

## Creating a thriving.....livelier.....stronger.....

### ...social, cultural and economic center for the City of Edmonds

As the social, cultural and economic centers of cities and often the symbol of economic health, downtowns should maintain a wide range of uses within a compact and walkable scale while providing appropriately designated areas for professional offices, service establishments, retail/eating/drinking/entertainment oriented uses, and recreational amenities offering various ranges of commodities and services. The City of Edmonds hosted a public meeting on November 8, 2012 during which Roger Brooks, Destination Development Inc., presented information on the topics of marketing and downtown destination development. What makes an outstanding downtown? Mr. Brooks mentioned 20 Ingredients and elaborated on each; these include: the Importance of having a plan, **Defining a strong brand and retail focus, Orchestrating recruitment of "critical mass" or "clustering"**, Establishing anchor tenants, **Defining operating hours and days (consistency)**, People living and/or staying downtown: hotels, condos, loft apartments, Identifying pioneers with patient money and convincing them to invest, **Starting with just one block - a "demonstration project" (Edmonds BD1 Zone?)**, Solving the parking dilemma, Public washrooms, Developing gathering places, **Creation of good first impressions**: Community gateways, Design, fabrication & installation of a Wayfinding System, good first impression: District gateways, 20/20 signage equals dollars, **Sidewalk cafes and dining, Investing heavily in retail beautification, activities and entertainment, Downtown districts with a name**, and Experiential marking.

Goals and policies of the City's Comprehensive Plan generally supportive of the 20 ingredients include: "promote downtown as a setting for retail, office, entertainment and associated businesses supported by nearby residents and the larger Edmonds community, and as a destination for visitors from throughout the region"; and "define the downtown commercial and retail core along streets having the strongest pedestrian links and pedestrian-oriented design elements, while protecting downtown's identity". The City's Economic Development Plan also contains goals that tie directly to the 20 ingredients, i.e., "revitalize the City's business districts, balancing redevelopment, preservation and the need for consumer amenities"; "diversify the tax base and increasing revenues"; "strengthen the quality of life and vitality of the community for residents, workers and visitors to enjoy"; and expand social, cultural, artistic, recreational and other learning activities for all generations". Goal 2 Policy 2i of the City's Economic Development Plan calls for more specificity, i.e., "Create synergy for commercial businesses where possible, for example, by implementing a "retail core" area in the downtown".

When information provided by Mr. Brooks is combined with goals and policies contained within City adopted plans, what stands out as an area that should be considered for implementation is defining a retail focus and creating a critical mass or clustering within the downtown core. In order to have a vibrant, lively, thriving and prosperous downtown core, the City must encourage uses that generate high levels of pedestrian traffic in a concentrated area within ground floor spaces along street frontages that encourage/promote/attract specialty retail shops (housewares, books, wine, food, antique, clothing and music stores), personal services (hair/beauty salons), eating and drinking establishments (bakeries,

coffee shops, restaurants, bistros), entertainment venues (music houses/theaters, art galleries, and cultural facilities) and education centers.....all of which reinforce the distinctive charm of Edmonds' small town characteristics. These uses tend to have windows with interesting displays and/or visibility into the businesses which add to a lively pedestrian environment within the Downtown. Other than marketing, installation of physical improvements, and recruitment of certain types of businesses, one way to enhance/strengthen the "retail/dining/drinking/entertainment" core is to preserve ground floor space along designated commercial street frontages for commercial retail/service oriented uses. The term preservation equates to possibly limiting office uses along the ground floor of these designated street frontages (within Edmonds, this would be the first 45 feet only measured from public rights-of-way or sidewalk). Requiring professional office uses to locate behind ground floor retail or on the second floor of buildings within the downtown core, e.g., land zoned BD1, would provide more street frontage space for these types of uses, thus creating a well-defined core that generates higher levels of ground floor activity and hopefully establishing a "niche" making Downtown Edmonds competitive with outlying areas.

Ultimately, the desire is to provide opportunities for retail oriented establishments to cluster for the convenience of the public and for efficient business operation in mutually beneficial relationships to each other, and finally to enhance and protect the retail oriented core of downtown from the intrusion of incompatible activities which might impair the areas' appearance or functioning as a convenient, lively, and thriving retail oriented shopping area. It is intended that all uses in this area maintain ground floor visibility to serve patrons on an unannounced or drop-in basis, conduct a majority of their business face-to-face on the premises with their customers, and maintain retail storefronts comparable to traditional retail sales operations, including display of goods and services for sale.

There are significant reasons for supporting and maintaining a focus on retail/eating/drinking/entertainment uses along street frontages within the BD1 zone or downtown core area, these include:

- Clustering works - People are drawn to a critical mass of like-businesses; think food court, gas stations or auto malls. Retail areas are dependent upon synergy and lively activity which would be/are interrupted with uses other than retail/eating/drinking/entertainment oriented/service on the ground floor.
- Creating a dedicated area for "destination retail," often referred to in planning circles as "festival retail." This is where a City can have a "restaurant row" and many non-chain, non-franchise businesses that are organic to Edmonds. Included in this mix must be a couple of "anchor tenants," just like a mall.
- There is power in "Critical Mass" - A great case study? Walnut Creek, California - similar in size to Edmonds, 20 minutes from Oakland, and half an hour east of San Francisco. In their downtown they have more than 85 restaurants - and you can walk to all of them within 7 or 8 minutes. The locals hang out in their own town, and now it's become a major destination city for ALL of Northern California. That's the power of "Critical Mass."

- A City can spend millions of dollars on beautification, public parking, street trees, facade improvements, and a host of other things and still have a dead downtown. After all, what makes a downtown work is what's IN the buildings. The rest is ambiance - important - but not the ultimate reason we spend time downtown. A City and business community MUST help orchestrate the business mix - once its decided what we want to be known for (your brand), which will dictate the kind of businesses you'll recruit.
- Office uses typically close in the early evenings and weekends, creating dark, dead spaces, thereby discouraging a pedestrian friendly environment extending into the later evening. The resulting impression of the area is that it is not inviting, not interesting, and friendly to walk around.
- Because Edmonds has mostly one and two-story buildings and a restrictive height limit, Downtown Edmonds is challenged with getting the density of customers necessary that would allow more sparse retail to survive without the synergy from a consistent clustering of retail/service uses.
- "Charming & thriving downtowns" to which people strive to emulate: Walnut Creek, Carmel and Palo Alto, CA, and Fairhaven, WA.....in none of these town centers, do they allow new offices or housing at the street level.

Assessment:

If the City Council were to support the passage of a proposed ordinance, this should accompany a requirement to re-evaluate the ordinance within one-two years to ensure that the ordinance is having a positive effect on the downtown core and vicinity in general.

ORDINANCE NO. \_\_\_\_

AMENDING SECTIONS #####," OF THE EDMONDS COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CODE CODE

WHEREAS, the existing City of Edmonds, Washington Economic Development Plan contains goals to foster a healthy business community that provides employment and other economic opportunities, revitalization of the City's business districts, balancing redevelopment, preservation and the need for consumer amenities, diversifying the tax base and increasing revenues, as well as strengthening the quality of life and vitality of the community for residents, workers and visitors to enjoy; and

WHEREAS, Goal 2, Policy 2i of the Economic Development Plan states "Create synergy for commercial businesses where possible, for example, by implementing a "retail core" area in the downtown"; and

WHEREAS, this ordinance is intended to protect and enhance the existing character of the downtown commercial core and encourage orderly development in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan and Economic Development Plan for the city; and

WHEREAS, city or town downtown centers/districts typically promote compact, pedestrian-oriented development with a diverse mix of residential, business, commercial, entertainment, and other uses for workers, visitors, and residents; and

WHEREAS, there is a desire to:

- promote a diverse mix of residential, business, commercial, office, institutional, educational, cultural, and entertainment activities appropriately located within the downtown waterfront activity area for workers, visitors, and residents
- create an active thriving downtown commercial core that serves as the City's primary gathering place for greater social interaction
- create a compact assembly of storefront buildings housing a mix of uses, short walkable blocks, and pedestrian amenities
- create a place that represents a unique, attractive, and memorable destination for visitors and residents
- enhance the community's character through the promotion of high quality urban design
- strengthen opportunities for economic vitality and support pedestrian activity

WHEREAS, currently the ECDC allows the ground floor of buildings along designated commercial street frontages within the BD1 Zone to be used for commercial purposes other than those tied to retail, eating and drinking establishments, theaters and cultural facilities; and

WHEREAS, the City Council approved in year 2011, new commercial depth requirements of 45 feet along commercial street frontages within the Downtown Zones; and

WHEREAS, the Council recently endorsed a review of limiting office uses along street frontages of the BD1 Zone; and more specifically within business spaces located within the first 45 feet of commercial street frontages of BD1 Zones measured from public rights-of-way, and

WHEREAS, the City wishes to maintain retail frontage in its downtown core, while at the same time allowing for other uses such as offices within designated non-commercial street frontage areas which are less viable for retail use, and

WHEREAS, the City wishes to maintain and enhance a retail focus for the Downtown retail core area due to their visibility and prominence in determining the character of the downtown retail core, and

WHEREAS, the Edmonds Planning Board and City Council held public hearings at which they received and considered written and oral comments; and

WHEREAS, the City held one (1) downtown community meeting with property and business owners regarding a proposal to limit certain office uses along commercial street frontages within the BD1 Zone and provided opportunities for the involvement of private, public agencies, civic, education, and other community and interested groups; and

WHEREAS, the City Council introduced the ordinance at its meeting of #####, 2013; and

NOW, THEREFORE, THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF EDMONDS, WASHINGTON ORDAINS AS FOLLOWS:

REQUIRED RETAIL FRONTAGE. The following provisions apply within the BD1 Zone:

(a) Permitted Uses. In addition to traditional retailing activities, entertainment and cultural uses, etc, uses shall require ground floor visibility to serve patrons primarily on an unannounced or drop-in basis, shall conduct a majority of their business face-to-face on the premises with their customers, and shall maintain retail storefronts comparable to traditional retail sales operations, including display of goods and services for sale. The following uses are permitted on the ground floor within the first 45 feet of designated commercial street frontages measured from the front facade within the BD1 Zone. Note that the ground floor retail space may be occupied by other uses initially, but will be available for retail uses in the future when the space is vacated and non-conformance standards apply.

(1) Retail Sales. Uses principally engaged in retail sale or rental of consumer or household goods, including ancillary repair services. These retail uses are characterized by face-to-face transactions conducted by both the buyer and seller on the business premises. Retail businesses that conduct a majority of their sales (over 50%) via the Internet or other means of telecommunications are not considered “retail” for the purposes of this section.

(2) Personal Services. Uses principally providing services of a personal convenience nature to the individual consumer. These types of uses are primarily engaged in the provision of frequent or recurrent needed services of a personal nature. Typical personal services uses include, but are not limited to beauty and hair salons, shoe repair shops and tailor shops. This definition of “Personal Services” does not include professions as defined in section ??? of the City of Edmonds Community Development Code or any similar professions.

(3) Eating and Drinking Establishments. Uses principally engaged in the preparation and retail sale of food and/or beverages, but excluding uses principally involving food preparation for off-site catering.

(4) Theaters and Cultural Facilities. Uses providing entertainment such as motion pictures, plays or operas or cultural facilities such as museums or art galleries.

(5) Banks. Uses providing financial services including banks, savings and loan institutions, lending institutions, and credit unions that have tellers and no drive through facilities. Such uses shall be retail service in nature, dedicated to serving the general customer, and not be open by appointment only.

**16.43.020 Uses.**

A. Table 16.43-1.

Permitted Uses	BD1	BD1 GFSF	BD2	BD3	BD4	BD5
	Commercial Uses					
Retail stores or sales	A	A	A	A	A	A
Offices	A	X	A	A	A	A
Legal/Law Firms						
Financial						
Advising		X				
Mortgage		X				
Banks (without tellers)		X				
Accounting		X				
Counseling		X				
Architecture		X				
Engineering		X				
Advertising		X				
Insurance		X				
Fitness related businesses		X				
Real Estate		X				
Service uses	A	Needs to be discussed	A	A	A	A
Retail sales requiring intensive outdoor display or storage areas, such as trailer sales, used car lots (except as part of a new car sales and service dealer), and heavy equipment storage, sales or services	X	X	X	X	X	X
Enclosed fabrication or assembly areas associated with and on the same property as an art studio, art gallery, restaurant or food service establishment that also provides an on-site retail outlet open to the public	A	C	A	A	A	A
Automobile sales and service	X	X	A	A	X	X
Dry cleaning and laundry plants which use only nonflammable and nonexplosive cleaning agents	C	X	A	A	A	X
Printing, publishing and binding establishments	C	X	A	A	A	C
Community-oriented open air markets conducted as an outdoor operation and licensed pursuant to provisions in the Edmonds City Code	A	A	A	A	A	A
	Residential Uses					

Single-family dwelling	A	X	A	A	A	A
Multiple dwelling unit(s)	A	X	A	A	A	A
	<b>Other Uses</b>					
Bus stop shelters	A	A	A	A	A	A
Churches, subject to the requirements of ECDC 17.100.020	A	?	A	A	A	A
Primary and high schools, subject to the requirements of ECDC <a href="#">17.100.050</a> (G) through (R)	A	X	A	A	A	A
Local public facilities, subject to the requirements of ECDC 17.100.050	C	C	C	C	A	C
Neighborhood parks, natural open spaces, and community parks with an adopted master plan subject to the requirements of ECDC 17.100.070	A	A	A	A	A	A
Off-street parking and loading areas to serve a permitted use	B	X	B	B	B	B
Commuter parking lots in conjunction with a facility otherwise permitted in this zone	B	X	B	B	B	X
Commercial parking lots	C	X	C	C	C	X
Wholesale uses	X	X	X	C	X	X
Hotels and motels	A	A	A	A	A	A
Amusement establishments	C	C	C	C	C	C
Auction businesses, excluding vehicle or livestock auctions	C	X	C	C	C	C
Drive-in/through businesses	X	X	C	A	C	X
Laboratories	X	X	C	C	C	X
Fabrication of light industrial products not otherwise listed as a permitted use	X	X	X	C	X	X
Day-care centers	C	X	C	C	A	C
Hospitals, health clinics, convalescent homes, rest homes, sanitariums	X	X	C	C	A	X
Medical Dental Optometrist (without retail) Therapy (without retail) Counseling		X X X X				
Museums and art galleries of primarily local concern that do not meet the criteria for regional public facilities as defined in ECDC 21.85.033	A	A	A	A	A	A

Zoos and aquariums of primarily local concern that do not meet the criteria for regional public facilities as defined in ECDC 21.85.033	C	X	C	C	C	A
Counseling centers and residential treatment facilities for current alcoholics and drug abusers	X	X	C	C	A	X
Regional parks and community parks without a master plan subject to the requirements of ECDC 17.100.070	C	C	C	C	C	C
Outdoor storage, incidental to a permitted use	D	X	D	D	D	D
Aircraft landings as regulated by Chapter <a href="#">4.80</a> ECC	X	X	D	D	D	D

A = Permitted primary use

B = Permitted secondary use

C = Primary uses requiring a conditional use permit

D = Secondary uses requiring a conditional use permit

X = Not permitted

GFSF = Ground Floor designated Street Frontage – First 45 feet measured from public rights of way