

1 **Re-Visioning Westgate**

2 **Edmonds Citizens Economic Development Commission**

3
4 **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

5
6 Both the Edmonds Comprehensive Plan and the Edmonds Economic Development Plan
7 identify neighborhood centers for development of specific planning policies, including the
8 Westgate area. In doing so, the City is addressing urbanization trends appearing across the
9 country. Specifically, the trend is toward neighborhood “lifestyle centers,” with more livable
10 and human scale urban spaces, where residential uses and compatible commercial and public
11 uses can co-exist; where residents are able to walk to shopping and entertainment, or just to
12 enjoy open, publically accessible spaces.

13 Westgate’s location, with connecting arterials to Hwy 99, downtown Edmonds and
14 North-South Edmonds, its proximity to public transportation and its existing commercial
15 activity, make it well suited to this type of development, more so than other neighborhood
16 centers in Edmonds. The benefits of such controlled development are substantial. “Empty
17 nesters” (a growing Edmonds demographic) and young adults (a demographic often cited as
18 smaller than desired in Edmonds) find these neighborhood centers particularly desirable due to
19 their convenience (including less reliance on automobiles) and affordability. The Westgate re-
20 visioning has great potential for attracting new investment that will serve the at-large Edmonds
21 community by expanding the number and quality of service and entertainment opportunities as
22 well as providing additional tax revenues for the City. The policies identified in the Westgate
23 Plan, as finally approved by the Planning Board, address the trends described above and the
24 desires of the Edmonds citizens, as identified by the UW study described below. Also, while
25 respecting the property rights of owners, the Plan also assures that the citizens of Edmonds
26 derive real benefit from the public contribution, such as streetscapes and utilities.

27 As early as 2010, the Edmonds Citizens’ Economic Development Commission
28 (“CEDC”) had identified completing the planning and implementation process for key
29 neighborhood centers as one of the six recommended high-priority items for the City. The City
30 Council expressed its support by passing Resolution 1224 and by providing funding to engage
31 the UW Green Futures Lab to develop the information and basic structure for moving the
32 Westgate re-visioning process forward. The original draft of the UW Study was presented in late
33 2010 and the final version was presented at the City Council meeting on June 21, 2011. The
34 Planning Board has been working on the Plan since April 25, 2012 and has submitted a final
35 proposed plan for review by the City Council, to be considered during the summer of 2014.

36
37 In the long and public process leading up to the Westgate Plan, a great deal of support
38 was identified for the concept embodied in the Plan. Public concerns were raised and addressed
39 by the Planning Board modifying the original proposal.

40 As finally approved, the Plan addresses the desire to create such a neighborhood life style
41 center through zoning concepts based on a hybrid mix of traditional use-based zoning and form-
42 based code, as well as predetermined, point-based incentives. A more thorough discussion of
43 these concepts is included within this paper. However, at its core, form-based code is
44 prescriptive rather than restrictive, allowing the City to tell and show the development
45 community how it wants to utilize the space within the affected area. The Code provides both
46 verbal and graphic guidance to such matters as types of allowed buildings, relationship of
47 buildings to the streetscape and to each other, and relationship of commercial and residential
48 uses. Predetermined, point-based incentives encourage developers to provide additional public
49 amenities (e.g., open space areas or park-like settings) and building attributes by allowing
50 additional development rights (i.e., the possibility to go from three stories to four in only
51 specified locations) if the criterion are met. It should also be recognized that the development
52 prerequisites with these regards are increased from current requirements regardless of building
53 height.

54 While these latter zoning concepts are well-tested elsewhere, they are new concepts for
55 the City of Edmonds, representing an attempt to provide a more balanced approach than has been
56 present in past re-visioning efforts. In this way, the Westgate Plan attempts to mitigate risk and
57 concerns associated with change.

58 The CEDC continues our strong support for and urges the adoption of the Westgate Plan
59 as finally approved by the Edmonds Planning Board.

60 INTRODUCTION

61 The purpose of this paper is to provide input from the Edmonds Citizens' Economic
62 Development Commission ("CEDC") into the approval process for the Westgate Plan, as finally
63 approved by the Edmonds Planning Board (the "Plan"). It is intended as a guide to help identify
64 what the Westgate Plan is intended to do and to support the mission of the CEDC.

65 The Westgate business district has the potential to become a much greater economic and
66 citizen use resource within the City of Edmonds. The CEDC believes that because of its unique
67 Edmonds location, Westgate presents opportunities to create a lifestyle center that potentially
68 includes retail, eatery, entertainment, and housing options within a walkable village designed
69 around planned open spaces and amenities. As has been the case in numerous communities
70 around the country and, here in Snohomish County, in places such as Mountlake Terrace and
71 Mill Creek, these elements will enhance the economic vitality of Westgate and reduce economic
72 leakage from Edmonds, while allowing the area to continue to provide and expand the goods and
73 services that our community relies on. As discussed below, the Westgate Re-visioning Plan, as
74 finally approved by the Planning Board is a major step in achieving that vision.

75 The Westgate Public Process

76 The public process for the Westgate Plan had its genesis at open public meetings at the
77 CEDC in late 2009. In January 2010, the CEDC made several recommendations to the City
78 Council which included one to "initiate Neighborhood Business Centers Plans" . In March, 2010

79 The Council adopted Resolution 1224 approving the recommendations of the EDC. The Council
80 appropriated funds in 2010 to hire the University of Washington Green Futures Lab to create a
81 public process in order to obtain community input on the re-visioning of Westgate and Five
82 Corners.

83 Attached to this paper as an Appendix 1 is a list showing the extensive involvement of the
84 City Council, the CEDC, the Planning Board and the public leading to this re-visioning plan. As
85 is graphically represented, a huge effort, involving hundreds of people, many of whom, including
86 City staff and the team from the University of Washington, were compensated for bringing their
87 expertise to this process. Public outreach, especially to those living in surrounding neighborhoods,
88 was made to solicit feedback throughout the process.

89 This public process included design workshops, a community listening session, online and
90 mail surveys, meetings and discussions and/or workshops with the CEDC, Planning Board and
91 City Council. There have been three public hearings by the Planning Board and currently at least
92 one hearing will be held by the City Council. To date there have been extensive opportunities for
93 residents and business and property owners to make their voices heard. In June, 2012 there was a
94 presentation to the Council, Planning Board, CEDC and the public on Form-Based Code and how
95 it differed from a traditional zoning code. The three presenters were former Shoreline Planning
96 Director Joe Tovar, then Mountlake Terrace Development Director and now Edmonds
97 Development Director Shane Hope, and Chuck Wolf, an attorney specializing in land use issues.
98 Importantly, it was made clear that form-based code concepts may be used in conjunction with
99 traditional code; that is, a hybrid approach may be used. This presentation was also available for
100 public viewing on City's Public Television channels 21 and 39. Since the CEDC originally
101 recommended the Council initiate the Westgate process in January of 2010, the Planning Board,
102 CEDC and City Council have discussed Westgate and issues relating to the Westgate Plan at 48
103 different meetings each of which provided an opportunity for public comments. The agendas and
104 minutes of those meetings are published on the City website.

105 The Westgate Plan has gone through different iterations as a result of the extensive public
106 process. In arriving at its final recommendations on the Westgate Plan, the Planning Board has
107 made changes to the original proposal in response to public input and their careful review of the
108 plans concepts and details. These changes include reducing the maximum height allowance for
109 buildings from five stories to four stories and increasing setbacks from Route 104 to potentially
110 accommodate any necessary frontage improvements related to development, such as turning or
111 deceleration lanes.

112 **Why Westgate: What's Different This Time?**

113 The Final Westgate Plan envisions a revitalized mixed-use lifestyle center for Westgate,
114 with public spaces, walkability and both residential and commercial uses. The plan does not
115 mandate particular uses, nor call for or require any change of current uses. It allows property
116 owners to either continue to use their properties in the current configuration or to re-develop in
117 ways that reflect the desires of Edmonds community as expressed through the public process
118 which resulted in the Plan.

119 It is arguable that the current status of Westgate is acceptable, adequately serving the
120 needs of our community as a “drive-buy-leave” business district. And the Westgate Plan does
121 envision a continuation of the substantial commercial presence which is already there. However,
122 the Plan also recognizes that changing demographics, retailing trends, and Westgate’s accessible
123 Edmonds location suggest that an alternative mid to long term vision is important for the area to
124 achieve its full potential into the future.

125 As part of the preliminary site analysis leading up to the plan, the City Council hired
126 consultants (UW Green Futures Lab) who applied a recognized 12-quality criteria methodology,
127 measuring Westgate’s current capacity to provide protection, comfort, and enjoyment for persons
128 of all ages. That methodology determined that opportunities to safely sit, stand, walk, and talk
129 were found to be especially deficient at Westgate. The site also scored poorly regarding
130 aesthetic quality and pleasant sense experience. Under the current zoning, we have seen the loss
131 of a bowling alley (to the chagrin of many) as well as development of properties such as the
132 Walgreen’s and the Key Bank, without any real inclusion of amenities or additional “livability”
133 components which, had a plan been in place, could well have addressed the noted deficiencies.

134 There has been a significant amount of discussion in the retailing industry for many years
135 suggesting malls, including strip malls, are going “extinct”. Largely, this phenomenon has been
136 attributed to changing demographics and a perspective that foresees that future economic growth
137 lies in the value of experiences and transformations -- goods and services are no longer enough.
138 That thinking has inspired more stores and shopping centers to include a "tourism" component,
139 driving the surging popularity of lifestyle centers. Lifestyle centers — unlike traditional
140 enclosed malls or strip shopping centers that face parking lots — are usually open-air,
141 landscaped, walkable mixed-use neighborhoods combining business, retail and
142 leisure/entertainment activities, often times accessible to public transportation.

143 Westgate serves as, if not the best location in Edmonds, one of the most appropriate for a
144 successful lifestyle center development for the following reasons:

- 145 • Westgate already has some key elements that are intended to be retained, such as
146 supermarkets, drugstores, and restaurants.
- 147 • Westgate’s accessible Edmonds location and access by public transportation to
148 downtown Edmonds, Highway 99 and downtown Seattle from the Shoreline Park and
149 Ride would be attractive to seniors and young alike.
- 150 • Westgate can provide more affordable housing for those either starting out or
151 downsizing, who would be less able to afford downtown and/or view condos/apartments
152 in Edmonds.
- 153 • Many older and an increasing number of younger people are choosing to significantly
154 reduce their reliance on the automobile.

155 The Westgate Plan proposes mixed-use development, including retail spaces, eateries,
156 and leisure/entertainment options, as well as dwelling units and offices in a walkable community
157 center with many amenity spaces, some of which are required of ANY new development
158 (prerequisites). The intent of the Plan is to establish a connection between neighborhoods; create

159 a convenient center for local residents with expanded offerings, while being inviting to visitors;
160 and unify the Westgate district with a distinctive character. The Westgate Plan includes two
161 zoning related concepts that have not been tried in Edmonds before. A brief discussion of those
162 two aspects and why they make a difference is provided:

163 **1. Predetermined, Point-Based Incentives.**

164 Currently, zoning for most of the Westgate area allows only two-story buildings (with one
165 residential unit allowed per parcel). The proposed plan would retain two-story limits at some
166 locations, while allowing 3-story buildings and conditional allowances for an additional story (at
167 specified locations) if certain pre-identified conditions (incentives) are met. The locations in
168 which height bonuses are allowed are shown in the plan and take into account the geographical
169 terrain (i.e., are generally adjacent to steep slopes). The incentives fall into the following
170 categories:

- 171 • Green Building Program
- 172 • Green Factor
- 173 • Amenity Space
- 174 • Alternative Transportation

175 The Plan also requires that ANY new development must provide some amenities and public
176 spaces that are not required under current zoning. Such amenities are prerequisites unrelated to
177 the incentive program.

178 This predetermined, point-based incentive approach (along with prerequisites exceeding
179 current requirements for any new development) recognize an important fact. The citizens of
180 Edmonds are giving something up in allowing additional development. As in any scenario in
181 which one side gives something up, they should expect to get something in return. The
182 identification of the types of incentives which allow further development are a way in which the
183 community can expect development consistent with its values and mitigate the risks or concerns
184 the community may have regarding the proposed changes. The question then becomes, “What
185 should we get in return?” The Westgate area provides a unique opportunity to make site-specific
186 adjustments without implicating or setting policy for other business districts in the City and
187 provides a real opportunity to deal with and measure these risks and rewards. Importantly, this
188 plan provides a significant opportunity for a community conversation regarding the types of
189 “give-backs” and the extent to which the incentives can provide real benefits reflecting the
190 values of the community.

191 As an example of the value to the community, the large cement retaining wall behind
192 Walgreen’s would not have been permitted under the Plan, which identifies the frequently
193 expressed Edmonds value for preserving trees and vegetation, particularly on steep slopes, as an
194 important criteria.

195

196

197 **2. Form-Based Code.**

198 In addition to the introduction of the “predetermined, point-based incentive” approach to
199 development, the Plan also incorporates form-based code concepts, along with more traditional
200 zoning (hybrid approach). In explaining form-based codes, the Michigan Institute of Planning
201 used the following description:

202 “First and foremost, form-based codes are place-based. The codes are adapted to fit the
203 unique characteristics of a community and intended to require that new development fit
204 within the context of the existing community and reinforce a unique sense of place.”

205 Historical zoning has primarily focused on uses, particularly segregating identified
206 incompatible uses such as residential and industrial. If a new development intended the right
207 kind of use, the actual form and location of the structures was, for the most part, without further
208 regulation. Form-based codes focus on what the community wants the particular area to look
209 like. The code as exemplified in the Westgate Plan, incorporates descriptions of various types of
210 buildings housing compatible uses. It defines the locations of those buildings in relation to each
211 other and to the public components (streetscapes). Finally, form based code provides both verbal
212 and graphic descriptions so that developers will clearly understand the expectations of the
213 community as to the nature, appearance and content of their prospective development.

214 Use of form-based code concepts enables development that creates public areas, walkable
215 streets, human scale and the image which the community wishes to project. More importantly,
216 such codes can be developed to deal with site-specific concerns of the community. The
217 Westgate Plan is a great example of addressing how to develop a proposed lifestyle center and
218 livable neighborhood which incorporates the very specific geographical location and terrain of
219 the site, along with traditional community values, while adapting to current demographic trends
220 and future needs so as to support a sustainable Edmonds economy.

221 **CONCLUSION**

222 The CEDC has been a part of and supported the community efforts regarding the
223 Westgate Plan since its inception and continues to do so. In considering the value of re-visioning
224 the Westgate business district we need to not only consider the details, merits, and risks
225 associated with the Westgate Plan, but also to consider risks associated with inaction. As noted
226 above, the recent loss of the bowling alley and replacement with a drugstore, plus the addition of
227 another bank on an important corner property, without any mitigating or ameliorative
228 components are examples of development under current code. The CEDC believes we can do
229 better and recognizes the presence of a viable lifestyle center at Westgate is an important step in
230 the future of Edmonds.

Date	CEDC Activities	Planning Board	Council Activities
2009			
11/18/09	Discussion of diversifying the tax base and increasing revenues to support local services by developing commercial areas including Westgate, indicating all areas of the city require different strategies		
12/16/09	Discussion of possibility of redevelopment of Westgate & initiating rezone of neighborhood centers		
2010			
1/6/2010	Discussion of need for an approach that addresses neighborhood districts and residential development as well as and maintaining quality of life, requiring a multi-pronged approach		
1/19/10	Presentation of Annual Report to Council which included recommendations to initiate neighborhood business/residential center plans for Westgate and Five Corners		
3/16/10			Passed Resolution 1224 directing CEDC to further development, among other items its Westgate and Five Corners redevelopment recommendation and committing to Council action on same.

Date	CEDC Activities	Planning Board	Council Activities
4/21/10	Discussion of requesting Council to initiate Neighbor Business Center Plans for Westgate & Five Corners & retaining consultant to facilitate public design & planning process		
5/11/10			Committee discussion of partnering w/Cascade Land Conservancy, CEDC & UW to discuss the redevelopment framework for Westgate and 5 Corners
5/19/10	Rob Chave & Land Use Sub Group updated CEDC on further research into involvement of UW & Cascade Land Conservancy in Neighborhood Business Plans for Westgate and Five Corners		
6/24/10	Rob Chave & Land Use Sub Group updated CEDC on discussions with UW regarding the establishment of a team of students/instructors to conduct a study of Westgate & Five Corners		
7/21/10	CEDC voted to unanimously forward to Council UW's scope of work for 3 Phase approach to Special districts Plan for Westgate & five Corners		

Opportunity for public input at all listed events except for 5/11/10 Council Committee Meeting & 6/27/12 joint meeting of CEDC & Planning Board

Date	CEDC Activities	Planning Board	Council Activities
8/3/10			Presentation of recommendation from CEDC to proceed w/UW Green Futures Lab for development of a Five Corners and Westgate Commercial Centers and approval of same by Council
8/24/10			Continued discussion & potential action related to a proposed Market Study for the 5 Corners and Westgate Commercial Centers – approval of financing for Study
10/10/10	Land Use Sub-group update on Westgate		
11/17/10	Land Use Sub-group update on Westgate		
12/15/10	Presentation by representatives of UW concerning three phase project with the goal of developing conceptual alternatives for potential redevelopment of Five Corners and Westgate Village		
2011			
1/19/11	Westgate/ Five Corners survey. Final Phase I Report posted to CEDC Webpage. Nancy Rottle, Director, UW Green Futures Lab explained the three Phase II public events including two listening sessions and an interactive workshop.		
1/25/11	Community Listening Session with UW Team re Westgate & Five Corners		

Opportunity for public input at all listed events except for 5/11/10 Council Committee Meeting & 6/27/12 joint meeting of CEDC & Planning Board

Date CEDC Activities Planning Board Council Activities

2/16/11	Survey link and the minutes of two workshops posted to CEDC Webpage. Market analysis being prepared by Property Counselors		
3/12/11	UW Design Workshop with UW Team to engage public, business and property owners and the local design community to explore more specific design for Westgate & Five Corners.		
3/16/11	Stephen Clifton Reported on March 12, 2011 Design Workshop regarding Westgate and Five Corners. A concerted effort was made to publicize the Workshops via press, mailings to an increased radius and notices to expanded radius of property and business owners.		
4/20/11	Summaries of March, 2011 workshop distributed to CEDC and Planning Board. Jill Sterritt of UW's Team provided overview of process to date and timeline. A summary of Workshop results, online survey, audience response, listening sessions and Design Workshops for Westgate and Five Corners with regard to building scale, public space, walking/biking, traffic, services and amenities was presented		

Opportunity for public input at all listed events except for 5/11/10 Council Committee Meeting & 6/27/12 joint meeting of CEDC & Planning Board

Date	CEDC Activities	Planning Board	Council Activities
5/3/11	Community Meeting with UW Team re Westgate Alternatives Presentation		
5/12/11	Presentation by Jill Sterritt of UW Team re presentation of alternative concepts and selection of CEDC preferred alternative that will be provided to City Council for their input prior to developing code		
6/15/11	Presentation by Jill Sterritt and UW Team based upon CEDC input at 5/12/11 meeting. CEDC unanimously approved Revised Plan For Westgate with exception for building height to go to three stories plus one or two additional stories via development agreement and consistent with topography.		
6/21/11			An update of the UW planning for 5 corners and Westgate was presented by Rob Chave, Jill Sterritt and Nancy Rottle from the UW. A description of the process used, timeline and Phasing. Sent to Planning Board for study.
7/20/11	CEDC was advised by Stephen Clifton that City Council voted to move Westgate Plan to Planning Board.		

Opportunity for public input at all listed events except for 5/11/10 Council Committee Meeting & 6/27/12 joint meeting of CEDC & Planning Board

Date	CEDC Activities	Planning Board	Council Activities
8/17/11	CEDC advised by Stephen Clifton that UW students are working on Form Based Code. CEDC advised it wanted to review draft and provide input to Planning Board.		
10/19/11	Stephen Clifton advised that UW submitted draft Form Based Codes which CEDC will review and provide input on at November meeting prior to submission to Planning Board.		
11/16/11	Rob Chave provided an update on the staff review of the draft Form Based code.		
2012			
2/15/12	Jill Sterritt and Nancy Rottle of UW Team made a presentation on the draft form Based Code, took comments from the CEDC before presenting it to the Planning Board for consideration.		
4/25/12		Jill Sterrett & Nancy Rottle provided an overview of the Westgate Plan detailing the process used and results obtained. Public most interested in building scale, public space, walk & bike, traffic, services & amenities	

Date	CEDC Activities	Planning Board	Council Activities
6/27/12	Presentation to joint meeting of Planning Board and CEDC on Form-Based Codes relating to Westgate & Five Corners by attorney Chuck Wolfe, Shoreline Planning Director Joe Tovar, and Mountlake Terrace Community and Development Director Shane Hope	Presentation to joint meeting of Planning Board and CEDC on Form-Based Codes relating to Westgate & Five Corners by attorney Chuck Wolfe, Shoreline Planning Director Joe Tovar, and Mountlake Terrace Community and Development Director Shane Hope	
8/8/12		Follow up presentation by Jill Sterrett and a comparison of Edmonds to nearby cities of comparable size	
8/15/12	Update from Stephen Clifton on status of Form Based Code and City's traffic study in Westgate to ensure the street configures in the Westgate form based code document are workable.		
9/12/12		First Public Hearing on the Westgate Plan and an examination of the design and programming elements	
10/17/12	Update on Westgate – Rob Chave		
10/24/12		Presentation by traffic consultant on the proposed Westgate plan and potential impact of reduces drive lanes, biking, wider sidewalks, etc.	

Opportunity for public input at all listed events except for 5/11/10 Council Committee Meeting & 6/27/12 joint meeting of CEDC & Planning Board

Date CEDC Activities Planning Board Council Activities

2013			
2/13/13		Rob Chave presentation to the Board comparing and contrasting differences between Westgate and Five Corners.. Westgate was later compared with U-Village with its emphasis on internal walkability.	
4/8/13			Committee Meeting Report – Planning Board and Staff requested Direction from Council on proceeding with the Westgate and Five Corners sub-areas plans.
5/28/13			Discussion focused on transportation issues and the coordination of studies for Westgate and the transportation study for that area. Planning had said that they have been awaiting direction from Council and that they preferred to complete the Westgate plan before taking on Five Corners.

Date	CEDC Activities	Planning Board	Council Activities
7/23/13			Rob Chave, Jill Sterritt and Julie Kriegh re-introduced the Study and planning efforts for Westgate stressing Comprehensive Plan and Sustainability elements, Economic Development and Housing flexibility due to new members on City Council.
9/11/13		Discussion focused on Amenities & Open Space, Building Height and topography, Green Factor Section and Height Bonus Section	
10/13/13	Westgate Plan Discussion – Land-Use Sub-group		
11/20/13	Overview of Westgate Plan & Form Based Code by Jill Sterritt & Julie Kriegh Status of Westgate - Rob Chave Transportation issues relating to Westgate - Phil Williams		
2014			
3/12/14		Second Planning Board Public Hearing on Westgate Plan	
3/14 & 15/ 14			During the City Council Retreat, the Westgate and Five Corners Areas were identified as goals for the year.

Date	CEDC Activities	Planning Board	Council Activities
3/19/14	Status of PB recommendations on Westgate – Phil Lovell, Planning Board Liaison		
4/19/14	Report from Business Districts Enhancement Sub Group re: creation of white paper on Westgate		
5/14/14		Discussion of Westgate Plan	
5/21/14	Report from Shane Hope re: Planning Board work session on Westgate. Report from Business Districts Enhancements Sub Group re: status of Westgate white paper.		
5/28/14		Third Planning Board Public Hearing on Westgate Plan	
6/11/14		Recommendation of Westgate Plan to City Council including Comprehensive Plan Amendment, Amendments to ECDC 16.110 & adding Chapter 22.110 regarding Design Standards for the WMU - Westgate Mixed Use District	
6/18/14	Presentation From Phil Lovell, Planning Board Liaison re Planning Board's Recommendation to City Council on Westgate Plan		