



PROGRESS UPDATE ON STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

After initial approval in April of 2013, the City Council approved an updated version of the City's Strategic Action Plan (SAP) this past April 7, 2015. The update was the product of an approximately one-year effort focused on clarifying and/or providing greater specificity to the original verbiage associated with the 88 initial Action Items, identifying Primary Leads for each item, summarizing up-to-date progress or status, and providing an implementation "road map" for several key Action Items. As a result of this work, a few Action Items were consolidated, resulting in a final total of 85.

This report is meant to highlight those Action Items that have seen substantial progress or even completion since approval of the original SAP. While only 23 Action Items are highlighted below, it should be noted that all but 9 of the 85 total Action Items are in some state of planning, progress or even substantial completion to date. We intend to post quarterly updates to assist the public in gaining insight into the progress being made on the 85 Action Items of the City's SAP.

Strategic Objective 1: Create economic health, vitality & sustainability

1a: Foster dynamic/diverse economy

Action Item 1a.1: Economic sustainability. Recruit businesses that employ technical, professional, and managerial skills offering a live/work sustainability environment in Edmonds.

UPDATE: In addition to on-going direct and indirect outreach to prospective businesses, the City's Economic Development Department just initiated a first-ever business-attraction advertising campaign for the second half of 2015 – with fresh, compelling ads placed in Seattle Business magazine and the Puget Sound Business Journal.

Action Item 1a.7: Development regulations. Amend mixed-use development standards to allow higher, mixed-use density in the Highway 99 area.

UPDATE: On November 3, 2014 the City Council approved an amended set of development standards for mixed-use development in the Highway 99 Corridor. Principal among the amendments: fewer restrictions related to the provision of commercial uses in mixed residential-commercial projects, standardized parking requirements, and other enhancements intended to accommodate redevelopment. The City Council also approved funding for a more detailed planning process for the Highway 99 Corridor that is just beginning mid-2015.

Action Item 1a.9: Development regulations. Amend mixed-use development standards to allow higher, mixed-use density in the Westgate area.

UPDATE: In April 2015 the City Council concluded a multiyear planning process that led to amendments to the development standards in the Westgate area intended to accommodate a broader mix of uses and variety of building types. In addition, building heights, setbacks and design standards were established.

1b: Take advantage of special/unique characteristics of areas

Action Item 1b.1: Health and medical industries. Retain and recruit businesses that support and can expand health-related services and products within the general area of Swedish Hospital Edmonds.

UPDATE: The medical/health care sector is booming in Edmonds, with Swedish-Edmonds constructing a major emergency/urgent care addition that will bring result in the addition of over 200 new health-care-related jobs. Other health care/medical offices and businesses have opened up in what is becoming a regional health care hub.

Action Item 1b.5: Antique Mall, aka Salish Crossing. Encourage coordination among the Safeway/Antique Mall, aka Salish Crossing, and nearby properties for the purpose of enhancing redevelopment opportunities of this significant gateway site.

UPDATE: The transformation of the former Antique Mall property into Salish Crossing is nearing completion. The anchor tenant, Cascadia Art Museum, is set to open in September, with new, supporting retail tenants Scratch Distillery and Brigid's Bottle Shop already open for business, while Spud Fish n Chips and Top Pot Doughnuts are also soon to open.

Action Item 1b.7: Organization – Main Street. Institute the “Main Street” Program 4-Point approach which includes economic restructuring, promotion, design and organization for downtown.

UPDATE: While the City is an official “affiliate” of the State of Washington Main Street Program, thorough research and discussion of the notion of instituting the Main Street Program has yielded the conclusion that Downtown Edmonds has already put into play the vast majority of the Program’s “4-Point” approach through the efforts of the Edmonds Downtown Alliance, Downtown Edmonds Merchants Association and the City of Edmonds, including historic designation of landmarks, development regulations that ensure contextually responsive and appropriate development, district promotion and enhancements, and strategic initiatives for business or development recruitment. At this time there is no further intent to pursue institution of the “Main Street” Program.

Action Item 1b.9: Downtown (BID). Create a Downtown Business Improvement District (BID) to benefit properties and businesses for the purpose of instituting marketing, design, and promotional activities within the Downtown business district.

UPDATE: Since initial approval of the SAP in April 2013 the Edmonds Downtown Alliance (aka “BID”) has been established by City Council and is fully functioning with a Council-approved budget and work plan intended to promote and enhance the Downtown Edmonds business and residential district.

1e: Effectively develop, market, and promote the City's arts and cultural heritage and brands (Arts & Culture)

Action Item 1e.1: Organization and promotion – arts and culture. Create a central clearinghouse to coordinate scheduling and promotion of events in Edmonds. Create an Edmonds arts website and utilize social media including Google maps, Facebook, and Twitter to promote and attract visitors to an expanded year-round calendar of events and festivals for performing, literary, culinary, fine, and other arts interests.

UPDATE: In late November 2014 the City debuted its new tourism website, www.VisitEdmonds.com, that included a new arts and events calendar, which is also linked from the official City website (www.edmondswa.gov). The calendar is up and running, providing information on arts and cultural events and activities around town. Additional effort is needed on an on-going basis to both populate the calendar from the full array of event/activity organizers, as well as further promote the calendar throughout the community, etc.

1e.3: Fourth Avenue Cultural Corridor. Complete design, fund and complete construction of a linear park streetscape between Downtown and Edmonds Center for the Arts in order to create a pedestrian-friendly walkable corridor that preserves the historical character of the area, and promotes retail/art opportunities.

UPDATE: In early Fall of this year the City will install a Council-approved, interim, artistic treatment of 4th Avenue, consisting of diagonal stripes of inset LED lights that will run the length of the corridor, providing needed ambient lighting, a sense of special character, and a recognizable, welcoming pathway for drivers and pedestrians between Main Street and the Edmonds Center for the Arts. This interim treatment is intended to last for 3 to 5 years while a final arts-inspired streetscape is designed, funded and completed.

Strategic Objective 2: Maintain, enhance, and create a sustainable environment.

2a: Build a community that balances environmental protection, economic health, and social needs

Action Item 2a.2: Farmers/Public Market. Expand into a year-round activity with available all-weather structures, available parking, and increased visibility to attract out-of-area customers and tourists.

UPDATE: The Edmonds Historical Museum currently operates the Spring and Summer Farmers Markets and is not able to take on expansion to a year-round market. City staff, working with local volunteers and organizers, are working towards a first-ever Holiday Market for the period from mid-November till late December, 2015.

Strategic Objective 3: Maintain and enhance Edmonds' community character and quality of life.

3a.1: Senior Center. Develop a long-term solution for maintaining and updating the Senior Center.

UPDATE: The City Council has approved a renewed long-term lease with the Senior Center for redevelopment of the Senior/Community Center on the existing site. Initial site planning and concept design have been performed. Fundraising is underway, with the State Legislature committing \$1.25 million towards the project.

Action Item 3a.2: Downtown restrooms. Develop a public restroom facility to serve pedestrians, customers, and tourists in the Downtown district.

UPDATE: The City Council placed this project in the Capital Improvement Program for year 2016, but with no funding yet identified. Staff have conducted research into the project, identifying the capital costs to total approximately \$300,000, with on-going yearly operations and maintenance running about \$35,000. A budget request will be presented to City Council this Fall for consideration to fund this project in 2016. Partners, such as the Historical Museum, Edmonds Downtown Alliance, Lodging Tax Advisory Committee, et al, will be sought to provide contributions.

Action Item 3a.6: Yost Pool - Financing. Create and implement a long-term financial and operational strategy for the updating/upgrading, refurbishment and retrofitting of the current Yost Pool facility.

UPDATE: As of last year the City has partnered with the YMCA to provide management of Yost Pool on behalf of the City. At this time the result is that the City is in a net positive financial position with respect to the pool, allowing for financial planning for additional upgrades and retrofits, as stated in this Action Item.

Action Item 3a.9: Civic Field. Address long-term property ownership and upgrade field, stadium, lighting, and other features to support competitive play, including tournaments.

UPDATE: The State Legislature approved an RCO Recreation Grant in the amount of \$1.87 million to help fund acquisition of Civic Field. Negotiations are underway for acquisition, following which upgrades to the field and support systems will be performed.

Action Item 3a.13: Woodway Fields. Address long-term property ownership and upgrade field, lighting, and other features to support competitive play, including tournaments.

UPDATE: The Edmonds School District is currently nearing completion on the substantial renovation of the former Woodway High School playfields into an updated athletic facility featuring all-weather fields as well as bleachers, playfield lighting and other amenities. The City and the School District intend to renew an Interlocal Agreement that will spell out the City's financial contribution to the project, and the rights and responsibilities of each party with respect to operations, maintenance, usage and scheduling of the fields and associated facilities.

Action Item 3a.14: Dog Park. Identify a suitable relocation site and develop a dedicated dog park consisting of fenced social yards with spectator seating and amenities, and off-leash exercise areas and trails.

UPDATE: The Dog Park is currently contemplated to remain an integral component of Marina Beach Park, which is currently undergoing a Master Plan process for future improvements, especially in response to the proposed daylighting of Willow Creek that will bisect the Park, requiring reconfiguration of all components.

Strategic Objective 4: Develop and maintain a transportation and infrastructure system to meet current and future demand.

4a. Build a community that balances environmental protection, economic health, and social needs.

Action Item 4a.7: Highway 99. Create transportation improvement program and related project for Highway 99 to improve traffic flow, transit connections, and pedestrian streetscape that encourages mixed-use project developments similar to what has been recently completed in Shoreline and is planned in Everett and Lynnwood.

UPDATE: The State Legislature approved \$10 million for this project in the multiyear transportation package, with the allocation currently slated for the 2021-23 biennium. The City will work with the Legislature in coming sessions to attempt to move this allocation up in order to allow for construction of this project in a nearer timeframe.

Action Item 4a.9: Waterfront connection. Work to establish an emergency and everyday access over the railroad tracks and ferry terminal lanes for pedestrians bound for shoreline and waterfront attractions from Harbor Square, Salish Crossing, and Downtown.

AND

Action Item 4a.10: Ferry Terminal. Create an interim ferry waiting and loading strategy that reduces conflicts between trains, automobiles and pedestrians while improving ferry rider access to the waterfront and Downtown services and amenities.

UPDATE: The State Legislature awarded the City \$500,000, which together with City, Port, BNSF and Community Transit contributions provides \$680,000 to fund an analysis of alternatives to the at-grade rail crossings at Main and Dayton Streets. The Mayor has appointed an eleven-member Advisory Task Force, comprised of community and regional subject matter experts and civic leaders to provide advice, insight and guidance during the process, which will include copious public outreach and involvement. The analysis is intended to explore all reasonable alternatives that provide vehicular, pedestrian and emergency access, leading ultimately to a preferred alternative for which additional funding may be sought to pursue environmental review, design and construction.

Strategic Objective 5: Responsible, accountable, and responsive government.

5a. Provide efficient and effective delivery of services.

Action Item 5a.2: Permitting processes. Consolidate and simplify the business license, land use and building permit review process to incorporate electronic application procedures, pre-submittal workshops, and concurrent reviews.

UPDATE: The City Council approved funding for a comprehensive development code update this year, which is currently underway. The proposed update is intended to improve the code's accessibility and internal consistency, including clarifying terminology, requirements, processes, and roles. Regulatory enhancements such as those mentioned here, as well as others, will be considered both during this process and in general as the City endeavors to provide ever more efficient and effective regulatory services.

Action Item 5a.3: Assess performance results of SAP. In addition to on-going annual assessment of State of the City programs, projects, and budget, conduct regular public, customer, and business outreach to determine the effectiveness, performance, and priorities of adopted Strategic Action Plan action items.

UPDATE: In April of this year the City Council was provided with a performance assessment on the SAP since its original approval in April 2013, in addition to the updates that were approved. City Council approved funding in the 2015 budget for purchase and deployment of project management software to facilitate comprehensive tracking of SAP performance, tasks, leads and participants, etc. In addition, while approving the 2015 update, the City Council stated its desire to see a more comprehensive SAP update, based on a renewed, robust public engagement process, in 2016.

Action Item 5a.4: Strategic Plan Implementation. Adopt and implement the Strategic Action Plan in partnership with public and private organizations.

UPDATE: As can be seen by this Progress Update, the SAP is in the process of being implemented, Action Item by Action Item, by the various City departments and other local and regional agencies.

5b. Promotion and encouragement of an active and involved community.

5b.1: Public Access. Conduct frequent town halls, public open houses, and other events at locations throughout the city to improve public access and facilitate dialogue on policies, programs, projects, and budgets.

AND

5b.2: Communication. Establish effective public information and feedback methods including websites, blogs, Facebook, Twitter, and other social media outreach.

UPDATE: Since 2014 the City has substantially enhanced its public outreach and engagement activities. The Mayor has held Town Hall meetings throughout Edmonds on a quarterly basis. The City publishes a newsletter on a quarterly basis, distributed widely and available on the front page of the City's website. As of late 2014 the City Council approved social media usage policies, which have enabled the establishment of a City Facebook page, tourism Facebook page, and City Twitter accounts. Starting 4th Quarter 2014 the City has employed the part-time services of a professional communications and public information consultant to assist in disseminating information, connecting with local and regional media to enhance coverage of Edmonds news and activities, strategizing on public engagement and involvement activities, and managing the City's social media platforms, etc. Also in early 2015 the City launched a new, upgraded website that is more user-friendly, engaging and interactive. Lastly the City Council established Study Sessions instead of Committee meetings that provide greater transparency to the public of these proceedings.