



downtown everett
association

strategic plan 2021-2024



welcome to the downtown everett association!

We are the Downtown Everett Association (DEA), a 501(c)(6) nonprofit organization. We champion our downtown community by supporting economic vitality, stewarding public spaces and historic places, promoting local experiences, and cultivating a strong organizational network. For 25 years, we have collaborated with businesses, residents, governments, community organizations, investors, and developers.

OUR EVERETT

Downtown Everett is the heart and soul of Snohomish County. An industrial boomtown born at the end of the 19th century, the setting is ripe with history. Downtown is romantic – dotted with Prohibition-era buildings, vintage streetlamps, and corner bars, harkening back to a time when millworkers were central in this town. Today, with an influx of 60,000 residents planned over the next two decades, Downtown Everett is well on its way to becoming an urban center.

Firmly planted in its history, Downtown Everett is blossoming into the future. New apartment buildings are going up, bringing new residents to the downtown core, and new restaurants, bars, and shops are following in their footsteps. The downtown's first seasonal farmer's market is open for business, with a long list of local producers and artisans bringing their offerings to market in the middle of downtown.

OUR STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

In spring of 2021, we embarked on a strategic planning process to guide our work over the next three to four years. We first conducted a landscape scan to gather community context for this plan. The landscape scan includes demographic analysis, a business market analysis, a synthesis of community outreach conducted prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, and community interviews with three local businessowners to understand the impacts of the pandemic. The full landscape scan is available at downtowneverettwa.org.

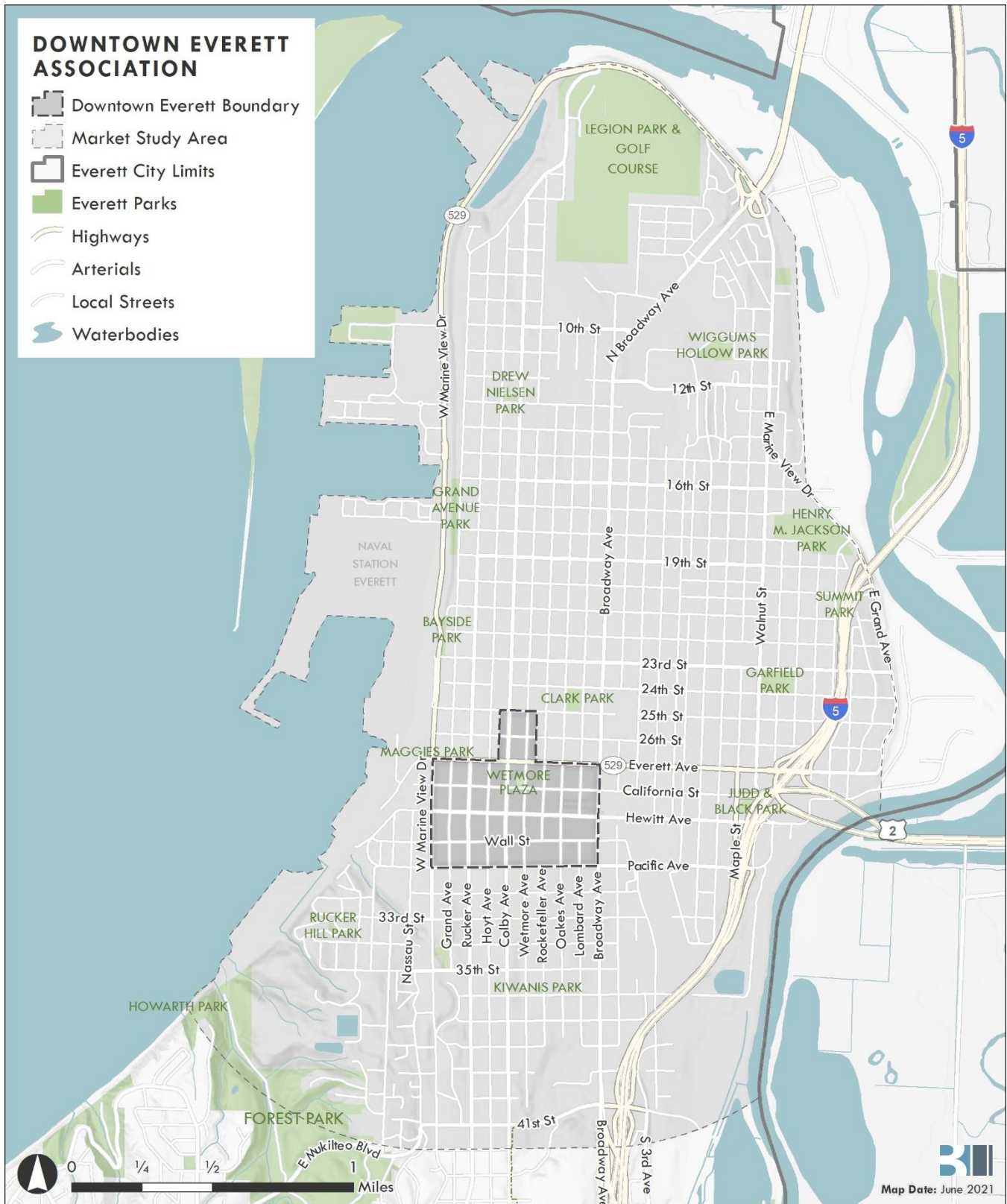
We worked with a Strategic Planning Team and our Board of Directors in May and June of 2021 to craft and adopt this plan. Throughout the duration of this strategy, we will create an annual work plan with specific actions to implement and advance the objectives laid out in this plan.

OUR FOUR FOCUS AREAS

Our strategy is organized around four focus areas:

- 1 – economic vitality and business support
- 2 – design and public space
- 3 – promotion and marketing
- 4 – organization and capacity

our region



our foundations



VISION

Everett's downtown core is the hub of public life in Snohomish County. Its energetic streets are home to an innovative business community, engaged residents, and delighted visitors who experience economic opportunity; a unique historic context; and a vibrant dining, arts, and entertainment culture.

MISSION

We champion Downtown Everett's community of businesses, residents, workers, and visitors by supporting economic vitality, promoting local experiences, cultivating a strong organizational network, and stewarding public spaces and historic places.

TRANSFORMATION STRATEGY

A transformation strategy is a fundamental element of the Main Street Approach™ (see below) and articulates a focused, deliberate path to revitalizing a downtown economy.

We cultivate and grow experiences in dining, entertainment, and the arts in Downtown Everett.

MAIN STREET APPROACH™

The DEA achieved designation as a Main Street Community in early 2021. Through this strategic plan, we embrace our new designation by nesting our work within the [Main Street Approach](#)™, which is centered around a Transformation Strategy and the Four Points of Main Street: economic vitality, design, promotion, and organization.

Each of the four focus areas in this strategy corresponds to one of the Four Points. We incorporate work that previously existed separately – namely the work of the Parking and Transportation Committee and the Downtown Improvement District – into these four focus areas based on precedent set by other Main Street Communities. For further reading on Main Street, visit downtowneverettwa.org/philosophy.

1 – economic vitality and business support

OUR AIM

We strengthen existing businesses and attract new ones to draw new residents, visitors, and investment that creates a healthy, diverse, and thriving economic hub for the entire community to enjoy.

WHERE WE LEAD

- **Support and strengthen new and existing businesses** by understanding and addressing businesses' needs and emphasizing cultivation of excellent customer experiences.
 - **Provide direct services** like workshops and other training opportunities.
 - **Connect businesses to external supports** and relevant programs.
 - **Serve as a liaison** between businesses and the City of Everett.
 - **Cultivate a business network** through means such as creating a business and resource directory or facilitating connections through events and private social media groups so businesses can support and learn from one another.
 - **Welcome new businesses** through a business orientation packet, an onboarding framework, and in-person visits.
 - **Gather feedback from businesses** through means such as an annual survey, in-person visits, focus groups, or listening sessions to understand businesses' hopes and needs.
- **Recruit businesses and creatives** to Downtown Everett, including:
 - **Dining, entertainment, retail, and arts businesses** to create a contiguous business district that offers consumer choice and improves the pedestrian environment.
 - **Professional and service businesses** to offer living-wage jobs that bring more workers into downtown and attract new residents.
- **Develop a program to support small businesses' access to capital** to emphasize entrepreneurship as a means of economic mobility by connecting businesses to lenders, providing consultation, and supporting businesses' loan and grant applications.

WHERE WE COLLABORATE AND ADVOCATE

- Encourage the City of Everett to adopt policies that increase the availability, affordability, and diversity of housing to increase the number of residents and consumers downtown.
- Encourage the City of Everett and developers within the greater community to discourage displacement of existing businesses, artists, and residents while still encouraging economic growth that keeps the benefits within the community.

2 – design and public space

OUR AIM

We cultivate and activate an inviting, accessible, and people-centered atmosphere that celebrates historic character in Downtown Everett.

WHERE WE LEAD

- **Maintain a clean and safe environment** by operating the Downtown Improvement District Clean Team.
- **Activate public spaces** through year-round programming and placemaking, including cultivation of enjoyable areas to sit or linger.
 - **Beautify the district** through the downtown flower program and holiday lighting via Downtown Everett Partners.
 - **Elevate public art** by celebrating and promoting existing murals, sculptures, and art installations, connecting new artists to the City of Everett and property owners, and collaborating with local arts organizations.
- **Support public parking** by managing the Everpark Garage and resources to support access to on-street and off-street parking.

WHERE WE COLLABORATE AND ADVOCATE

We support and encourage local governments, businesses, and community organizations to:

- Incentivize property owners to repair and maintain historic facades and buildings through supportive programs and compliance-focused legal tools like demolition by neglect ordinances.
- Financially support property owners in making seismic upgrades to historic buildings via tax incentives or other public funds.
- Improve transit, bike, and pedestrian connectivity within the City of Everett, including between the Snohomish Riverfront and Everett waterfront, and to nearby regions.
- Create a position at the City of Everett for a parking manager to address parking concerns in the city and downtown.
- Activate public spaces by helping businesses create engaging storefronts, improve facades and signage, and add sidewalk seating.
- Support organizations that provide services and resources for people experiencing homelessness and work with the City of Everett on the Community Streets Initiative to improve the safety and wellbeing of all Everett residents, unhoused or housed.
- Activate public spaces through additional seating, art, and programming maintained by the City of Everett.

3 – promotion and marketing

OUR AIM

We celebrate and share downtown’s thriving arts, entertainment, and dining experiences by promoting community developments and activities happening in and around downtown.

WHERE WE LEAD

- **Host and support existing and new promotional events** to attract patrons of dining, entertainment, and the arts to visit downtown.
 - **Encourage businesses to provide incentives** like special experiences, limited edition goods, or coupons to draw additional event attendees.
 - **Develop promotional materials and shopping guides** to increase event awareness and support local businesses.
 - **Recruit events** that currently occur elsewhere to relocate to Downtown Everett.
 - **Increase community support for hosting events downtown** by communicating the benefits and addressing any concerns of downtown businesses and residents.
- **Establish the DEA as a voice for the community** by maintaining an interactive, engaging organizational website and social media channels.
 - **Promote local campaigns** like “You can make it in Everett” and “Visit Everett” to build DEA brand awareness and support businesses.
 - **Shift public perception about Everett** by crafting messaging that champions Everett as a top-tier community full of diversity, beauty, excellence, and opportunity.
 - **Encourage businesses and residents to “buy local”** for services, labor, and goods to recirculate money within the community.
- **Champion the benefits of the DEA’s efforts** to downtown residents, businesses, and members to strengthen community understanding of DEA’s role and importance to the region.

WHERE WE COLLABORATE AND ADVOCATE

- Support the City of Everett in certifying Downtown Everett as a Washington State Arts Commission Creative District to promote Everett’s creative identity.
- Support and align with Everett Tourism and Snohomish County Tourism by sharing information, co-creating initiatives, and co-messaging campaigns to bring more visitors to the region.

4 – organization and capacity

OUR AIM

We build our membership and collaborate with residents and businesses to improve our organizational capacity in conjunction with Downtown Everett's growth.

WHERE WE LEAD

- **Grow and cultivate a highly engaged and inclusive community** of DEA supporters.
 - **Formalize and promote the DEA's membership structure** and maintain lasting relationships with members.
 - **Serve Everett's business community** by connecting businesses located outside the Downtown Improvement District to DEA events and networking opportunities.
 - **Engage volunteers to supplement DEA staff capacity** by creating volunteer opportunities and encouraging community members to invest time and effort into continuously strengthening Downtown Everett.
 - **Develop relationships with faith communities** that have downtown houses of worship to reach and collaborate with communities that regularly visit Downtown Everett.
- **Strengthen and diversify the DEA's financial resources.**
 - **Create and implement a co-fundraising strategy** with Downtown Everett Partners.
 - **Evaluate expanding the Downtown Improvement District** in 2026 through preliminary feasibility research.
 - **Convey the value of donating to the DEA** via the Main Street Tax Credit Incentive Program.
- **Increase staff capacity** to address the objectives outlined in this strategy.
 - **Fundraise for and hire new staff.**
 - **Support staff professional development and wellbeing** to retain staff and help staff build skills.
- **Develop collaborative relationships with key external partners** to co-amplify messages, share resources to leverage capacity, and reduce duplication of efforts.
 - **Establish and manage a formal relationship with Downtown Everett Partners.**
 - **Partner with public sector agencies**, including the City of Everett, Snohomish County, and the Port of Everett.
 - **Engage a wide range of private sector partners**, including nonprofits and for-profits.

WHERE WE COLLABORATE AND ADVOCATE

- Support relevant initiatives led by external partners to cultivate relationships of mutual support.

our committees

We support each of our focus areas with a committee of dedicated volunteers.

ECONOMIC VITALITY

The Economic Vitality Committee develops businesses by supporting local entrepreneurs. It works to build a diverse economic base, to encourage new public and private investment, and to create a strong entrepreneurship ecosystem.

DESIGN

The Design Committee develops physical spaces by leveraging the existing built and historic environment and other physical assets, including public art. It works to create an inviting, inclusive atmosphere, to celebrate historic character, and to foster accessible, people-centered public spaces. It also advocates for the Downtown Improvement District (DID) given its important role in improving public spaces.

PROMOTION

The Promotion Committee develops markets by leveraging local cultural assets. It works to promote Downtown Everett's defining characteristics, to communicate unique features through storytelling, and to support a "buy local" experience.

ORGANIZATION

The Organization Committee develops partners by leveraging an engaged public. It works to build leadership and strong organizational capacity, to ensure broad community engagement, and to forge partnerships across sectors. It also oversees and develops the DEA's financial assets.

PARKING AND TRANSPORTATION

This strategy incorporates transportation and parking efforts under Design and Public Space, but the Design Committee and Transportation Committee are distinct.

The Parking and Transportation Committee develops access by leveraging the transportation infrastructure. It works to improve mobility in and around Downtown Everett by efficiently managing existing parking resources, improving bike routes, and increasing walkability in the urban core. It also supports the Everpark Garage.



acknowledgements

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Photos on page 4 and 10 courtesy of City of Everett.