

I. Land Use Impact Analysis

The Olde Town subarea includes both sides of Front Street and both sides of Sunset Way, in the center of town. The Subarea is bordered by Issaquah Creek to the west and the slopes of Tiger Mountain to the east. It includes the Cultural and Business District (CBD) mainly comprised of CBD zoned small scale commercial businesses and personal services located immediately adjacent to Front Street. The CBD zoning district has specific development regulations intended to preserve and enhance the existing scale and character. The Subarea includes areas outside the CBD such as the older residential homes and duplexes located to the east of Front Street. The area to the west of Front Street is transitioning from single family residential to a mixture of small businesses and multifamily developments. Olde Town includes the City’s oldest planned area and retains much of the original character with grid pattern streets and alleys, small lots and older homes. It contains most of the affordable single family and multifamily housing for the City. Rainier Boulevard has a mixture of residential and commercial uses that link the Olde Town and the Gilman Subareas. Olde Town contains the following zoning and land use designations.

**Table III-5
Olde Town Zoning**

Zoning	Approx Acres	Equivalent Plan Land Use Designation	Comprehensive Land Use Designation	Characteristics
CF	120.5	Community Facilities		City, School District, and State owned land and facilities including parks.
CBD	33.4	Cultural and Business District		Business and cultural activities in the downtown core.
SF- S	1.4	Low Density Residential		Allows suburban style single family units with development to a density of 4.5 units/acre.
SF-SL	29.5	Low Density Residential		Allows single family units on small lots with development to a density of 7.26 units/acre.
SF-D	68.7	Low Density Residential		Allows single family and duplex units with density from 7.26 units/acre for single family to 14.52 units/acre for duplex units.
MF-M	11.9	Multifamily Residential		Allows single family (existing) and multifamily units with a development density of 14.52 units/acre and limited neighborhood commercial.
MF-H	29.4	Multifamily Residential		Allows multifamily units and some accessory commercial with a development density of 29 units/acre.
TOTAL	294.7			

Source: City of Issaquah, CADD readings of zoning map, 1996

A substantial part (40%) of Olde Town is used for government functions. There are about 120 acres of land in Olde Town owned by the City of Issaquah, Issaquah School District #411, and the State of Washington. The location of the government land and its

uses are a dominant factor within the subarea. (See **Community Facility zoning in Figure III-I**).

Low density residential land use designation comprises the next largest part of the subarea with 99.6 acres or 34% of the land. Although the category implies single family density, most of the land accommodates a mix of single family and duplexes. The multifamily land or High Density Residential is designated for 41.3 acres or 14% of the land, part of which is underdeveloped.

Vacant and Developable Land

The Olde Town Subarea contains some limited opportunities to develop vacant land. At least eighty acres of land are likely to change land use within the 20 year planning period based on the quantity of vacant and redevelopable land. Within the subarea there are 37 vacant parcels possible for development, 91 parcels for potential redevelopment and another 138 parcels for potential rehabilitation. (See **Table III-6**). The total vacant land is 13.03 acres. There is also 32.38 acres with the potential for redevelopment and another 34.8 acres with the potential to be rehabilitated.

**Table III-6
Vacant Redevelopment and Rehabilitation Land**

Olde Town Neighborhoods	Vacant		Redevelopment		Rehabilitation		Total	
	Parcels	Acres	Parcels	Acres	Parcels	Acres	Parcels	Acres
CBD	10	3.23	17	5.22	17	5.73	44	14.18
Historic Residential	15	2.38	56	13.47	90	18.85	161	34.70
Creekside	5	1.26	10	10.06	16	3.63	31	14.95
So. Olde Town	8	6.16	8	3.63	15	6.59	31	16.38
Total	38	13.03	91	32.38	138	34.8	267	80.21

If all these parcels change use, either by developing to the permitted density, or changing to allow other additional uses (such as in mixed use areas), about 27% of the land area will be affected. There is also the probability that other properties will be considered for their rehabilitation of redevelopment potential during the 20-year period.

Growth will affect many parcels within Olde Town. An estimate of 20-year growth is provided by the Plan. Adding accessory housing units within the existing neighborhood will be allowed and encouraged by the Plan, whether or not the parcel is considered potentially redevelopable or for rehabilitation. New or expanded commercial, new or converted office and new mixed use will create a sizable transition for Olde Town.

**Figure III-I
Zoning (1996)**

**Table III-7
Increase in Olde Town Development
Over 20 Years**

Olde Town	Increase in DU's	Increase in Commercial s.f.	2017 DU's	2017 Commercial s.f.
CBD	104	467,000	186	917,320
Historic Residential	256	14,400	691	38,350
Creekside	166	1,000	363	1,000
South Olde Town	102	0	499	57,220
Total	628	482,400	1,739	1,013,890

The resulting increase of development in Olde Town will be 628 new residential units and about 482,400 square feet of commercial space. The average density will increase in the Historic Residential area from 6.2 units per acre to 9.9 units per acre and in the Creekside from 6.0 units per acre to 11 units per acre. Similarly the intensity of commercial development within Olde Town CBD is estimated to increase from .16 Floor Area Ratio (FAR) to .31 FAR. Most of this density is currently allowed, and the estimated changes would reflect the implementation of the existing City policies, zoning and development regulations.

**Table III-8
Intensification of Olde Town**

	Area in Acres	DU's/Acre 1997	DU / Acre 2017	Commercial SF/Ac 1997	Commercial SF/Ac 2017
Historic Residential	70	6.2 (435/70)	9.9 (691/70)	N/A	N/A
Creekside	33	6.0 (197/33)	11 (363/33)	N/A	N/A
South Olde Town (1)	124	3.2 (397/124)	4.0 (499/124)	N/A	N/A
CBD	69	N/A	N/A	6,770 sf/Ac (.16 FAR)	13,300 sf/Ac (.31 FAR)

DU's/Ac = dwelling units per acre

(1) The calculations for South Olde Town includes about 63 acres of Community Facilities (Schools and Bus Barn) that result in a density lower than found in the area. It exclude the area zoned CF (Community Facilities); and the DU's adjusted by 63 acres to reduce the School District properties, the density would be 6.5 units per acre.

Development Density Proposed Changes

The Draft Plan proposes several changes that will affect development density. The changes proposed include:

- 1) Change Residential Low Density zoning to CBD zoning;
- 2) Allow detached accessory units within the Low Density Residential area;
- 3) Allow adjustment of impervious surface limits along CBD zoned Front and Sunset;
- 4) Modify parking ratios in the CBD zone area; and
- 5) Establish a future park/open space overlay designation that overlays residential zoning.

The implementation of the plan proposes to change Residential Low Density zoning to CBD zoning. This would affect 7 parcels (two near Darigold and five along SE Bush Street). These parcels, while currently used as duplex and single family residential, would be largely surrounded by commercial and or community facilities in the CBD. The change in land use would occur over time. The land value of the parcels would increase because commercial, office and residential uses would be allowed. The existing residential uses are permitted. The residential structures could be converted into commercial or office use. The adverse impact on the Olde Town land use of this change would be insignificant. The location of these changed parcels is shown in **Figure VIII-A**.

Accessory units are to be allowed as attached or detached units. This is a change that would permit detached units, occupied by non-family members. The Draft Plan proposes that allowing accessory unit housing where older homes are in disrepair, as a means to allow owner income for maintaining and improving the property. Accessory units are also identified by the Draft Plan as a way to accommodate density allowed by the zoning, and to retain the original single family residential character sought by the policies. Design guidelines are to be developed for use in evaluating accessory units. Allowing detached accessory units in residential areas will not be a significant adverse impact for the residential land use in Olde Town, because detached units will be only a small part of the units added in the residential area.

The Cultural and Business District (CBD) currently requires that new development provide 15% of the land area as pervious area, with 85% allowed to be impervious. The CBD zoned properties along Front and Sunset contains about 24 acres of land. The change to allow an AAS for up to 100% impervious surface area in the CBD would add up to a maximum of 3 ½ acres of new impervious area, assuming that all the land now developed has the 15% pervious surface area provided. In fact, many of the CBD parcels on Front and Sunset were developed many years ago and are covered with close to 100% impervious surface area, so the increase would be less than the 15%. This loss of pervious surface represents 1.2% of the entire Olde Town planning area (295 acres). This area of Olde Town has the existing storm water drainage system to channel runoff created by the additional impervious area. To address the potential for loss of green spaces within

the CBD, the plan requires development above the 85% impervious area for street tree and planter improvements in the CBD.

An adequate level of parking is required to support the anticipated uses for Olde Town's CBD. The CBD is allowed a 15% reduction in on-site parking standards to promote pedestrian activity. Land Use Code parking requirements for the CBD encourage a large amount of parking, similar to the Gilman commercial or Pickering Place commercial areas. The current condition for parking produces .168 spaces per 100 feet of commercial and office and 1.0 space per multifamily dwelling unit. This is a significant disparity between the existing condition and the existing standards. However, Olde Town has expressed a decidedly different desire to be a walkable, transit friendly, working and shopping destination. As such, the Draft Plan proposes to reduce the CBD parking standards for on-site parking, increase on-street parking, increase accessibility to transit and improve walkability. In doing so, the need for on-site parking should decrease. The off-site parking can accommodate some of the loss, and availability may improve with the proposed establishment of a parking authority to manage reciprocal parking and timed parking.

The last of the land use changes would be to create a land use designation within the Olde Town Subarea Plan for those lands that are targeted for use as public park or open space in the future. The intent is that the future land use would be identified as park, yet it would retain an existing zone (which is residential) until the time when the acquisition of the land by the City is complete. There would be no impact on the land use, because no change would be immediate, but rather long term planned use would be for transition to public park or open space as part of the larger planned open space and greenway network.

Land Use Character Changes

Residential Housing

The residential land use impacts of the Draft Plan will be minor and generally the same as anticipated by the citywide Issaquah Comprehensive Plan. Retaining single family homes on some streets is emphasized to retain the single family character. Some streets will experience infill. The infill residential development will supplement some older single family homes with two or more units. This has already occurred in parts of the Historic Residential area, and will continue. The key to making infill compatible with the traditional residential character will be in the preparation of design guidelines.

This is one of the most affordable areas for housing in Issaquah. Allowing smaller units and lots and more multifamily units will continue to keep housing affordable. Similarly, affordable accessory units or cottages will increase area-wide. Accessory units provide affordable housing in the single family in the Historic Residential neighborhood and as a way to realize the zoning density without large scale redevelopment. The addition of accessory units will also provide an incentive to keep the old housing maintained in good physical shape. Additional incentives will also be needed, such as community based housing rehabilitation.

The addition of multifamily, smaller lot sizes, and accessory units within the residential areas will provide several ways to keep affordable housing in Olde Town. The maintenance of some of the older, dilapidated homes will need immediate attention if they are to be preserved. The Draft Plan identifies that many organizations are needed to help, including continued work with ARCH (A Regional Coalition for Housing), soliciting the group “Christmas in April”, and others for community-supported efforts to maintain affordability. The City can also review and update their present regulations to support accessory units and consider reduced cost permits for low/moderate income units.

Housing affordability is often tied to the use and availability of transit. In the U.S., 20% of household income is dedicated to vehicle transportation. The Draft Plan makes a strong point of pairing the residential density, walkability and access to transit as a way to support the business community. Additionally, it is a way to support affordable housing, by decreasing the home buyer or renter’s dependence on a car for travel.

Commercial

Commercial businesses, which serve the neighborhood, will predominate storefront retail space as a result of the Draft Plan. Retaining a grocery, drug store, butcher, hardware, florist type businesses will be emphasized. New essential neighborhood commercial services supported with needed infrastructure improvements (new development and City) and marketing efforts (Main Street™). Successful increases in retail business and office uses in the CBD will result in more activity in the evenings and on weekends as residents, employees and visitors use downtown. Business hours of operation may stay open later to serve theaters and nighttime visitors. The availability of new office space above retail or in the blocks behind Front Street will allow retail space to predominate the storefronts over time. The Draft Plan provides a focus to incorporate Front Street uses north of Dogwood into the CBD planning. The new retail services along Front Street should be able to cater to the immediate residents with goods and services, and in turn the increase in residents and workers will patronize their local businesses. The new neighborhood oriented commercial (located along E. Sunset Way) may take the form of mixed use residential or conversion of a residence to commercial.

As property improvements are made, rents will increase. Some essential neighborhood services may be lost if they cannot afford the increased rents or are displaced by new development. However, the Main Street™ organization will be a business support resource for those essential services. Growth anticipated by the plan should supply a strong local population (market) which with the aid of marketing and merchandizing of Main Street™ can supply the draw (the desired goods and services) to retain and attract businesses.

The Draft Plan allows for new cottage industries and home-offices interspersed with residences. New home businesses will add economic activity without a necessary increase in building space. Mixed use activities increase the number of people that live and work in Olde Town and will support the business oriented core. An office corridor focus along 1st

Avenue NW and Rainier should help to draw new knowledge based business to Olde Town for its nearby neighborhood amenities.

Historic Resource Impacts

The historic structures inventory identified 64 structures within Olde Town that are over 50 years old. The inventory's structures are shown in **Figure III-B**. The sites, while not necessarily all eligible for the Washington State Historic Register, provide remnants of the early settlement of Issaquah. A second phase of the inventory will examine another 90 structures over 50 years old. The Draft Plan supports the recognition of these structures for their local importance. If the "Historic Walk" past the residential and commercial structures is established it will bring appropriate recognition to the role of Olde Town and acknowledgement of the rich history that is still present. The walk may be modified as more structures are inventoried and recognized for their contributions to local history. The Historical Society should assist in locating the route, structure features, and historic information on signs or placards to locate and identify the structures.

Some of the most actively preserved structures would be the Train Depot and Gilman Town hall, each which is under the care of the Issaquah Historical Society. The Train Depot was carefully hand restored over a 10- year period. It hosts railroad artifacts and memorabilia from Issaquah's early settlers. The Historical Society considers the adjoining track and switch essential to the historical display and of significant value. The addition of more rail cars, used to display Issaquah's historical items, will expand the display area further north along the rail.

The need for pedestrian connections in Olde Town is emphasized in the Draft Plan. Establishing a pedestrian crossing across the railroad track would be an alternative to a street and pedestrian crossing. Pedestrian crossing only would facilitate access to and from the CBD for pedestrians, without the potential conflict of cars and crowds at the depot. Creating a safe pedestrian surface to cross the rail tracks will be technically challenging, but can be engineered. Elimination of the vehicle connection reduces the historic impact to a minimum. Other road grid connection points are identified in the Transportation Impact Analysis section, following the Parking and Circulation chapter.

2. Natural Environment Impacts

The natural environment limitations include frequent flooding areas, drainage patterns, creek and hillside vegetation, and natural habitat.

Surface Drainage Changes

Olde Town is located in the Lower Issaquah Creek and East Fork drainage subbasins of the Issaquah Creek. The Lower Issaquah Creek subbasin is a Class I stream because of its fish resources and habitat value. The portion of the East Fork of Issaquah Creek that passes through Olde Town is also a Class I stream.

Flooding

The Mainstem and East Fork of Issaquah Creek flow primarily along the western and northeastern edges of the Olde Town subarea. Issaquah Creek Basin Non-Point Action Plan (King County, December 1996) shows flooding problems along the Mainstem and East Fork of Issaquah Creek within the Olde Town area. The single greatest flooding issue is that many structures (homes, businesses and public facilities) have been constructed in areas prone to flooding.

Within Olde Town area, flooding along the Mainstem is most severe between Newport Way SE, Front Street S. and W. Sunset Way. The flooding in this part of Olde Town impacts multifamily and single family residential and the Washington State Fish Hatchery, as well as Newport Way SE. While not as widespread, flooding does impact single family residential properties between NW Alder and NW Dogwood Streets.

The City has initiated a flood hazard program to address the continued flooding problems citywide. As part of the program, the City has initiated a program for the purchase of homes and the removal of these buildings from the floodplain. Additionally, the City has initiated construction projects to increase the channel capacity along the Mainstem where the purchase of property and structures is not feasible. Easements from property owners are being requested for purposes of constructing these projects. To date, one home at the end of NW Birch Place and two homes at Newport Way SE have been purchased. The City is currently negotiating for the purchase of one other home within the Olde Town area.

There will be no increase in planned density within flood hazard areas. Although multifamily development may locate near the creek, designing the structures to minimize flood hazard will offset the impacts. Parking facilities and increased building space in downtown will add to the impervious surface area and increase runoff, but storm drainage systems are in the appropriate places to serve CBD growth. The City's flood hazard improvements (broadening the stream corridor, enhancing streamside protection and home purchases) will reduce the impacts from flooding.

Critical Areas (Wetlands, Streams, Steep Slopes)

Wetlands

The Olde Town Subarea has one separate wetland located in an apartment project (Wind Song) adjacent to the urban trail and a second is south of the High School fields on a residential property at the southern end of subarea. Wetlands are a rare occurrence within the Olde Town subarea.

The wetlands within Olde Town will not be impacted by the Draft Plan. The larger wetland is preserved and enhanced by the multifamily development. The southern wetland lies within a Low Density Residential Area (Single Family 4.5 units per acre) which will not be developed intensively if developed.

Streams (Shoreline)

The City's Shoreline Master Program identifies Issaquah Creek (the Mainstem and East Fork) as shorelines of statewide significance. The shoreline area extends 200 feet from the high water of Issaquah Creek and includes any associated wetlands that extend beyond the 200 feet limit. The Shoreline Master Program establishes a separate set of regulation for development that occurs within the shoreline area. The shoreline designations for the East Fork include Urban Residential and Urban Low Density Development. The shoreline designations for Issaquah Creek mainstem include: Urban Low Density Development, Urban Residential and Conservancy Riparian.

The Master Program identifies the purposes for each of the shoreline designations. Urban Low Density Development designation includes land where limited urbanization already exists but the area has some ecological limitations for intensive development. These areas are intended to accommodate future low intensity urban development. Urban Residential includes lands that are presently in residential and commercial use or planned to accommodate these uses. However, the shoreline inventory identified areas of valuable riparian vegetation adjacent to the bank that should be maintained in the event of further development. Conservancy Riparian includes lands with existing riparian vegetation communities. The uses permitted are to maintain riparian vegetation, provide water quality and benefit habitat. These designations are **shown in Figure III-J.**

**Figure III-J
Shoreline Map**

**Figure III-K
Vegetation**

The Draft Plan does not promote intensified development within the floodplain or along shoreline areas. No changes to the shoreline designations are proposed by the Draft Olde Town Subarea Plan. No significant impact to shoreline is anticipated. Shoreline access may be potentially increased by the future acquisition of land at various points along Issaquah Creek as a result of 1) flood hazard prevention actions, 2) park land purchase, and 3) Sunset Interchange improvements.

Vegetation and Habitat

The Olde Town subarea has areas of second growth mixed forest much like the rest of the city. Vegetation corridors help to define the boundaries of Olde Town, especially along the Mainstem and East Fork of Issaquah Creek and along the edge of Tiger Mountain. The existing vegetation plays a critical role in reducing erosion, strengthening slope stability, and maintaining water quality. The existing vegetation provides important habitat for the variety of fish and some limited wildlife in Olde Town. (See **Figure III-K**.)

The riparian vegetation lies along Issaquah Creek (Mainstem and East Fork). The plants associated with the riparian corridor are adapted to erratic flooding conditions. The wetter conditions attract more diverse plant community growth than in drier areas. Consequently these riparian corridors often provide more valuable wildlife habitat per acre than do forested upland areas. Undeveloped riparian zones are important corridors for wildlife in the urban area. Though much of the riparian corridor is developed, low density and undeveloped segments still enable habitat movement. The rooted vegetation along the stream inhibits erosion and sedimentation, filters runoff and enhances fish and wildlife habitat. The shading provided by the taller overstory maintains lower stream temperatures, which is important to salmonids. It also provides breeding habitat for insects, thus improving the availability of food for fish.

The upland forest, or forested edge of Tiger Mountain provides many important functions. Upland forests provide critical fish and wildlife habitat, mitigate flood events, maintain stream flows and enhance aesthetics. Other important functions include recharging groundwater by slowing overland flow and allowing surface water to percolate into aquifers, protecting uplands from erosion, providing open space and recreational areas and providing nutrients for streams from decaying or dying plant life.

As urban development continues in Olde Town, urban vegetation takes on an important role of mitigating visual and physical impacts. Well designed landscaping integrates architecture and land uses, provides relief from urban noise, creates shade, provides wildlife habitat and erosion control, improves aesthetics, and separates differing land uses. Most urban landscapes in Olde Town are exotic trees and shrubs. Non-native species (exotics) are generally visually attractive and hardy and tend to require more irrigation than do native species.

New office, retail and mixed use development will be placed outside the flood and creekside habitat areas, and where the storm drainage is in place to serve it. Although

some additional multifamily or infill residential development will be added at creekside, critical area regulations and shoreline regulations should minimize further intrusion in the creekside habitat. New development within or by the wooded hillsides should use clustering to minimize the wide-scale disturbance of vegetated hillsides. Minimal development in the residential areas along the creek would minimize impact to the riparian habitat. The potential for passive creekside sections in the new northern park (Cybil-Madeline) will encourage wildlife to remain and will retain the undisturbed fish habitat along most of the creek edge.

The Draft Plan advocates retaining greenbelt areas (including natural vegetation retention) to minimize impacts on the habitat loss and retain the areas natural beauty. The addition of tree-lined streetscapes along Front Street and Sunset will provide pedestrians with visual relief from more urbanized conditions. Within residential areas, the addition of accessory units or home occupations will have minimal impact on vegetation.

Land Use and Natural Environment Mitigating Measures

Land Use Mitigation

1. Continually evaluate (and amend if needed) City codes to encourage mixed use development.
2. Design Guidelines will be used to assure quality residential infill that respects residential character.
3. Assure that residential regulations allow flexibility for home occupation, cottage and mother-in-law apartment options.
4. Work with community based housing organizations to facilitate rehabilitation to maintain affordable housing, and construction of new affordable housing units.
5. Use public property and new multifamily development along creek to allow controlled visual access to Issaquah Creek and tie into other segments of the City's trail system.
6. Modify the Land Use Code to :
 - a. Allow accessory units within the Low Density Residential area;
 - b. Through AAS allow increases in impervious surface limits along Front and Sunset CBD zone area, with the correlated requirement for streetscape improvements when the impervious surface exceeds 85%.
 - c. Modify parking ratios in the CBD zone area to require less on-site parking, allow partial on-street parking or created parking to be used to meet CBD parking requirements.
 - d. Establish A Future Park/Open Space overlay designation over existing residential zoning, to allow parcels to be identified for long range park and open space use, while maintaining the owners existing usability.
7. Establish a pedestrian only crossing between NE Alder and NE Creekway within the Historic Depot railcar display area.
8. Establish, at the completion of the Sunset Interchange and SE Issaquah Bypass, designated areas of Open Space to buffer these transportation facilities.

Housing Mitigation

1. Work with ARCH and other agencies to maintain and add affordable housing within Olde Town.
2. Seek Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to aid housing rehabilitation.
3. Assure that residential regulations allow flexibility for home occupations, cottage and accessory unit options.
4. Give low/moderate income units reduced permit costs and other incentives such as reduced parking or increased allowed density.

Natural Environment Mitigation

1. Continue working on the Flood Hazard Plan to reduce the number of units that are susceptible to frequent flooding by either removal, creek improvements and /or raising floor elevations.
2. Enforce the CAO and Shoreline policy and regulatory protections for the vegetation and habitat closest to the creek and on steep hillsides.