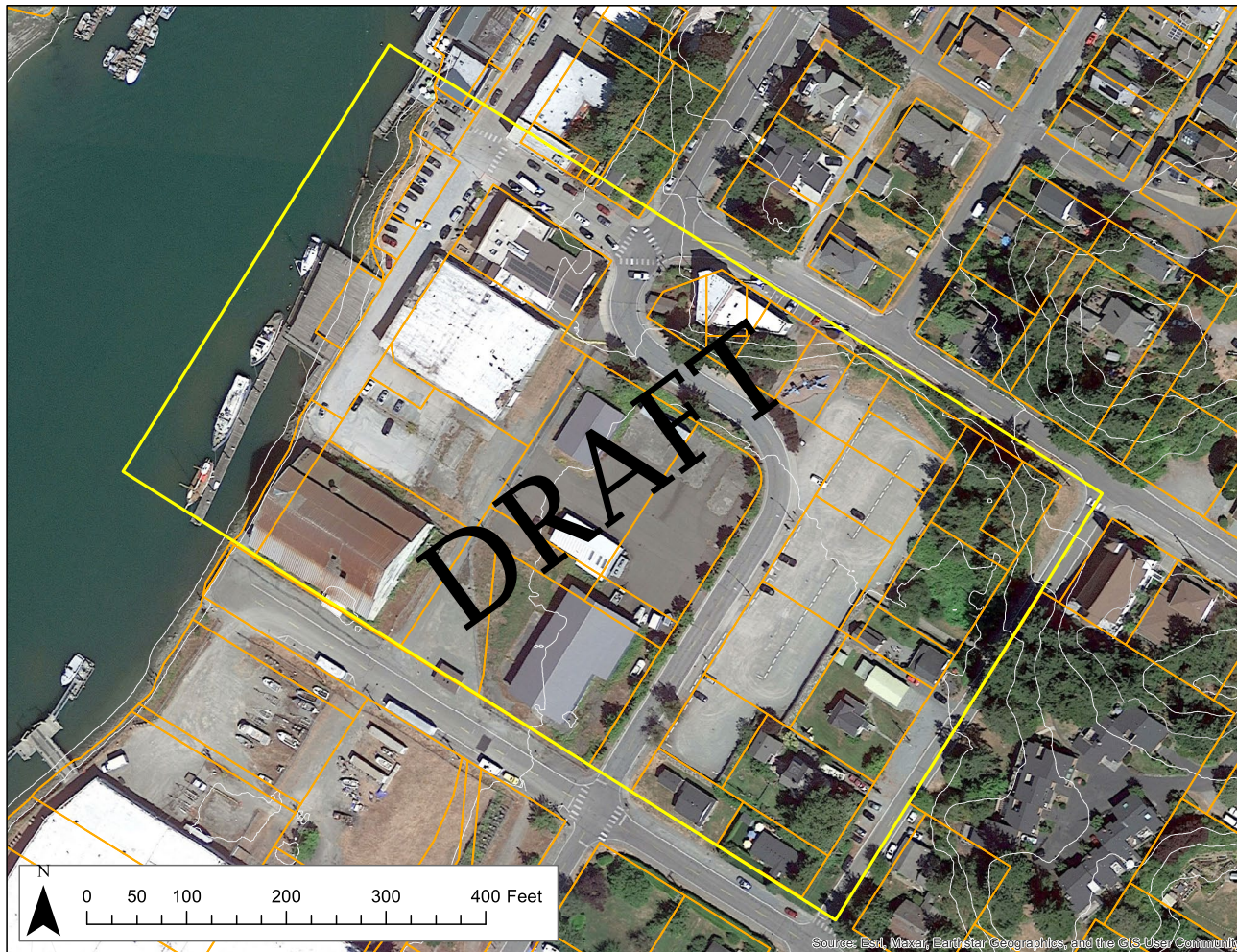
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TO: Planning Commission  
FROM: Planning Staff  
SUBJECT: Moore-Clark Subarea Plan  
DATE: February 28, 2025

Please see attached the draft of the Moore-Clark Subarea Plan with edits from Planner Davolio. Please come prepared to share any edits/questions/concerns you may have. This will come before you again on March 18<sup>th</sup>.



# Town of La Conner Moore Clark Subarea Plan



24 February 2025

**Town Council**

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

**Planning Commission**

Position 1	Cynthia Elliott
Position 2	Carol Hedlin
Position 3	Bruce Bradburn
Position 4	John Leaver
Position 5	Sommer Holt

**City Staff**

Attorney/Administrator	Scott Thomas
Planning Director Planner	Michael Davolio AICP
Assistant Planner	Ajah Eills

**Consultants**

Team Leader	Tom Beckwith FACIP
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.**

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## 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 Sneeoosh 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 Sneeoosh 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.*

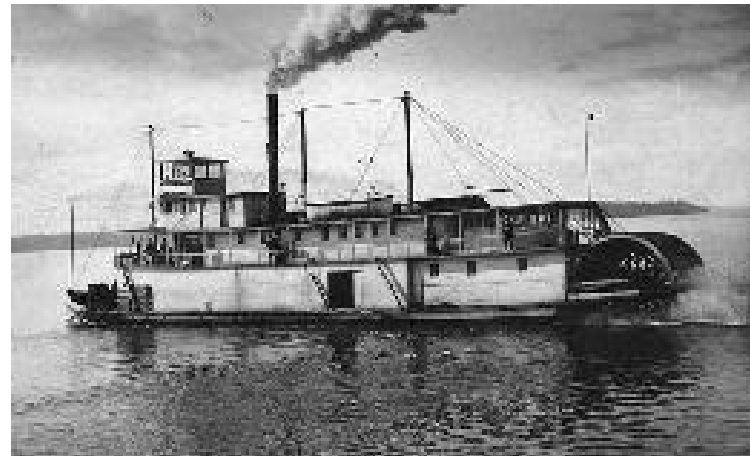
*Many an old-timer can remember the excitement of large wooden ships and barges loading heavy sacks of grain by hand, across shaky gang planks. Of course, when the tide was low, maneuvering the steep planks took a strong, agile man. Occasionally the hand truck would spill its load in the slough. Some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





**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) established



## 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, **with an estimated net worth of** \$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~~ **with an estimated value of** \$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~~ **estimated at** \$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~~ **estimated at** \$418,100 of wetlands located west of Fourth Street and adjoining the public parking lot. **This property is not located within the study area.**
- Town of La Conner - owns 0.3167 acres, 2,500 square feet of building, worth **an estimated** \$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. **Maple Hall is not located within the study area.**

Owner	Parcel	Acres	Bldgs	Yr built	<u>Est.</u> Value
Triton	P74496	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

	P74392	0.5372	6,840	1982	\$556,490
		2.7669	44,332		\$3,549,490
Dunlap	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 **an estimated** \$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 liveboards.

- 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 **Magnus Anderson** cabin, a shelter for an original Swinomish canoe, some benches, and a young children's play structure that will all be retained.

## Floodplain

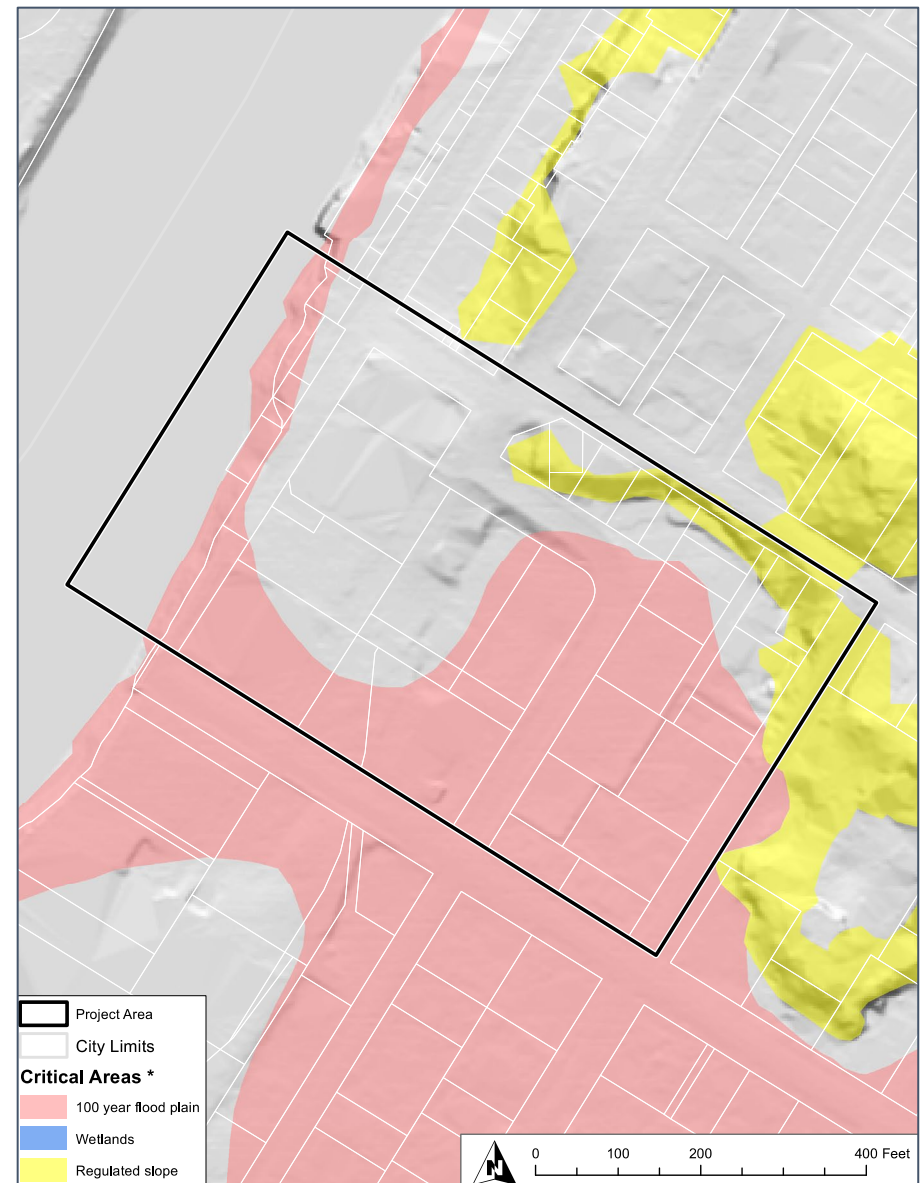
La Conner, except for the higher ground on Second and Third Streets and Pioneer Park, flooded regularly from the North Fork of the Skagit River and Swinomish Channel before early settlers began building dikes.

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.

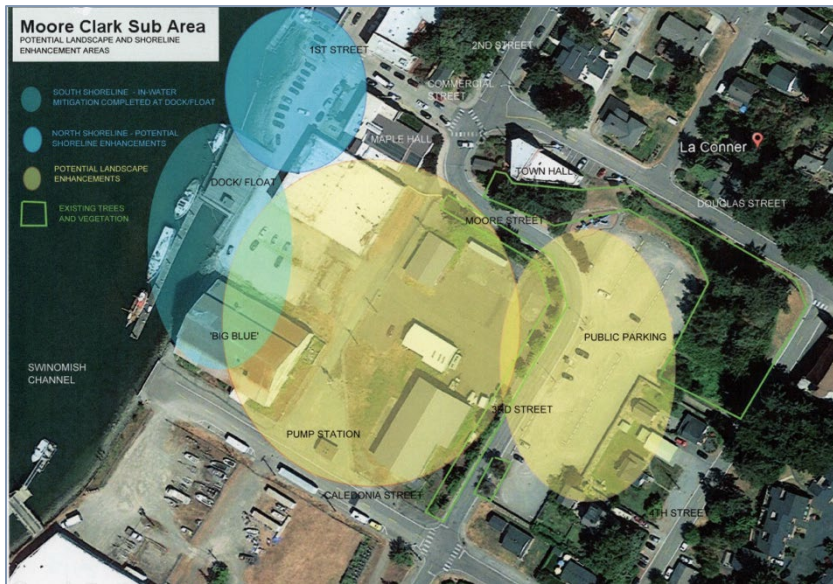
### Shoreline

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.



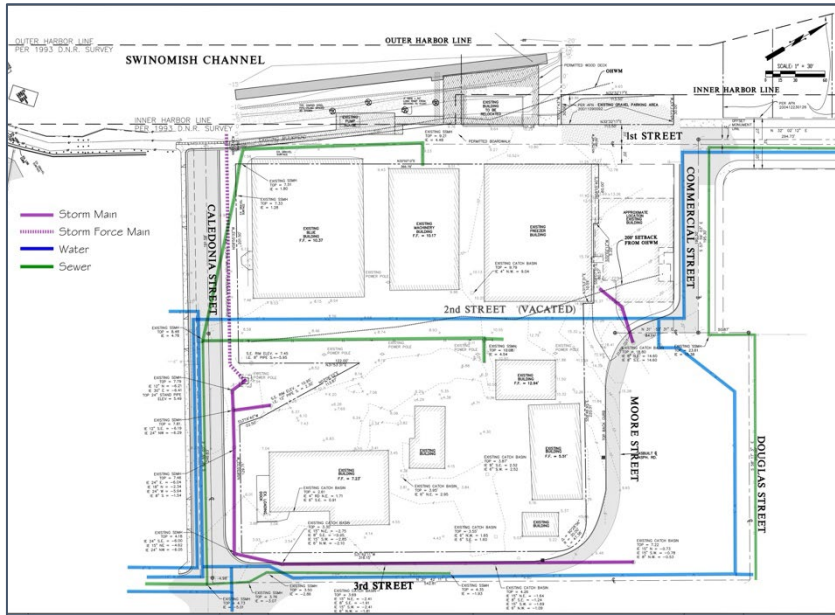
*Top left - principal storm drainage areas in Moore Clark and waterfront.*

*Top right - existing storm drainage routes and collection pipes.*

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



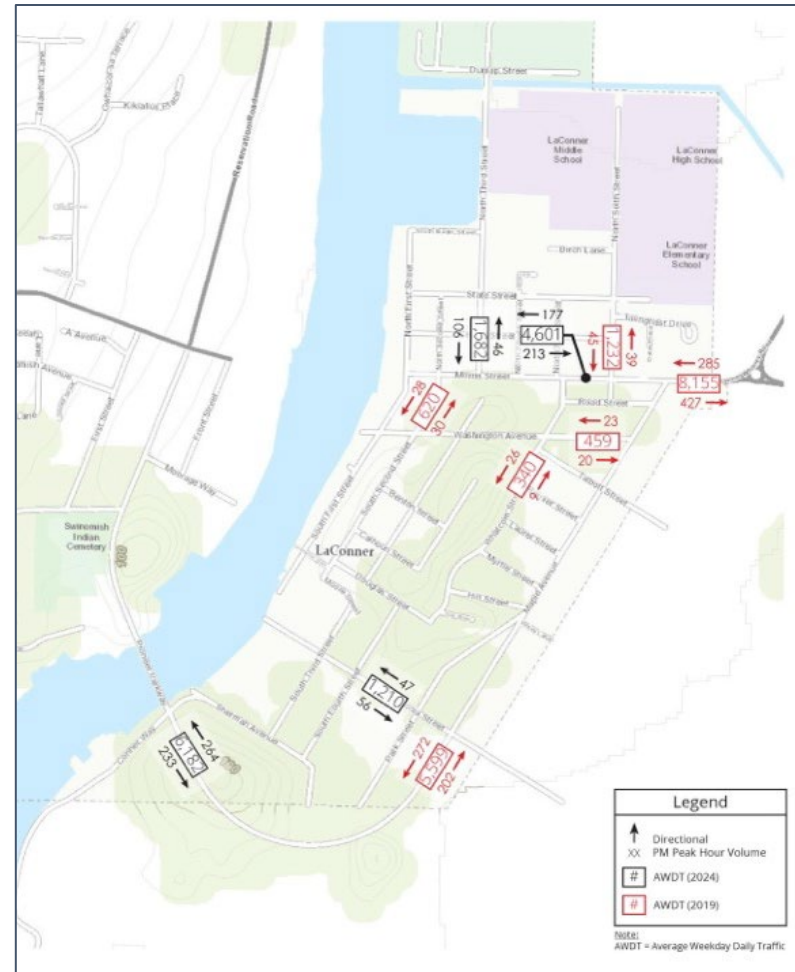
A water supply line is also located in the vacated portion of Second Street that services the Moore Clark subarea.



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 8remains 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

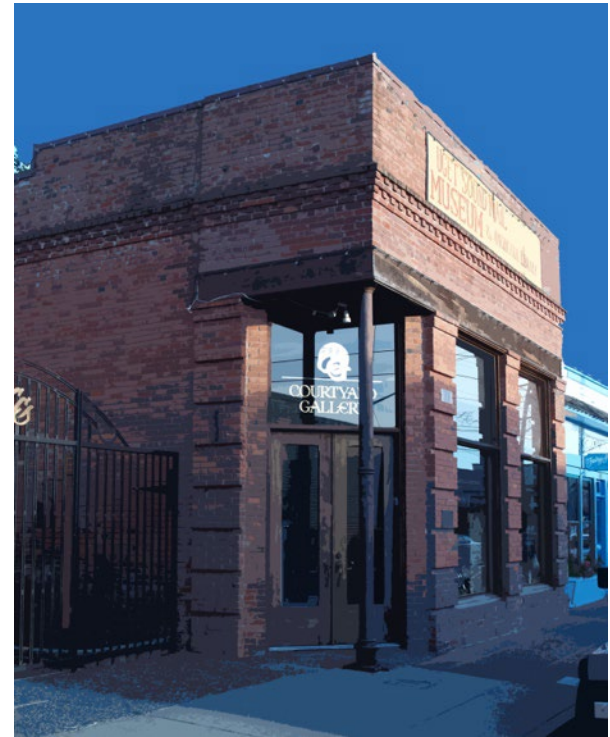
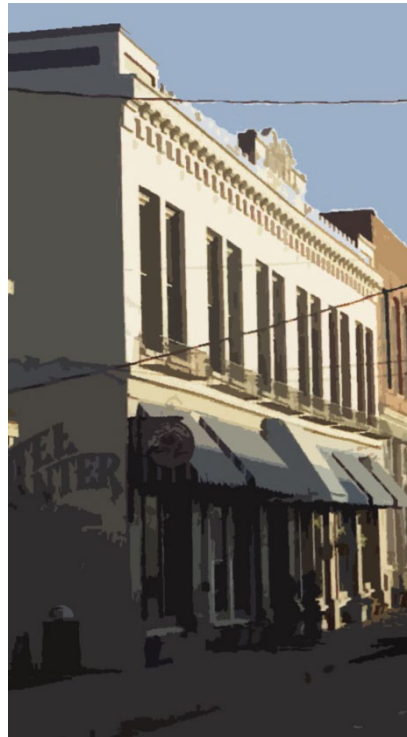
Public includes 9 ADA, 2 EV, and 20 pay to park.

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.



Downtown historic district 1-2 story masonry buildings.

## 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 SLA aircraft that meet the demands of flight schools. The Skytrek is the first SLA 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 **an estimated** \$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 **an estimated** \$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 **an estimated** \$1,576,100 and purchased in February 2014. The pier was built in 1914 and previously owned by 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 **an estimated** \$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, **with an estimated** worth **of** \$3,549,490 acquired due to 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 offices, and 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 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.

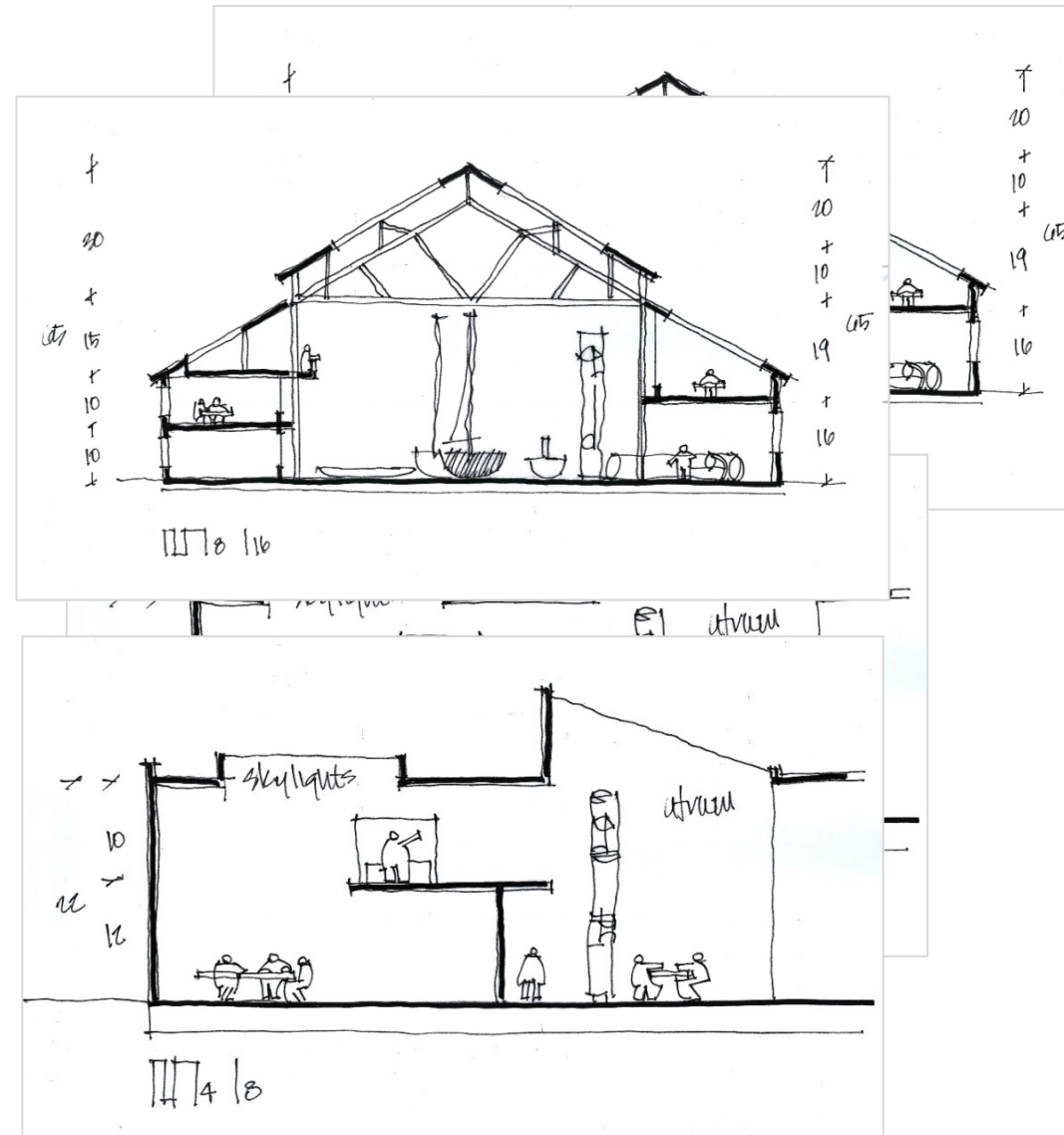


The NEA grant requests were well received but ultimately turned down because the town did not control the Moore Clark property.



*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*





Downtown historic district 2-story wood buildings with flat roofs

## 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

	\$0	\$25-50	\$75-100	\$125-150	\$175-200	\$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 and Upper Skagit Indian Tribe.

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), Washington Association of Land Trusts, Land Trust Alliance, Nature Conservancy, and Forterra.

Tenant prospects - Jansen Arts Center, Pacific Northwest Art Center, Port Townsend School of Woodworking, Bainbridge Artist Resource Network (BARN), and email outreach with Center for Wooden Boats, Northwest Maritime, Northwest School of Boatbuilding, SCC Wood Technology Center, Schack Art Center, Redfish, Equinox Studios,

Local developers - included workshops with Community Action of Skagit County, Home Trust of Skagit, Skagit Habitat for Humanity, Housing Authority of Skagit, and email outreach with Oldival, GMD Development Bridge Housing, DevCo, Catholic Community Services, and Homesight.

Regional developers - included workshops with Forterra and Watershed Community Development, and email outreach with Accuset Construction, Sustainable Living Innovation, and McMenamins.

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** - **Consider** relocating **all or a portion of** 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 Mavret 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 potential** 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



Extend First Street one-way as "woonerf" to be closed during major public events



Redirect Commercial Street two-way traffic to provide flexible access between First, Second, and Third Street grid

Extend Second Street from Caledonia two-way for flexibility when First Street 'woonerf' is closed for events

2

Develop "woonerf" parking/gathering space with one-way access and 45-degree stalls

Add 45-degree parking on east side of street

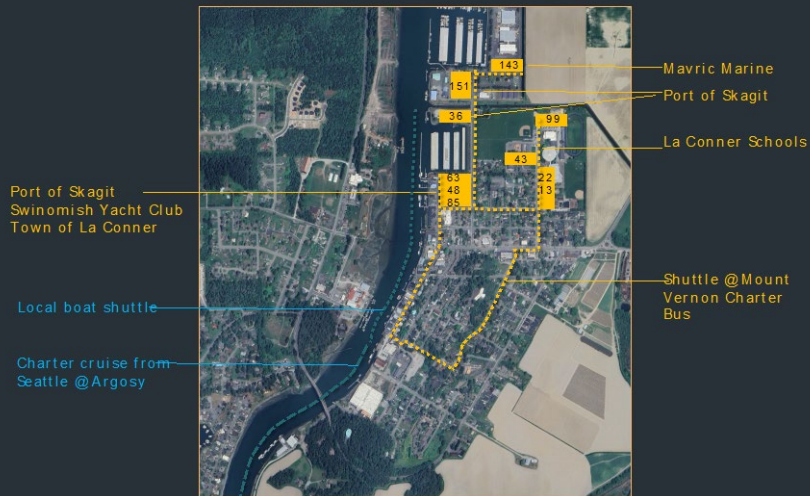
Add 90-degree parking on north side of street



Add angled parking on both sides of Second Street extension

Add angled parking on west side of Third Street

## Special event parking



703 parking spaces in public lots not including on-street parking serving marinas collected by commercial bus or boat shuttle service during special events

Mike/Tom

17

Freezer Building rebuilt as an addition to Maple Hall up to 30 feet

Wharf, First Street, and parking lot convertible for outdoor gathering area activities

Albers Warehouse replaced with event facility up to 60 feet







*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 **estimated to be** 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 **building as an** 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

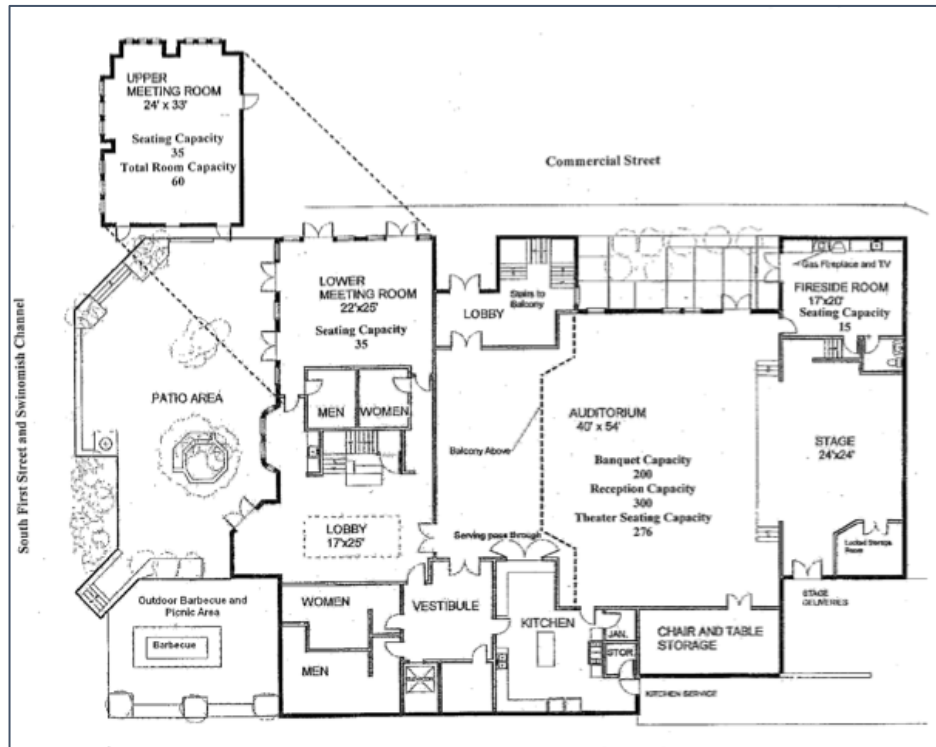
others. The warehouse/festival space will support 411 people in a dining format, or 800 in a lecture or presentation format, or 960 people in a gathering format with exhibits and vendors, or 2,057 in a standing room only format.

## 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 ~~to~~ 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





*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*

the increase in parking stalls does not cause the structure to exceed the building envelope.

- **Affordable housing ratio** - ~~will be recommended to require~~ 20% 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 ~~±62~~ **74** housing units in total ~~including 32 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 build 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~~ **may** 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 woonerf 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-swailes 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.



Freezer Building  
rebuilt with  
connection to  
Maple Hall Annex  
up to 30 feet

Albers Warehouse  
replaced with  
event facility up to  
60 feet

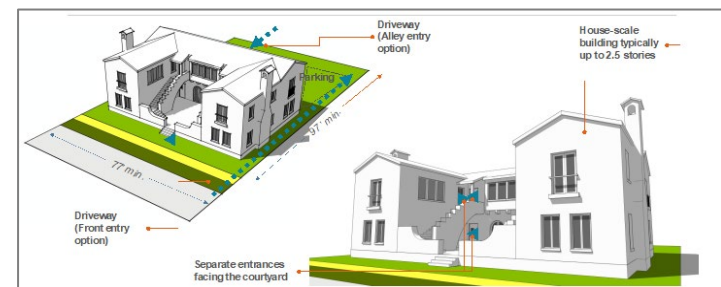
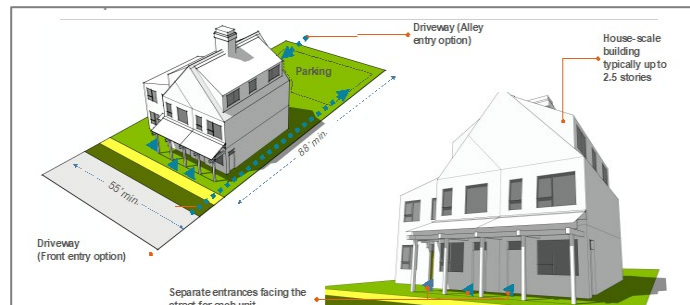
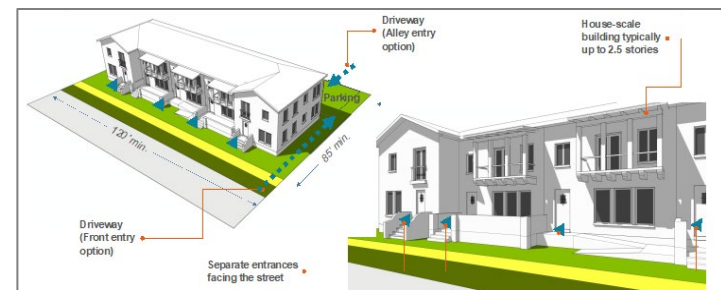
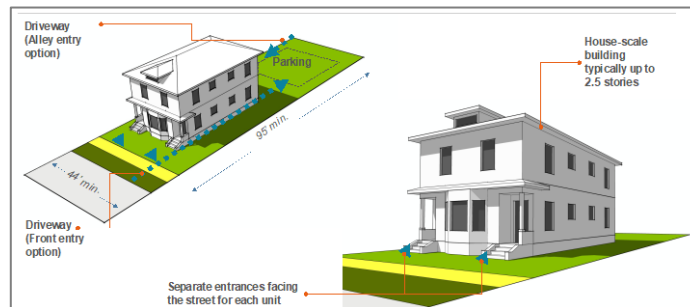
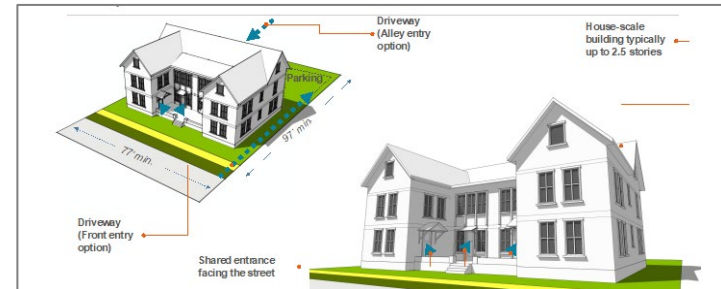
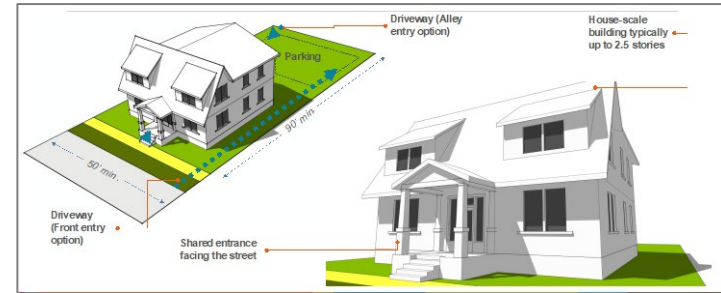
Live/work  
townhouses up to  
30 feet above flood  
level with parking  
behind and under



Courtyard building  
up to 30 feet above  
flood level with  
parking behind  
and under

Multiplex up to 40  
feet above flood  
level with parking  
under and green  
roof option

Multiplex up to 30  
feet above flood  
level with parking  
behind and under







*Top left - trail and open space plan.  
Top right - Pike Place Market hillclimb example  
Bottom - raingarden in Port Townsend example*





Downtown historic district 2-story wood buildings with gable roofs

## 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
<b>Subtotal public infrastructure costs</b>	<b>\$7,576,077</b>

#### 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
<b>Subtotal amenity costs</b>	<b>\$3,596,467</b>

#### Destination facilities

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

\* 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.

**While the Town will have an active role in the extension of South First Street, the Town has no involvement with the potential rebuild/reuse of the Albers Warehouse.** 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 (**ArtsWA**) 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 thorough 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	\$17,369,228
Moore Clark southeast parcel	\$17,052,067
Public parking lot 3 north parcels	\$21,973,595
Public parking lot 2 central parcels	\$14,073,264
Public parking lot south parcel	\$4,858,665
Total mixed income housing developments	\$75,326,819

As shown, the total development cost for all mixed income housing projects is **estimated at** \$75,326,819. If mixed income housing is developed under the average size and parking ratios described previously, the average cost will range between \$372,295 to \$374,014 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. **This is the most extreme option.**

### 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~~ **its Arts Commission** 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.

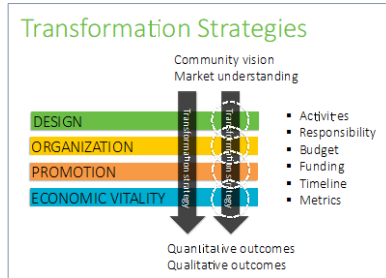
Creative districts are defined areas where there's a high concentration of cultural attractions and programs. Each district has its

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~~ **designate an** operating agency, **such as the La Conner Arts Commission.**

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 Archeology & 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 **Main Street Association** 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 purposes 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.



Downtown historic district 2-story wood iconic building





# Town of La Conner

Post Office Box 400  
La Conner, Washington 98257

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## Staff Report

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**TO:** Planning Commission  
**FROM:** Michael Davolio, AICP, Planning Director  
 Ajah Eills, Assistant Planner  
 Jo Wolfe  
**APPLICANT:** Skagit County Historical Society  
**PROPERTY OWNER:** 513 S. 4th Street, La Conner WA, P102803  
**PROJECT LOCATION:** January 29, 2025  
**DATE:** LU25-07HDR  
**APPLICATION FILE#:** Historic Design Review

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The application is for review and approval of exterior changes to 513 South 4<sup>th</sup> Street, the structure that functions as an annex/office space for the Skagit County Historical Museum.

The property is 513 South 4<sup>th</sup> Street, La Conner, WA, parcel P102803. The building is part of the property owned by Skagit County Historical Society. It is not within the La Conner Floodplain or within 200ft of the shoreline. The changes proposed are to remove failing siding, a window, a sliding door, and old deck support. Two windows would be replaced, and one new window would be placed where the sliding door used to be. The siding and paint would match the existing colors on the building. The architectural dimensions of the new windows are comparable to the previous windows.

### FINDINGS of FACT

1. The subject property is located within the town's Public Use Zone. This building is allowed under the uses of the Public Use Zone.
2. The subject property is not located within a floodplain. The subject property is not located within 200' of the shoreline. SEPA determination is not required.
3. The following sections of the Town of La Conner Municipal Code apply to this application:
  - Chapter 15.45 Public Use
  - Chapter 15.50 Historic Preservation District
4. The subject property is located within the Historic Preservation District. The proposed changes are to an existing structure within the District.
5. The proposed changes would not have a negative impact on the main building, or on any surrounding property.
6. The proposed palette is compatible with existing historic paint colors on the building.

7. Dimensional Requirements: Section 15.35.040 of the LCMC sets forth dimensional standards. The existing building is consistent with the town's height limits and setback restrictions.
8. The development, as proposed, meets the requirements of all relevant codes and statutes.

**Staff Recommendation:**

Staff has determined that this application be approved, pending review and comment by the Planning Commission. It is further recommended that the following conditions be attached to the approval of this proposal:

1. All contractors and subcontractors must be licensed to conduct business in the Town of La Conner.
2. The permit holder must provide contact information on all contractors and subcontractors to the Town of La Conner prior to commencement of construction.
3. All contractors and subcontractors must report sales tax transactions within the Town of La Conner. The La Conner sales tax number is 2905.
4. All of the work performed shall be fully consistent in terms of colors and materials with the information provided in the applicant's submittal.

Nothing in this approval shall be construed to exempt the proposal from any Federal, State or local regulations.



Michael Davolio, AICP  
Town of La Conner

## MEMORANDUM

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TO: Planning Commission  
FROM: Planning Staff  
SUBJECT: Public Participation Element  
DATE: February 28, 2025

Please see attached the draft of the Public Participation Element, Chapter 2 of the Comprehensive Plan. Please come prepared to share any edits you may have.



## CHAPTER 2

# PLAN IMPLEMENTATION, PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND REVIEW

### Introduction

The Town of La Conner actively encouraged public participation in the ~~2018~~ 2024 - 2025 Comprehensive Plan update process. The Planning Commission held numerous public meetings to discuss the various sections of the plan. Notice of those meetings and the agendas were published in the local newspaper, made available at Town Hall and on the La Conner website, and distributed via email and text for those individuals registered in the Town's Notify Me system. A series of ~~open houses~~ "Community Mingles" to discuss the various elements were held. A variety of sources were used to advertise each meeting, and residents were encouraged to attend the ~~open houses~~ Mingles and/or offer written comments. The Town also invited representatives from organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce, Port of Skagit County, local tribal interests, and the La Conner School District to participate as well.

A total of ~~28-30~~ Planning Commission meetings were held ~~during 2017 and 2018~~ from 2023 to 2025 to discuss various ~~aspects~~ elements of the Comprehensive Plan. The agenda for each meeting was published in advance and time was set aside at each meeting to allow for public comment. ~~Very few members of the public attended the~~ Planning Commission and Town Council ~~m~~ Meeting attendance was sporadic, with some plan elements generating more interest than others. The majority of the Comprehensive Plan review process occurs during planning commission meetings, which are always open to the public, with multiple opportunities for public comment.

~~During t~~ The week prior to each meeting, workshop agendas were published in the La Conner Weekly News, the Town's local newspaper. In addition, meeting notices were posted on the town's website, at Town Hall, at Maple Hall, and on ~~the~~ local community bulletin boards. Informational articles outlining the Comprehensive Plan public process were written by a reporter from the La Conner Weekly News, ~~at the beginning of~~ during the process.

~~A total of~~ Community Mingles were held on subjects related to various elements of the Comprehensive Plan. The attendance at the ~~public open houses~~ Community Mingles was ~~light~~ significant. ~~While the turnout was modest,~~ The discussions were very fruitful and informative, and had a positive impact on the development of each element of the plan. ~~These discussions~~ provided

important comment and feedback to the Planning Commissioners, ~~the and~~ Planning Department, ~~and the Town Council~~. Community Mingles are an important method of connecting with the La Conner community, and as such are used only when public input can result in real, actionable change. La Conner is aware of the concept of “citizen fatigue” and strives to combat this by linking opportunities for citizen comment with governmental action, so that citizens can see the impact of their voice in real time.

One significant addition to La Conner’s Comprehensive Plan is the creation of an area-wide plan to help define future uses of properties currently zoned Commercial Transition. This area-wide plan, which is included as an appendix to the Land Use Element, was also the subject of numerous public meetings, as documented below.

Community involvement in the development of the town’s Comprehensive Plan update has been a high priority for the staff, the Planning Commission, and the Town Council. Public meetings were held in several locations and at different times, in order to facilitate the ability of the public to attend and participate.

MEETING DATE	MEETING TYPE	SUBJECT	PARTICIPANTS (est)
<u>2/79/12/23</u>	<del>Town Council</del> <u>Community Round Table</u>	<del>Essential Facilities (Ch. 10)</del> <u>Public Participation</u>	<u>~20</u>
<u>10/17/23</u>	<u>Community Mingle</u> <del>Planning Commission</del>	<del>Essential Facilities (Ch. 10)</del> <u>Short Term Rentals</u>	<u>~40</u>
<u>2/20/24</u>	<u>Community Mingle</u>	<u>South First Street/Parking</u>	<u>~35</u>
<u>4/25/24</u>	<u>Community Mingle</u>	<u>Jenson Property</u>	<u>~30</u>
<u>9/30/24</u>	<u>Public Workshop</u>	<u>Moore-Clark Subarea Plan</u>	<u>~20</u>
<u>12/11/24</u>	<u>Public Workshop</u>	<u>Moore-Clark Subarea Plan</u>	<u>~40</u>

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~~Additionally, the Town encouraged public participation through a public outreach announcement mailed to all town residents and business owners with their November 2018 utility bills. The invitation explained the Comprehensive Plan process, outlined the schedule for review, and welcomed community participation.~~

The community will have ~~an additional~~ opportunities to comment on the Comprehensive Plan update ~~through the public hearing process to be held~~ during the adoption process.

### Components of the Comprehensive Plan

The Comprehensive Plan is the unifying document that outlines how ~~a the~~ community will direct development and retain certain qualities of the Vision Statement. With the Growth Management Act (GMA), the Comprehensive Plan gained significant weight in decision-making and code development.

A plan written to comply with ~~the~~ GMA must address in general terms the twenty- year period following plan adoption, with a detailed financial analysis for the first six years after adoption. The plan contains the ~~seven~~ mandatory elements required by the GMA at RCW 36.70A.070:

- 1) **Land Use Element** designating the proposed general distribution and general location and extent of the uses of land for housing, commerce, industry, recreation, open space, public facilities, utilities and other land uses.
- 2) **Housing Element** containing an inventory and analysis of existing and projected housing needs and making adequate provisions for all economic segments of the community.
- 3) **Capital Facilities Element** consisting of an inventory of existing capital facilities owned by public entities, the proposed locations and capacities of forecasted improvements and a six-year plan demonstrating how these improvements can be financed.
- 4) **Utilities Element** showing the general locations, proposed locations, and capacity of all existing and proposed utilities, including telephone and electrical lines, pipelines, etc.
- 5) **Transportation Element** including an inventory of transportation facilities and services, an analysis of future transportation needs, a six-year financing plan for needed improvements. (Not included in this update to be completed by 2019)
- 6) **Economic Development Element** provides a summary of the local economy, current population and employment, a summary of the strengths and weaknesses of the local economy, and goals and policies to support economic development projects. Reflects the work of the Economic Development Task Force and provides direction to the Economic Development Commission.
- 7) **Parks and Recreation Element** provides a summary of existing parks and recreational opportunities within the Town as well as projected future parks and recreational needs.



**8) Climate Change Element** is a newly-mandated element that will enable the Town to create policies to address the threats posed by climate change. As a waterfront community, this will be a critical issue for the Town to address.

In 2024, the state legislature added requirements to modify some elements (such as housing).

The Plan also contains background information, the community's vision statements, goals and policies, and other supporting information.

The Plan is written for several audiences: local decision makers, Town residents, developers, and state and county officials. The Plan maps out the Town's future so that development follows the Town's preferred scenarios and so that the Town Council can anticipate and plan for the public expenditures that development will require.

Specifically, the plan is a legally recognized framework that serves these purposes:

1. The comprehensive plan is a guide for plans and regulations that govern the location and intensity of land uses, and it provides the basis for evaluating proposed changes in zoning, subdivision, and shoreline regulations. It also provides Town officials with direction in developing detailed plans and reviewing private development proposals, and it indicates to the public how likely the Town would be to approve zoning or other changes that apply to a specific parcel.
2. The plan provides the framework for decisions about the type and location of public facilities to accommodate projected growth.
3. The plan is a guide for Town and County coordination, for preparation of interlocal agreements, and for consideration of any proposed annexation.
- ~~3-4.~~ With new state mandates, the plan will address issues related to housing affordability at all income levels.

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### **Constitutional Considerations**

The Town is using the State Attorney General's Advisory Memorandum: Avoiding Unconstitutional Takings of Private Property for evaluating constitutional issues, in conjunction with and to inform its review of regulatory and administrative actions. The Town has used the process, a process protected under Attorney-Client privilege pursuant to law including RCW 36.70A.370(4), with the Town Attorney who has reviewed this Advisory Memorandum; has discussed this Memorandum, including the "warning signals" identified in the Memorandum, with decisions makers; and conducts an evaluation of all constitutional provisions potentially at issue and advises of the genuine legal risks, if any, associated with proposed regulatory or administrative actions to assure that the

actions do not result in an unconstitutional taking of private property, consistent with RCW 36.70A.370(2).

### **Policies**

The policies under each of the goals specify actions that are either represented in code or through interpretation of the code during land use permitting. These policies are essential to attain consistency throughout the Comprehensive Plan and Uniform Development Code.

### **The Decision-Making Process**

The Town Council, Administration, Planning Commission or individual citizens may propose amendments to the Comprehensive Plan. The Town Council has the final authority to adopt ~~any~~ amendments to the Comprehensive Plan after receiving recommendations from the Planning Commission. The Council's final decision is made after the Comprehensive Plan is reviewed by Skagit County and the state's Department of Commerce.

In addition to the public hearing process before the Planning Commission and Town Council, the public has the opportunity to participate and provide comments during the numerous public meetings that are advertised at the regular meetings of the Planning Commission.

### **Amending the Comprehensive Plan**

This Comprehensive Plan is based upon the best available information. As years go by, better information or changing circumstances may require the change or amendment of this plan. Such information could be a revised sewer or water plan, for instance. In any event, it is likely that this plan, designed to guide the Town of La Conner to the year ~~2036~~2045, ~~may~~will need to be amended before that time. Therefore, the following procedure shall be used to amend this Comprehensive Plan:

The Comprehensive Plan may be amended once per year, unless there is an emergency. All citizen requests for amendments must be filed with the Planning Department at Town Hall by the last business day in January to be considered in that calendar year. Applicants will be expected to show cause as to why their proposed change should be made. If amendments are proposed they shall be brought to Town Council for docketing by the Planning Department staff.

Every seven years, or as often as specified by the legislature, the Comprehensive Plan must be amended to include updated demographics, economic data, analysis, legislative mandates and Growth Management Hearings Board Decisions. The decennial census, performed on the federal level and analyzed by the state, is critical for updating population demographics.

Amendments to the Comprehensive Plan shall be adopted in accordance with RCW 35A.63.070 to 35A.63.073 as outlined below:

The amendment process begins with the ~~P~~lanning ~~D~~epartment. The application is made along with a State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) checklist to address potential environmental concerns. In addition to the Town's procedures outlined below, the draft plan is also subject to a 60-day review by the Washington State Department of Commerce, and by Skagit County.

The Planning Commission will conduct a public hearing on the proposed amendments and review based on:

- (a) The proposal demonstrates that the requested amendment is timely and meets at least one of the criteria in LCMC 15.125.090(3);
- (b) The proposed amendment is consistent with the goals and policies of the comprehensive plan;
- (c) The proposed amendment will not adversely impact the general health, safety, and welfare of the community; and
- (d) Recommendations of staff and comments from members of the public ~~input.~~

The Planning Commission will then make findings and recommendations that:

- (a) Identifies any provisions of this code, comprehensive plan, or other law relating to the proposed change and describes how the proposal relates to them;
- (b) States factual and policy considerations pertaining to the recommendation;
- (c) Includes written comments, if any, received from the public.

The Town Council will conduct a public hearing to review the record and adopt, amend or reject the proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Plan.

### **Comprehensive Plan Amendment Appeals**

Comprehensive Plan amendments adopted by the Town Council may be appealed to the state's Growth Management Hearings Board.

## MEMORANDUM

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TO: Planning Commission  
FROM: Planning Staff  
SUBJECT: La Conner Climate Element  
DATE: February 28, 2025

Please see attached the **incomplete draft** of the Climate Element. Please share any edits/questions/concerns you may have, with the understanding that this is incomplete. The goals and polices selected are taken from the Department of Commerce “Menu of Measurers” provided for jurisdictions creating a Climate Element. The Climate Element does not currently have any discussion of Greenhouse Gas Reduction. This will be included in later drafts.



# CHAPTER 12

## CLIMATE

### Historical Climate and Geography

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. 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.

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.

### Impacts of Climate Change and Degradation

La Conner residents are highly impacted by changes to weather and climate. As the effects of anthropogenic change continue to accumulate, La Conner will experience changes in local weather and climate patterns. Some of these changes are outlined in the matrix below:

Hazard	Change	Impact
Extreme Heat	By 2050, the average summer temperature is expected to increase by 4 degrees. There will an	Higher temperatures and humidex cause strain to vulnerable populations. La Conner is particularly

	increase of between one and three weeks where the humidex index is over 90 degrees. The humidex is a “real-feel” measurement that combines the effects of heat and humidity.	sensitive to this due to the age of its population. High heat can cause additional wear and tear on equipment and roadways due to asphalt softening. High heat results in greater bodily stress on those working outdoors, including La Conners Public Works.
Riverian Flooding	By 2050, the return streamflow of a 25-year Rivian flooding event will be 15 years instead, meaning that the potential for high Riverian flooding will be increased.	La Conner experiences effects from both coastal/tidal and Rivian flooding. Many of the dikes surrounding La Conner are privately owned, and are at risk of being over-topped. An increase in the severity or frequency of riverain flooding will have large negative impacts on La Conner.
Tidal/Coastal Flooding	For a full account of how tidal flood events are expected to change, please see the Sea Level Rise report attached as appendix 12A.	For a full account of how tidal flood events are expected to change, please see the Sea Level Rise report attached as appendix 12A.
Drought	Although total precipitation is expected to increase by 2050, late summer precipitation is expected to decrease by roughly 7%. Between the years 2030-2059, there is a 30% chance that any given year will experience summer or year-long drought conditions	This means that there will be less water for agriculture, livestock, fire-fighting, and may result in additional impacts on vulnerable populations. These effects will be exacerbated by a longer growing season and more heat.

## La Conner Climate Goals and Policies

### **GOAL A**

*Ensure that development and redevelopment projects are resilient to the impacts of climate change.*

### **Policies**

- 12A-1 Plan and build facilities, utilities, and infrastructure projects to avoid or withstand flooding from rising sea levels and associated climate impacts (e.g., changing flood plains).
- 12A-2 Review required buffers and setbacks for steep slopes and shorelines vulnerable to erosion exacerbated by climate change, and establish new minimums, if necessary, so that improvements are not required to protect structures during their expected life.
- 12A-3 Require the design and construction of commercial and residential buildings and their surrounding sites to reduce and treat stormwater runoff and pollution.
- 12A-4 Design buildings for passive survivability to ensure that they will stay at a safe temperature for occupants if the power goes out.
- 12A-5 Establish overlays, special zoning districts, design standards, or other strategies to increase resilience to climate hazards.
- 12A-6 Identify and plan for climate impacts to valued community assets such as parks and recreation facilities, including relocation or replacement.
- 12A-7 Develop or modify design standards to integrate exterior building features that reduce the impacts of climate change and increase resilience.

### **GOAL B**

*Prioritize the adaptive reuse of buildings, recognizing the emission-reduction benefits of retaining existing buildings.*

### **Policies**

- 12B-1 Retrofit buildings for energy efficiency.
- 12B-2 Preserve and reuse existing buildings.

**GOAL C**

*Protect community health and well-being from the impacts of climate-exacerbated hazards — prioritizing focus on overburdened communities — and ensure that the most vulnerable residents do not bear disproportionate health impacts.*

**Policies**

- 12C-1 Provide all residents equitable opportunities to learn about climate impacts, influence policy decisions, and take actions to enhance community resilience.
- 12C-2 Ensure that all community members have equitable access to green space within a half-mile.
- 12C-3 Protect the health and well-being of outdoor workers exposed to extreme heat and other climate-exacerbated hazards.
- 12C-4 Develop and implement an urban heat resilience strategy that includes land use, urban design, urban greening, and waste heat reduction actions.
- 12C-5 Choose native drought- and pest-resistant trees, shrubs, and grasses in restoration efforts to support climate resilience.
- 12C-6 Manage tree canopy and forests (including parks, greenbelts and urban forests) to decrease climate-exacerbated risks from severe wildfires, protect residents, and improve ecosystem health and habitat.

Increase tree canopy cover to boost carbon sequestration, reduce heat islands, and improve air quality, prioritizing overburdened communities.

3 80