

**LEGISLATIVE DEPARTMENT
CITY OF ABERDEEN**

Mr. Mayor: Hon. Pete Schave
The Members of: Finance
To whom was referred: Gateway Center Steering Committee Request

REPORT AND RECOMMEND AS FOLLOWS:

The City is on the final path for completed design/building documents for the Gateway Enterprise Center.

Since 2013, the City has received \$3,376,300 in funding which has gone to the purchase of the land, demolition of structures, development of a landscaped parking area and architectural construction drawings. The next steps in moving the project forward is to initiate a capital campaign to raise funds to construct the building, recruit tenants, construction and operations of the building.

The preliminary architectural estimate that we have received to construct the building to today's codes is \$13,800,000.

The Mayor discussed the Gateway Center project very briefly at a City Council workshop that was held on June 30, 2021. The Mayor and staff were directed by City Council to bring this project forward and get a recommendation from the Gateway Center Steering Committee on what they believe the City of Aberdeen should budget toward completing the Gateway Center.

The Gateway Center steering committee, which is comprised of Mayor Pete Schave, Council President Dee Anne Shaw, Councilmember Alan Richrod (who was not in attendance), Cary Bozeman, Bette Worth, Bobbi McCracken, Lynette Buffington and Norm McLoughlin met on July 9, 2021 to discuss this project.

The Committee agreed that the proposed Gateway Center is a vital piece of Aberdeen's future economic success and that they look forward to seeing it through to completion.

The Committee also recognized the City's commitment to date and as well as the enormity of City's overall capital needs when planning and budgeting for the future. The Committee agrees that the planning for these projects is needed in coordination with the Gateway Center and overall the Committee also supported the City's need to hire a consultant to work with staff and Council to develop a facilities plan that takes into account all funding possibilities for the various projects that the City has in the pipeline.

The next step in the path to completing the Gateway Center is to begin a capital campaign to raise funds to construct the building. The Mayor has been told that the City will need to contribute monetarily in order to even be considered for future state funding.

Therefore, the Gateway Center Steering Committee it is recommending that the City Council agree to contribute a minimum of \$7 million dollars of funding to support the construction of the Gateway

Center Building and that the Gateway Center be included in the City's overall Capital Facilities Plan.

Lisa Scott

Lisa Scott, Community Development Director

Chair

Reported July 14, 2021 _____

Adopted July 14, 2021 _____

ISSUED FOR _____ DATE _____

DESIGN DEVELOPMENT 03/03/2021

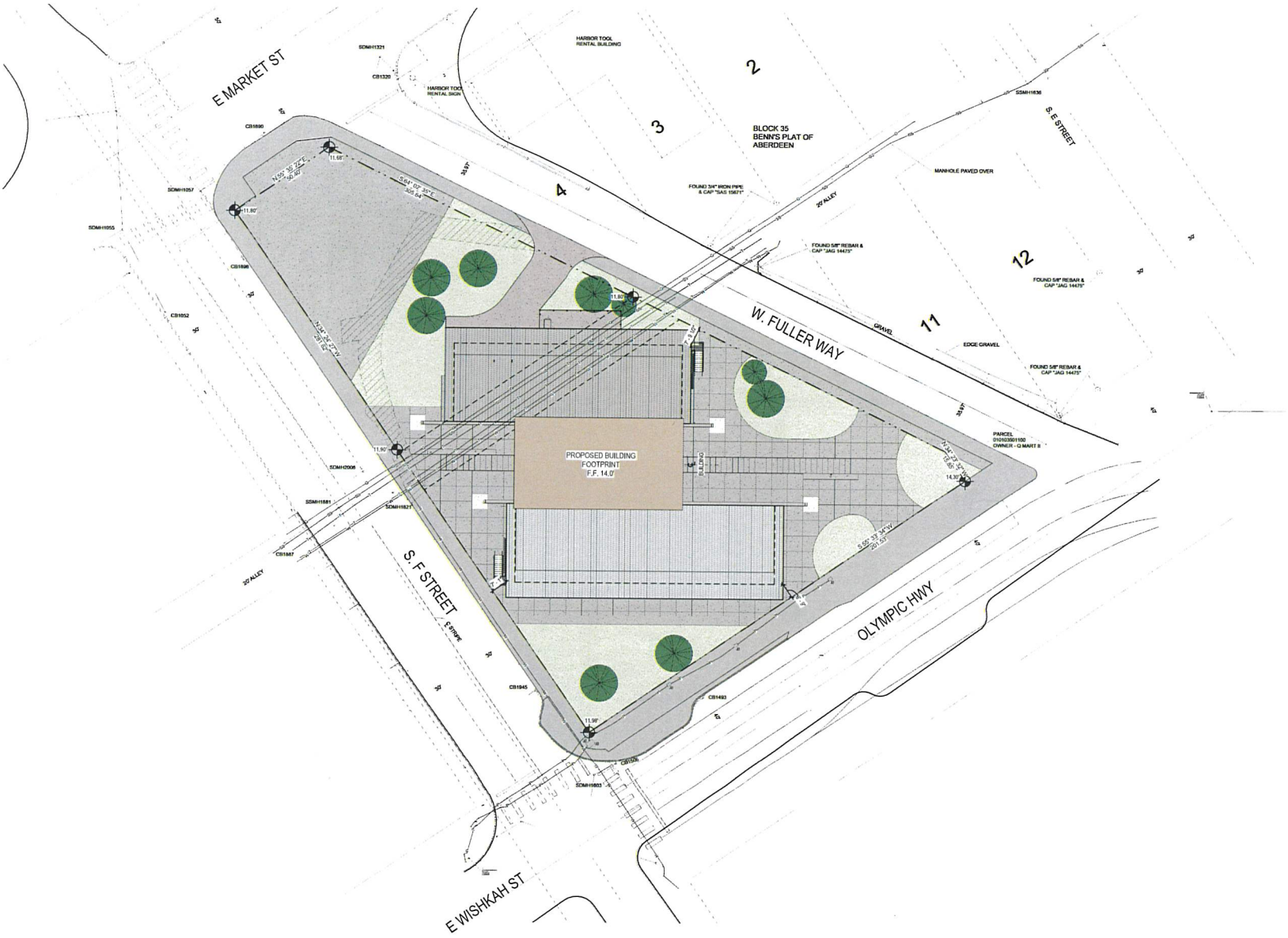
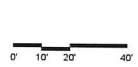
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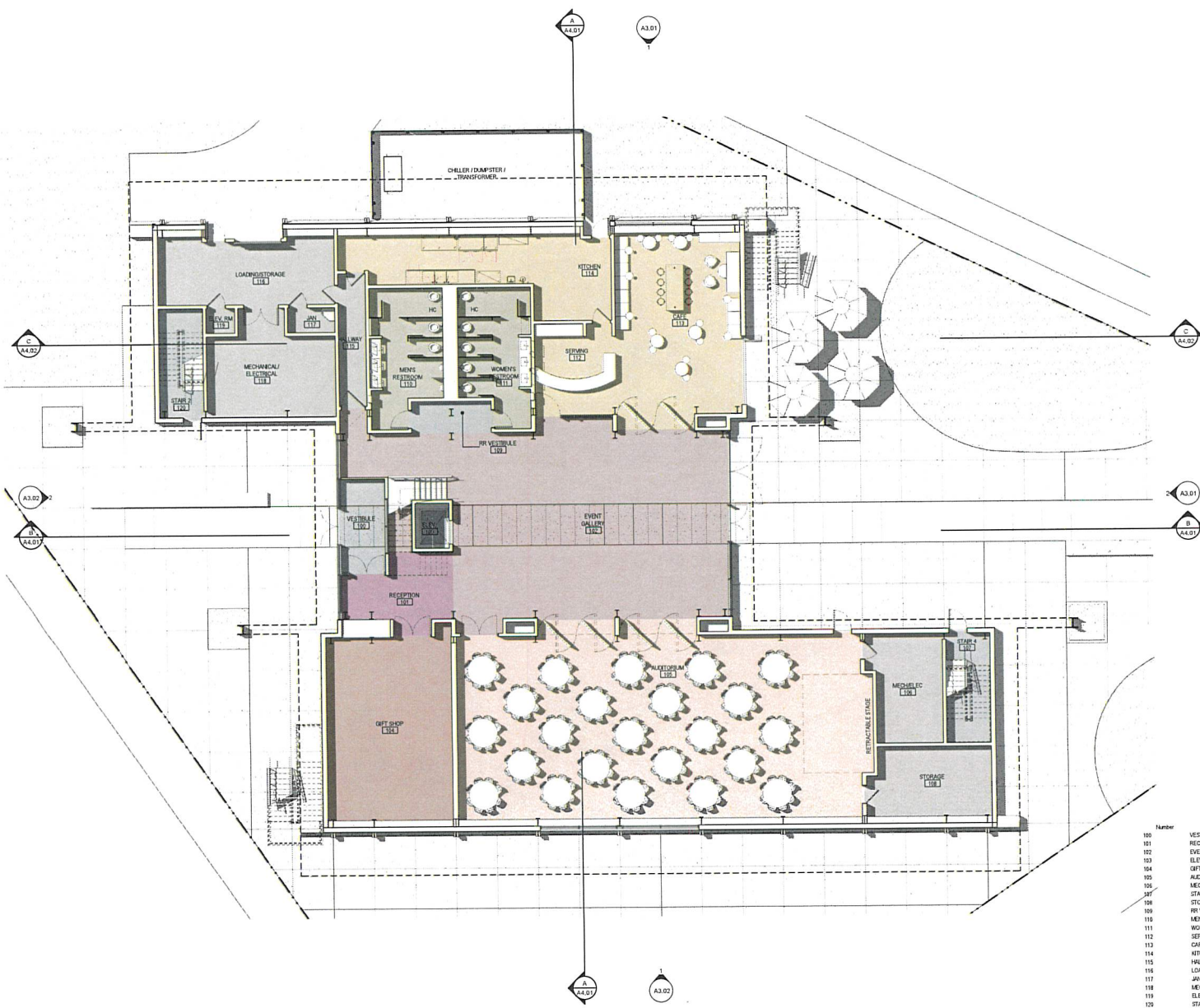
**ABERDEEN
GATEWAY CENTER**

506 E. WISHKAH ST.
ABERDEEN, WA 98520

SITE PLAN

P1.00





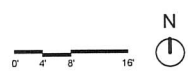
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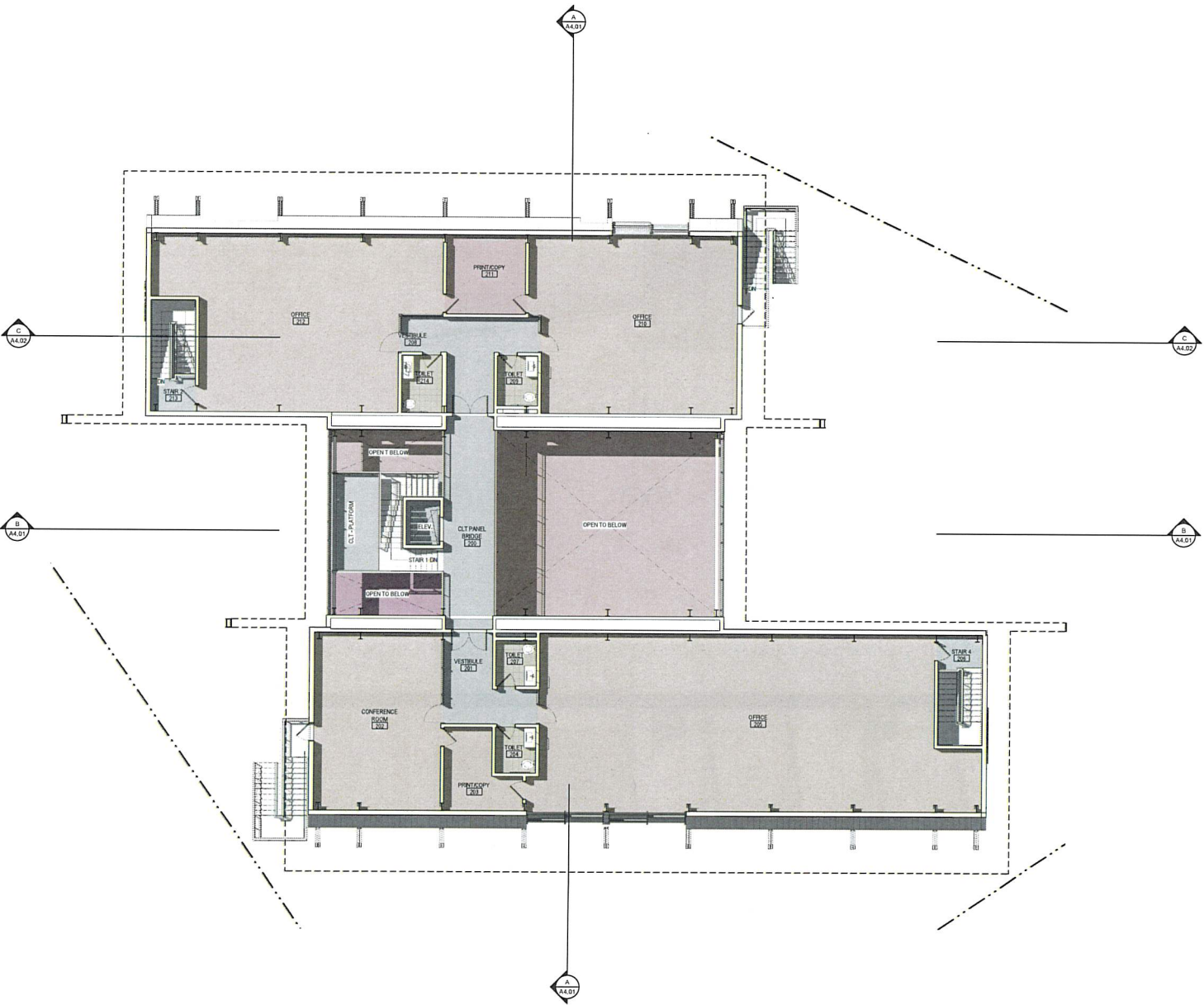
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ABERDEEN GATEWAY CENTER
 506 E. WISHKAH ST.
 ABERDEEN, WA 98520

Number	Name	Area
100	VESTIBULE	134 SF
101	RECEPTION	229 SF
102	EVENT GALLERY	1819 SF
103	ELEV	44 SF
104	RECEPTION	599 SF
105	AUDITORIUM	2298 SF
106	MECH/ELEC	229 SF
107	STAIR 1	143 SF
108	STAIR 2	250 SF
109	RE VESTIBULE	74 SF
110	MEN'S RESTROOM	372 SF
111	WOMEN'S RESTROOM	271 SF
112	SERVING	221 SF
113	CAFÉ	712 SF
114	KITCHEN	476 SF
115	HALLWAY	108 SF
116	LOADING/STORAGE	350 SF
117	JAN	35 SF
118	MECHANICAL/ELECTRICAL	350 SF
119	ELEV RM	21 SF
120	STAIR 2	143 SF



FIRST FLOOR PLAN
P1.01



COATES DESIGN
ARCHITECTURE + INTERIORS

900 WINDLOW WAY E SUITE 210
BARRINGTON ISLAND WA 98110
P. 206.790.0876

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DESIGN DEVELOPMENT 10/03/2021

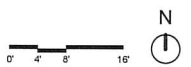
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**ABERDEEN
GATEWAY CENTER**

506 E. WISHKAH ST.
ABERDEEN, WA 98520

**SECOND FLOOR
PLAN**

P1.02

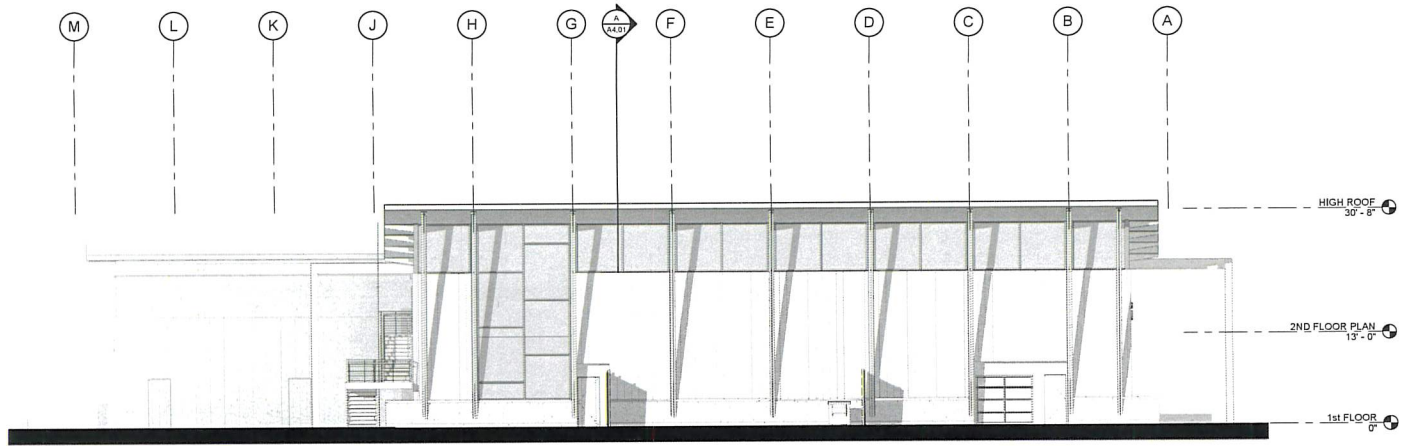


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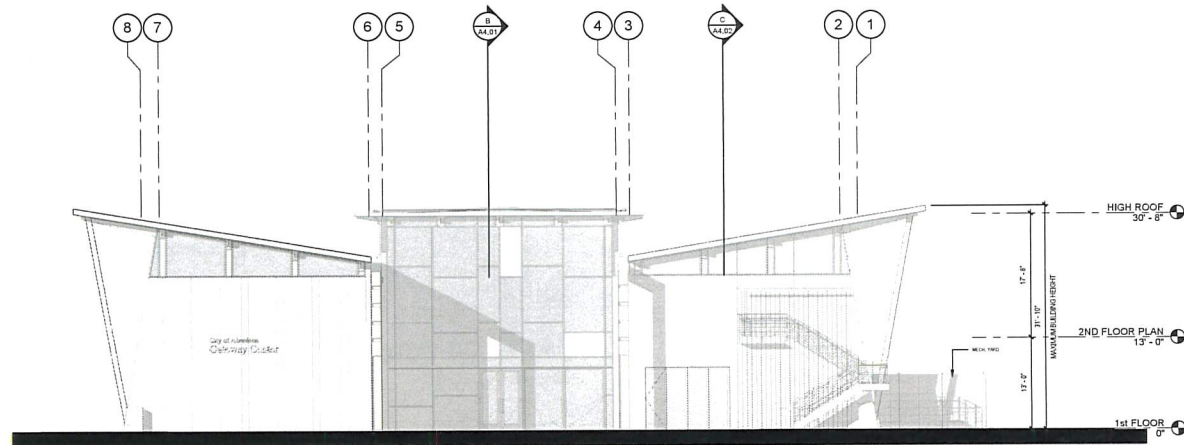
ABERDEEN GATEWAY
CENTER

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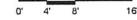
1 NORTH ELEVATION

SCALE | 1/8" = 1'-0"



2 EAST ELEVATION

SCALE | 1/8" = 1'-0"



COATES DESIGN
 ARCHITECTURE + INTERIORS
 190 WILSON WAY E SUITE 210
 BAINBRIDGE ISLAND WA 98110
 P 360.765.0876

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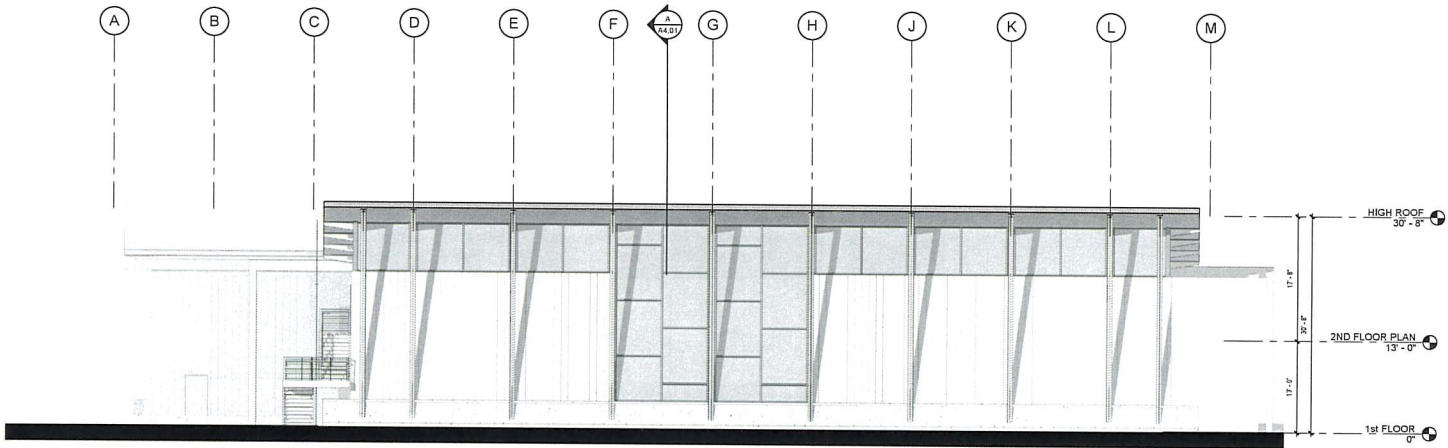
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ABERDEEN GATEWAY CENTER
 506 E. WISHKAH ST.
 ABERDEEN, WA 98520

EXTERIOR ELEVATIONS

A3.01

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ARCHITECTURE + INTERIORS

900 WINSLOW WAY E SUITE 210
ABERDEEN ISLAND WA 98110
P 206.760.0876

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DESIGN DEVELOPMENT 02/25/2021

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**ABERDEEN
GATEWAY CENTER**

506 E. WISHKAH ST.
ABERDEEN, WA 98520

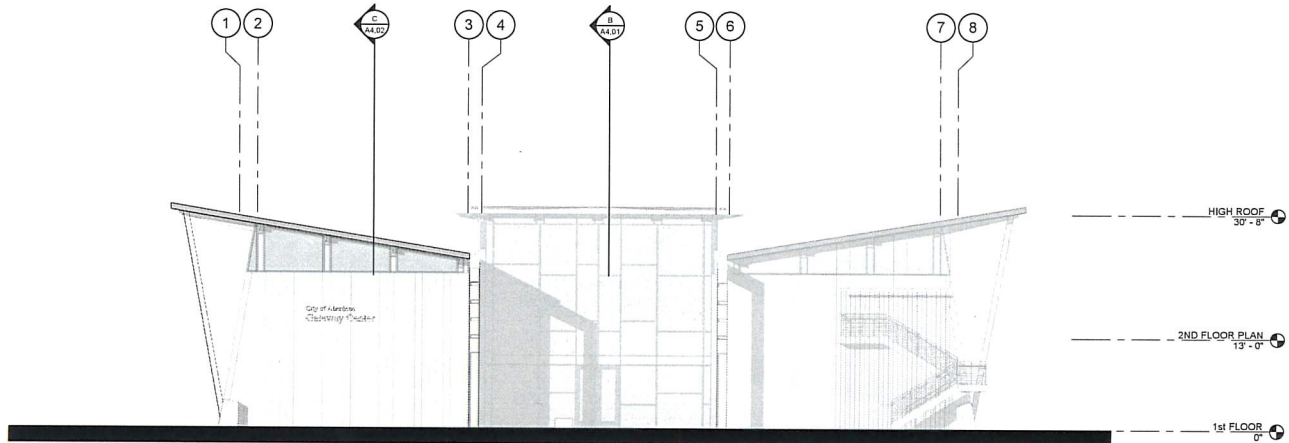
**EXTERIOR
ELEVATIONS**

A3.02

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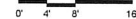
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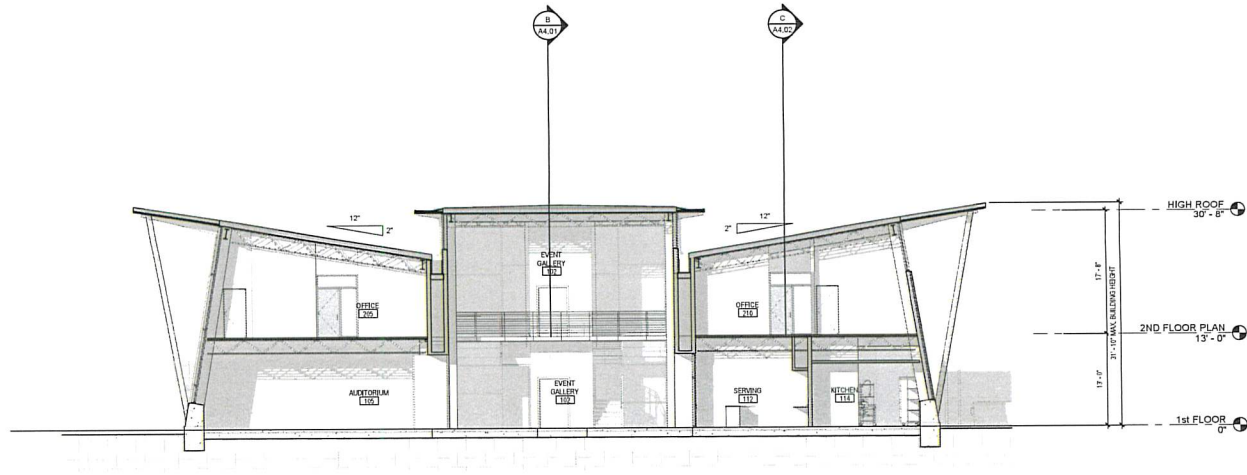
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2 WEST ELEVATION

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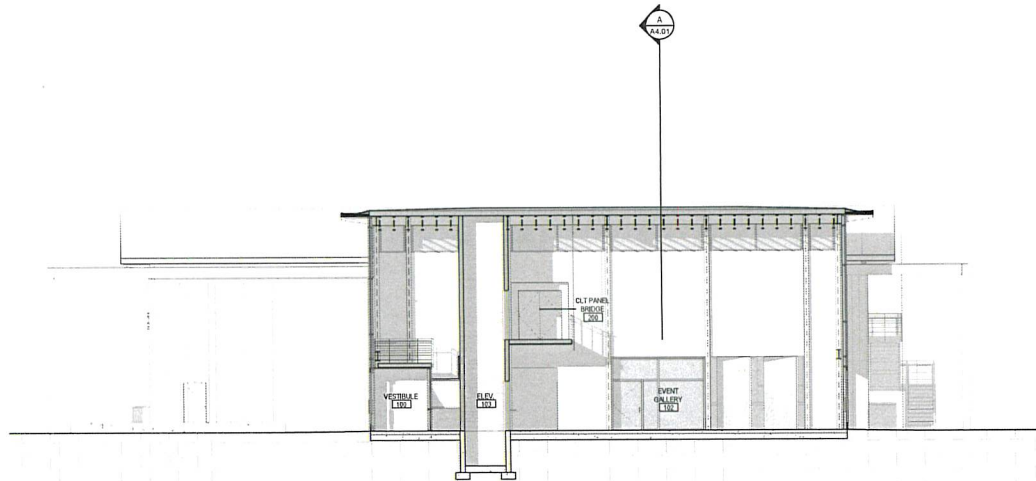
A BUILDING SECTION

SCALE | 1/8" = 1'-0"

ISSUED FOR _____ DATE _____

DESIGN DEVELOPMENT 02/20/2021

NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION



B BUILDING SECTION

SCALE | 1/8" = 1'-0"

HIGH ROOF 30'-8"

2ND FLOOR PLAN 13'-0"

1st FLOOR 0"

ABERDEEN GATEWAY CENTER

506 E. WISHKAH ST.
ABERDEEN, WA 98520

BUILDING SECTIONS

A4.01





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ABERDEEN GATEWAY CENTER



AUDITORIUM
GRAYS HARBOR COUNTY

Scale: 01/26/21



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ABERDEEN GATEWAY CENTER

0 1 5 10 20
ENTRY GALLERY
GRAYS HARBOR COUNTY

Scale: 01/26/21



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CORPORATE OFFICE: 360.525.0000

ABERDEEN GATEWAY CENTER

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

OFFICE SPACE
GRAYS HARBOR COUNTY

Scale: 01/26/21



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ABERDEEN GATEWAY CENTER

0 1 5 10 20

CAFE
GRAYS HARBOR COUNTY

Scale: 01/27/21



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ABERDEEN GATEWAY CENTER

0 1 5 10 20'

CAFE - OUTDOOR SEATING
GRAYS HARBOR COUNTY

Scale: 02/05/21



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ABERDEEN GATEWAY CENTER



LOBBY STAIR
GRAYS HARBOR COUNTY

Scale: 02/09/21



Grays Harbor Gateway Center Feasibility Study

February 2016

PREPARED BY:

ECONorthwest
ECONOMICS • FINANCE • PLANNING

transpogroup 
WHAT TRANSPORTATION CAN BE.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

For over 40 years ECONorthwest has helped its clients make sound decisions based on rigorous economic, planning, and financial analysis. For more information about ECONorthwest, please visit econw.com.

ECONorthwest prepared this report for Greater Grays Harbor Inc., the City of Aberdeen, and the Aberdeen Revitalization Movement (ARM). It received substantial assistance from Coates Design Architects, Transpo Group, Bob Ford, and Scott Reynvaan of the Quinalt Indian Nation. This project was supported in part by a Washington State Community Economic Revitalization Board Planning Grant.

For more information about this report:

Morgan Shook
shook@econw.com

The Seattle Tower
1218 Third Avenue
Suite 1709
Seattle, WA 98101
206-388-0081

Prepared for:

Greater Grays Harbor, Inc.
The City of Aberdeen
Aberdeen Revitalization Movement (ARM)



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INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

GROWING TOURISM AND THE REGIONAL ECONOMY

Tourism is increasing a vital part of the local and regional economy in Grays Harbor. In 2014, visitors spent \$334.4 million in Grays Harbor County. Visitor spending directly supported 5,930 Grays Harbor County jobs, or about 27 percent of all non-farm industry employment in the County. These jobs paid \$102.3 million in earnings to people who work in the County. Out of the Western Washington Coastal Region, (e.g., Grays Harbor, Jefferson, Pacific, Mason, and Clallam Counties) Grays Harbor had the most visits in 2014. This translates to more tourism dollars spent in Grays Harbor County than in any other county in the coastal region. Grays Harbor Ranked 9th out of 39 counties in the State in terms of the most tourist dollars spent in 2014. The county ranked 6th out of 39 counties in the State for most jobs directly supported by tourism.

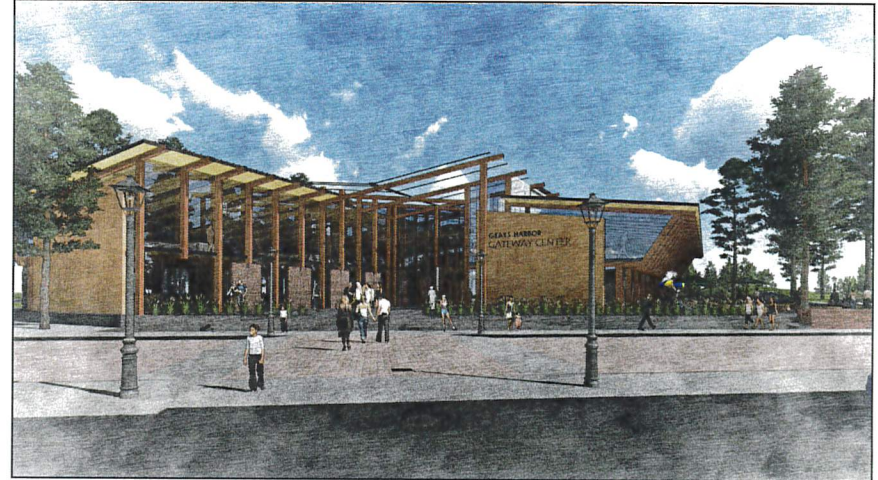
While tourism plays a larger role in the local economy, the forest products industry is still a central contributor to the economy in the county and broader region. Forest products have not been the economic mainstay they once were, but recent innovations in forest products might help rural timber communities flourish in the future. Cross-laminated timber (CLT) is an engineered wood building system designed to complement light- and heavy-timber framing options. Because of its high strength and dimensional stability, it can be used as an alternative to concrete, masonry and steel in many building types. CLT and potentially other forest products can help sustain the commercial value of working forests, strengthen the local economy, and support sustainable construction and carbon sequestration.

The Grays Harbor Gateway Center hopes to be a pivotal piece in growing the local, regional, and state economy.

GRAYS HARBOR GATEWAY CENTER

Regional economic development interests in Grays Harbor County have embarked on a concerted effort to grow Grays Harbor, revitalize downtown Aberdeen, and connect tourists to the broader Olympic Peninsula and Washington Coast. Over the past several years, community leaders have developed and championed a vision for an “enterprise and visitor center.” Preliminary concepts envision a “best-in-class” facility that will provide

Figure 1: Concept for Gateway Center



general information on cultural and tourist activities for the communities in the Grays Harbor region, as well as the millions of visitors that come to the region every year. Furthermore, the facility will be home to a diverse array of economic development agencies to showcase products and business opportunities in the county and broader region.

The City of Aberdeen and Greater Grays Harbor, Inc. (GGHI) asked ECONorthwest to lead a team to develop a concept for a viable visitor center enterprise. This project involved the following considerations:

- Visitor center concept: What programmatic elements should the facility include to achieve its mission and fiscal sustainability?
- Visitor center design: How do these programmatic elements fit together in a physical building? What is the building design? And, how does the building interact with the site and transportation system?
- Operating forecast: What do we know about the likely operations and financial performance of the facility over time?
- Capital funding assessment: How might public and private partners fund the development of the facility?
- Ownership and governance: What considerations should impact decisions about facility ownership and management? What options exist? And, what are their pros and cons?
- Facility impacts: How many visitors are likely to visit the center? How will these visitors impact the local economy and government revenues?

Joining ECONorthwest on the project team were Coates Design Architects and Transpo Group (collectively referred to as the Consultant Team), which directed the building design and transportation impact elements, respectively.

SUMMARY OF CONCEPT AND FEASIBILITY FINDINGS

This work resulted in the development of a building and space program. The concept envisions a building of approximately 20,000 square feet and includes office space, visitor information facilities, an exhibit space, a gift and coffee shop, and an event space.

In summary, the program outlined above is a novel approach to operating a visitor center. The inclusion of economic development and tourism promotion uses anchor the facility and enhance the complementary gift shop, food/beverage area, exhibit, and information services.

The variety of uses for the Center also provide economies of scale for facility administration and operation. We believe this concept could be a financially sustainable way to operate the Center if executed under the right ownership and governance model. This report presents the details of our analysis.

Successful development and operation of the facility will bring a range of economic, job, and tax impacts to the region. Highlights include:

- Over 20,000 square feet of visitor and tourism enterprises. A state-of-the-art facility designed to at least LEED Silver certifications.
 - A showcase for local stories and products.
 - A gathering place for local and regional partners—both public and private.
 - Net positive operating financials—including surpluses to cover reserve and capital replacement funds.
- Facility that can attract over 100,000 visitors on tourism aspects alone.
 - Facility whose construction and operation will grow the economy by hundreds of jobs.

VISITOR CENTER CONCEPT

ECONorthwest led the design of the Gateway Center programmatic concept. The following criteria shaped the development of this concept:

- What elements must the Center include to attract visitors?
- What complementary uses would enhance the visitor information elements of the facility (e.g., attract more visitors, or entice visitors to venture into downtown Aberdeen or the greater Grays Harbor region)?
- What complementary uses would generate revenues to support facility operations?

The Consultant Team relied on several sources of information to develop the final concept:

- Research on comparable facilities
- Discussions with GGHI, the current visitor center operator and primary tenant of the proposed facility
- Discussions with the client team and other key stakeholders
- Financial feasibility testing of draft concepts

The analysis resulted in the production of facility concept and building program, which ECONorthwest finds would be feasible to execute.

CONCEPT SUMMARY

The concept for the facility is for a 20,000 square foot (SF) building that includes four programmatic components:

- GGHI office space
- Other tenant office space
- Shared tenant space
- Visitor/tourism “mission specific” space and common areas

Table 1 shows the facility space needs by component. ECONorthwest describes each component in detail on the following pages. This space program serves as a guide for future physical planning and financial assessments.

Table 1: Gateway Center Program Concept

Program	Quantity	Net Square Feet per Unit	Net Square Feet	Rentable Square Feet	Gross Square Feet
Greater Grays Harbor					
Offices	3	250	750	930	1,070
Workstations	2	150	300	370	430
Additional Office Tenants					
Offices	5	250	1,250	1,550	1,780
Workstations	2	150	300	370	430
Shared Tenant Space					
Reception	1	400	400	500	580
Mailing, printing, production	1	200	200	250	290
Storage, supply	1	300	300	370	430
Break room, kitchen	1	350	350	430	490
Conferences, meeting area	1	450	450	560	640
Mission Specific and Common Areas					
Entry	1	500	500	620	710
Tourist desk	1	500	500	620	710
Exhibit space	1	4,000	4,000	4,960	5,700
Gift shop	1	350	350	430	490
Coffee shop	1	400	400	500	580
Public restroom	1	1,000	1,000	1,240	1,430
Event space	1	3,000	3,000	3,720	4,280
Total			14,050	17,420	20,040

Source: ECONorthwest, 2015.

OFFICE AREAS

Collectively, the GGHI office space, other tenant office space, and shared tenant space comprise the office areas within the Center.

GGHI Office Space

This component includes the office space for GGHI operations. Per Dru Garson's direction, GGHI will require three offices and two workstations for its staff. These workstations could be located in an open office environment or in a shared office.

Other Tenant Office Space

This component includes office space for additional tenants that would benefit from colocation with GGHI. These tenants might include: the Grays Harbor Council of Governments (three staff members), the Aberdeen Small Business Development Center (one staff person), and Grays Harbor Tourism (four staff members, not all of whom would necessarily relocate). ECONorthwest has estimated space needs for these tenants.¹ Further work could entail examining additional space for federal agencies in the tourism/park/natural resource areas; and, nonprofit organization advocating economic issues important to residents of Grays Harbor.

Shared Tenant Space

The shared tenant space includes common areas that would be available to all office tenants and their guests. These shared spaces include: a reception area; a mailing, printing, and production station; a storage room, a break room

with a full kitchen, and a conference room that seats fifteen. ECONorthwest estimated space needs for these shared elements based on standard industry guidelines for space planning.

MISSION-SPECIFIC AND COMMON AREAS

The mission-specific and common area component includes the visitor center and community meeting space. These space allocations are based on a vision for a relatively open floor plan that maximizes space efficiency and allows for the Center to adapt the space to accommodate a variety of uses over time. For example, the central common area could double as informal seating for the coffee shop, or the information and exhibit space could be relocated to accommodate larger events.

Entry Area

The entry area includes the foyer and common space. This should be passive space for visitors, used in conjunction with other spaces in the Center. Stakeholders at the design charrette envisioned a "grand" and "warm" feeling. Ideas have also included a fireplace centerpiece.

Visitor Information

The visitor information desk is the place where visitors can arrive to speak to someone. It could be one large desk or several small kiosks. The core information/advertising elements targeting visitors and tourists would occur here. The idea is for the kiosk to be staffed at peak times, but also include self-service platforms that could be accessed 24/7.



Rendering of potential public plaza

Exhibit Space

The exhibit space is open for community and cultural organizations (i.e. the Quinault Indian Nation, historical association, etc.) to host or sponsor exhibits. This space should be flexible enough to allow exhibits to rotate. It should serve as a draw for community members and out-of-town visitors alike.

The exhibit space should showcase that which is unique to Aberdeen and the greater Grays Harbor region. A visitor can get information online or stop for a restroom just about anywhere. What they cannot get online is a slice of Aberdeen and the region's unique history. Providing such unique exhibits will entice visitors to stop, get out of their cars, and visit the City and region. Five potential focus points include:

- Maritime heritage. Aberdeen's history as a frontier port once known as "The Port of Missing Men" and coastal history that has led to an initiative to designate the Washington Coastal area as a national maritime heritage area.²

¹These tenants are included as likely mix of tenants that could locate in the facility and provide complements to GGHI and the visitor center. At the time of the study, these tenants had not committed to the Gateway Center.

²"Washington State National Maritime Area Feasibility Study for Designation as a National Heritage Area," <http://www.dahp.wa.gov/sites/default/files/NationalMaritimeHeritageAreaStudy.pdf>

- **Music history.** Aberdeen has a central role in music history as the birthplace of Kurt Cobain. This feature already draws visitors from as far away as Europe. Showcasing this unique history with an eye-catching site, such as a Kurt Cobain statue, would be an effective way to get people to stop and exit their cars.
- **Aberdeen’s “gritty” past.** It is rumored that Aberdeen was once so wild that the military prohibited those on leave from visiting the City. Stories of a “gritty” past (think the Seattle Underground Tour) are effective draws for visitors.
- **Forest Products.** Natural resources, logging, and the forest product industries have shaped the region. There is a rich heritage of the industry that spans across economic and social issues. Further, innovations in new forest products, such as CLT, might also be featured in the facility.
- **Washington Beaches.** Iconic natural and tourist areas on the Washington coast could be highlighted. Proximate places like Ocean Shores and Westport could showcase their rich history and the enjoyment they bring visitors.

Gift Shop

The gift shop is a small area for local businesses and artisans to sell a selection of goods and for the Center to sell branded items. The purpose of the gift shop is twofold: (1) to generate revenues for the Center, and (2) to showcase local businesses and entice visitors to venture into the downtown area.

Coffee Shop

This concept includes space for service, circulation, and seating. It could be as small as a shop, or as large as a full-service café. A larger coffee shop/café might generate higher revenues for the facility while a smaller shop might be able to draw visitors into the City of Aberdeen to patronize local businesses. Either of these concepts could fit comfortably on the site.

Public Restrooms

High quality restrooms are a critical component of successful visitor centers. They should include ample space for women, men, handicapped visitors, and families. These restrooms should be very clean and well-maintained, or visitors will not return.

Event and Auditorium Space

The event space is a venue for GGHI, the City, and other community groups to host events. The space should be flat and open, allowing for a variety of uses including meetings, audio/visual events, and community gatherings. The specific design of the event space warrants further discussion among key stakeholders to identify priorities and further investigate the market at the time of facility design. Regardless, facility design can accommodate a range of formats.

At one end of the spectrum, the Center could include a fully equipped event center with a commercial kitchen, audio-visual equipment, and a removable stage and seating. The benefit of this type of facility is that it could attract a greater diversity of events, generate demand for more hotel room nights in the City, and

increase business at local food and beverage establishments. The drawback of this type of facility is that the operating costs are often greater than the revenues. Event centers can face challenging operating environments. But, public operators see them as a good investment because they generate positive economic impacts among local businesses. At the other end of the spectrum, the Center could include a scaled-back event space that would include neither a kitchen nor expensive furniture, fixtures, and equipment. It would certainly generate less revenues and economic impacts, but the operator could likely operate it as a revenue neutral facility. And, it would still provide a venue for GGHI to host its events.

The exact design of the event space requires, first and foremost, agreement among stakeholders on the ultimate goal of this component: to drive economic benefits in the immediate area, or to support net operating income at the Center. Once there is agreement on this question, the Center can appropriately size the facility and complete a market analysis. There are several nearby facilities, such as the Rotary Log Cabin or the Ocean Shores Convention Center, so ECONorthwest recommends a complete market analysis prior to design and development. For the purposes of this report, the model assumes that the Center operator designs an event space that is in the middle of these two bookends and hosts only those events that would be net revenue neutral.

VISITOR CENTER SITING AND DESIGN

This section provides an overview of the building siting, transportation impacts, and design. A full discussion of transportation impacts is available in Appendix A: Transportation Impacts.

SITE LOCATION AND ACCESS

The proposed site is adjacent to regional highways US 12 and US 101 that connect residents and tourists to the Olympic Peninsula and Washington Coast (Figure 2). This location is strategically situated in downtown Aberdeen and next to local investments in transit, such as the Aberdeen Transit Center, and open space, including Zelasko Park. These investments present an opportunity to make the Gateway Center a multimodal hub for visitors in the City's effort to revitalize its downtown.

Those interested in visiting the center will likely take different routes for inbound and outbound trips due to a one-way couplet through downtown Aberdeen. Eastbound and westbound directions on US 12 are split between E Wishkah Street and E Heron Street, creating unique access considerations for businesses in downtown including the Gateway Center.

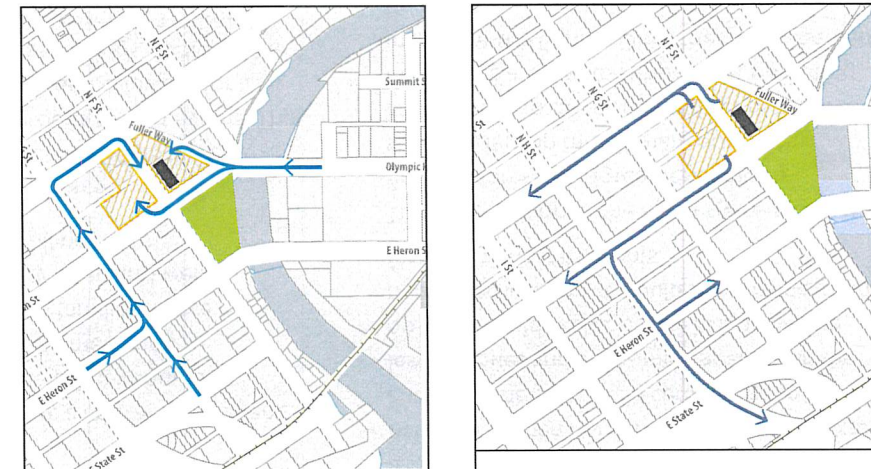
Figure 3 shows the inbound travel patterns for vehicles entering the site. The majority of inbound trips heading westbound, including those from the Puget Sound region, would likely use E Wishkah Street to turn right into the parking area after seeing the Center from the roadway. Employees or visitors that have advanced knowledge of the center might also use Fuller Way to access the site. Eastbound trips and those traveling on US 101 would likely use E G Street and E Market Street to access parking areas. Travelers on US 12 will need advanced directional signage to indicate the location of the Center and access to parking areas.

Figure 4 shows the outbound travel patterns for vehicles leaving the site. Outbound trips would likely use driveways on E Wishkah Street to return to their original route, or use E Market Street to head toward destinations within Aberdeen or back to state highways. After visiting the Center, travelers will then need signs within parking areas directing them back to their original route.

Figure 2: Proposed Gateway Center Site



Figure 3 and 4: Inbound Routes for Vehicles Entering the Site (Left); Leaving the Site (Right)



BUILDING DESIGN

Coates Design Architects developed the exterior building design and interior layout concept for the Gateway Center. They based their designs on input from stakeholders at the Design Charrette (see Appendix B: Design Charrette Findings) and ECONorthwest.

To support financial viability of the concept, the design team stressed the following concept design elements:

- Use space efficiently, to limit building operating costs.
- Co-locate components that require staff, to minimize staffing costs.
- Include programming or advertising elements within the visitor information functions that would lend themselves to financial support by stakeholder organizations (e.g., Grays Harbor County, Westport, Ocean Shores, etc.).
- Design with expansion in mind, to facilitate the execution of the program but with the ability to add on complementary elements.

Figure 5 shows day-time renderings of the Center. The southeast orientation of the facility provides a “grand gesture” to visitors travelling west to the Coast. The design of the facility is open and invites occupants into the site.

Figure 5: Gateway Center Exterior Building Design

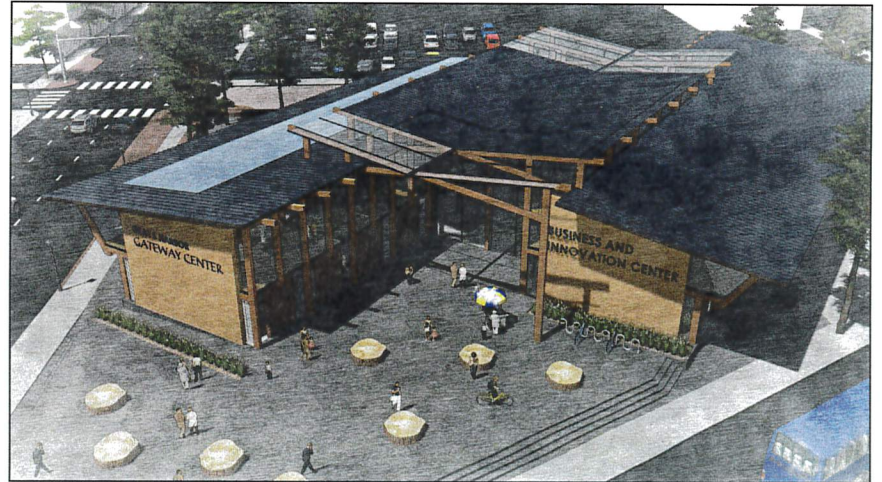
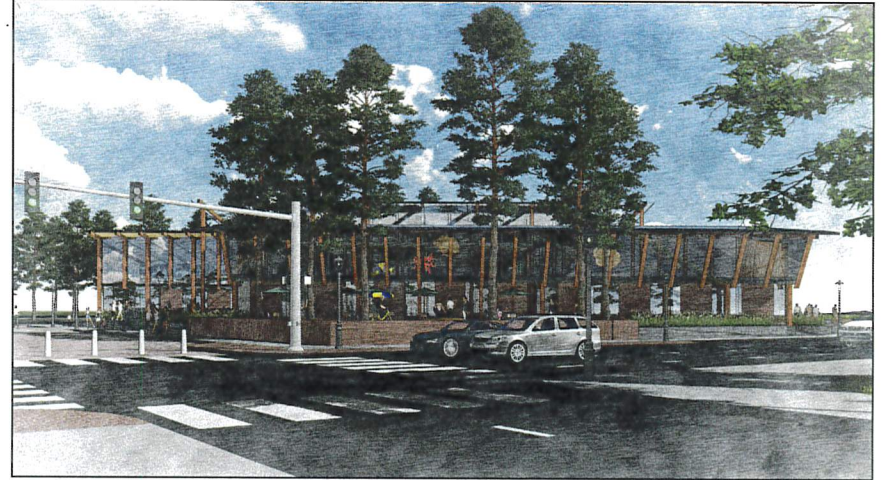
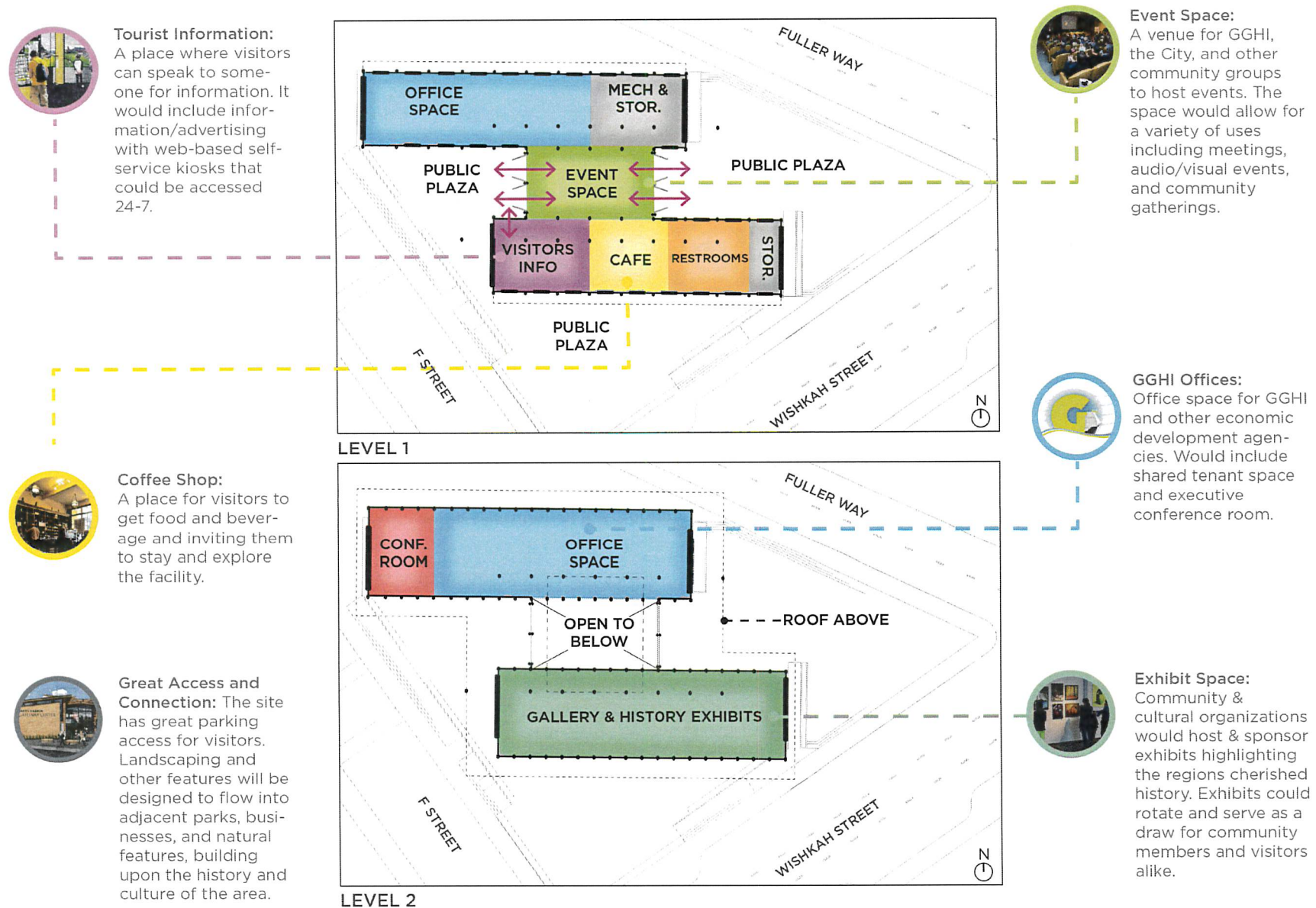


Figure 6. Gateway Center Interior Building Layout

Figure 6 shows the potential placement of the program elements in the facility. The office areas will be located on the first and second floor of the facility. The mission-specific visitor center elements will be on the lower floor.



OPERATING ASSESSMENT

An operating forecast shows revenues and expenses associated with operations only. It does not include investment items (e.g. capital costs) or finance items (e.g. debt service payments), both of which factor into the feasibility of a project. This forecast describes facility operations, presents visitor and revenue forecasts, breaks down costs by segment, and concludes with a net income statement. It finds that the concept for the facility is financially feasible and would generate a modest net operating income for the owner that could be the basis for an operating and capital reserve fund.

VISITORS AND OPERATING ASSUMPTIONS

This section provides information on key assumptions related to the operations and financial performance of the Grays Harbor Gateway Center.

Visitor Demand

Visitation to the facility will follow travel patterns for the Washington Coast and Olympic Peninsula. It will likely be seasonal, with a summer peak. Tracking the number of visitors is important because it will enable the Center to determine its impact on visits to the region. Furthermore, it will enable the operator to better adjust its operating hours to fit times of peak and low demand.

ECONorthwest used two-step methodology to estimate the annual visitor count, based on data collected from five visitor centers in comparable areas of the Pacific Northwest (Table 2). First, it took a straight average of annual visitor counts for these centers. Second, it calculated the ratio between each center's number of annual visitors

and its average daily traffic count (ADT). Then, it applied this ratio to the ADT near GGHI to estimate visitors to Gateway Center.

Table 2: Visitor Counts at Other Centers

Visitor Centers	Annual Visitors
Astoria, OR	15,169
Port Angeles, WA	84,179
Coos Bay, OR	26,529
Port Townsend, WA	14,085
Forks, WA	33,512
Average	34,695

Source: ECONorthwest, 2015.

The precise number of visitors will hinge on a number of factors: does the Center offer a unique exhibit or feature that would attract visitors? Is the exhibit space exciting and rotated regularly? Are the restrooms clean? Is the Center marketed well? Is it easy to access? Based on the performance of other visitor centers located in proximity to large tourist draws, this analysis anticipates that the range of visitors will fall between 69,000 and 132,000 per year. Given the proximity to the tourist draws, it is likely that the center could draw visitors at the high end of the estimate. For the gift shop revenue and operating cost calculations, the analysis uses an average of 100,500 visitors per year.

Hours of Operation

Maintaining convenient operating hours is always a challenge with this kind of facility. To maintain consistency, which is an important factor in building user loyalty, the visitor information elements should be open during set business hours. To serve visitors and tourists, the visitor information elements should stay open early and

late during the peak season. The Center should also have a subset of self-service information available 24/7.

REVENUE SEGMENTS

This model assumes that the Gateway Center will generate revenue from the following sources:

- Office tenants: revenue estimates assume that office tenants will pay \$9 per square foot per year (triple net rents). These rents reflect that this is new facility with state-of-the-art offerings (current office rents range between \$5 to \$12 per square foot per year).
- The gift shop: the facility will include a gift shop to be operated by the Center directly. Our model estimates gift shop sales based on the sales per visitor at other visitor centers. Based on these estimates, we expect that the visitor center will receive about \$1.35 per visitor, leading to total estimated sales of \$136,000 per year.
- Coffee shop: the Center will lease the coffee shop at a rate of \$9.50 per square foot per year (triple net rent), which is comparable to retail lease rates for commercial stores in the City of Aberdeen.
- The event space: ECONorthwest estimated event center revenues using per square foot rental revenues from the Ocean Shores Convention Center. It assumes that the Center would generate 50% of the revenues that Ocean Shores Convention Center generates on a per square foot basis, as the Gateway Center will only allow revenue neutral events. In addition to generating revenues, the event space will allow GGHI or

Table 3: Revenues by Source

Revenue Source	Rentable SF	Revenue/SF		Revenue/Unit	
		Annual	Monthly	Annual	Monthly
Office Tenants					
Greater Grays Harbor	1,300	\$9.00	\$0.75	\$11,700	\$975
Additional Office Tenants	1,920	\$9.00	\$0.75	\$17,280	\$1,440
Shared Tenant Space	2,110	\$9.00	\$0.75	\$18,990	\$1,583
Mission-Specific and Common Areas					
Gift shop	430	\$317.00	\$26.42	\$136,310	\$11,359
Coffee shop	500	\$9.50	\$0.79	\$4,750	\$396
Event space	3,720	N/A	N/A	\$10,900	\$908
Total	17,420	\$10.85	\$0.90	\$199,930	\$16,661

Source: ECONorthwest, 2015.

Table 4: Annual Expense by Category

Expense	Revenue / SF		
	Annual	Monthly	Applicable Uses
COGS	\$103,459	\$8,622	Gift shop sales
Utilities	\$17,520	\$1,460	Non-leased SF
Janitorial/Maintenance/Grounds	\$28,200	\$2,350	Entire building, excluding event space
Insurance	\$15,000	\$1,250	Entire building
Event expenses	\$10,900	\$908	Event space
Total	\$175,079	\$14,590	

Source: ECONorthwest, 2015.

other organizations to hold community events that otherwise could not occur without a free or low cost space.

GGHI receives revenues for visitor information functions from local governments. But, as it already spends these revenues on visitor information functions that it will continue to operate in the new facility (i.e., costs that are included in the GGHI budget and not in this project budget), those revenues are already

“spent” and thus not included in this model. There may be some opportunities to increase these types of marketing and sponsorship revenues, both from public and private sources, into the future.

Table 3 shows the revenue by programmatic element (Table 3). In total, the facility will generate \$199,930 in revenues per year, or \$16,661 per month.

OPERATING EXPENSES

This section summarizes the operating expense assumptions used in the financial forecast. Table 4 lists the operating expense categories and their annual estimated expenses. Each category is discussed in more detail below.

The operating expense model does not include costs that GGHI already assumes for the operation of the visitor center, namely: labor, marketing, materials, and general administration. Nor does it include three cost items that may be incurred depending on how the facility is constructed and operated: property taxes, the cost to lease the land, and debt service to support facility construction. These costs would be incurred if a private entity owned and operated the facility, which is unlikely (see Ownership and Governance for more detail).

The calculations for the four operating expenses are as follows:

- **Utilities:** ECONorthwest calculated GGHI's utilities on a per square foot basis at its current location and applied this cost to the number of square feet at the new location that are not leased to tenants. It assumes that office tenants will be responsible for their own utility costs. The calculation also excludes the event space, as utility costs for events are rolled into an event expense line item.
- **Janitorial/Maintenance/Grounds:** the model segments this expense item into two sections: the visitor center and office space. The visitor center elements will require more janitorial and maintenance services, due to the higher volume of traffic and high cleanliness standard among visitors.

ECONorthwest calculated the per square foot janitorial and maintenance cost of other visitor centers and applied that to the number of square feet that comprise the mission specific components of the facility (excluding the event space), to calculate the total cost of janitorial/maintenance/ grounds for that item. ECONorthwest used an industry standard of \$0.75 per square foot per year for office buildings and applied that to the number of square feet that comprise the office space elements to calculate the cost for that segment.

- **Insurance/Service:** ECONorthwest collected data on the insurance costs of several other visitor centers and then consulted a commercial insurance agent to determine how to appropriately scale those costs for this facility. The analysis also accounted for addition professional service assistance that will be needed.
- **Event expenses:** ECONorthwest assumes that the Center will only accept events for which revenues will cover costs. Since most conference center events cost more than they generate in revenue and most meeting spaces operate on the margin, this model assumes that event expenses equal event revenues.

FINANCIAL FORECAST

Net Operating Income

Table 5 shows the financial performance of the Gateway Center for its first full year of operations. ECONorthwest anticipates that the Center will generate a net-positive operating income. This is the purely financial portion of the return on investment; it does not take into consideration the important economic, fiscal, and community development benefits generated by the facility. The financial performance of the facility could be improved through more aggressive rent structures of office tenants.

Over the first few years of operation, the financial picture is unlikely to change significantly. Commercial rents will not increase over the course of the lease period, while gift shop and coffee shop revenues are likely to increase with inflation. Event space revenues will increase if the Center operator is able to successfully market the facility and capture a share of demand.

Reserve/Capital Fund

The facility will generate operating surplus

Source: ECONorthwest, 2015.

of \$25,000 a year. Those surpluses can be dedicated to cash reserves and for a capital replacement fund. Generally, a capital replacement study will need to be undertaken to determine a replacement schedule and cost obligation estimate; however, a rough standard of \$1 per square foot per year (seen in other similar facilities) would be needed to target approximately \$20,000 per year for the fund. This figure is within the operating surpluses generated by the tenants and other income-producing units.

Table 5: Net Operating Income

Item	2017
Revenues	
Greater Grays Harbor	\$11,700
Additional Office Tenants	17,280
Shared Tenant Space	18,990
Gift Shop	136,310
Coffee Shop	4,750
Event Space	10,900
Total Revenues	\$199,930
Less Cost of Goods Sold	
	-\$103,459
Gross Income	
	\$96,471
Operating Expenses	
Utilities	-\$17,520
Janitorial/Maintenance/Grounds	-28,200
Insurance	-15,000
Event expenses	-10,900
Total Operating Expenses	\$71,620
Net Operating Income (NOI)	
	\$24,851

CAPITAL NEEDS AND FUNDING ASSESSMENT

This chapter provides construction cost estimates and a capital funding assessment for the Gateway Center.

CONSTRUCTION AND DESIGN ESTIMATES

ECONorthwest and Coates Design Architects developed capital cost estimates based on an average construction cost per square foot of \$325, which is in line with current market conditions for event and conference spaces. Industry planning estimates equate architecture and engineering (A&E) fees to approximate 25 percent of construction costs. Table 6 shows the construction and A&E costs.

Table 6: Gateway Center Construction and A&E Costs

Construction Costs	6,510,000
A&E Costs	1,627,500
Total Project Costs	8,137,500

Source: ECONorthwest, 2015.

FUNDING ASSESSMENT

Income from operations alone likely will not provide enough money to fund the Center’s construction and operation. This means that the Gateway Center will have to look to other sources for funding. Most of the comparable facilities reviewed relied heavily on both public grants and private donations to fund construction. These sources avoid the risks of debt in a low-margin facility (whose purpose is more public in orientation) and are a good fit for a facility that aims to provide economic benefits to the region.

Beyond operating income there are two main categories of funding that the operator should consider: public sources and private sources. Public funds may come from federal, state, or local governments, primarily in this case in the form of grants to support community development. Each level of government may have grant programs that can donate or match contributions to the Center to fund its construction or programs. Private sources of money may come from donations on behalf of a charity or foundation, or from advertising (for example, the sale of naming rights).

This chapter provides an overview of funding sources that may be available to the Center. It draws from a memorandum Norman McLoughlin provided to Dru Garson on October 24, 2015. Ultimately, the options available to the Center will depend on what entity owns and manages it, competing priorities for public dollars, and how much risk the public sector is willing to take in providing or pursuing alternative financing among other factors. So, an in-depth financial strategy is inappropriate at this stage. We recommend completing a robust finance strategy once the Visitor Center ownership and management model is defined.

FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

- U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) grants. The USDA provides priority funding for regional economic development projects under four programs. Funding for the Gateway Center may be available under one program for Rural Business Development Grants. Eligible projects must support small business development in rural areas or towns

outside the urbanized periphery of any city with a population of 50,000 or more. There is no maximum grant amount, but generally grants range from \$10,000 to \$500,000.

- National Park Service (NPS) and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS). Both the NPS and the USFS provide tourist information services for visitors to national parks and USFS facilities, respectively. The Gateway Center should explore interest within the NPS and USFS to fund kiosks in the visitor center.
- U.S. Treasury New Market Tax Credits. This program provides private investors with federal tax credit for investments made in economically distressed communities. The proposed site is in a qualified U.S. Census tract. This program is competitive and has an expensive application process.
- U.S. Economic Development Agency (EDA). The EDA offers a variety of grant programs, one of which the Center may use to fund a portion of its construction. Qualified applicants may apply for a Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance program for grants of \$100,000 to \$3,000,000 to fund construction of projects that “create jobs, leverage private capital, encourage economic development, and strengthen America’s ability to compete in the global marketplace.”

STATE FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

- Washington State capital budget. The State has already provided a \$60,000 CERB grant and a \$1,000,000 grant for property purchase, indicating its support for the Center. The Center should continue to seek funding from the State as it moves through the design and development process.
- Direct appropriations. There may also be opportunities for the Center to gain funding through one-off opportunities sponsored by State legislators.

LOCAL FUNDING POSSIBILITIES

- County and City tax revenues. Lodging and tourism related tax revenues are the dominant revenue streams for most visitor centers. Both the City of Aberdeen and Grays Harbor County have supported the GGHI visitor center in the past. In 2015, The City of Aberdeen gave \$20,000 to GGHI out of the \$60,000 total in lodging tax revenues. The County has committed \$20,000 (out of \$100,000) to GGHI in 2016 for visitor center operations.
- The Port of Grays Harbor. The Port has an explicit role in economic development and tourism. The Center may request that the port commit to a one-time capital and/or ongoing operations contribution.
- Sponsorships and naming rights. Corporations and individuals may be willing to pay for naming rights for a specific segment of the Center. This payment may occur one time or be ongoing.

- Private donations. Most visitor centers rely heavily on private donor contributions (individual, foundation, and corporate donations, and crowdfunding). Centers organized as 501(c)(3) organizations may have an easier time soliciting donations, as they are tax-deductible.

OWNERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

There are several ownership and operating models to consider for the Gateway Center. Deciding the appropriate model requires an evaluation of their tradeoffs with respect to several key criteria:

- Access to capital: different types of entities (i.e., public, private, nonprofit) will have different sources of capital that they can access at different costs.
- Financial feasibility: tax exempt status and ability to realize economies of scale, both factors that influence the financial viability of the Center, differ among ownership and operating models.
- Accountability: each entity will have unique success metrics and accountability mechanisms.

The best model will be one that facilitates access to low cost capital, minimizes operating costs (is tax exempt and able to achieve economies of scale on the operations side), and is mission-driven and accountable to stakeholders for the achievement of this mission.

NONPROFIT

Many visitor centers are nonprofit owned and operated. A board of directors would govern the organization providing some accountability from the enabling members. An executive director, accountable to the board, with the support of a small staff would manage the operations. Generally speaking, the benefits of nonprofit ownership and management are: access to public funding, access to tax-exempt donations, reduced operating costs via property tax exemptions, and the ability to run as a mission-based organization with accountability to a larger group of stakeholders.

In this particular case, additional benefits would be realized if GGHI—a nonprofit—were to operate the facility. GGHI is a nonprofit and already operates the existing visitor center. As the primary office tenant and operator of the visitor information components, having GGHI operate the facility would achieve economies of scale in operations by having it handle the administrative aspects of operating the facility. The potential drawback in this case is that GGHI is a small organization for which visitor information is not its primary focus; it may need to take on additional staff capacity in order to adequately manage the operations of the larger center.

PUBLIC OWNERSHIP

Grays Harbor County (or other municipality) could choose to own and operate the Gateway Center as a County venture. It could own and operate the Center outright, it could form a Public Development Authority (PDA) to operate

the facility under public ownership, or it could own the Center and contract operations to a nonprofit entity. PDAs are unique, independent government entities governed by a board of directors. They are legally separate from the County, which allows them to pursue public purpose activities independent from other functions of County government.

The benefits of public ownership include: access to public funds, property tax exemptions, and the ability to run it as a mission-based organization. The drawback to the first option, public operation, is that Center funding might shift as government priorities change. PDA operation would solve this challenge, but it would be accountable to the County or other jurisdiction, as opposed to a broader set of stakeholders.

FOR-PROFIT

The County may choose to find a private entity to construct, own, and manage the Center. The benefits of a for-profit entity include: access to traditional sources of bank financing and private equity to fund construction, responsiveness to operational challenges, and energy. The drawbacks to a for-profit entity are a priority of and accountability to profit over mission and the increase in operating costs associated with property tax payments. Given the difficulty in monetizing the public benefits of a visitor center and the resulting small margins, a for-profit entity is unlikely to have an interest in owning or operating the facility.

³ Washington Employment Security Department. 2016. <https://fortress.wa.gov/esd/employmentdata/reports-publications/regional-reports/labor-area-summaries>

⁴ Earnings include wage, salary disbursements, benefits and proprietor income

^{5,6} Washington State County Travel Impacts and Visitor Volume 1991-2014. Dean Runyan and Associates. April 2015. <http://www.lakechelan.com/content/uploads/2014/02/WAColmp14pRev.pdf>

FACILITY IMPACTS

The greatest benefits of visitor centers are those that accrue to local businesses and governments via increases in tourism and related spending. This section describes some of those impacts.

ECONOMIC IMPACTS

The Gateway Center will cause people to stop and spend money in Aberdeen and the greater Grays Harbor region. This spending at local businesses will support increases in output and employment. It will have continued indirect economic impacts on the economy as these businesses and their employees spend this income and it ripples throughout the region.

In 2014, visitors spent \$334.4 million in Grays Harbor County. Visitor spending directly

	Construction	
	Output (millions)	Jobs
Direct	\$8	37
Indirect/Induced	\$13	77
Total	\$21	113

Source: ECONorthwest, 2015.

supported 5,930 Grays Harbor County jobs, or about 27 percent of all non-farm industry employment in the County.³ These jobs paid \$102.3 million in earnings⁴ to people who work in the County. Out of the Western Washington Coastal Region (i.e., Grays Harbor, Jefferson, Pacific, Mason, and Clallam Counties), Grays Harbor had the most visits in 2014. This translates to more tourism dollars spent in Grays Harbor County than in any other county in the coastal region. Grays Harbor Ranked 9th out

of 39 counties in the State in terms of the most tourist dollars spent in 2014. The county ranked 6th out of 39 counties in the State for most jobs directly supported by tourism.⁵

Grays Harbor County had 1,599,000 overnight visits, which were directly responsible for \$272.3 million of spending in 2014. On average overnight visitors spent \$83 a day in Grays Harbor County in 2014. Overnight visitors who stayed in a hotel or motel (700,000) were responsible for \$187.7 million of spending in Grays Harbor in 2014. Overnight visitors who stayed in private homes (557,000) were responsible for \$32.9 million of spending. All other overnight visitors (332,000), which includes nights spent at campgrounds and vacation homes, spent \$51.7 million in Grays Harbor in 2014.⁶

While it is difficult to directly attribute the exact amount of impact that the facility would have on the county economy, it is clear that even modest changes that grow the tourism industry will have meaningful impacts. According to the IMPLAN model (an economic impact modeling software) using Dean Runyan data, an increase in visitor spending in Grays Harbor County by one percent, \$3.34 million, would create an additional 38 direct jobs in the County and 47 jobs in total.

This one percent increase would directly add an additional \$2.2 million to the Grays Harbor County economy, and through secondary impacts would add \$3.4 million in total. If visitor spending increased by three percent (\$10.0 million) from its 2014 levels (\$334.4 million) then 115 direct jobs, and 141 total jobs would be created in the County. This increase would result in an additional \$6.7 million in direct output, and a total of \$10.2 million of output in the local economy.

CONSTRUCTION IMPACTS

Using wages in Washington State, ECONorthwest estimated construction jobs (Washington State Input/Output Model) for the design and construction of the Grays Harbor Gateway Center. As shown in Table 7 the construction of the facility will require approximately 37 direct workers. Due to the proximate nature of the construction industry, it is likely that a large number of these workers will be residents of Grays Harbor County (the remainder are assumed to be residents of Washington State). The \$8 million in new investment would lead to a total statewide impact of \$21 million. The construction of the facility would support the equivalent of 37 jobs and lead to another 77 jobs (indirect and induced jobs) for a total of 113 jobs.

Table 7: Construction Impacts

TAX IMPACTS

In addition to economic impacts, the Center will deliver fiscal impacts in the form of tax revenues to state and local governments. At the Center itself, gift shop sales will generate direct sales tax revenues. Spending by visitors at local businesses will generate additional indirect tax revenues. Tax spending

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is particularly important local economic development and tourism activities since tax revenues are derived on accommodation expenditures. Most local and regional governments enact the local option hotel/motel tax on gross receipts of accommodation spending. In 2015, the tax raised \$1.7 million in tax revenues that were reinvested into the community. This was a \$200,000 increase over the collections for 2014. Increased tourism activities will generate additional revenues for these activities.

DYNAMIC IMPACTS

Over the long-term, the Gateway Center will have dynamic impacts on the economy. Dynamic impacts are qualitative and long-run. Over time, the increase in tourism will cause a shift in the local economy toward businesses that provide goods and services to visitors. These dynamic impacts, though less easily

quantified, are equally important.

As the Gateway Center helps grow businesses, these businesses will spend money at other area businesses and pay local workers. This boosts the economy. Recipients of those dollars use them not just on immediate purchases causing static impacts, but also on savings and taxes. Some of that money is invested. New roads, new schools, new businesses sprout up. The economy's structure changes.

Investments enhance a community's future economic capabilities. They can produce more goods and services, support higher wages, and employ more people. As the local economy physically improves, so too does its labor force. Overall, the community's locational competitiveness improves, attracting even more investment. These are the principal dynamic impacts. This is a key step that the Gateway Center can help the region take by using the visitor center and its economic development aspects to market to the region to outside visitors and businesses alike.

The geographic movement of population and businesses to a community is one way that a series of dynamic impacts can start. In-migration stimulates capital

investment around that community. There is a feedback effect, as growth begets growth by "pushing out the production possibilities frontier." The production possibilities frontier defines the range of possible goods and services that can be made in a community. A community that is growing and attracting local investments, sees that frontier expand. This is a significant mechanism in dynamic impacts and perhaps the least predictable. The coincidence of both the visitor center and economic development activities under the same roof will help the region showcase, grow, retain, and recruit new businesses to the area that push out the possibilities of what can be accomplished in Grays Harbor.

APPENDIX A: TRANSPORTATION IMPACTS

This appendix summarizes the findings of a transportation assessment completed to assist the Consultant Team in siting the building and developing concepts for the Gateway Center. The assessment does not include detailed analyses of traffic impacts or intersection levels of service (LOS), but recommends those as next steps for the development of the Center. This document is organized by 1) describing the site location



Outbound Vehicle Access
Gateway Center

transpogroup

relative to major transportation facilities, 2) presenting parking demand estimates for the intended uses of the center, and 3) discussing circulation and access for non-motorized modes.

SITE LOCATION AND ACCESS

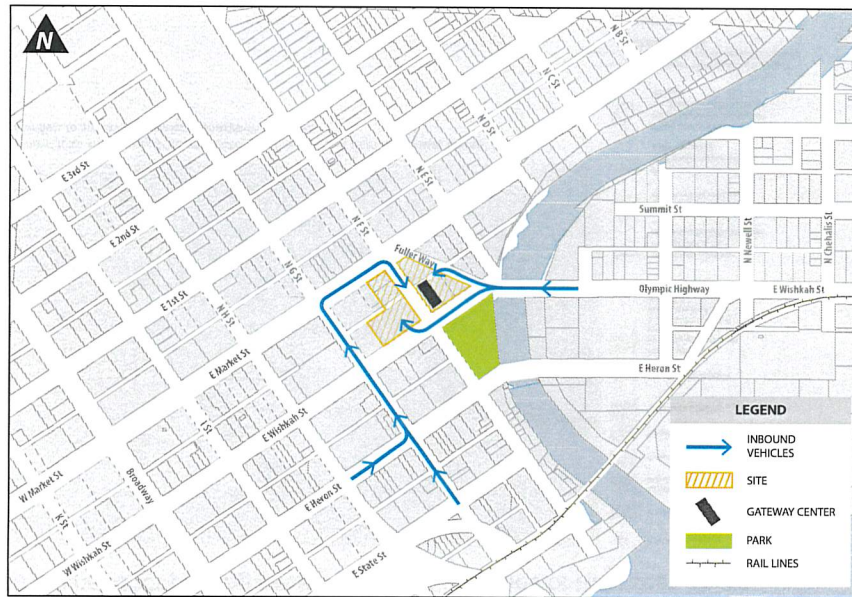
The proposed site is adjacent to regional highways US 12 and US 101 that connect residents and tourists to the Olympic Peninsula and Washington Coast. This location is strategically situated in downtown Aberdeen and next to local investments in transit, such as the Aberdeen Transit Center, and open space, including Zelasko Park. These investments present an opportunity to make Gateway Center a multimodal hub for visitors in the

City's effort to revitalize its downtown.

Those interested in visiting the center will likely take different routing patterns for inbound and outbound trips due to a one-way couplet through downtown Aberdeen. Eastbound and westbound directions on US 12 are split between E Wishkah Street and E Heron Street, creating unique access considerations for businesses in downtown including Gateway Center.

Figure 7 shows the inbound travel patterns for vehicles entering the site. The majority of inbound trips heading westbound, including those from the Puget Sound region, would likely use E Wishkah Street to turn right into the parking area after seeing the Center from the roadway. Employees or visitors that have advanced knowledge of the center might also use Fuller Way to access the site. Eastbound trips and those traveling on US 101 would likely use E G Street and E Market Street to access parking areas. Travelers on US 12 will need advanced directional signage to indicate the location of the Center and access to parking areas.

Figure 7: Inbound Routes for Vehicles Entering the Site



Vehicle Access
Gateway Center



Figure 8 shows the outbound travel patterns for vehicles leaving the site. Outbound trips would likely use driveways on E Wishkah Street to return to their original route, or use E Market Street to head toward destinations within Aberdeen or back to state highways. After visiting the Center, travelers will then need signs within parking areas directing them back to their original route.

Figure 8: Outbound Routes for Vehicles Leaving the Site

F STREET

F Street separates the building site from another group of parcels to the west that could serve as additional open space or an area for parking overflow. F Street could serve as an alternative route for vehicles to access the site and connect the Center to additional parking located on the other side of the street. The ultimate role of F Street within the broader context of downtown Aberdeen depends on the functional classification of the roadway, the ability of adjacent parcels to maintain access and parking, and the interest of stakeholders to prioritize non-motorized and festival uses on the street.

- **Functional Classification.** Functional classification systems are used in transportation planning to establish a hierarchy of roadways based on the tradeoffs between mobility and access. Higher order roadways, such as Principal Arterials, prioritize mobility (speed and volume) over driveway access. F Street is a collector street that places a higher emphasis on access than higher order roadways.
- **Access and Parking.** For businesses located on F Street, including Gateway Center, access to driveways and parking areas are important considerations. F Street could also serve as an extension of the site with the need for parking extending to the west side of the street. There

would be tradeoffs to using E Wishkah Street and Market Street as the primary driveway locations because some on-street parking will need to be removed.

- **Non-Motorized Access.** Roadways with lower speeds and volumes are more attractive to pedestrians and cyclists. Most of the roadways in downtown Aberdeen have sidewalks, but few have bicycle facilities. Visitors parking in the parking lot on the west side of F Street could use a crosswalk or potentially cross at various locations along F Street if the roadway includes traffic calming measures that adequately reduce vehicle travel speeds.
- **Stakeholders.** For F Street to serve more uses than mobility and access, there needs to be an engaged stakeholder group dedicated to activating F Street. This includes festivals, block parties, and other events that might close F Street during all or part of certain days. During these times, stakeholders will need to work with the community on communication and coordination so residents are not surprised by these closures.

Any decisions made regarding the ultimate configuration of F Street could change the location of driveways on E Wishkah Street, in that they could move to F Street. The outcomes would depend on future conversations with the City and WSDOT staff. To not preclude a pedestrian-oriented designation for F Street, the parking layout concepts do not utilize F Street as a primary vehicle access point to and from Gateway Center.

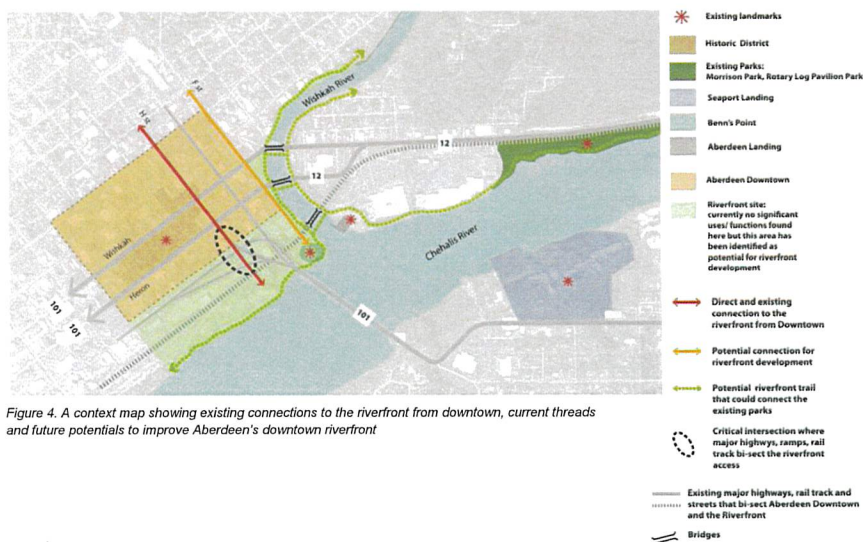


Figure 4. A context map showing existing connections to the riverfront from downtown, current threads and future potentials to improve Aberdeen's downtown riverfront

DRIVEWAYS AND PARKING

The 20,000 square-foot building will have two primary components that generate trips and parking demand: general office and a visitor center. The general office space is expected to include approximately 5,850 square feet of offices, workstations, and shared tenant space. Visitor parking demand is based on the capacity of the meeting room that will serve as a venue for events and have the capacity to seat 125 for a lunch or dinner event.

The City of Aberdeen does not have parking requirements for downtown, where the proposed site is located. So, Transpo Group relied on national recommendations for parking rates as summarized in the Parking Generation Manual, 4th Edition (Institute of Transportation Engineers). The calculations for the minimum number of parking spaces for the Gateway

Center land uses are shown in Table 8.

Table 8: Gateway Center Estimated Parking Demand

Land Use	Amount	Parking Rate	Parking Estimate
General Office	5,850 SF	1 space / 300 sq ft	15 spaces
Visitor Center	125 visitors	1 space / 0.4 visitors	50 spaces
Total			65 spaces

Transpo Group estimates that Gateway Center will need 65 parking spaces. The parking estimate is dependent on the needs of the site, including employees, office workers, and visitors. Other parking demands could change the demand and size of on-site parking spaces, including parking demand from larger RVs and longer-term and day use parking for visitors sightseeing in downtown. Figure 9 shows the parking areas and potential driveway locations to provide vehicle access.

Figure 9: Site Layout With Potential Parking And Driveway Locations



Parking and Driveways
Gateway Center



Transpo mocked up parking layout options to determine the number of spaces that could be accommodated in the parking area (Figure 9). Preliminary parking layouts show the parking area east of N F Street could accommodate 20 spaces, and the parking area west of N F Street could accommodate an additional 80 to 90 spaces. At maximum build out, the site could accommodate the requisite 65 spaces (Table 8). However, building out to the maximum parking may be advisable for the following reasons. Several factors may influence the type and number of spaces required. The ultimate parking configuration should include ADA spaces and larger parking spaces accessible for RVs. The removal of on-street parking spaces to provide new driveways or develop a roundabout might also impact space requirements.

³ "New Visitor Center Opens at Alaska's Kenai Wildlife Refuge," Ben Bottger, Peninsula Clarion, May 10, 2015, <http://www.adn.com/article/20150510/new-visitor-center-opens-alaskas-kenai-wildlife-refuge>.

⁴ "New Visitor Center Celebrates Unique Beauty of Great Salt Lake," Amy Joi O'Donoghue, Desert News, June 13, 2015, <http://www.deseretnews.com/article/865605163/New-visitor-center-celebrates-unique-beauty-of-Great-Salt-Lake.html?pg=all>.

⁵ Tillamook Forest Center, <http://tillamookforestcenter.org/index.html>.

⁶ "Lexington Visitors Center Programmatic Report," Town of Lexington, January 20, 2012, http://www.lexingtonma.gov/1-20-12_LexVisitorsCtr-Programmatic-Report.pdf.

NON-MOTORIZED ACCESS AND CIRCULATION

Pedestrian and bicycle trips will strengthen the tie to nearby businesses by providing a destination at the east end of downtown for residents and travelers to visit. Non-motorized facilities will serve a large number of trips to and from the Gateway Center, including those arriving by personal vehicles and walking from parking spaces to the entrance.

The location of the site next to the Aberdeen Transit Center, Zelasko Park, and a future waterfront trail also has the potential to introduce more biking and walking trips into the area. Figure 10 from the Downtown Aberdeen Community Planning Assistance Team Report (American Planning Association – Washington Chapter, March 2015) shows existing and future non-motorized circulation routes in downtown Aberdeen.

Figure 10: Existing Connections to the Riverfront from Downtown and Future potential trails (green dashed lines)

The building site and walkways should connect to the existing and future non-motorized network to provide access opportunities for pedestrians and bicyclists. Pedestrian crossings of E Wishkah Street are provided at the traffic signals with F Street and G Street. Non-motorized crossings near the E Wishkah Street / Fuller Way intersection should be discouraged due to limited sight distance for vehicles heading off the bridge. On-site walkways should provide adequate width for walkers of all ages, and on-site bicycle parking will provide cyclists with a safe, secure location to park for part of the day.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND NEXT STEPS

The following points summarize the key findings from the transportation assessment and next steps for the Gateway Center project:

- Coordinate with the City and WSDOT to ensure advanced signage is provided for travelers on US 12 to indicate the location of the Center and access to parking areas. After visiting the Center, travelers will also need signs directing them back to their original route.
- Determine the ultimate parking demands that could influence the number of on-site parking spaces, including parking demand from larger RVs and longer-term, day use parking for visitors sightseeing in downtown.
- Conduct a detailed analysis of traffic impacts for intersections that will serve driveways to the parking areas on site. While the design of the facility has tried to minimize circulation impacts on the state highway, additional work may be necessary to address any concerns for WSDOT.
- The building site and walkways should connect to the existing and future non-motorized network to provide access opportunities for pedestrians and bicyclists. On-site walkways should provide adequate width for walkers of all ages, and on-site bicycle parking will provide cyclists with a safe, secure location to park for part of the day.

APPENDIX B: DESIGN CHARRETTE FINDINGS

On Thursday November 5th, ECONorthwest and Coates Design convened stakeholders for the Aberdeen Gateway Visitor's Center project in a Design Charrette: a collaborative session to lay the groundwork for developing a design solution for the project. The goal was to bring to the table the opinions, thoughts, and preconceptions of the individuals and openly discuss them in an encouraging and non-threatening way, so to develop joint ownership of the solution.

The process involved roundtable discussions led by ECONorthwest and the architect. It began with the program and site opportunities and constraints. Discussion then moved to impressions about Aberdeen and Grays Harbor in general. The event concluded with a word association exercise to determine what attributes would best describe a successful design. Conversation was lively, collaborative and productive.

The client invited stakeholders from local municipalities and planning agencies, the Quinault Indian Nation, local economic development agencies, and other public and private entities. Attendance provided a diverse representation of all groups.

Following is an outline of the charrette proceedings.

I. ECONorthwest presented the draft program. Summarily:

- a. Core and Core+ concepts: a basic (core) scheme of some 14,000 square feet with an option for an additional 5,000 square of retail space.

i. Core concept

1. Office space for Greater Grays Harbor Inc
2. Office space for other tenants
3. Shared office and support space
4. Mission specific components
5. Reception, entry, gallery, coffee, restrooms

ii. Core+: Expanded mission specific spaces (larger coffee, gallery, retail)

2. Coates presented Transpo's findings on site amenity and both motorized and non-motorized access. Summarily:

- a. Existing surface roads provide one and two way road access to the proposed site.
- b. The proposed site has sufficient space for the core and core+ programs and sufficient parking at a conceptual level (one stall per 300 square feet of building space). Further conversation will be required to develop the specifics of the required parking.
- c. The project site has close connections to local amenity; transit and parks.

3. Coates facilitated a group conversation on transportation impacts that included the following comments:

- a. There was a desire to provide long term RV parking (all day), which could have significant space requirements and will need to be tested.
- b. Discussion about optimal building location and parking. Consensus was that the current Selmer Building / Pour House location is ideal.
- c. For westbound 12 traffic, it would be desirable to provide access to parking past the building to

allow time to make a decision.

d. Discussion about potential closure of F Street to provide better pedestrian access to the building from parking. There was a question about viability of the idea and acceptance by the community and municipality.

4. Matthew Coates introduced the topic of the existing structures on site and how best to incorporate them into the project. The following were points of discussion brought up by the group:

- a. There would be cost associated with keeping all or portion of the existing as opposed to complete demolition of the two structures.
- b. The group expressed a reluctance to demolish both buildings; Aberdeen has a pattern of removing existing buildings and it is removing the historical context.
- c. There was a consensus to assign some level of priority to keeping the existing facades even if the decision was made to demolish all of the interior portions. The additional cost and impact to the project will need to be tested at later date when better information is available.
- d. There was a question on elevation of the flood plane and the level of first floor if existing façade is to be kept. Does it comply with building code? No definitive answer.
- e. Discussion about historical significance of the Selmer Building. Not on the register, similar to other downtown Aberdeen structures.
- f. Pourhouse was dismissed as not

historically significant. Perhaps there would be opportunity to save the bar/backbar or other interior features for incorporation into the current project.

- i. The idea was suggested to offer the structure to anyone willing to move it before demolishing. This is not a factor in developing the site for this project.
- g. Historical significance of Selmer Building is in the form of the building; daylighting strategy with the stepped back second floor on the backside of the building.
- h. Consensus to proceed with concept to keep the west and possibly the south façade of the Selmer Building.
- i. Present a new, modern, heavy timber and glass façade, interesting wood structure to the east with existing façade to the south and west.

j. Provide parking across F Street and to the north of the Selmer Building. Available space will need to be tested for motor home and truck/trailer parking and circulation.

5. Coates facilitated a conversation about Aberdeen, what makes it special, and what needs the project should address. The following statements came from the attendees. Responses are meant to frame the project, explore possibilities with the group and develop consensus for what should be included or examined further by the design team.

- a. Meeting space is important; open to the public for special events.
 - i. No state of the art meeting spaces in town so this presents unique opportunity.
 - ii. 120 seat auditorium with tech features.
- b. Question about seasonal variations and is there a way to smooth it out.
- c. Statement that nice restaurants and nice motels are necessary to attract visitors. Locals would support the restaurants.
- d. Add kitchen to the program to cater events.
- e. Discussion about providing visitors with something to do; get them to stay and they buy more stuff. Winery tours was an example.

6. Matthew from Coates facilitated a word association exercise. The following words came from the attendees in response to Matthew's instructions to provide single word or phrases that would describe the project. These do not have to be literal but could be evocative of

Visitor Centers as Destinations

With information increasingly available through the internet, visitor centers in the 21st Century have had to expand their role beyond simply providing information to new visitors. In 2011, a New York Times article reported on this trend, writing that while visitor centers were once "the first point of contact and information about where to go and what to do there," today visitors access that information online and "set foot in the park via the Internet."

In order to make visitor centers useful to tourists who already have access to the internet, new visitor centers have focused their mission on providing activities and events, in addition to practical information about a town or park.

For example, in the past decade the National Parks have begun to think of their visitor centers as hubs for event programming, such as educational workshops and film screenings, as well as a place for the gift shop and a source of practical information.

emotion or experience.

- a. Wow!
- b. Progressive
- c. Inviting
- d. Outdoor
- e. Curiosity
- f. Innovative
- g. Modern
- h. Forests
- i. Culture
- j. Unique
- k. Energy efficient
- l. Sustainable
- m. Accessible

- n. Convenient
- o. Open
- p. Classy
- q. Textural
- r. Contextual

7. Matthew from Coates facilitated an aesthetic qualities exercise. Similar to the previous exercise, but focused on user experience.

- s. Comfortable
- t. Inviting
- u. Pride
- v. Discovery past
- w. Communal
- x. Celebratory
- y. Future

⁷ "New Visitor Center Opens at Alaska's Kenai Wildlife Refuge," Ben Bottger, Peninsula Clarion, May 10, 2015, <http://www.adn.com/article/20150510/new-visitor-center-opens-alaskas-kenai-wildlife-refuge>.

⁸ "New Visitor Center Celebrates Unique Beauty of Great Salt Lake," Amy Joi O'Donoghue, Deseret News, June 13, 2015, <http://www.deseretnews.com/article/865605163/New-visitor-center-celebrates-unique-beauty-of-Great-Salt-Lake.html?pg=all>.

⁹ Tillamook Forest Center, <http://tillamookforestcenter.org/index.html>.

¹⁰ "Lexington Visitors Center Programmatic Report," Town of Lexington, January 20, 2012, http://www.lexingtonma.gov/1-20-12_LexVisitorsCtr-Programmatic-Report.pdf

z. Educational
aa. Safe/clean

8. Matthew from Coates facilitated a material vocabulary exercise. He asked attendees to provide thoughts on materials that would be appropriate to the project.

- a. CLT
- b. Glass
- c. Bullitt Center
- d. Wood
- e. Heavy timber
- f. Tribal influence: wood, warm
- g. Trees / timber
- h. Water element, water feature
- i. Avoid the use of sustainable/green; this is a sensitive issue in Aberdeen
- j. Kurt Cobain

The design team reviewed the information gathered at the charrette and folded it into the final design, presented in 3.2 Building Design.

¹¹ http://www.rogerbrooksinternational.com/Visitor_Info_Handout.pdf

¹² "Successful Visitor Experience—Getting it Right," Success Guides of the Association of Independent Museums, <http://www.aim-museums.co.uk/downloads/a4415601-b24a-11e2-b572-001999b209eb.pdf>.