

Nisqually Road Corridor Charette

January and April 2001

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Introduction



INTRODUCTION

Background

On a clear day Mount Rainier is visible from an enormous distance. Many people journey to the mountain to find solitude, challenge, and inspiration, or simply to admire the magnificent scenery. To the Nisqually Tribe it is Tahoma, a source of spirituality and provider of sustenance and healing. To others the mountain serves as a majestic backdrop to the towns and landscapes existing in its shadow. Undeniably, it is an icon and a source of regional pride. As such, it is a tourist attraction that draws up to 2 million domestic and international travelers per year, with most of its visitation occurring during the summer months. The park frontcountry becomes very crowded on sunny weekends. This pattern of use results in traffic congestion within the park, particularly at Paradise and Sunrise, and in outlying communities. This leads to resource impacts and a generally deteriorating visitor experience within the park, and threatens the quality of life in communities outside the park boundary.



Mount Rainier

The National Park Services (NPS) policy on tourism exists

“to promote and support sustainable, responsible, informed, and managed visitor use through cooperation and coordination with the tourism industry. National Parks have been interwoven with tourism from the earliest days of the National Park Service. In the early part of the 20th century, National Park Service leaders Stephen Mather and Horace Albright believed the public needed to be enticed into the parks to experience them first hand in order to understand and support their values and importance. The lure of both natural and cultural areas as magnets for tourism and related economic activity has been understood and capitalized on by many interests.”¹

By 1899, the year Mount Rainier National Park was established, James Longmire had opened a resort for tourists at Longmire Meadows. Paradise and Sunrise are also examples of development that was intended to encourage visitation to this park.

“Today, the Service is challenged to protect park resources in the face of unprecedented visitor demands, particularly in the high use portions of the most heavily visited parks.”²

Mount Rainier National Park faces this challenge. When park facilities are filled to capacity, visitors may be turned away, without adequate information on other recreational opportunities available outside the park.

In fall 1999, to begin to address this problem, the National Park Service joined in discussions with federal, state and local government agencies and private business organizations with interests in land use, tourism, transportation, and economic development along road corridors leading to the Upper Nisqually Valley. During these initial discussions, it

was noted that the rural gateway communities were interested in encouraging stable economic development at appropriate levels and kinds of tourism, but were concerned about jeopardizing their quality of life. In fact, many of these communities had recently completed or were in the process of preparing comprehensive land use plans, vision statements, and design standards.

Also at that time, an NPS initiative was underway to address transportation issues and explore alternative transportation options in and around national parks. This initiative, known as the Alternative Transportation Program (ATP), is managed by the National Park Service and funded by the Transportation Enhancement Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) through the Federal Lands Highway Program. Through the Alternative Transportation Program, the National Park Service set aside funding to study road corridors leading to Mount Rainier National Park and to address associated tourism, resource management, and transportation-related issues along those road corridors.

The studies began in August 2000, when the National Park Service assembled a planning and design team to work with a team of local citizens, stakeholders, agency representatives, and technical experts. The team was comprised of landscape architects, architects, transportation planners, interpretive planners, an economist, and a graphic artist. Work began with the State Route 410 All-American Road Corridor Charette, held in September 2000. The team, with a few new members, returned to the region in January and April 2001 to conduct the Nisqually Road Corridor Charette.

Charette Approach

A *charette* is an intensive, focused effort to develop conceptual plans within compressed, creative, high-energy sessions. In addition to the components



The Charette Team

of a workshop, a charette involves production of plans and concepts based on the input of all participating interests. The term charette initially appeared in the early part of the late 1800s. Architecture students in Paris who needed to rush their drawings to the Ecole Des Beaux-Arts placed them on a cart, which was called a charette. Later the word came to describe any intense, short-term, student design project. Today the architectural and design community uses the word to describe any intense, on-the-spot design effort.

The charette structure was organized around a two-week time frame. The first week was focused on the team becoming thoroughly familiar with the landscape of the corridor as well as meeting as many of the stakeholders as possible and becoming familiar with the issues, opportunities, and concerns.

During the first week public meetings were held in

Eatonville and Elbe/Ashford. An all-day workshop was conducted with many of the corridor stakeholders. The workshop began with a “mirror” exercise, where the planning team members reflected their corridor experiences, including what they had seen during the field analyses and what they heard during meetings with stakeholders. Next, a comprehensive list was created of key corridor issues and opportunities that stakeholders wanted to see advanced in the charette. Participants voted on those they felt were most important, and priorities were set. For the remainder of the day, team members led smaller stakeholder groups through brainstorming exercises for each of the priority issues/opportunities.

During the second week the design team focussed on graphic production and scripting a visitor experience for the Nisqually Road Corridor and its surrounding landscape. Stakeholders were encouraged to drop in and participate. The team produced illustrative

graphics and conceptual plans based on the field-work, issues, input, goals, and brainstorming sessions for presentation to all parties involved. At the end of the second week the team shared the plans and concepts generated with the stakeholders and gave everyone a sense of the next steps to be taken.

At the January 2001 charette it became clear that a significant portion of the corridor was left out of the initial study that examined the highway 7 and 161 road corridors from Tacoma and Payallup, respectively. The SR 510 corridor runs from I-5 at Lacey, by the Nisqually Indian Reservation to Yelm, State Route 507 runs between Yelm and McKenna (due South of Roy), and feeds into State Route 702 which leads to State Route 7, nine miles north of LaGrande. The team returned in April 2001 to meet with citizens and planners from Thurston County, Yelm, Roy, and McKenna.

Charette Objectives

Strengthen partnerships among corridor stakeholders and interest groups; encourage broad participation and creativity.

Consider concepts for retaining intrinsic values and special resources through collaborative initiatives and management while enhancing use and enjoyment for visitors and residents alike.

Build on and advance previous plans or initiatives; develop ideas/concepts as a step towards a common vision for the corridor presented in a highly graphic and user friendly ideas document.

Recognize corridor opportunities and develop approaches to disperse congestion; explore alternative transportation opportunities.

Support opportunities for enhancing a sustainable, less seasonably dependent economic vitality for corridor gateway communities and visitor service providers.



Charette participants

Nisqually Road Corridor Study

The Nisqually Road is a 26-mile stretch of paved road, SR 7/706, between Eatonville and the Nisqually Entrance at Mount Rainier National Park. For purposes of this study it extends up the mountain to Paradise and from the Eatonville vicinity out to “feeder routes” along SR 161, SR 7, SR 702, SR507 and SR 510 into the Nisqually Basin, where they eventually tie to the Interstate 5 road corridor.

Within these road corridors is a rich mosaic of natural resources, recreational opportunities, rural and agricultural lands, wild landscapes, and small communities. The challenge for the future of this place is to retain all of its high-quality intrinsic values while enhancing use and enjoyment for visitors and residents alike. It is a balancing act that has been addressed by the many existing community land use plans and vision statements as well as a management plan for the Nisqually River Watershed.

While many plans exist, there remains a need to tie their common components together. The Nisqually Road and its feeder routes are part of a transportation network that threads these communities and experiences together and they are recreational experiences in and of themselves. Thus, it is with all of this in mind that the Nisqually Road corridor charette began.

It should be noted that all recommendations in this document are collective ideas generated by the project participants and are conceptual in nature. This document is a record of ideas generated in an intensive two-week effort and may contain inaccuracies or omissions (a formal draft document will not be distributed). If advanced, recommendations would require planning, compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and state Environmental policy/Act (SEPA), and public input and design, prior to any implementation. Therefore, until affected historic, cultural, and natural resources are identified and avoidance or mitigation strategies negotiated with the regional American Indian Tribes and other interested parties, the recommendations and visions delineated here remain subject to design changes, relocation, or termination resulting from Federal, State and local policies, and legal processes designed to assure that tribal and other historic, cultural and natural resources are given appropriate consideration and protection.

Through the use of transportation planning strategies, the ideas presented in this document begin to knit together the many plans and initiatives of the local counties and communities to address common issues and to develop solutions that realize shared or common visions. The “Regional Context and Existing Conditions” section of this document describes the corridor setting, its intrinsic qualities, and relevant planning efforts. Opportunities for conservation and appropriate use and alternative transportation strategies are discussed in the section entitled “Overall Corridor Charette Recommendations.” In the “Design Concepts and Sketches” section, initial concepts for new facilities and improvements to existing sites are explored. Respect for those areas that are pristine could ensure that the very qualities that contribute to the health and well being of the Nisqually River Watershed and its associated fisheries and wildlife are conserved. The recommendations in this plan are intended to be consistent with planning efforts con-



Charette participants

ducted at the Federal, State, county and community level, such as the *Nisqually River Basin Management Plan*, the *Upper Nisqually Valley Community Plan*, the *Mount Rainier General Management Plan*, and the *WSDOT Route Development Plans for SR 507 (1997) and SR 510 (1998)*. The “Next Steps and Funding” sections of this document are devoted to ideas for future planning, management, operations, and funding for the Nisqually Road Corridor.

¹ NPS Directors' Order #17, Policy on Tourism

² *Ibid.*

REGIONAL CONTEXT

Nisqually Road Corridor Description and Character

The Nisqually River begins at Mount Rainier's Nisqually glacier and flows to Puget Sound, at Tacoma. The river provides a natural transportation corridor, which includes the ancestral home of the Nisqually Indians, who now reside on a reservation about 10 miles upstream from the mouth of the river.

The corridor has many diverse landscapes as well as cultural and historical features. From a strictly geographical perspective, the corridor consists of the watershed area represented by the Nisqually River Basin starting at the Nisqually Glacier on Mt. Rainier, then following the course of the Nisqually River, to the Nisqually Delta on Puget Sound. The Nisqually

Road accesses campgrounds and day use facilities at Alder Lake State Park, Washington State University's Pack Forest, Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest campgrounds and the Elbe Hills-Mount Tahoma Trails area and winds through the small towns of Alder, Elbe and Ashford, to the Nisqually entrance of Mount Rainier National Park.

The corridor lies within three Washington State counties. Most of the land area, including Mount Rainier and the portion of the Upper Nisqually Valley north of the Nisqually River, is in Pierce County. From Mount Rainier to Elbe, land bordering the south side of the Nisqually River is in Lewis County and from Elbe to Puget Sound, land on the south side of the Nisqually River is located in Thurston County.

For international travelers as well as those traveling to Mount Rainier from other states the corridor really extends to the Seattle-Tacoma Airport. For many,

this is where the experience begins. Those who sign up with local mountaineering guide services begin their journey to Mount Rainier when they board shuttle buses provided by the guide services. For travelers to the area from Seattle, Tacoma, and Olympia, the visual perception of the corridor begins along the roads to Mount Rainier. Distinct changes in landscape character from urban development to rural residences and farms can be observed when approaching the Upper Nisqually Valley from SR 161, south of the community of Graham, and southbound along SR7 approaching the Ohop Valley. A similar change in character occurs when traveling on SR 510 just before entering the Nisqually Indian Reservation, although the character becomes urbanized when passing through Yelm and McKenna before joining SR 702 en route to SR 7. The character gradually gives way from rural to densely forested as one nears the Nisqually entrance to Mount Rainier National Park.

Natural Landscape¹

Along the corridor and within the Nisqually River Basin the natural landscape was formed 13,000 years ago by the Vashon ice sheet as it retreated toward Canada, leaving glacial outwash plains behind. The dynamic forces of Mount Rainier's glaciers have largely defined the corridor's landscape. These glaciers feed glacial rivers and are a continuous source of water for wildlife and downstream communities.

Erosive forces of the Nisqually River cut valleys in the glacial material within the Nisqually basin. As the water neared Puget Sound the river lost energy and began to meander as it deposited silt, thus forming the Nisqually River delta. The process of sediment deposition is diminished today. Two hydroelectric dams, one at Alder and the other at La Grande, trap sediment behind them and release water in calculated amounts to produce power, control flooding and preserve the salmon runs in the Lower Nisqually River.



The natural landscape differs from high to low elevations. Where the Nisqually River begins on the slopes of Mount Rainier, the *Alpine* environment (life zone) is one of perpetual ice and snow. Below the alpine environment are the *Fellfields*, located above the treeline and below the glaciers. This is an environment where species, some endemic only to Mount Rainier, subsist on thin soils of volcanic origin. Below the fellfields, in the *Subalpine* environment, one can see the stunted growth of conifers known as Krummholz. Subalpine meadows are predominant at this 6,500-foot elevation. Below the subalpine meadows is the *Silver Fir Forest* where the Pacific silver fir is the dominant species.

The *Lowland Forest* is often called old-growth forest. Much of the forest has been logged and/or converted to farm and pasture use. Remnants of old growth forest are preserved within Mount Rainier National Park and the University of Washington's Pack Forest. Douglas fir, often reaching heights of 250 feet, is the dominant species within this life zone.

The *Prairies* that were interspersed within the lowland forest were rocky areas of glacial till overlain by a thin layer of soil. Mature Douglas fir and Oregon white oak dot the remnant prairies, which had been routinely burned by native tribes to maintain grassland for pasturing horses, attracting other wildlife such as elk, and ensuring sustained growth of the camas lily, a principal food source for the tribe. Today the Nisqually prairies are disappearing due to development and the invasion of exotic grasses and Scotch broom. Only two prairies remain, both on the Fort Lewis Military Reservation, and these are managed by the state.

The *Riparian* zone is the vegetated area bordering and protecting streams, rivers, lakes, and ponds. Deciduous shrubs and hardwood trees, such as maple, cottonwood, alder, and willow, thrive in this water rich environment and provide shade and cover for fish and habitat for eagles, osprey, and herons.

The *Delta* supports an incredibly rich and diverse number of habitats. The Nisqually Wildlife Refuge protects most of the delta. The delta is comprised of working farms that have given way to grasslands, bluffs that flank the delta, freshwater and saltwater marshes, and mudflats that give way to Puget Sound. The delta is a species rich area and is part of the Pacific Flyway.

The *Nisqually River* provides prime habitat for spawning salmon, ocean-going steelhead, and cutthroat trout. The most important fishery in the Nisqually River is the wild chum, which runs in December and January. Chinook and coho salmon also run during the summer and fall. The health of the river and its fisheries is linked with the health of the riparian habitat and ultimately all of the ecosystems in the Nisqually Basin.

The Nisqually Tribe, commercial fishermen, and sport fishermen depend on the river and its ability to sustain these fisheries. Similarly, the tourist and recre-

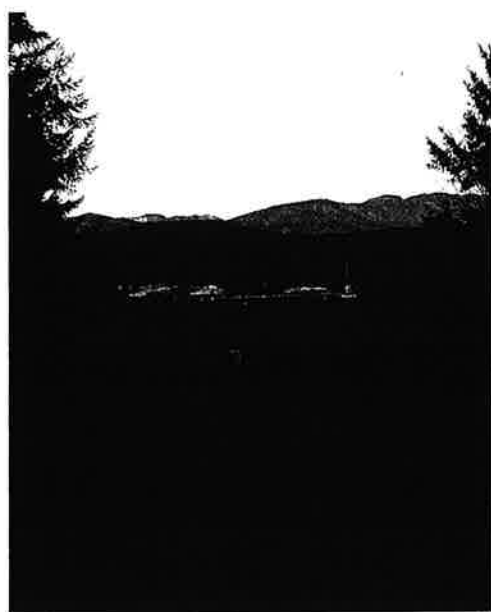


Nisqually Valley

ation-based economy of the region depends on the ability of the valley's inhabitants and public land managing agencies to protect and conserve its resources.

Species found within the corridor include:

- algae and ice worms, ptarmigan, mountain goat, ravens, bear and porcupine
- hoary marmot, golden-mantled ground squirrels, black-tailed deer and pikas
- elk, pine martens, weasels, flying squirrels and tree voles
- bobcat and cougar, raccoon, Douglas squirrel, and the western gray squirrel (a state-listed threatened and endangered specie)
- mink, beaver, Pacific water shrew, river otters, and amphibians such as the Pacific giant salamander and Cascade and tailed frogs.
- northern harriers, Canada geese, and ring-necked pheasants; fox and coyote
- sea lions and orca whales



Alder Dam

Cultural Heritage

Historically, the Nisqually Tribe inhabited the entire Nisqually Valley basin, although other native peoples used the area. Mount Rainier – traditionally called Tahoma – was and continues to be the spiritual center for all tribes in the region. Yet the Nisqually Valley, as the original aboriginal homeland, has special significance for the Nisqually Tribe. It was and continues to be the home of the Nisqually Tribe. The Nisqually Indians tended horses and relied on the naturally open meadows for grazing, food gathering, and hunting as well as for their encampments. The meadows were especially important habitat for the elk herds that were a primary source of food for the Nisqually people. This tradition and reliance on natural resources in the upper valley continues today. The Nisqually Tribe is actively involved in maintaining the health of the Nisqually River Valley, its water quality, fisheries, wildlife, and native vegetation.

When settlers arrived in the 1850s there were many instances of cultural cooperation and intermingling. Nisqually Indians often guided settlers through the area. Intermarriage was common, and settlements were established in the Yelm prairie and Ohop Valley. Until the mid-19th century the Nisqually Indians migrated along routes around Tahoma, managed prairies, and traded with other Indian groups in the region. There were isolated instances of white settler killings and intertribal conflicts that set the U.S. government in motion to remove the Nisqually Indians to a small reservation. The Nisqually Indians suffered untold tragedies that ultimately led to the Indian War of 1855-56. After the war, under Governor Stevens, the Nisqually Indians were effectively removed from their aboriginal homeland to the Nisqually Indian Reservation, which included much of what is now the Fort Lewis Military Reservation.

At the turn of the century the European-settler-dominated culture was expressed by timbering and related processing activities. Farming practices gave way



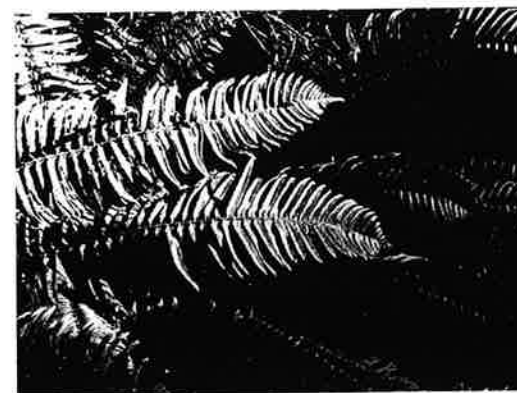
Logging truck

to lumbering practices. Major sawmills were established in Eatonville, Yelm, McKenna, Elbe, and National, and communities developed to support those industries.

Also, interest in the recreational opportunities of the area began. The first recorded ascent of Mount Rainier occurred in the 1870s. John Muir climbed Mount Rainier with James Longmire in 1888 and joined other advocates in efforts to protect the magnificent natural resources in the immediate vicinity of Mount Rainier. Mount Rainier National Park was established in 1899. Resort hotels began to spring up during the early 1900s. James Longmire opened a resort at Longmire Meadows in 1898. Rail connections from Ashford to Tacoma began in 1911 and provided passenger service as well as freight to and from the mills in the area. A rail line was built from Tacoma to Morton, with a spur linking to the National lumber mill and community.

Decline in timbering within the area and closure of major saw mills began in the late 1930s and culminated in the closure of the Eatonville Lumber Company Mill in the mid-1950s. The National Mill, located near Ashford, was at one time the largest sawmill operation west of the Mississippi River. The community of National soared to 3,000 people at peak operation, and by the 1950s was but a ghost town, barely discernable in the encroaching second-growth forest.

Since the 1950s there has been substantial population loss in the Nisqually Valley associated primarily with the decline in natural-resource-based industries, and, more recently, with a decline in the seasonally dependent tourism and recreation-based economy. Timbering is still pursued in the area, but the economy is now predominantly based on recreation, with portions of the area increasingly experiencing residential growth associated with expansion of the Olympia, Tacoma, and Seattle metropolitan areas.



Relationships with the Nisqually Indian Tribe

The Nisqually Indian Tribe maintains a close and long-standing relationship to the landscapes and vistas of Mount Rainier. During prehistoric and early historical times, Mount Rainier --or Ta-co-bet in Salishan dialect-- provided important plant and animal resources to people living in the Nisqually River drainage, as well as to those living in other areas surrounding modern park boundaries. The Nisqually River provided fishery resources vital to Indian people, and the Nisqually corridor served as an important access route to the mountain. The special status of Mount Rainier to traditional Nisqually land-use practices is recognized in provisions of the 1854 Treaty of Medicine Creek, and supported by long-standing Native American traditions. Today, as in the past, Mount Rainier continues to be of great significance to the Nisqually people as a source of emotional and spiritual renewal, and as a symbol of their

continuing cultural connection to the land and traditional values.

The Nisqually Road Corridor charette, and actions flowing from it, provide an opportunity for the history and values of the Nisqually people to be incorporated into conceptual designs in a manner that better communicates these values to the public, and enhances the planning process generally. The Nisqually Tribe welcomes the opportunity to work with civic and commercial entities to develop mutually beneficial concepts and goals. During this process, it should be recognized that the corridor contains a variety of historic, archaeological, traditional cultural, and natural resources important to the Nisqually people; many of which remain undocumented or only partially understood. It is important that planners and project proponents understand the special status of the tribe, consult with them, and undertake appropriate studies while completing component designs.

Opportunities abound for involvement of Nisqually tribal members and Nisqually perspectives in the planning and implementation process. Specific tribal interests include, but should not be limited to, involvement in overall planning and communication; employment; development of a cultural center; use of native language in interpretive materials; enhancement of tourism options; involvement in educational programs; protection of the natural world, including water quality, fish and elk habitat; establishment of research and education programs on native culture, heritage and natural history; and development of historic trails through the corridor and across the mountain.

Relevant Planning Efforts within the Nisqually Road Corridor

Counties, cities, and towns within the road corridor have conducted planning efforts, to responsibly conserve and protect resources, and to guide and direct future growth. The Nisqually Road Corridor charette

effort is intended to recognize these efforts and to suggest exploration of ideas and concepts that are consistent with these plan recommendations and design standards.

Numerous planning efforts involving Pierce and Thurston Counties, communities, agencies, and private businesses along the corridor and its feeder routes are underway or have recently been completed. These include the *Pierce County Comprehensive Plan*, the *Upper Nisqually Valley Community Plan* (an addendum to the Pierce County Comprehensive Plan), the *Eatonville Community Action Plan and Vision Statement*, the *Eatonville Market Assessment*, *Eatonville Design Guidelines*, and the *Non Motorized Transportation Plan* (prepared by the Eatonville Department of Public Works). The National Park Service completed a General Management Plan for Mount Rainier National Park (2001).

The National Park Service is considering developing an environmental education center at the NPS administrative facility at Tahoma Woods. Plans are underway to develop a master plan for recreation facilities at Mashel State Park. There is also a privately initiated proposal to develop the Mount Rainier

Resort at Park Junction. The town of Ashford is considering proposals to develop a civic center for the performing arts, a mountaineering center and museum, and a visitor welcome center (in conjunction with Mount Rainier National Park).

Transportation planning efforts include the *Proposal for Train to the Mountain*, which would resurrect a rail route that would originate in Tacoma to transport people and freight to towns in the Nisqually River Corridor. The Train to the Mountain is envisioned as an excursion route and not a commuter route at this time. A recent NPS transportation feasibility study examined a potential shuttle system that could serve locations within the corridor and park.

These efforts are all pieces of a large regional puzzle that, when reviewed collectively, can be fitted together to create a collective vision for the entire corridor – an experience that is perhaps greater than any individual plan can realize. Additional plans are referenced in the sections of this document to which they are specifically related. A more thorough list of plans and information sources obtained during this study is included at the end of this document.



National Park Service Longmire inn

Endnotes

¹ Most of this information was summarized from "The Living River, A Guide to the Nisqually River Basin," by Chris Maun, with Cecilia Carpenter, for the Nisqually River Education Project, published 1996. pp. 8-29.

² Ibid, p. 65.

³ Final General Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement, Mount Rainier National park, p. 16.

⁴ Ibid, p. 70-71.

⁵ Ibid, p. 71.

⁶ Ibid, p. 71.

⁷ Final General Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement, Mount Rainier National park, p. 16.

⁸ Final General Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement, Mount Rainier National park, p. 16.

Overall Corridor Charette Findings and Recommendations



OVERALL CORRIDOR CHARETTE FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Resource Management

In the Nisqually Watershed the Nisqually River Council, comprised of local, state, and federal governments and private stakeholders and citizen interests, manages the range of resources in the watershed. These include the Nisqually River, the Nisqually Wildlife Refuge, Alder Lake, the Elbe Hills State Forest, Tahoma State Forest, Snoqualmie and Gifford Pinchot National Forests, and Mount Rainier National Park. These designated public lands have general management plans and policies in place for resource management and visitor use. The public has been extensively involved in the preparation of these studies and plans for management of publicly owned lands within the corridor. For privately owned lands in Pierce County's Upper Nisqually Valley, the adopted zoning plan in the *Upper Nisqually Valley Community Plan* concentrates development within village centers and tourist commercial areas. Land outside the village centers is zoned to preserve the rural character that currently exists. Because the primary focus of the charette was on the Upper Nisqually Valley corridor, the team did not spend as much time studying land management in the Lower Nisqually Valley. The team did meet with members of some of the key gateway communities in outlying areas to discuss their concerns and listen to their ideas.

The Nisqually Tribe is very much involved with the protection of the Nisqually River and maintains two fish hatcheries in the Nisqually watershed. The tribe also works with federal, state, and local agencies to study and maintain the health of regional wildlife herds, specifically the elk herds. The tribe consults on a government-to-government basis with federal

agencies to ensure maintenance of their rights to subsistence-related hunting and gathering.

Some participants voiced concern that this charette effort should have given more emphasis to resource conservation and protection. Some of the resource-related concerns that were expressed during the charette include the following:

- The importance of protecting endangered species in the corridor should be emphasized.
 - The need to preserve natural resources in the corridor is very important. If communities lose the "place," also lost would be the means to attract businesses and the reasons why people choose to live in these upper Nisqually communities.
 - Community members may not be aware of the locations of sacred sites and critical wildlife habitat areas that are important to the Nisqually Tribe. Communities would like to assist with the preservation of these sites.
- Tribal Partners emphasized the following with respect to resource preservation:
- Expressed a desire to continue government-to-government relations with federal, state, and local agencies.
 - Emphasized the importance of protecting traditional tribal cultural sites and the need for compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and the National Environmental Policy Act for development relating to federal, state, and local government projects.
 - Emphasized the importance of protecting natural resources habitat and the health of wildlife and fisheries and native plant communities.

- Reiterated the need to obtain funding for ethnographic studies and cultural resource inventory for tribal sites.

- Emphasized the need to preserve areas of traditional use for vision quests and tribal ceremonies.

Local community members encouraged:

- Economic stabilization through reduced dependence upon seasonal visitation to Mount Rainier National Park.
- Development of multi-seasonal diversity of recreation and leisure activities.

Preservation of Scenic Qualities

Much of the land that borders the roadways within the corridor and outside of the cities and towns is privately owned rural residential properties and farms. During the charette, the team explored as much of the corridor as was possible and subsequently prepared a large "heritage highlights" collage of images that captured the scenic qualities of the corridor. Images of Mount Rainier were placed at the top of the collage, with the Nisqually River and tributaries cascading beneath, surrounded by various images of the natural and cultural resources and towns within the corridor. The team talked about Mount Rainier (or Tahoma) as a place of spirituality, as the headwaters of the Nisqually, and about the valley's significance to the Nisqually Tribe, early settlers, and the communities of Eatonville, Alder, Elbe and Ashford. Participants discussed the importance of appreciating the valley's resources and understanding their significance and value, so that they may be protected for the benefit of future generations. Participants then referenced the existing plans that call for studies and other research and inventory efforts that may be appropriate within the corridor

area. These might include historic structure reports for historic properties, cultural landscape studies for places such as the Ohop Valley, wildlife habitat research, and viewshed analysis to identify primary views within the corridor. Completing studies such as these would lead to a better understanding of the scenic resources that are worthy of protection.

The team cautioned that ideas presented at this workshop are opportunities, which, if every idea was pursued, might result in overwhelming development, even if concentrated only in village centers. The recommendation is either to create a corridor management plan for the entire corridor or, if development of a corridor management plan is not feasible, to move the best ideas forward through an appropriate planning process and to find the balance among preservation, conservation, and development.

Participants shared concerns regarding scenic quality and road character during the charette. Some of these follow:

- There was general support of scenic quality evaluation within the corridor and the need to identify and protect high-quality views.
- SR 7/706 is a designated State Scenic Byway. There was interest in pursuing a National Scenic Byway designation.
- There are 'cut-off' roads within the corridor that are highly scenic. These roads could be evaluated, and their rural character could be maintained and possibly protected.
- There are incredible views from Puyallup ridge, from International Paper, Inc. land near Washington Department of Natural Resources property, and from FS Road 59. These views should be preserved.

- There was concern among some participants about eyesores and/or lack of maintenance on some private residential and commercial properties within the corridor. Discussion included ideas to establish and enforce regulations aimed at maintaining corridorwide scenic character, and finding ways to financially assist homeowners with removing junk from their properties, – all ultimately aimed at enhancing beautification within the corridor.

- Some participants thought that roadside maintenance practices, whether county, state, or federally initiated, could focus more on promoting growth of wildflowers on roadsides rather than applying herbicides to control weeds.

- The 1-mile corridor before the Nisqually entrance to Mount Rainier National Park zoned Tourist Commercial in the *Upper Nisqually Valley Community Plan*, could be more majestic in appearance.

- Some participants expressed concern about logging practices in prime viewshed areas, suggesting the need to avoid clear-cutting and the need to consider environmental consequences. At the time of the charette, participants included representatives from International Paper, Inc., a forest products company, which subsequently sold its properties within the corridor to another business interest. It is hoped that the new owner, Rainier Timber Company, will work with local, county, state, and federal agencies and the public to maintain visual quality within the corridor.

- The Washington State Department of Natural Resources is interested in using some of its lands within the Nisqually Road Corridor that are scheduled for harvesting to showcase best management practices for sustainable forestry.

Recreational Qualities

Overall Recreational Opportunities

One of the initial purposes for holding this charette was to explore opportunities to enhance existing or create new visitor recreational opportunities within the Nisqually Road Corridor to disperse visitation and avoid congestion in any one area. Recreational opportunities abound within the Nisqually Road Corridor, and include hiking, birdwatching, mountain biking, horseback riding, boating, swimming, rafting, camping, 4-wheel driving, hut-to-hut cross country skiing, fishing, hunting, and snowmobiling. The Existing Conditions Map highlights recreational opportunities available within the Nisqually Road Corridor. This document recommends that those activities remain largely unchanged, though some additional ideas are noted in the Corridor Recreational Opportunities maps.

Recreational use within the Upper Nisqually Valley fluctuates seasonally. In summer, there is considerable recreational traffic along state route 706 and

state route 7 at Elbe headed to Mt. Rainier National Park and 1.6 million acres at Gifford Pinchot National Forest. Along the Skate Creek Road, traffic is headed to Gifford Pinchot National Forest destinations, to Packwood, and beyond to the U.S. 12 corridor. In the winter the National Park Service plows the road to Paradise. Snowshoeing, cross-country skiing and tubing are the primary wintertime activities that take place at Paradise. Historically, the Skate Creek Road was kept open during the winter, providing access to a local ski area and a year-round flow of tourists through Ashford. Now the Skate Creek Road is closed during winter for resource protection purposes and road safety hazards, resulting in no pass through traffic to Packwood and negative effects on Ashford's economy. Ashford residents, once accustomed to four seasons of recreational visitation, find that visitation drops off from late fall through the spring thaw. So their economy depends primarily upon summer use.

The ability to spread out recreational use and draw year-round visitation to the Upper Nisqually Valley area would have merits to the business community.

This is no small task in a region where rain is plentiful and daylight short during the winter months. The ideas presented in this document begin to take a look at venues that could attract year-round use.

The Corridor Recreational Opportunities maps highlight recreational opportunities that represent the collective recommendations generated by the charette team and participants. They do not represent a consensus opinion on the part of all participants for the desired future for the Nisqually Road Corridor. These ideas need to be further evaluated through an appropriate planning process with public involvement to determine if implementation is feasible or even desirable. These maps identify scenarios that illustrate generally suitable locations for most of the ideas discussed. Infrastructure needs, such as water and sewer requirements have not been addressed. Some of these facilities, if implemented, would require an increased level of search and rescue support, fire protection, and law enforcement services. Without an increased tax base or substantial funding assistance from private or public sources, service providers may not be able to meet the demand brought about by increasing recreational use within the corridor. These providers should be consulted during the planning process for new facilities. Many of these concerns would typically be addressed in feasibility studies for selected facilities, conducted before implementation. New proposals would also require a proper level of operations and maintenance funding. This topic is discussed further in the "Next Steps" and "Funding" sections. It should be understood that any new development would undergo appropriate planning with the National Environmental Policy Act and National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 compliance.

Ideas for recreational opportunities suggested by charette participants include the following:

- There are several recreational opportunities in and around Eatonville, such as Northwest Trek and Pioneer Farm. These venues could combine forces and broaden their potential for use through ongoing partnership efforts.
- There is a community of local artisans within the gateway communities and along the road corridor that could benefit from broader exposure to area visitors.
- There are opportunities for cultural arts tours and for displaying the work of local artists in public places, such as the proposed civic center in Ashford or art shows that could be held at the proposed public plaza in Eatonville.
- There are many historical sites in the corridor that could be featured on a historical tour of the valley.
- Although visitation to Mount Rainier National Park has leveled, adjacent Forest Service lands and Department of Natural Resources lands continue to experience increasing levels of use. Participants expressed a desire for increased opportunities for 4-wheel driving and camping on Forest Service and DNR lands.
- There was much support among participants for improving trail systems and creating many types of new trails within the Nisqually Road Corridor. There are many trail systems within the corridor, but these are not widely publicized. This topic was the focus of so much attention at the public workshop that it is discussed and mapped separately.

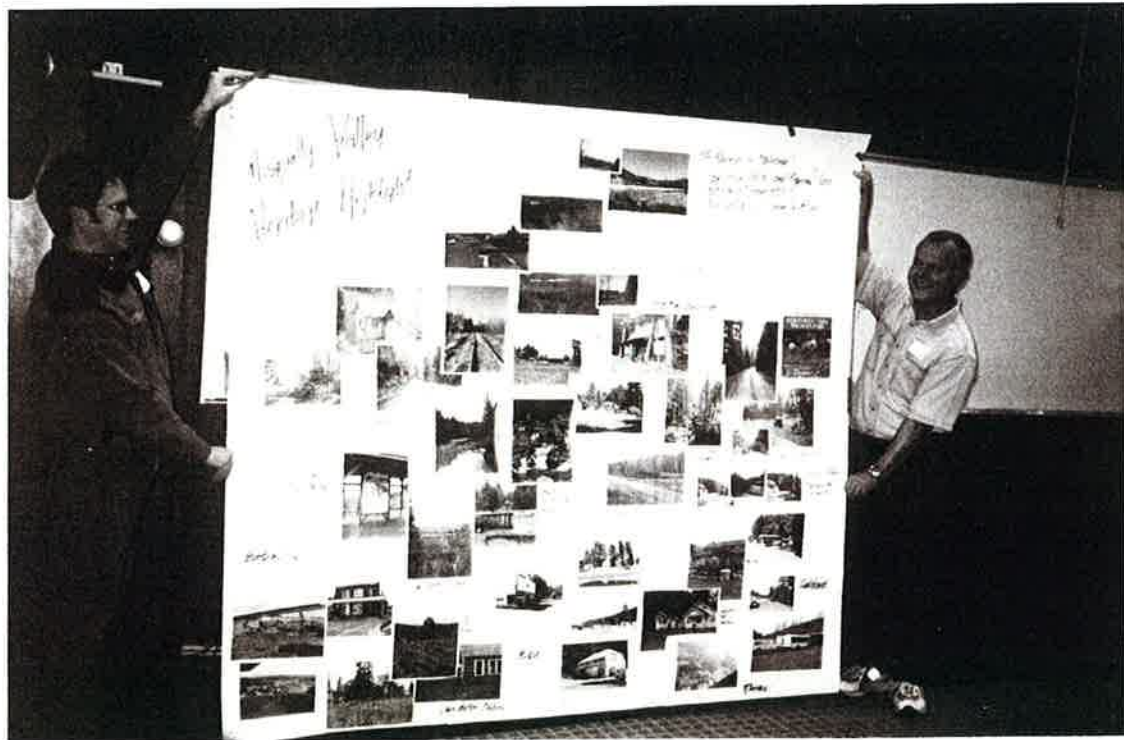
Gateway Community Enhancements

The principal gateway communities in the Nisqually Road Corridor are Eatonville, Alder, Elbe, and Ashford. Yelm, McKenna (on SR510), and Roy (on SR 507) may be considered peripheral gateway communities for the purposes of this study.

Recommendations for gateway community enhancements build off existing plans, where possible, and include:

- For Yelm, a central multimodal transit hub where a regional information kiosk could be located, where train, transit, parking, and bike routes come together in the historic central town core.
- For Eatonville, an improved central plaza where the Chamber of Commerce could staff a regional orientation and information center.
- For Elbe, a redesigned public open space with on-street parking and pedestrian and streetscape improvements and possibly a train station with regional orientation information.
- For Ashford, the charette focused on how the future civic center and community park might look, and options were discussed for a potential NPS visitor welcome center that could be combined with a world class mountaineering museum.

Principal concerns from community stakeholders from most of the communities included the need to slow traffic down when passing through communities, provide safe pedestrian access across busy streets and to local businesses, maintain the quality of life typical of small towns, economic vitality, and integrate the community into the corridor visitor experience, and creating communities as destinations.



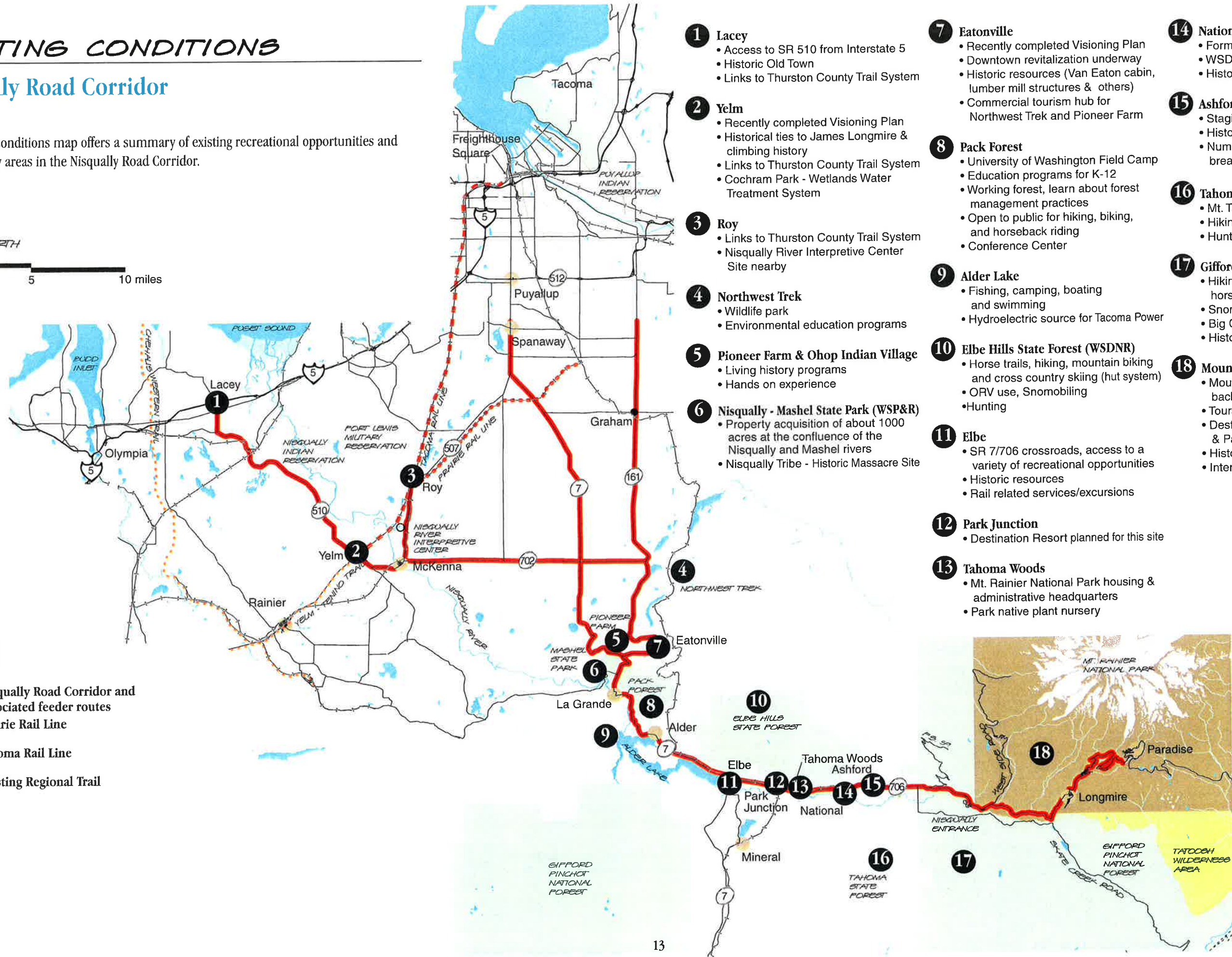
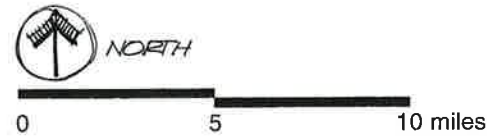
Nisqually heritage highlights

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Nisqually Road Corridor

Washington

The existing conditions map offers a summary of existing recreational opportunities and highlights key areas in the Nisqually Road Corridor.

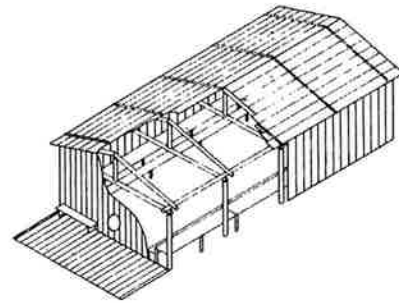


Legend

- Nisqually Road Corridor and associated feeder routes
- - - - - Prairie Rail Line
- . - . - Tacoma Rail Line
- Existing Regional Trail

- 1 Lacey**
 - Access to SR 510 from Interstate 5
 - Historic Old Town
 - Links to Thurston County Trail System
- 2 Yelm**
 - Recently completed Visioning Plan
 - Historical ties to James Longmire & climbing history
 - Links to Thurston County Trail System
 - Cochram Park - Wetlands Water Treatment System
- 3 Roy**
 - Links to Thurston County Trail System
 - Nisqually River Interpretive Center Site nearby
- 4 Northwest Trek**
 - Wildlife park
 - Environmental education programs
- 5 Pioneer Farm & Ohop Indian Village**
 - Living history programs
 - Hands on experience
- 6 Nisqually - Mashel State Park (WSP&R)**
 - Property acquisition of about 1000 acres at the confluence of the Nisqually and Mashel rivers
 - Nisqually Tribe - Historic Massacre Site
- 7 Eatonville**
 - Recently completed Visioning Plan
 - Downtown revitalization underway
 - Historic resources (Van Eaton cabin, lumber mill structures & others)
 - Commercial tourism hub for Northwest Trek and Pioneer Farm
- 8 Pack Forest**
 - University of Washington Field Camp
 - Education programs for K-12
 - Working forest, learn about forest management practices
 - Open to public for hiking, biking, and horseback riding
 - Conference Center
- 9 Alder Lake**
 - Fishing, camping, boating and swimming
 - Hydroelectric source for Tacoma Power
- 10 Elbe Hills State Forest (WSDNR)**
 - Horse trails, hiking, mountain biking and cross country skiing (hut system)
 - ORV use, Snomobiling
 - Hunting
- 11 Elbe**
 - SR 7/706 crossroads, access to a variety of recreational opportunities
 - Historic resources
 - Rail related services/excursions
- 12 Park Junction**
 - Destination Resort planned for this site
- 13 Tahoma Woods**
 - Mt. Rainier National Park housing & administrative headquarters
 - Park native plant nursery
- 14 National**
 - Former lumber mill & town site
 - WSDNR owned (school reserve lands)
 - Historic lumber heritage resources
- 15 Ashford**
 - Staging area for mountain climbers
 - Historic resources
 - Numerous lodges & bed and breakfast inns
- 16 Tahoma State Forest (WSDNR)**
 - Mt. Tahoma Ski Trails, hut to hut skiing
 - Hiking, biking
 - Hunting
- 17 Gifford Pinchot National Forest (USFS)**
 - Hiking, biking, backpacking, horseback riding, ORV use, hunting
 - Snomobiling
 - Big Creek Campground
 - Historic Nisqually Guard Station
- 18 Mount Rainier National Park (NPS)**
 - Mountain climbing, hiking, backpacking, camping
 - Tours
 - Destination Resorts (Longmire & Paradise Inns)
 - Historic resources, (CCC era)
 - Interpretation / education

An idea to reestablish an historic replica longhouse within the Nisqually Valley surfaced in discussions with the Nisqually Tribe. Apparently, in the region north and west of Mount Rainier during the mid 1880's, there were 19 historical longhouses that were maintained by regional tribes for extended gatherings, called potlatches. Typically these longhouses were established along the coast and accessed by canoe. Building a new longhouse facility would enable the regional tribes, in a way, to return to their homeland and to share their culture with other tribes. At the Nisqually Tribe's suggestion, such a longhouse could be built to resemble a traditional longhouse in form and materials, but could include modern conveniences. The use of a longhouse facility could be available to tribes for special occasions and all community members at other times. They could offer bunkhouse style lodging with kitchen facilities, similar to a hostel.



Longhouse

Information, Orientation and Primary Interpretive Themes

Visitor information and orientation plays a key role in trip planning and wayfinding within the Nisqually Road Corridor. It is anticipated that visitors to this corridor will be able to:

- Access information in a variety of formats before arriving in the area.
- Obtain adequate information and orientation at key entry points to the corridor and at major stops along the route.
- Find high-quality visitor facilities and amenities along the route.
- Choose from a variety of activities and experiences based on interests, time constraints, and abilities.
- Easily identify and locate the Nisqually Road Corridor and the attractions and services along the route.

- Find places for solitude, exploration, socialization, and physical and mental challenges.
- Learn and apply leave no trace program principles and practices when interacting with corridor resources.
- Learn something about each of the interpretive themes.
- Develop a sense of stewardship toward the resources of the Nisqually River and its watershed.
- Use alternative forms of transportation to access key corridor resources.
- Find meaningful and inspiring experiences in less crowded areas along the corridor.

For the Nisqually Road Corridor, the charette team took an initial look at key corridor locations and identified components of one corridorwide scenario for providing visitor orientation and wayfinding information. Interpretive opportunities are also identified, some of which are merely ideas and others for which planning is already underway. These ideas are included within the section entitled Design Concepts and also in Appendix B, for specific locations within the corridor. Mount Rainier National Park's Draft Long-Range Interpretive Plan addresses facilities and services that could be provided at a visitor welcome center. Further planning for a visitor welcome center is anticipated.

The basic concepts for orientation and wayfinding offered for the Nisqually Road Corridor include:

- Intelligent Transportation Systems strategies (ITS) that offer various means to transmit travel-related information based on real-time information.
- Regional visitor information kiosks at key locations in the corridor, (e.g. SEATAC Airport, Freighthouse Square in Tacoma,) as well as key intersections and tourist venues throughout the corridor (e.g., Northwest Trek, Pioneer Farm, and Pack Forest). Many of the charette participants felt that it was very important to think very broadly about where the corridor experience actually begins.
- A multiagency regional information center at Eatonville in a central location (potentially staffed by the Chamber of Commerce plus other agencies) to highlight recreational opportunities within the region and to aid with trip planning.
- A National Park Service visitor welcome center located somewhere in the SR 7/706 corridor, described in this effort as possibly located in Ashford.
- Interpretive waysides recommended for key locations within the corridor.
- Highlighting key organizations as members of an environmental education consortium.

Primary interpretive themes are those ideas and concepts about the Nisqually Road Corridor that guide every aspect of a comprehensive interpretive program and help visitors make meaningful connections with the resources. The themes do not contain everything that may be interpreted, but they do address those ideas that are critical to understanding and appreciating the significance of the resources. All interpretive efforts (through both media and programs) should relate to one or more of the themes, and each theme should be addressed by some part of the interpretive program. Those visitors traveling to NPS visitor centers will get a fairly strong overview of

the active volcano, dynamic glaciers, diverse ecosystems, and recreational history of the park. To ensure that Nisqually visitors receive a well-rounded story, Mount Rainier National Park related interpretation in the corridor could link to park themes but have a distinctly regional focus. Following are some initial suggestions for the primary interpretive themes and sub-themes.

- The active volcanic processes of Mount Rainier strongly influence the Nisqually watershed and landforms traversed by the routes within this corridor.
- Mount Rainier's glaciers feed glacial rivers, which have unique hydrological processes. They are a continuous source of water for downstream communities throughout the region.
- The mountain's dynamic processes result in forces that pose significant hazards to human and natural communities throughout the region.
- The quality of life and character of the region's human inhabitants have been shaped by a long and varied history of human interaction with the corridor resources. (i.e. The Timber Industry's role in shaping the communities and the cultural and historical identity of its inhabitants.)
- The Nisqually people have a long and continuing connection with the region, characterized by a strong interest in preservation and use of its resources.
- The beauty, challenges, and economic opportunities the region offered drew many Euro-American explorers, pioneers, settlers, and laborers to the area.
- The resources within the Nisqually Valley offer a diverse array of recreational opportunities.
- Evidence of past and present conservation, preservation, and sustainable land management endeavors are present throughout the corridor.

Education Programs

Ideas generated during the charette for education programs follow:

- Develop a regional education consortium that could include Mount Rainier National Park, The Nisqually Tribe, Northwest Trek, Pioneer Farm, Pack Forest, Tacoma Power, Camp Arnold, Lincoln Tree Farm, Tahoma Audubon, Cispus Learning Center, and the Nisqually Wildlife Refuge among others. A key common interpretive concept for this consortium could be the regional geographic, ecological, geological, social, cultural, and historic resources and their connections between the mountain and the sea. The consortium should consider integrating additional partners such as the Nisqually Tribe, a future mountaineering center and museum at Ashford, the Nisqually River Education Council (including the Nisqually River Interpretive Center near Roy), the Washington State Historical Society's heritage education program, the Washington Forest Industries Museum, and the Washington Forest Protection Association.
- Develop integrated informational/promotional literature and a web site with links to/from all participating partners (consortium members). Easy access and one-stop shopping could help educators with decision-making/program selection. The web site may include downloadable information and curriculum materials.
- Create incentives to fund school group transportation.
- Create programs that address multi-ethnic/multi-language needs and regional complexities.

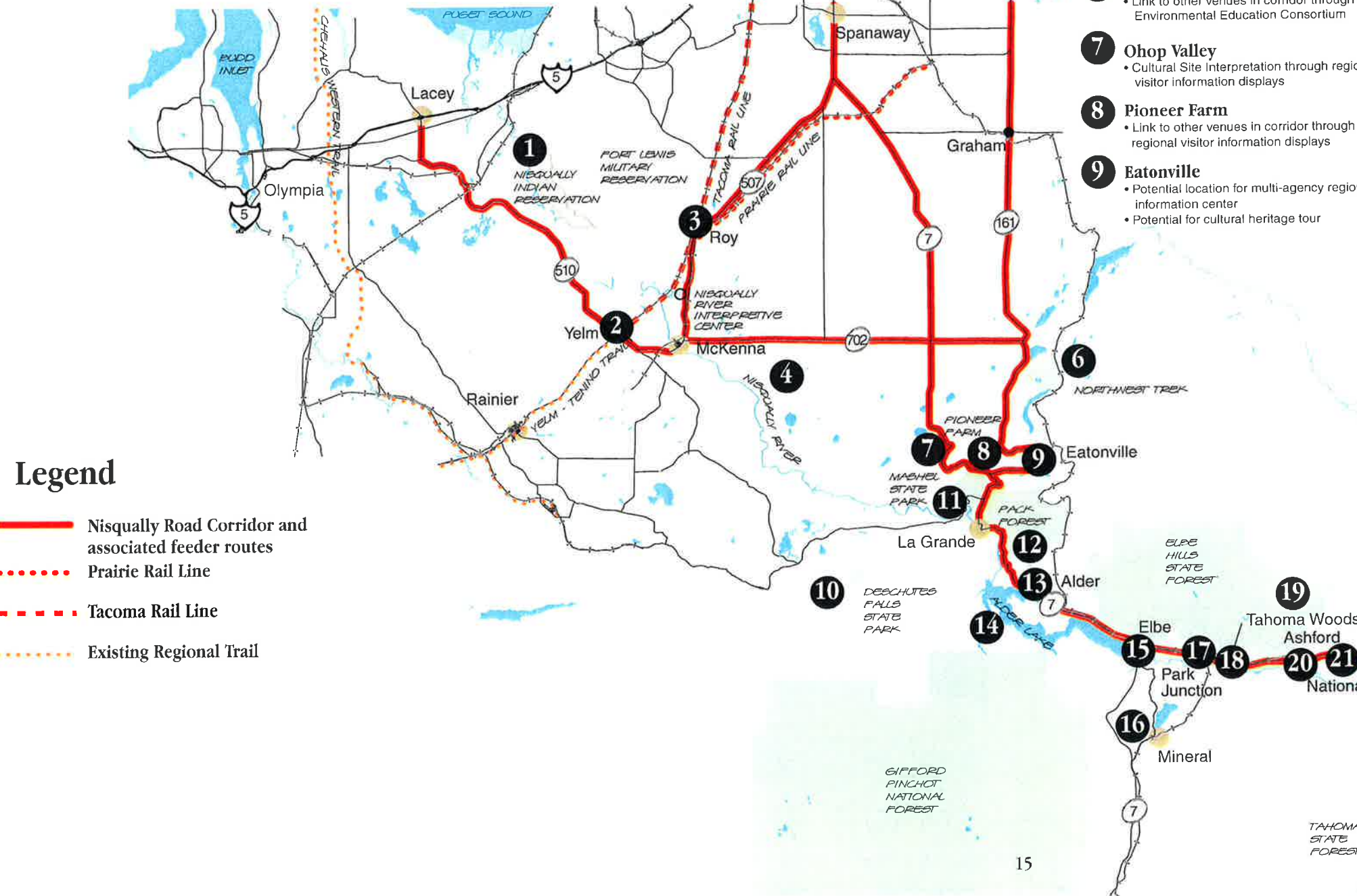
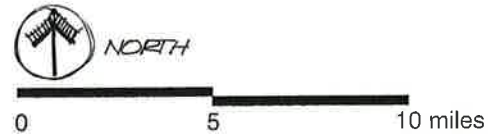
Other detailed recommendations for interpretive, orientation, and exhibit information and interpretation focus are discussed in the "Design Concepts and Sketches" chapter.

CORRIDOR RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Nisqually Road Corridor

Washington

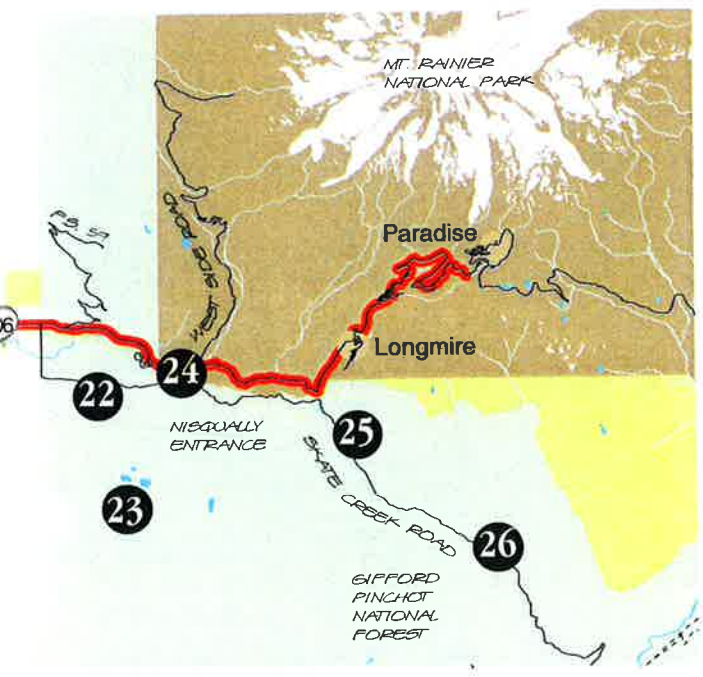
This Map highlights some of the some of the ideas generated during the charette for potential recreational opportunities. It also represents plans for new recreational opportunities that are already underway.

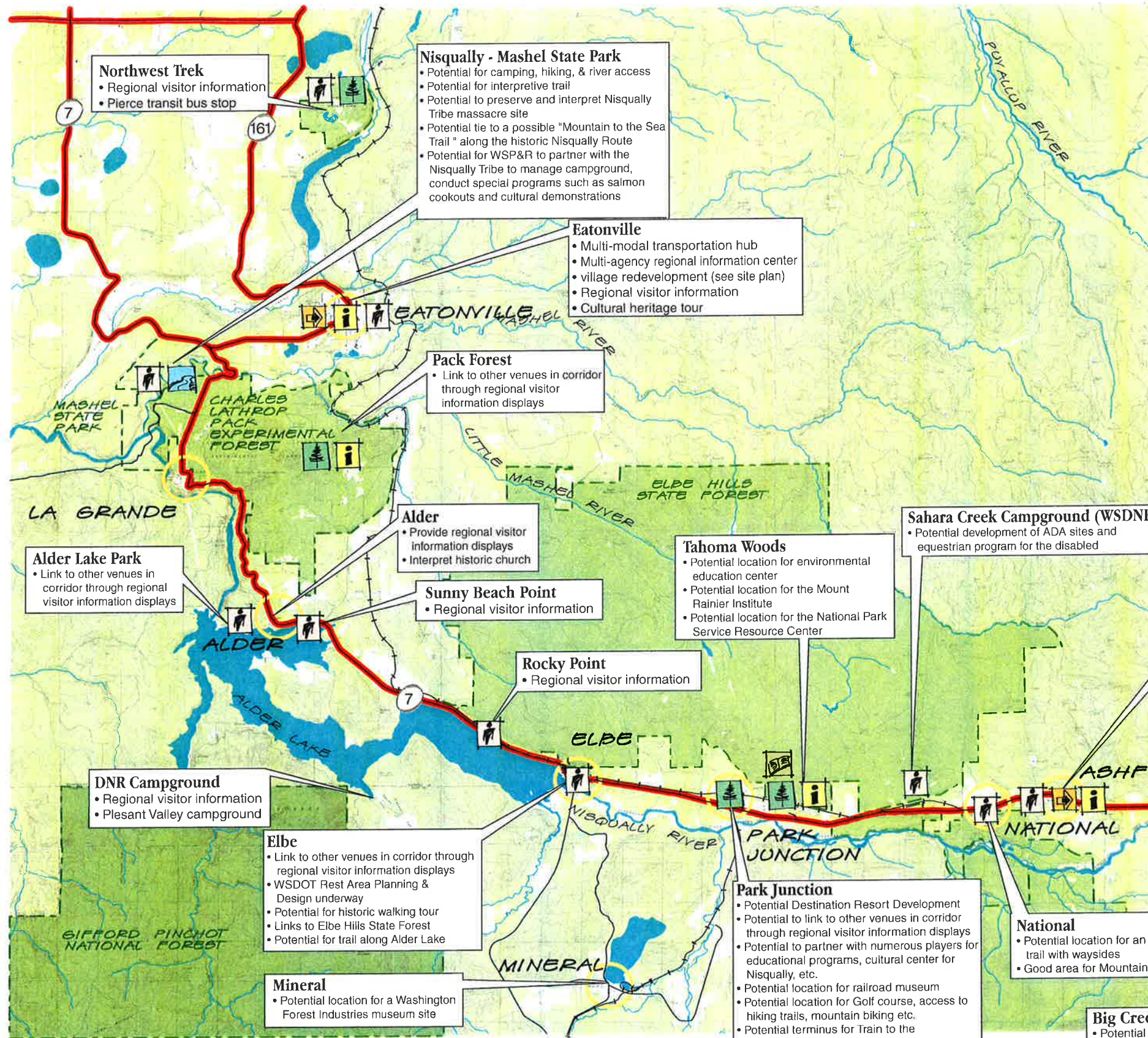


Legend

- Nisqually Road Corridor and associated feeder routes
- ⋯ Prairie Rail Line
- - - Tacoma Rail Line
- ⋯ Existing Regional Trail

- 1 Nisqually Indian Reservation**
 - Educational opportunities, guided tours
 - Cultural Center site on the Nisqually Delta - planning underway
 - Casino
- 2 Yelm**
 - History Museum
 - City Park with statue of Longmire and Chief Leschi
- 3 Roy**
 - Nisqually River Interpretive Center
- 4 Hart's Lake Road**
 - Very scenic and has potential for a road biking route
- 5 Freighthouse Square, Tacoma**
 - Multi-modal transportation hub
 - Train to the Mountain (Excursion route planning underway)
 - Regional visitor information
- 6 Northwest Trek**
 - Link to other venues in corridor through the Environmental Education Consortium
- 7 Ohop Valley**
 - Cultural Site Interpretation through regional visitor information displays
- 8 Pioneer Farm**
 - Link to other venues in corridor through regional visitor information displays
- 9 Eatonville**
 - Potential location for multi-agency regional information center
 - Potential for cultural heritage tour
- 10 Deschutes Falls State Park**
 - Redevelopment underway for day use trails & picnicking
- 11 Nisqually - Mashel State Park**
 - Potential for camping, hiking, & river access
 - Potential for interpretive trail
 - Potential to preserve and interpret Nisqually Tribe massacre site
 - Potential tie to a possible "Mountain to the Sea Trail" along the historic Nisqually Route
 - Potential for WSP&R to partner with the Nisqually Tribe to manage campground, conduct special programs such as salmon cookouts and cultural demonstrations
- 12 Pack Forest**
 - Link to other venues in corridor through regional visitor information displays
- 13 Alder**
 - Provide regional visitor information displays
 - Interpret historic church
- 14 Alder Lake Park**
 - Link to other venues in corridor through regional visitor information displays
- 15 Elbe**
 - Link to other venues in corridor through regional visitor information displays
 - WSDOT Rest Area Planning & Design underway
 - Potential for historic walking tour
 - Links to Elbe Hills State Forest
 - Potential for trail along Alder Lake
- 16 Mineral**
 - Potential location for a Washington Forest Industries museum site
- 17 Park Junction**
 - Potential Destination Resort Development
 - Potential to link to other venues in corridor through regional visitor information displays
 - Potential to partner with numerous players for educational programs, cultural center for Nisqually, etc.
 - Potential location for railroad museum
 - Potential location for golf course, access to hiking trails, mountain biking etc.
- 18 Tahoma Woods**
 - Potential location for environmental education center
 - Potential location for the Mount Rainier Institute
 - Potential location for the National Park Service Resource Center
- 19 Sahara Creek Campground (WSDNR)**
 - Potential development of ADA sites and equestrian program for the disabled
- 20 National**
 - Potential location for an interpretive trail with waysides
 - Good area for Mountain biking
- 21 Ashford**
 - Potential location within the SR 706 corridor for the National Park Service Welcome Center
 - Feasibility Study for a Mountaineering Center and Museum underway
 - Planning, design and construction for a community park with a civic/art center underway
 - Good potential for a cultural heritage tour of historic sites
 - Potential to pursue development of short hiking trails
 - Ground breaking for Community Park 2002
- 22 Big Creek Campground**
 - Potential to link to other venues in corridor through regional visitor information displays
 - Potential to partner with Mount Tahoma Trails (MTTC) hut group or snomobiling related group for adaptive use of Nisqually Guard Station as hostel.
- 23 High Rock Fire Lookout Tower**
 - Potential to partner with MTTC group to open tower for winter use on reservation/fee basis
- 24 Nisqually Entrance Area**
 - Numerous lodges and Bed & Breakfast Inns
- 25 FS Road 59 and FS 52/Skate Creek Road**
 - Potential opportunities vary for year round use on these highly scenic roads
 - Access to hiking, biking, horse trails, primitive camping, campgrounds, ORV/ATV use etc.
- 26 Bear Prairie**
 - Potential to interpret this meadow as an important prairie along the Nisqually Route





CORRIDOR RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Eatonville/Ashford Vicinity to Mount Rainier National Park

Nisqually Road Corridor

Washington

This Map highlights some of the some of the ideas generated during the charette for potential recreational opportunities. It also represents plans for new recreational opportunities that are already underway.



0 2.5 5 miles

Legend

- Nisqually Road Corridor and associated feeder routes
- Multimodal Transportation
- Regional Visitor information center
- environmental education consortium
- Information & orientation facility
- Resource Center
- Nisqually heritage interpretation
- Town designation

Long Distance Trails and Related Components

Trail systems with multiple components are elements of the Nisqually Valley Corridor transportation concept. Improving trails and providing for new recreational trail experiences received strong support from charette participants. This idea links trail networks and systems maintained by many agencies, including Mount Rainier National Park, the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), Washington State Department of Natural Resources (WSDNR, Elbe Hills and Mt. Tahoma ski trails), Washington State Department of Parks and Recreation (WSDP&R and Mashel State Park), and the University of Washington's Pack Experimental Forest. The new trails could connect to existing trails within the Nisqually Valley and offer diverse recreational experiences for a wide variety of users. Trail-related recreational opportunities include a wide range of activities, such as hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, cross-country skiing, the use of motorized vehicles (ATVs and jeeps), and the development of access points for rafting along the Nisqually River.

The Long Distance Trails map on page 18 highlights trail-related opportunities that represent the collective recommendations generated by the charette team and participants. These ideas need to be further evaluated with respect to consistency with the Pierce County and Thurston County comprehensive trail plans and current master planning for state and federal agencies (WSDNR, U.S. Forest Service, National Park Service, and Tacoma Power and Light).

Two long-distance trails were discussed at the charette. The "Mountain to the Sea Trail," could generally follow the Nisqually River starting at the Nisqually Glacier on Mount Rainier and proceeding to the Nisqually Delta on Puget Sound. This is a historically significant corridor, once used by the Nisqually Indians and often described as the "Nisqually Route" or the "Longmire Route." (The trib-

al route was a migratory route that continued over the Cascade mountain range to the Yakima Valley.) The proposed trail could pass through the Nisqually Indian Reservation, where tribal members (at their suggestion) could lead guided tours by appointment. The notion of developing campgrounds along the trail was discussed with the tribe. The establishment of an actual trail could play an important role in reestablishing this migratory route, by which tribal members could teach their heritage to their people and to others, such as Scout groups. The Nisqually Route could be designated as a significant historic route at any time, in much the same way as the Lewis & Clark Route is a historic trail. The actual trail segments could be implemented at a later date.

The other long distance trail could be a multipurpose "rail with trail" that could start near Graham, or possibly in Tacoma, and follow the Train to the Mountain rail line to Eatonville. At Eatonville a spur trail could leave the rail line and follow a proposed route within a power line corridor to connect to the Nisqually River Trail at the La Grande Dam. It was suggested at the workshop that this trail could extend to Ashford and beyond to Mount Rainier National Park. Branching off this multiuse trail could be spurs that offer short hikes; there are few opportunities for short hikes in the area. This trail is envisioned as a nonmotorized multiuse trail that could accommodate both bicyclists and hikers and possibly equestrian traffic, though some workshop participants expressed a strong desire to separate equestrian use from hiking and bicycle use. The trail, or major portions thereof, could also be made accessible.

Other trail-related ideas discussed at the charette follow:

- Tour bicyclists prefer on-road alignments where speed can be maximized. For all roadway routes within the Nisqually Road Corridor that do not have improved shoulders, WSDOT recommendations for all weather roadway shoulder improve-

ments include adequate shoulder width. Shoulder designs should be consistent with WSDOT highway system plans and roadway design standards.

- The river trail would also intercept the location of the planned Nisqually River Interpretive Center which is to be established along the river between Yelm and Roy.
- A mountain bike trail connection from Eatonville to Elbe through the Elbe Hills area managed by the Washington State Department of Natural Resources could also be established. This trail could follow the Scott Turner Road to its end and then be routed along existing mountain bike trails. Scott Turner Road links with the CCC Road, which ends at National. It is a rough road, but it could be improved.
- Short hikes or loops could be established from trailheads within the Nisqually Road corridor to views and river access points.
- Designated campsites could be established along the Mountain to the Sea trail.
- Connecting trails to other destinations (such as a trail from Elbe to Kapowsin through Elbe Hills) could be established.
- The Foothills trail could be connected from Puyallup to Lake Kapowsin via a shared rail/trail route.
- A connection to the Foothills Trail in the Carbon River Valley could be explored along the historic Ballie-Willis route. The Baillie-Willis route is an old mining trail located roughly between Ashford and the Carbonado/Wilkeson Area. This could be a cooperatively managed trail system from Puyallup, to the Carbon River entrance to Mount Rainier National Park, south to the Nisqually entrance to Mount Rainier National Park, and from the

Nisqually entrance to Tacoma via Ashford, Elbe, Eatonville, and Graham. Mine hazard maps show the Baillie-Willis trail coming into Ashford near the proposed Community Park by the existing firehall building. The Washington State Department of Natural Resources could be contacted for copies of old mine hazard maps to piece together this historic Baillie-Willis trail.

- Establish the Cross State Trail, as proposed by the Pierce County Regional Trails Advisory Commission, April 1995.
- A trail or route along Orville Road could be considered to create a connection between the Foothills Trail and Eatonville.
- Publish information about existing trail systems within the Nisqually Valley. For example, DNR manages 13 miles of JEEP/ORV routes and 40 miles of horse trails and a campground (all open free of charge to the public). A trail map could be published.
- Mountain biking routes could be established to the ski huts in the Mt. Tahoma Ski Trails system for use during the summer months.
- A trail access within Mount Rainier National Park could be developed from the Nisqually entrance to Longmire along an existing powerline corridor.
- Within Mount Rainier National Park, a walking trail to Paradise could be provided, giving people an option to taking cars or buses to this site.
- An Ashford bike trail could be created on the town periphery, perhaps through the National area (DNR/private lands would be involved).
- Incentives could be provided for Mount Rainier National Park visitors to leave cars behind. A reduced or no park entrance fee could be institut-

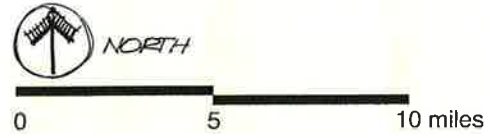
ed for pedestrians and bikers.

- A trail from Skate Creek Road to National could be created along the Old State Road and a spur trail could be developed to one of the huts on Mt. Tahoma Trail system.
- The Nisqually River Valley needs equestrian trails, in addition to bike and pedestrian trails.
- Pursue creation of a Mountain to the Sea Trail. Potential partners include: Fort Lewis (military), Nisqually Tribe, Tacoma City Light, Washington State Department of Natural Resources, Gifford-Pinchot National Forest, Washington State Parks, Nisqually Delta Wildlife Refuge, Pack Forest, Washington State Department of Transportation, and others.
- More recreational opportunities for all-terrain-vehicle users could be created. This type of use could be accommodated in Gifford Pinchot National Forest and Washington State DNR lands and also in DNR-managed lands at Alder Lake.
- Thurston County is implementing their county trail plan. In Thurston County it is possible to bicycle or hike through much of the county on recently developed trail systems.
- The future Nisqually River Interpretive Center at Roy could be linked with the Mountain to the Sea Trail.
- Links to a bigger, statewide trail system could be created.
- Implement trail planning first, then consider the need for alternative transportation, such as a shuttle system, within the Upper Nisqually Valley.

LONG DISTANCE TRAILS OPPORTUNITIES

Nisqually Road Corridor

Washington



* NOTE: Consistency with Pierce County Road Improvement Projects Plan, Non-Motorized Transportation Plan



Legend

Trail Proposals

- Multi-purpose trail
- - - Rail with trail
- - - Mountain bike trail
- Road shoulder improvement
- Nisqually River trail /route
- ~ Nisqually Tribal Route
- Longmire Historic Route
- River views
- Short hikes, loops, interpretive trails to views

Existing Trails

- Other regional trails

- 1 Chehalis Trail**
 - Multi-purpose trail along old railroad grade connects from/to Woodard Bay and Cascadia Marine Trail
 - I-5 bridge crossing needed
- 2 Nisqually Indian Reservation**
 - Potential for guided hikes along sections of a potential Nisqually River Trail or "Mountain to the Sea" trail
- 3 Yelm to Roy Prairie Trail**
 - Rail with Trail from Yelm to Roy
 - Bridge crossing needed
 - Potential link between a possible "Mountain to the Sea Trail" system and Nisqually River Interpretive Center, and also the Chehalis trail via the Yelm-Tenino trail
- 4 Nisqually-Mashel State Park**
 - Potential link between trails and the river (River access planned)
 - Potential to link directly with a multi-purpose trail to/from Eatonville
- 5 Pack Forest**
 - Potential to expand existing trail system and to link with a future Nisqually River Trail or "Mountain to the Sea" trail
- 6 Elbe River Walk**
 - Potential to create a trail through the City of Tacoma Wildlife Area at this location
 - Potential to link Elbe to Nisqually River Trail or "Mountain to the Sea" trail
- 7 Mineral**
 - Potential rail with trail trail to Mineral
- 8 Baillie Willis**
 - Potential connection to Foothills Trail
- 9 Kapowsin to Elbe**
 - Potential trail connection to Elbe from Kapowsin through the Elbe Hills
- 10 Washington State Department of Natural Resources Lands**
 - Potential access to trails from Elbe and National
 - Potential to expand hut to hut trail system
- 11 Ashford**
 - Potential for Reese Road trail connection
 - Potential for an interpretive trail associated with NPS visitor center
 - Potential for trail connections from Mountaineering Center
 - Potential for trail connections to community center
 - All of the above could be linked to a Nisqually River Trail (Mountain to the Sea Trail)
- 12 Gifford Pinchot National Forest**
 - Potential to create opportunities for short hikes from /along existing trail system
 - High Rock Lookout Tower is a 2 mile hike from a dirt road
- 13 Bear Prairie**
 - Potential to create a short hike from the road to a view point
- 14 Mount Rainier National Park**
 - Potential anchor, starting point or terminus for "Mountain to the Sea Trail"
 - Potential to encourage access to the Park via hiking or bicycling along trails or routes other than Nisqually Road
 - Potential biking access via powerline corridor or from Skate Creek Road to Longmire
 - Potential mountain bike route along West Side Road

Alternative Transportation Opportunities

Mount Rainier National Park draws up to 2 million visitors per year, most of which occurs during the summer months. Traffic congestion along park roads and in parking lots often accompanies summer visitation, particularly at Paradise. Presently, when parking lots are full, visitors park in unofficial overflow areas, (often along road shoulders and sometimes more than a mile distant), or leave. Mount Rainier's General Management Plan recommends future actions to eliminate overflow parking at popular destinations in order to address problems with visitor frustration, resource damage associated with improper parking, and overall safety concerns. To minimize its effects, a ban on overflow parking would be implemented in phases and would be coordinated with other actions. One preferred action is to implement a shuttle system to assure that visitors have an alternate means of accessing the park's popular destinations, once overflow parking has been eliminated.

During peak visitation, outlying communities along the Nisqually Road Corridor also experience traffic congestion much as the park does. Traffic management combined with choices for alternative modes of transportation could benefit adjacent communities as well. During the charette, several transportation options that could promote recreational diversity and sustainability were explored for the Nisqually Road Corridor. These include improved transit and bus shuttle systems, van pools, trolley and passenger train service. The charette team suggested locations for inter-modal transportation hubs and shuttle stops and described how a shuttle service might tie in with visitation to Mount Rainier and between towns. A shuttle system could help to alleviate congestion within parking lots and along access routes to Longmire and Paradise, ensuring that visitors would be able to access these sites. Interpretive programs could be offered with transit service, providing visi-

tors with an understanding of the area's resources while viewing from large windows. Using the shuttle could give bicyclists and hikers a means to begin a trail at one shuttle stop and end it at another shuttle stop, without facing the need to reposition cars. The charette team offered a range of transportation improvements that would typically be associated with low, moderate, and high growth scenarios within the corridor. The team illustrated how these transportation improvements could be phased over time and how they could connect with Pierce, Thurston and King County Transit service, and with general Puget Sound regional transportation.

The notion of providing visitors with a transit shuttle system was generally supported by stakeholders, but many felt that a shuttle system would only be feasible if it were to provide comprehensive local and regional service, extending from the Mount Rainier National Park Nisqually entrance to Tacoma/Seattle. The need to interface with other transit providers was stressed. It was also suggested that Mount Rainier National Park demonstrate the actual demand for a Visitor Transportation System (VTS) shuttle service by implementing a monitoring program whereby actual numbers of visitors and park/concession employees traveling within the park are counted. At the charette, it was also pointed out that the park could offer other HOV related incentives, such as lower park entrance fees, or an entrance bypass for those in carpools.

This section of the document highlights features of the individual transportation system components and then illustrates how these components could tie together to form a comprehensive regional transportation system. Two transit service scenarios for the Nisqually Valley were modeled and initial costs for the systems and design data were derived. *Additional planning and related NHPA Section 106 and NEPA compliance would be necessary prior to implementation of any of the ideas recommended during the*

charette. The Train to the Mountain project, initiated by the City of Tacoma, is one transportation system planning process that is currently underway.

Bus Shuttle System Component

One of the objectives of this charette effort was to explore alternative multi-modal and shuttle system opportunities for relieving congestion at Mount Rainier and along the Nisqually Road Corridor during periods of heavy use. The charette team used the 1995 Transportation Feasibility Study for Mount Rainier National Park as a basis to understand the existing problems and to further explore development of a Visitor Transportation System (VTS) originating within the Nisqually Road Corridor, providing service to sites within Mount Rainier National Park.

Findings of the 1995 Transportation Feasibility Study indicated that annual visitation to Mount Rainier National Park (based on visitor counts from 1983-1993) fluctuates between 1.4 and 1.7 million visitors per year. Generally, visitation increases after roadways are cleared of snow, and peaks in July and August. Daily visitation varies depending on the weather, but typically more visitors come to the park on weekend days than during the week. Parking facilities that cannot meet peak day vehicle demands result in overcrowded parking lots at Paradise, Longmire, and Sunrise. Back up and congestion at park entry stations affects the efficiency and operation of the roadway facilities leading to Mount Rainier.

The following statistics, taken from the 1995 study profile a few key park visitation statistics and how visitors use State Route 706 to travel to the Nisqually entrance.

- Approximately 4,500 vehicles enter the park at three entrance stations on an average weekend day in August. About 50% of the vehicles enter the park at the Nisqually entrance.

- The highest weekend average daily two-way traffic volumes (5,155) are found on the Paradise loop road. These figures may include vehicles circulating through the parking area when the lot is full. The official parking capacity at Paradise is approximately 750 spaces. This parking area is typically overcrowded from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on summer weekends and holidays, when parking demand exceeds capacity for a period of six hours. On peak days, data collected showed that demand exceeded official capacity by up to 50%.
- The next highest weekend daily two-way traffic volumes occur at the Nisqually entrance. The weekend average daily two-way traffic (up to 5000 vehicles) is nearly double the volume found at the same location on a weekday.
- Tour bus travel accommodates only 2% of the all park visitors.
- 93% of all the trips made to the park are for day use.

With the findings of the 1995 Transportation Feasibility Study, the charette team modeled a voluntary shuttle bus system from Ashford to Paradise (see *Phase 1* on the Alternative Transportation Options map and *Ashford Village Center Opportunities* design concept). Under this scenario, visitors would stage their vehicles in Ashford or within parking lots between Ashford and the Nisqually Entrance to Mount Rainier National Park. The shuttle system would provide service to Paradise, with shuttle stops at a number of key park sites along the existing route to Paradise. The shuttle system could also provide service to a portion of the West Side Road, which is closed to private vehicle access due to frequent washouts. Modeling indicated that up to nine 35-passenger shuttle bus vehicles and six 12-passenger vans would be required under this scenario. Approximately 285 private vehicle parking spaces would be needed for visitors/employees using such a shuttle bus system.

The charette team also looked at scenarios for expanding transit service beyond Ashford (see Phase 2 on the Alternative Transportation Opportunities map). Pierce Transit could be instituted to handle passenger transportation between Eatonville and Ashford as well as other destinations, such as Northwest Trek, Pioneer Farm, Mashel State Park, Pack Forest, etc. Under this scenario, the system would require six 35-passenger vehicles and if instituted, should connect with existing transit service operating daily from Tacoma to Graham. On the weekends, an excursion service could operate from Yelm to Eatonville and Ashford. This would involve cooperation between Pierce County and Thurston County transit providers. With an expanded transit system, charette participants recommended that a multi-modal transit center be explored in Eatonville. Parking for visitors and residents using the system would consist of designated sites and on-street parking. The combined transit and shuttle system, as envisioned, would conform to the Puget Sound Regional Council Vision 2020 program.

Road Shoulder Improvements Component

Road shoulder improvements could be provided for a number of route segments including Skate Creek Road; SR 706 from Ashford to the park entrance; the cutoff roads between SR 7 and SR 161 terminating at Eatonville; and along the Eatonville-Alder Cutoff Road. Improved shoulders would add to the life of the pavement and increase safety for the motoring public, bicyclists and pedestrians who use these county roads. The road segments are managed by either the Washington State Department of Transportation or by Pierce County.

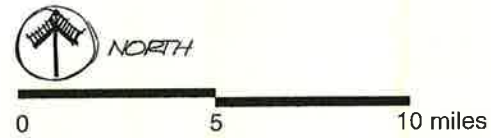
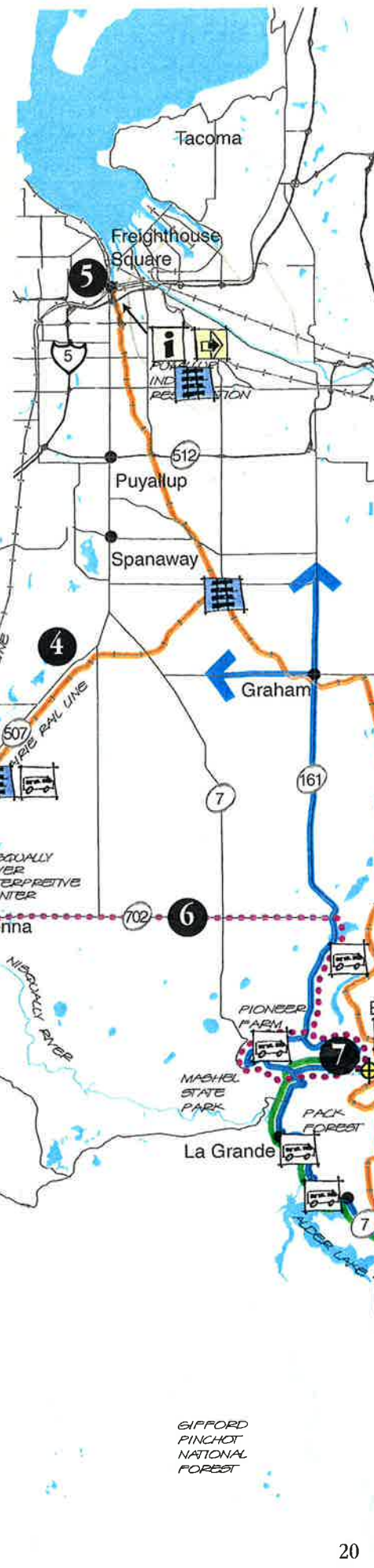
Train to the Mountain Component

The City of Tacoma, Mountain Rail Division is currently planning an upgrade of the existing rail line between Tacoma and Morton to include passenger service from downtown Tacoma to the Upper Nisqually Valley. Passenger service was last provided on this route in 1936.

ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM OPTIONS

Nisqually Road Corridor

Washington



Legend

- Phase 1 - Low growth
- Phase 2 - Moderate growth
- Phase 3 - High growth / train & shuttle
- Pierce County Transit (proposed route)
- Intercity Transit Route 14
- ⋯ Proposed weekend excursion bus service (Pierce County system with extension to Yelm)
- Train Station
- Shuttle Transfer location
- Shuttle Stop
- Information & orientation facility
- Multimodal Transportation
- Intelligent transportation system - "real time"

- 1 Interstate -5**
 - Consider signing along I-5 route for travel to Mount Rainier.
 - Conduct feasibility study to determine if designation of the SR 510 corridor and feeder routes will have significant traffic impacts to local communities
- 2 Yelm**
 - Potential for multi-modal transportation hub at the SR 510/507 intersection
 - Terminus for future Yelm to Roy Prairie railroad line
 - Trailhead for Yelm - Tenino Trail
 - Potential hub for bus service, terminus for intercity route 94
 - Potential for weekend excursion bus service to regional venues or link with future shuttle system
- 3 Roy**
 - Potential stop on excursion bus route
 - Potential to link Tacoma Rail and Prairie Line
- 4 Tacoma Rail**
 - Consider passenger use to Chehalis with stops at Roy, Rainier and other communities
 - Consider excursion from Yelm to Ashford
- 5 Freighthouse Square, Tacoma**
 - Multi-modal transportation hub
 - Train to the Mountain (Excursion route planning underway)
 - Regional visitor information

- 6 Excursion Bus Service**
 - Potential to mount kayak and bike racks to buses
 - Potential to link with put in at Mashel State Park and take out at McKenna
 - Potential stops include Northwest Trek, Pioneer Farm and Eatonville
- 7 Eatonville**
 - See specific area site plan concept for transportation
 - Multi-modal transportation hub planned for Eatonville
- 8 Elbe**
 - See specific area site plans
 - Potential train station or stop for Train to the Mountain
- 9 Park Junction**
 - Potential location for future train station/stop for Train to the Mountain and link to park shuttle system
 - Potential terminus for Train to the Mountain excursion route
 - Shuttle Options include:
 - Deliver guests to Ashford & East Louis County
 - Run shuttle to Paradise
 - Service to other tourism attractions
- 10 Mineral**
 - Potential location for future train station/stop for Train to the Mountain
- 11 Ashford**
 - See specific area site plans and sketches
 - Potential location for future train station/stop for Train to the Mountain
- 12 Park Entrance**
 - Potential location for overflow parking with shuttle stop

- 13 Shuttle stops at:**
 - Sunshine Point
 - Gobbler's Knob Trailhead
 - Klapatche Park Trailhead
 - Klapatche Point
- 14 Shuttle Stops at:**
 - Kautz Creek Trailhead
 - Longmire
 - Cougar Rock Campground
 - Comet Falls Trailhead
 - Narada Falls
 - Paradise Picnic Area
 - Paradise Visitor Center

Intelligent Transportation Systems

- Traveler information system (T.I.S.) Radio capture ± 20%
- Real time stations: Tacoma, Eatonville, Elbe, Park Junction, Ashford
 - Parking information and shuttle
 - Paradise parking full shuttle access only
- Internet- have variety of Nisqually Valley Recreation options
 - Live cameras at Paradise & visitor centers
 - Transit & shuttle schedules
- Variable Message Signs- alert visitors to congestion, Paradise parking, road closures weather conditions, Elbe, Ashford, Eatonville
- Phone numbers- 1-800-NISQUALLY Valley Recreation and MT. Rainier conditions

The Mountain Rail Division anticipates that the rail line will carry between 45,000 and 85,000 passengers per year at full build-out. Terminal facilities in the corridor area could be located near Eatonville, in Elbe, and possibly at Mineral, National and Ashford. If the proposed Mount Rainier Resort is developed, a station could also be located at Park Junction. Extending train service east of Park Junction is a possibility, depending on feasibility and land use/ownership issues. Track and right of way exist up to National, however, providing a terminal facility at National could be in conflict with the Upper Nisqually Valley Community Plan. Though less feasible (track and designated right of way no longer exist), having a terminal in Ashford, rather than National, would be appropriate within the Village Center land use category, identified in the Upper Nisqually Valley Community Plan. Some charette participants supported the idea of extended service to Ashford in the future. This is reflected in some of the detailed site plans the team developed for the Ashford area.

Trolley Component

To link Eatonville with Train to the Mountain service a trolley service, consisting of three rubber-tired trolleys, could be operated within the downtown area of Eatonville with connections to the Train to the Mountain station located east of the city. A dedicated curbside facility for passenger transfers would be located at the proposed multi-agency visitor center at the Eatonville Town Plaza. Service could be extended as needed to pickup and discharge passengers at numerous locations in the downtown area.

Rail trolley service (self-propelled cars) could be provided from Eatonville to Elbe, and ultimately Ashford, if train service is implemented. Six trolleys are required to provide service within the designated rail corridor. The trolley service could be operated on a scheduled basis with times coordinated with Train to the Mountain passenger and freight service sched-

ules. Charette participants talked about the trolley in reference to phasing and development for Train to the Mountain. They suggested that initially a trolley run on tracks from Eatonville to Elbe (and/or as far east as track improvements and infrastructure would allow) and provide service to those interested in a short excursion through the valley. Use of the tracks for a trolley could be covered by a lease agreement with the City of Tacoma, which in turn could help fund the city's track maintenance and Train to the Mountain endeavor.

Intelligent Transportation Systems Components (ITS)

Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) contribute to effective transportation management. ITS promotes travel efficiency and aids in decision-making relating to trip planning. ITS technologies include a range of tools that can be utilized to manage visitor movements through the park, enhance the visitor experience, monitor impacts on natural resources, and improve public safety. The charette team addressed several ITS technologies. Specific applications of ITS technologies for the Nisqually Road Corridor could include:

- Traveler Information systems (for example, Radio system outside park on approach roads to Mount Rainier National Park)
- Phone information lines, such as 1-800 Number(s) and cell phone access specifically for corridor/park road information
- Interactive information kiosks that provide current information about road, traffic and weather conditions possibly with real-time updates.
- Key information provided at visitor facilities within the corridor, including regional airports at Seattle and Portland.

- Web cams at Paradise, Sunrise and visitor centers
- Website (with trip planning opportunities and transit route information for Nisqually corridor and park visitors, real-time information, and links to live webcam of road and parking conditions at Paradise, year-round weather, etc.) and links to/from all existing and future partner sites
- Coordinate park and corridor related information with WSDOT, Pierce County and Pierce Transit web sites
- GPS technologies to track shuttle buses
- Electronic payment systems at park entrances (may cover a range of fee collection activities such as park entrance fees, including National Park Pass, parking fees, backcountry fees, etc.)
- Public safety applications (Variable message signs located outside park along the route, reduced speed signs, automated signal changers)
- Other educational applications including related training opportunities for all information and visitor service providers/attraction website operators
- Local TV Channel information in area hotels/motels/Bed & Breakfast Inns

Key to implementation of ITS technologies is to provide input to WSDOT planning to develop ITS "architecture" that would tie the Nisqually corridor and National Park related ITS needs with regional and statewide ITS planning. (The term "Architecture," when used in reference to ITS technologies, could be described as a layout for ITS program development, keyed to a specific region, and illustrated in flow chart form.) The National Park Service and U.S. Forest Service as well as state agencies and local interests need to work together in this current, ongoing effort.

Alternative Transportation Strategy

The Alternative Transportation System Options Map illustrates phased development of alternative transportation systems (ATS) for the Nisqually Valley. *Phase 1* represents a low growth scenario, whereby voluntary shuttle service could be implemented in the Upper Nisqually Valley. Under this scenario, service would begin at Ashford and serve Mount Rainier National Park from the Nisqually Entrance to and including West Side Road and Paradise, with additional stops at key park sites in between these locations. Under *Phase 2*, the 'moderate growth' scenario, Phase 1 would be implemented and Phase 2 shuttle service would be extended down valley, from Ashford to Eatonville with shuttle stops at National, Tahoma Woods, Park Junction, Elbe, Alder Lake, and Pack Forest. *Phase 3*, a 'high growth' scenario, could supplement Phases 1 and 2 shuttle service. In this scenario passenger train service could be implemented and supported by the shuttle service.

The community of Yelm could tie into Train to the Mountain through service to Tacoma at Freighthouse Square or through linking the Prairie line with the Tacoma Rail Line in the vicinity of Roy. Olympia is also linked to Yelm through Intercity Transit Route 14. This could tie into an inter-county bus route that could serve the communities of Yelm, Roy, Mckenna, and Eatonville with additional stops at Northwest Trek, Pioneer Farm and Mashel State Park. It was suggested that the buses offer racks to accommodate bicycles and kayaks. Initially this inter-county service is envisioned as a weekend excursion route and would require consultation and cooperation between Pierce and Thurston County transit providers.

The charette team recommends that a private/public partnership be explored for a coordinated shuttle transit system operation to transport visitors, employees and community members in and around Mount Rainier National Park. Such a private/public partnership would require cooperation between the

NPS, participating towns and venues within the Nisqually road corridor, UNAC, WSDOT and Pierce and Thurston Counties and the City of Tacoma. This recommendation is consistent with the park's General Management Plan, which calls for a transportation plan that would be developed in coordination with regional road corridor and transportation planning to examine different options for improving transportation in the park. Partnerships, such as those described above, would be sought in implementing the plan's actions. The implementation of a shuttle system would require planning, public input and NEPA and NHPA compliance, and an operations plan that would include ridership estimates, recommended service levels, operational and capital funding commitments and an action plan with specific roles and responsibilities for federal, state, local and private interests. Funding for alternative transportation systems (ATS) is addressed further in the last section of this document.

Design Concepts and Sketches

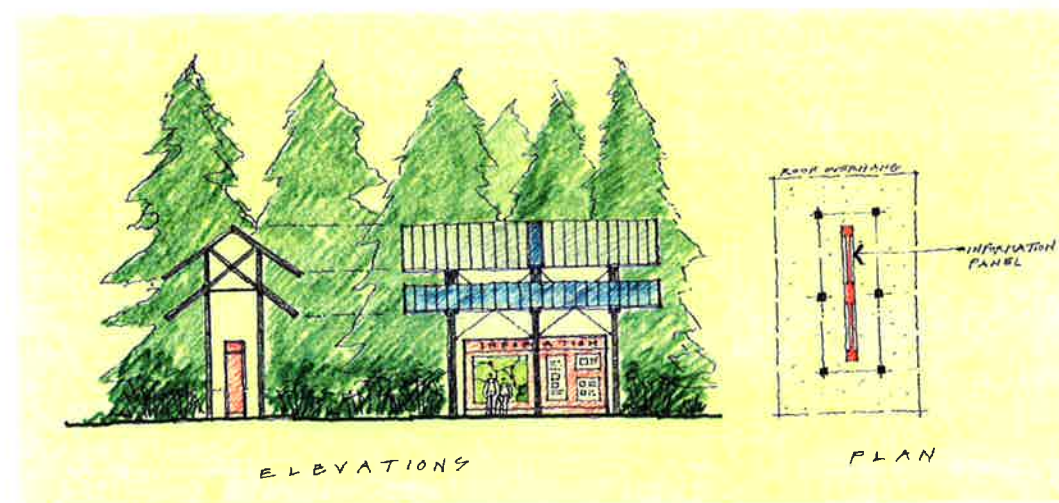
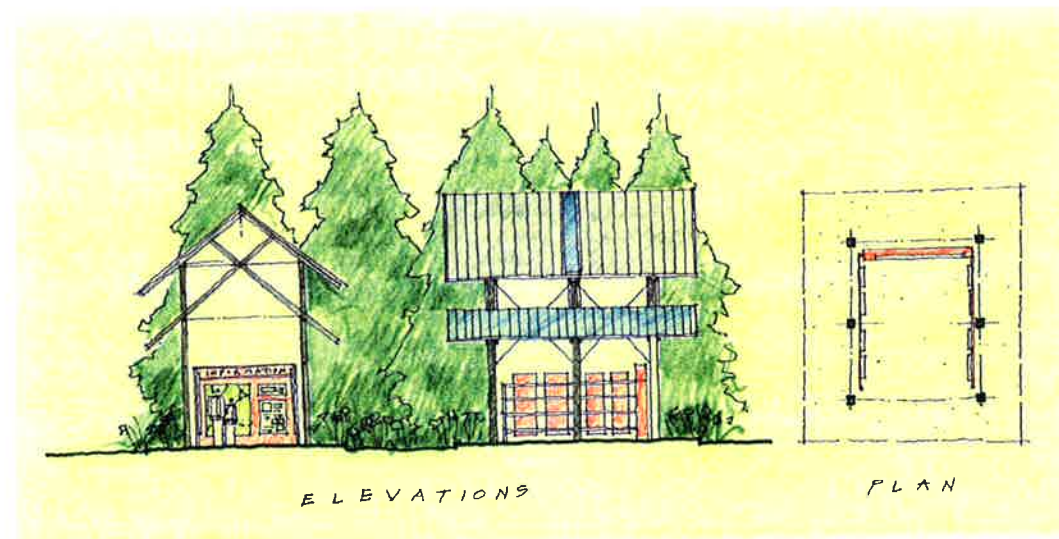
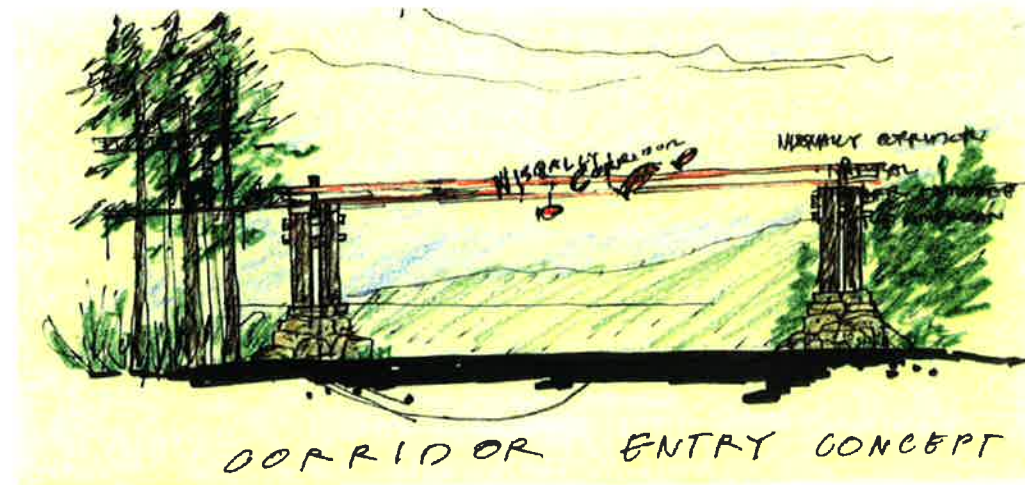
This section describes more specific ideas and recommendations for the Nisqually Road Corridor. It also contains sketches of ideas presented at the charrette. Although some sketches may look more like finished design plans to some readers, (with exception of the plaza at Yelm Prairie Development) all were prepared by charrette team members during the four-day effort. This section also contains some background of the different areas discussed so that charrette recommendations would be in the best context possible.



NISQUALLY ROAD CORRIDOR APPROACH ROUTES

Potential Corridor Entrances

The need to define corridor boundaries was discussed at the workshop. Some participants felt that the corridor really extends to Seattle and Tacoma, perhaps to the regional airports, where many of the journeys to Mount Rainier begin. In some way, the Nisqually Corridor, primarily SR 7/706, needs to be linked to these metropolitan areas, to the Interstate 5 corridor, and to SRs 161, 512, 167 and 510. Setting boundaries at the town or jurisdictional level is useful for developing market scenarios. Another way to define boundaries is to identify the entry points – locations at which the landscape character changes and at which common corridor signs could be placed. The team explored some ideas for signs at entry points, and their locations are noted on the Alternative Transportation System Options map. The sketches identify initial ideas for simple information/orientation kiosks that could be placed along the corridor to assist visitors in locating key features.



Thurston County

Thurston County includes the greater Olympia area, Tumwater, Lacey, and the smaller towns of Yelm and Rainier, among others, and part of the Nisqually Indian Reservation. Thurston County borders the Nisqually River opposite Pierce County and follows the river to the southern tip of Puget Sound at the Case Inlet. The Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge is also within this county. Transportation related commerce includes major truck routes along I-5 and along SRs 510 and 507. Rail freight and the mainline for Amtrak passenger rail service extends from Tacoma through Tenino and to Centralia (in Lewis County) and points beyond.

The Thurston County Parks and Recreation Department has developed an extensive trail and park system that includes multiuse paths, rails to trails, and even water-based trails. Much of this information is on the Existing Conditions and Long Distance Trails Opportunities maps. On this extensive system of public trails, it is possible to ride or hike off road through most of Thurston County, from city to city and through the countryside to Puget Sound. The county is pursuing a number of grants to complete the trail system. The trail system meets the train system in several locations within the county, so there are opportunities for multimodal travel.



Cochram Park, Yelm

The county is also redeveloping the Deschutes Falls Park Site on Bald Hill Road. A master plan includes development of an environmental learning center, trails, and trailhead parking.



A redevelopment plan is underway for the downtown area. It includes a new transit center along 6th Ave at Golf. Sixth Avenue is identified as a future transportation corridor. All key multi-modal intersections will have plazas where trip and regional recreational opportunity information can be displayed. The City is working with WSDOT to develop landscaped areas. Also, the city is seeking Heritage Scenic Byway designation for a portion of the SR 510. It may be worthwhile for other towns along SR 510 to consider working with Lacey on this designation.

Lacey has an extensive urban trails system that includes:

- a non-motorized commuter trail along I-5
- trails through the woodland Creek Community, around a series of lakes formerly used to float logs to the Henderson Inlet
- the Chehalis-Western Trail, which runs north-south along an abandoned railroad right-of-way and ties to the east-west railroad corridor in the city of Rainier, Washington

Lacey

Lacey was incorporated in 1966 and is in Thurston County, south and west of Interstate 5 near the SR 510 and Interstate 5 interchange. Population is about 31,000 in the incorporated area, and roughly 30,000 in the unincorporated area. Lacey, once a small town, is now an expanding suburb between Olympia and Tacoma. Lacey is also the site of St. Martin's College, founded in the late 1800s.

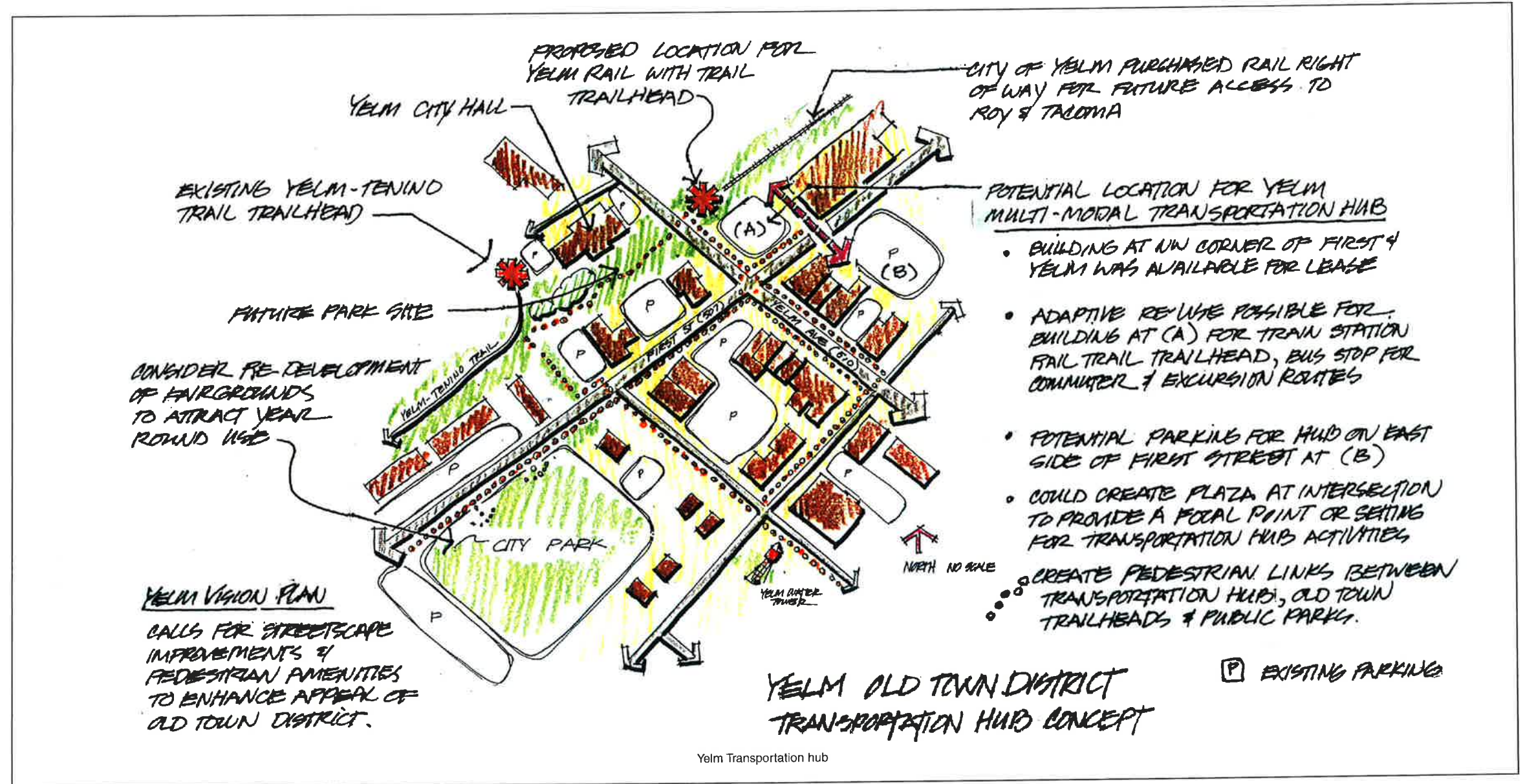
- a section of the Burlington Northern Route west of SR 510 may be abandoned and could become a rail to trail opportunity (Fones Road to Active rail east of SR 510)
- links to the Cascadia Marine Trail, which is part of a series of water trails linking overnight campsites throughout the Puget Sound to Canada

For those traveling from Olympia and points west, the 510 interchange is the likely route to Mount Rainier. For those traveling south from Seattle-Tacoma region it is an attractive alternative to experiencing frequent traffic delays on SR 161. However, the team did not observe any traffic signs on I-5 near Lacey that direct travelers to Mt. Rainier National Park. Lacey has developed a new roundabout at the I-5/SR 510 interchange, from which one can see a magnificent view of Mount Rainier. This interchange area is the focus of new growth in Lacey, in addition to redevelopment of its city downtown area.

During the charette there was some discussion of promoting the I-5 and SR 510 corridor as an alternate route to Mount Rainier National Park. Additional study would need to be undertaken, with the Washington State Department of Transportation, to determine the potential impacts on traffic in small towns along the SR 510/507/702 route.

Yelm

"Yelm is really Thurston County's Gateway to Mount Rainier" (Quote by local Steve Craig). Yelm is at the crossroads of SR 510 and SR 507. The town was founded in the mid-19th century and has lately seen growth in residential and commercial development related to the expanding metropolitan area surrounding Olympia and Lacey. Yelm recently completed a *Vision Plan* and *Design Standards and Guidelines*.

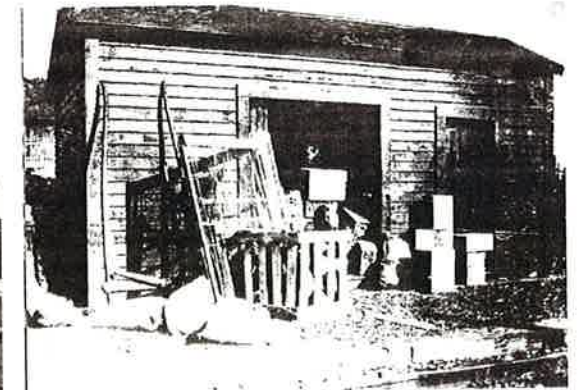


James Longmire settled in the Yelm Prairie during the 1850s. He was a friend to the Indians and also a Thurston County representative to Governor Stevens, who was in charge of Indian Affairs and negotiating the Medicine Creek Treaty. After the Indian War of 1853, Longmire was known for exploring Rainier and later led climbs along a trail that the Nisqually Indian Tribe used for commerce with other tribes to the east. In the 1850s there were no roads beyond Yelm. The route to the mountain generally followed the Nisqually River Valley, and eventually became known as the Longmire Route. Longmire was highly regarded by his friends in the Nisqually Tribe

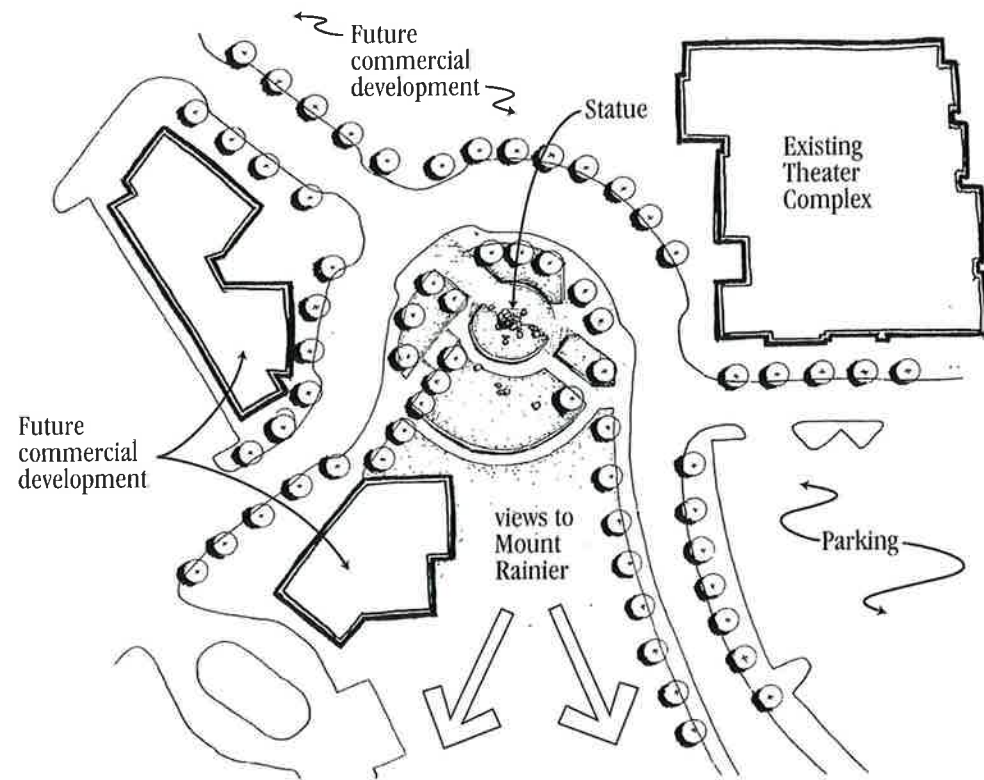
and he often depended on the Indians to assist with his guided trips and explorations. In the 1880s, Longmire 'discovered' natural springs on the mountain in the area that is now known as Longmire Meadows. There he opened a resort, which continues to operate today as the Longmire Inn. There were many other explorers, including John Muir, who traveled to Mount Rainier in 1888 and used Yelm as a base camp for staging his expedition. Muir proved influential in the movement to establish Mount Rainier as the fifth national park. Philemon Van Trump, the first man to summit Mount Rainier and Fay Fuller, a Yelm schoolteacher, the first woman



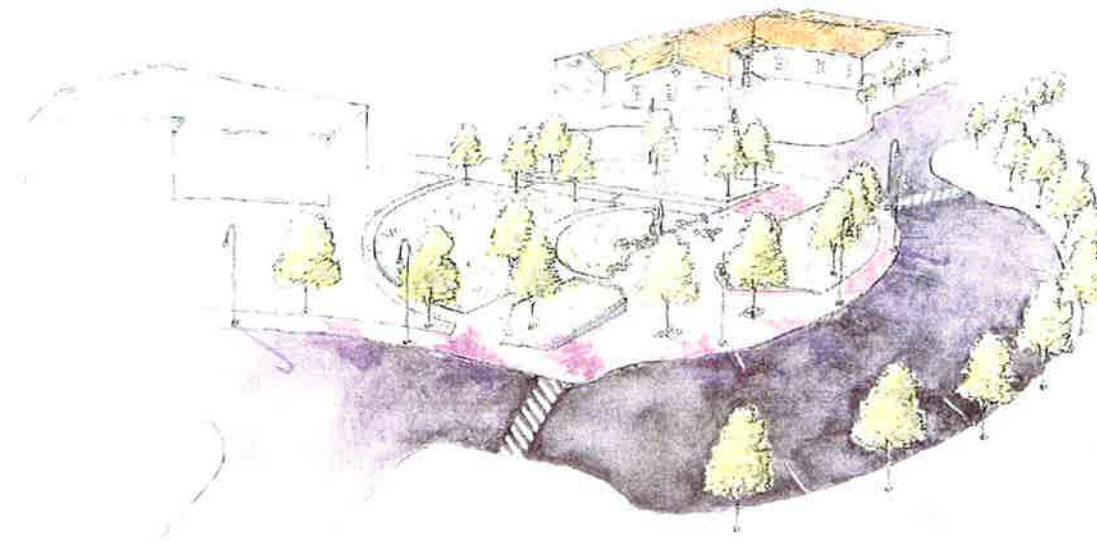
Yelm streetscape



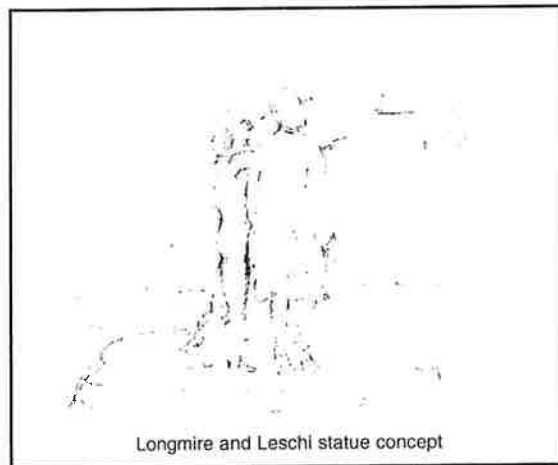
Yelm Depot - 1896



Plan view: Yelm Prairie Civic Plaza



Perspective: Yelm Prairie, Civic Plaza



Longmire and Leschi statue concept

to climb to the top of Mount Rainier were Yelm residents. Her accomplishment was widely publicized and attracted national attention.

There are many tourist attractions in the Yelm area. The Nisqually Tribe has a cultural center and operates the Red Wind Casino. Fort Lewis has a picnic area and offers tours of the historic military base. Cochram Park is a state-of-the-art sustainable park –

a wetland wastewater treatment system and public park. Wilcox Farms offers tours, mostly for school groups. The Drew Harvey Theater in Yelm offers plays showcasing local talent.

In 1992 Yelm adopted a transportation plan. A set of alternatives was developed that included a Yelm city bypass, for which an environmental assessment has been completed and adopted at the city and county levels. The goal is to remove the pass-through traffic from SR 510 and enable the Yelm business community to thrive.

Yelm bought 4.5 miles of rail line that connects to Tacoma which will enable rail transport of sand and gravel resulting in removal of up to 100 trucks from SR 510 per day. This track ends in the center of town, across the street from the trailhead for the Yelm-Tenino rail trail trailhead. The town is interested in working with the Washington State Department of Transportation to provide a park and ride parking

area and rail transit hub at this location.

The Yelm Prairie Development is 0.25 mile east of the Yelm historic town center. It includes a motel (with plans for an expanded conference facility) and a large movie theater and is the future site for the Yelm Chamber of Commerce, the Yelm Public Library, and potentially the Yelm History Museum. Other future businesses may include a coffee shop and copy center. There is an expansive view of Mount Rainier from this site. The developer has expressed an interest in creating a central civic plaza that would provide a place for a statue honoring Longmire and Nisqually Tribal Chief Leschi, for Saturday markets, for local art fairs, and possibly for an outdoor amphitheater for small concerts.

Yelm is also an area that attracts a number of well-known artists. Local artists joined us for a portion of the Yelm Charette. Sculptor Paul Keesler expressed interest in creating a statue of Longmire and Leschi

for the central plaza in the Yelm Prairie Development. The accompanying illustrations and statue show an initial concept for the plaza, with Longmire and Leschi, or another of the Nisqually Tribe, looking in the general direction of Rainier, as perhaps they often did. The statue would rise from a re-created meadow of grasses and camas lilies, once abundant in the Yelm Prairie.

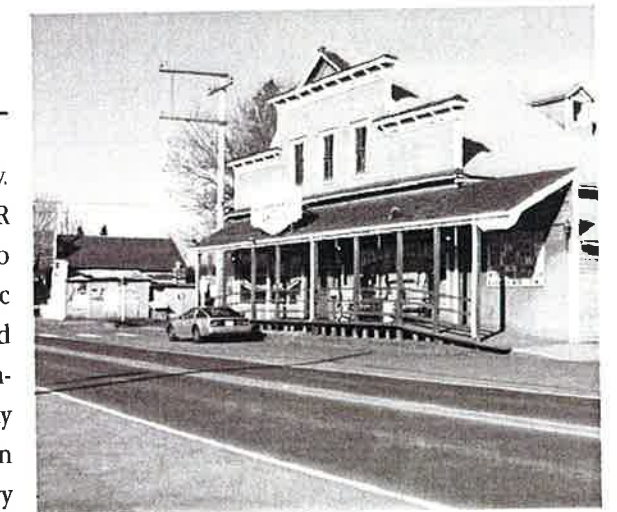
Roy

Roy is a small historic town located in Pierce County. It has experienced a steady increase of traffic on SR 507, with few traffic flow or safety improvements to deal with this traffic. The lack of turn lanes, traffic lights or other traffic control devices that would allow citizens to safely cross SR 507 or access commercial services and schools within Roy from any city street, is a major concern. During rush hour traffic in the morning or evening, traffic volume is so heavy

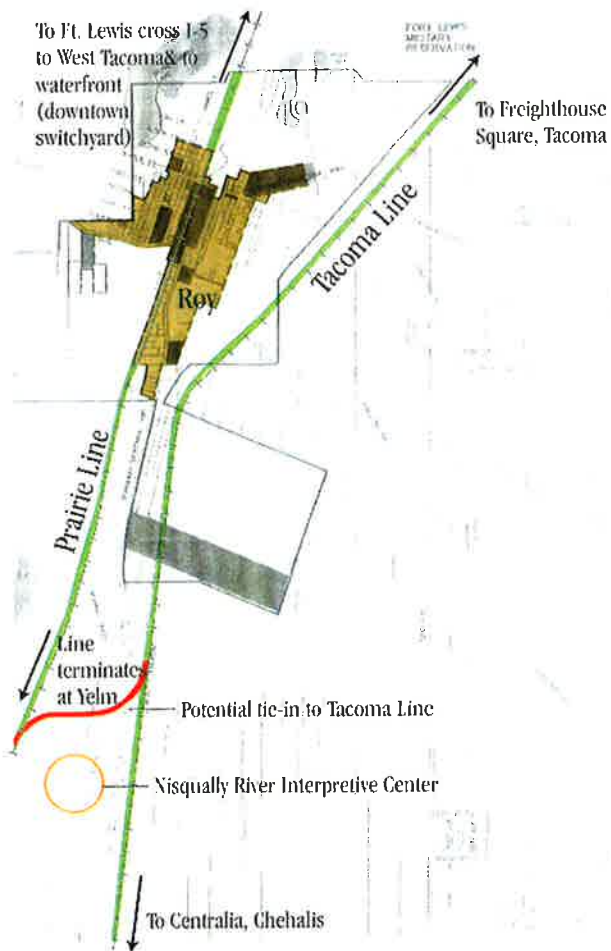
that it can take 10 minutes for local traffic to cross SR 507. The city is also in the process of adding sidewalks and improving amenities for children.

Roy generally supports the idea that SR 507 could become a "gateway" road to Mount Rainier, but would encourage Washington Department of Transportation to work with their municipal government to deal with the traffic problems. There is an obvious need to look at crucial infrastructure improvements and traffic calming practices that would mitigate the impacts of increased traffic to the community of Roy.

The proposed Nisqually River Interpretive Center is planned outside of Roy on a large tract of land on a bend in the Nisqually River. The purpose of this facility is to "highlight the interrelationship between cultural, economic, and environmental resources, and to direct residents and visitors alike to the many other superb educational facilities in the [Nisqually River] basin" (*Nisqually River Interpretive Center Plan*). The interpretive center could be a hub to attract and direct visitors to other venues within the region. There is potential to develop a trail connection between Roy and the Nisqually Interpretive Center.



Roy



Potential rail link at Roy

During a brief visit to Roy, the team noticed that the train tracks run parallel to SR 507 – right through the town center. These tracks could link to Frederickson and the Tacoma rail line that runs from Freighthouse Square in Tacoma to Park Junction and beyond to Morton. There could be opportunities to link Roy with rail service for Train to the Mountain. The City of Tacoma has set aside funding to provide a rail link between the City of Tacoma Rail Line and the Prairie Rail Line linking Roy and Yelm.

Charette participants suggested the Train to the Mountain could ultimately expand to serve Centralia and also Yelm and the Nisqually Interpretive Center, outside of Roy. A potential rail to trail connection exists just beyond Frederickson. Potential projects that could be pursued for Yelm, McKenna, and Roy

that were identified during the charette include the following:

- Yelm alternative transportation links (rail, trail, and parking concepts for the Yelm city center)
- Yelm prairie development Civic Plaza (statue and design ideas)
- Yelm-Roy railroad (ideas for trail and excursion train)
- suggest locations for ITS in corridor (from I-5 to SR 706)
- expansion of trails and regional locations for connections within corridor, also cross-state connections



Roy

- a stream restoration concept for Yelm Creek
- rails/railways in corridor and station locations and potential links
- locations for visitor centers or contact stations within corridor where people can learn about regional recreational opportunities
- advance SR 510 heritage corridor concept/national scenic byway
- Nisqually River Interpretive Center (links and connections to communities)

- Nisqually tribal cultural centers (concept and locations)
- Nisqually tribal longhouses at key locations around Tahoma (Mt. Rainier)
- Entrance gateways (add sense of place and defining quality to communities)

Pioneer Farm & Ohop Indian Village

The following text describing this facility is excerpted from the Pioneer Farm website. The 1800's farm offers guided day and overnight tours for children of all ages with such hands-on activities as milking, grain milling and other household and farm chores similar to those the pioneers performed some 100 years ago while homesteading in Washington. Pioneer Farm is open daily May through September and on weekends only during October through April.

A 1.5-hour tour of Pioneer Farm includes visiting a homestead cabin built in the 1880s and learning about the families who built and lived in it. It includes doing the chores that pioneer children did in the cabin, such as grinding grains, churning butter, scrubbing laundry, and carding wool. Doing barn



Ohop Valley



Pioneer Farm

chores includes gathering eggs, milking, and visiting all the animals – even a jump into the hay pile. Doing some work in the blacksmith shop includes using the forge and pounding or bending a horseshoe. Doing some work in the wood shop includes pounding nails, using a bit and brace to drill, spudding bark, sawing wood, and using the draw knife

Other experiences offered by this venue include

- listening to pioneer stories and playing pioneer games
- creation of pioneer and Indian crafts
- experiencing a pioneer school firsthand, conducted in a replica one-room school house.
- a 1.5-hour hike through a forested path in the Ohop Valley where tour guides teach how native plants were used for nutrition, medicines, tools, and clothing.
- a journey back to a time before the first contact with Europeans to experience the seasonal Ohop Indian village.

Pioneer Farm is implementing its *Master Plan*. Transportation access, orientation/information, and signing for this venue were addressed in the charette.

Northwest Trek

At Northwest Trek visitors can see animals native to North America in their natural habitat. This park is a popular regional attraction. It offers guided tours to school groups, scouting groups, and the general public. The range of experiences provided include riding the tram through the free roaming area, walking along forested paths in the core area, hiking the nature trails, and relaxing in the Forest Theatre while watching a movie. The Cheney Discovery Center for children provides hands-on discovery activities. Food and gift sales are available. Northwest Trek is open year round, with limited weekend access during January and February.

During the charette, ideas pertaining to Northwest Trek were keyed to integrating this facility with public transit, improving access/awareness from the road, exploring a partnership possibility with Pioneer Farm, and future program expansion and land acquisition. Transportation access and orientation/information and signing for this venue were addressed in the charette.



Bighorn sheep at Northwest Trek

NISQUALLY ROAD CORRIDOR

Eatonville

Eatonville is on SR 161, about 3 to 4 miles north of La Grande, which is near the intersection of SR 161 and SR 7 in the upper Nisqually Valley. Eatonville is quite close to the Olympia-Tacoma-Seattle I-5 corridor, and many residents commute to jobs in urban areas. The city had a population of 1,915 persons in 1999; however, (for purposes of growth management planning) the population is forecast to grow to 7,000 during the next 20 years. The Eatonville area is host to Northwest Trek, Pioneer Farm, and other natural resource-based recreation areas. Eatonville appears to be transitioning from a resource-dependent economy (which used to emphasize timber harvesting and forest products processing) to a diversified economic base, with an emphasis on tourism and recreation as well as an attractive location for retirees and commuters from nearby urbanized locations. Eatonville is a popular destination for tourism visitors and appears to be establishing itself as a gateway to Mount Rainier National Park as well. The city has extensive plans for improving the retail core and streetscapes, as well as master planning the vacant lumber mill site for a variety of uses – among other goals and objectives.

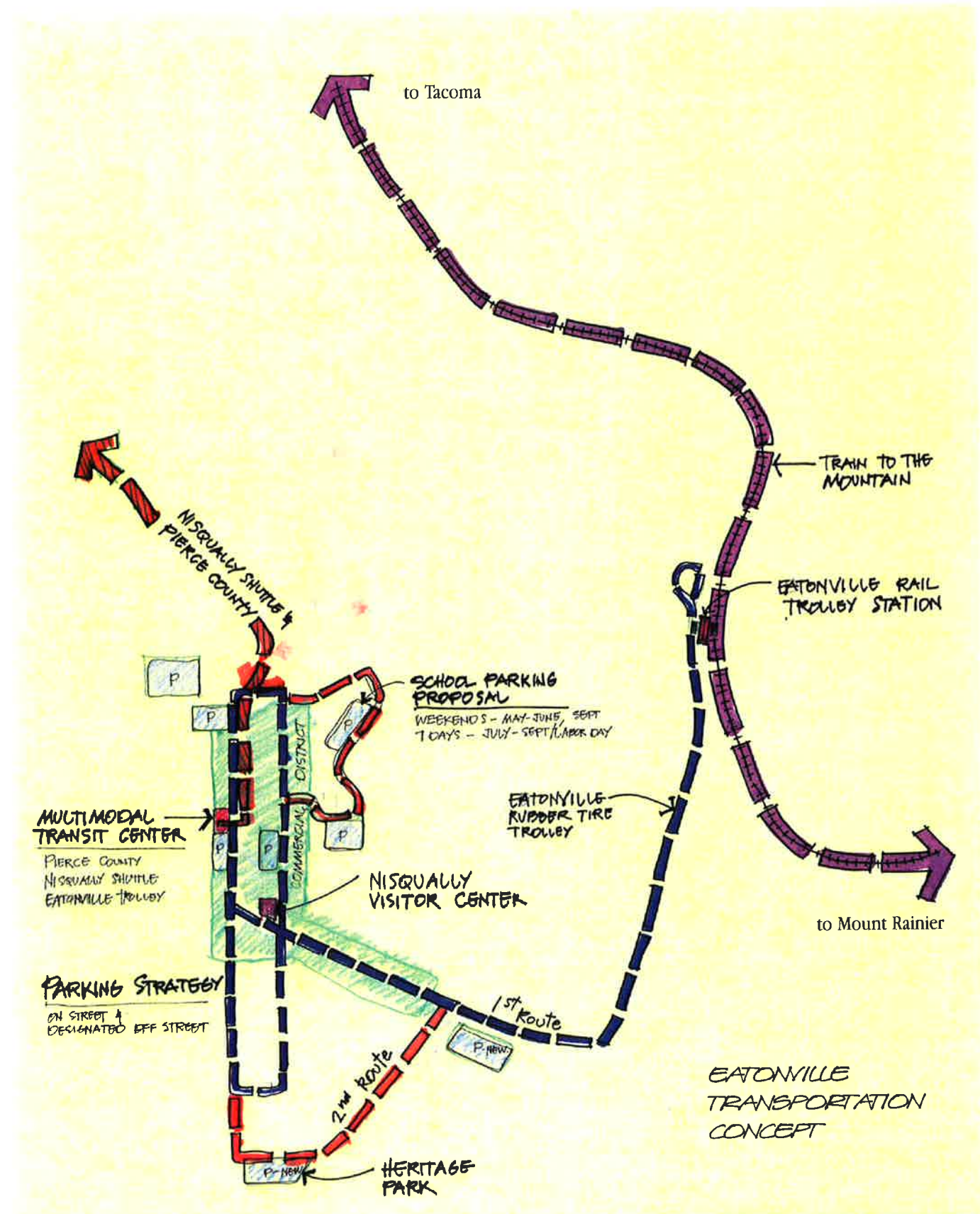
In 2000 Eatonville completed the *Eatonville Community Action Plan and Vision Statement*. Following completion of the plan, design standards for Eatonville were developed. The following text is taken from this plan's summary section, which was prepared by Makers Architecture and Urban Design.

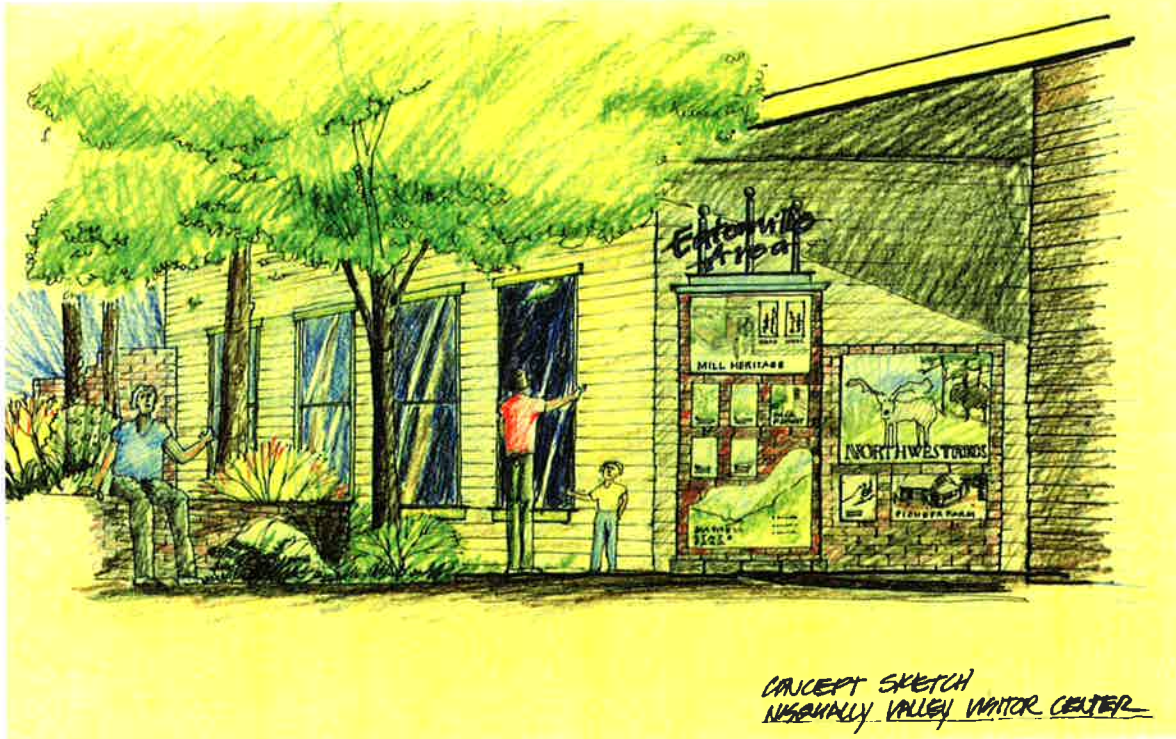
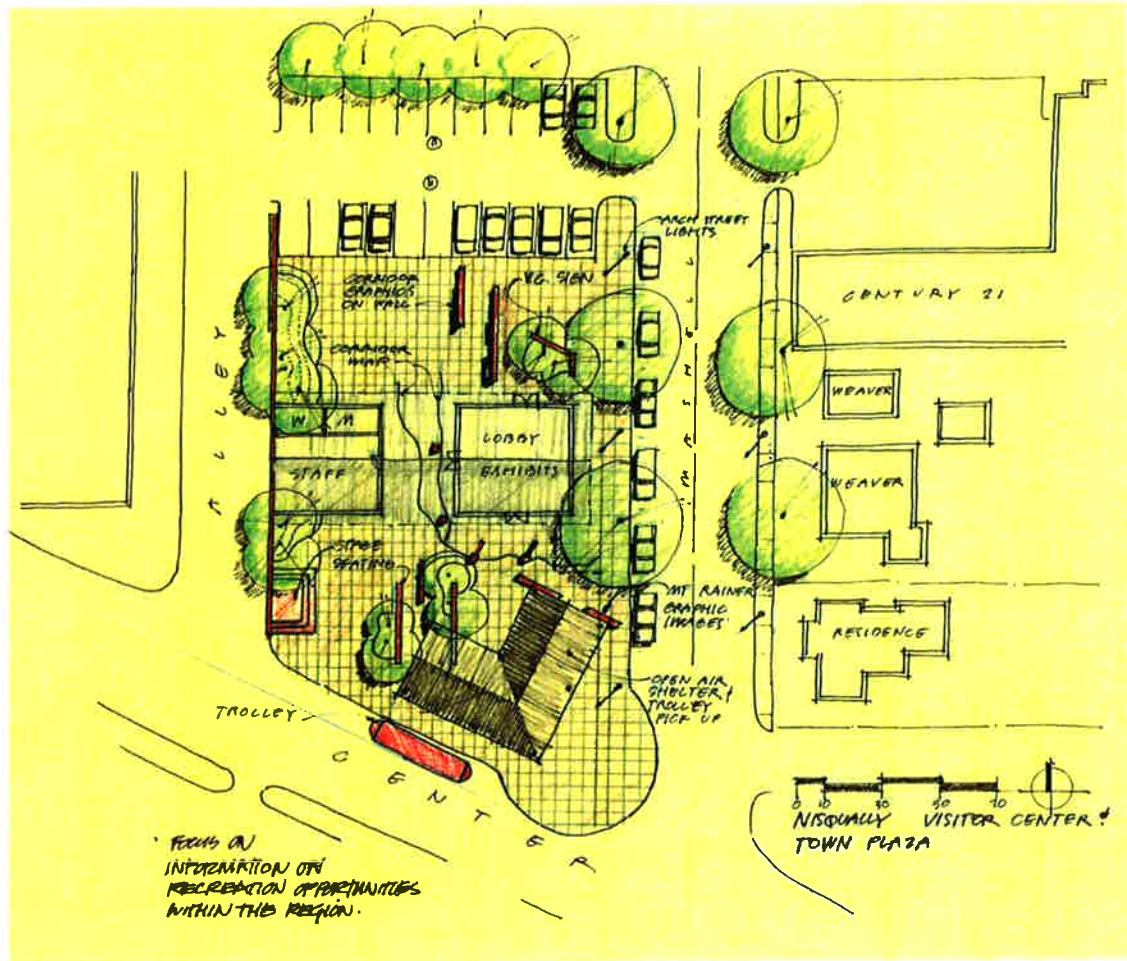
During the planning process, community participants identified three general opportunity areas. First, participants agreed that increasing services

for visitors provides Eatonville an attractive potential for growth. Visitors to Mount Rainier and other local attractions continue to increase and Eatonville is well positioned to take advantage of this market. Moreover, citizens felt that tourism can be a relatively clean and desirable economic base and noted that visitors to the area are beginning to flow through the town on a year-round basis. There are both short and long-term actions that the community can pursue to increase tourism related trade, including: participating in the Mount Rainier Rural Gateway Communities program, strengthening the Mashell Avenue Main Street core, improving the Washington Avenue corridor, and undertaking a promotional/marketing campaign."

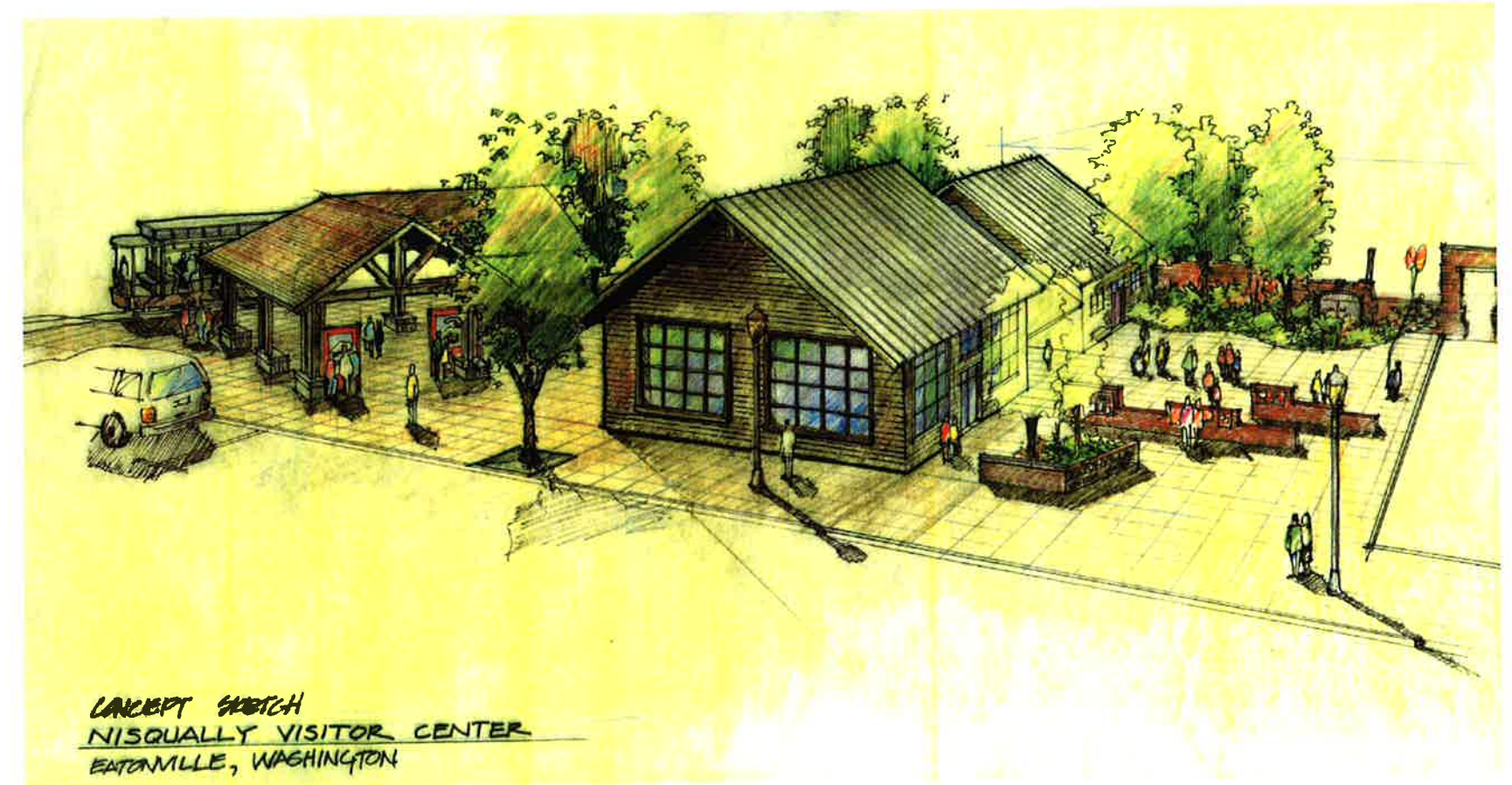
Design concepts and sketches for key sites in Eatonville were developed during the Nisqually Road Corridor charrette. Site plans and architectural concepts for Eatonville included a transportation concept, details for a regional visitor information center at the town plaza, and a potential mill site development plan. It is noted that all of the concepts would require more detailed planning and compliance activities, initiated at the town and county level.

The Eatonville Transportation Concept illustrates one scenario for multimodal transportation in the town. A multimodal transit center could be located within the commercial district. The Pierce County shuttle, the Eatonville to Ashford shuttle, and the Eatonville trolley could serve this facility. The trolley route could serve the Eatonville Rail Trolley Station and Train to the Mountain (see "Overall Charette Corridor Findings and Recommendations" section). Trolley service could be extended to provide access to the local schools and the Heritage Park at the mill site, as needs arise. Parking for the town could be accommodated by on-street parking in combination with streetscape improvements and by developing parking lots at key locations throughout town.





National Park Service. The intent of the center is to dispense helpful information, even during off hours. A visitor will discover a variety of means to learn about the area. From the parking lot, descriptions of Eatonville's history and recreational opportunities are placed in an open plaza. Passing through this pleasant landscaped area leads to two enclosed structures, whose character is inspired by historic mill buildings in the vicinity. The larger of the two buildings houses the information center with permanent and temporary exhibits. The smaller one contains public restrooms and the staff area. A corridor map integrated into the paving points to additional outdoor exhibits beyond the buildings. Here, city events and tours can be staged from a small amphitheater. On the corner of the site, a shelter that serves the trolley stop provides exhibit and event space under cover, a useful amenity during inclement weather. The entire complex forms a unique center in Eatonville, enriching both local and visitor activities.



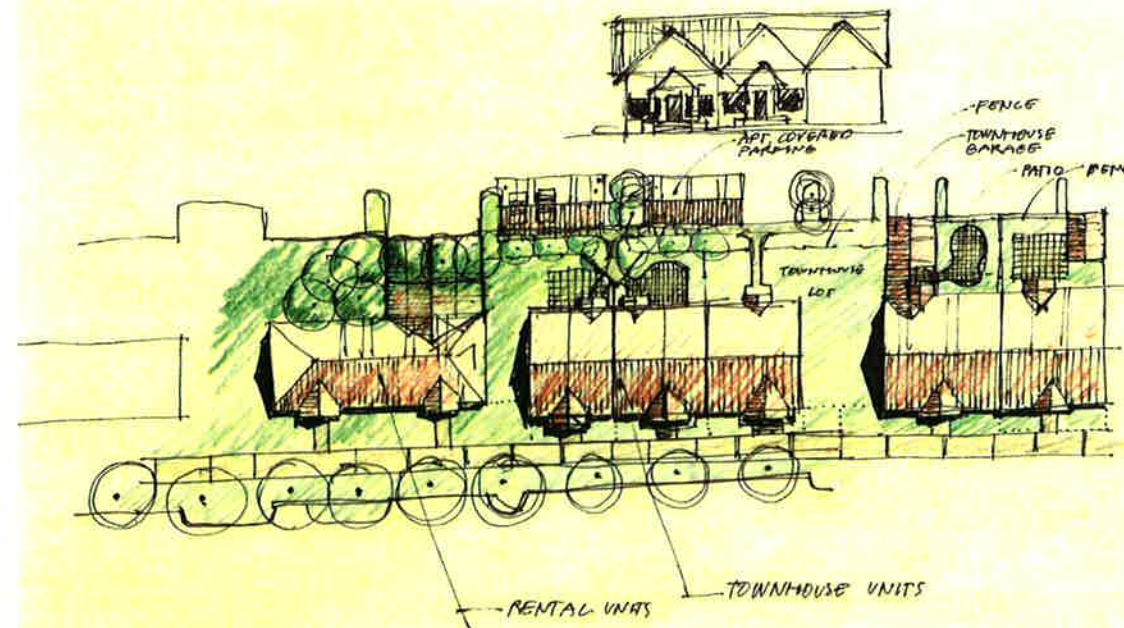
A multiagency visitor center could be developed at Eatonville to provide regional information and orientation services for Nisqually Road Corridor recreational opportunities. This center could include indoor and outdoor exhibit space, a small amphitheater, restroom facilities, and administrative office space. Off- and on-street parking could be provided, and a trolley and/or shuttle stop could serve this facility. The charette team prepared sketches and a per-

spective of what this facility and its related components might look like. Initially, the facility might operate from an existing structure. A new visitor center could be jointly developed and operated by the City of Eatonville, the Eatonville Chamber of Commerce, Washington State Department of Natural Resources, Washington State Parks and Recreation, Washington State Department of Transportation, U.S. Forest Service – Gifford Pinchot National Forest, and the





STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS
CONCEPT FROM EATONVILLE
COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN &
VISION STATEMENT

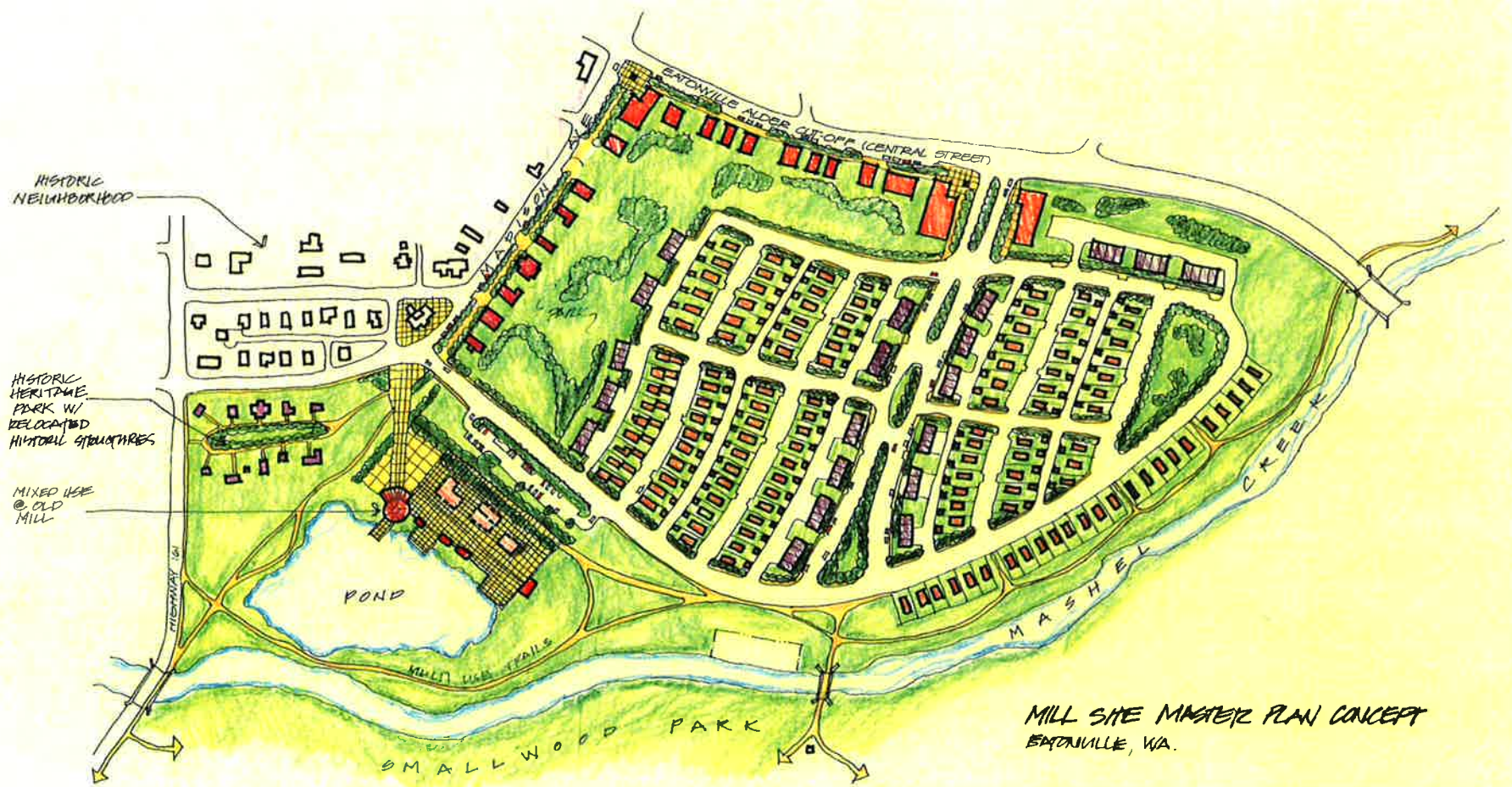


HOUSING CONCEPT MILL SITE



Eatonville Streetscape

Streetscape improvements in the Eatonville area and in other towns within the Nisqually Road Corridor could include improvements to building facades, outdoor seating, sidewalk resurfacing with accessibility improvements, street trees and 10-14-foot-high pole-type pedestrian lighting. Streetscape improvements were very important to participants and were accepted in Eatonville's plan. Traffic calming needs to be an aesthetic part of streetscape improvements. The streetscape improvements sketch was borrowed from the Eatonville Community Action Plan.



MILL SITE MASTER PLAN CONCEPT
EATONVILLE, WA.



Eatonville historic cabin



Eatonville Mill

The Mill Site parcel is bounded by Center Street to the north and Madison and SR 161 to the northwest and west. The charette team prepared a conceptual design for a Mill Site Master Plan Concept that includes mixed use development at the old Mill Site, and restoration of the mill pond, housing, and offices. This site could be linked to proposed multi-use trails along Mashel Creek. The plan shows a layout for a historic heritage park which includes the historic Van Eaton cabin. The site could also support new housing and limited office development. A combination of townhomes and rental units could borrow architectural detailing from historic residences within town and respond to a location adjacent to a historic neighborhood. A new park and green space could be a prominent feature of this development.

Comments by participants for Eatonville included the following:

- Eatonville has already begun construction of a historical society and heritage park at the mill site.
- Trail system and connections could add much to quality of life for Eatonville residents. Eatonville could be tied into a regional bike route and mountain loop. Bike loop/trail opportunities could include more than at Ram Rod. The charette team suggested that Eatonville could tie into a regional trail system by following the Mashel River and linking with a regional multiuse trail that could follow the Nisqually Valley. Rail-trails could also be explored.
- Although a key trestle is missing, a train depot is a possibility, even though costly to implement. The charette effort addressed the logistical problem by recommending implementation of a rubber tired trolley service between a train depot and the Eatonville town center.
- A multiagency regional information center could be in the proposed Eatonville town center. Participants felt it would be necessary to work with the town on the actual location. This facility is important to the town and it must have a presence. The facility should also have adequate administrative office space for each agency that has staff at this location. One participant wanted to know if the existing Chamber of Commerce visitor center is working well. The charette team thought that a more prominent location in the town center would make it more attractive to visitors, especially if it could be combined with transit and shuttle access.
- Growth management and maintenance of green space between village centers is very important.

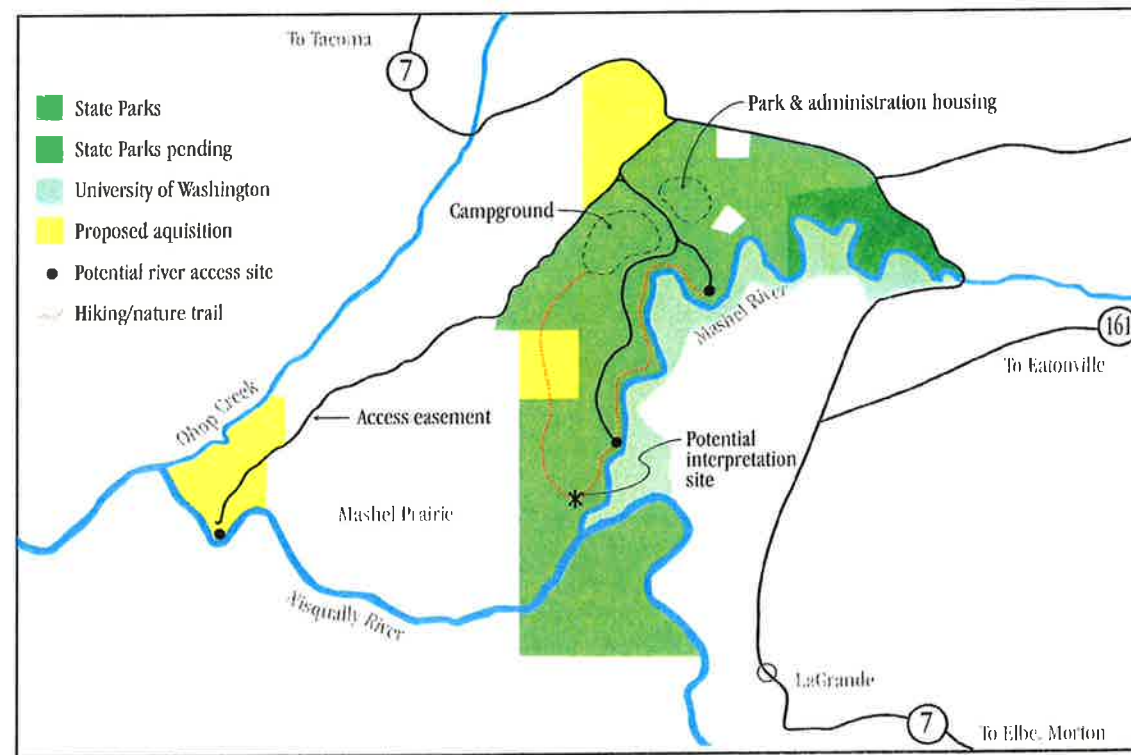
Nisqually-Mashel State Park

Southwest of Eatonville and adjacent to University of Washington's Pack Forest, nearly 1,000 acres of forested land make up the Nisqually-Mashel State Park. The park features Mashel Canyon, some old-growth forest, the confluence of the Mashel River with the Nisqually River, and dramatic vertical cliffs that are home to a variety of raptors and cliff birds.

To date the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission has focused on land acquisition and has not yet prepared a master plan for the park. However, Washington State Parks planners envision numerous possibilities for the park. Generally, planners expect at least half of the park will be conserved for native habitat and wildlife, whereas the other half will be used for recreational and administrative purposes, compatible with the landscape. Recreational opportunities include camping and day use related

to water recreation, such as canoeing, kayaking, and float trips. Boat put-ins and take-outs would both be accommodated within the park. A detached parcel near the Ohop Creek confluence with the Nisqually River, which would be accessed via an easement, has been suggested as a possible boat take-out location. Other day use activities might include an interpretive nature trail through the old-growth forest, along the cliffs of the Mashel Canyon. Administrative facilities and limited park staff housing would likely be placed near the park entrance along SR 7.

Although the exact location has not been verified, Nisqually-Mashel State Park is within the vicinity of a camp inhabited by the ancestors of the Nisqually Indian Tribe. The horrific Mashel Massacre of the camp inhabitants occurred along the banks of the Mashel River in 1856. Options could be explored for interpreting this tragic event within the park.



Nisqually-Mashel State Park conceptual plan

Pack Forest

On January 9, 1926, Charles Lathrop Pack Demonstration Forest came into being with the acceptance of a \$9,222 gift from conservationist and East Coast lumberman, Charles Lathrop Pack. This gift was used, pursuant to Mr. Pack's wishes, to acquire the first 334 acres of what would, by 2001, become a 4,500-acre facility. This forest was to become a demonstration site and sustainably managed forest. Proceeds to manage this forest come primarily from conferences and timber sales.



Pack Forest

The campus at Pack Forest contains housing for students, faculty, and staff. There is also a complement of self-contained housing used by faculty, staff, and graduate students for projects and assignments requiring them to stay overnight. Several classroom settings are available in buildings originating from CCC and WPA projects in the 1930s. In addition to the College of Forest Resources, these facilities are extensively used by other University of Washington schools and colleges, and other institutions, agencies, and groups in accordance with University of Washington facilities use policy for conferences, short courses, internal training programs, and continuing education. Completed and confirmed conferences, academic uses, and research lodging commonly result in more than 6,000 use days by more



Pack Forest

than 100 groups. The number of individuals contacted commonly exceeds 3,000. Pack Forest also hosts 200 kindergarten through 12th grade classes each year.

The forest itself is a field laboratory for academic programs and forestry research in that it contains a diversity of forest types, sites, soils, and operating features that are essential to a well-rounded undergraduate forestry curriculum and research program. Continual replanting is undertaken for up to 60-year forest stands. Demonstration areas illustrate various harvest techniques and create habitats for wildlife.

Pack Forest offers an existing trail system for hiking and mountain biking. There is potential to develop perimeter trails as well as potential for an old-growth forest research and interpretive center. Pack Forest could benefit from the establishment of alternate forms of transportation, such as Train to the Mountain.

Alder

The unincorporated community of Alder is on SR 7 above Alder Lake at the entrance to Alder Lake Park. The community consists of several homes, the Alder general store, Alder Church, Alder Community Club, and a Washington State Department of Transportation maintenance facility. Historically, Alder was to be the

focal point of a trail and road to Mount Rainier from Tacoma. The town may need assistance to help preserve its historical resources, namely the Alder Church, which dates to 1895. The store could benefit from increased tourism through this area.

Alder Lake Recreation Area

The Nisqually River Project is owned and operated by Tacoma Power. Two dams, the La Grande Dam and Alder Dam, were constructed on the Nisqually River in 1912 and 1944, respectively, and the project generates hydroelectric power for Tacoma. Alder Reservoir is about 7 miles in length and has a surface area of 3,065 acres. The popular Alder Lake Recreation Area is off SR 7 near Alder, Elbe, and Eatonville. Along Alder Lake are three main recreation areas provided by Tacoma Power: Alder Lake Park, Sunny Beach Point, and Rocky Point. Alder Lake Park and Rocky Point are open year-round except December 20 through January 1. Sunny Beach Point



Alder Lake

day-use area is open during summer months.

Fishing at Alder Lake is a fun and exciting pastime for anglers of all ages. Bank anglers and trollers can catch kokanee, rainbow, and cutthroat trout. Rocky Point, Sunny Beach, and near the mouth of tributaries

are the best fishing spots. Kokanee may be caught by trolling near the mouths of tributaries such as Little Nisqually River. Anglers catch spiny ray species, including catfish, perch, and crappie, at the west end of the lake. Large-mouth bass, along with rainbow and cutthroat trout, can be caught at the lake's west end using various gear. In spring, rainbow trout have been caught from shore between Elbe and Rocky Point. Or, you can launch your boat on the lake and fish to your heart's content. (Information taken from Tacoma Power website.)

The charette team toured this facility and basically recommended that it be maintained status quo. This area offers much of the camping and day use activity in the Nisqually Valley and is a very popular recreation spot with the local users.

Elbe

The unincorporated community of Elbe lies between the steep Cascade foothills to the north and east and Alder Lake and the Nisqually River to the south and west. Elbe is a platted town-site, with small home sites along the streets off SR 7 and tourism-oriented commercial development along the highway corridor through the community. Elbe is the terminus for an excursion train that runs about 6 miles south to Mineral (Lewis County). Train facilities in Elbe include lodging and a restaurant. The historic Elbe General Store and Elbe Evangelical Lutheran Church provide two more unique sites in the community. Several other commercial businesses, a second church, and a fire hall are also in Elbe. Elbe is at the junction of SR 7, which runs west to Tacoma and south to Morton, and SR 706, which runs east to Mount Rainier National Park.

Historically the community once supported more than 450 people associated with the logging industry and provided support services for nearby lumber mills and shingle mills. Today the community is



Elbe historic church

much smaller, about 41 residents. The town is a staging area for recreation access to state DNR lands, such as the Elbe Hills Forest. Elbe differs from Ashford, because it is a crossroads town. When the Skate Creek Road is closed during the late fall through early spring, most of the traffic passes through Elbe along SR 7. There is also significant cultural heritage associated with the town, and some of this heritage remains in its architectural fabric – such as the historic church. Elbe is included in the *Upper Nisqually Valley Community Plan*, and in that plan it is zoned Village Center.

To make Elbe an attractive place for people to stop, charette participants favored the creation of a pedestrian friendly environment by implementing streetscape improvements and traffic calming techniques. There is potential for Elbe to be a rail stop along the Train to the Mountain route, as well as a place for other rail excursions to begin and end. In the event a shuttle service to Mt. Rainier is initiated, Elbe wants to be a stop on the route. Another idea that received strong support by charette participants was the creation of a long distance trail through the Upper Nisqually Valley that would link communities together. This trail could route through Elbe.

The Washington State Department of Transportation has prepared construction drawings for a highway rest stop, to be located on WSDOT property between SR 7 and the Nisqually River, immediately across from the Scaleburger roadside restaurant. Business interests in town want the rest stop in Elbe to stop visitors, bring them to the town, and encourage them to spend some time there. Public restrooms are direly needed, as there are no other public restrooms between Eatonville and Mt. Rainier National Park (or west along Route 7 to Morton). At this time it was decided that the charette team take a look at Elbe and the WSDOT rest area plans and devise a range of schematic village center plans that present initial ideas for the future of Elbe. Since January 2001, a transportation crisis has developed in the state of Washington. After two sessions the state legislature failed to pass a state transportation bill, leaving funding for the WSDOT Elbe rest area unavailable. The planned \$6 million rest area, scheduled for construction in the summer of 2001, was never built. However, at a recent meeting with WSDOT representatives and stakeholders from Elbe and the region, it was stated that some grant monies were available to construct a smaller facility. The next step, would be to convene a workshop with the state Department of Transportation, Train to the Mountain, Elbe, Upper Nisqually Advisory Council, and other interested stakeholders to explore potential solutions to this problem. WSDOT is attempting to scale back facilities (ie. reduce the amount of parking and explore options for locating public restroom in a location other than the defined rest area, such as in an existing commercial establishment.)

The charette concepts build off the 2001 WSDOT rest area plan and include a number of scenarios that illustrate various degrees of streetscape improvements to the Elbe village center. Insofar as the rest area is concerned, the team looked at ways to modify the 75% design to allow it to better relate to the community needs identified during the charette. Regardless of what the WSDOT rest area looks like, the community

can move forward to capitalize on many of the ideas presented in the drawings. Key to slowing down traffic in this community is to work with WSDOT staff to relax the SR 7 right-of-way restrictions to allow for the construction of on-street parking, traffic calming devices and street improvements.

The charette team developed 3 conceptual plans for Elbe during the charette to illustrate a range of ideas for the Village Center. Descriptions of these concepts follow. The concept plan titled *Elbe Village Center Concept Limited Development Plan* suggests limiting new parking at the rest area to accommodate oversized vehicles such as, RV/bus/or car with trailer, automobiles would be accommodated with new on-street parking. This concept provides 50 parking spaces in the village center and 34 spaces in the SR 7 right-of-way. Additional parking for the rest area could be phased in, as needed or as funding becomes available. Traffic calming techniques could include bump-outs (curb extensions) to narrow the street, tree plantings to bring the residential scale to the highway, and concrete sidewalks (or soil stabilized surfaces for sidewalks). A train depot with restroom facilities that serve multimodal travelers (cars, bus tours, bikes, transit, rail and shuttle) could be provided. The depot could be centrally located and could house visitor orientation and information and provide for the sale of public land use permits (back-country, camping, etc). A crosswalk could access a



Elbe

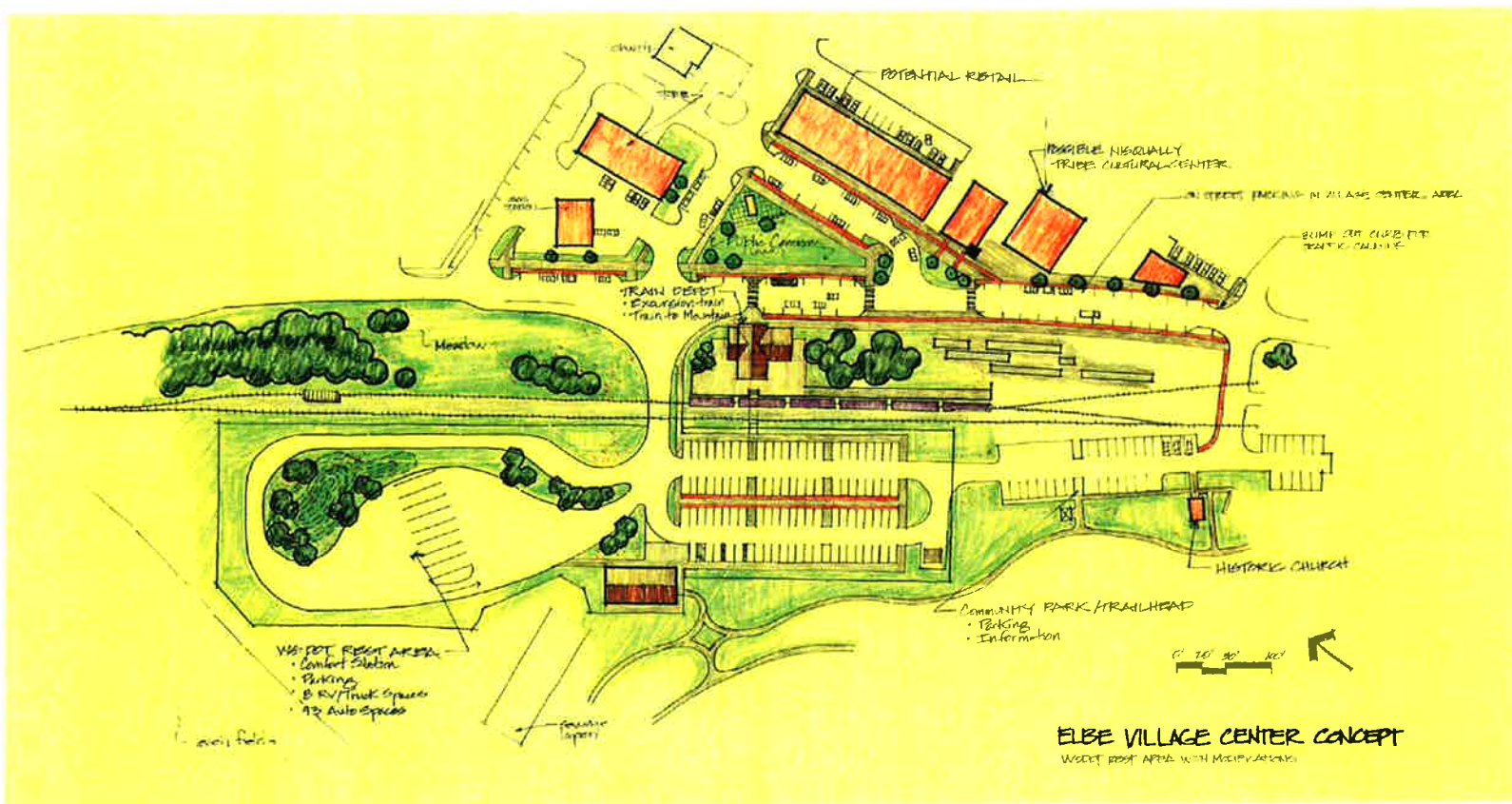
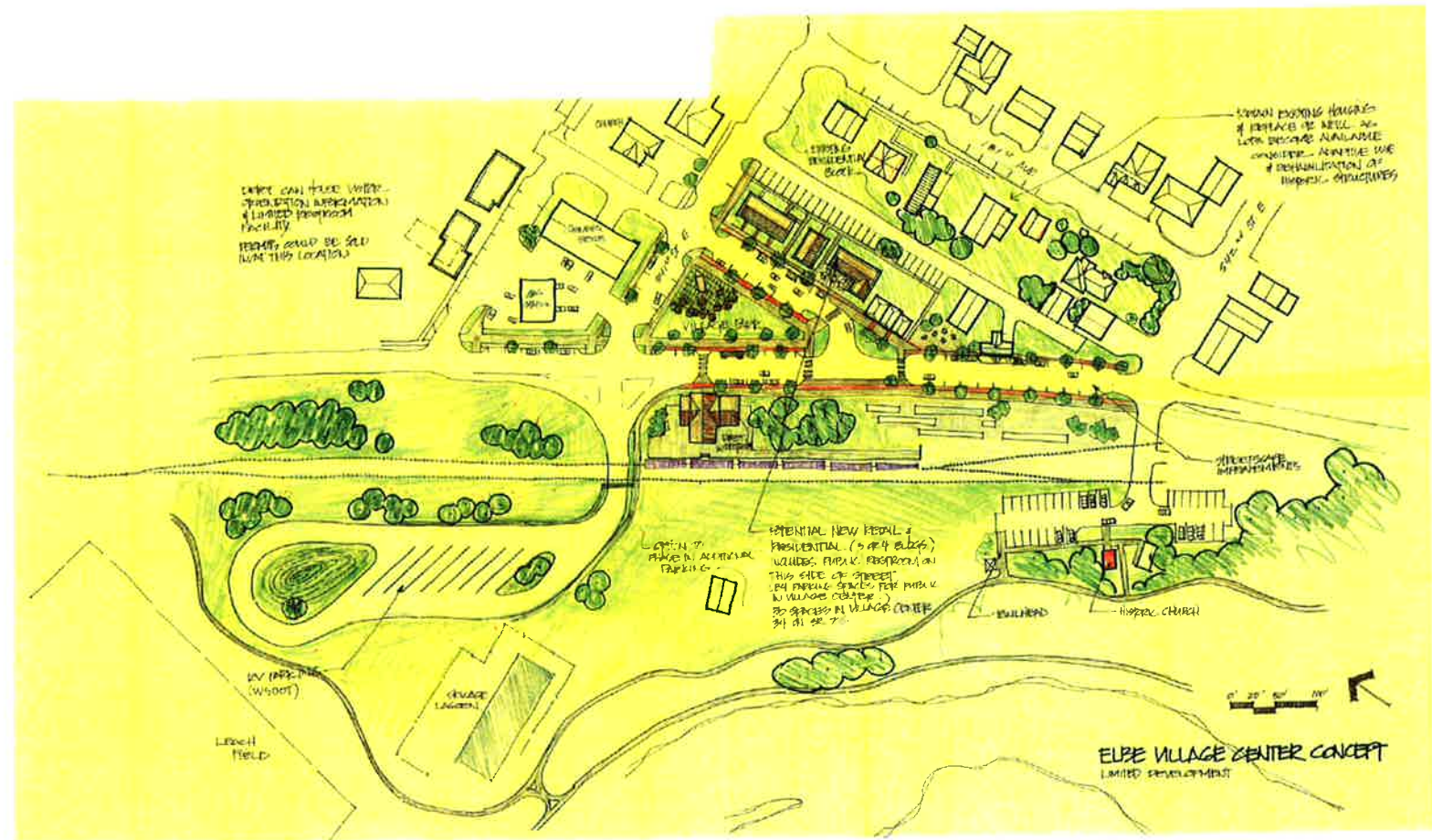


Hut in Elbe Hills

available. Adaptively using and rehabilitating historic structures rather than razing them to build new structures could be considered to help keep to the existing residential scale of the buildings (rather than create large retail and housing development). The *Upper Nisqually Valley Community Plan* suggests that new housing be developed in village centers rather than contribute to suburban sprawl. Parking could be provided for the historic church and Nisqually River Trailhead, which could access a long distance multiuse trail that could link communities along the Upper Nisqually River.

new village park, and a green space could be developed where parking for the Scaleburger restaurant is now located. Even though it is adjacent to a highway, if traffic could be slowed this green space could be a place for the community members to gather or travelers could picnic there and special events could be held – such as art displays or markets. Potential sites for a limited amount of new retail and residential facilities could be realized, as property becomes

The charrette concept plan titled Elbe Village Center Concept WSDOT Rest Area with Modifications (lower left) took the design program for the rest area as a given, but changed the orientation of the car parking from angle parking to head in to provide more parking spaces than the initial plan allowed. Walkways could be added in the parking area to accommodate pedestrian movement and connect to a sidewalk to the train depot

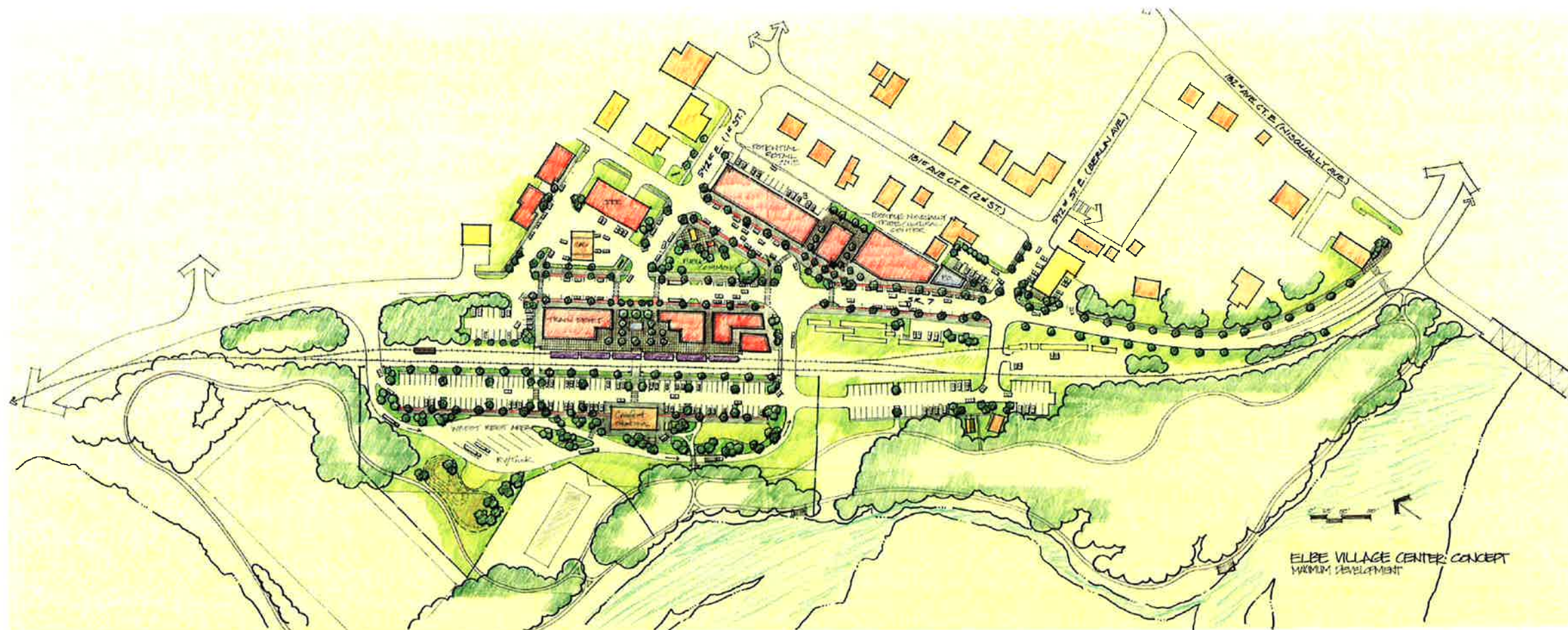


and crosswalk to the public commons. During the charrette it was noted that historically, the Elbe area supported a Nisqually tribal village, abandoned since the time the Nisqually were driven out of the valley. This concept offers a potential site for a Nisqually Tribe cultural center, where tribal crafts could be sold, interpretive displays could be exhibited, and special events could take place – as a means to give the Nisqually Tribe an opportunity to benefit from tourism-based development and return to their homeland.

The Elbe Village Center Concept 'Maximum Development' took a fresh look at the rest area and accommodated the program with a different layout that relied on two access points instead of one. It removed the chain link fence surrounding the WSDOT site to enable circulation between the trail system and the community to the comfort station. The concept suggests that this development is not only a highway rest area, but also one that serves many types of users.

It offers a train depot and plaza as a major attraction that enables the village center to expand across SR 7.

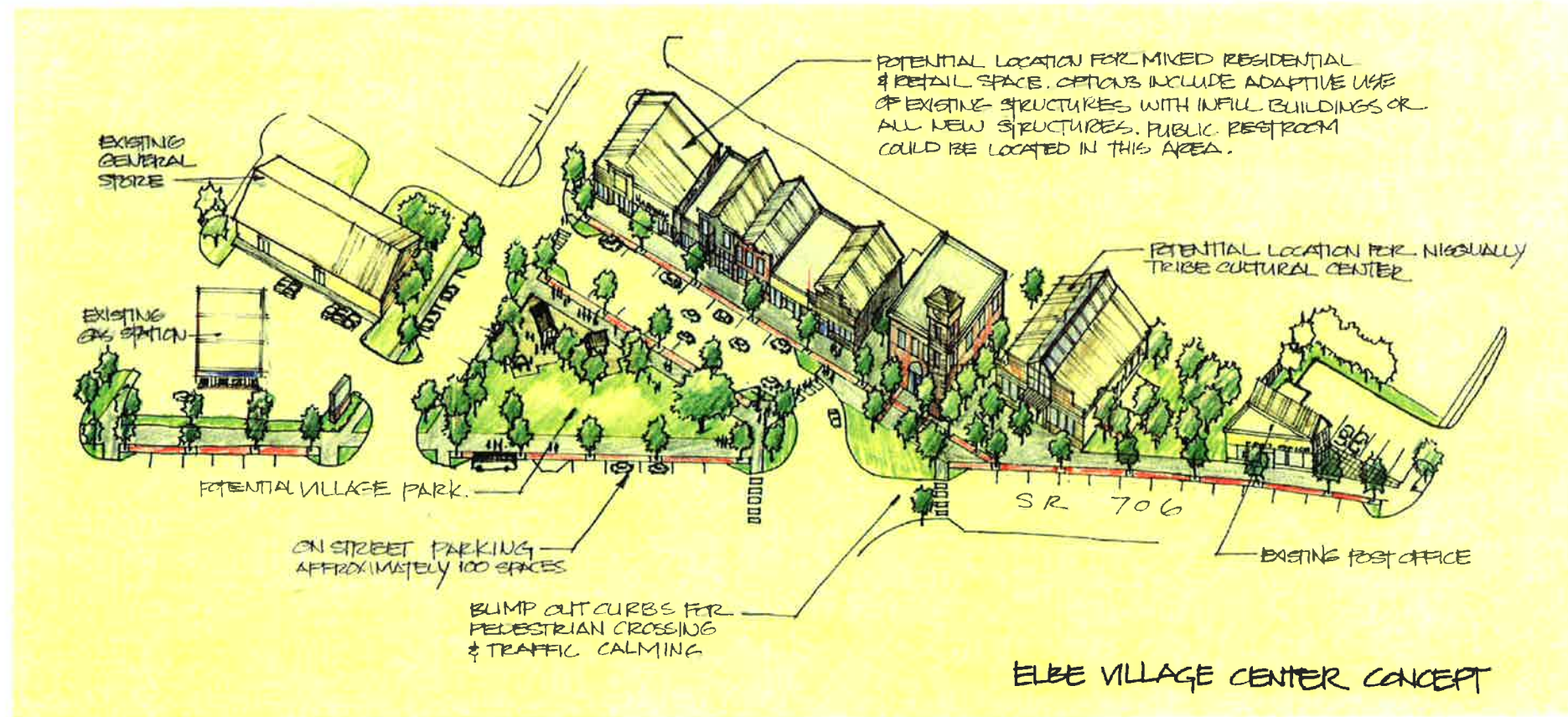
The Elbe Village Center Concept 'Elevation' sketch shows many of the existing structures – the post office, Scaleburger food stand, general store and gas station with infill of new development. The buildings can be massed for more intense development, as shown, or can be constructed as separate structures. It shows how formalizing on-street parking and adding vegetation and street trees can change the character of a place and make it an attractive place to stop and spend some time. This concept suggests a second public restroom in the village center that is separate from the WSDOT facility. It could tie into the WSDOT rest area water and sewage treatment system, thereby reducing the need for visitors to Elbe to cross SR 7 and use the comfort station at the rest area. This type of restroom development, coupled with on-street parking and the creation of a green space, could be partially funded from a WSDOT grant



– to begin to address the need for a rest stop along the SR 7 road corridor. Additional restroom facilities could be phased in as funding becomes available.

It should be noted that these are all conceptual ideas. The sketch that gained the most support at the charette wrap-up session was the Limited Development Concept. Elbe appears to not be looking for major change – but to experience limited growth in retail and services and to support improvements in transportation, tourism, and community-based enhancements within the Upper Nisqually Valley.

The new rest area, while serving a need that has existed for many years along SR 7, will bring striking change to this community. It is hoped that, in the future, WSDOT staff can work with Elbe community members to develop a context sensitive design for SR 7 through town that enables Elbe to become a more pedestrian friendly place.



Participants at the charette supported the idea of using traffic calming techniques and streetscape improvements, particularly on the west side of SR 7, in Elbe. They suggested that there are hiking and 4-wheel-drive trail and recreation staging opportunities in the town. Participants felt that there needs to be a pedestrian connection between the proposed WSDOT rest area and the town, perhaps even a crossing signal to improve safety. They suggested that Elbe should have some retail development for rest area visitors and employee housing for both Park Junction Resort and NPS employees. Participants questioned the need for a train stop because there would probably not be room for associated parking. They envisioned a boardwalk and wood building facades in keeping with Upper Nisqually Advisory Commission standards. They also mentioned the idea of redeveloping for sale properties at the south end of town to provide a retail anchor for the end of a pedestrian "boardwalk." Many ideas were offered, and it was even suggested that Elbe needs to develop an Elbe master plan.

Park Junction



Park Junction

The Mt. Rainier Resort at Park Junction is a master planned resort under the Washington Growth Management Act and the 1994 *Pierce County Comprehensive Plan*. The stated purpose for the resort is to “serve the projected increase in visitors to the park with alternative services and facilities.” The project site lies north of and adjacent to SR 706 and about halfway between Elbe and Ashford. The resort developers envision this resort as a facility that could draw visitation nine months out of a year and has stated four main objectives:

1. To develop a major destination resort with facilities for recreation, lodging, conferences, conventions, retail sales, and tourists.
2. To provide vacation and recreation homesites.
3. To maintain and enhance scenic views from the site.
4. To protect and preserve the natural resources of the site including the wildlife.

Major elements planned for this resort include:

- an 18-hole championship golf course
- lodge, hotel, conference center, tennis center, swimming pools, and spa
- cabins and/or clustered housing

- Condominiums
- retail center
- Forest interpretive center
- train station
- employee housing

At the time of the Nisqually Road Corridor charette, proponents for the resort were moving through the environmental impact statement process. Charette participants expressed opinions both for and against the development of this property, which could have both positive and negative impacts on visitation to and the character of the Nisqually Valley and its recreational sites. The team opted to include Mt. Rainier Resort at Park Junction within the concepts and sketches for the Nisqually Valley, but also developed concepts that could stand alone in the event this resort is not constructed.

- The team suggested there be opportunities for possible design input/enhancements to improve the resort’s contribution to environmental as well as economic stability and sustainability.
- Charette participants suggested that this development is of such large scale and is relatively self-contained; it could be better integrated with the communities within the valley.
- Resort planners developed a hiking and biking trail system with links to adjacent public lands to enable visitors to access and appreciate them.



Park Junction Meadow

- Train to the Mountain and Mt. Rainier shuttle should be developed. If the train doesn’t end at Park Junction, it could end at National (and with additional funding and right-of-way acquisition, at Ashford). People could also rent or use their own bicycles to travel through the valley.
- There was a suggestion that utilities and infrastructure could be shared with Tahoma Woods. However this could contribute to sprawl along the corridor.
- There was a suggestion to provide pedestrian and shuttle links to Tahoma Woods. The resort plans to provide a multi-destination shuttle service to its clients.
- Providing off-site housing for resort workers in neighboring village centers in Elbe and Ashford could be one way to reduce impacts of the resort.



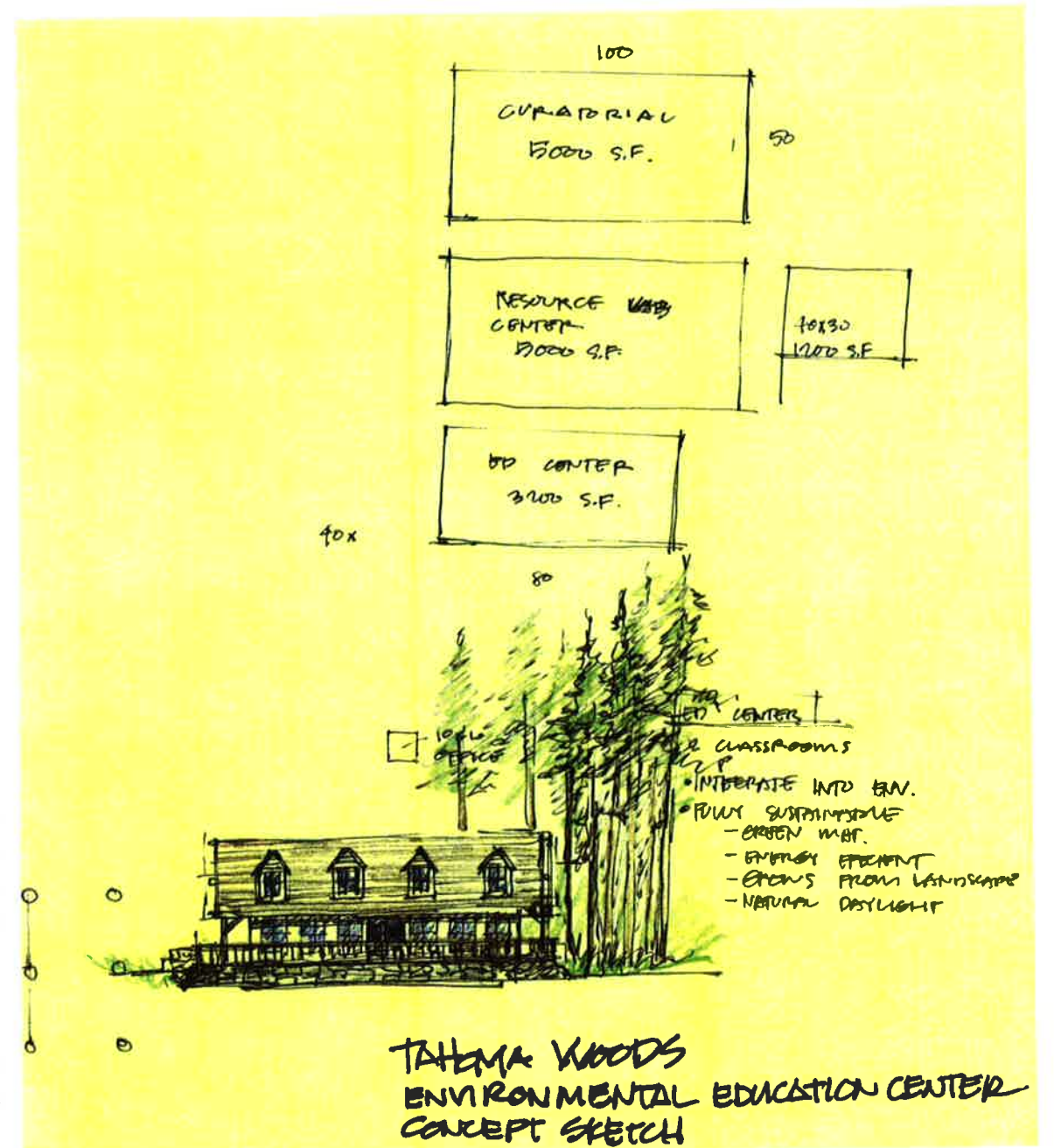
Park Junction

- Overnight accommodations for the kids who attend the Tahoma Woods Environmental education center (environmental/education program) could be considered. This need could be served by other venues within the valley as well, if available.
- Other area attractions could be developed in the corridor for general visitors if the resort is not developed.

Tahoma Woods

Tahoma Woods is on SR 706 between Elbe and Ashford. It is the site of the national park’s administrative headquarters and includes a small employee housing area, the park greenhouse operations, and storage facilities, in addition to the administration building. Adjacent to Tahoma Woods is Columbia Crest Magnet School, teaching kindergarten through 6th grades for the communities of Ashford, Elbe, and Alder.

The *General Management Plan* for Mount Rainier National Park, completed in 2001, calls for the park to become a world leader in the area of ecosystem management and protection. The park also plans to strengthen partnerships with other state and national parks and educational institutions. An outreach program will be developed for schools and community groups to provide a continuum of quality experiences for lifelong learning.





Tahoma Woods

To facilitate the realization of these goals, the park has identified a 2-acre site on previously disturbed land at Tahoma Woods as a potential location for a park Resources Research Campus. The site is bor-

dered by the abandoned railroad right-of-way that runs between Eatonville and Ashford. The campus would house a resource center, where research relating to natural and cultural resources could be focussed, and an associated building to house and provide for study of the park's extensive collections of artifacts, flora, and fauna. The existing greenhouse facility would be expanded, enabling the park to expand its ability to support revegetation and site restoration projects. A new environmental education center would be constructed at this site and would provide for educational programs for school groups and adults for both daily and extended study programs. The site would be accessible to busses, provide limited parking for vehicles, and would ultimately be linked with Train to the Mountain via Park Junction or, in the event rail service is provided to

Ashford, a rail stop could be provided at the Tahoma Woods site.

Given this initial information, the charette team developed an initial concept for this facility. At the outset, it was suggested the facility be a model for sustainability. The buildings could be built as green buildings with recycled material or use materials harvested or created from sustainably managed material sources. Design of the buildings could maximize energy efficiency, emphasizing proper orientation and maximizing the use of natural daylight to light the interior spaces. It was thought the buildings could "grow from the landscape" and possess an architectural character that draws from the surrounding landscape characteristics.



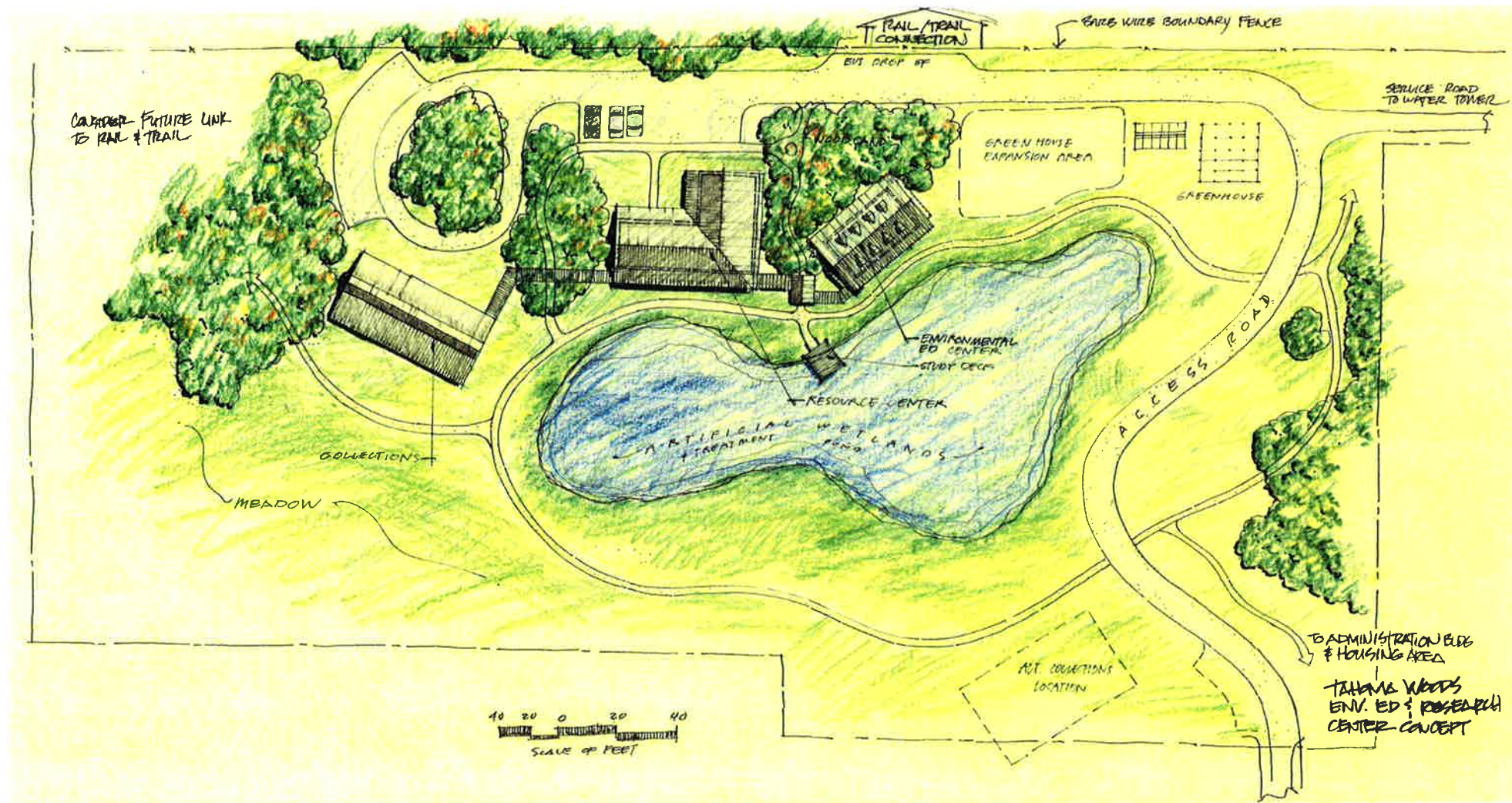
Tahoma Woods, existing greenhouse

The site plan titled Tahoma Woods Environmental Education and Research Center Concept represents an initial attempt to create a site layout and program for this facility. Additional exploration of program development, alternative design and layout concepts,

and associated NEPA and Section 106 compliance would have to occur before the selection of a preferred alternative. Because the field is a large meadow, shaded on its borders by the encroaching forest, it would be desirable to locate the structures to maximize the amount of time they would receive sunlight. It was thought -the structures could tie into the existing sewer system at Tahoma Woods and also develop an artificial wetlands/treatment pond system for greywater. (Although these systems are expensive, the city of Yelm, with the assistance of grant monies, recently constructed a state-of-the-art sewage treatment pond system that doubles as a unique city park and fishing ponds.) The buildings could be clustered with a boardwalk connection. The adjacent woodlands and meadow areas could serve as a living laboratory for revegetation at this elevation. An access road would provide a bus drop-off zone and limited parking for facility users.

The thumbnail sketch titled Tahoma Woods Environmental Education Center, Concept Sketch shows what the environmental education building might look like. Without being given detailed program requirements, the charette team assumed 5,000 square feet for curatorial storage, 7,200 square feet for the resource center, and 3,200 square feet for the education center. With this information it was possible to generate a potential site plan to show what this facility might look like.

During the charette there was some discussion of partnering with Park Junction to provide limited lodging for school groups in the off season. It was not determined at the time if this would actually be feasible given the clientele the resort and conference center wants to attract. In the future, school groups from Tacoma, Eatonville, and points in between could take the Train to the Mountain to its terminus at Park Junction, where a park bus could meet them and provide transportation to the facility.



Another idea was to encourage the park to explore future partnerships with the Park Junction Resort that would enable the sharing of water treatment and sewage treatment facilities.

It was also thought that the park, through the environmental education center, could be a member of an Environmental Education Consortium, an organization in which venues for environmental education throughout the region could join to share information and promote their programs. For example, the consortium could promote multiday field trips that would include a day at Mt. Rainier, a visit to Northwest Trek and/or Pioneer Farm, and even an overnight stay at the planned Nisqually Valley Interpretive Center outside of Roy, Washington. All these venues could participate in the consortium.

These concepts were presented at the charette wrap-up session. Tahoma Woods was not selected by participants as a topic that merited further exploration at the wrap-up session. Again, these represent initial ideas and concepts. Further study is merited before development of a preferred alternative for this research center and the Environmental Education Consortium.

National

The town of National was once the site for one of the largest timber mill operations in the world. Today,



Residences at National

only a few homes and mill remnants overgrown with second-growth forest exist, however, much of the history remains and deserves to be interpreted.

The Washington State Department of Natural Resources owns most of the land associated with National. Charette participants identified opportunities to route a potential Nisqually Valley multi-use trail through this area and beyond to Ashford and other adjacent recreation areas. The National site was also considered for a possible terminus for Train to the Mountain and a shuttle stop, should Mt. Rainier Resort at Park Junction not come to fruition. The problem with developing a train and shuttle stop at this location is that it would not be in conformance with the UNAC vision to keep larger scale developments to the village center or tourist commercial zones.

Ashford

Ashford is an unincorporated community located on SR 706, about 6 miles west of the park entrance. Well-maintained historic homes, restaurants, stores, lodging, a post office, a fire hall, and vacant, wooded lots enhance its rural character. Like other communities within the Nisqually Road Corridor, Ashford offers an array of possibilities for the future to improve the community and provide additional services to the visiting public. At the same time, improvements must be carefully considered to retain the very qualities that make Ashford most appealing.

Charette participants met with local residents and business owners to identify issues and opportunities in and around Ashford. Providing adequate and safe pedestrian access was a major concern with residents as was the volume and speed of traffic through the community during the summer months. Residents also expressed the need for a community center, which might also function as a performing arts center. Future development in Ashford includes a new community park on the northwest side of town.



Rural Ashford

Private interests are exploring the feasibility of developing a mountaineering museum in the area.

The 2001 *General Management Plan* for Mount Rainier National Park calls for development of an NPS visitor center within the SR 706 road corridor, however the plan does not identify a specific site for this

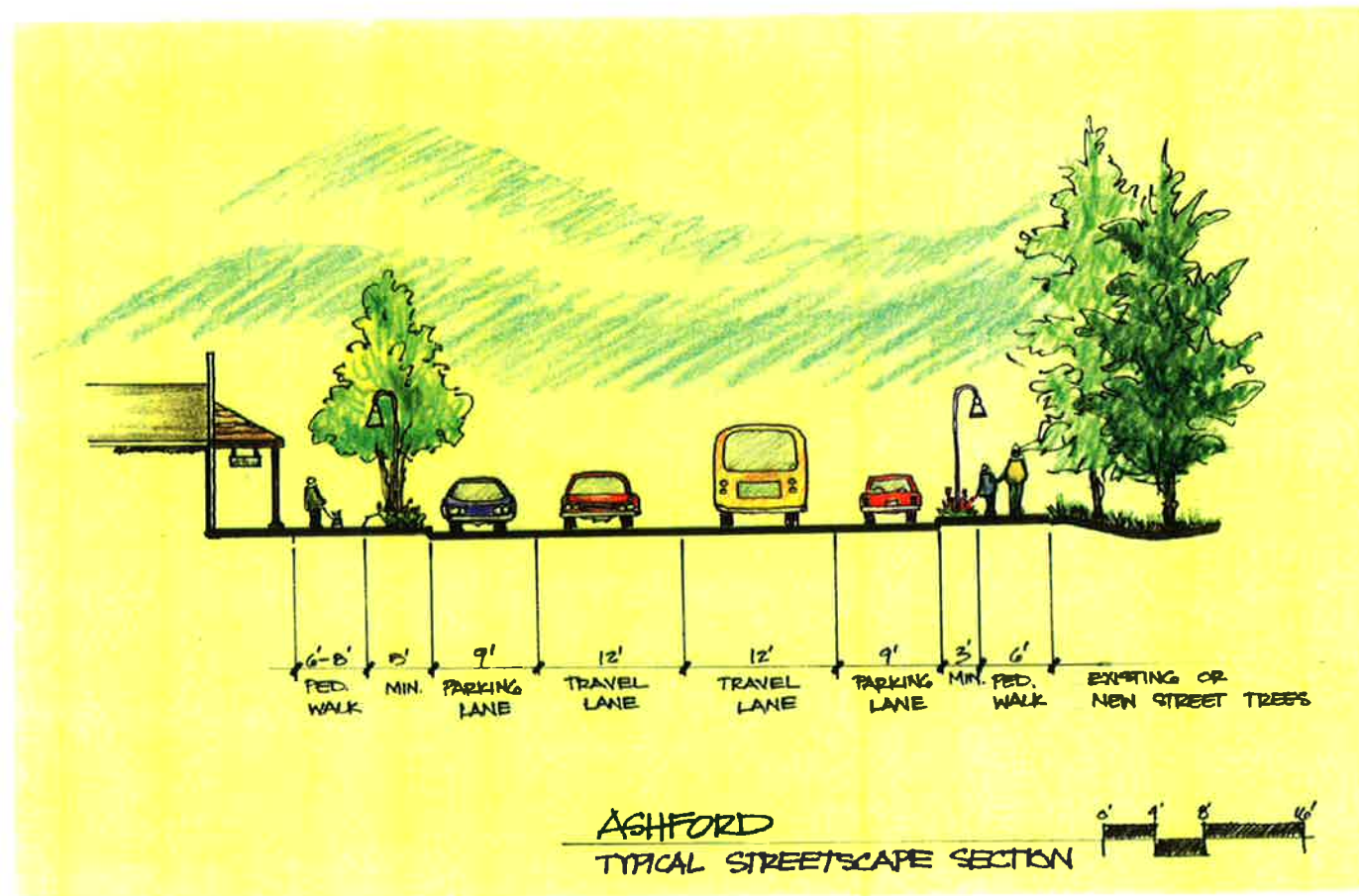
facility. Based on both feedback from the community and potential actions described in the GMP, the charette team chose to explore how an NPS visitor center might partner with mountaineering museum interests for a shared facility, and how a shuttle service to locations in Mount Rainier National Park could be handled in Ashford. In addition, the charette team explored ways to improve the 'village center' streetscape, incorporate a community center into the proposed park site and improve pedestrian circulation to potential future developments.

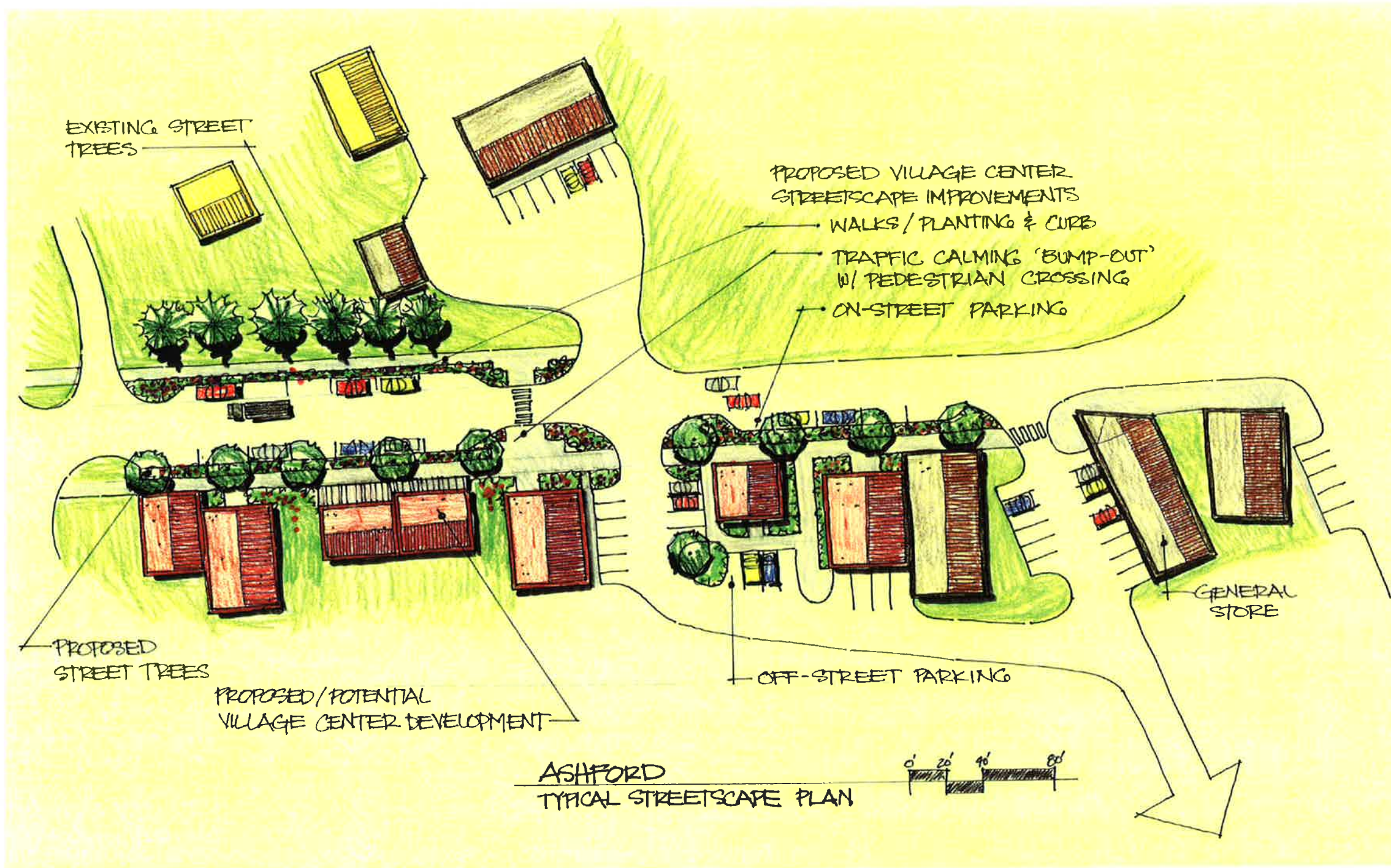
Although the charette team focussed on private property within the Ashford area to illustrate concepts for the visitor center facility, these concepts could be realized at a variety of other locations along the SR 706 road corridor. A detailed planning study with compliance would be required to determine a preferred location for this facility. The study should also

address the need for potable water, wastewater and sewage treatment, and other infrastructure that would be associated with development of this type.

Design concepts and sketches produced by the charette team include the following:

The *Ashford Typical Streetscape Plan* illustrates ideas for streetscape improvements and pedestrian access improvements that could be applied to the village center area. It would be necessary to explore some of these recommendations in partnership with property owners and WSDOT staff as most of the improvements would be located in the WSDOT right-of-way for SR 706 and on private property. Of concern to WSDOT staff would be engineering feasibility, traffic and pedestrian safety, maintaining through traffic and snow removal. Charette participants stressed the need to maintain a country character rather than the





Ashford

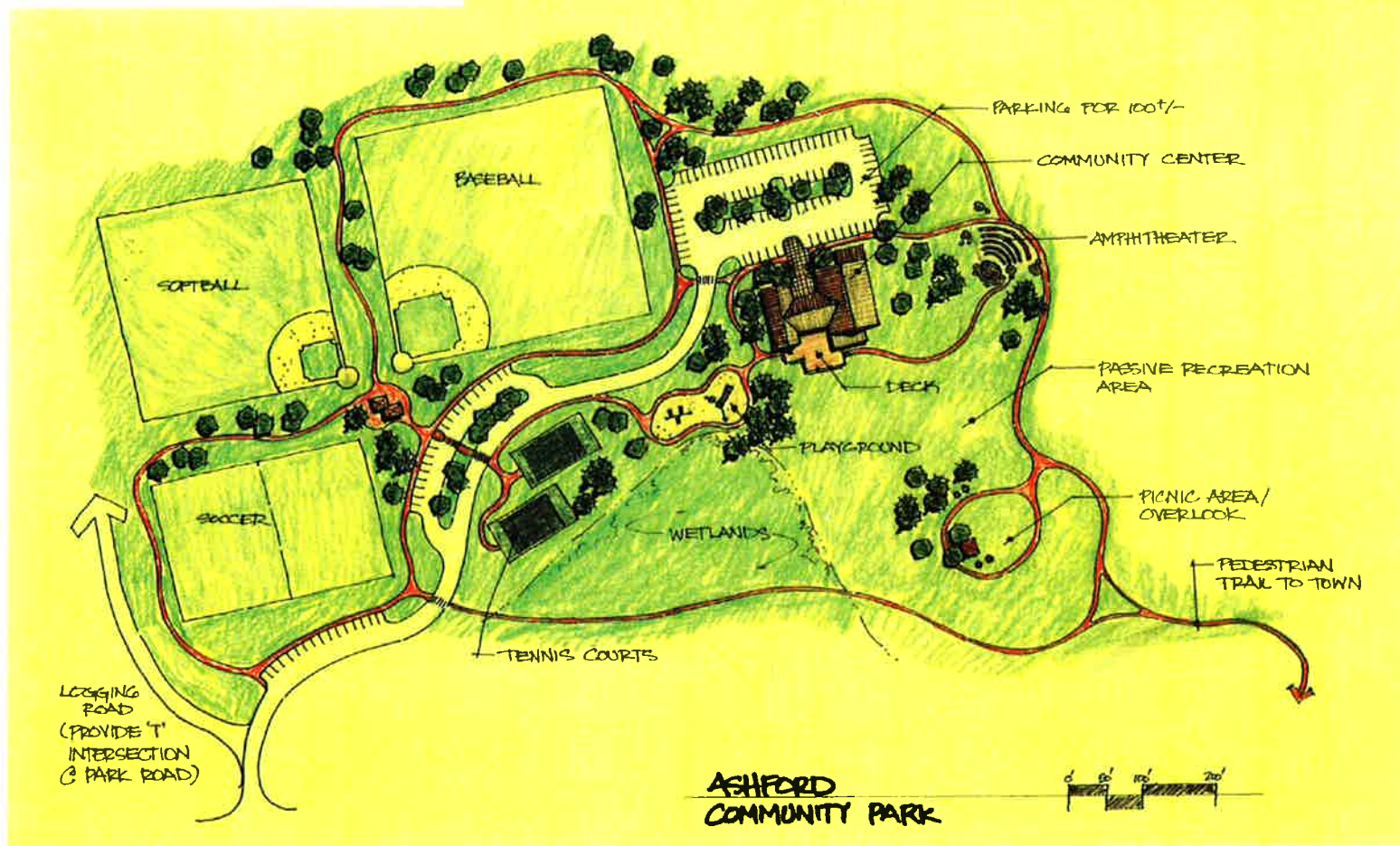
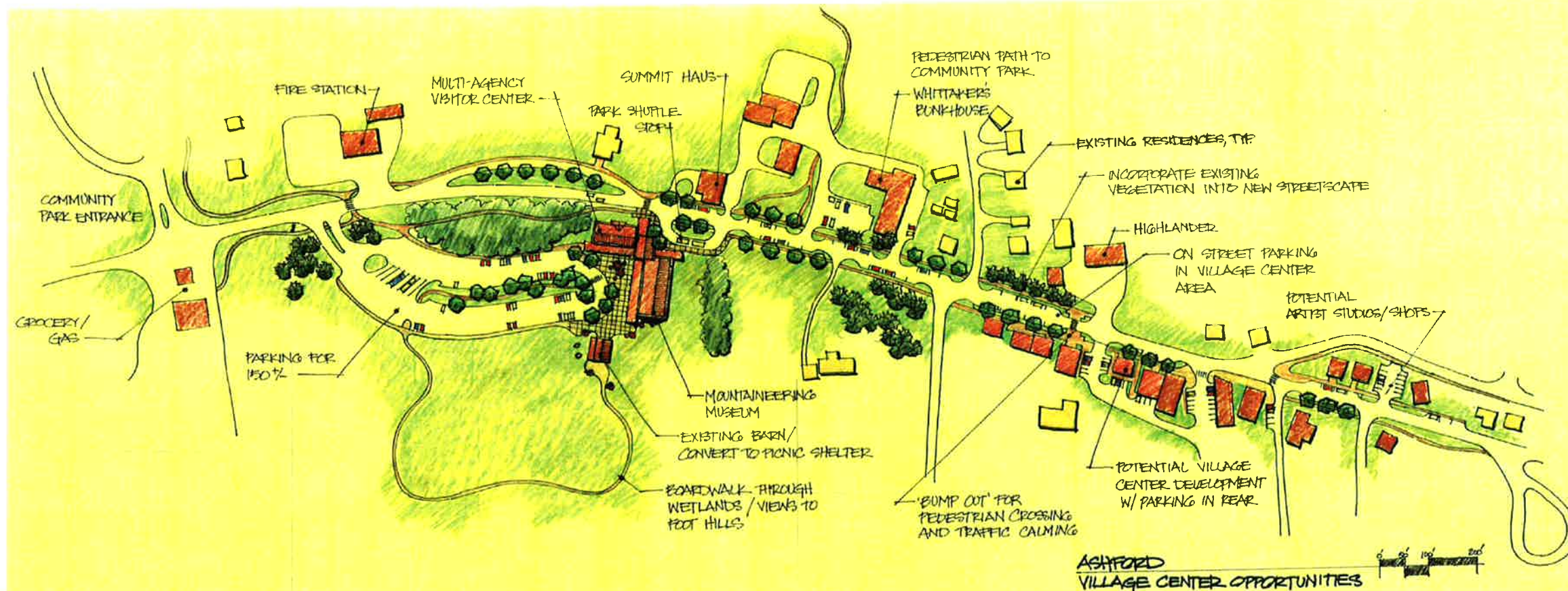
look and feel of an urban environment. They suggested pursuing town beautification and the use of boardwalks at shops. (A boardwalk could be slippery in rainy weather and additional maintenance would be required.)

There was much discussion of vehicular congestion, trails and pedestrian access to trails and businesses across SR 706. As in other small towns within the Nisqually Valley, when traffic is at peak flow it is nearly impossible to safely cross SR 706 in the town of Ashford. Community residents suggested pursuing traffic calming practices, creating designated pedestrian crossings with a stoplight, or even constructing a pedestrian overpass. Suggestions to deal with the problem of allowing vehicular traffic convenient access to turning and crossing SR 706 included creating a bypass through town or spitting the highway into two one-way segments through town. On a smaller scale, the town could consider the use of roundabouts, much like the city of Lacey has constructed, to facilitate two-way traffic movements.

Specific comments regarding regional trail access through town follow:

- Residential access (car and pedestrian) south of the highway (from across Whittakers to the 553rd St. development) could be provided.
- A tie into regional trail from Old Skate Creek Road could be provided.
- Part of the wide SR 706 right-of-way could be used to create designated bike lanes for a valley bike route.

The charette team generated a concept for the Ashford Community Park that builds on the existing plan proposed for the site. The concept sacrificed one of the athletic fields to provide an integrated trail



system, community center, and a passive recreation area and parking for about 100 vehicles. Under this concept, the trail system would connect to the pedestrian paths along SR 706 at two locations: near the fire station and near Whittaker's Bunkhouse. Some community members participating in the charette stressed that this facility was to be for community members and would not be a tourist attraction. Other participants stressed the need to create a strong visual link between the main highway and the community park. Some suggested that the mountaineering museum and/or a center for the performing arts and visual arts could be accommodated on site.

The concept entitled Ashford Village Center Opportunities begins to look at where streetscape improvements could occur and how an NPS visitor center could be combined with a mountaineering museum and shuttle stop. This concept has several advantages. Visitors gathering to learn about the

Nisqually corridor and Mount Rainier can easily obtain information as they plan their recreational activities. One shuttle stop could serve both museum and visitor center. One set of restrooms could reduce the cost for both operations. The central location in town could also reinforce and complement the activity already in place at the Whittaker's retail, bunkhouse, and shuttle complex. This concept shows shuttle and visitor center/museum parking for approximately 150 vehicles. Based on the transportation model discussed in the "Alternative Transportation Systems Strategies" section, parking for 285 vehicles would be needed for the shuttle system. Additional parking could be accommodated on the street, and perhaps an additional shuttle staging lot could be constructed in the tourist commercial zone near the park boundary.

The visitor center and museum could make a significant contribution to Ashford's commercial center



WEST ELEVATION



NORTH ELEVATION

while maintaining an appropriate, friendly scale. The architectural heritage in the region includes cascade (mountain rustic), mining, and agricultural building types, and this project could draw its forms and details from them. The visitor center and museum could be placed on the site to relate to pedestrians, provide convenient vehicle circulation, and minimize negative impacts on natural vegetation and trees. Windows in the mountaineering museum could be placed to capture views of the meadow, farms, and mountain ranges to the south. Covered walkways could bring visitors to and from parking areas and lead to viewing platforms and walking paths around the site.

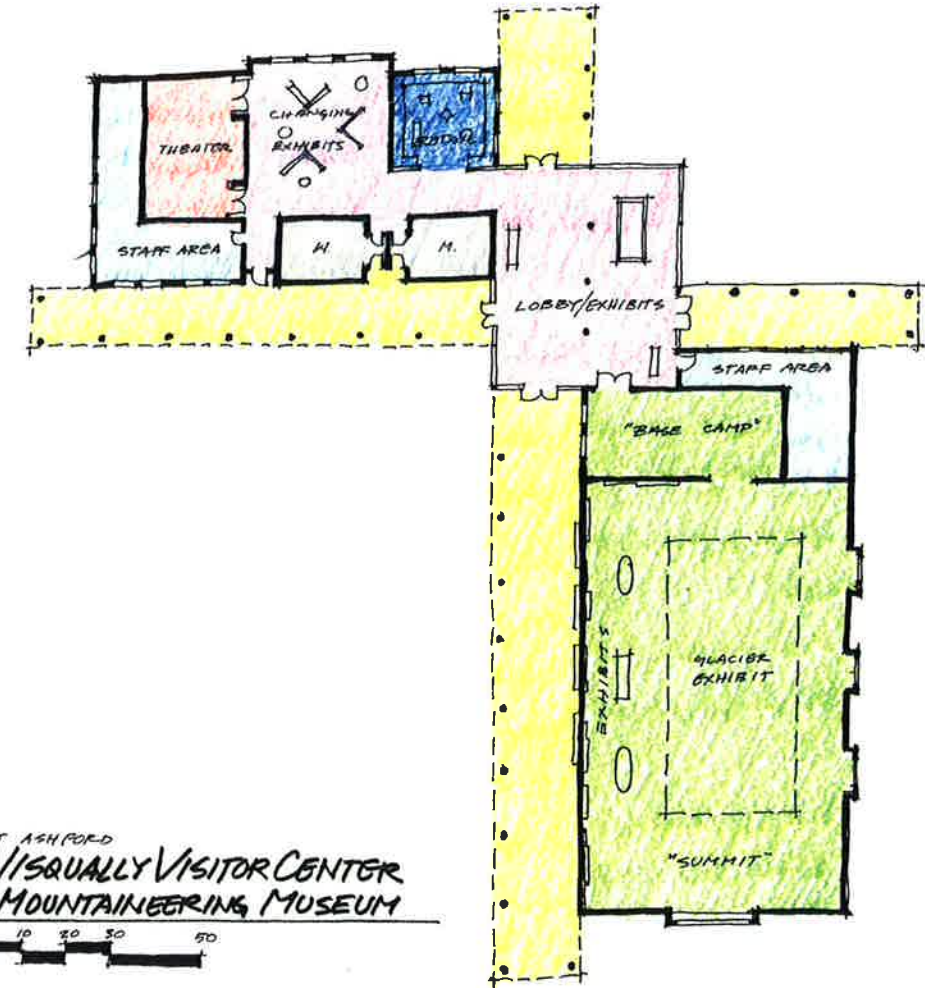
The series of sketches and plans for the Nisqually Visitor Center and Mountaineering Museum at Ashford identifies possibilities for the visitor experience and suggests the character of the architecture. The team developed a hypothetical program for the building and extended the plan to create a perspective sketch.

The Museum Experience

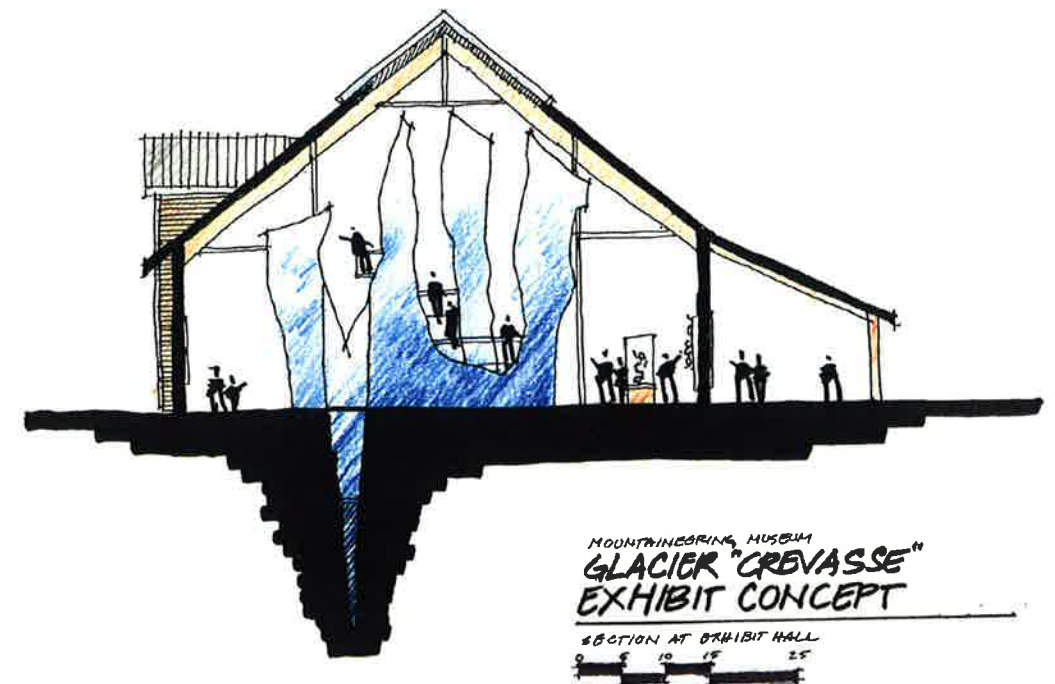
"To me," Lou Whittaker wrote, "There is no greater satisfaction than seeing the joy on a person's face upon reaching the summit of Mount Rainier, a journey that seemed impossible to that person at the start."

Seemingly impossible journeys have fueled Lou Whittaker's life for decades. His willingness to share his passion has brought many others into a world of high adventure. The mountaineering museum is born out of such a thirst, creating a new place to teach, inspire and challenge those who find mountains irresistible.

The museum's primary focus could be experiencing the journey up the mountain and the lessons learned from a family of seasoned mountain climbers. Tickets could be purchased in the lobby, which could be a high space of heavy timber construction that could be shared with the visitor center. Then the visitor could be introduced to the *Base Camp*, where



AT ASHFORD
NISQUALLY VISITOR CENTER
& MOUNTAINEERING MUSEUM



MOUNTAINEERING MUSEUM
GLACIER "CREVASSE"
EXHIBIT CONCEPT
SECTION AT EXHIBIT HALL

the rigor of preparation could be explained and a short film could present the drama and danger of the climb.

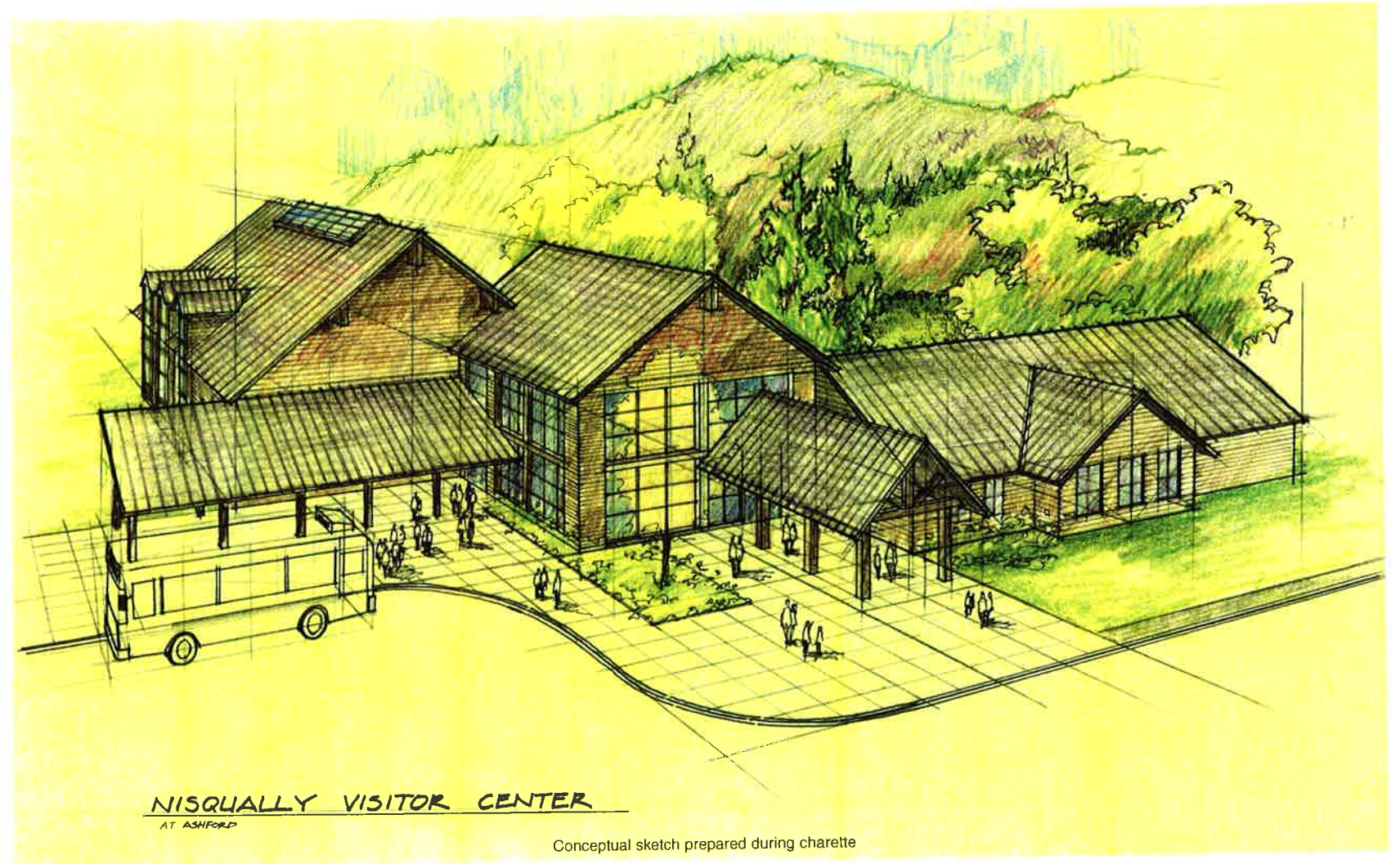
Upon leaving the *Base Camp*, visitors could be faced with the formidable *Glacier Exhibit*, a simulated crevasse more than 30 feet tall. As visitors make their way around the massive "ice forms," they could pass an interactive wall of the stories and artifacts from around the world that describe the historic climbs. But there is more!

Visitors could actually enter the *Glacier Exhibit* and follow a series of ramps in a vertical climb, reading about the forces that formed the glacier as they ascend. The ramps could lead to a seemingly endless crevasse, and here the techniques required for crossing or exploring – and surviving – could be demonstrated. The culmination of the trip could be the *Summit*, where forces of nature are recalled through

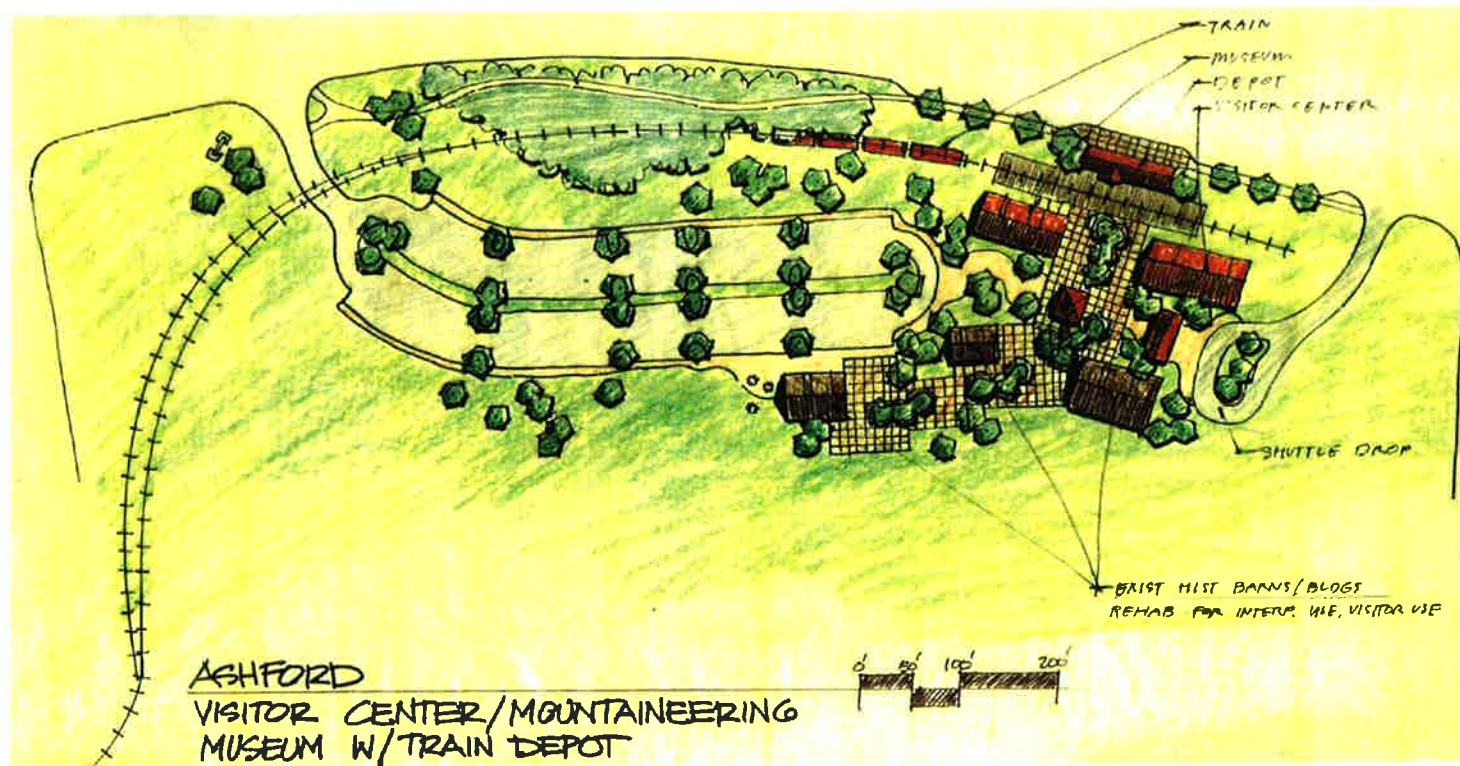
sound, wind, temperature, and view effects.

The visitors could then return to *Base Camp*, and their journey could come to an end – for now. There is wonder and joy at the top, and the mountaineering museum could usher in a new generation of climbers longing to make such an achievement their own.

The sketch entitled Ashford Visitor Center/ Mountaineering Museum with Train Depot addresses the scenario of the Train to the Mountain ending in Ashford. New track for Train to the Mountain could be extended from National along the south side of SR 706, in cooperation with the Washington State Department of Natural Resources that administers property in this area. This concept illustrates a campus of structures (including a visitor center and mountaineering museum) integrated with an interpretive plaza and shuttle bus stop.



Conceptual sketch prepared during charette



Historical Site Tour and Historical Museum

Twenty Sites of Historical importance are listed in the *Upper Nisqually Valley Community Plan*. According to one charette participant "the list provides a basis for designing a tour or for recognition of historically significant sites. Some of these properties are commercial and some are private. Development of such a tour would require participation of the property owners as there are privacy issues that must be respected...and transportation issues that must be addressed. One urgent need in the Nisqually Valley is a historical museum with curatorial storage capability and humidity controlled environment to preserve precious artifacts that are currently in private ownership and whose owners want a safe place

to share them with the community. Some of the buildings on the list could be considered for future museum possibilities."

There are a number of historical sites pertaining to Nisqually tribal occupation within the valley. The exact location of many of these sites is not currently known. It is the desire of the Nisqually Tribe to protect these sites and tribal artifacts and to keep their locations, if known, private, and to work with community governments to protect them.

Washington State Department of Natural Resources

The Washington State Department of Natural Resources has a strong interest in developing part-

nerships to pursue recreational opportunities and with commercial forest interests within the Nisqually Valley for timber harvesting and management. Many recreational opportunities could be enhanced for mountain biking, skiing, hiking, equestrian activities, and 4-wheel driving. Gifford Pinchot National Forest recently closed more than 1,000 miles of forest roads, and the department feels pressure from this. There is much illegal ATV use on DNR land at National.

DNR staff is pursuing an ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) grant to make their Sahara Creek Campground accessible.

The hut to hut system in the Mt. Tahoma Ski Trails Area and Elbe Hills State Forest is one of region's great assets/secrets. There may be opportunities to expand this system and/or open it to summer use by hikers and mountain bikers. DNR staff also have a strong interest in interpreting state-of-the-art sustainable forestry practices.

U.S. Forest Service – Gifford Pinchot National Forest

Primary access to the Gifford Pinchot National Forest occurs along the Skate Creek Road and Forest Road 59. FS 59 has a trail network that provides access to



Big Creek Campground



Guard Station at Big Creek Campground

great views, dispersed camping and wilderness areas. It would be possible to develop short-term, 20-minute hikes in this area. The sno-park is no longer there.

Skate Creek Road is closed to vehicular traffic during the winter due to safety considerations. (The Skate Creek Road is open to snowmobiling.) Its surrounding forest is designated as least successional reserve (LSR) habitat. With this classification comes restrictions to the type of uses that may be permitted. Uses permitted within LSR lands must be beneficial or habitat neutral. The Forest Service is receiving much pressure to reopen the road during the winter – although this would be problematic for the resources.

Big Creek Campground offers popular campsites during three seasons. The Forest Service is looking for a partner or tenant to use or relocate the historic guard station at Big Creek Campground. This agency also has property, a former transfer site, at Kernihan Road and SR 706. The charette team looked at this site as a possible location for shuttle staging, but it is not within a village center or tourist commercial area and the idea was abandoned.

Other opportunities for existing sites within Gifford Pinchot National Forest are identified on the Corridor Recreational Opportunities maps.

The U.S. Forest Service could be a partner in the multi-agency regional information centers recommended

within the Nisqually Road Corridor and possibly at the NPS visitor center in the SR 706 road corridor.

Mount Rainier National Park

During the charette, participants offered a number of ideas regarding use and access at Mount Rainier National Park. There was much support for linking the park with the rest of the Nisqually Valley, for hikers and bicyclists by using existing trailheads and back roads. This would encourage multi-modal transportation and offer an alternative to riding bikes through the Nisqually entrance. The large-scale maps in the recreation, trail and transportation opportunities section reflect some of these ideas. Participants acknowledged that most of the park use is day use during peak summer weekends and suggested that the public could be encouraged to visit during non-peak times and be better informed as to which roads and areas within the park are open for use. One par-



Paradise Lodge

icipant commented that closure of the West Side Road has limited opportunities for recreational use. Re-opening this road, at least to shuttle use, could provide opportunities for hiking and bicycling, in addition to providing an alternative recreation experience for Paradise bound visitors. Participants expressed concern over the reduction of parking at the new visitor center at Paradise. They suggested that, in addition to park and concessionaire employees and climbers, overnight guests should be shuttled to park lodging. This would free up additional

parking spaces for day use. One idea to accommodate day users at Paradise during Winter was to have the Longmire entrance gate open early enough in the day so hikers and climbers could reach camp Muir and return to Paradise in daylight.

Participants suggested a range of ideas to address transportation issues within the park. These included looking at creative incentives to encourage use of park shuttles, giving consideration to allowing pre-purchase of entrance fees and bypass lines at park entrance gates and using a diversified fee structure to incite shoulder season visitation.

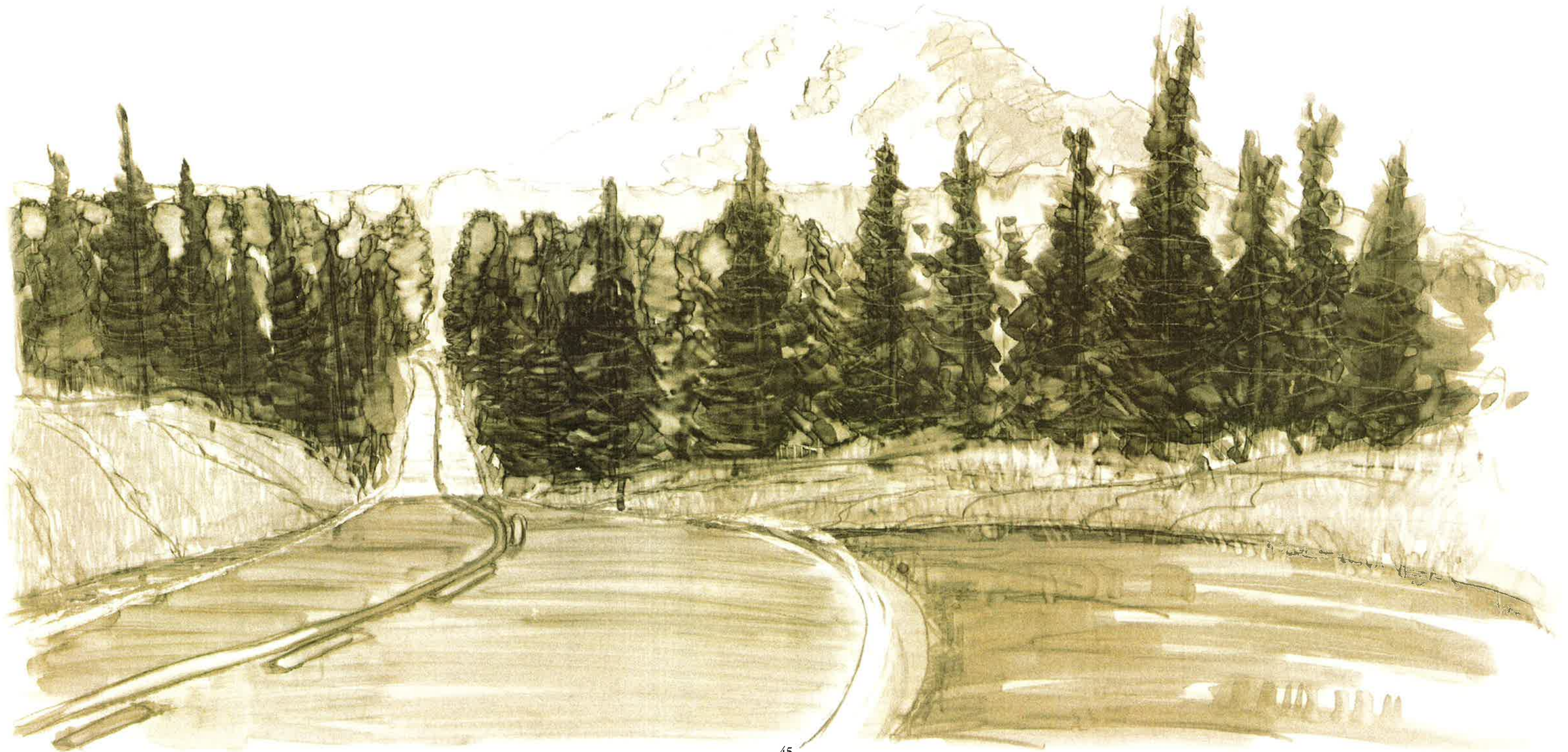
The General Management Plan (GMP) for Mount Rainier National Park has been finalized. Under the preferred alternative, a park transportation plan would be developed in coordination with regional road corridor and transportation planning. The charette studies for the road corridors and communities surrounding the park identify many of the local issues, community interests, and opportunities and

constraints for transportation planning. Implementation of suggested ideas that require park involvement would have to be consistent with the intent of the park's General Management Plan.

The GMP discusses creation of several new visitor welcome centers outside the park along State Routes 410, 165, US Highway 12 and State Route 706. The Draft Interpretive Prospectus for Mount Rainier National Park offers recommendations for and appropriate levels of services and interpretation at Visitor Welcome Centers. One participant suggested that more activities take place outside the visitor center to educate visitors on outdoor amenities. This idea could be incorporated into programming and site design for the SR 706 visitor welcome center. Although the charette team recommended locating the SR 706 visitor welcome center in Ashford, a specific location for construction of a welcome center in the SR 706 corridor has yet to be determined. Detailed planning and public involvement is anticipated prior to implementation of this project.



Next Steps and Funding Options



NEXT STEPS

Much planning work has been done to ensure the preservation and conservation of the unique resources and to determine appropriate locations for development within the Nisqually Road Corridor. The ideas in this document form a menu of possibilities to preserve the resource values and enhance visitor experiences within the Nisqually Road Corridor and that could contribute to the revitalization and stabilization of the local economy. Through the efforts of individuals and through partnerships, some of these ideas can be implemented.

Corridor Management

A number of steps should be taken to establish a coordinated approach to management and funding of future facilities for the Nisqually Road Corridor. A blend of management and operations structures as well as funding sources will be required. The following identifies first steps in facilitating corridor management.

- Establish a corridor commission that is empowered to accept government funds and disburse such funds and other funds it receives from donations and other sources, as well as undertake management oversight and coordination activities. It may be possible to create a corridor commission under the auspices of the Nisqually River Council.
- Initiate the steps required to obtain state and national scenic byway designation for key transportation routes within the corridor.
- Establish links with Nisqually River Council and planned development of Nisqually River Interpretive Center, to be located along the Nisqually River at a site between the communities of Roy and McKenna.

- Solicit state agency support and endorsement for Washington legislative support for planning and development of the Nisqually Road Corridor.
- Establish an endowment trust that can receive donations and bequests.
- Develop an overall management plan, outlining development priorities, including staffing requirements, and funding goals.
- Develop a business plan that delineates business activities, funding sources, market performance, and milestones for goal setting.

Planning, Design, and Implementation

Once a commission is established it is recommended that the planning process begin for both corridor-wide and specific corridor components. Planning processes are not always linear; components may be enacted out of sequence or may never come to fruition. Nevertheless, during all subsequent planning and design activities, environmental compliance, including the National Environmental Policy Act and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, would be performed as required by federal, state, and local policies and practices.

A priority would be developing an overall corridor management plan for the Nisqually Road corridor. This charrette document can be used as a resource for developing a corridor management plan. An ethnographic study of the corridor area should be done in conjunction with a corridor management plan to ensure that impacts to ethnographic resources are avoided to the extent possible. A corridor management plan should include public involvement, thorough documentation of existing conditions, development of corridor-wide goals and

objectives and alternatives goals and objectives, alternatives impact analysis, and an action plan for implementation and management.

It is recommended that plans and design guidelines be established for common, corridor-wide components, such as:

- signs and information/interpretive waysides and kiosks
- restrooms
- pull-outs
- trailheads and trail improvements
- shuttle stops

All design guidelines and plans should be consistent with guidelines, policies, and management plans already in place, such as those established for the Upper Nisqually Valley communities, Eatonville, the city of Yelm, the U. S. Forest Service, the Washington Department of Transportation, and the National Park Service.

Operations and Maintenance

To improve existing and build new facilities, it will be necessary to provide for operations and maintenance (O&M) of those facilities. What are the facilities and how extensive are the requirements for operations and maintenance to support them?

- Visitor Welcome Centers – require continuous O&M with designated personnel as well as materials and equipment
- Interpretive waysides – require infrequent O&M
- Restroom facilities – require frequent O&M at heavily traveled locations and infrequent O&M consisting of pump-out at remote locations and vandalism repair

- Signs and markers – require infrequent O&M
- Trailheads – require infrequent O&M
- Bike trails – require infrequent, but potentially extensive O&M
- Campgrounds – require continuous O&M
- Streetscape and traffic calming techniques at gateway communities – require continuous O&M, although at relatively modest levels
- Shuttle stops – require infrequent O&M
- Bus maintenance facility – requires continuous O&M for the facility and shuttle buses
- Search and rescue – requires continuous O&M

Responsibility for the operations and maintenance of the various facilities and other improvements will

likely be shared by numerous public and private organizations, including volunteer groups. Who are the likely participants?

• *Gateway Communities.* Eatonville will likely participate in supporting O&M of the multiagency visitor center, the trolley linking the Train to the Mountain station located east of Eatonville, and streetscape and traffic calming techniques within Eatonville. Local businesses (as contributing members to Chambers of Commerce and similar organizations, e.g., Greater Eatonville Chamber of Commerce and Ashford-Mt. Rainier Visitor Association) and volunteer community groups could contribute O&M support for streetscape and traffic calming facilities that are in the community.

• *Nisqually Road Corridor Implementation Committee or Other Group.* A group formed to implement a comprehensive overall corridor plan could provide oversight and leadership in further-



Typical shuttle stop concepts

ing the goals and objectives of the Nisqually Road Corridor and take the lead in soliciting donor contributions and writing grants to secure public and private program support. The committee could include participation from members of the Nisqually River Council.

- *U.S. Forest Service – Gifford Pinchot National Forest.* This USFS unit may be expected to participate in supporting O&M of the multiagency visitor center at Eatonville. It would also support other elements of the corridor facilities including roadway maintenance (such as snow removal), signs, restroom facilities in remote locations, interpretive waysides, bike trails, and hiking trails in areas under its jurisdiction.
- *National Park Service.* This agency would provide O&M support to the Mount Rainier-Ashford visitor welcome center and possibly to the multiagency visitor center at Eatonville, including designating personnel to provide orientation and interpretation. O&M support could also be provided for interpretive waysides and the shuttle bus system including the bus maintenance facility and shuttle stops. The National Park Service could work with a private partner to facilitate optimum use and O&M cost-sharing of the shuttle system, particularly during the winter.
- *Washington State Department of Transportation.* This agency would provide O&M support for restroom facilities and waysides of the corridor. Roadside trail maintenance by others through a cooperative agreement with WSDOT.
- *Washington State Department of Parks and Recreation.* This agency would provide O&M support for existing and new facilities, including the proposed Mashel River State Park, within the corridor area.
- *Washington State Department of Natural*

Resources. This agency would provide O&M support for trails, campgrounds, and campsites and interpretive exhibits within its jurisdiction.

- *University of Washington, Charles L. Puck Experimental Forest.* The university would provide O&M support for interpretive exhibits in the forest reserve.
- *City of Tacoma, Mountain Rails Division.* The city would provide O&M support for Train to the Mountain stations along the rail route from Tacoma to Ashford in the upper Nisqually Valley.
- *Bicycle Clubs.* Bicycle clubs could be enlisted under the Pierce County Adopt a Trail program to take primary responsibility for O&M-related upkeep of biking trails located off the main corridor transportation route. Work would be performed in accordance with USFS, WSDP&R, and WSDNR policies and plans.
- *Hiking Groups and "Friends of the Corridor".* These groups could be enlisted, also under the Pierce County Adopt a Trail program, to provide O&M support for hiking trails off the main corridor route. Work would be performed in accordance with USFS, WSDP&R, WSDNR policies and plans.
- *Local Public Fire Protection and EMS Providers.* These groups would likely continue to provide EMS and rescue services within the corridor.

As this list suggests, there are numerous participants with varying levels of responsibility for providing support for the O&M of facilities located on or near the corridor. Much of the O&M support would come from existing or augmented funding sources attributable to ongoing programs or through private sector participation and volunteer efforts. Nonetheless, major facilities would require alternative funding sources to support ongoing O&M. Principal among

these are the visitor centers, the shuttle system, including bus maintenance facilities, and new restrooms along the corridor. EMS and rescue services would also require augmented funding from alternative sources.

FUNDING OPTIONS

Funding for Capital Facilities

A substantial number of capital facilities are considered within this charette document, including transportation systems, highway improvements, visitor and community centers, hiking and biking trails, campground facilities, streetscape landscaping and other related improvements, commercial and retail space, and residential structures. Several of the capital facilities projects are in the planning stage, while others are at the conceptual level only.

Key elements of the capital facilities are discussed in the section on "Design Concepts and Sketches." Potential funding sources for these facilities (excluding commercial and residential facilities) are described as follows; a later description in this section describes funding sources by the potential grants and legislation.

Visitor Welcome Centers

There is the potential for entering into partnerships with the local community and private nonprofit organizations to fund development of the NPS visitor welcome center. Presumably, part of the cost might be funded through the NPS line-item funding program.

A multiagency visitor center, located in Eatonville, may operate from an existing structure. A new visitor center could be funded jointly and operated by the city of Eatonville, Eatonville Chamber of Commerce, Washington State Department of Natural Resources,

Washington State Parks and Recreation, Washington State Department of Transportation, U.S. Forest Service – Gifford Pinchot National Forest, and the National Park Service.

Train to the Mountain

Funding for capital facility improvements is predicated on federal and state appropriations. Operating funds will be obtained from freight operations and passenger fares.

Bus Shuttle System

Operation of the shuttle would likely be contracted through a concession arrangement. Funding for the shuttle would be appropriations from existing or future funding authorizations.

Funding of the Pierce County bus shuttle system would be obtained from Federal Transit Administration grant sources to support development and operations by a regional transit authority.

Trolley

Eatonville would likely operate the rubber-tired trolley through a contractual agreement with a private vendor. Funding for trolley service infrastructure would be provided from city resources and Washington State Department of Transportation-administered federal pass-through grant (TEA-21) sources.

The rail trolley infrastructure would likely be eligible for Washington State Community Revitalization Board grant funding. Purchase and operation of the trolleys could be under the city of Tacoma, Mountain Rail Division auspices, as one option. Alternatively, a private operator could lease the rail facilities and operate the facility.

Parks, Campgrounds, and Interpretive

Waysides and Exhibits

Funding for the Mashel State Park program is being provided by the Washington State Department of Parks and Recreation. The Department of Parks and Recreation could also partner with the Nisqually Tribe for campground management or special programs, e.g., alder-plank-smoked salmon cookouts, cultural demonstrations, and completion of a direct connection with the Mountain to the Sea Trail. Additional funding for Nisqually Tribe participation would likely come from the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation (IAC) from the Recreational Trails Fund, as well as user fees and sales of goods and services.

The Washington State Department of Natural Resources is considering development of a three- to four-unit jeep campsite near its maintenance facility at Elbe Hills. Funding would come from programmed sources.

Funding and operation of wayside exhibits, information/interpretive kiosks, information signs, and related facilities could come from the National Park Service funded through Transportation Legislation funding (such as TEA-21 & subsequent acts), Washington State Department of Transportation (using programmed road development funds, Heritage Corridor Program funding, and federal grants), local governments, and business enterprises and nonprofit organizations, as appropriate.

Trails and Road Shoulder Improvements

A potential trail from the park entrance to Longmire in the power line route serving the park could be funded by the National Park Service. The Nisqually River trail and multipurpose trail would likely be operated by the Washington State Departments of Natural Resources and Parks and Recreation and funded from federal and state sources. The federally supported Recreational Trails Fund, administered by

the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation, can fund trails that have no relationship to roadways; similarly, the Land and Water Conservation Fund can fund acquisition and trail development. The Washington State Wildlife and Recreation Program, with appropriations from the Legislature, also administered by the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation, can fund trails and habitat protection. Private foundations, such as the American Greenways Foundation, also provide support for trail development. The Washington Heritage Corridors program also supports trail development in designated corridors. It may also be possible to utilize commercial development impact funding streams to help pay for roadway improvements.

Funds for road improvements under the jurisdiction of the Washington State Department of Transportation could come from regular WSDOT road improvement funding and through the Heritage Corridors Program. WSDOT will likely need special legislative revenues to effect improvements beyond preservation and road safety needs.

Streetscape, Traffic Calming Techniques, and Road Wayside Improvements

Funding for streetscapes improvement and traffic calming facilities techniques, including sidewalks, is available from regular WSDOT project funding. Funds for Eatonville would likely be available from city government sources augmented by state grant funding. TEA-21 Enhancement funds can be used to support streetscape development.

Museums, Cultural Centers, and Other Educational Institutions

A number of museums, cultural centers, and other educational institutions are currently being considered for development within the Nisqually Road Corridor. These include the following:

- Nisqually Homeland Heritage Center and Museum
- Washington Forest Industries Museum at Mineral
- Forest Industries/Railroad Museum and Mount Rainier Institute (in affiliation with Tahoma Woods NPS administrative complex) at the proposed Mt. Rainier Resort facility at Park Junction
- NPS Environmental Education Center at Tahoma Woods
- NPS Resource Management Center at Tahoma Woods
- Mount Rainier Institute (in affiliation with the Park Junction Mt. Rainier Resort and Washington Forest Industries Museum and Washington Forest Protection Association) at Tahoma Woods
- Mountaineering Museum and Civic/Arts Center at Ashford

Operation and funding of these centers and museums would be by the sponsoring agencies or foundations. However, the Nisqually Homeland Heritage Center and Museum could be funded from federal grant sources and foundation donations.

Operations and Maintenance Funding Opportunities

Operations and maintenance funding (O&M) from sources other than existing programs would be necessary to maintain corridor projects. Outlays for facilities and services would likely be supported from a variety of sources, such as special appropriations, federal legislation designating ongoing support for national scenic byways (assuming this status is achieved), private industry, fees, service charges, publication sales, public agency operating funds,

grants, sponsorships, private contributions, other related sales, and concession revenue. Following are examples of such funding sources:

Special Federal Legislation

- USFS and NPS appropriations from existing program authorizations.
- Initiate development of a Federal Lands Transit Program (similar to the Federal Transit Administration Program) to cover O&M costs for a community shuttle system.
- NPS legislative request for authorization and appropriations to operate a shuttle system, including operations outside the park boundary (based on the Zion National Park model).
- A separate NPS legislative request for authority to establish and operate regional shuttle systems where appropriate. The intention is to stimulate a sufficiently large market for high-quality tourism shuttle service across a variety of operating environments and seasonal markets. O&M appropriations would be required.
- Joint USFS and NPS legislative request for authorization and appropriations for funding of EMS and rescue services on major tourism corridors within their jurisdictions.

Federal, State, and Local Government Grants

- WSDOT Heritage Corridor Program and Parks and Recreation Commission national scenic byway O&M funding.
- Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation (IAC) from the Recreational Trails Fund for operations and maintenance of campground at Mashel State Park.

- WSDOT continues to explore funding opportunities for National Park Partnership Projects. These may include long range community-based planning studies and analysis for corridors serving Mount Rainier and Olympic National Parks.

Regular Appropriations for Federal, State, and Local Governments

- Augmented funding from Washington State Department of Transportation construction and general operations accounts. Additional funding would be sought to support operations and maintenance of restroom facilities and signs.
- Appropriations from NPS and USFS general operations accounts. Additional funding would be sought to support operations and maintenance of visitor centers, interpretive waysides, signs and other monuments, trailheads, and shuttle stops.
- Appropriations from WSDP&R general operations accounts to support operations and maintenance of interpretive materials, campground and picnic area development, and restrooms at Mashel State Park.
- Appropriations from the city of Eatonville and Pierce County towns for O&M support for visitor centers in their respective jurisdictions, as well as to augment funding of local fire district EMS services on the corridor.

Fees and Charges

- Modest increases in NPS park entrance fees, WSP&R and DNR fees, and USFS dispersed recreation fees would be instituted to help cover corridor O&M costs.
- Marginal increases in NPS park entrance fees could also be necessary to supplement the cost of shuttle operations and maintenance.

- Shuttle operations would also be supported by charging riders directly for services associated with other activities (such as tours or special programs).
- Charges for goods and services provided at visitor centers, e.g., publications, Internet communication, reservations, etc.

Private Sector Sources

- Private partner participation in developing and operating visitor centers and other visitor facilities. This could include major players, e.g., restaurant chains, as well as small tourism-related businesses, e.g., bicycle rental operations, hiking equipment sales, etc. A major private partner could help to underwrite both construction and operations and maintenance of the visitor center facilities.
- Private business sponsorship of some aspects of the corridor, e.g., a major fuel retailer could underwrite the cost of brochures and other publications and obtain advertising benefits from having its logo on the printed material.
- Private business and tribal enterprise operation of various components of corridor facilities, e.g., campgrounds for bike riders and hikers and trolley services.
- Volunteer support could take several forms. Individuals might apply for positions at the visitor centers or at interpretive waysides. Groups could take responsibility for maintaining certain facilities, e.g., bike club sponsorship of mountain biking trails along the corridor.
- Private donations and bequests. Gifts could support an endowment trust established for the corridor. Also, facilities and areas in the park could be identified for company and individual sponsorship.

- Establish an “adopt a road” program for segments of the corridor that may not be covered by WSDOT’s existing program.

Transportation Capital Funding Opportunities

Heritage Corridors Program

The Washington State Department of Transportation operates a Heritage Corridors Program. The purposes of the Heritage Corridors Program are:

- to preserve the unique scenic character along Washington’s transportation corridors and recognize the benefits of promoting cultural tourism
- to provide travelers opportunities to learn about unique natural, cultural, and historic features that are near to or accessible by transportation routes

Designation makes a corridor eligible for technical support, provides a means to plan for traveler or tourism impacts on resources, and provides a framework for a community to communicate its unique heritage. Heritage tour routes include roads, trails, or other corridors that contain regional and/or local points of interest related to historic, cultural, recreational, archeological, or scenic resources. Designation by the state of a scenic and recreational highway enables a corridor that might not otherwise be eligible to apply for National Scenic Byway status. Strong local support is the first requirement for state designation. Trails and bikeways developed and improved in the Nisqually Road Corridor will also be included in the *State Trail Plan and the State Bicycle Plan*.

Designation as a scenic and recreational highway makes available coordinated programs in four categories: heritage corridor coordination; safety rest

areas and viewpoints; public outreach; and signs, markers, and interpretation. A number of these programs directly relate to future scenarios and needs of the Nisqually Road Corridor.

The *heritage corridors coordination* category includes scenic and recreational highways, the state’s national scenic byways, visual assessments, exceptional view areas, and route designation

Elements of the *safety rest areas and viewpoints* category includes partnership facilities, scenic viewpoints and pullouts, traveler information, and RV dump stations

The *public outreach* category includes heritage corridors advisory committee, statewide communication networking, corridor management planning guidebook, outreach publications and customized workshops, and project identification and public involvement

The fourth category on *signs, markers, and interpretation* includes route signs, heritage tour guides, roadside interpretative markers, and byway orientation panels

Currently two routes in this region have state scenic and recreational highway status, SR 7 south of SR 702 ending in Morton, and SR 706 from Elbe to the entrance of Mount Rainier National Park. National designation, with local match funds, can be used to apply federal transportation enhancement funding under TEA- 21. There are two steps that the Nisqually Road Corridor coordinating committee or other designated group can take towards pursuing national designation throughout the corridor.

1. Pursue State Designation for the Nisqually Road Corridor

A local organization should pursue expanded state

designation of scenic and recreational highways to include the entire Nisqually Road Corridor. This expansion would encompass SR 510 south of Tacoma to SR 702 connecting to SR 7 and SR 161 south from Graham to its intersection with SR 7 south of Eatonville. In addition to strong local support, a corridor management plan and compliance with billboard regulations is a prerequisite for designation.

2. Pursue National Scenic Byways Designation

Eligible portions of the Nisqually Road Corridor could apply for National Scenic Byways status. Along with matching local funds, federal designation will open up opportunities to apply for federal funds including enhancement funds under TEA-21. Currently eligible portions include SR 7 from SR 702 to Morton and SR 706. Once the remainder of the corridor is designated under the state’s heritage corridors program, they too will be eligible for the national scenic byways designation.

Heritage Projects Supported by TEA-21 Grants.

The Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), the successor to the 1991 Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA), provides funding for transportation improvements and protection of historic and scenic resources that provide a sense of community and foster economic development. The state of Washington expects to fund approximately \$67 million for enhancement projects through 2003. Eligible projects for heritage-related enhancements include the following:

- provision of facilities for pedestrians and bicycles
- acquisition of scenic easements and scenic or historic sites
- scenic or historic highway programs (includes tourist welcome facilities)
- landscaping and other beautification
- historic preservation
- rehabilitation and operation of historic transporta-

- tion buildings, structures, or facilities
- preservation of abandoned railway corridors
- archeological planning and research
- establishment of historic transportation museums

Other Capital Facilities Funding Sources

It is anticipated that major capital facilities could be funded from TEA-21 grants under the WSDOT Heritage Corridor Program as well as allocations from budgeted funds for such purposes by the Washington State Departments of Parks and Recreation and Natural Resources, the Interagency Committee on Outdoor Recreation, and the National Park Service. Transportation outlays for a shuttle system, similarly, might be provided from specially designated funds programmed for this purpose. Following are examples of these funding sources.

Special Federal Legislation

- USFS and NPS appropriations from existing program authorizations.
- Development of a Federal Lands Transit Program (similar to the Federal Transit Administration Program).
- NPS legislative request for authorization and appropriations to establish and operate a shuttle system, which would include operations outside the park boundary (based on the Zion National Park model).
- A separate NPS legislative request for authority to establish and operate regional shuttle systems where appropriate – the idea would be to stimulate a sufficiently large market for high-quality tourism shuttle service across a variety of operating environments and seasonal markets. Both capital and O&M appropriations would be required.

- Support city of Tacoma, Mountain Rails Division request for special appropriations to complete Train to the Mountain infrastructure developments.

Federal, State, and Local Government Grants

- HUD CDBG grants and other federal programs providing support to rural communities facing timber cutbacks or other revitalization needs. Funding purposes are predominantly for capital projects.
- Federal Transit Administration (FTA) grant sources to support development and operations by the regional transit authority.
- The NPS Alternative Transportation Program for capital and construction costs to support alternatives to automobile use to access national park sites.
- The NPS Challenge Cost Share Program might provide matching funds for park-related programs and activities.
- Washington State Office of Trade and Economic Development and Office of Community Development rural community revitalization program funds. Also, research the potential to receive federal pass-through funding. Washington State Community Revitalization Board grants, which provide matching funds for infrastructure projects that enhance employment opportunities. Funding purposes are predominantly for capital projects. Development of infrastructure for shuttle staging areas may be eligible projects under the grant program.
- Long-distance river and multipurpose trails would likely be operated by the state Departments of

Natural Resources and Parks and Recreation and funded from federal and state sources. The federally supported Recreational Trails Fund, administered by Interagency Committee on Outdoor Recreation (IAC) can fund trails with no relationship with roadways. Similarly, the Land and Water Conservation Fund can fund acquisition and trail development. The Washington State Wildlife and Recreation Program, with appropriations from the Legislature (also administered by the IAC) can fund trails and habitat protection.

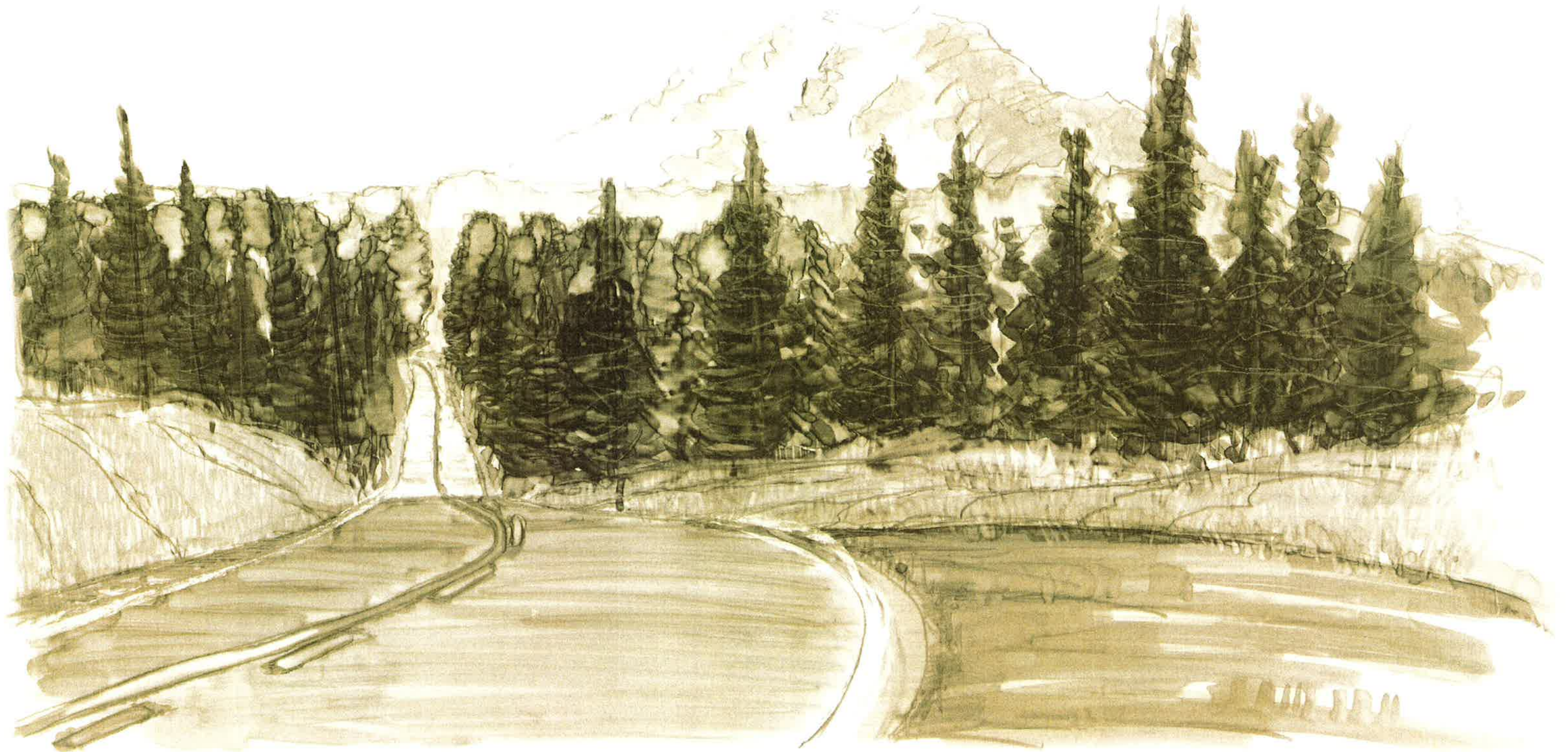
- Grant funding from Pierce County rural lodging tax. This is a one-time grant to fund projects up to \$500,000.
- Transportation Benefit Districts - local improvement district could be created to authorize a property tax levy (non-general obligation bonds) for transportation-related improvements.

Regular Appropriations for Federal, State, and Local Governments

- Augmented funding from WSDOT construction accounts.

Foundations

- Private foundations, such as the American Greenways Foundation, provide support for trail development.



APPENDIX A

Summary of Relevant Plans

Nisqually River Management Plan

Approved by the Washington State Legislature in 1987, this plan constitutes an overall management plan for the Nisqually River that emphasizes the natural and economic values of the river, which is of statewide significance. The plan provides policy recommendations and implementation guidelines for stewardship of the economic, cultural, and natural resources of the river basin.

Pierce County Comprehensive Plan

The *Pierce County Comprehensive Plan*, adopted in 1994, was developed in response to the requirements of the Washington State Growth Management Act. The plan integrates citizen's ideas, concerns, and preferences into statements of how the county should be developed, what development regulations should accomplish, what facilities and services levels are needed, and how publicly funded improvements should support these objectives.

Pierce County Transportation Plan

Adopted in 1992, this plan contains policies concerning roads, ferries, transit, airports, and nonmotorized modes of travel. The citizens and organizations involved in the developing the plan expressed their concern about the importance of nonmotorized modes of travel and helped produce a policy calling for the development of a *Pierce County Nonmotorized Transportation Plan*.

Pierce County 2020 Nonmotorized Transportation Plan

This plan was adopted in 1997. The Regional Trails

Advisory Commission developed the 2020 vision for the nonmotorized system in Pierce County. The citizens' commission that works with Pierce County staff to review nonmotorized projects and policies, approved the vision to guide the development of the plan. The plan illustrates means to achieve the following vision, which is quoted from the plan.

- A safe system of nonmotorized facilities that allows citizens to use nonmotorized modes at least as easily as they use motorized vehicles.
- A safe system that is appropriately designed, widely used, and accessible for different types of uses including commuter trips and recreational trips and being available to all skill levels and uses, diverse physical capabilities, as well as all age, income, and activity interests.
- A system that is strongly supported by the public through promotional and educational programs that emphasize the benefits of nonmotorized transportation including:
 - improved personal mobility
 - reduced traffic congestion
 - improved air quality
 - protection of open space, greenways, environmental, and wildlife resources
- A regional system that is coordinated with adjacent jurisdictions and public transit.
- A system that is clearly defined, planned, and implemented for the future in adopted county policies and regulations.
- A system that enhances neighborhoods, is safe for children and families and the result of local and regional planning efforts.
- A system that provides many benefits to the community and one in which the public feels a sense of pride and ownership.

Many of the ideas in this document that relate to transportation strategies support the vision of the Pierce County 2020 Nonmotorized Transportation Plan.

Upper Nisqually Valley Community Plan

The *Upper Nisqually Valley Community Plan* area is in southeast Pierce County, Washington. The plan area is about 18 miles in length, beginning slightly north of Alder Dam, extending eastward along the highway corridor through the communities of Alder, Elbe, and Ashford, and ending at the Nisqually entrance to Mt. Rainier National Park. The plan area consists of about 27,000 acres, about 50% of which are public lands held by federal, state, or local governments. Most of the public lands are designated forests, which provide significant recreational opportunities and conservation of wildlife habitat. Population in the plan area is between 1,100 to 1,200 persons.

The Pierce County Council adopted the *Upper Nisqually Valley Community Plan*. Under the plan, the communities of Ashford and Elbe are largely zoned Village Center, which allows for a mix of commercial, residential, and civic uses. The area adjacent to Mount Rainier National Park was also rezoned to Tourist Commercial, which is restricted to four uses: lodging, restaurants, sales of general merchandise, and rental of recreational equipment. The latter two uses are limited to a 5,000-square-foot building size. The plan attempts to balance environmental and economic factors by recognizing the abundance of local natural resources such as wildlife, water, and forests with the opportunity to allow local citizens to make a sustainable living from the visitors to the area.

Eatonville Community Action Plan and Vision Statement

Preserving the quality of Eatonville's small town char-

acter and improving local services as well as maintaining a healthy economy depend on attracting new businesses, expanding local markets, and increasing local investment. For this reason this plan is inherently a community redevelopment plan, recommending actions to generate the economic resources necessary to achieve the town's vision.

Thurston County – TransACTION 2020 - The 1998 (RTP) Update

The *1998 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) Update* extends the planning horizon from 2010 to 2020. It accounts for real and projected changes in population, employment, and traffic since adoption of the 1993 regional transportation plan. The plan's title – *TransACTION 2020* – reflects the need for action. The plan focuses on improving the efficiency of the existing network with travel demand management (TDM) measures, increasing transit service in the urban areas and between counties, improving multimodal facilities and connections, and optimizing roadway operating systems. The plan also places a high priority on protecting and enhancing the transportation investments that have already been made with comprehensive maintenance, preservation, and safety programs. *TransACTION 2020* also recognizes the need for expanded capacity for all modes of transportation in Thurston County to meet current and future accessibility needs.

Yelm Vision Plan and City of Yelm Design Guidelines

The Yelm Vision Plan focuses on improving the Yelm commercial area's economic viability and convenience, as well as its appearance, by focussing on industry, retail, and commercial- and tourism-based economies. The plan discusses the need to build community pride and involvement, enhance Yelm's identity, improve the downtown area, improve vehicular circulation, and promote efficient and high-quality land use. The design guidelines set requirements

and standards for site planning, pedestrian access, parking, building design, and site design and landscaping.

Gifford Pinchot National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (1990)

Forest plans are required by the National Forest Management Act for each national forest. These plans establish land allocations, goals and objectives, and standards and guidelines used by land managers, other government agencies, private organizations and individuals.

In 1990 the Gifford Pinchot National Forest published its first *Land and Resource Management Plan* (Forest Plan) developed under the National Forest Management Act and the National Environmental Policy Act. The Forest has made several amendments since 1990.

In April 1993 President Clinton convened a Forest Conference in Portland, Oregon, to address the human and environmental needs served by the federal forests of the Pacific Northwest and Northern California. President Clinton directed his cabinet to craft a balanced, comprehensive, and long-term policy for the management of Forest Service and BLM lands within the range of the northern spotted owl. The Northwest Forest Plan, completed in April 1994, amended 19 U.S. Forest Service and seven Bureau of Land Management plans within the range of the northern spotted owl to include a comprehensive ecosystem management strategy. The Gifford Pinchot National Forest adjusted its 1990 Forest Plan in February 1995 to incorporate the amendment.

Mount Rainier National Park Final General Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (2001)

The National Park Service (NPS) has finalized this

Final General Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement to provide guidance on the management of Mount Rainier National Park over the next 20 years. The plan establishes a framework for monitoring resource conditions and visitor experiences relative to the defined, long-term goals to ensure that park resources are preserved and high-quality visitor experiences are provided. Within these mandates, the plan addresses issues confronting the park, such as vehicle congestion, perceived overuse of wilderness, and changes in park infrastructure.

APPENDIX B

NISQUALLY CORRIDOR

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INFORMATION/ORIENTATION/INTERPRETATION

The charette team reviewed ideas for potential corridor related projects where information and orientation needs could be addressed and where interpretation would be appropriate. It is assumed that detailed interpretive planning would be undertaken prior to implementing any of these ideas and that NEPA and Section 106 NHPA related compliance would be undertaken for all projects in which Federal government agencies would be involved.

FREIGHTHOUSE SQUARE (TACOMA)

- Train to the Mountain origin
 - Information/interpretation literature/brochures available to passengers
 - Personal services – interpreters on the train
- Information displays at station on:
 - Visitor attractions & opportunities in the corridor (map based with call outs)
 - Train to the Mountain (schedules)
 - Multi-modal transportation options
 - Interactive computer terminal(s) - possibly including a live cam of real time road and parking conditions at Paradise, weather, etc. (summer

- and winter potential)
 - Phone numbers/email/web sites for additional information
 - Corridor and Train to the Mountain brochure dispenser

CORRIDOR ENTRANCE – ROUTE 7 NORTH END

- Corridor identification monument
- Information/orientation wayside exhibit (kiosk)
 - Visitor attractions & opportunities in the corridor (map based with call outs)
 - Train to the Mountain (schedules)
 - Multi-modal transportation options
 - Phone numbers/email/web sites for additional information

CORRIDOR ENTRANCE – ROUTE 161

- Corridor identification monument
- Information/orientation wayside exhibit (kiosk)
 - Visitor attractions & opportunities in the corridor (map based with call outs)
 - Train to the Mountain (schedules)
 - Multi-modal transportation options
 - Phone numbers/email/web sites for additional information

CORRIDOR ENTRANCE - ROUTE 7 NORTH - ELBE

- Corridor identification monument

NORTHWEST TREK

- Information/orientation exhibit (indoor/outdoor)
 - Visitor attractions & opportunities in the corridor (map based with call outs)
 - Strong focus on adjacent and theme-related corridor opportunities
 - Train to the Mountain information
 - Shuttle options
 - Phone numbers/email/web sites for additional information
 - Interactive computer terminal(s) - possibly including a live cam of real time road and parking

- ing conditions at Paradise, weather, etc. (summer and winter potential)
 - Corridor brochures

PIONEER FARM

- Information/orientation exhibit (indoor/outdoor)
 - Visitor attractions & opportunities in the corridor (map based with call outs)
 - Strong focus on adjacent and theme-related corridor opportunities
 - Train to the Mountain information
 - Shuttle options
 - Phone numbers/email/web sites for additional information
 - Interactive computer terminal(s) - possibly including a live cam of real time road and parking conditions at Paradise, weather, etc. (summer and winter potential)
 - Corridor brochures
- Expanded interpretation of Nisqually heritage and culture

DOGWOOD PARK

- Interpretive wayside exhibit(s) to interpret the Mountain (including the significance of Tahoma to the Nisqually people) and other significant elements at the site

OHOP VALLEY VIEW

- Interpretive wayside exhibit on the valley's significance, history, and importance to the Nisqually people

EATONVILLE

- Variable information signs alerting visitors to congestion, Paradise parking, road closures, weather conditions, etc.
- Interactive computer terminal(s) - possibly including a live cam of road and parking conditions at Paradise (summer and winter potential)
- Eatonville & Upper Nisqually Valley Information

Center

- Information/orientation exhibits (indoor/outdoor)
- Visitor attractions & opportunities in the corridor (map based, but with more in-depth exhibits on specific sites and recreation opportunities)
- Stronger exhibit focus on Eatonville and adjacent corridor opportunities
- Train to the Mountain information
- Multi-modal transportation options
- Phone numbers/email/web sites for additional information
- Interactive computer terminal(s) - possibly including a live cam of real time road and parking conditions at Paradise, weather, etc. (summer and winter potential)
- Corridor brochures
- Eatonville walking tour brochures (revised to start at the center)
- AV program – the compelling stories of the Nisqually Corridor
- Sales area
- Establish heritage park
 - Historic furnishing plans for building interiors
 - Site walking tour route and brochure
 - Interpretive wayside exhibit for each historic structure (could depict a historic illustration of each building and/or in its original location)

MASHEL STATE PARK (Proposed)

- Information/orientation wayside exhibit (kiosk)
 - Visitor attractions & opportunities in the corridor (map based with call outs)
 - Stronger focus on site and adjacent corridor opportunities
 - Train to the Mountain (schedules)
 - Shuttle options
 - Phone numbers/email/web sites for additional information
- Interpretive wayside exhibit on Nisqually/Mashel Massacre site (additional research needed)
- Interpretive wayside exhibit focusing on view of

the Mountain (Tahoma) interpreting the Nisqually Tribe's historical and spiritual associations with the entire area, including the site's connection to the Nisqually Trail.

- Potential for interpretive trail development to focus on forest ecology/habitats, logging history, and cultural sites. This may require a self-guiding publication with numbered stakes, perhaps supported by one or more interpretive wayside exhibits.
- Potential for co-management/partnership with Nisqually Tribe to operate campground and/or to provide personal services interpretation (i.e. cultural demonstrations – alder plank smoked salmon, cookouts, etc.).

PACK FOREST

- Information/orientation wayside exhibit (kiosk)
 - Visitor attractions & opportunities in the corridor (map based with call outs)
 - Stronger focus on site and adjacent corridor opportunities
 - Train to the Mountain (schedules)
 - Shuttle options
 - Phone numbers/email/web sites for additional information
- Corridor information brochures/packets for overnight guests and at entrance booth in summer

ALDER COMMUNITY

- Interpretive wayside exhibit at historic church

ALDER LAKE RECREATION AREA

- Information/orientation wayside exhibit (kiosk) (One at each of the three campgrounds and at the DNR Pleasant Valley Campground)
 - Visitor attractions & opportunities in the corridor (map based with call outs)
 - Stronger focus on site and adjacent corridor opportunities
 - Train to the Mountain (schedules)
 - Shuttle options

- Phone numbers/email/web sites for additional information

- Corridor information brochures for campers

ELBE

- Corridor entry identification monument
- Information/orientation wayside exhibit (kiosk)
 - Visitor attractions & opportunities in the corridor (map based with call outs), also Mt. St. Helens/Gifford Pinchot National Forest and East Lewis County Attractions and Services
 - Stronger focus on site and adjacent corridor opportunities
 - Train to the Mountain (schedules)
 - Multi-modal transportation options
 - Phone numbers/email/web sites for additional information
- Variable information signs alerting visitors to congestion, Paradise parking, road closures, weather conditions, etc.
- Nisqually Homeland Heritage Center & Museum or Cultural Center
 - Exhibits/AV on the Nisqually people: their homeland, history, tribal values, efforts to re-learn and preserve their heritage, and their commitment to protect the integrity of homeland resources
 - Cultural Demonstrations
 - Sale of Native art and crafts
 - Information about historic tribal trail
 - Interactive computer terminal(s) - possibly including a live cam of real time road and parking conditions at Paradise, weather, etc. (summer and winter potential)
- Interpretive trail to overlook the Alder Lake Wildlife Management Area (potential for interpretive wayside exhibit)
- Interpretive kiosk illustrating local history
- Interpretive wayside exhibit at historic church
- Historic walking tour of Elbe (self-guiding brochure supported with interpretive wayside exhibits at key locations)
- Washington Forest Industries Museum

PARK JUNCTION (Proposed)

- Forest industries/railroad museum
- Information/orientation exhibits
 - Visitor attractions & opportunities in the corridor (map based with call outs)
 - Train to the Mountain information
 - Multi-modal options
 - Phone numbers/email/web sites for additional information
 - Interactive computer terminal(s) - possibly including a live cam of real time road and parking conditions at Paradise, weather, etc. (summer and winter potential)
 - Corridor brochures
 - History of area
 - Variable message signs alerting people to congestion, Paradise parking, road closures, weather conditions
- Corridor information brochures/packets for overnight guests
- Mount Rainier Institute (in affiliation with Tahoma Woods)

TAHOMA WOODS

- NPS Environmental Education Center
- Mount Rainier Institute (in affiliation with Park Junction)
- NPS Resource Management Center

NATIONAL

- Information/orientation wayside exhibit (kiosk) (If site is used for train terminus)
 - Visitor attractions & opportunities in the corridor (map based with call outs)
 - Stronger focus on site and adjacent corridor opportunities
 - Train to the Mountain (schedules)
 - Multi-modal options
 - Phone numbers/email/web sites for additional

information

- Interpretive wayside exhibit and/or self-guiding trail interpreting the former logging mill and community of National

ASHFORD

- NPS and regional visitor center (See program/proposals in MORA long-range interpretive plan: Appendix D. Some media (inside/outside) could be similar to those at the Eatonville center.)
- Variable information signs alerting visitors to congestion, Paradise parking, road closures, weather conditions, etc.
- Interactive computer terminal(s) - possibly including a live cam of road and parking conditions at Paradise (summer and winter potential)
- Mountaineering museum
- Information/orientation wayside exhibit (kiosk) outside the visitor center for after-hours visitors
 - Visitor attractions & opportunities in the corridor (map based with call outs)
 - Train to the Mountain (schedules)
 - Multi modal options
 - Phone numbers/email/web sites for additional information
- Civic/Art Center
- Tours of historic sites in Ashford

BIG CREEK CAMPGROUND

- Information/orientation wayside exhibit (kiosk)
 - Visitor attractions & opportunities in the corridor (map based with call outs)
 - Stronger focus on site and adjacent corridor opportunities
 - Train to the Mountain (schedules)
 - Shuttle options
 - Phone numbers/email/web sites for additional information

SAHARA CREEK CAMPGROUND

- Information/orientation wayside exhibit (kiosk)
 - Visitor attractions & opportunities in the corri-

dor (map based with call outs)

- Stronger focus on site and adjacent corridor opportunities
- Train to the Mountain (schedules)
- Shuttle options
- Phone numbers/email/web sites for additional information

DNR JEEP CAMPGROUND

- Information/orientation wayside exhibit (kiosk)
 - Visitor attractions & opportunities in the corridor (map based with call outs)
 - Stronger focus on site and adjacent corridor opportunities
 - Train to the Mountain (schedules)
 - Shuttle options
 - Phone numbers/email/web sites for additional information

SKATE CREEK ROAD

- Wayside exhibit at view of Nisqually River interpreting the washout, connections between the mountain and the sea, and the significance of the watershed to the Nisqually people

MOUNT RAINIER NATIONAL PARK

- Interpretive messages on shuttles to West Side Road and Paradise
- See other interpretive recommendations addressed in the MORA Long-range Interpretive Plan

BEAR PRAIRIE

- Wayside exhibit to interpret the site, the association of the Nisqually people, and the historic Nisqually trail around the mountain

EDUCATION PROGRAMS

- Regional Education Consortium (includes MORA, Northwest Trek, Pioneer Farm, Pack Forest, Tacoma Power, Camp Arnold, Lincoln Tree Farm,

Tahoma Audubon, Cispus Learning Center, etc.)

- Key concept will be the regional geographic, ecological, geological, social, cultural, and historic resources and their connections between the mountain and the sea.
- Need to include/integrate with additional partners (i.e. Nisqually Tribe, future climbing museum, Nisqually River Education Council – including the new visitor center, and the Washington State Historical Society's heritage education program opportunities)
- Integrated informational/promotional literature and web site with links to/from all participating partners (consortium members). Easy access and one-stop-shopping to help educators with decision-making/program selection. May include downloadable information and curriculum materials on the programs.
- Create incentives to fund school group transportation issues
- Programs address multi-ethnic/multi-language needs and regional complexities

PRE-VISIT AND CORRIDOR-WIDE

- Internet site with real-time information, possibly including a live cam of road and parking conditions at Paradise, weather, etc. (summer and winter potential)
- A Nisqually Corridor web site with links to/from all existing and future partner sites
- 1-800 Number(s) and cell phone access specifically for corridor/park road information
- Local TV Channel information in area hotels/motels/B&Bs
- Nisqually Corridor brochures/rack cards
- Training opportunities for all information and visitor service providers/attraction operators
- Incorporation of Nisqually names for geographic features, place names, flora, and fauna

(All real-time messages to be positive and provide options to crowded or closed areas)

Preparers & Selected References



CORE CHARETTE TEAM

National Park Service

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Charette Consultants

(Check Meeting Lists for those who hosted meeting and provided tours)

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