

AUGUST 2019



Final Environmental Impact Statement

for the Town Center Plan

INTRODUCTION AND EIS SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY OF ALTERNATIVES

This final environmental impact statement (FEIS/EIS) analyzes alternatives for potential future redevelopment of the Town Center at Lake Forest Park, located at the intersection of SR 104/Ballinger Way NE and north of SR 522/Bothell Way NE in the City of Lake Forest Park, King County, Washington.

The proposed action studied in the EIS is the potential adoption of a Town Center Plan, along with potential amendments to the Lake Forest Park Municipal Code (LFPMC) and supporting design standards and guidelines. The purpose of this twenty-year plan is to guide redevelopment of the Town Center into a vibrant, attractive, transit-friendly and pedestrian-oriented hub of activity that is consistent with the community's vision.

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), which was published on January 2, 2019, analyzed a no action alternative, Alternative 1, and two action alternatives (Alternative 2 and Alternative 3). This FEIS studies a no action alternative and one additional action alternative, Alternative 4. These alternatives are summarized below. Refer to Chapter 2.0 for additional information and details.

- **Alternative 1—No Action—**No action would be taken to adopt a specific Town Center Vision/Plan and there would not be amendments to the existing LFPMC. In this case, “no action” does not equate to “no change” in the Town Center because redevelopment could occur at any time under the current LFPMC regulations. These regulations and guidelines allow residential use to be added at the Town Center without a prescribed limitation on density (density is only limited by

building form). The maximum allowed building height under current regulations is approximately 60 to 66 feet to the base of roofline. This assumes the baseline height allowance of four levels above ground and the potential to add a bonus floor level (bonus height/density) with the provision of amenities to reach five levels above ground. As stated in the DEIS, redevelopment under the current LFPMC could result in an estimated residential density of approximately 700 or more dwelling units, while reducing the overall amount of commercial and office space at Town Center by approximately 10,000 gross square feet. See Chapter 2.0 for more information.

- **Alternative 4—New Alternative—**Alternative 4 assumes that the building height limitation allowed under the existing LFPMC would be retained, but residential density allowed at the Town Center would be limited to 700 units. Alternative 4 also assumes that modifications to the LFPMC to clarify that additional open space would be required for the baseline height of four levels above grade and clarifies the amenity requirements for activating bonus height/density for an additional fifth floor level. The maximum allowed building height would be no greater than allowed under current regulations, up to 66 feet to the base of the roofline. In addition to placing a 700-unit cap on residential density, Alternative 4 would retain about the same overall amount of commercial and office use as exists at Town Center under current conditions. See Chapter 2.0 for more information.

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Detailed descriptions of these alternatives and the assumptions related to each are provided in Chapter 2—Description of the Alternatives.

Alternatives No Longer Under Consideration:

The two previous action alternatives studied in the DEIS are no longer under consideration. The analysis of these alternatives from the DEIS has been retained in Appendix F to this FEIS. As a result of public comment received on the DEIS, the City determined that Alternative 2 and Alternative 3 should not be moved forward for further consideration.

- **Alternative 2—Varied Form and Height**—This redevelopment alternative assumes a mix of commercial, office, and residential uses of varied height and form across the site, administered through revisions to the LFPMC. The maximum building height under Alternative 2 would be 75 feet to the base roofline and could result in an estimated potential multi-family residential density of 1,200 dwelling units while reducing the overall amount of commercial and office space at Town Center from current conditions by about 25,000 gross square feet.
- **Alternative 3—Uniform Form and Height**—This redevelopment alternative assumes a mix of commercial, office, and residential uses located in buildings of more uniform height and form across the site, administered through revisions to the LFPMC. The maximum building height under Alternative 3 would be 85 feet to the base roofline and could result in an estimated potential multi-family residential density of 1,500 dwelling units, while also increasing the overall amount of commercial and office use at Town Center above the

current amount by approximately 63,000 gross square feet.

POTENTIAL FUTURE ACTIONS

Action alternatives analyzed are based on the potential proposed action of revising the planning and land use regulations applicable to the Town Center in Chapter 18 of the LFPMC. However, at this time, the City has not determined if it will proceed with such action. The City has not identified a preferred alternative (between Alternative 1, No Action and Alternative 4). Upon completion of this FEIS, the City may determine to proceed in one of the following ways:

- No action—no formal adoption of a Town Center Vision/Plan and no changes to the current LFPMC; -OR-
- Formal adoption of a Town Center Vision/Plan that recognizes a preferred direction for potential future improvements and redevelopment at Town Center with minimal revisions to the LFPMC to support plan implementation; -OR-
- Formal adoption of a Town Center Vision/Plan that recognizes a preferred direction for potential future improvements and redevelopment at Town Center with more substantial revisions and reorganization of the Town Center chapter of the LFPMC and development of specific design standards/guidelines to guide redevelopment.

With either the second or third option listed above, at least one public meeting would be held to obtain public comments on the Town Center Vision/Plan and code amendments prior to adoption. In addition, if the City decides to

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proceed with the second or third option, the State of Washington Department of Commerce will be notified at least 60 days prior to Council action that a legislative proposal requiring coordinated state agency review is being considered for adoption.

This EIS is a programmatic, non-project level document supported by a correlating planning level of analysis. With future redevelopment applications, individual applicants would be required to conduct additional environmental review and obtain applicable approvals. This would include additional environmental analysis and studies at the project level (addressing such topics such as, but not limited to, traffic impact analysis, parking management, tree preservation, and critical areas). Applicants for individual development proposals would be required to obtain permits, which may include, but would not be limited to: quasi-judicial land use approvals, clearing and grading permits, critical area permits, and building permits.

If the City proceeds to adopt a subarea plan (Town Center Vision/Plan) and modify the LFPMC, these outcomes will help to guide future redevelopment so they are consistent with the Town Center VISION published in 2018 and shaped by an extensive community and stakeholder visioning and planning process focused on the Town Center that began in the Fall of 2017.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Town Center has long served as the heart of the Lake Forest Park community—a place where people gather, socialize, shop, dine, access services at City Hall, and participate in events and activities. Changes are on the horizon for Town Center related to multiple upcoming opportunities for redevelopment and improvements.

Voters in the Puget Sound Region approved a \$54 billion ST3 package of regional transit improvements in November 2016. As a result, Sound Transit is planning to build a bus rapid transit (BRT) system from Shoreline to Woodinville, connecting to the light rail system in the I-5 corridor and following the route of NE 145th Street and Bothell Way NE (SR 522). The BRT would provide fast, reliable, frequent transit service in Lake Forest Park and other communities along the corridor. The project would include multiple BRT stations in Lake Forest Park, including one station pair at Town Center, as well as improvements to intersections and sidewalks connecting to the stations. Sound Transit has identified Town Center as the representative project location for a new park-and-ride structure with space for a minimum of 300 vehicles.

Merlone Geier Partners (MGP) is a private investment company that purchased most of the property that encompasses the Lake Forest Park Town Center in 2014 and has been making improvements to the shopping center and may redevelop areas of the site in the future. If such redevelopment occurred, it would likely take place in multiple phases over the next 20 years or more.

The City of Lake Forest Park also owns property at Town Center, where City Hall is located and the Lake Forest Park Police Department is headquartered. The Northshore Fire Department also operates out of Station 57 located at Town Center. There is currently a need to expand police facilities and a need for additional public meeting space at City Hall. As the community grows and changes, the demand for all public services will intensify resulting in the need for future publicly funded infrastructure and civic improvements to serve new residents and businesses. It should be

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noted that while the region has experienced upward growth for several years, growth and change are not an absolute certainty in Lake Forest Park.

Given the extent of these potential changes at Town Center, the City has been seeking public input on what the community would like to see and has been completing the EIS analysis of potential impacts from different redevelopment scenarios and to determine if a new plan for the Town Center should be created and formally adopted.

TOWN CENTER VISIONING PROCESS

To inform the development of a long-term vision for Town Center, input was gathered from the community and stakeholders starting in November 2017 through a robust set of lively, well-attended engagement events, including stakeholder interviews, community meetings, and workshops. The Town Center VISION was developed in June 2018 and accepted by City Council to serve as a framework for policies regarding land use, zoning, and connections within the site and between Town Center and adjacent neighborhoods.

As part of the Town Center Plan, the VISION would guide future redevelopment so that it is designed to best serve the needs of current and next generation citizens, resulting in an enduring, people-oriented place that is consistent with the community's values. The VISION would be the foundation of a new Town Center Plan and supporting code amendments, and the VISION goals and policies would be updated as part of the full plan. The VISION focuses on the key elements (listed below), under which separate goals and policies were drafted. In June 2019, the City Council Committee of the Whole revisited these goals

and policies and is considering editorial changes that ultimately would be included in a supplemented Town Center Vision/Plan, if adopted.

- ***Placemaking, Vibrancy, and Public Spaces***—Retaining and expanding important functions and uses that serve the everyday needs of Lake Forest Park residents, such as City Hall, Third Place Commons, the library, police, fire, and emergency services, groceries, shops, businesses, and restaurants and cafes, as well as creating high quality indoor and outdoor gathering spaces that are well connected to an enhanced pedestrian network throughout Town Center.
- ***Sustainability***—Preserving and enhancing the natural environment—healthy streams, clean water, mature trees, and green spaces and parks that are emblematic of this place called “Lake Forest Park.”
- ***Multi-modal Connectivity***—Providing a variety of transportation choices and enhancing connectivity to the high capacity BRT system through a more transit- and pedestrian-oriented form of development at Town Center that also supports effective traffic circulation and minimizes congestion.
- ***Pedestrian Realm***—Ensuring more of a focus on pedestrian-friendly redevelopment as changes occur over time, transforming Town Center from an automobile-oriented place that requires driving between locations to a place where people can park and safely, efficiently, and comfortably walk between multiple destinations.
- ***Parking for Vehicles and Bicycles***—Right-sizing parking to fit the uses at Town Center and designing parking facilities so they are

carefully and attractively integrated with other site uses, as well as providing sufficient and convenient bicycle parking areas across the site.

- **Public Services and Utilities**—Ensuring that public services and utilities are improved and expanded to serve Town Center changes in the future.
- **Land Uses and Transit Oriented Development**—Retaining commercial, employment, and civic uses and introducing a variety of housing choices offered within mixed-use and residential buildings to enhance the vibrancy and livability of Town Center as the heart of the community.
- **Town Center Character**—Enhancing the aesthetics at Town Center and reflecting the character of the surrounding community with timeless, Northwest-style architecture and natural materials and planning and design that optimizes views of the lake and surrounding forested setting.

Policies and recommendations of the VISION are integrated into the FEIS and closely align with the adopted City of Lake Forest Park Comprehensive Plan, as well as other City plans and initiatives, including Safe Highways, Safe Streets, Town Center Connections, and the Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Trails (PROST) Plan.

The VISION may be reviewed at:

<http://www.yourlakeforestpark.com/library-towncentervision.html>

PLANNING AND SEPA ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS

The planning and environmental review process is being completed in compliance with the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) and applicable provisions of the LFPMP. The process has been designed to encourage public and agency participation and review and includes scoping procedures to define environmental elements addressed in the EIS. Upon issuance of the DEIS published January 2, 2019, the City received comments from the public, organizations, and agency representatives. The City then prepared responses to these comments, which are presented in Chapter 5 of this FEIS. The timeline in Table 1.1 more specifically describes the steps of the process.

ELEMENTS ANALYZED IN THE EIS

Elements analyzed in this EIS were determined based on the public scoping process conducted September 26 through October 26, 2018 and include:

- **Town Center Character and Land Use**
This section addresses setting and site character, land use, population, housing, and employment, as well as consistency with adopted plans and policies.
- **Surface Water and Natural Conditions**
This section addresses geology and soils, streams with a focus on the Lyon Creek corridor, surface water management, and trees, vegetation, and habitat.
- **Public and Community Services**
This section addresses civic and community services, City Hall and municipal services, fire and emergency services, police protection, schools, parks, recreation, open space, and trails, and other community services and facilities.

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- **Utilities**
This section addresses sanitary sewer, water, electricity, natural gas, and communications.
- **Multimodal Transportation and Parking**
This section addresses traffic circulation and safety, parking, pedestrian, bicycle, and access to transit.

Table 1.1 Planning and Environmental Review Process Timeline

Dates	Steps in Process
Fall 2017 - Summer 2018	Extensive community and stakeholder engagement to inform development of the VISION for Town Center
Summer - Fall 2018	Planning Commission work on development of potential draft amendments to existing planning and land use regulations applicable to the Town Center
September 26, 2018	Determination of Significance and Scoping Notice Issued by the City of Lake Forest Park (Lead Agency)
September 26 - October 26, 2018	Public Comment Period on Scoping
October 10 and 14, 2018	Public Open House Events during Scoping
January 2, 2019	Issuance of this DEIS
January 2, 2019 through February 1, 2019	Public and Agency Review Period
January 16, 2019 at Lake Forest Park City Hall, 6:30 pm to 8:00 pm	Public Meeting on the DEIS
August 8, 2019	Issuance of the FEIS
Future (Timeframe Unknown)	Possible Development and Formal Adoption of the Town Center Vision/Plan (Subarea Plan) and LFPMC Amendments

SUMMARY OF IMPACT ANALYSIS

The analysis of potential effects found that with implementation of proposed and recommended mitigation measures, significant unavoidable adverse impacts would not be anticipated under any of the alternatives, including Alternative 4, the new action alternative analyzed in this FEIS. Refer to Chapter 4.0 for the full impact analysis results.

Although no longer under consideration, it should be noted that Alternative 3 would have required a higher level of mitigation for all

elements of the environment analyzed compared to Alternative 4 and Alternative 2.

Traffic and parking analysis would be required for each phase of redevelopment, and potential infrastructure and utility improvements would also need to be analyzed at the project level. This would include water, sanitary sewer, stormwater management, electricity, natural gas and communications. Geotechnical analysis would be needed to determine the appropriate design and engineering methods for the site and would need to analyze groundwater conditions and make recommendations for seismic design. Each phase of redevelopment

also would be subject to compliance with Lake Forest Park Municipal Code requirements, including provisions related to environmentally critical areas, tree canopy preservation and enhancement, and low impact development.

Future phases of improvements and redevelopment at the Town Center also will need to be analyzed at a project level to determine specific requirements related to open space, amenities, and other supporting improvements. Each phase of redevelopment would need to include more detailed project-level analysis to determine the level of improvements that would be required to accommodate the project, with project developers coordinating closely with the City. There may be funding (grants) and public/private partnership opportunities that could be explored.

FUTURE ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

This EIS presents a programmatic, non-project level of environmental analysis addressing the potential effects of changes in planning and land use code provisions at the Town Center. Future project-level review will be completed by others as projects move forward. Environmental review for the Sound Transit BRT project is scheduled to begin in 2019.

Future phases of redevelopment at Town Center would be subject to separate SEPA compliance by each development proponent. SEPA compliance for these future phases of development may include future EIS analyses or other environmental compliance documents depending upon the threshold of development proposed.