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# Washington APA

## Morton Community Planning Assistance Program



A report prepared for the City of Morton summarizing the outcome of the APA Community Planning Assistance Team Charrette of October 26-27, 2007

## APA Community Planning Assistance Team Report

## **Morton – Community Planning Assistance Team**

**Tim Dalton**, Downtown Revitalization Expert, Historic Downtown Kennewick Partnership

**Mary Ann Duncan-Cole**, City Administrator, City of Stevenson

**Greg Griffith**, Historic Preservation Expert, Department of Architecture and Historic Preservation

**Dick Larman**, Economic Development Division Manager, Department of Community Trade and Economic Development

**Julie Poncelet**, Brownfields Expert, University of Washington

**Paula Reeves**, Community Transportation Expert, WSDOT

**Dave Sjoding**, Energy Expert, WSU Extension Energy Program

**Greg Stidham**, Traffic Engineering Expert, Parametrix

## **Executive Summary**

### **Introduction**

In August 2007, the City of Morton submitted a proposal to the Washington Chapter of the American Planning Association (APA) for a Community Planning Assistance Team to assist the town and its citizens in addressing key issues facing the community. The issues ranged from historic preservation to traffic safety.

The APA accepted the proposal and, after a preliminary meeting with the Mayor, City Council, City Clerk and community leaders, in September, the team members arrived in Morton on October 26th, 2007, for a two-day work session.

Throughout the work session, the team members, local officials, community leaders, technical experts, and citizens came to understand the key issues and used their expertise to frame a wide range of recommendations, which are presented to the community in this report.

On Friday evening, October 26<sup>th</sup>, APA hosted a public forum to discuss strengths and opportunities in three main areas. These areas were identified by the community in their application for assistance and included: economic development, downtown revitalization, and traffic circulation and safety.

### ***APA Community Planning Assistance Team***

#### **Work Session Objectives:**

- **Advance the principles of *APA for a Livable Washington*.**
- **Recognize and describe the qualities of a place.**
- **Explore and articulate the larger contexts from regional resources to the neighborhood scale, and the interactions of ecological, sociological, economic, and physical systems.**
- **Connect plans and actions.**
- **Help communities define the roles of stakeholders.**
- **Develop a roadmap for implementation of plans and policies.**

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*Mayor Worsham Welcomes Washington APA to Morton*

recommendations covered during the work session. APA's guiding principles for CPAT planning charrettes ensure that ultimately the citizens of the community are the critical players, both for their insights and observations during the team visit and for their support for the new directions that emerge from the process.

### The Work Session

APA selected a Community Planning Assistance Team comprised of experts in economic development, downtown revitalization and traffic circulation and safety. These volunteers included:

**Tim Dalton**, Historic Downtown Kennewick Partnership

**Mary Ann Duncan-Cole**, City of Stevenson

**Greg Griffith**, Department of Architecture and Historic Preservation

**Dick Larman**, Department of Community Trade and Economic Development

**Julie Poncelet**, University of Washington

**Paula Reeves**, WSDOT

**Dave Sjoding**, WSU Extension Energy Program

**Greg Stidham**, Parametrix

Mayor Bob Worsham kicked off the work session on Saturday, October 27<sup>th</sup>, with an overview of opportunities and challenges. The group reviewed the extensive planning work done in recent years including:

- The Morton Community Revitalization Plan
- White Pass Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan
- State Route 7 Route Development Plan

See Appendix B for summaries of these plans.

A closing section of this report offers some thoughts on how the community can best move forward to address the range of issues and



*Mary Ann Duncan-Cole, City Administrator for Stevenson, Presenting a Case Study at the Morton CPAT*

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Following the Mayor's opening remarks, Dick Larman provided insights based on his experience in economic development in Washington and established a context for the worksession. Dave Sjoding followed with examples of innovation and efficiency in industry from across the country focusing on minimizing Morton's energy expenditures and preserving/leveraging those resources within the community.

Tim Dalton moved the group into a discussion of downtown revitalization, outlining the basic principles of Main Street communities:

### Four Principles of Main Street Communities:

- **Organization** *involves getting everyone working toward the same goal and assembling the appropriate human and financial resources to implement a Main Street revitalization program.*
- **Promotion** *sells a positive image of the commercial district and encourages consumers and investors to live, work, shop, play and invest in the Main Street district.*
- **Design** *means getting Main Street into top physical shape -- capitalizing on its best assets such as historic buildings and pedestrian-oriented streets.*



Dick Larman, CTED discusses economic development in Washington State

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Greg Griffith and Mary Ann Duncan-Cole concluded the discussion of downtown revitalization, presenting information about general historic preservation strategies and a case study of how the City of Stevenson implemented similar strategies.

The last team presentation was about traffic circulation and safety, with Paula Reeves and Greg Stidham teamed up to provide information about walkability, context-sensitive design, and traffic calming options such as roundabouts.

Following these introductory remarks and some group discussion, the participants split into three groups to identify short-term and mid to long-range action steps. A summary of the outcome of this session is included in Appendix C of this report. The agenda included a working lunch to allow the team to continue discussing ideas, concepts and experiences and organize thoughts for the afternoon discussion.

After prioritizing action steps, the three groups headed out for a walking tour of downtown. One group walked along Main Street (SR 508 and SR 7) and discussed options for downtown revitalization. Another group visited the school site, the fueling station behind the school and reviewed economic development opportunities, and a final group looked at improving traffic circulation and safety along SR 7.



*Morton CPAT Worksession Participants*

When work session participants reconvened at the Community Center, they were asked to give an overview of some of the immediate work elements that had come from the walking tours. The work session participants identified a number of immediate next steps.

The CPAT team presented a summary of these steps with related action items (see **Table 1**). This inspired a discussion of resources and responsibility for each action item and mid to long-term steps (complete table provided in Appendix C of this report). The workshop participants agreed that in order to proceed with the immediate next steps, an Action Committee would need to be established.

### **Creating an Action Committee**

An Action Committee should consist of seven to ten individuals that can motivate others and be inclusive when discussing specific community issues. This committee will be a very helpful tool in organizing the project and typically consists of a variety of local people having made a commitment to accomplishing these important next steps.

Representatives of the following groups might be useful candidates to consider for such a committee:

- Local government officials
- Bankers, realtors, other professionals
- Business Owners
- Local leaders
- Residents
- Artists

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The ideal Action Committee has members that can wear “several hats.” It should be limited to a group that can hold a conversation around a table but also represent multiple interests. This group should consist of individuals with a vision, can be optimistic yet realistic, can think holistically as well as with focus, include long time residents as well as newcomers and be of equal representation in gender, race, and economic status.

It is helpful to identify a Committee Chair to run the meetings and/or assign a member to communicate logistics and meeting outcomes with rest of the group on a regular basis. Meetings should be regularly occurring (i.e., third Monday of the month). Most communities WA APA has worked with have chosen to keep these committees independent of local government, but include elected officials in their membership. This enables the Action Committee to hold local government accountable vs. being accountable to local government. It also helps to keep local government staffing commitments to a minimum, which can be important in smaller, resource strapped communities.

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**Table 1. Immediate / Short-Term Action Steps**

<b>THEMES</b>	<b>ACTION</b>	<b>RESOURCES</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>
Economic Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Depot – Park, Parking, Traffic Circulation</li> <li>• Energy assessment</li> <li>• Gateway</li> <li>• Industrial Lands/Critical Areas survey</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Byways, Transportation Enhancement</li> <li>• WSU Extension Energy Program</li> <li>• Byways Grant</li> <li>• Community Economic Revitalization Board (CERB) - \$50K Grants, Growth Management Office (CTED) Grants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Action Committee</li> <li>• Action Committee, Industry, PUD</li> <li>• Byways Group, Action Committee</li> <li>• Action Committee</li> </ul>
Downtown Revitalization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define supporters – stakeholders</li> <li>• Define downtown boundaries</li> <li>• Historic Inventory/Storefront vision</li> <li>• Community Clean Up</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City, business owners, other downtown stakeholders</li> <li>• CTED Mainstreet Program</li> <li>• Department of Archeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP)-, WSDOT – UW Storefront Studio Program</li> <li>• Volunteers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Action Committee</li> <li>• Action Committee</li> <li>• Action Committee</li> <li>• Action Committee</li> </ul>
Traffic Circulation and Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safe Routes to Schools Plan – Sidewalks in TIP</li> <li>• Freight circulation study</li> <li>• Gateway</li> <li>• Improve intersection of 508 and 7</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WSDOT Charlotte Claybrooke, Safe Routes to Schools Grants (1/08)</li> <li>• CWCOC (spell out), WSDOT</li> <li>• Byways Grant</li> <li>• WSDOT Pedestrian Bicycle Safety Grants (1/08)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sidewalk Committee, Action Committee</li> <li>• Action Committee</li> <li>• Byways Group, Action Committee</li> <li>• Action Committee</li> </ul>

## **The Report**

### **Community History**

Local historian LaVonne Sparkman says that Morton "combines quiet small town life with the convenience of being near large centers of trade." One hour south of Tacoma, two hours south of Seattle, and two hours north of Portland, Morton has a long time history for being one of the major timber providers for the region. In early Morton history, four trails used by early trappers and explorers converged in the Morton-Davis Lake Valley, making the area a logical spot for development when settlers first arrived around 1870. In the Morton area, there were communities referred to as "Little Tennessee" and "Little Kentucky" after the Homestead Act in 1862 brought many Appalachian families west. Early foreign settlers were mostly Scandinavian, Swiss and German immigrants.

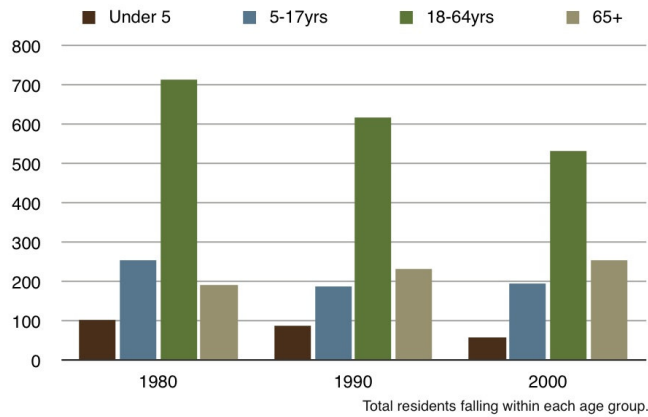
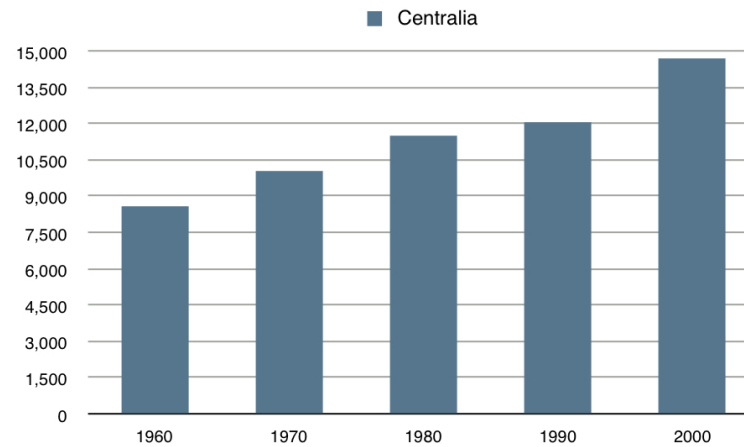
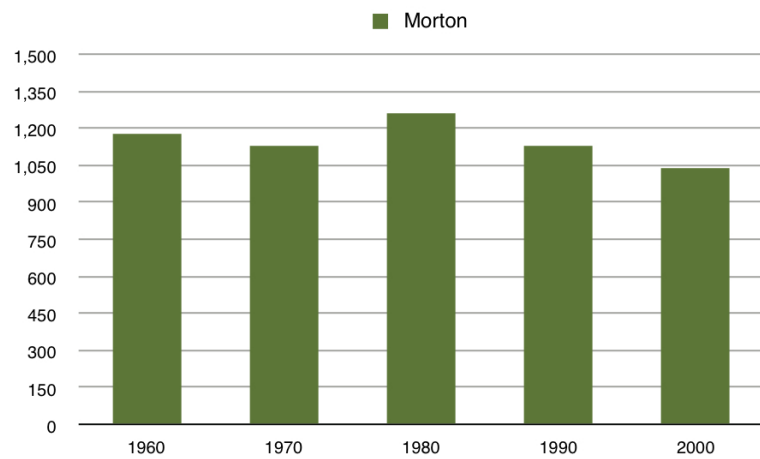
When Washington became a state in 1889, a post office was built and the town was named for Levi P. Morton, 22<sup>nd</sup> Vice President of the United States. The population was approximately 300 at that time. In 1910, the Tacoma Eastern Railroad reached Morton and the economy accelerated. Local sources of revenue like cascara bark, mined Cinnabar (Mercury) and other forestry related products could now be distributed more efficiently.

From 1915-1950, Morton was known as the "railroad tie capital of the world." In 1937 or 1938 (there is some disagreement), the first annual Logger's Jubilee was held during the second weekend of August. Local loggers often times risked their lives performing the vigorous tasks required of their business and the festival is held in their honor while providing room for a bit of "friendly competition." The Loggers Jubilee motto still holds true for the city of Morton today, "Work hard, be independent, and play hard too!"



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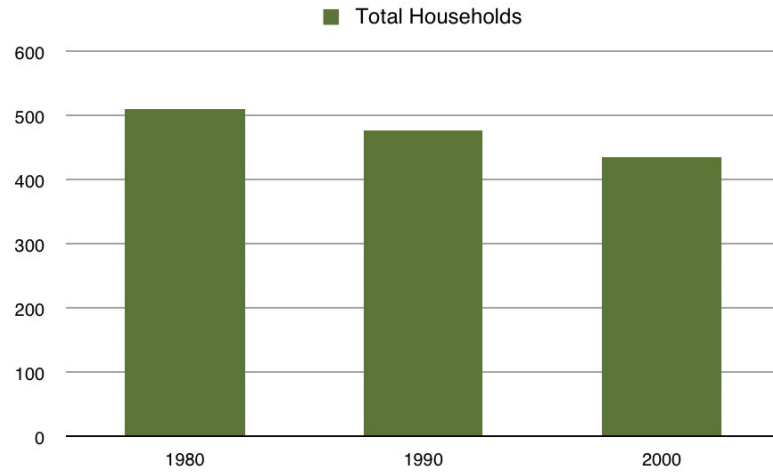
### Population



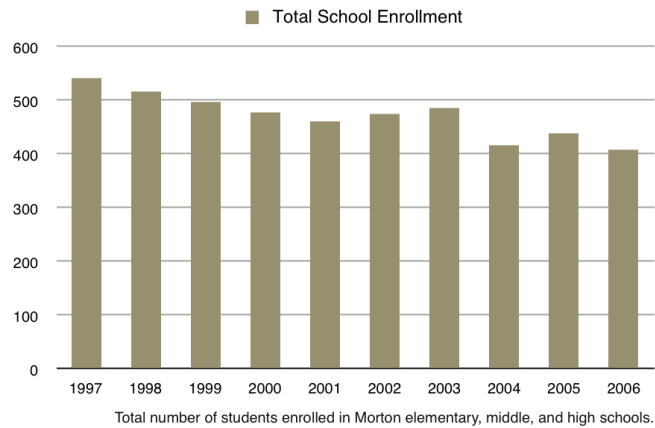
Source: US Census; WA Office of Financial Management

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### *Households*



### *School Enrollment*



Source: US Census; WA Office of Financial Management

## **Economic Development Opportunities**

### **Background**

In the last decade, Morton has increasingly become a bedroom community for commuters working in the surrounding area as well as a tourist destination and retirement community. This is, in part, due to its geographical proximity to several large trade centers, outdoor recreation opportunities, and its convenient location along Highway 12 in Lewis County.

### **Analysis**

As in any city, economic development can be defined differently by different citizens and groups. With that acknowledgement, most people participating in the October workshop agreed that the restored Historic Railroad Depot held promise for economic development. The Depot's contribution to the local economy will depend on how well it can be connected with new and existing community economic assets. For example, the Depot as a destination for historic tourism could not only increase tourism spending, but facilitate keep more of the local household and businesses spending within the Morton community.

### *Tourism*

Some of the primary opportunities for tourism in and around Morton identified during the CPAT workshop included:

- Marketing Morton's authenticity, its location and outdoor sports and recreation opportunities,
- Developing an urban rail connection and connecting it with local transit service,
- Seeking National Designation of the scenic byway (SR 7) and gateway to Mt. Rainier and Mt. St. Helens

Morton has built momentum with recent successes like the Depot project. The community should continue to build on these successful efforts by pursuing additional grant resources and organizing a local action committee. Specifically, this

committee would be responsible for further development and pursuit of the short term tourism/economic development priorities identified in Appendix C. Participants in the CPAT workshop agreed that in order to achieve some of the more complex and longer range goals in the area of tourism, the community would need to establish a two year staff position responsible for community and economic development.

### *Local Retail Spending*

Morton has a very lively retail shopping area primarily located along State Routes 508 and 7. Since the community theater, Roxy Theater, was purchased and renovated by the Fire Mountain Arts Council in 2003, it has become a strong regional asset and a cornerstone of the retail area. To build on the work Morton has already completed in downtown revitalization, the CPAT work session participants identified several opportunities for focus including parking, development standards for future development and re-development efforts, and the need for more development of regional economic growth strategies.

*Parking* – During the CPAT work session, participants raised concerns about the perceived shortage of parking in the downtown area. A formal parking inventory and occupancy study is needed to ensure that parking demand is being addressed. Municipal Research and Services Center website offers more information about parking studies and parking management at: <http://www.mrsc.org/Subjects/Transpo/Tpark/transsolut.aspx> .

*Future Development* -- Development standards should be established in Morton's zoning code to insure that new development meets the City's goals for the area. Development of new standards also provides an opportunity to encourage a consistent look or them in specific areas. Typically, these standards address uses, scale, and design standards that help create context and character. Some measures could be considered that would facilitate infill residential development. To address potentially larger scale retail development, other relevant regulatory standards to

consider include commercial square foot maximum size, consistency with neighborhood context and historic character, and integration with recent improvements at the Depot. (<https://www.newrules.org/retail>). Guiding Comprehensive Plan or zoning code policies should also be considered to ensure that new development meets state and local mandates and objectives for environmental regulations, urban growth or sub-area boundaries, storm water management, PUD ordinances, and community access (especially pedestrian and bicycle safety and mobility).

*Regional Economic Growth Strategy* – Because of its proximity to several communities of similar size, the CPAT team advises working with neighboring communities to further a Regional Economic Growth Strategy that would maximize resources of all the surrounding communities as well as the recreational offerings of the region.

## **Recommendations**

To compliment the industrial lands study that Morton is undertaking, local officials and staff should consider identifying resources to fund a complete regional economic analysis. Possible resources include:

1. The Washington State Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development (CTED) can provide some funding, training, and technical resource assistance specifically focused on economic development (<http://www.cted.wa.gov/>).
2. A local resource is the Lewis County Economic Development Council (<http://www.lewisedc.com/>)
3. CTED's Growth Management Services (GMS) at <http://www.cted.wa.gov/growth> can provide planning resources that include potential planning funds through the Emerging Issues Grant.

The CPAT recommends the following steps be taken to further economic development:

**1. Perform economic analysis, including identifying local resources and opportunities.**

An appropriate scope of work for economic analysis should include market analysis and recommendations. The analysis should consider regional and local trends in real estate development, city and state funding resources, including bonding capacity, and known or likely opportunities for development. The analysis should also identify market “gaps”, using some standard tools such as Claritas (<https://www.claritas.com>). The Claritas model provides local supply and demand data. Inputting this information into the University of Wisconsin model (<http://www.wisc.edu/urpl/people/marcouiller/projects/clearinghouse/Tourism%20Resources.htm>) will correlate it with population demographics.

Accomplishing this analysis may take some resources, but the result – an in-depth demographic and economic profile of your community -- can be extremely helpful to your community’s efforts. Teri Cameron<sup>1</sup>, Neighborhood Project Manager for the Spokane Neighborhood Business Centers organization, can provide more information on her recent experience using these models. She also recommends a step-by-step method outlined in a book titled “Step-by-Step Market Analysis: A Workbook for Commercial District Business Development.”

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<sup>1</sup> Teresa 'Teri' Cameron, Neighborhood Project Manager, Neighborhood Business Centers (NBC) Program, City of Spokane, Economic Development Division (509)625-6597  
[www.SpokaneNBC.org](http://www.SpokaneNBC.org)    [tcameron@spokanecity.org](mailto:tcameron@spokanecity.org)

**2. Retain a project position staff person dedicated to community and economic development to obtain funds for an economic analysis and development.**

The community (either the town or a local organization, such as a Chamber of Commerce) should consider retaining a staff person on contract to research private nonprofit grant sources. The volunteer or paid services of an economic development consultant may be another option, including faculty or students at any nearby educational institutions such as Centralia College. Other similarly situated towns, in Oregon or Washington, or their Chambers of Commerce may also be sources for good ideas.

**3. Develop an economic strategy, based on Steps 1 and 2 (analysis and identification).**

With a combination of good analysis and local resources, Morton can create a formal economic strategy. During the CPAT workshop, the team members and the town identified several specific strategies to pursue. These include:

- *Storefront improvements* -- Resources for further investigation to accomplish these improvements include CTED's Main Streets program, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation at <http://www.dahp.wa.gov>.
- *Signage, Directional Improvements, Gateway* -- Participants identified better signage and a gateway sign as priorities. WSDOT's Scenic Byways program has funding for signage and other features. See <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/TA/ProgMgt/Byways/>.
- *Development Standards and Design Guidelines* -- As identified above on pages 14 and 15, development standards should be established to ensure that new development meets Morton's goals for the area. In terms of use, scale (height and bulk) -- Morton can work with regional agencies to obtain sample regulations for regional retail that will be consistent with the community's objectives.

## **Funding Opportunities and Resources**

Morton should be aware of potential funding sources to help implement economic development programs. Reference has been made elsewhere in this report to some of these resources. The following list is provided as a starting point for further research and investigation. Please note that the contact information provided here should be used as a starting point in researching and determining an appropriate funding strategy.

- CTED provides loans through the “Rural Washington Loan Fund” for projects creating new jobs. ([http://www.cted.wa.gov/portal/alias\\_\\_CTED/lang\\_\\_en/tabID\\_\\_87/DesktopDefault.aspx](http://www.cted.wa.gov/portal/alias__CTED/lang__en/tabID__87/DesktopDefault.aspx)).
- Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP) (<http://www.dahp.wa.gov>) for the Certified Local Government Program, providing information about this process and its benefits. For example, listed properties may be eligible for various tax incentives.
- Funding may also be available from Heritage Capital Projects Funds through the Washington State Heritage Resource Center ([www.wshs.org/wshs/hrc/grants.htm](http://www.wshs.org/wshs/hrc/grants.htm)).

## *Volunteers*

Other local resources are existing organizations. Examples include the Chamber of Commerce and the Parent Teachers and Students Association. Members of these organizations have great ideas, and can be motivated to help with new projects. In addition, because granting agencies often require a local match in terms of volunteer hours, the volunteer help from local organizations can help make up that match. For example, the Main Street program values local hours at \$18.00 an hour – and this can add up quickly to your required match. Other in-kind donations of labor or materials can also be counted.

## **Downtown Revitalization**

### ***Historic Preservation Opportunities***

#### **Background**

Morton has a cohesive and pedestrian friendly downtown. It also has strong potential for undertaking historic preservation activities that support the community's interest in preserving its historic resources toward stimulating economic development, enhancing quality of life, and meeting a range of broader community goals.

Based upon previous planning efforts, plus input received at the October 26 public forum, historic preservation efforts clearly overlap with community goals of economic development, downtown revitalization, and traffic circulation and safety. To this end, the Morton community has already taken significant strides in reaching these goals.

From an historic preservation standpoint, an outstanding example is local efforts to move and rehabilitate the historic Morton Depot. Years in planning, fund-raising, and implementation, this massive undertaking promises a big payoff to the community in tourism and economic development. In terms of quality of life, the restored depot will provide a visual anchor as well as activity node. The Cowlitz River Valley Historical Society, City of Morton, and the community in general, are commended for their vision and dedication to preserving this historically and architecturally significant building.



Completion of the depot rehabilitation will mark a major milestone in achieving Morton community goals. However, other public and private efforts at downtown revitalization, tourism and economic development provide a strong base and impetus for continued efforts. Among these are the re-opening and popularity of the Roxy Theater, installation of the teen center in downtown, and commitment made by individuals and small businesses to maintain operations in storefronts and second-story spaces. Historic preservation activities recommended herein, will build on these accomplishments.

## **Analysis**

For the purposes of this report, the following analysis and recommendations focus on Morton's historic commercial core, primarily along Main Avenue between First and Fifth Streets. The intent here is to outline steps the community can initiate that will lead to the identification of significant historic resources in the downtown area. In turn and once identified, the Morton community can take steps for long-term preservation of these resources for downtown revitalization, tourism development, and quality of life. The following are specific steps/recommendations, listed in sequence and with a suggested timeframe for achievement.

- Action: Investigate designation of Morton as a Certified Local Government

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Background: The State's Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP) administers the Certified Local Government (CLG) program in Washington. Becoming a CLG entails creation by City Council of a local historic preservation commission and a local register of historic places. Similar to a planning commission, the historic preservation commission provides the community with expertise on preservation matters and reviews and designates properties for listing in the local register of historic places. It is important to note, that listing in the local register of historic places allows those property owners access to take advantage of preservation tax incentives; specifically the Special Valuation for Historic Properties program. CLG status also makes the City eligible to apply to DAHP for matching grants to conduct historic preservation activities such as survey/inventory (see below), historic preservation planning, and public education/outreach. Existing CLGs in the region include the Cities of Centralia and Chehalis as well as Longview.

Step: Contact DAHP's Local Preservation Programs Coordinator Megan Duvall at [Megan.Duvall@dahp.wa.gov](mailto:Megan.Duvall@dahp.wa.gov) or 360-586-3074 for more information and presentation.

Timeline to completion: approximately 6 months

- Action: Survey and Inventory of Downtown Morton

Background: Conducting a survey effort and preparing inventory forms is a fundamental first step in gathering information about historic properties in a community. In essence, this step results in collection of data about properties (includes buildings, structures, sites, districts, and objects) that are 40 years in age and older. DAHP's Historic Property Inventory database is used to record data about individual properties. Survey work is to be completed by historic preservation professionals with specified training and education. Volunteers can assist in the survey work when trained and supervised by qualified professionals. Note: a survey project is eligible to be funded by matching grants from DAHP to CLGs (see above). The UW Storefront Studio program may serve as a source of volunteer work with the caveat that survey work is closely coordinated with DAHP staff.

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Step: Contact DAHP's Survey and Inventory Coordinator Megan Duvall at [Megan.Duvall@dahp.wa.gov](mailto:Megan.Duvall@dahp.wa.gov) or 360-586-3074 for more information.

Timeline to completion: approximately 3 months

- Action: Evaluation for Historic Significance/Historic Designation

Background: Once a survey/inventory project has been completed, those identified properties should be "evaluated" to determine significance and eligibility for listing in the local register of historic places (assuming Morton has created such a program) and/or the National Register of Historic Places, or the Washington Heritage Register. Historic designations can afford property owners access to preservation incentives, particularly the Special Valuation for Historic Properties program, mentioned above.

Comment: A walking tour of downtown Morton on October 27 indicated that the Morton Depot and the Fairhart Building are eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places and the Washington Heritage Register. Preliminarily, it does not appear that a historic district exists in downtown Morton that would be eligible for National Register listing. However, an intensive survey/inventory of all the buildings along Main Avenue might provide additional data that could support a National Register historic district designation. However, a local register of historic places designation could well support a "downtown historic district." Such a designation could provide owners of those properties the ability to take advantage of incentives such as the Special Valuation for Historic Properties program.

Step: Contact DAHP's Architectural Historian Michael Houser at [Michael.Houser@dahp.wa.gov](mailto:Michael.Houser@dahp.wa.gov) or 360-586-3076 for more information and possible site visit.

Timeline: ongoing

- Action: Ongoing Preservation Planning Activities

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Background: Once Morton has established a local historic preservation program, inventoried historic properties, and evaluated inventoried properties for listing in a local register and/or the National Register/Washington Heritage Register, it is recommended that Morton sustain this momentum through subsequent preservation planning activities. Such activities should include the following tasks:

- Drafting and adoption of design guidelines to help property owners in rehabilitation of buildings as well as new construction.
- Drafting and adopting a historic preservation element or chapter as part of Morton's growth management plan.
- Coordinating local historic preservation efforts with other community activities such as a "Main Street" program, White Pass Scenic Byway planning, and any sidewalk improvements or traffic circulation projects that involve State Routes 7 and 508.
- Link visitor activity at the Morton Depot with downtown businesses.
- Support re-use of second floor spaces for housing or other appropriate uses.

In summary, it is recommended that the Morton community pursue a comprehensive and systematic approach to building a local historic preservation program. The building blocks for such a program include:

- Implementing a local historic preservation program (Certified Local Government or CLG);
- Conducting a survey of downtown Morton with completion of inventory forms;
- Evaluate inventoried properties to assess significance and eligibility for historic registers;
- Consider establishing a downtown historic district for listing in a local register of historic places and thereby providing property owners with access to rehabilitation tax incentives;
- Encourage nomination of the Morton Depot and the Fairhart Building for listing in the National Register of Historic Places;

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- Coordinate and incorporate historic preservation projects and activities with other local tourism planning, economic development, downtown revitalization, and transportation projects;
- Explore using other preservation tools for long-term historic preservation, land-use planning, and community development projects.

### Resources

- Transportation Enhancement Grants---Contact the Washington State Department of Transportation and the Regional Transportation Organization (RTPO) for Yakima County for information about application time frames, processes, and project eligibility.
- Heritage Capital Grants---Contact the Washington State Historical Society for more information. Grant periods are based on the State's biennial budget and require a 2 for 1 match.
- Save America's Treasures (SAT) Grants---Contact the National Park Service for application time frames, processes, and project eligibility.
- Community Development Block Grants---Contact the Washington State Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development (CTED) for information about project eligibility, application time frames, and other state/federal funding programs.
- "Brownfields" Remediation Grants may be an option for historic locations ---Contact John Means at WA Dept. of Ecology for more information about funding opportunities to remediate potential hazardous waste contamination at an existing or proposed site.
- U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development---Contact the regional USDA Rural Development office for information about USDA funding opportunities.
- Lodging Tax Revenues
- The Trust for Public Land---Contact the Northwest Regional Office at 206-587-2447 for information about funding opportunities and technical assistance.

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- National Trust for Historic Preservation (NTHP) ---Contact the Western Regional Office of the NTHP for funding or low-interest loans appropriate for this project.
- Washington Trust for Historic Preservation (WTHP) ---Contact the WTHP for information about the “Washington Preserves” grant program.

## ***Main Streets***

### **Background**

The Main Street Approach is a community-driven, comprehensive methodology used to revitalize older, traditional business districts or main streets throughout the United States. It has proven to be a common-sense way to address the variety of issues and problems that face traditional business districts. The underlying premise of the Main Street approach is to encourage economic development within the context of historic preservation in ways appropriate to today's marketplace. The Main Street approach advocates a return to community self-reliance, local empowerment, and the rebuilding of traditional commercial districts based on their unique assets: distinctive architecture, a pedestrian-friendly environment, personal service, local ownership, and a sense of community. While becoming a Main Street community as defined by Washington State and the National Trust for Historic Preservation may not be an immediate next step for Morton, many of the principles and concepts may be applied to support the ongoing efforts and goals of the community.

### **Analysis**

The National Trust Main Street Center offers a comprehensive commercial district revitalization strategy that has been widely successful in towns and cities nationwide. Described below are the four points of the Main Street approach which work together to build a sustainable and complete community revitalization effort.

**Organization** involves getting everyone working toward the same goal and assembling the appropriate human and financial resources to implement a Main Street revitalization program. A governing board and standing committees make up the fundamental organizational structure of the volunteer-driven program. Volunteers are coordinated and supported by a paid program director as well. This structure not only divides the workload and clearly delineates responsibilities, but also builds consensus and cooperation among the various stakeholders.

**Promotion** sells a positive image of the commercial district and encourages consumers and investors to live, work, shop, play, and invest in the Main Street district. By marketing a district's unique characteristics to residents, investors, business owners, and visitors, an effective promotional strategy forges a positive image through advertising, retail promotional activity, special events, and marketing campaigns carried out by local volunteers. These activities improve consumer and investor confidence in the district and encourage commercial activity and investment in the area.

**Design** means getting Main Street into top physical shape. Capitalizing on its best assets — such as historic buildings and pedestrian-oriented streets — is just part of the story. An inviting atmosphere, created through attractive window displays, parking areas, building improvements, street furniture, signs, sidewalks, street lights, and landscaping, conveys a positive visual message about the commercial district and what it has to offer. Design activities also include instilling good maintenance practices in the commercial district, enhancing the physical appearance of the commercial district by rehabilitating historic buildings, encouraging appropriate new construction, developing sensitive design management systems, and long-term planning.

**Economic Restructuring** strengthens a community's existing economic assets while expanding and diversifying its economic base. The Main Street program helps sharpen the competitiveness of existing business owners and recruits compatible new businesses and new economic uses to build a commercial district that responds to today's consumers' needs. Converting unused or underused commercial space into economically productive property also helps boost the

profitability of the district. Coincidentally, the four points of the Main Street approach correspond with the four forces of real estate value, which are social, political, physical, and economic.

## Recommendations

During the Morton CPAT work session, the team members and the town leaders identified several specific strategies to pursue. These include:

- *Downtown Streetscape Improvements.* Develop design concepts for downtown streetscape improvements through a design workshop or similar method. Include elected officials, city staff, local business owners, citizens and other interested parties. Visit WSDOT's website for additional resources:  
<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/TA/Operations/LocalPlanning/>
- *Incorporate Main Street Concepts into Comprehensive Plan.* As discussed elsewhere in this document, development standards should be established to ensure that new development meets Morton's goals.
- *Signage, Gateway Improvements.* Participants from Morton identified better signage to downtown as a priority. WSDOT's Scenic Byways program has funding for signage and other features. See  
<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/TA/ProgMgt/Byways/>.
- *Storefront Improvements.* Workshop participants agreed that Morton would be an ideal candidate for additional support from the University of Washington's Storefront Studio program. Each year the UW Storefront Studio Program occupies vacant Main Street storefronts in several Washington communities. In partnership with local business associations, the King County Historic Preservation Program, and Washington State Department of Transportation, the studio hosts a series of public open houses, exhibits, and information exchanges. Through archival research, photographic documentation, and digital collages, the students generate before-and-after streetscapes and individual building proposals. Business owners, property owners, and residents provide feedback to the students and help develop strategies for revitalizing entire Main Streets. In this way the studio uses local

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expertise and existing assets to enhance communities through historic renovation and sympathetic new development. Recent Storefront Studios have worked in the University District, White Center, Auburn, Renton, and Skyway. To view additional information about the UW Storefront Studio Program, visit the website at: <http://www.storefrontstudio.org>

Additional resources for further investigation to accomplish these improvements include CTED's Main Streets program, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation at <http://www.dahp.wa.gov>.

### **Funding Opportunities and Resources**

Morton should be aware of other potential funding sources to help implement economic development programs. Reference has been made elsewhere in this report to some of these resources. The following list is provided as a starting point for further research and investigation. Please note that the contact information provided here should be used as a starting point in researching and determining an appropriate funding strategy.

- CTED provides loans through the “Rural Washington Loan Fund” for projects creating new jobs. ([http://www.cted.wa.gov/portal/alias\\_\\_CTED/lang\\_\\_en/tabID\\_\\_87/DesktopDefault.aspx](http://www.cted.wa.gov/portal/alias__CTED/lang__en/tabID__87/DesktopDefault.aspx)).
- Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP) (<http://www.dahp.wa.gov>) for the Certified Local Government Program, providing information about this process and its benefits. For example, listed properties may be eligible for various tax incentives.
- Funding may also be available from Heritage Capital Projects Funds through the Washington State Heritage Resource Center (<http://www.wshs.org/wshs/hrc/grants.htm>).

## **Traffic Circulation and Safety**

### **Background**

During the CPAT Workshop, participants discussed their location along and at the convergence of two state highways (SR 508 and SR 7) as both a challenge and an opportunity. They discussed the state highways as access for tourism, but agreed that it was difficult to make the necessary design changes that would make these highways “fit in” to their community. In other words, the community has a vision for the state highways the state highways that would make them more walkable, but recognizes the importance of the other purposes these state highways serve as regional linkages and freight corridors.

### **Analysis and Recommendations**

Morton’s transportation system is laid out in a grid street pattern with traditional blocks and intersections spaced at every quarter mile or less in the downtown core. This grid street pattern design is very walkable and handles traffic more efficiently than any other transportation system design. Even with an ideal grid street pattern that was originally established in the late 1800’s – early 1990’s, Morton faces several transportation challenges discussed during the CPAT work session.



*Existing SR 7 through Morton*



*Potential Vision for Arterial Retrofit*

### *Pedestrian Safety/Safe Routes to Schools*

Transportation infrastructure added in recent decades across the state of Washington and across the country has been primarily focused on the efficient movement of larger motor vehicles. Some of the primary arterials within Morton reflect this trend in transportation design. Morton's Elementary School fronts State Route 508 and much of Morton's commercial development including grocery stores and banks front State Route 7. Pedestrian safety and mobility could be improved along both of these primary arterials. Work session participants agreed that improving the safety and consistency of the walking route within a half mile of the elementary school was a priority. The team developed several concepts for re-design of the group's primary pedestrian safety concern, the intersection of State Routes 7 and 508. Greg Stidham captured some of the design concepts in sketches during the group discussion to help the team visualize the ideas and quickly determine if there was enough space in the intersection to accommodate the various concepts (See **Figures 1-3**).

Figure 1. Medians for Pedestrian Refuge

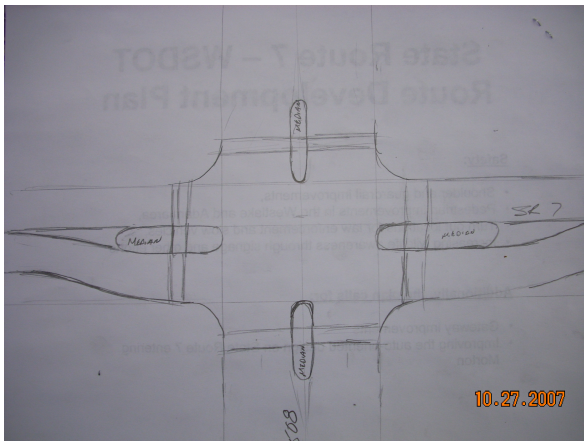


Figure 2. Mini Roundabout

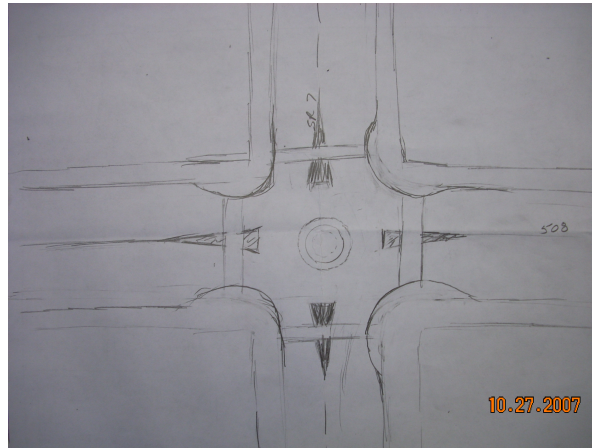
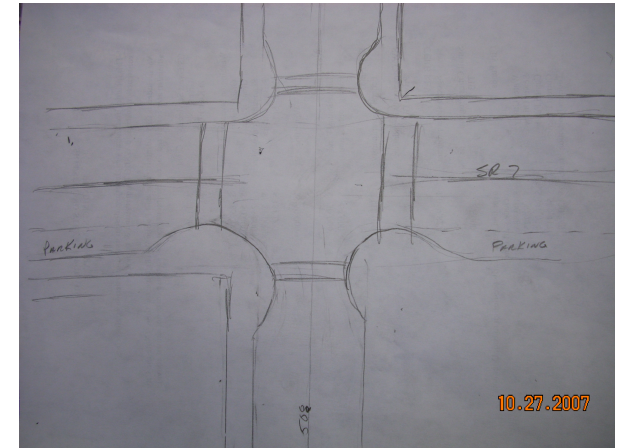


Figure 3. Curb Extensions



### *Freight Mobility*

Freight mobility is a priority and a challenge the CPAT work session participants discussing related to improving the walkability and furthering downtown revitalization efforts. Some work session participants felt that freight, primarily logging trucks and forestry product carriers, are a part of the character of Morton and should not be displaced from the core downtown area. Others felt that identifying an alternative freight route was a must for pedestrian safety and increasing economic vitality in downtown. The group discussed a number of options including a freight route from State Route 7 along Fairhart Street, Davis Lake Road, and Temple Road ultimately re-entering Highway 12 just to the east of Morton. The work session participants ultimately agreed that a formal freight study that included area freight carriers was a priority next step for Morton. The CPAT team pointed out that establishing an alternative freight route through the Morton area would not prevent some carriers from using the route through the downtown core as all roads are open to freight movement under Washington State Law, unless they have weight restrictions. However, developing a route that is most efficient for freight carriers may be a “win-win” solution as it may become their preferred route in turn resulting in some additional pedestrian design flexibility through the downtown core.

### *Gateway/Traffic Control*

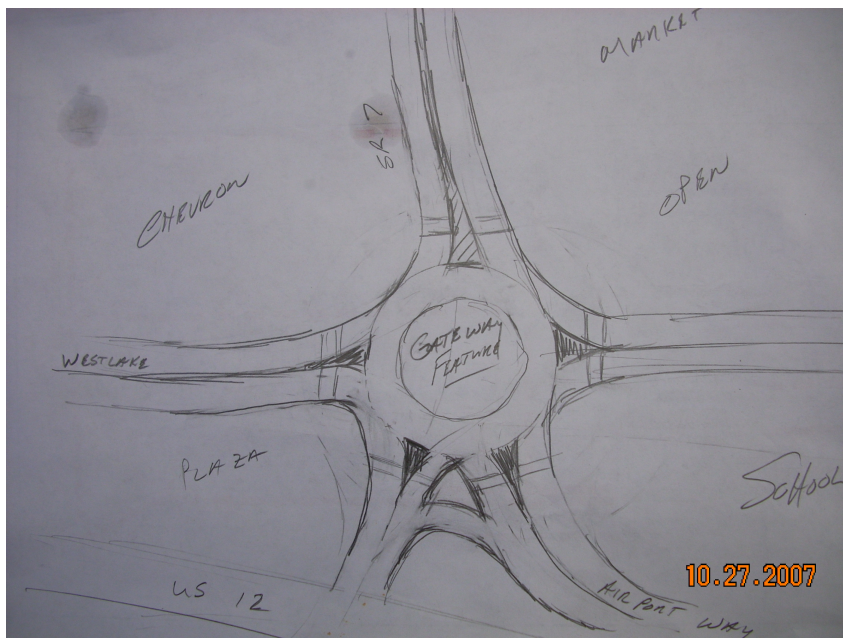
Another transportation priority identified by the CPAT work session participants was the development of a gateway with additional traffic control along State Route 7 from Highway 12 to State Route 508, the downtown core area. Some work session participants had initial concerns about freight mobility through roundabouts. After the walking tour of the corridor, all agreed that roundabouts were a viable option for a gateway treatment.



*Roundabout as Gateway and Traffic Control Treatment*

During the CPAT work session, the walked the State Route 7 corridor and concluded that there was sufficient right of way to install a combination of roundabouts and medians that would improve the walkability of the corridor while creating a gateway to the community that would still be conducive to freight movement. Greg Stidham prepared some sketches that capture some of the group's discussion and ideas. The group agreed that, consistent with the State Route 12 Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan, a gateway roundabout located at State Route 7 and Westlake would help manage traffic, inform motorists that they have entered Morton, improve safety along State Route 7 for all users, and possibly help manage storm water. See **Figure 4**.

Figure 4. Sketch of Gateway Roundabout – SR 7 and Westlake



## Additional Resources

Important publications and other resources for developing transportation design standards as they relate to pedestrian safety and mobility, context sensitive design, modal integration – including freight, and roundabouts include:

- American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, *Guide for the Planning, Design and Operation of Pedestrian Facilities*, AASHTO 2004.
- Federal Highway Administration, *Designing Sidewalks and Trails for Access: Best Practices Design Guidance*, FHWA 2001.
- Institute of Transportation Engineers, *Context Sensitive Solutions in Designing Major Urban Thoroughfares for Walkable Communities*, ITE 2006.
- WSDOT websites for Safe Routes to Schools, Pedestrian Safety, and related grant resources:  
<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/bike/SafeRoutesResources.htm>  
<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/walk>  
<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/bike/funding.htm>
- Washington Traffic Safety Commission's School Zone Safety and Pedestrian Safety websites:  
<http://www.wtsc.wa.gov/programs/schlzone.php>  
<http://www.wtsc.wa.gov/programs/walkbike.php>
- Federal Highway Administration's Freight Mobility website:  
<http://www.ops.fhwa.dot.gov/freight>

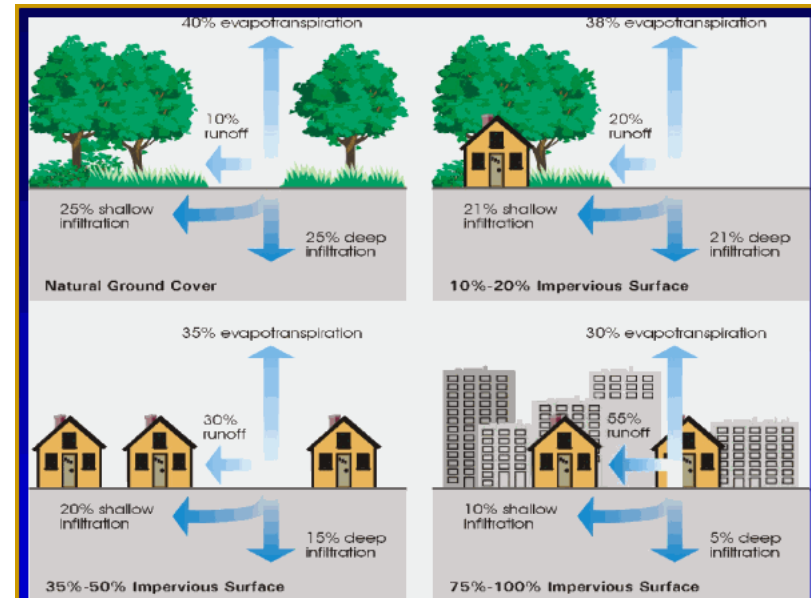
## Connections to Other Issues

### Storm water

Storm water management and water conservation are common concerns for many communities in Washington and are connected with development of transportation infrastructure as well as new residential and commercial development. With the strong potential for additional development, Morton has an opportunity to review codes and design standards and incorporate “Low-Impact Development” practices that will help the community introduce low cost options for managing storm water, as well as water conservation practices.

New research conducted at both the national and state levels point to opportunities to reduce negative impacts of storm water using a combination of regional and site level techniques to prevent, treat, and storm water runoff and associated pollutants. Many of these practices use low-impact development methods, such as rain gardens, bio-retention areas, and grass swales. Others go further by changing site-design practices to maximize existing infrastructure by focusing development, reducing parking spaces, narrowing streets, and eliminating cul-de-sacs.

Conventional storm water conveyance systems concentrate water runoff in detention ponds and sewer systems until it is discharged through an outfall back into the natural hydrologic system. Unlike in the pre-development cycle, the discharged water is released far from its point of inception, and is altered



in terms of its quantity, speed, and quality. Lack of infiltration causes groundwater depletion, and collected pollutants are not filtered before being released into receiving waters. Water pollution resultant from storm water outfalls is increasing with development, and is currently one of the major challenges faced in the effort to reclaim the biological integrity of Washington's waters.

Innovations in storm water management, such as bio-retention, bio-swales, and rain gardens, allow for new development to have fewer impacts to natural systems than conventional practices. Additionally, existing urban development can be retrofitted using similar practices to dramatically lessen its historic hydrologic disruptiveness.

## Resources

Other sources for additional detail related to low impact development and water conservation are:

US EPA, *Protecting Water Resources with Higher Density Development*  
[http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/pdf/protect\\_water\\_higher\\_density.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/pdf/protect_water_higher_density.pdf)

Low Impact Development Center  
<http://www.lowimpactdevelopment.org/home.htm>

Puget Sound Action Team – Technical Guidance and Grants  
<http://www.psat.wa.gov/Programs/LID.htm>

Municipal Research and Services Center  
<http://www.mrsc.org/Subjects/Environment/water/wc-measures.aspx>



*Bio-Swale next to neighborhood street*

## **Appendix A: Public Forum Comments (Friday, October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2007)**

***What is the significance of some of the comments being bolded? Are these identified priorities?***

### ***Economic Development Strengths:***

- **Cool Depot in the works to include visitor center**
- Hospital is a regular supporter of the tax base and employment
- Working freight rail line that connects to Port of Tacoma
- Airport
- Local hardware store
- Industrial sites on highway 7
- UGA – Comp Plan update in place
- Wood debris may be valuable
- Industrial workforce
- Centralia College
- Housing costs are reasonable
- Quality of life is good
- Urban rail connection
- Theater is an attraction for people to Morton
- Loggers Jubilee – 9000 people come to town
- Bus line established
- Access to international airport
- Access to State Highways
- Two saw mills and chip mill
- High school – education facilities – school district
- Regional banking center
- Member of Lewis County Economic Development Council
- New reservoir; more capacity for new industry
- Center for outdoor recreation
- Scenic Byway; Gateway to Mt. Rainier and St. Helens
- Active Community
- Old downtown core
- No big box
- Strong local businesses

***Economic Development Opportunities:***

- Housing to attract hospital employees
- Bridge repair – Nisqually River Bridge to improve freight rail
- Lighting for airport to attract larger planes
- Zoning for new industrial sites
- Promotion or marketing to attract industry
- Incentives for industry to come to town
- Scenic Byway
- Active Community
- Expanding bus line

***Downtown Revitalization Strengths:***

- **Roxy Theater**
- **Depot as an anchor for downtown**
- Building stock
- Teen Center
- **Two state highways that intersect – 7 and 508**
- **Walkable**
- Backstrom Park
- Community Center
- Jubilee Park
- Residential area near downtown
- Senior housing and center
- Senior care facilities
- Art Gallery
- Napa – diverse shopping
- Financial institutions
- Yoga studio
- Pedestrian scale – width of roads, scale of buildings
- School at the edge of downtown

***Downtown Revitalization Opportunities:***

- Two state highways that intersect – 7 and 508
- Additional parking
- Filling in with shops, restrooms
- Park opportunity near Depot
- Tourist amenities – gas, lodging, food
- 2nd floor use of downtown buildings
- More senior care facilities – aging community – sidewalk access
- RV accommodation
- Hunting and fishing supply
- Dentist
- Landscaping – urban forestry – trees – shade – color
- Sidewalk improvements
- Truck route – improve separation of modes of transportation
- Fueling station
- Re-design for truck traffic to avoid mix of pedestrians and trucks
- School near downtown – opportunity to involve them

***Traffic Circulation and Safety Strengths:***

- Bypass along railroad tracks
- Downtown sidewalks more than 5'
- Sidewalks on Westlake, 7th, Adams planned for 2nd
- **Two state highways and US highway**
- **Multi-modal**
- Tourism – pull tourists from highways; Gateway to Mt. Rainier
- Intact grid system
- US 12 draws through traffic away from community
- Some like logging trucks – a bit of a curiosity – tourist attraction
- Public Lake Access
- Walking Trail on Peterman Hill
- Proposed expansion of White Pass Ski Area
- In back of downtown businesses there is almost enough ROW for parking
- **Depot has parking**
- Existing coordination between rail and transit (bus)

***Traffic Circulation and Safety Opportunities:***

- **Improve intersection of 7 and 508 for pedestrians and trucks, traffic**
- Reduce traffic near grade school
- Re-route 508 up 7th St to SR 12
- **Re-locate fueling station\* - Remote public parking**
- SR 7 wide – lots of right of way – opportunity for landscaping
- Reduce pedestrian delay – crosswalk improvements
- **More activity around Depot – alternative**
- Opportunity for more public parking in core – off-street lots
- Re-route trucks from 508 on 7th to hwy 12.
- More defined gateway to attractions
- May be able to widen intersections by increasing curb radii
  - improvement for truck traffic
- Opportunity to repair sidewalks and add where missing
- Work with School District to develop safe walking routes
- Existing transit service could provide more local transit service
- Expand coordinated transit/rail
- Rename State Route 7 and 508 their historic names
- PUD property – parking option



## **Appendix B: Key Goals and Policies from Recent Plans**

### **Morton Community Revitalization Plan (MCRP)**

#### **Four strategic approaches identified:**

- Support the forest and health industries
- Capture tourism to support parks, arts, open space and historic preservation
- Support activities that have mutual benefit for local youth and visitors
- Empower local organization

#### **Ten priority projects:**

- Project 1: Morton Historic Depot & Museum
- Project 2: Morton Gateway Entrance
- Project 3: Building Renovation and Physical Improvements
- Project 3A: Main Street Improvements from 3rd Street to 1st Street
- Project 4: Improvements to intersection of 2nd and Main Streets
- Project 5: Improvements to 2nd Street Corridor
- Project 6: Loop Walking/Exercise Path
- Project 7A: Skate Park
- Project 7B: Ball Field Improvements
- Project 8: Community Amphitheater

## **White Pass Scenic Byway – Corridor Management Plan**

### **Byway Goals:**

- Improve byway experience
- Improve the tourism economy of the byway and its communities -Protect byway resources
- Develop sustainable byway facilities and organization

### **Priority Tasks Identified for the City of Morton:**

- **Design Guidelines** - Develop design guidelines for signage and building materials
- **Regional Cooperation** - work with other towns along the corridor
- **The Depot** - continue restoration of the historic Morton depot as a museum, visitor information center and station for a train that will connect Mineral and Elbe
- **Visitor Center** - determine whether the entire current Morton Visitor Information Center will be needed in addition to the new info center at the Depot
- **Gateway** - improve the aesthetics of the City of Morton Gateway Corridor (US-12 & SR-7) in order to encourage more travelers along the corridor to exit the highways, this includes a possible relocation of the logger statue.
- **Festivals and Events** - continue work to make the annual Loggers Jubilee in August a cultural event that attracts crowds and puts Morton on the map

## **State Route 7 – WSDOT Route Development Plan**

### **Safety:**

- Shoulder and guardrail improvements,
- Pedestrian improvements in the Westlake and Adam area,
- Turn out locations for law enforcement and slow vehicles,
- Increasing wildlife awareness through signage and other efforts

### **Additionally, the plan calls for:**

- Gateway improvements
- Improving the auto-oriented design on State Route 7 entering Morton

## **Appendix C: Recommended Action Steps, Resources and Responsibility**

# Overarching Implementation Steps

- #1 Establish an ACTION COMMITTEE that meets regularly to drive priorities
- 2 year staff position for community and economic development
  - Pursue Funding Opportunities

# Economic Development Near Term

Action	Resources	Responsibility
Depot – Park, Parking, Traffic Circulation	Byways, Transportation Enhancement	Action Committee
Energy assessment	WSU Energy	Action Committee, Industry, PUD
Gateway	Byways Grant	Byways Group, Action Committee
Industrial Lands/Critical Areas survey	CERB - \$50K Grants Growth Management Office (CTED) Grants	Action Committee

# Economic Development Mid-Long Term

Action	Resources	Responsibility
Available – Affordable Housing Study	Common Ground, CTED Affordable Housing Office	Action Committee
National Designation of Byway	WSDOT – Carrie Sunstrom	Action Committee, Byway Group

# Downtown Revitalization Near Term

Action	Resources	Responsibility
Define supporters - stakeholders	City, business owners, other downtown stakeholders	Action Committee
Define downtown boundaries	CTED Mainstreet Program	Action Committee
Historic Inventory/Storefront vision	DAHP WSDOT – UW Storefront Studio Program	Action Committee
Community Clean Up	Volunteers	Action Committee

# Downtown Revitalization Mid-Long Term

Action	Resources	Responsibility
Design guidelines (sidewalks, parking, etc..)	DAHP, CTED, WSDOT	Action Committee, City, Planning Commission

# Traffic Circulation and Safety

## Near Term

Action	Resources	Responsibility
Safe Routes to Schools Plan – Sidewalks in TIP	WSDOT Charlotte Claybrooke, Safe Routes to Schools Grants (1/08)	Sidewalk Committee, Action Committee
Freight circulation study	CWCOG, WSDOT	Action Committee
Gateway	Byways Grant	Byways Group, Action Committee
Improve intersection of 508 and 7	WSDOT Pedestrian Bicycle Safety Grants (1/08)	Action Committee

# Traffic Circulation and Safety Mid-Long Term

Action	Resources	Responsibility
Parking Study	MRSC, WSDOT	Action Committee, City Staff