

Sammamish Town Center Sub-Area Plan EIS

Draft Scoping Report

Project Description

The City of Sammamish has initiated a planning process to develop and adopt a Sub-Area Plan for the City of Sammamish Town Center. The Town Center planning area is located on the Sammamish Plateau in the center of the city. The Sub-Area will emphasize four major objectives: 1) accommodate an appropriate share of urban growth; 2) preserve open spaces and habitat areas; 3) provide employment and commercial opportunities in proximity to new housing; and 4) provide adequate public facilities and services. The Sub-Area Plan will be incorporated into the City of Sammamish Comprehensive Plan.

The Town Center area is approximately 243 acres; boarded on the north by E Main Street; on the east by 232nd Avenue SE; on the south by SE 8th Street; and on the west by 222nd Place SE. The intersection of SE 4th Street and 228th Avenue SE is likely to be the central node of the Town Center area.

The Sub-Area Plan will include elements addressing the Town Center's vision, land use, zoning, environmental management, open space, transportation, capital facilities, urban design and design guidelines, and implementation. The implementation actions may include amendments to the City's Comprehensive Plan, Transportation Improvement Plan, Land Use Regulations, or Capital Improvement Program.

Purpose of the EIS

The City of Sammamish has determined that the Town Center proposal is a major action under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) because it is likely to have probable significant adverse environmental impacts. Therefore, the proposal will require an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to assess these impacts. The City of Sammamish issued a determination of significance (DS) on March 17, 2006 and initiated a formal scoping process. A scoping meeting/open house was held on March 28, 2006. The Sammamish City Council approved four EIS alternatives on July 25, 2006.

The Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will be prepared concurrent with the development of the Sub-Area Plan. The EIS and Sub-Area Plan processes will be integrated in accordance with the Washington Growth Management Act (GMA) and the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) requirements as described under Washington Administrative Code (WAC) Section 197-11-210 through 197-11-235. Integration of the SEPA and GMA processes will allow consideration of environmental information as well as public input, and will inform and assist decision makers in selecting an alternative that incorporates measures to fulfill the goals of the GMA while identifying and mitigating probable significant adverse environmental impacts under SEPA.

Description of the Alternatives

Four alternatives have been identified and will be evaluated in the EIS. The alternatives will include three action alternatives and a no-action alternative. Analysis of these alternatives will provide a better understanding of how future residential, commercial, and civic uses as well as open space could be distributed within the study area through the planning horizon of 2030. Understanding these differences will provide information to aid decision-making and the identification of a preferred alternative.

The four alternatives were developed through a process that included several public open houses, input from a property owner's forum, comments from the general public, the Town Center Committee, the Planning Commission, and the City Council. A design charette was also held to solicit the community's vision of the Town Center. The alternatives were approved for analysis by the City Council on July 25, 2006.

The alternatives present several different patterns of future land use in the Town Center area. The action alternatives represent three distinct development strategies through which the Town Center vision could be realized. Each would differ in how the Town Center would look and function, and what purpose it would serve in the community. The fourth alternative, the No-Action alternative is a status quo alternative. It assumes that the Town Center planning area would be developed in accordance with the adopted Comprehensive Plan land use map. Analysis of development under the No-Action alternative will be used to compare the potential impacts of the action alternatives.

The four alternatives are defined by varying amounts, types, mixes, and intensities of land uses within the Town Center area. All of the alternatives are meant to establish long-term policy directions for a desired outcome. Any adopted sub-area plan would be implemented over an approximately 25-year period, with an expected planning horizon of 2030. Table 1 provides a summary of the of the potential development scenarios for each alternative.

Table 1. Sammamish Town Center Land Use Scenarios

Land Use	Alt 1 Commercial Focus	Alt 2 Low Intensity	Alt 3 Public Facility Focus	Alt 4 No Action
Building Areas (1000 square feet)				
Commercial/Retail	385 – 415	120 – 150	185 – 215	0
Commercial/Office	65 – 85	0	100 – 130	0
Civic/Institutional	65 – 85	20 – 40	150 - 180	0
Open Space (acres)				
Public Parks	30	40	40	30
Streams, Wetlands & Buffers	50	50	50	50
Private Open space	65	45	50	0
Total Open Space	145	135	140	80

Housing Units				
Detached Single-Family	15 – 20	230 – 250	30 – 40	300 – 350
Town Houses	160 - 175	515 – 530	115 - 130	0
Mid-rise Multi-family	2,500 – 3,000	315 - 330	2,500 – 3,000	0
High-rise Multifamily	475 – 500	0	0	0
Total Housing Units	3,000 – 4,000	1,000 – 1,500	2,500 – 3,000	300 - 350
Parking (1000 square feet)				
Surface Parking	275 – 325	200 – 250	400 – 450	0
Structured Parking	325 – 375	0	75 – 100	0
Total Public Parking	600 – 700	200 – 250	475 - 525	0

Alternative 1 – Commercial Focus

Land Use Pattern. Alternative 1, the commercial focus alternative, envisions the Town Center as a sub-regional destination with unique character, activities, family entertainment, employment and services. Under this alternative, the Town Center would provide a walkable central retail area west of 228th Avenue SE surrounded by a variety of housing types. This alternative is estimated to add approximately 3,500 - 4,000 new housing units, approximately 65,000 – 85,000 square feet of civic amenities, approximately 385,000 - 415,000 square feet of retail space, and approximately 65,000 - 85,000 square feet of office space in the Town Center. A summary of potential land uses is shown in Table 1.

The primary commercial area would be centered on the intersection of SE 4th Street and 224th Place SE. It would be linked to the northern boundary of the Sammamish Commons and extend north. This area would consist of several single-use and mixed-use retail buildings as well as some civic buildings. The commercial core would be the center of a dense mixed use neighborhood consisting of several housing choices including town homes, mid-rise multi-family structures ranging from 3 to 5 stories, and high-rise residential towers up to 12 stories.

Land use on the east side of 228th Avenue SE would also include several types of town homes and mid-rise residential structures. An area of office development would be located on the northeast corner of 228th Avenue SE and SE 8th Street.

Under this alternative, the Sammamish Town Center would include the Sammamish Commons as well as three other public parks in the NE and SE quadrants, totaling approximately 30 acres. This Alternative (as well as the other two action alternatives) would preserve and protect streams and wetlands by avoiding development in them and their buffers. It would also establish policies that promote private open spaces. The Town Center would include an additional 115 acres of open space comprising approximately 60 percent of the land in the Town Center. All of the major nodes in the Town center would be connected by a system of non-motorized trails that would use open space as corridors.

Transportation. Several new roads are proposed to accomplish the goals of this alternative and provide access to areas of new development. Primary access from 228th Avenue SE to the central commercial area would be along SE 4th Street. A new road would intersect with SE 4th Street at approximately 222nd Place SE and form a loop connecting 228th Avenue SE at E Main Street. East Main Street would then continue east and turn south connecting with SE 4th Street.

A second new road would divert southeast from SE 4th Street and travel to SE 8th Street. The alternative would also include walking trails connecting all areas of the Town Center area. The conceptual layout of new roads and land uses is shown in the Alternative sketches approved by the City Council on July 25, 2006.

Alternative 2 – Small Commercial Village

Land Use Pattern. Alternative 2, the low intensity alternative, envisions the Town Center as a local neighborhood with a small commercial village and limited services. As in Alternative 1, Alternative 2 would create a commercial core centered immediately south of the intersection of SE 4th Street and 224th Place SE. However, the commercial core would be much smaller in scale comprising approximately 120,000 - 150,000 square feet of commercial development.

Alternative 2 would include 1,000 - 1,500 new housing units spread throughout the Town Center area. In general housing would be more dispersed than under either Alternative 1 or 2. New housing would be a mix of detached single-family homes, town homes, and, near the commercial area, 3-story, mid-rise, multi-family buildings.

Under this alternative, the Sammamish Town Center would include approximately 40 acres of public parks including the Sammamish Commons. Similar to the other action alternatives, this alternative would preserve and protect streams and wetlands by avoiding development in them and their buffers. It would also establish policies that promote private open spaces. In total, the Town Center would include 135 acres of open space, which constitutes slightly less than 60 percent of the land in the Town Center. As in the other action alternatives the Town Center would be connected by a system of non-motorized trails that would use open space as corridors.

Transportation. New roads would be needed to access new development. These would include two new loop roads north of SE 4th Street on both the east and west sides of 228th Avenue SE. Similar to Alternative 1, a new road would divert south off of SE 4th Street and travel southeast to SE 8th Street on the east side of 228th Avenue SE. The alternative would also include walking trails connecting all areas of the Town Center area. The conceptual layout of new roads and land uses is shown in the Alternative sketches approved by the City Council on July 25, 2006.

Alternative 3 – Civic Focus

Land Use Pattern. Under Alternative 3, the public facilities focused alternative, the Sammamish Town Center would provide a central civic, cultural, and recreational development core surrounded by housing of various densities. This alternative would also create a central plaza near the intersection of SE 4th Street and 224th Place SE, immediately north of an expanded Sammamish Commons park. The plaza would be lined by public facilities that could include a library, community center, aquatic center, performing arts center, senior center, youth center, or other civic amenity.

Commercial and retail development would be more limited than in Alternative 1, and would be located in a more diffuse pattern throughout the Town Center planning area. A smaller commercial area is envisioned around the intersection of 228th Avenue SE and SE 4th Street. Commercial development on either side of 228th Avenue SE would be connected by a pedestrian

bridge over 228th Avenue SE. This alternative also includes mixed-use office development along 232nd Avenue NE in the northeast corner of the Town Center area.

Housing on both sides of 228th Avenue SE would include a mix of detached single-family residences, town homes, mid-rise, multi-family buildings from 3 to 5 stories, and some limited mixed-use developments (residential and office). This alternative is estimated to add 2,500 - 3,000 new housing units, approximately 150,000 - 180,000 square feet of civic amenities, 185,000 - 215,000 of square feet of retail space, and 100,000 - 130,000 square feet of office space. A summary of land uses is shown in Table 1.

Under Alternative 3, the Sammamish Commons would be expanded north and would include space for active recreational uses such as sport fields, public gardens, or a farmers market. The expanded Commons would be approximately 40 acres. No other public parks are proposed for the Town Center under Alternative 3. Similar to the other action alternatives, this alternative would preserve and protect streams and wetlands by avoiding development in them and their buffers. It would also establish policies that promote private open spaces. The Town Center would include approximately 140 acres of private space. In total, open space would comprise slightly less than 60 percent of the land in the Town Center. As in the other action alternatives the Town Center would be connected by a system of non-motorized trails that would use open space as corridors.

Transportation. New roads would be constructed to access new housing, commercial, and civic areas through the Town Center. A new access road is proposed for the area north of SE 4th Street on the west side of 228th Avenue SE. Development on the east side of 228th Avenue SE would be accessed by SE Main Street, SE 4th Street, SE 8th Street, 232nd Avenue NE and a new road diverting southeast from SE 4th Street and traveling to SE 8th Street. The alternative would also include walking trails connecting all areas of the Town Center area. The conceptual layout of new roads and land uses is shown in the Alternative sketches approved by the City Council on July 25, 2006.

Alternative 4 – No Action

Under the No-Action Alternative, the existing comprehensive plan land use map would remain as adopted in the City's 2003 Comprehensive Plan. The existing land use designations in the Town Center include primarily low density single-family residential and some park use for the Sammamish Commons.

According to the Comprehensive Plan's land use map, single-family residential uses in the Town Center include a variety of densities allowing one (R-1), four (R-4), six (R-6), and eight (R-8) units per acre. This level of housing density would continue existing trends and could eventually accommodate an estimated 300 to 350 homes in the Town Center. Current zoning does allow institutional development under conditional use permits. There are several institutional developments in the Town Center now including the Sammamish Hills Lutheran Church, the Eastside Catholic High School, and the Sammamish Children's School. Under the No-Action Alternative, there would be no retail, office, or further civic development in the Town Center area.

SEPA Compliance

Scoping Activities

The scope of the EIS analysis is based on an assessment of probable significant adverse impacts and reasonable alternatives. A determination of significance and scoping notice was issued by the City on March 16, 2006. Interested citizens, agencies, and organizations were invited to submit comments on the scope of the EIS evaluating comments for the Town Center Sub-Area Plan. The scoping process was conducted from March 17, 2006 to April 12, 2006. A public open house and scoping meeting was held on March 28, 2006.

Information on the existing conditions of the Town Center's built and natural environment and preliminary sketches of possible Town Center layouts were presented to the public at the scoping meeting. Open house attendees submitted comments at the open house and through the City's website. Public comments were also received through online forms accessible to the public on the City of Sammamish website, as well as emails and letters sent directly to City staff.

A summary of the scoping comments received during the scoping period was issued by the City following the end of the scoping period. During the scoping period, the City received a total of 60 comment forms, emails, and letters containing approximately 200 comments. Additional comments have been received by the City since the end of the scoping period and have been considered in developing the scope of the Town Center EIS.

Scope of the EIS

The City determined the scope of the EIS based on the comments received to date and its own analysis of potential impacts and reasonable alternatives. Adoption of the Town Center Sub-Area Plan will constitute a SEPA non-project action as defined in WAC 197-11-704 and described in WAC 197-11-442. As a non-project action the analysis in the EIS will include less detailed information on environmental impacts than would be included in a project level proposal. SEPA non-project reviews are generally more qualitative in nature since details are still very conceptual. The EIS will focus on comparing the impacts on elements of the environment from each alternative relative to the No-Action alternative and to each other. Subsequent SEPA review will be conducted on a project-specific level as appropriate.

The Draft EIS will follow the format and content as described in WAC 197-400 through 197-11-442. It will contain a fact sheet, summary, project description including a description of the alternatives, evaluation of the affected environment, probable significant impacts, and mitigations measures. Elements of the proposed Sub-Area Plan that are common to all the alternatives will be discussed in the description of alternatives. These would include provisions for open space, low-impact development, stormwater facilities, and construction of a trails network. The EIS will address the following elements of the environment:

- **Earth.** The analysis of earth resources will review descriptions of existing geologic and soil characteristics as well as geological hazards and critical aquifer recharge areas identified in the Town Center area. The analysis will document potential environmental impacts relative to geologic hazards that might result from implementation of the Town

- Center Sub-area Plan. The analysis of potential impacts associated with geologic hazards includes erosion hazards. Measure to mitigate any probable impacts will also be included.
- **Water.** The water resources analysis will review existing stormwater runoff and infiltration, flooding, groundwater characteristics, and surface and ground water quality. The Draft EIS will analyze potential impacts to surface and sub-surface flow patterns (i.e. inter-basin transfer), changes in quantities of impervious surfaces (with particular attention to changes in volume and quality of stormwater runoff), water quality in streams and downstream in Lake Sammamish, and potential stormwater drainage problems (flooding and erosion). The Draft EIS will also provide measures, if needed, to mitigate impacts resulting from the proposed alternatives.
 - **Streams, Wetlands, Fish & Wildlife.** The natural resources analysis will document existing streams, wetlands, fish and wildlife habitat, and the City's critical areas ordinance protection for these resources (buffers). The analysis will also describe any existing special-status species in the Town Center area. The analysis will also describe potential impacts to streams, wetlands, buffers, wildlife and wildlife habitat, wildlife corridors and movement in and through the Town center area, fish in Town Center Creeks, and existing forested areas (tree and vegetation cover) resulting from implementation of the Sub-area Plan. Measures to mitigate the impacts will also be included.
 - **Land Use.** The land use analysis will include an evaluation of the amount, types, and pattern of land uses and the potential height, bulk and scale of future development proposed for each of the alternatives. The relationship to relevant plans and policies will also be discussed. The focus of the analysis will be on land use compatibility of potential development within the Town Center and adjacent to the Town Center. Where land use incompatibilities are predicted, mitigation measures will be proposed. Changes to housing and population will also be discussed.
 - **Transportation.** The transportation analysis will identify current peak hour traffic volumes, traffic operations, and parking in the Town Center. The analysis will evaluate potential impacts to morning and evening peak hour traffic in and around the project area, traffic operations at area intersections, parking, site access, transit service, and non-motorized transportation facilities. These elements will be evaluated for the planning horizon of 2030. The analysis will also include potential measure to mitigate impacts, where necessary.
 - **Air & Sound.** The discussions of air and sound will include descriptions of the existing air quality and sound environments in the project vicinity. The analysis will focus on potential air quality and sound impacts resulting from increased traffic and land use changes associated with each alternative. Where necessary, measure to mitigate potential impacts will be included.
 - **Public Services/Utilities.** The public services and utilities analysis will review fire protection and emergency medical services, law enforcement, public schools, parks, recreation and open space, water, sewer, energy utilities, and solid waste disposal. The analysis will include existing levels of service, estimated needs and demands for services,

and measures, if any, to mitigate shortfalls in service provision resulting from implementation of the alternatives.

- **Aesthetics/Views.** The aesthetics discussion includes a description of the current visual character within the Town Center boundaries. The analysis will discuss changes to the area's visual environment resulting from each of the four alternatives. The analysis will be based on proposed building and infrastructure massing and will include visualizations from some key perspectives.

Draft