



downtown everett  
association

Strategic Plan 2025 – 2027

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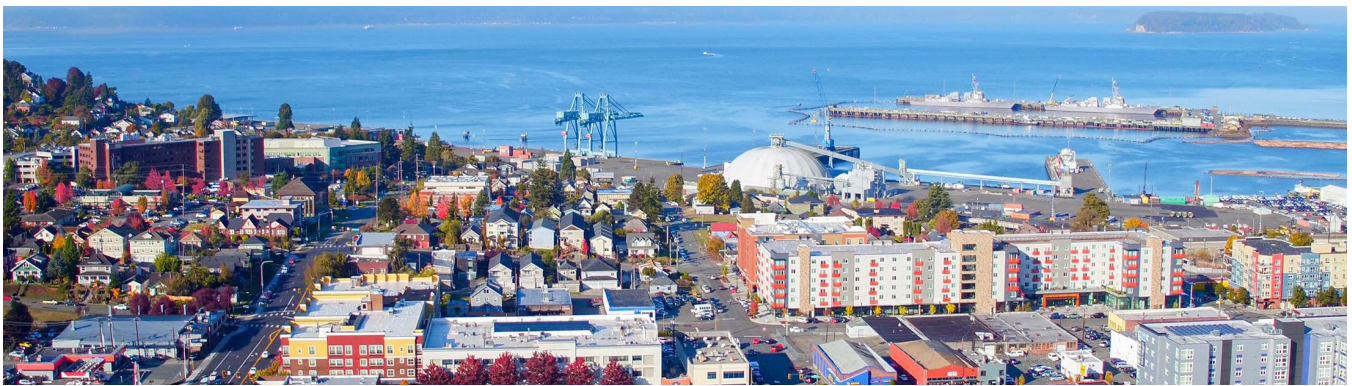
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# Welcome to the Downtown Everett Association!

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 over 25 years, we have collaborated with businesses, residents, governments, community organizations, investors, and developers.

The Downtown Everett Association is supported by a dedicated team of volunteer board members and full-time and part-time staff. Our team encompasses expertise in management, administration, marketing, and business development. Together we oversee operations of the Everpark Garage, manage the Downtown Improvement District, and drive downtown revitalization efforts.

In addition to these efforts, the DEA produces signature events such as Sip & Shop, Cookie Crawl, Downtown Trick-or-Treating, Salty Sea Days, and holiday promotions. We also support the City of Everett's major events like Wintertide, Sorticulture and other downtown community gatherings.



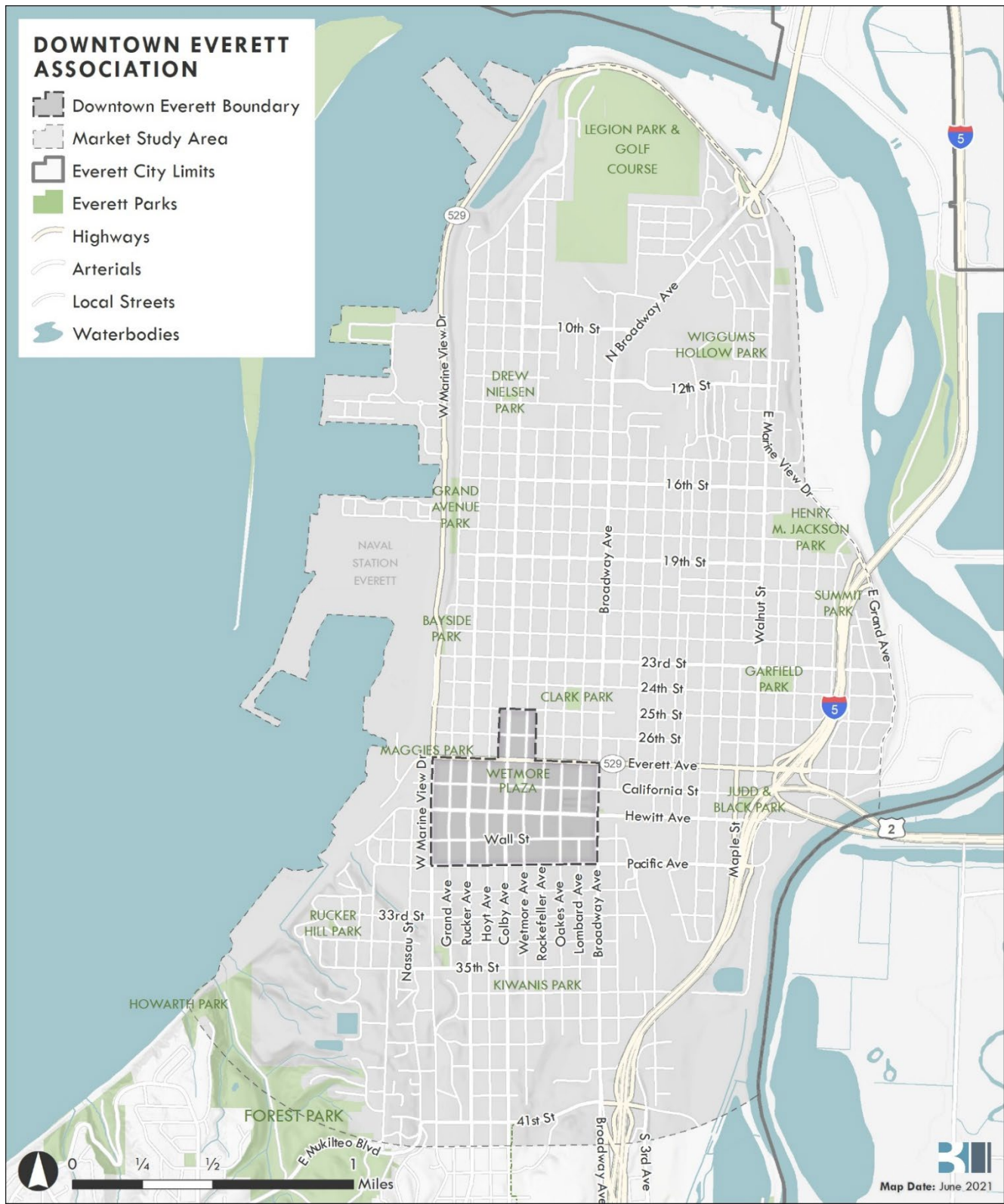
## Our Everett

**Downtown Everett is the vibrant heart and soul of Snohomish County**, rich with history and brimming with opportunity. Once an industrial boomtown rooted in the 19th century, its Prohibition-era buildings, vintage streetlamps, and charming corner bars tell stories of its past while setting the stage for an exciting future.

Today, Downtown Everett is a dynamic hub of culture, commerce, and community. New residential developments are drawing people downtown, fueling the growth of local restaurants, bars, and shops. The area offers stunning views of the Puget Sound alongside lively parks, markets, and events. From art galleries and theaters to the Everett Farmers Market and annual festivals, the downtown area pulses with creativity and connection.

As the economic and cultural center of Snohomish County, Downtown Everett offers unmatched potential. Its thriving business district, accessibility via major highways and transit, and unique charm continue to attract residents, visitors, and entrepreneurs alike. With a strong sense of history and an eye toward the future, Downtown Everett remains the cornerstone of community life in the region, poised for continued growth and prosperity. With plans for significant growth over the next two decades, Downtown Everett is transforming into a thriving urban center that honors its heritage and embraces growth.

# Our Region





# Our Foundations

## MISSION

*To advance a vibrant and thriving downtown.*

## 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 STATEMENT

We collaborate with the city and a broad range of partners who have come together to build a vital cultural and economic hub in Everett. We envision the downtown as a bustling center of life and home to innovative businesses; a thriving arts and cultural community; a wide range of retail, dining, and entertainment options; historic architecture; and essential services. People are excited about the opportunity to create a downtown that is uniquely Everett. It is an exciting and inclusive place for young, old, and people with diverse backgrounds, families, and professions.



## MAIN STREET APPROACH™

Downtown Everett Association became a designated Main Street Community in January 2021, joining 35 other Main Streets across Washington State. Washington Main Street assists communities to revitalize the economy, appearance, and image of their downtown districts using the successful Main Street Approach™, a comprehensive revitalization strategy built around a community's unique heritage and attributes. The Main Street Approach™ has four focus areas, called the Four Points, which drive our revitalization efforts: Design, Economic Vitality, Organization, and Promotion. 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. 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 assists with the organization's fundraising efforts.

## TRANSFORMATION STRATEGY

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

In 2021, we launched our transformation strategy: "We cultivate and grow experiences in dining, entertainment, and the arts in Downtown Everett." This foundational strategy will be redefined within the upcoming Downtown Vision & Action Plan.

# Our Process

## STRATEGIC PLANNING

Our Strategic Planning process included an organizational assessment with Kennedy Consulting LLC in late 2023. The Downtown Everett Association team used the output of the assessment work to complete this strategic planning work in 2024. The work included:

- Create and agree on a *mission* statement.
- Review and update the *vision* as needed and begin to define key metrics of success to measure progress to the vision.
- Identify *barriers* to achieving our vision that when removed will allow the DEA to move the revitalization work forward.
- Identify *strategic objectives* for the next three years along with high level execution tasks.

- Place the strategic objectives on a *roadmap*.
- Assist in defining near-term *yearly plans*.
- Implement Strategic Actioning planning process.

One of the key findings of the assessment was that the DEA has two main functions that include downtown enhancement and revitalization. The team concluded that the downtown enhancement work of beautification and placemaking is (1) a clearly defined and mature function that is performing at the agreed to levels, (2) in continual improvement mode, and (3) that it supports the revitalization work. In contrast, the revitalization work is just beginning and is naturally in an early maturity stage.

The DEA will follow a metrics based, best practice, and iterative approach called Strategic Actioning that integrates planning into normal operations and is built on an action-based model of Assess, Plan, Act, Measure.

## BARRIERS

- 1 Planning, implementation, and investment are inadequate to accomplish revitalization
- 2 Public safety perception and lack of resources to address social issues
- 3 Lack of a cohesive team of property and business owners with a shared vision
- 4 Minimal enforcement of existing general code violations and neglected properties
- 5 Blank first floor storefronts and disconnected active retail

## OUR OBJECTIVES

- 1 Create Business Development Manager Position **COMPLETED**
- 2 Lead the creation of a Downtown Vision & Action Plan
- 3 Improve downtown safety & security
- 4 Make Downtown Everett a destination
- 5 Build a network of engaged property owners
- 6 Update economic development plan

# 1 – Create Business Development Manager Position

The DEA's Business Development Manager will play a key role in revitalizing Downtown Everett by focusing on business recruitment and support. This position will contribute directly to objectives 2, 4 and 5. The Business Development Manager will connect entrepreneurs with available spaces, provide guidance and support throughout the business opening process, and collaborate with property owners and the City of Everett to create a thriving business environment. This role is crucial for achieving the DEA's goal of establishing Downtown Everett as a prime business, cultural, entertainment, dining, retail, and residential destination.

**OBJECTIVE 1 COMPLETED IN SEPTEMBER 2024**

## 2 – Lead the creation of a Downtown Vision & Action Plan

The DEA will lead the effort to create a "Downtown Vision and Action Plan." This plan will help guide future development and revitalization efforts. This plan updates and expands upon previous efforts, notably the 2006 plan led by the consulting firm MAKERS which catalyzed the shift towards a more diverse metropolitan center. And more recently, Metro Everett 2018, a subarea plan focused on growth allocation and transformational placemaking. Significant progress highlights Downtown Everett's current moment, calling for a refreshed plan. With this new vision and action plan there will be a strong emphasis on incorporating urban design, ensuring that future projects contribute positively to the downtown's physical character, pedestrian experience, public spaces, and overall aesthetic appeal, fostering a truly vibrant and well-designed urban core.

### ASSESS

The assessment was completed as part of the strategic planning effort. The DEA will lead the effort to hire a firm to develop a Vision & Action Plan that guides future development and revitalization. This planning work will start by reviewing Metro Everett and identifying new opportunities for vibrant placemaking and economic growth. Key focus areas include streetscape, business and activity nodes, arts and culture, and public spaces. Deliverables include data collection and analysis, stakeholder engagement, a shared vision and strategic goals, project and budget identification, metrics to measure success, and resulting in a plan document with visual elements.

### PLAN

2025:

- Raise the estimated \$75,000 - \$125,000 to complete the plan.
- Issue an RFP for planning firms to assist in developing the Vision & Action Plan.
- Evaluate proposals based on experience, approach, cost, and alignment with DEA goals.
- Select a planning firm and develop and sign contracts

2026:

- Develop project plan.
- Engage stakeholders that include residents, property owners, city officials, local businesses, and community organizations.
- Complete the Downtown Everett Vision and Action Plan.
- Review and finalize.
- Begin execution of the action plan.

### ACT/MEASURE

Post completion of the Vision and Action Plan.



### 3 – Improve Downtown Safety and Security

Building upon the City's efforts to improve public safety, the DEA will work with the City of Everett to establish public safety goals for the downtown area and establish a program to collect and regularly update the data. In recent years, the City of Everett has implemented several initiatives to improve public safety, including establishing buffer zones and increasing social services to support vulnerable populations. The DEA will continue to host existing meetings with the city and Everett Police representatives to identify and triage problems that negatively impact businesses.

#### ASSESS

The DEA will support the city to improve public safety and security in the downtown area to remove this barrier to downtown revitalization.

#### PLAN

2025:

- Work with the City, Police Department, and local businesses to establish a set of agreed to public safety metrics that when improved will result in improved safety and security.
- Conduct a comprehensive assessment of current safety challenges, leveraging stakeholder input and data.
- Develop and distribute a perception survey to identify when, where, and why safety concerns arise within the community.

#### ACT

2026+

- Work with the City and Police Department to develop an action plan to address identified issues, focusing on high-priority areas.
- Meet with the City of Everett representative(s) and Everett Police team monthly to review progress and share information.
- Implement safety initiatives (e.g., safety teams and/or EPD patrol, increased lighting, surveillance systems, community forums, CPTED reviews).
- Explore funding to contract a private security firm.
- Regularly report progress to stakeholders through monthly and annual updates.
- Share insights and outcomes to demonstrate impact and maintain transparency.

#### MEASURE

- Measure the effectiveness of actions taken and iterate the plan as needed.

## 4 – Make Downtown Everett a Destination

The DEA will partner with the city and a broad range of stakeholders to plan and execute actions to move downtown toward being a vibrant retail and cultural destination. The DEA will plan, staff, and execute a program to work with property owners, the City, and local brokers to fill downtown vacant first floor retail spaces with a mix of businesses desired by the community. The plan will follow the recommendations of the Downtown Vision and Action Plan and include clear and agreed to metrics, set baselines for each metric, and have annual targets to measure progress to the goal. To focus limited resources, the plan will define prioritized focus areas or streets of downtown that when improved will provide the foundation for future growth. This work will support strategic objective #5 through building strong relationships between downtown property and business owners.

### ASSESS

The DEA Executive Director and Business Development Manager will lead this effort in coordination with the City and key stakeholders.

### PLAN

- Identify focus areas for active business revitalization involving nightlife, entertainment, retail, and restaurants, prioritizing key streets or zones with high potential for growth.
- Determine the desired active business mix to attract diverse consumer demographics.
- Develop a visual representation of the existing retail mix.
- Develop a comprehensive implementation plan to address vacant retail spaces, including strategies to attract new tenants and incentives to encourage occupancy. This plan should include proactive outreach to property and business owners, emphasizing the benefits of a well-curated retail mix and its positive impact on the broader community.
- Actively work with the selected planning firm to complete the Downtown Vision and Action Plan and incorporate the actions into the DEA workplan.

### ACT

- Partner with city officials to streamline permitting and zoning processes for new businesses.
- Collaborate and execute on projects to enhance the visitor experience and create an 18-hour city: Creative District formation, nightlife initiative, seasonal events, pop ups and art installations in vacant storefronts.
- Other actions as defined by the various planning efforts.

### MEASURE

- The DEA team will iteratively measure the impact of actions to the achievement of agreed to metrics and adjust future actions as needed.

## 5 – Build a Network of Engaged Property Owners

The DEA and their partners will develop and execute a plan to build an *effective team of existing property owners and would be investors* that share a common vision of downtown and are inspired to implement that vision. This team will work to identify opportunities that lead and help promote the downtown transformation work plan. This work will be integrated with the ongoing effort to connect property owners with prospective businesses and build a strong network of business owners.

### ASSESS

The strategic planning team recognized the importance of engaged and supportive property owners to achieving our stated vision of a vibrant downtown. The Business Development Manager will lead this effort in coordination with key business and City stakeholders. This work will begin in 2026+.

### PLAN

Potential planning steps include:

- Identify and connect with property owners and investors with a vested interest in downtown revitalization.
- Define the roles and contributions expected from participants.
- Align goals to help promote the downtown vision and action plan.
- Develop a roadmap to engage property owners and inspire collaboration, including incentives and recognition programs.

### ACT/MEASURE

Potential Act/Measure steps include:

- Host workshops and forums to align on a shared vision and promote best practices.
- Identify early-win redevelopment and improvement opportunities and work with property owners to execute them.
- Track the progress of redevelopment and improvements projects and report outcomes to maintain momentum and stakeholder buy-in.
- Identify key properties and incorporate with objective item 4 – Make Downtown Everett a Destination.



## 6 – Update Economic Development Plan

The DEA will work with the City of Everett to update the downtown portion of Everett's existing city-wide *economic development plan* using the output from the Downtown Vision and Action Plan.

### ASSESS

Once the Downtown Vision and Action Plan is complete the City and DEA will work together to plan and execute changes to Everett's economic development plan.

### PLAN

Potential planning steps include:

- Review the current economic development plan and identify areas to align with Vision and Action plan.
- Integrate strategies for retail revitalization, property development, and cultural programming into the updated plan.
- Ensure the plan addresses public safety, transportation, and infrastructure improvements.
- Facilitate stakeholder review and feedback sessions to finalize the updated economic development plan.

### ACT/MEASURE

Potential Act and Measure steps include:

- Secure approval from the City of Everett for formal adoption.
- Coordinate with relevant departments and organizations to implement prioritized actions from the updated plan.
- Monitor and report on implementation progress, adjusting strategies as needed.

# Acknowledgments

Thank you to the following individuals for supporting the creation of this strategic plan.

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Michael Finch | *President*  
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Karlee Deatherage  
Dan Gaffney  
Sherry Jennings  
Danielle Lothrop  
Aaron Sheckler  
Jordan Stephens  
Alessandra Szebenyi  
Erica Weir

## STRATEGIC PLANNING TEAM

Chrissy Goodrich  
Tyler Chism  
Karlee Deatherage  
Brian Farrell  
Michael Finch  
Dan Gaffney  
Patrick Hall  
Dana Oliver  
Collin Palen  
Stephanie Prothero  
Craig Skotdal  
Hayley Larson  
Liz Stenning

## DEA MANAGEMENT STAFF

Liz Stenning | *Executive Director*  
Amber Peterson | *Marketing & Events Manager*  
Scott Hulme | *Business Development Manager*  
Nic Boshart | *Field Operations Manager*  
Stephanie Prothero | *Business Administrator*

## KENNEDY CONSULTING LLC

Sean Kennedy | *Principal in Charge*

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