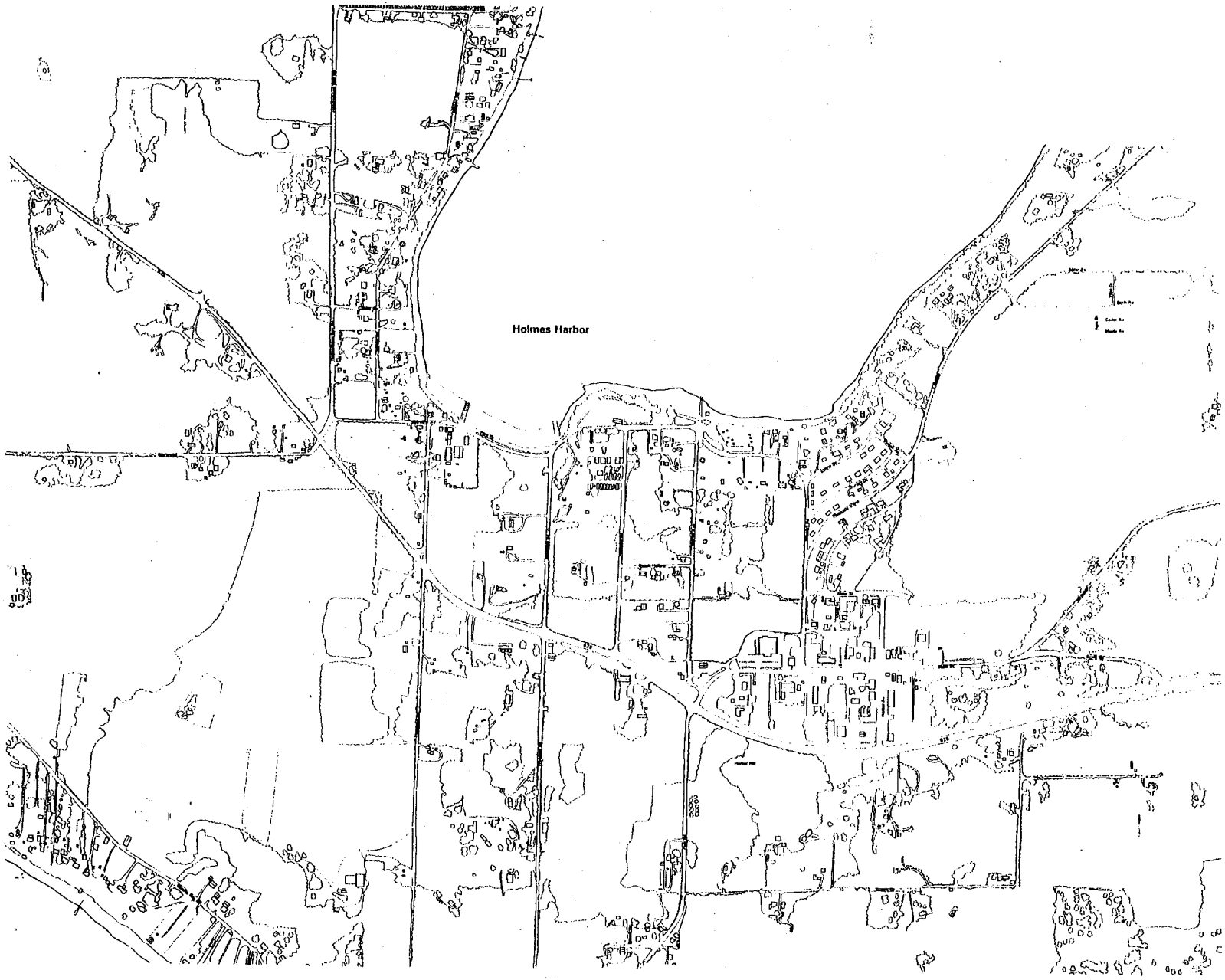

A Community Plan for Freeland, Washington.
Revised Draft Oct 4 1991

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Note: This draft plan document has been revised according to directions received during Island County Planning Commission Hearings. Portions that have been ~~crossed out~~ are to be deleted. Portions that are <u>underlined</u> are to be added.

Executive Summary

Freeland residents care deeply for the rural character of their community and are protective of Whidbey Island's environmental quality. In general, most residents favor improvements to the business core, storm drainage, roads, sidewalks and parks. The most strongly held value expressed, however, was against major redevelopment of the community to a more urbanized condition.

And yet, some change appears to be unavoidable. Growth projections predict a doubling of the local population within the next 20 years. Moreover, current zoning will allow substantial new development to occur in the community planning area. Poor soil percolation for septic systems has restricted development on many sites. However, new sanitary sewage systems such as a pipeline to an off-site treatment plant, a new local treatment plant or new on-site sanitary treatment technologies may well change this situation and permit wide spread development. The principal effort of this plan is to reduce the potential negative impacts of new growth while building a cohesive community

The 1984 Island County Comprehensive Plan designates Freeland as and Urban Business Center and a potential Urban Growth Area. A major finding of this study, based on community input taken throughout the process, is that the terms "urban business center" and "urban growth area" are not appropriate for Freeland. Instead, the term "~~community~~ "rural community center" ~~planning area~~ is more applicable to indicate an emphasis on retaining the area's rural character and environmental resources. The recommended definition for a "rural community center" is as follows: an unincorporated place consisting of clustered residential and non-residential uses developed at densities that can be supported without the provision of a full range of urban governmental service and facilities.

This change in nomenclature also represents a significant change to Island County's comprehensive planning policies. While the Freeland Community Plan envisions substantial business district growth within currently non-residential zoned properties and does not recommend substantially modifying existing residential zoning, the plan does not endorse the transfer of development pressure from elsewhere in the county into Freeland as encouraged in the 1984 Island County Comprehensive Plan.

The policy framework for this community plan includes the following general concepts.

a. Stabilize the amount of new growth to approximately that allowed by current zoning. ~~(The recommendations of this plan are based on the direction given by Island County that wide spread or comprehensive rezoning of the area is not implementable.)~~

b. Provide capital improvements and public services which are appropriate for a small town setting, are reasonable in cost and are necessary to protect environmental quality, insure efficient transportation, promote public health and safety, provide recreational opportunities, and enhance the community's appearance.

c. Adopt guidelines, design standards and project review procedures that reduce the visual and environmental impacts of new development.

d. Enhance a community oriented business district serving South Island residents that is small in scale, compact, pedestrian oriented and attractive.

e. Enhance the community's scenic qualities by conserving and preserving, where possible, woodlands and open space, protecting view corridors, improving the quality of the downtown, screening unattractive areas and landscaping important roadways.

f. Direct new commercial and industrial development to where its impacts are minimized, preferably adjacent to similar land uses.

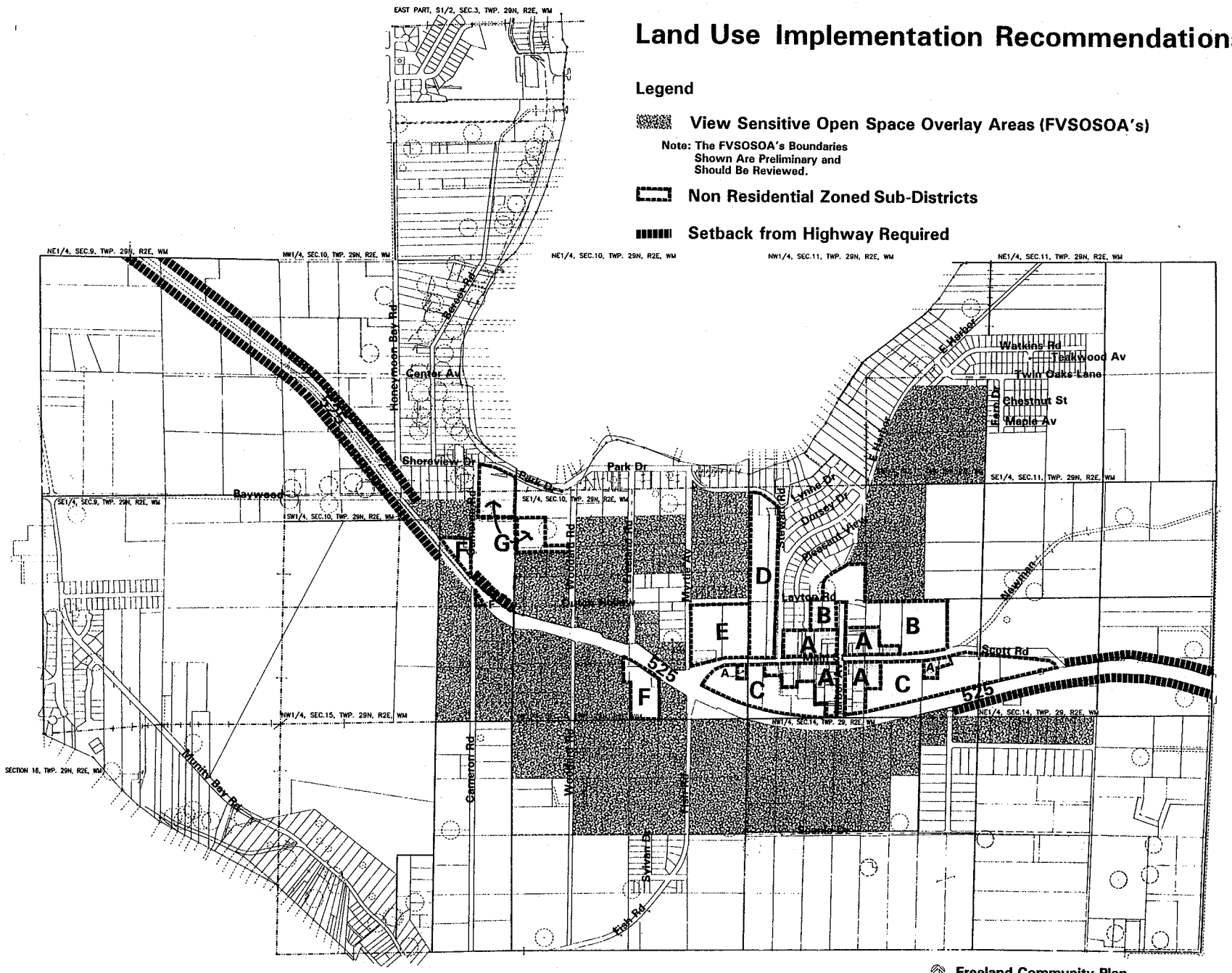
The list of policies, regulatory measures and capital improvements on the following page are recommended to pursue the planning directions stated above. The recommendations of this plan were developed through direct public participation at numerous town meetings. As such, the plan literally comes from the community. An intended by-product of this approach is a

more active, cohesive community forum to pursue the plan's objectives. It is a paradox that in Freeland's case, strong action must be taken just to maintain the qualities which local residents currently enjoy. The Island County governmental departments must serve all of Whidbey and Camano Islands equitably and will have the additional burden of complying with recent growth management and state regulatory statues. Therefore, if the community's goals are to be achieved, it will be up to the local residents and business leaders to initiate many of the recommended actions, and to press for Freeland's share of capital funds and public resources. The community has had a strong hand in developing a vision for Freeland's future. It must take an equally strong hand in making the vision a reality.

Recommended Actions:
Policy and Regulatory Programs

Action		Goals Pursued					Recommendation for Initiation
		A. Protect rural character	B. Protect env. quality	C. Upgrade business dist.	D. Improve circulation	E. Increase recreation fac.	
A-1	Disallow TDR's in Freeland	●					Revise County Policy
A-2	Single lot design guidelines	●	●				County Staff develop G.L. with community input
A-3	PRD guidelines for view sensitive areas	●	●				County staff review & revise the draft G.L. & map
A-4	Scenic corridor design standards	●	●	●			County should adopt as soon as possible, they may be applicable for other areas in county.
B-1	Protect drainageways	●	●				County enforcement of existing and proposed standards
B-2	Emphasize natural drainage	●	●				
C-2	Adopt use and site design standards for downtown sub-districts	●		●	●		The business community could initiate this with county support. A very important step that requires local property owner participation.
C-3	Restrict use of floating NR zone	●		●			Requires minor changes in criteria for floating NR rezone proposals.

Land Use Implementation Recommendations



Recommended Actions: Capital Improvements

[1] Figures are preliminary planning level estimates which could vary substantially due to unforeseen conditions

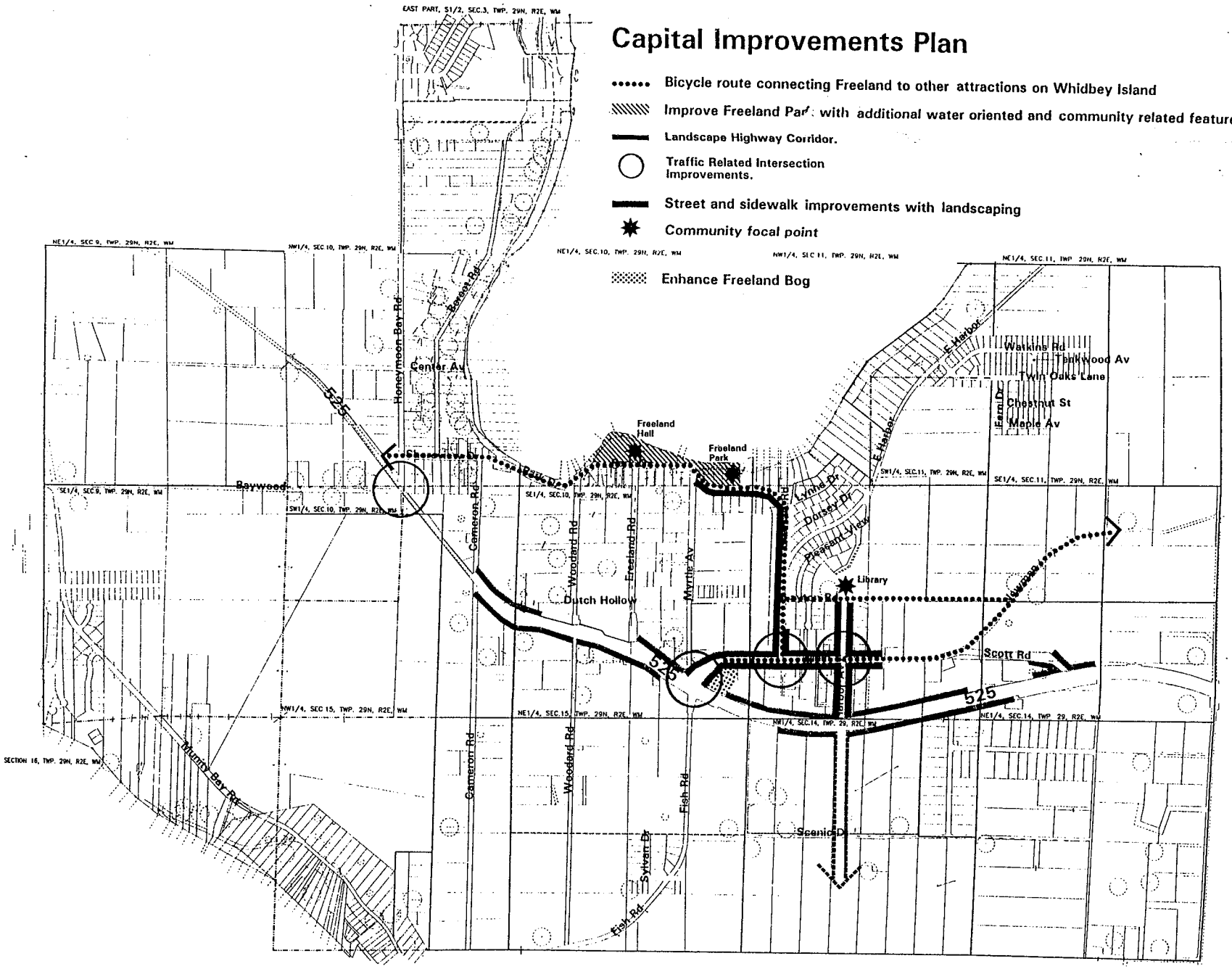
[2] Excluding individual septic tanks and treatment plan expansion. Treatment plant costs can vary widely depending on design of plant and extent of service area.

Action		Goal Pursued: A. Protect rural character	B. Protect env. qual.	C. Upgrade business dist.	D. Improve circulation	E. Increase Rec. Fac.	Cost [1] in $1,000's	Approx. Time Frame: 1991-1996	1996-2001	2001-2006	2006-2011	Participants: Local community	County	Water district	State	Other agency	Developer mit. fees
A-5	Highway landscaping	●	●	●			$100-200	▬	▬			○	●		●		
B-3	Storm water mgmt improvements	●	●	●			$150-160	▬	▬			○	●		○		○
B-4	Monitor sanitary sewer need	●	●	●			$1,200 [2]	▒	▬	▬	▬	◆	○	◆	○		○
C-1	Downtown street and sidewalk imp.		●	●	●		$280-350	▬	▬	▬		●	●				
D-1	Intersection improvements			●	●			▬	▬	▬			●		●		○
D-2	Bicycle lanes and sidewalk/path	●		●	●	●	$100-220	▬	▬			○	●		●		○
D-3	Park and ride facilities	●	●	●	●			▬								●	
E-1	Freeland Park improvements						$100-400	▒	▬	▬	▬	○	●		●	○	○
E-2	Acquire additional park area near Freeland Park	●	●	●		●		▒	▒	▒	▒	◆	●		●	○	○
E-3	Support efforts to develop a new library			●		●	$400	▬				●	◆			○	

◆ Possible lead participant
● Lead participant
○ Supporting participant

Action	Implementation Strategy	Other Funding Sources
A-5	Work with local WASHDOT District Office to upgrade as part of joint County/State project	WASHDOT City Gateway program
B-3	County to take lead in coordinated improvements and regulatory program	
B-4	Local water district or property owner group could take lead. It is important not to miss opportunity that could save dollars in the long run.	Loan from State Revolving Fund, EPA 202 Grant Prog., Farm Home Admin. Community Facility Loans
C-1	Joint County/L.I.D. project with business property owners contributing for landscape improvements. Business community should organize and work with county.	
D-1	County has responsibility for street improvements WASHDOT to contribute on highway improvements	WASHDOT
D-2	County to initiate work by apply for Coastal Zone Management (CZM) planning grant	State I.A.C. Grant Program State CZM Planning Grant
D-3	Local community should be involved in locating facilities	Island Transit
E-1	CZM planning grant would be useful to identify priority community desires and pursue the plan further. Fund potential will increases if tied to bicycle/ped trails. Improvements should be coordinated with bike and pedestrian routes.	State IAC Grant Program State CZM Planning Grant
E-2	The community should identify needs and opportunities. State funds can be used. The community could raise funds to acquire option on land.	State IAC Grant Program
E-3	Friends of Freeland Public Library take lead w/official co-sponsorship by County.	

Capital Improvements Plan



Freeland Community Plan

Introduction

Background

In recent years South Whidbey Island has been beset with many planning issues related to increased population, economic development, environmental protection, public service delivery, housing and retention of scenic qualities. Planning efforts to deal with these issues in Freeland have been hampered by several problems. The lack of a clear vision for the future has prevented concerted cooperative actions towards defined goals. Freeland is unincorporated and except for water district activities is restricted in the type of actions it can initiate. Moreover Freeland relies on County services and is subject to County land use policies which must address county-wide priorities and policies. For years there has been a perceived conflict between residents' wishes to retain a rural community and lifestyle and Freeland's designation as an urban business center. The lack of coordinated effort means that local issues such as drainage, park facilities, flooding, street improvements, business district quality and protection of scenic areas goes unaddressed. Therefore, the purpose of this plan is to remove the impediments to solving these issues by:

- Building a public consensus regarding identified values and objectives.
- Better defining Freeland's character and role within the larger county-wide framework.
- Identifying a list of realistic, practical regulatory and capital improvements that address specific goals and objectives.
- Coordinating local actions and policies regarding environmental protection, land use, transportation improvements, economic development and public services for gr eater effectiveness.
- Mobilizing Freeland citizens and providing them with a useful tool dealing with the problems and challenges facing the community.

Process

Because a critical aspect of this plan is to resolve underlying conflicts and building a public consensus, public participation was central in the planning process. During each step of the work, a town meeting was held in which the technical work was presented to community participants who then took part in work exercises to identify goals, evaluate alternatives, brainstorm ideas, or review proposals. These exercises were structured so that the results could be incorporated into the plan.

The primary steps were:

1. Develop base maps and inventory wetlands, land use and other conditions.
2. Publish public announcements/articles to advertise project
3. Conduct public opinion survey to identify priority issues
4. Identify community goals and issues from surveys and individual interviews with local citizens.
5. Hold town meeting #1 to present inventory and survey results and determine goals/issues
6. Hold town meeting #2 to confirm topics/issues, and explore community vision for its future.
7. Develop alternate land use concepts and actions to retain rural character.
8. Hold town meeting #3 to evaluate alternatives and define land use policies.
9. Analyze capital improvement needs (Alpha Engineering Group engineering study)
10. Hold town meeting #4 to present alternative capital improvement actions including proposals for sewer, water, drainage, transportation, business district enhancement and park projects. Evaluate and prioritize proposals.
11. Compile plan recommendations and discuss with business and resident groups' representatives.
12. Develop implementation recommendations and submit to county
13. Hold town meeting #5 to discuss implementation options
14. Develop specific implementation recommendations and submit to County regarding ordinance revision and other strategies
15. Hold town meeting #6 to present draft recommendations to Planning Commission and take testimony.
16. Prepare draft Planning Commission meeting
17. Assist County staff in obtaining county government approval

Contents

The plan is organized into the following chapters.

1. Executive Summary presenting recommended framework policies and implementation actions.

2. Background Conditions describing existing planning situations

3. Goals and Objectives statements developed during town meetings

4. Recommended Actions listed according to the primary goals pursued

5. A Vision Statement describing the intent of the recommended actions.

In addition, supporting materials and studies were conducted as part of the work program; namely

The draft guidelines are intended as a starting point to assist the community and Island County planning staff in developing the final regulatory measures.

Existing Conditions

General

Freeland is located on Whidbey Island approximately 9 miles from the Clinton Ferry Terminal. As such, it is considered to be within the "South Whidbey" area which has experienced rapid development over the past several years. The Freeland community itself is situated on Holmes Harbor on the Island's western shoreline. The planning area boundary includes rolling hills and gentle valleys with forest, farmlands, large vacant tracts, small subdivisions and a community based business center. While the open spaces are quite scenic with views of the water and a rural setting, the existing residential and commercial development, taken as a whole, is not so attractive. The community includes a little waterfront park along the Holmes Harbor shoreline which includes a public boat ramp, beach, restrooms and play area. Local efforts are underway to build a public library just north of the business district.

Population

Freeland's population is currently about 750, housed primarily in single family residences. The area's current growth rate is 3.5% per year and projections indicate this level is likely to continue, bringing the population within the planning area boundary to about 1500 persons by the year 2010. Current land use zoning will accommodate projected increase, however, the permeability of the soil and restraints on individual septic systems will constrain development somewhat until alternate sanitary systems are provided.

The Holmes Harbor Golf and Yacht Club is currently planning the development of a 458 lot subdivision and golf course near the western shoreline of Holmes Harbor immediately north of the Freeland area. A sewage treatment plant is being designed for this development and construction is scheduled for late 1991 or 1992. The developer is considering the development of a second golf course and an additional 500 units for the future. At an occupancy of 2.5 persons per lot the first phase could add approximately to the area with a total population gain from phase 1 and 2 of 2395 people.

This is over three times the current population of the Freeland planning area and would amount to significantly more than 1500 population projected for Freeland in 2010.

The impacts of this growth were considered in the transportation analysis and the proposal for a downtown L.I.D. anticipates significant increase in business from the additional population. Also, Holmes Harbor residents could increase park and library use.

Land Use and Zoning

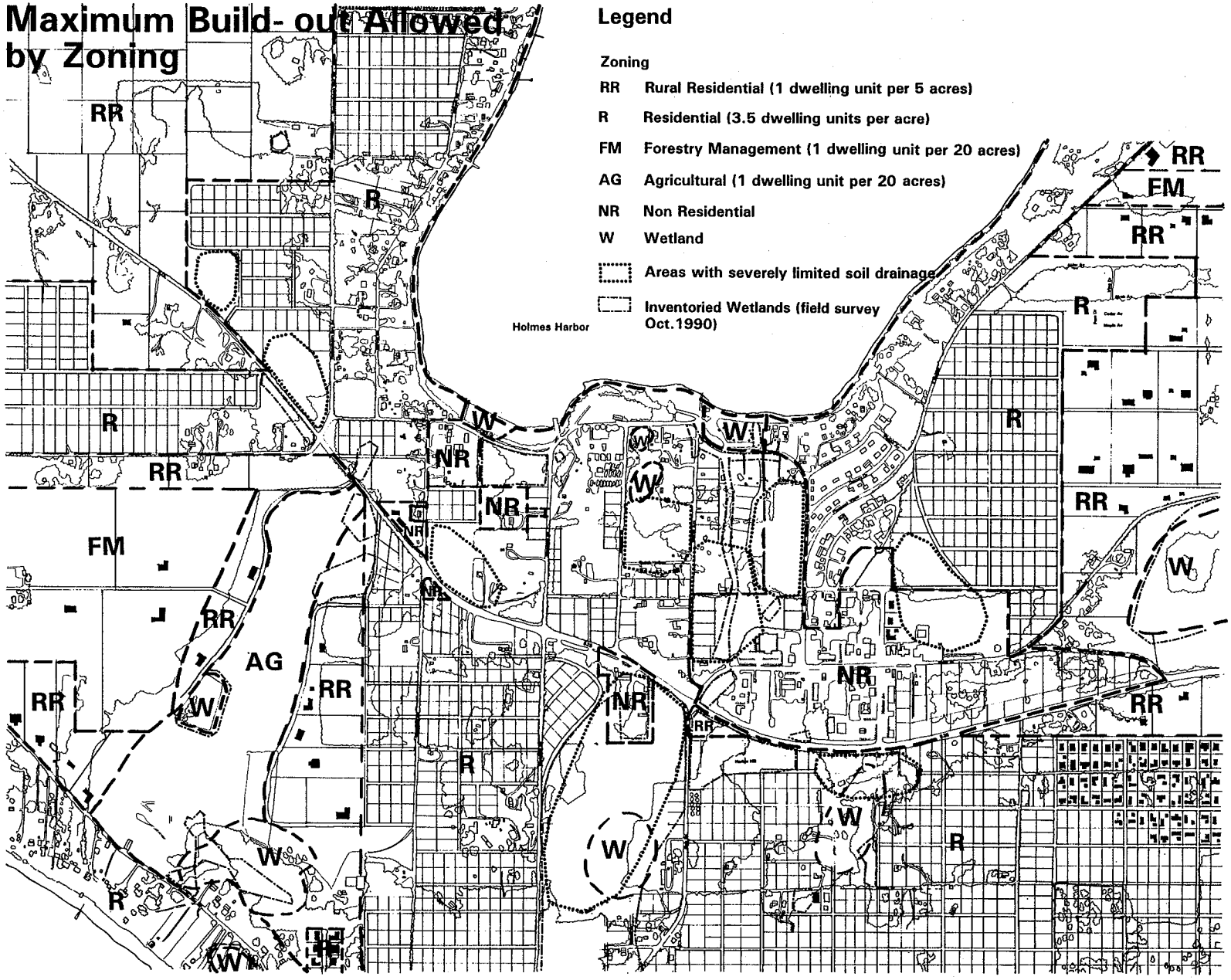
Current land use patterns in Freeland consist primarily of large agricultural fields, vacant lands and wooded areas interspersed with single lot residences and small subdivision developments. Commercial activities are clustered around the Main Street business district and a small center of highway oriented businesses on SR 525. Nichols Brothers Boatyard, located toward the west side of the bay, is one of southern Whidbey's most important manufacturing businesses and a major source of local employment.

The land use zoning in Freeland features large areas of both "Rural Residential" and "Residential" zoned land. The maximum density for the Residential zone is 3.5 dwelling units per acre and the map on the following page illustrates a lot layout at "maximum build-out." In reality, development would not be as close packed and many of the lots would be unbuildable unless a sanitary sewer system or new sewer system technology were employed. The drawing does illustrate, however, that there is the distinct possibility for the open lands to be developed into rather closely spaced single family lots.

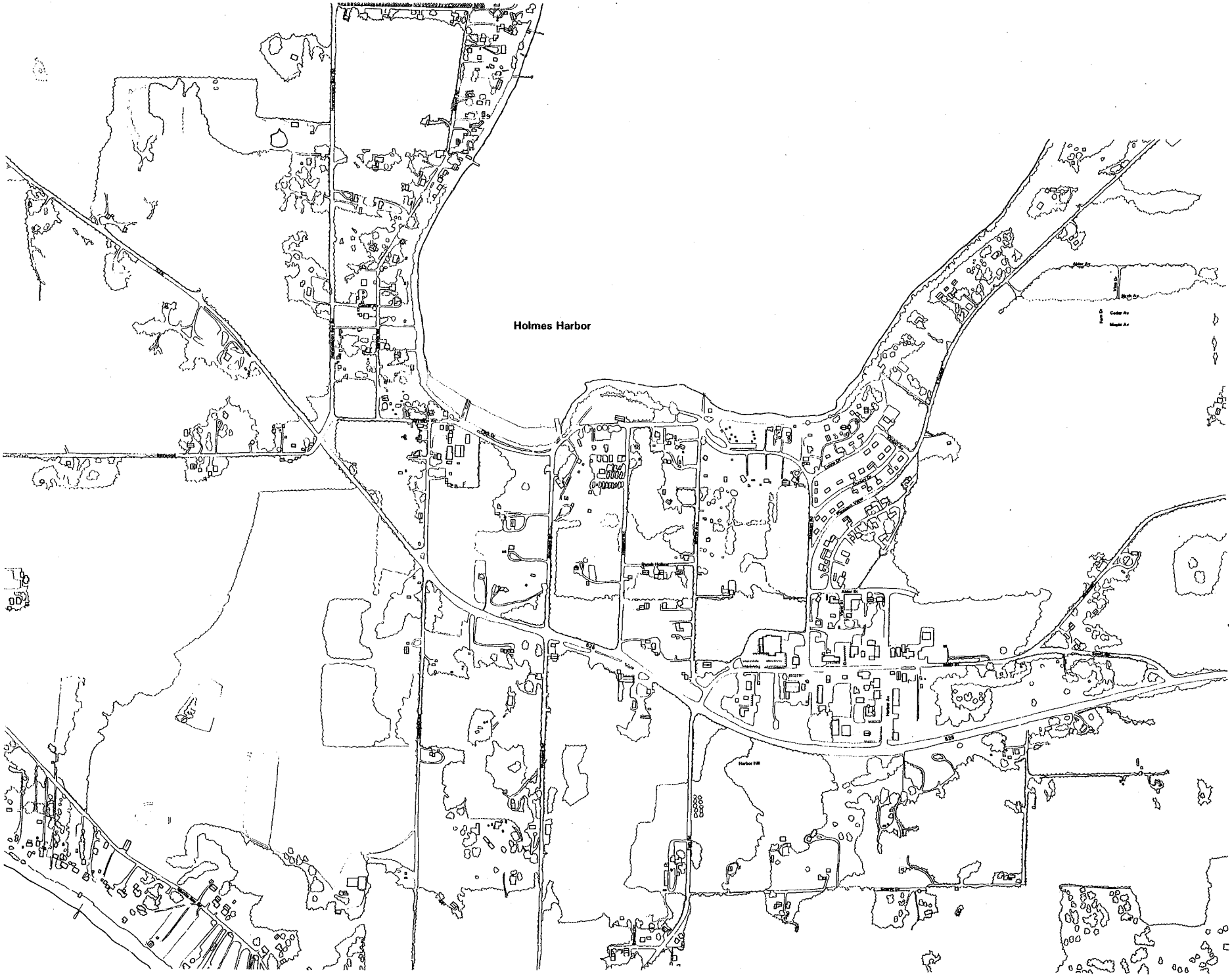
Natural Resources

One of the early tasks of this project was to inventory the planning area's wetlands. Worthy and Associates reviewed existing wetlands data and conducted a field survey of the community. The results of this survey are summarized on the wetland inventory map on the following page. Freeland contains many wetland areas because of the numerous lenses of non-permeable glacial till. This non-permeable soil also causes local

Maximum Build- out Allowed by Zoning

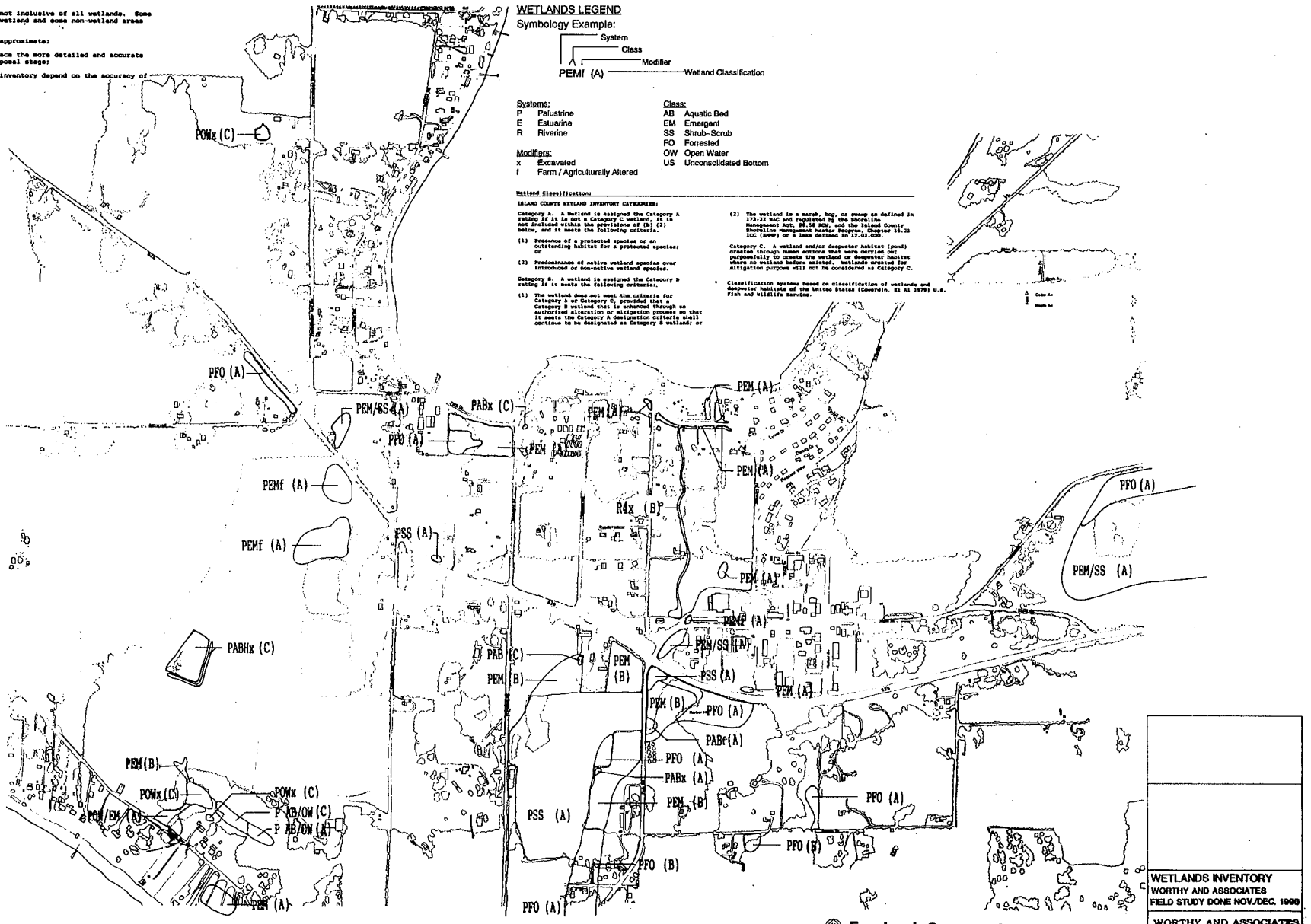


Freeland Community Plan


Holmes Harbor

NOTES:

1. Wetland inventories and maps are not inclusive of all wetlands. Some wetlands areas mapped may be non-wetland and some non-wetland areas mapped could be wetlands;
2. Wetland inventory boundaries are approximate;
3. Inventories are not meant to replace the more detailed and accurate studies needed at the project proposal stage;
4. Conclusions drawn from the paper inventory depend on the accuracy of the existing data;



WETLANDS DETERMINATIONS

Freeland Community Plan
DATE 4/15/91

WETLANDS INVENTORY
WORTHY AND ASSOCIATES
FIELD STUDY DONE NOV./DEC. 1990

WORTHY AND ASSOCIATES
Landscape Architecture • Urban Design • Planning

drainage problems in several areas, the most notable being the drainage way from the Freeland Bog. Storm water management is an issue that will increase in importance with new development.

Transportation

SR 525, the island's primary traffic corridor, runs directly through Freeland providing excellent access to the north and south, but dividing the community in half. The current PM peak hour volume is approximately 700 vehicles per hour (total traffic, both ways). Main Street is an east west minor collector forming the spine of the business core and connecting the highway at each end and to E. Harbor Road which runs to the north and east. To the west of the planning area Honeymoon Bay Road extends northward along the west side of Holmes Harbor to the proposed Holmes Harbor Golf and Yacht Club with a 500 lot subdivision.

Current vehicular circulation problems appear to be limited to a few critical intersections, most notably Main Street/E. Harbor Road, Main Street/SR 525 and SR 525/Honeymoon Bay Road. However, the new development at Holmes Harbor could significantly increase traffic volumes and cause congestion. A traffic analysis which details this information was prepared by Alpha Engineering Group as part of this study. ~~and is included in the engineering study appended to this plan.~~

Sidewalks, pedestrian walkways and bicycle lanes are virtually nonexistent in Freeland, a deficiency that was strongly noted during the public town meetings.

Island Transit serves Freeland with bus service and is considering establishing a park-and-ride lot with express service to the Clinton Ferry. This proposal is discussed in the action recommendations.

Water Distribution System

The community of Freeland is served by the Freeland Water District which has been in existence since about 1964. The service area boundaries include most of the currently developed area and comprises about 750 acres, which is about 60% of the plan area of 1240 acres. There are several private wells still operating within the service area. The district franchise also includes sewage collection and disposal. The water right for the district is 0.36 million gallons per day (mgd) instantaneous (250 gpm), and 168 acre-feet per year, which equates to 0.15 mgd 104 gpm). The present system appears to meet all current requirements for demand, quality, fire flow and storage. It is well designed, modern and operated by knowledgeable people. The District has a Comprehensive Plan for capital improvements to meet future demands, modernization and regulatory requirements.

The water rights and demand are in balance for 2010 population projections, and beyond 2010 additional water rights will be necessary. The service area boundaries will need to continue to expand to meet future development and the District will need to acquire additional water rights by transfer as they expand their service area. The engineering study contains additional information regarding the water system.

Defining Goals and Objectives

A sound community plan must be based on a set of commonly held goals and objectives. Without a public consensus regarding public planning values, a plan will have no conceptual foundation or popular support. The planning process placed heavy emphasis on identifying the most strongly held community values. To obtain a background sampling of community opinions, a survey was conducted through a mail-back questionnaire sent in the mail to all households in the community. This survey was non-statistical in its approach and was used only to identify key issues and frame the participation exercises in the first two town meetings. At the first town meeting, general goals were formulated while work at the second town meeting focused on specific objectives that describe how to achieve the broader goals. On the following pages are presented a graph summarizing the partial results of the questionnaire and a listing of the goal and objective statements developed in the town meetings.

Goals and Objectives

A. Protect Rural Character and Visual Identity

One of Freeland's qualities that is valued by residents is the rural character of the town. Freeland overlooks Holmes Harbor. Open pastures and wetland areas alternate with forested hillsides and provide panoramic views to the water. The beauty of the natural setting gives Freeland a special and unique character that residents feel should be protected. Residents feel less positive about the existing character of many of the developed areas of Freeland and believe that strong measures should be taken to upgrade the downtown.

1. The rural character and low density of Freeland should be preserved.

2. View corridors should be protected and high-rise buildings which might obstruct views of the water should not be permitted.

3. The visual appearance of the central business district should be improved and softened through the use of more landscaping and design guidelines for new construction. The commercial area should not be allowed to sprawl.

4. A local design committee should provide organized plan for parking, pedestrian amenities, recreation and commercial ares.

5. There should be a public arts committee.

6. Exhibits illustrating the history of Freeland could be placed in bank lobbies and the library.

B. Protect Environmental Qualities and Resources

Residents place a high priority on environmental quality, preservation and enhancement of wildlife habitats and natural resources including wetlands, shorelines, and forested areas.

1. Wetlands, Freeland Hill, and contiguous areas for wildlife should be preserved.

2. A high priority should be placed on water quality (drinking water and water quality of Holmes Harbor). Aquifer recharge areas should be protected.

   - o Run-off into Holmes Harbor and surface drainage in other critical areas should be controlled.
   - o Trees and vegetation should be used to control erosion and bio-filter run-off. Oil and water separators should be installed.
   - o Yearly septic inspections should be required and comprehensive steps taken to insure proper sewage treatment.

3. Clear-cutting of trees by developers should be controlled. Significant trees and vegetation

systems should be protected.

4. Air quality should be protected and alternatives to wood burning (oil; gas; electric; solar; wind) encouraged.

5. Natural areas should be protected through land use controls and/or development standards.

C. Upgrade Business District Improvements

While most residents expressed satisfaction with the existing mix of retail and services, many expressed a strong dissatisfaction with the *appearance* of the downtown and cited the need for a wide range of improvements such as sidewalks, landscaping, and night lighting. Residents agree on the need for a stronger pedestrian orientation to the downtown.

1. The business district should serve all of South Whidbey. This applies to manufacturing as well.

2. The business district should cater to the wide range of age groups that representing all the residents of Freeland.

3. Owner-operated businesss and quality businesses should be encouraged.

4. The business district should be pedestrian oriented (a shift away from its current auto orientation). To encourage pedestrian activity there should be sidewalks and street trees.

5. Adequate parking should be located to encourage walking within the business core.

6. Design guidelines should be established for new construction and landscaping to improve the appearance of the central business core.

7. If feasible, utility lines should be put underground.

8. There should be a central focus or gathering place. Currently, the bakery acts as a focus and stopping place.

9. The business core should be oriented to Main St.; not to the highway or the water.

10. The business core and the surrounding residential neighborhood should be compatible and mutually supporting.

D. Improve Transportation and Pedestrian Circulation

Residents feel that there are specific traffic problems that need to be addressed in Freeland. Many residents commented on the need for a 4-way stop across from the Post Office and a stop light and left turn lanes at 525 and Fish Rd. Pedestrian safety is another concern: residents expressed the need for sidewalks and more clearly marked crosswalks in the central core.

1. Sidewalks should be provided in the downtown area.

2. Public parking should be provided, perhaps around the perimeter of the commercial core, to encourage walking within the downtown area.

3. The image of Freeland as a bicycle town should be promoted with designated bike trails both for the convenience of residents and to encourage visitors to enjoy the town at a more leisurely pace.

4. There should be better designated crosswalks at intersections.

5. There should be more bus stops and possibly a retail core shuttle bus.

6. The possibility of an East Harbor bypass should be explored.

7. There should be a Park & Ride lot.

E. Increase Community Oriented and Recreation Facilities

Residents feel that, in general, the sense of community is not strong in Freeland. Lack of suitable meeting places is one reason cited. Currently, community events and festivals (Kris Kringle Day, Fishing Derby, Regatta) rather than a physical gathering place provide the residents with a sense of community and interaction. Several objectives for increasing community identity address the need for a physical gathering place and more activities for all ages to provide more interaction among residents.

1. Town meetings should be held on a regular basis.

2. Incorporation of Freeland should be explored to give residents an ongoing voice in what happens to their town.

3. Speed limits should be enforced and a 4-way stop light should be placed at Main and E. Harbor.

4. Sidewalks, pedestrian paths and biking trails should be constructed and shoulders of existing roads paved to provide an alternative to the automobile.

5. There should be theme for the downtown and better signage. A contest could be held to develop a town logo.

6. Mini parks, playgrounds and pedestrian amenities such as benches should be developed.

7. There should be more activities and places for teenagers.

8. Freeland Hall should be used more (dances for teenagers, etc.)

9. There should be more recreational opportunities: basketball, baseball, volleyball, shuffleboard, etc...

10. Additional property for another/larger park should be acquired (purchase, bequest) and the boat launch should be upgraded.

11. Cottage industries should be encouraged and an economic balance maintained.

12. There should be a downtown beautification program.

13. There should be an honorary mayor and a town council.

14. The proposed Freeland Library with a meeting center should be built.

Freeland Citizen Survey Result Summary

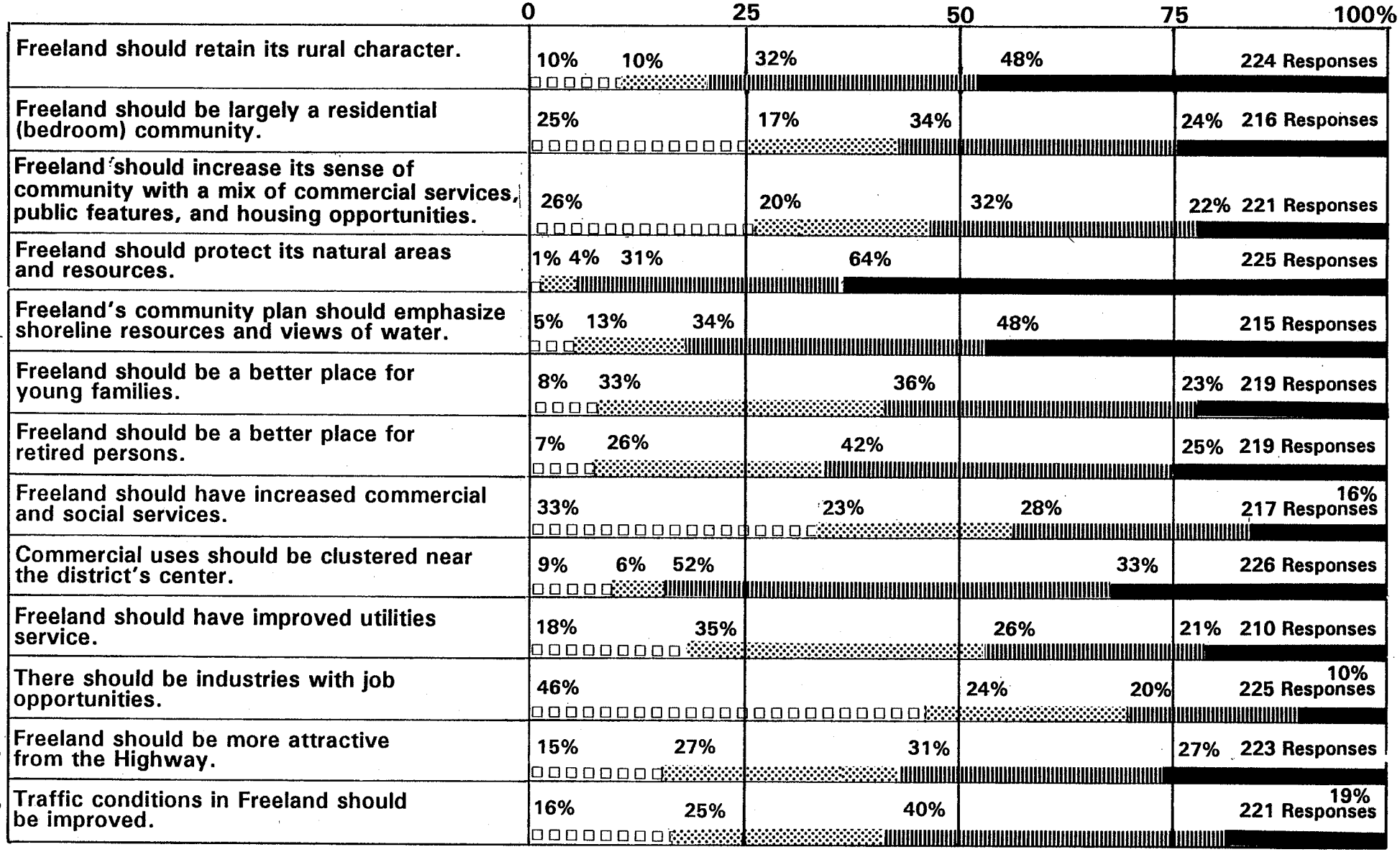
239 Total Responses to Questionaire

Statement

Percentage of Response

disagree | neutral | agree | agree-high priority

Number on top of the chart line indicates % of that response out of total number of responses. The total length of all tones taken together = 100% of respondents.



Implementation Actions

The goals and objectives listed on the previous pages represent a coherent, broad based consensus regarding community values, but they do not describe a way to achieve those goals. This plan looks beyond the ideals expressed in the town meetings to identify a set of positive steps that can be taken to direct Freeland's future. Described below are a series of recommended actions to enhance the Freeland's environmental assets and upgrade conditions for local residents and the business community. The recommendations are organized into the general goals they pursue. However, it should be noted that several of the actions pursue more than one goal.

A. Protect Rural Character and Scenic Qualities

Freeland's scenic open space and rural character was listed as one of Freeland's most important resources in the early town meetings. In addition, residents were deeply concerned about unmanaged development sprawling across the landscape which is allowed by the comparatively intense zoning (the Residential Zone allows 3.5 units per acre). Several actions are recommended to reduce the visual impact of new development and protect as much as possible the community's rural character while still providing the opportunity for affordable housing.

A-1 Do not Allow Transfer of Development Rights Within the Freeland Community Planning Area

The Island County Zoning Ordinance currently allows the transfer of development rights (TDRs) from one site to another. That is, one property owner may sell the right to develop dwelling units on another property. For example, if two property owners each had the "right' under the zoning ordinance to build 10 units each on their respective properties and one property owner sold his rights under the zoning ordinance provisions, then the buyer would be allowed to build 20 units and the seller none. In Freeland's case, this program could permit substantially denser development if TDRs from outside the community were sold to developers in the planning area. Since this generally runs counter to the maintenance of open space and rural lifestyle, it is recommended that the purchase of TDRs from outside the community planning area not be permitted.

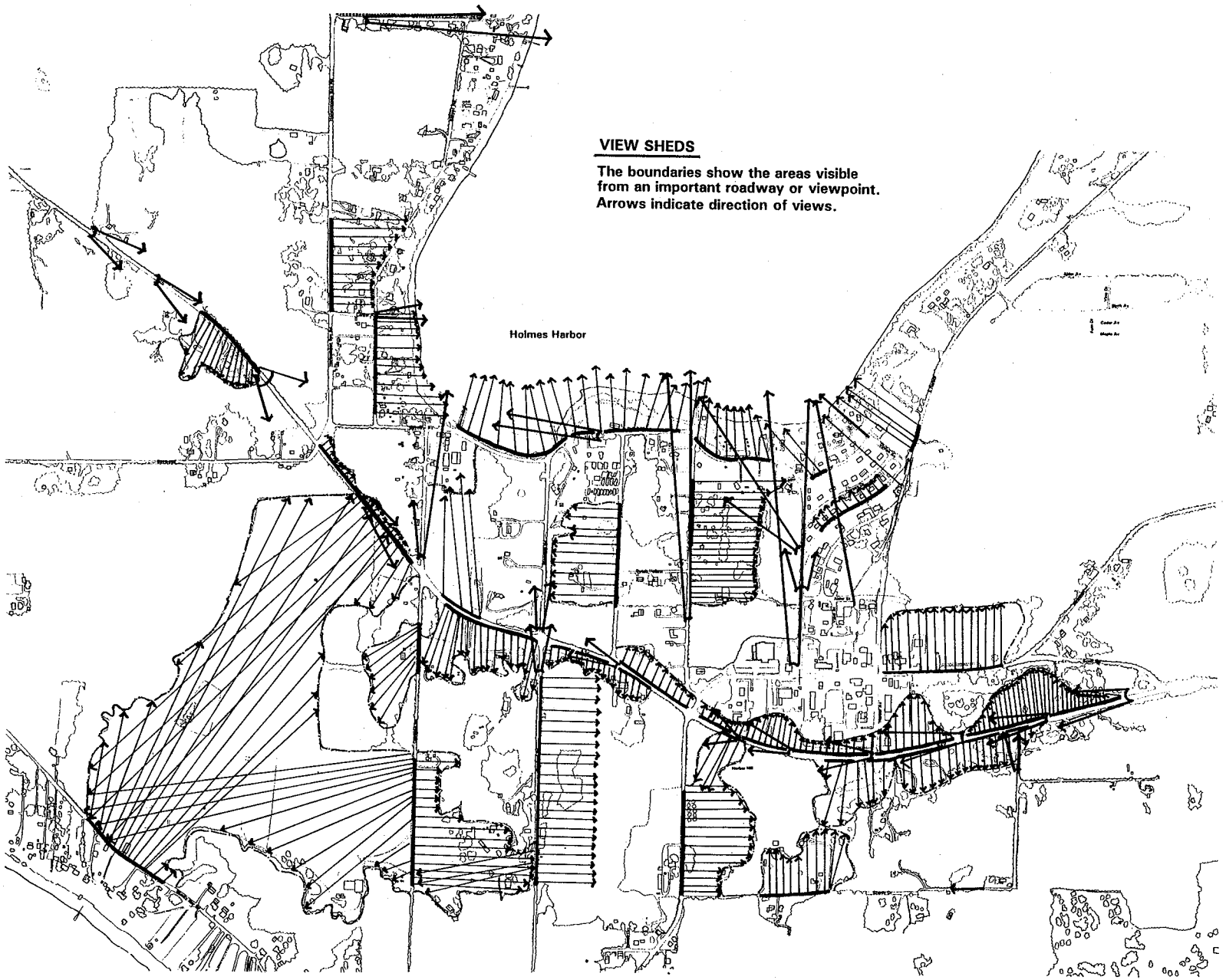
The transfer of development rights inside the community planning area from one property in a scenic site to a less sensitive site was suggested as a tool to redirect development to where it would have a lesser impact. However, there was strong community reaction against any use of TDRs because it was felt that the result would be local pockets of higher density development. Therefore, the use of TDRs anywhere in Freeland is not recommended.

The provision of affordable housing is addressed in three ways. First, attached housing and mobile home development as allowed in the current zoning ordinance will still be permitted. Second, a mixed use residential and commercial building are encouraged in some portions of the downtown and residential buildings are allowed in some proposed NR subdistricts. Finally, the proposed PRD guidelines allow for multifamily unit development so long as the original height limitations and new site design guidelines are met.

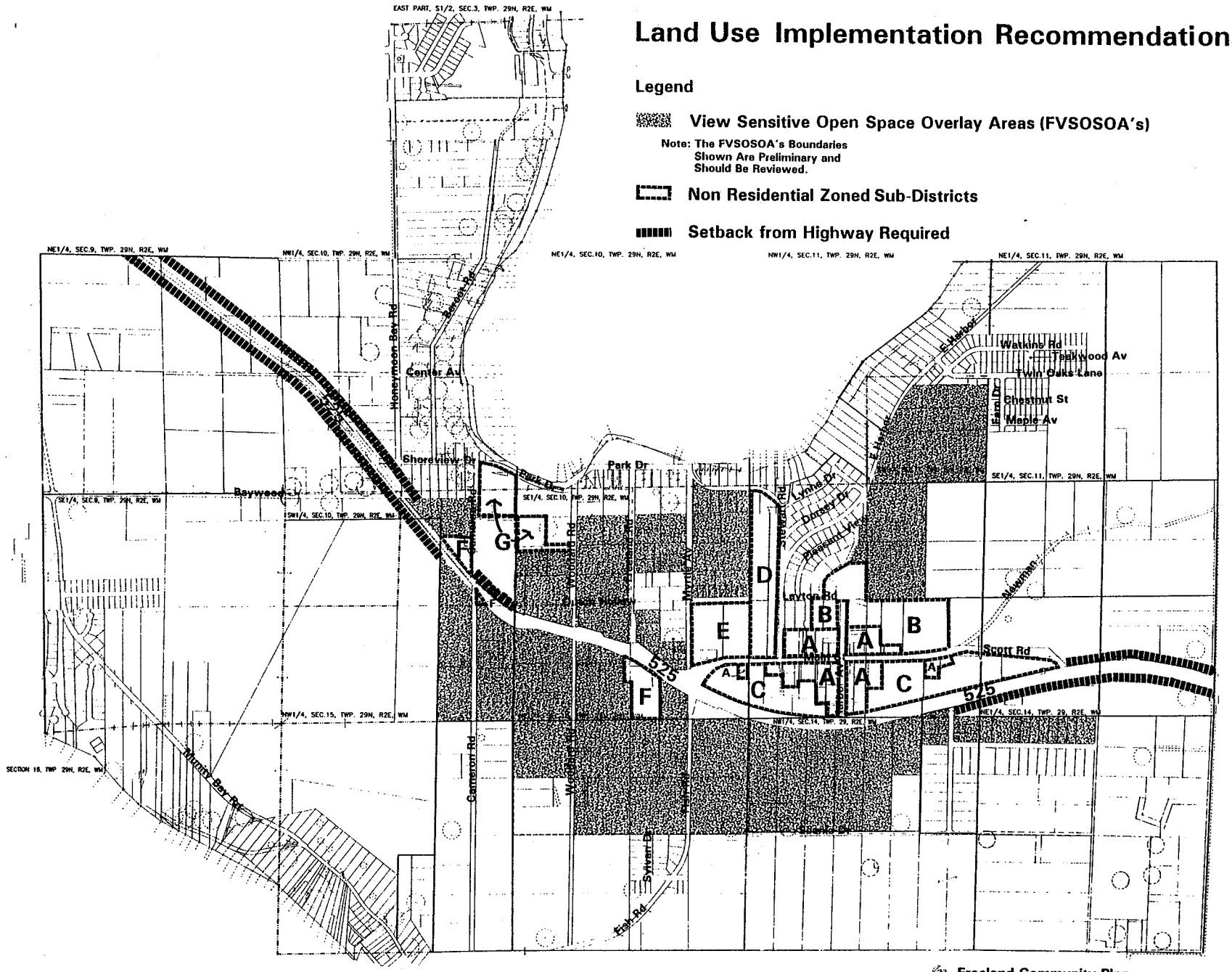
A-2 Adopt Site Design Guidelines Individual Lot Residential Development

Guidelines for individual residential development should encourage property owners to retain existing trees and reduce the visual impact of new houses through sensitive site planning are recommended. These can be adopted and simplified from the proposed guidelines recommended in A-3 below.

A-3 Adopt Site Development Guidelines for Development on Highly Visible Areas


VIEW SHEDS
The boundaries show the areas visible from an important roadway or viewpoint. Arrows indicate direction of views.
Holmes Harbor

Land Use Implementation Recommendations



Freeland Community Plan

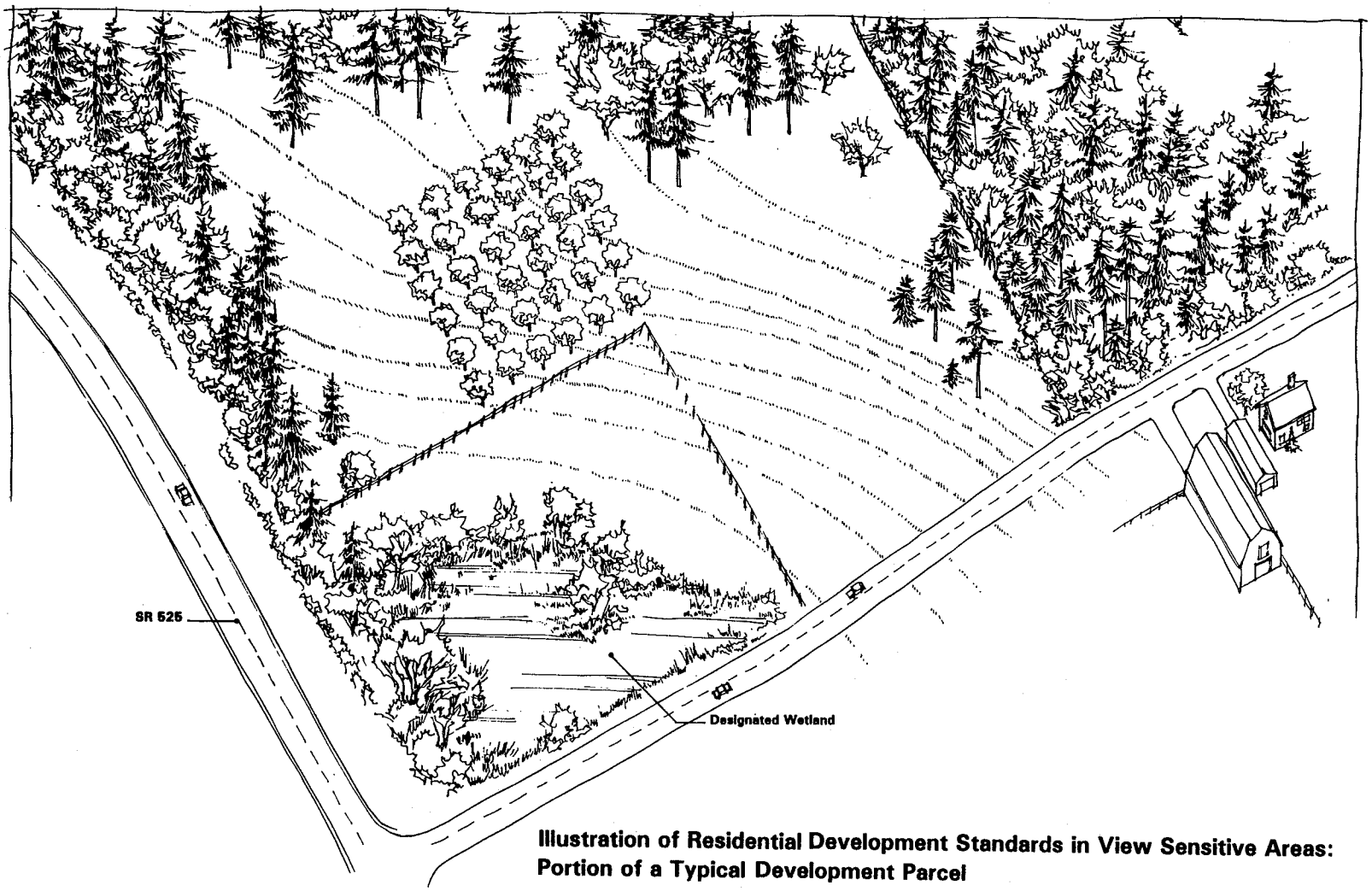


Illustration of Residential Development Standards in View Sensitive Areas: Portion of a Typical Development Parcel

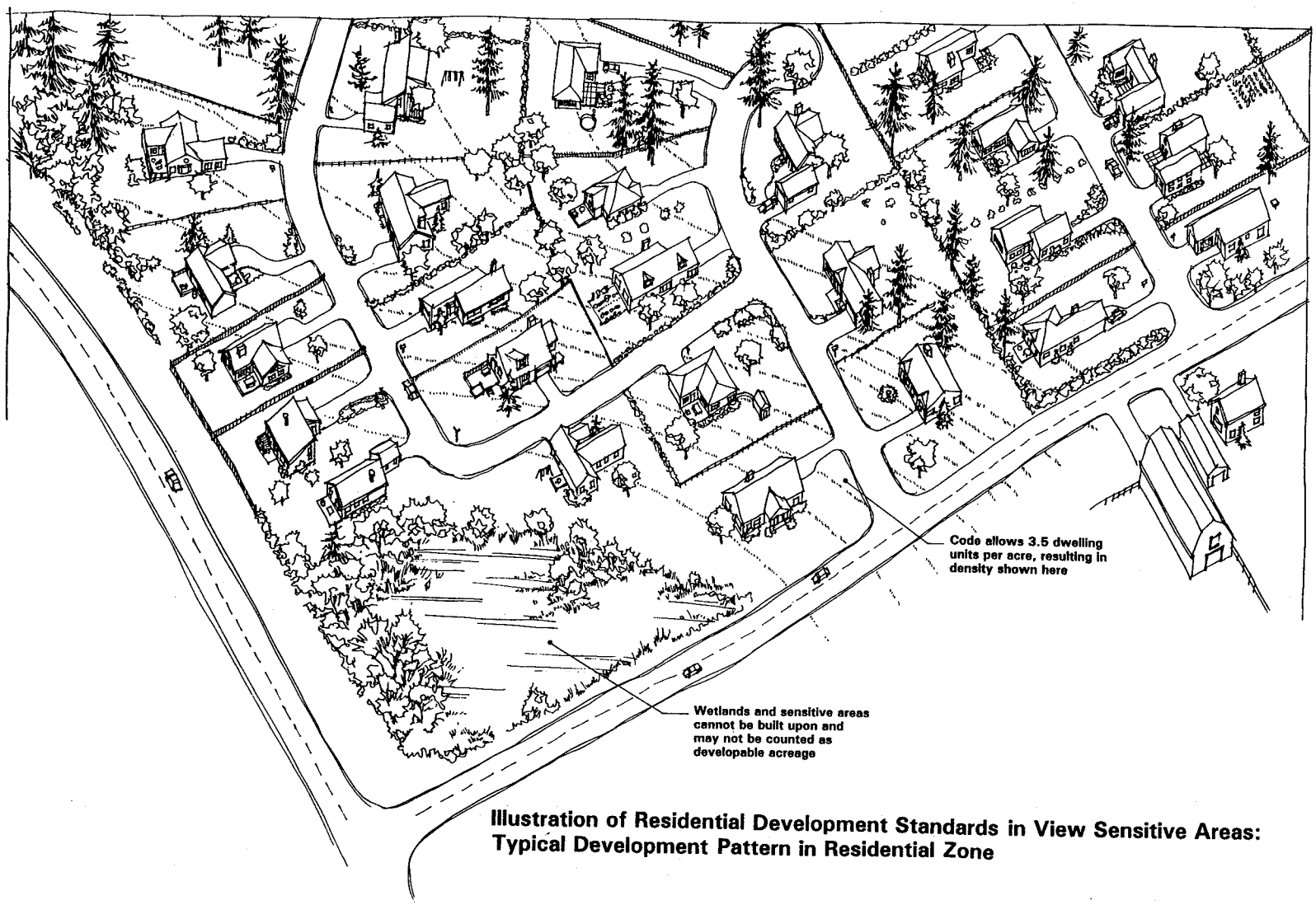


Illustration of Residential Development Standards in View Sensitive Areas: Typical Development Pattern in Residential Zone

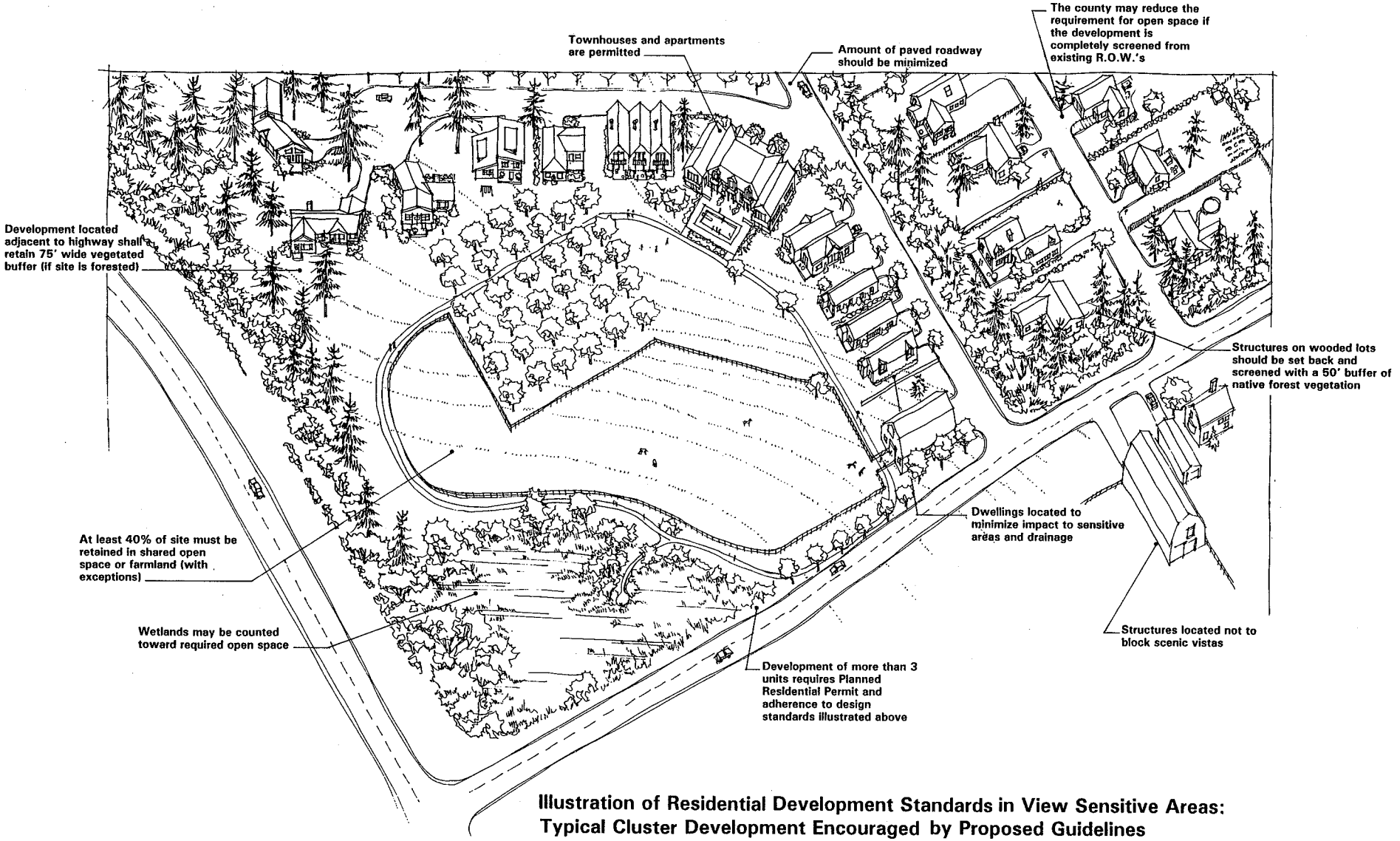


Illustration of Residential Development Standards in View Sensitive Areas: Typical Cluster Development Encouraged by Proposed Guidelines

The recommended site development standards would apply to the development or subdivision of three or more dwelling units within areas designated as a View Sensitive Overlay Area (see map), and would only allow development through the County's Planned Residential Development (PRD) process. Special standards for the retention of open space, reduction of visual impact and/or tree retention will encourage more efficient site planning that reduces sprawl and helps to retain the area's rural character. A draft outline for such standards was developed to assist the community and Island County planning staff in formulating regulations. ~~included in the appendices of this plan.~~ These draft standards should be reviewed and refined and the map designating the view sensitive areas refined. In the interim, the draft guidelines can be used as policy recommendations to assist in evaluating impacts and compatibility of individual projects. The three schematic aerial views on the previous pages illustrate the guideline's intent. Note that the guidelines allow for multifamily units (attached housing) within PRD's provided that height, bulk and other design standards are met.

A-4 Adopt Scenic Corridor Design Standard for Properties Lying on Highway 525

Where native forests still exist along the highway, new development should be required to maintain a buffer of trees and natural vegetation at least 60' wide. (This distance may be reduced in cases where it would cause a hardship.) Such a buffer will not only help to protect the scenic qualities of the highway, but also reduce the impacts of noise and fumes on residents.

Where new development occurs on an open, unforested site, the site standards for individual properties and PRDs (see A-2 and A-3 above) may be utilized to retain the areas open, rural character.

A-5 Install Highway Landscaping

The site development standards proposed in this plan will significantly reduce the risk of new development spoiling the rural scenery in Freeland along SR 525. However, landscaping in the highway ROW would screen currently unsightly areas and help to maintain the wooded greenbelts in other portions of the corridor.

Two different landscaping types are recommended. For open areas with wide views, a low hedge row would screen ground level intrusions such as parking areas and

add a colorful landscape element very typical on Whidbey Island. For closed, forested areas, denser more wooded vegetation is recommended.

The section on the next page shows proposed improvements for a typical wooded section within the ROW on 525 with a landscaped buffer of native plants. The planted buffer varies in width and height of plant material. The area closest to the highway, where a wide, unimpeded view is important for safety reasons, low growing wetland plants, shrubs such as Red Twig Dogwood, and native wild flowers would be planted. The "Freeland hedgerow" (of snowberry, Oregon grape, wild parsnip, wild rose, Red Current, etc.) would further add an attractive edge to the roadway add an attractive edge to the roadway that is typical of rural areas on Whidbey Island. In areas where it is important to provide a dense screen to block views (i.e. of residential or commercial areas) stands of native trees such as Vine Maple, Osoberry and Hawthorn are recommended; and in areas where overhead utility lines are not a consideration, Douglas Fir, cedar, Pacific Dogwood and Mazzard Cherry are recommended. An illustration of highway landscaping section for an open (non wooded) stretch of highway is included in the section on downtown street improvements, C-1.

Landscaping costs could vary from $100K to $200K depending on length and extent of the landscaped areas. This is a program which could be phased over time. At present, the most critical area is the section due south of the business district where storage yards and parking abut the highway. State Department of Transportation funds should be sought to assist this effort.

B. Protect Natural Areas and Shoreline Resource

The two highest priority values expressed in the mail out questionnaire survey dealt with environmental and water resource protection. Town Meeting #1 results listed the natural areas as what local citizens liked most about the Freeland and Town Meeting #2 results reaffirmed the priority of preserving wetlands, protecting drinking water and managing storm water. Listed below are several specific actions to take in this regard.

B-1 Enforce Wetland Ordinance and Protect Drainage Ways

This is an ongoing activity of the Island County Planning Department. The new wetland inventory done as part of this plan will assist Island County staff in evaluating the potential impacts of proposed projects on wetlands and drainageways.

B-2 Emphasize the Use of Natural Systems in Stormwater Drainage Design

Natural drainage basin features such as wetlands, meandering streams, grass lined swales and heavily vegetated valleys not only carry off storm water, they filter runoff, and recharge aquifers. In Central Whidbey, with its glacier formed rolling landscape and diverse soils, natural drainage systems are an interconnected network. Damage or blockage to one element can cause flooding or water quality problems downstream. Moreover, Holmes Harbor does not flush rapidly, so pollutants tend to collect there.

For these reasons, it is imperative that the design of drainage systems accommodate the natural processes related to retention, detention, and percolation. Vegetation buffers around wetlands and drainage ways and the incorporation of grass lined swales rather than closed pipes will help to improve water quality. Some drainage improvements and general maintenance may be needed. (see B-3 below)

B-3 Implement Storm Water Management Improvements and Regulations

(The following discussion is adapted from the Freeland Community Plan Engineering Study done in conjunction with this plan.)

The County reviews presently all new development relative to drainage requirements, and current County regulations and design criteria are limited and are applied on a case-by-case basis. There is a design standard for storm drainage calculations and requirements that post-development run-off not to exceed predevelopment rates for detention. However, structures less than 4000 sq. ft. (single-family residences) are exempt.

The County is currently writing a drainage manual, using the State standards as a guide. There is a draft revised Flood Damage Ordinance in the process of review and approval by the Board of Commissioners. The County is also considering the possibility of a Public Utilities Department which would be responsible for drainage.

Drainage issues identified by County staff are:

- "Freeland Bog" flooding and water quality
- Underground storm drainage system along Main Street
- Ponding in the area of Nichols Brothers Boatyard
- Ponding in the area of Alder Street and Harbor Drive intersection

The last two are not considered serious and will require only minor improvements and maintenance to be handled by the County in a normal priority.

The community participants have voiced a strong concern regarding the impacts of stormwater runoff from new development on neighboring properties. For areas where storm drainage is a potential problem, the County should carefully consider the impacts. It may be that for certain areas, the 4000 SF threshold is too large.

The Freeland Bog has been the subject of public meetings, previous studies and engineering analysis by the County staff. The bog is part of the natural drainage path for a large drainage basin. Over the course of time, the natural drainage has been disrupted by roadway and private development construction. At this time, the bog is part of a regulated wetland area and is contributing to a flooding problem along Main Street.

A solution to the problem is to obtain the necessary easements and funding to permit restoring the existing ditch from Main Street north to Holmes Harbor.

The storm drainage associated with Main Street is a conventional system of catch basins and pipelines. Any redesign required will be a routine task when Main Street is upgraded and does not require any special analysis at this time. Measures may be needed to insure that Main Street runoff is cleaned prior to entering the Freeland Bay drainageway. State standards for water quality measures such as oil water separators and sediment traps will be followed.

Activities which should be reviewed and/or completed by the County in order to ensure an overall drainage system operation include:

1. Define flood hazard areas and flood plains
2. Storm water urn off quality standards
3. Review detention/retention policy, including the practice of allowing credit for percolation if the percolated runoff can be resurfaced down on site stream and contribute to flow due to underlying impervious soil layers.
4. Drainage improvements standards.
5. Organization and Administration
   - Public Works Department, Drainage District or extend the Freeland Water District franchise to include drainage.
   - Need to purchase, operate and maintain drainage facilities including easements.
6. Coordinate storm drainage requirements with street section design.

B-4 Monitor and Evaluate Need for a Sanitary Sewage System

As part of an engineering study for this community plan, the Alpha Engineering Group, Inc. examined potential sewerage treatment schemes. The results of the analyses is included in the Freeland Community Plan Engineering Study and is summarized below.

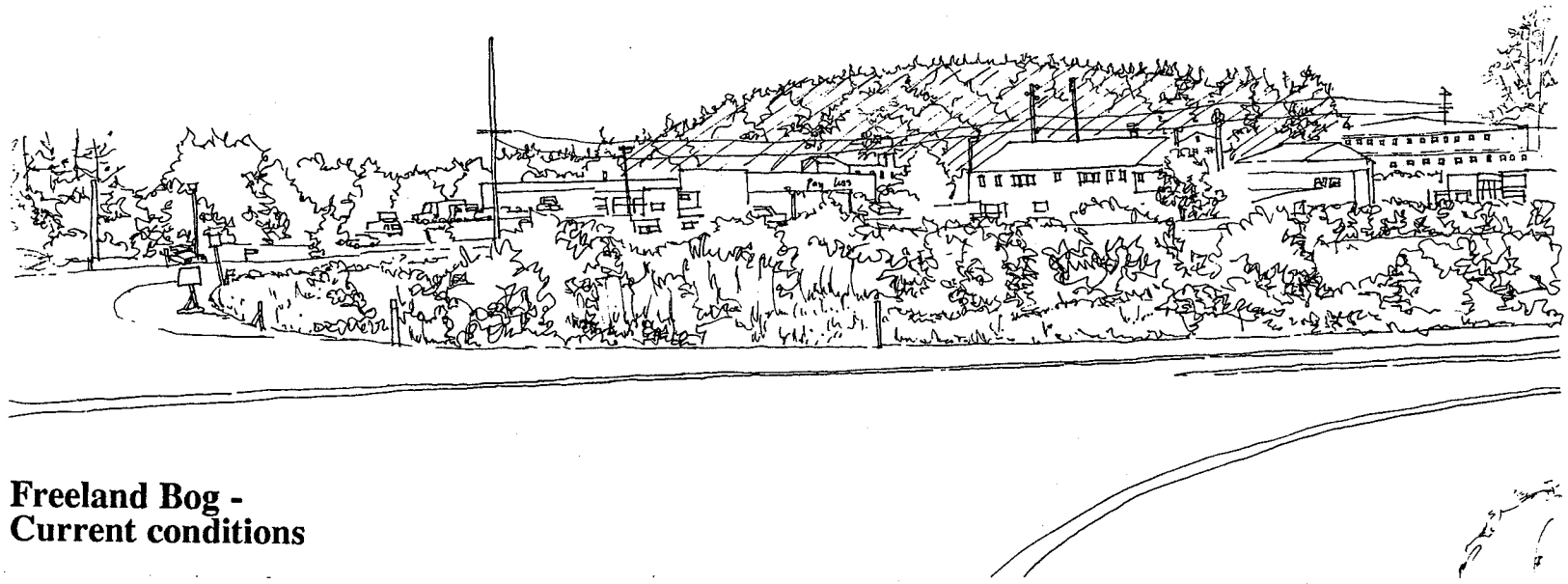
Present Conditions

All of the residences, business and other facilities in the Freeland area are served by individual on-site waste water treatment systems ~~by on-site septic tanks~~. Most tanks have conventional drainage fields; however, it is reported that some units have enhanced effluent disposal systems such as mounded percolation beds. The soil condition in this area is typical for the entire Puget Sound which is a glacial till with a highly variable composition. In general, the soil has poor to very poor percolation due to a significant amount of clay. This, in turn, has caused the failure of several drainfields with its related possible impact on public health. The performance of several fields is marginal and a number of developments in the area cannot obtain permits due to their inability to demonstrate adequate percolation capacity on their properties.

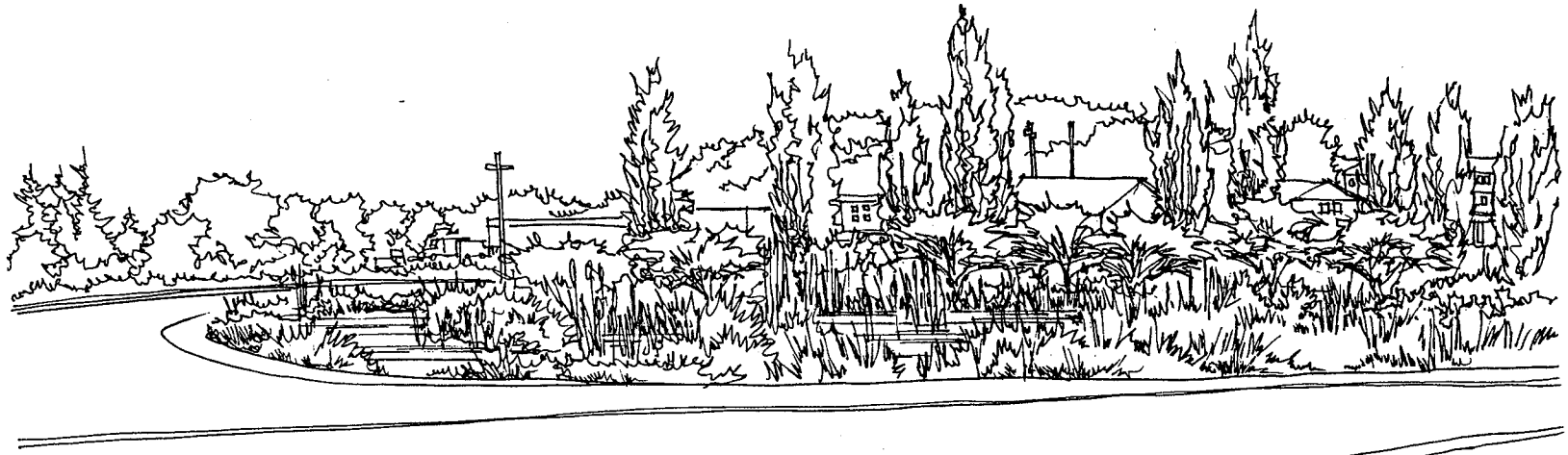
Analysis

Three alternatives were evaluated;

1. Individual septic tanks with on-site effluent displays.



Freeland Bog -
Current conditions



Freeland Bog -
Proposed gateway landscaping
and drainage improvements

2. A conventional system of gravity sewers, a central treatment plant (primary, secondary, effluent disinfection and sludge drying), and underwater outfall.
3. A "~~hybrid~~" innovative and alternative (I&A) waste water treatment system as defined by the EPA which combines septic tanks with components of a centralized system.

In the long term, the community's reliance solely on septic tanks appears not to be a reasonable alternative, given the lack of perkable soil and the number of failed drainfields. Based on two previously published reports, the capital cost of the second alternative, the conventional gravity system with a primary and secondary treatment plant was (in 1991 dollars) $3,875,000.

The opportunity to develop a "~~hybrid~~" an I&A system consisting of septic systems connected to a tertiary treatment plant can overcome most, if not all, of the negative factors of a conventional system.

- Individual or small groups of services will drain into on-site septic tanks which are fitted with a small discharge pump to pump the effluent from the septic tanks.

- The pump will discharge the effluent into low pressure, small diameter collection pipelines which will follow the existing rights-of-way ground elevations, and only requires shallow burial.

- This pipeline network (with the aid of a booster pump) will connect to a treatment plant. One potential option is the incorporation of Freeland's system into the treatment plant which is approved for construction in late 1991 by the Holmes Harbor Water District for the Holmes Harbor Golf and Yacht Club. This facility will treat the effluent for turf irrigation ~~consumption~~ on their golf course(s). They can also pump septic tanks, dispose of the sewage, and provide maintenance on a contract basis with the Freeland Water District to avoid duplication of services. Providing service to the Freeland area will require expansion of at least some of the original treatment plant's systems.

Such a system will have several advantages:

- It allows for connections which might otherwise have grade problems with a gravity system.

- It is easy to phase in because there will not be a need to have sufficient flows to flush the lines.

- It eliminates the need to design, permit, build and operate a separate treatment plant.

- Economics of a larger scaled operation may be realized.

- It eliminates the discharge of effluent into Puget Sound.

- It is an environmentally sound, self contained system.

- The overall capital cost is reduced as compared to conventional systems. ~~is a saleable commodity it can be used to reduce the cost for having Holmes Harbor Water District to provide treatment services~~. It should be noted that this type of system, although relatively new, has over 1000 ~~several~~ proven applications nationwide ~~and in fact will be similar to the system to be built by Holmes Harbor Water District~~.

The exercising of this option would be subject to approval by the private treatment plant owner and to the expansion capability of the plant's design. These issues should be discussed during the permit review for the private plant so that the potential for such a joint effort is evaluated.

The capital cost of such a system in 1991 dollars is estimated to be:

Septic Tanks and Pumps (approx. $2,300/site x 750 sites)	$1,725,000
Low Pressure Collection System and force main	$ 700,000
Booster Pump	$ 100,000
Engineering, Construction Management and Permitting	$ 400,000
Total Cost Excluding Septic Tanks and Pumps	$1,200,000

Note: This cost represents a community-wide system, costs for a smaller district or individual development connection would be substantially less.

The cost of expanding the Holmes Harbor Treatment Plant is not included because the amount will depend upon the plant's original design and on the number of Freeland users to be served. The capital costs of plant expansion may be incorporated into the fee rates.

There are several implementation options. One is for the Water District to develop a comprehensive system of all properties north of the highway. All system users and owners would be assessed to cover capital costs. Another option is for a group of property owners who need a sewage system (such as the CBD property owners and other nearby owners of non-perking properties) to form an organization (such as a local improvement district-L.I.D.) and construct the force main ~~high-pressure-system~~ with a low pressure feed to their properties only. New users would pay to enter the system and share the cost.

The important thing is that the capital start-up costs are relatively low. As more septic systems begin to fail and ground water becomes threatened, such a system may become an attractive option for the whole community. Costs for booster pump and force main can be reduced with a low interest loan through the Washington State Revolving Fund for Water Pollution Control (SRF).

It is recommended that the community closely monitor the need for a sewerage system and level of support for its development within the community. This would be an appropriate task for the Freeland Water District. It may be that the need for a sewerage system first arises in the commercial core or in a large development parcel. In this case, a cooperative organization or individual or private property owner can initiate the system to their properties only.

C. Upgrade the Business District

Many of the comments and issues raised at the town meetings dealt with the appearance and quality of Freeland's downtown. Citizens stated that they preferred a downtown that:

- o Retains a village scale and atmosphere
- o Is more attractive
- o Serves all of South Whidbey
- o Is pedestrian oriented
- o Allows opportunities for manufacturing and new jobs
- o Orients to Main Street and not to the highway

The actions listed below pursue these objectives. It is important to note that experience has shown that successful, cohesive communities depend on healthy business districts. Business districts are where individuals find their needs, and meet friends. The core also presents community's image and sense of identity.

It is also important to note that the appearance of a downtown and a community as a whole depends both on the quality of its public spaces, its streets, sidewalks, parks and civic buildings and the quality of private development. Therefore, the downtown improvement actions consists of both capital improvement actions to upgrade streets and utilities and urban design guidelines to direct new development to better support community values.

C-1 Downtown Street and Sidewalk Improvements

As a part of the capital improvements plan, street improvements are proposed within the right-of-way along Main St. and also along Harbor Ave. These are briefly described below. In all cases the recommended improvements should be planned so that future construction does not require the removal of earlier work. For example, the location of trees on Harbor Ave. should allow for ultimate installation of a storm sewer line to replace the drainage ditches. The utilitarian and informal character of improvements such as the rolled asphalt curb, wooden power poles, asphalt sidewalk, etc. are intended to keep construction costs to a minimum. The ability of the asphalt sidewalk to meander in its location relative to the curb allows for variations in utility line locations and driveways.

Note: All cost estimates in this report are planning level, order of magnitude projections based on engineering assumptions. Actual cost figures may vary considerably due to unforeseen conditions. Figures are in 1991 dollars.

A. Main Street:

Present roadway width of 25' is retained with the addition of rolled gutter, planted strip of varying width with street trees, and 8' asphalt pedestrian walkway. This configuration would allow ultimate street widening to 3 lanes when the demand warrants and would permit bicycle lanes. A key aspect of this scheme is to reduce the number and width of driveways to increase traffic capacity and safety upgrade drainage and vastly improve the appearance of the street. In many instances, such as in front of Napa parking lot, the planted strip and pedestrian walkway provides an edge to the parking lot which allows for an additional row of parking (see illustrations). The cost for improvements between Harbor Ave. and E. Harbor Drive is approximately $150 - $175,000.

B. Harbor Ave:

1. South of Main St:

   Present roadway width of 25' remains with the addition of a rolled gutter on each side. On the west side of the street there is a 5' pedestrian walkway between a double row of street trees. On the east side of the street the 6'-8" pedestrian walkway is adjacent to the roadway with a planted strip and street trees on the far side. A columnar tree, such as Bolle's Poplar, is recommended to give the street a special character and mark the

entrance to Harbor Ave. off of 525. The form of the tree recalls the poplars planted between the fields as wind breaks and is in keeping with the rural character. The cost for the block long improvements is estimated at between $80 - $100,000.

2. North of Main St:

Improvements for this portion of Harbor Ave. are proposed in two phases.

Phase 1: Present roadway width of 22' remains. On the east side of the roadway a 6' pedestrian walkway is buffered from the roadway by wetland plants and grasses in a 13' grasslined swale. These improvements are estimated to cost between $20 - $30,000.

Phase 2: As the commercial district expands north of Main St. the roadway is widened to 25' the current width of Harbor Ave. south of Main St.) and 8' pedestrian walkways on either side would be separated form traffic by a 9'-6" planted strip and street trees on either side.

C-2 Institute Land Use and Site Design Guidelines for Non-Residential Properties

One problem hindering the efficient functioning and appearance of Freeland's commercial core is that the "Non-Residential" (NR) zoning classifications allows such a wide spectrum of uses that it is difficult to create a more pedestrian oriented retail core, direct manufacturing uses to most suitable sites, or insure compatibility of neighboring properties. The wide-open nature of the N-R zone provides little direction or predictability, and it limits some opportunities such as mixed-use residential which may be viable in some areas.

The proposed solution for this problem is to subdivide CBD NR zones into smaller sub-districts with different land use options and design standards for each. The land use and site development standards are intended to expand the possibilities for development in the commercial area (e.g. to allow residential units in some sub-districts) while structuring the district to provide a more cohesive pedestrian core, a more attractive highway center, appropriate sites for light-duty industrial activities, and sites that transition form commercial to residential areas. The matrices on the following page indicate the uses and design standards recommended for each sub district on the map. The sketch on the following page illustrates how the standards might be applied in the Pedestrian Core sub-district.

~~The appendix to this plan contains~~ Draft guidelines to implement this concept have been developed which are intended as a starting point for establishing more refined land use and site design standards. It is recommended that the downtown business community work with the County Planning Department to refine the draft matrices, sub district map and guidelines to assist orderly and coordinated development of non-residential properties. In the interim, the guidelines can assist Island County Planning Department staff reviewing permit applications for compatibility with existing conditions and plans.

~~C-3 Rezone Rural Residential Lot South of Nichols Brothers Boatyard to Non-Residential and Apply Site Screening Standards~~

C-4 Condition the Use of the Non-Residential (NR Floating Zone in Freeland

The non-residential floating zone allows owners of properties zoned Rural Residential (RR) to apply for a rezone to NR to provide for unanticipated needs for commercial land. The proposal must meet criteria as specified in the Zoning Ordinance, however, this provision still allows the potential for new commercial development to intrude into residential areas, extend along the highway, and diffuse the business core, plus Freeland currently has enough NR zoned land to more

than double commercial activities. Therefore, it is recommended that rezone proposals from RR to NR also meet the following criteria:

- The applicant must demonstrate that there is no suitable, available land currently zoned NR in Freeland able to meet the needs of the proposed development; or that the location for the prosed facility on other than NR zoned land would serve a greater public benefit than if it were located on currently zoned land.

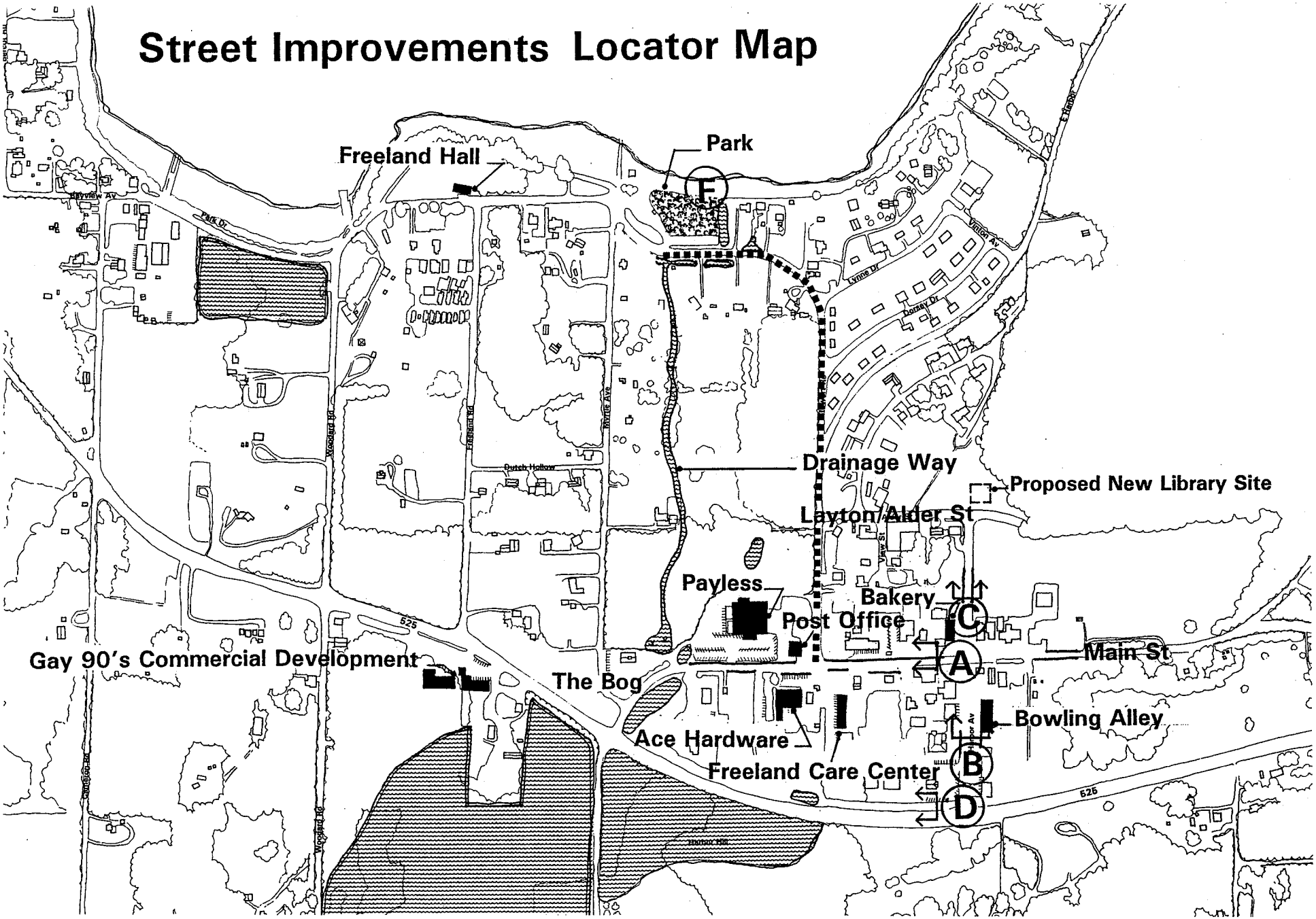
- The proposed development will not have any significant unmitigable impacts and is compatible with adjacent uses.

- The proposed development will not detract from the scenic qualities for views form Highway 525.

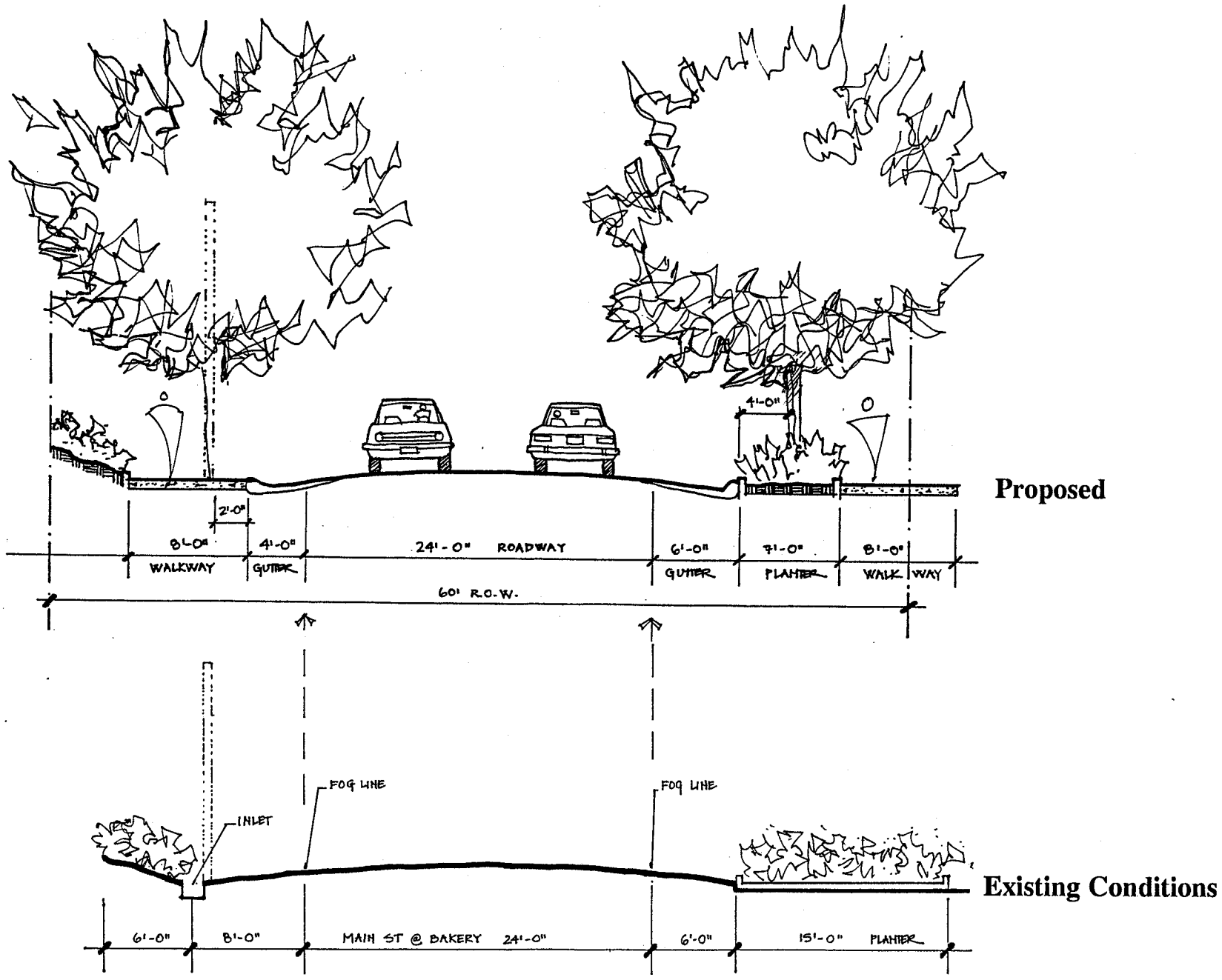
The parcel immediately south of Nichols Brothers Boatyard is one site where conversion from RR to NR zoning may be desirable. This parcel is currently surrounded by NR zoned land and is adjacent to the boatyard. Nichols Brothers Boatyard is an important source of employment in the South Island. Adequate provision for their expansion should be permitted so long as steps are taken to insure that environmental quality and residential areas are protected.

During the town meetings, participants expressed their concern that additional land for commercial activities such as warehousing, manufacturing and/or office parks be identified. Other participants expressed concerns that industrial or heavy commercial development would be unsightly and create negative impacts. If NR zoning is approved, conditions should be placed on private development that protect surrounding areas. The portions of sites adjacent to residential properties or street rights-of-way, especially Highway 525, should be heavily screened to reduce visual impact to those areas.

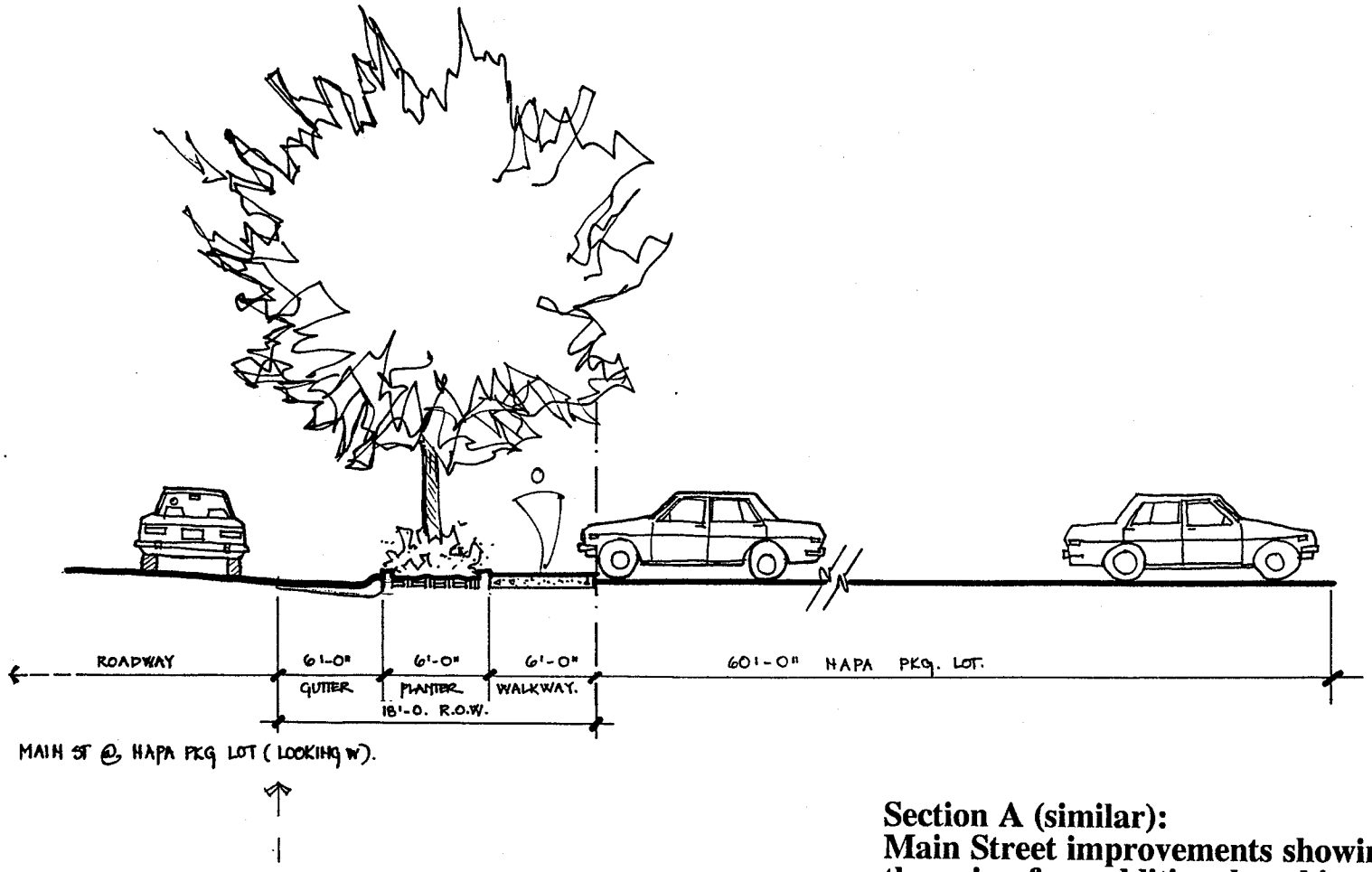
Street Improvements Locator Map



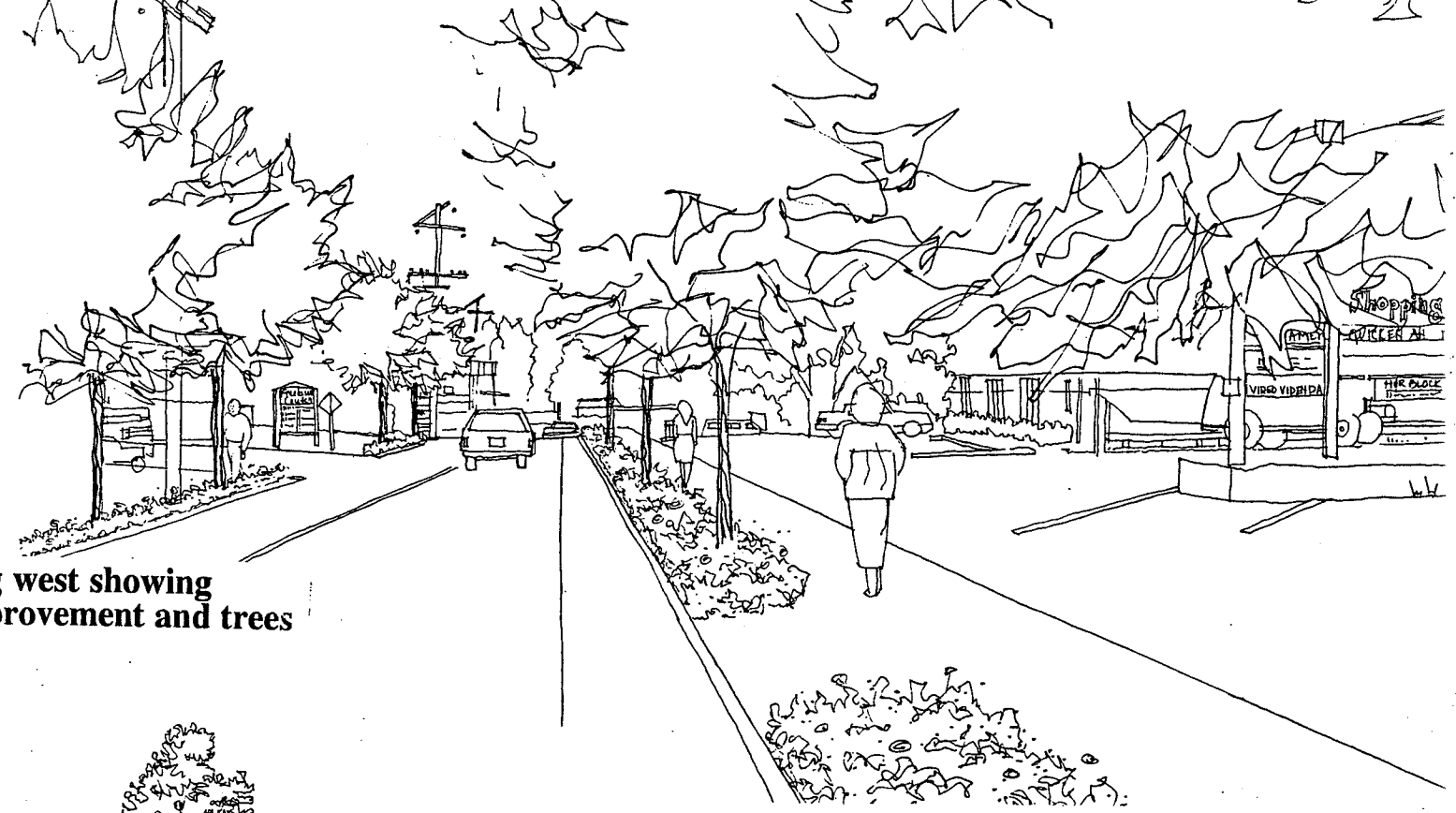
Section A:
Proposed Main Street Improvements



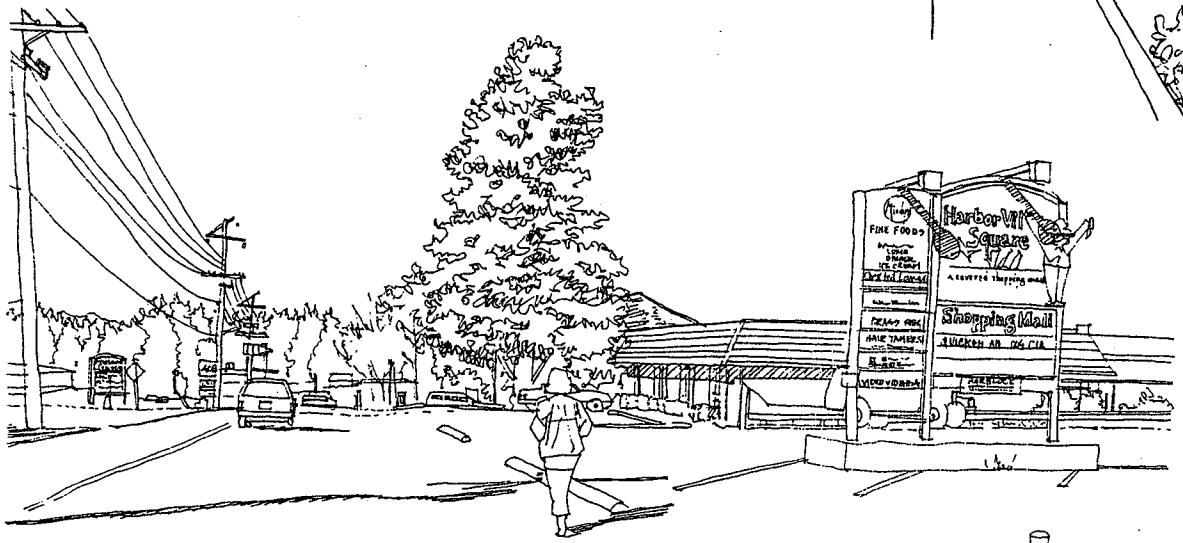
MAIN. ST. NEAR BAKERY LOOKING W.

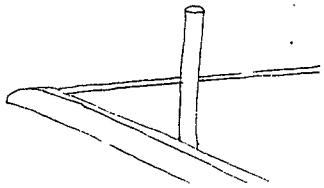


Section A (similar):
Main Street improvements showing the gain of an additional parking bay.

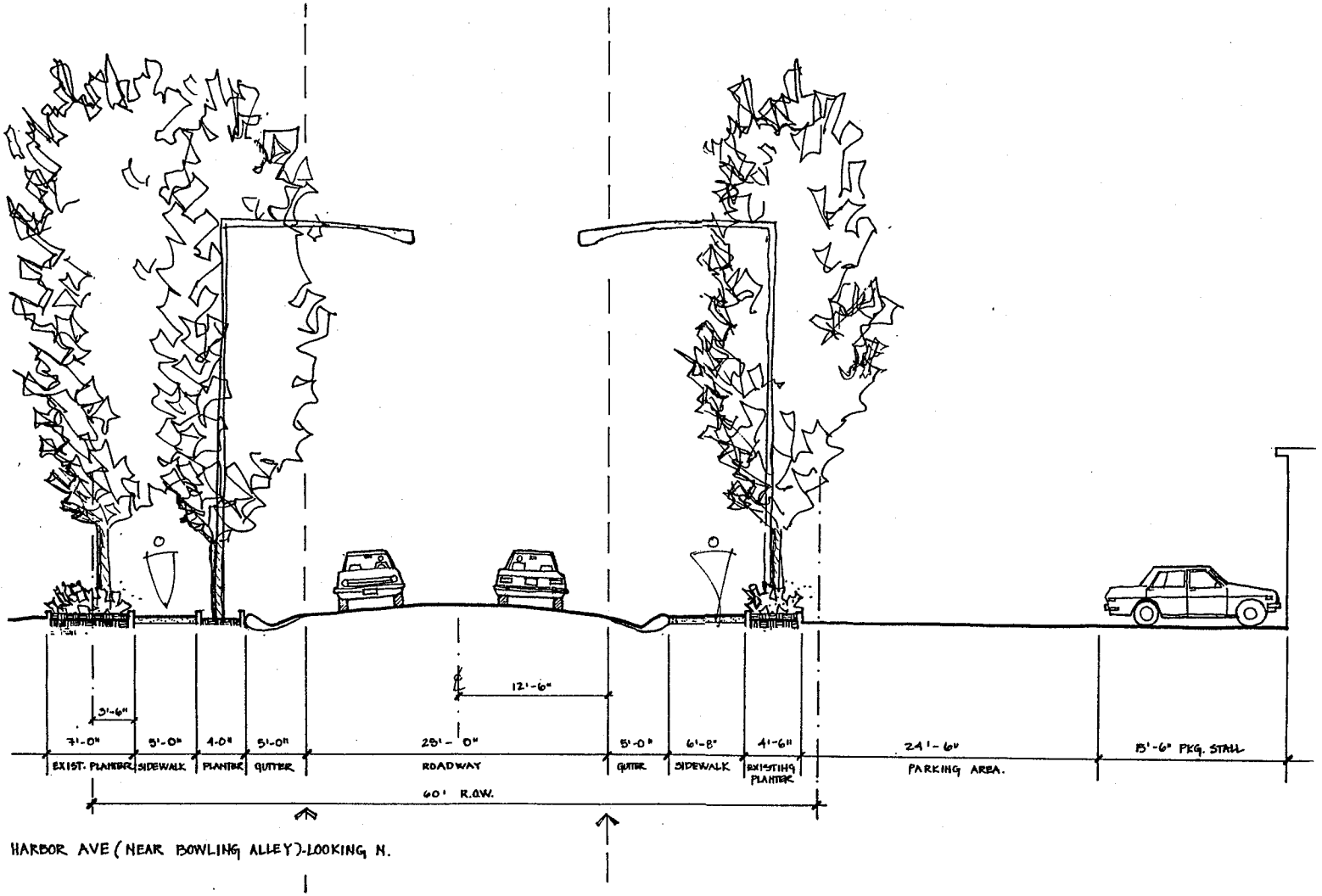


Main Street looking west showing proposed street improvement and trees

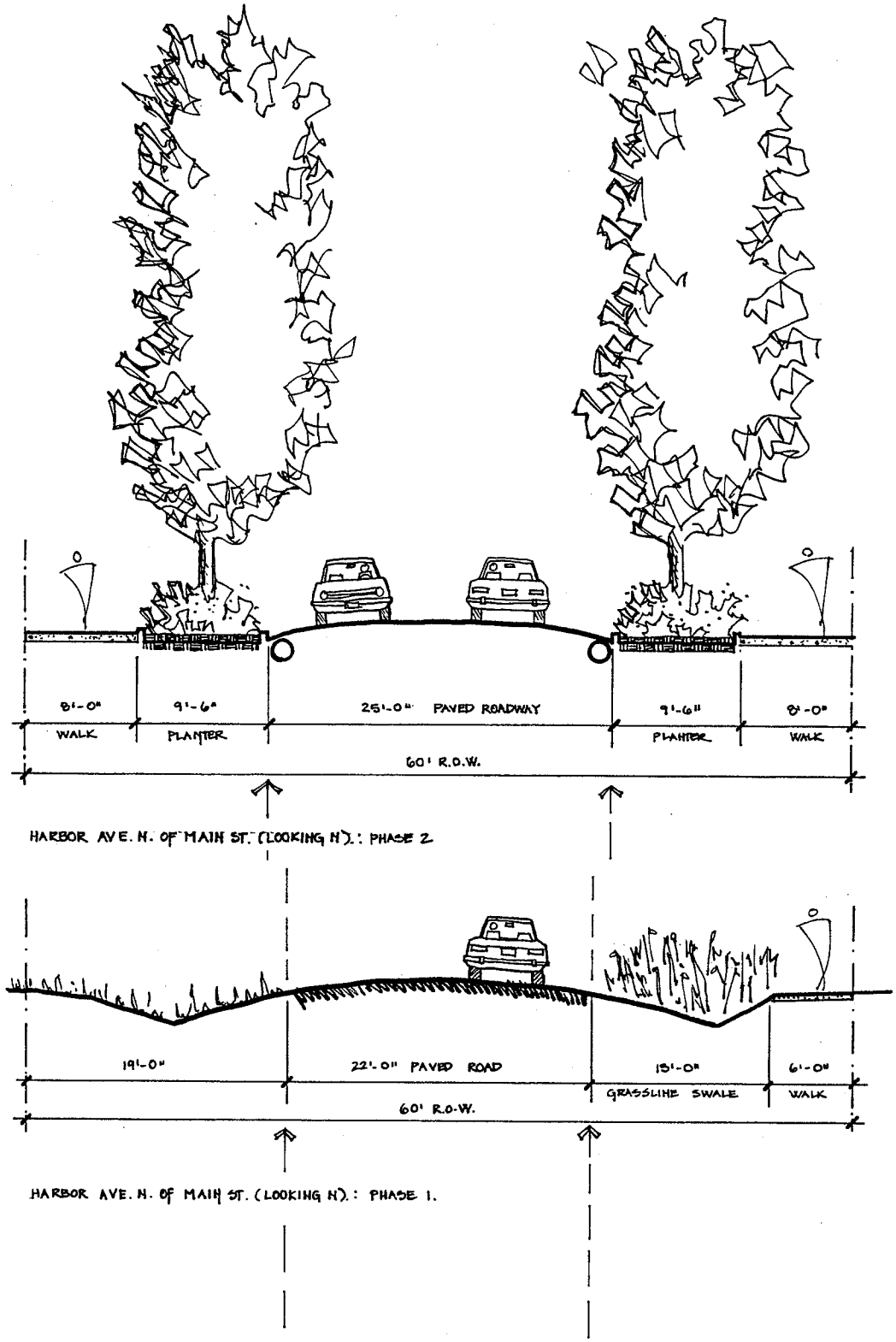




Main Street looking west - current conditions

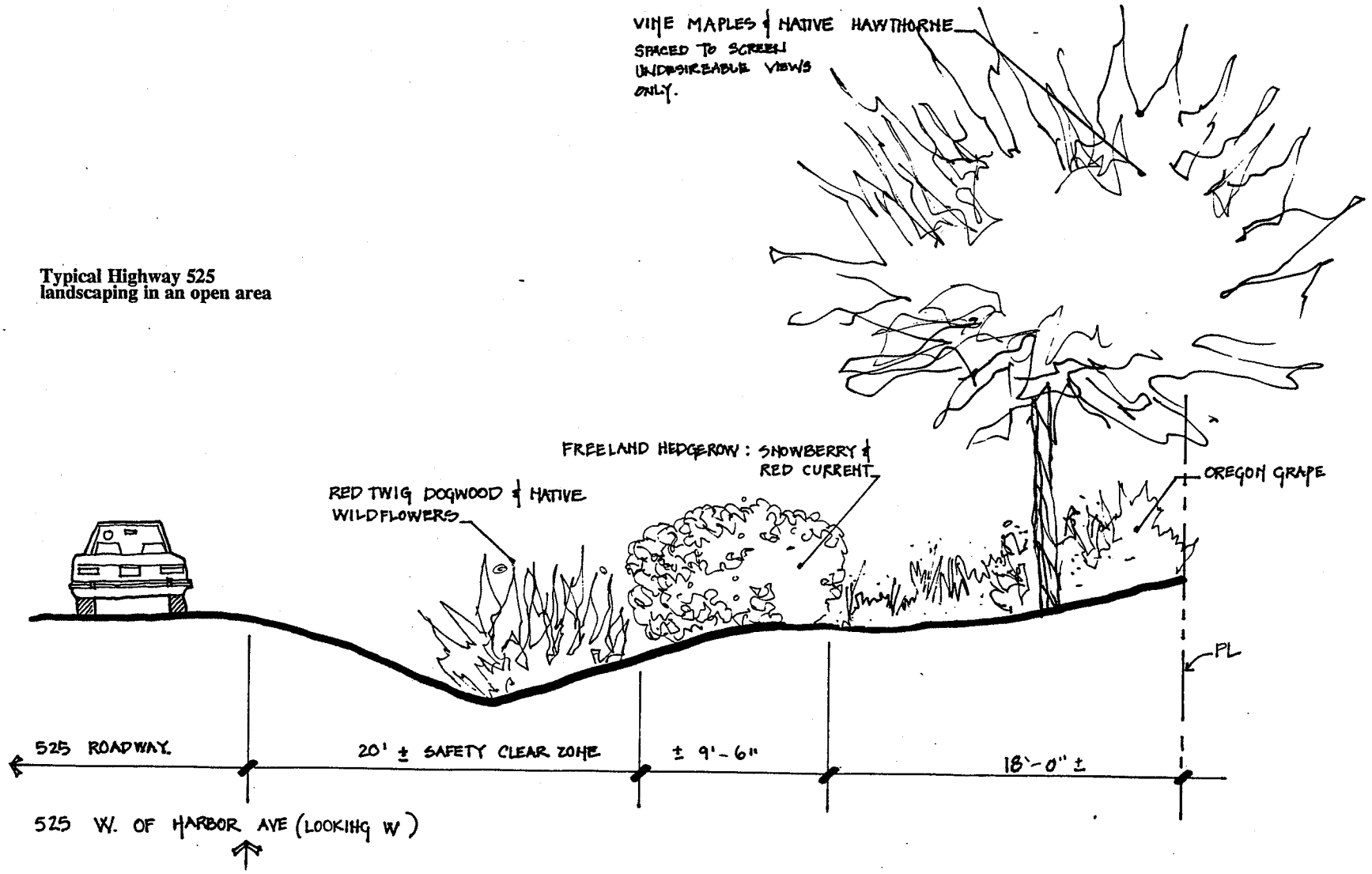


Section B:
Proposed Harbor Avenue Improvements



Section C:
Proposed improvements for Harbor Avenue north of Main St. Top drawing shows how Phase II construction build on Phase I improvements.

Typical Highway 525 landscaping in an open area

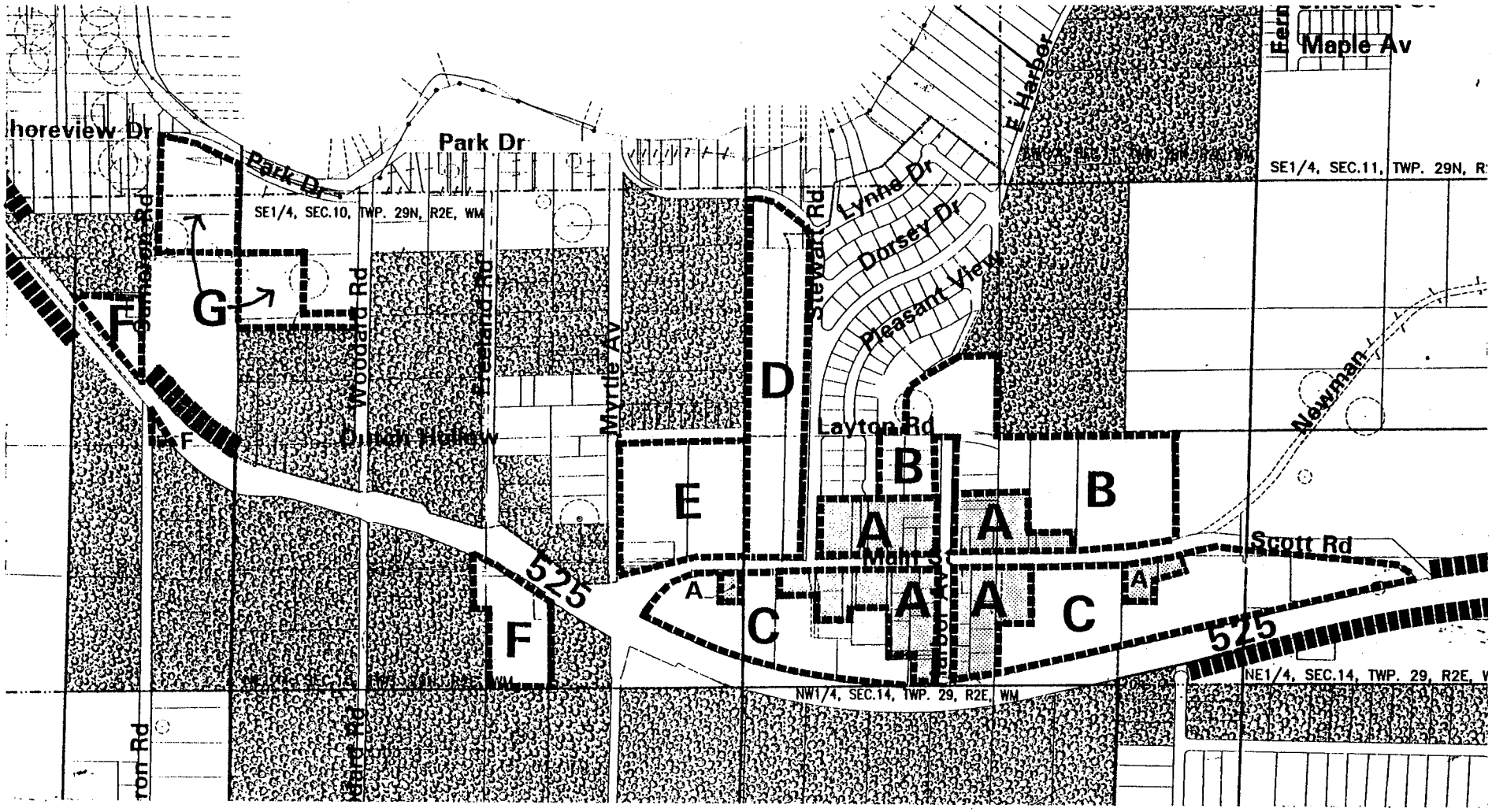


Legend

View Sensitive Open Space Overlay Areas (FVSOSOA's)

Note: The FVSOSOA's Boundaries Shown Are Preliminary and Should Be Reviewed.

Non Residential Zoned Sub-Districts



Allowable Uses in Freeland Non-Residential Sub-Districts

● = Permitted Use

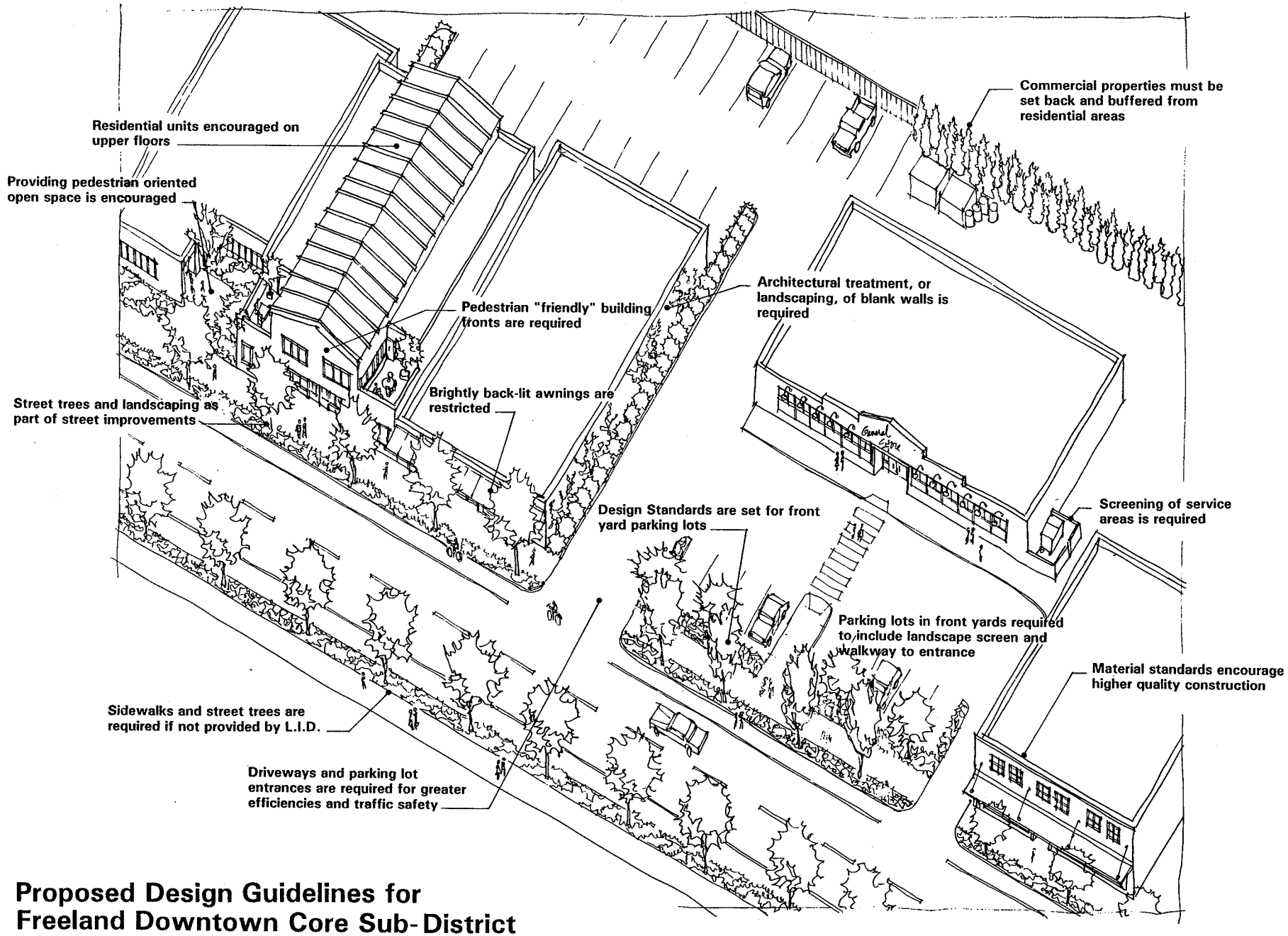
USE	Sub-District						
	A Pedestrian Core	B North Frame	C Highway Core	D North Spur	E West Frame	F South Highway	G West Satellite
Retail not otherwise specified below	●	●[1]	●		●	●	
Gasoline Filling Stations			●			●	
Drive-through Businesses			●				
Retail w/Outdoor Storage			●				●
Personal and Professional Services	●[2]	●	●	●	●		●
Residential	●[2]	●		●	●		
Bed and Breakfasts	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Eating, Drinking and Indoor Recreation	●	●[1]	●	●	●	●	
Community and Public Facilities	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Manufacturing and Warehousing							●

1. Permitted within 200' of Main Street Right-of-Way only.
2. Permitted in upper stories only.

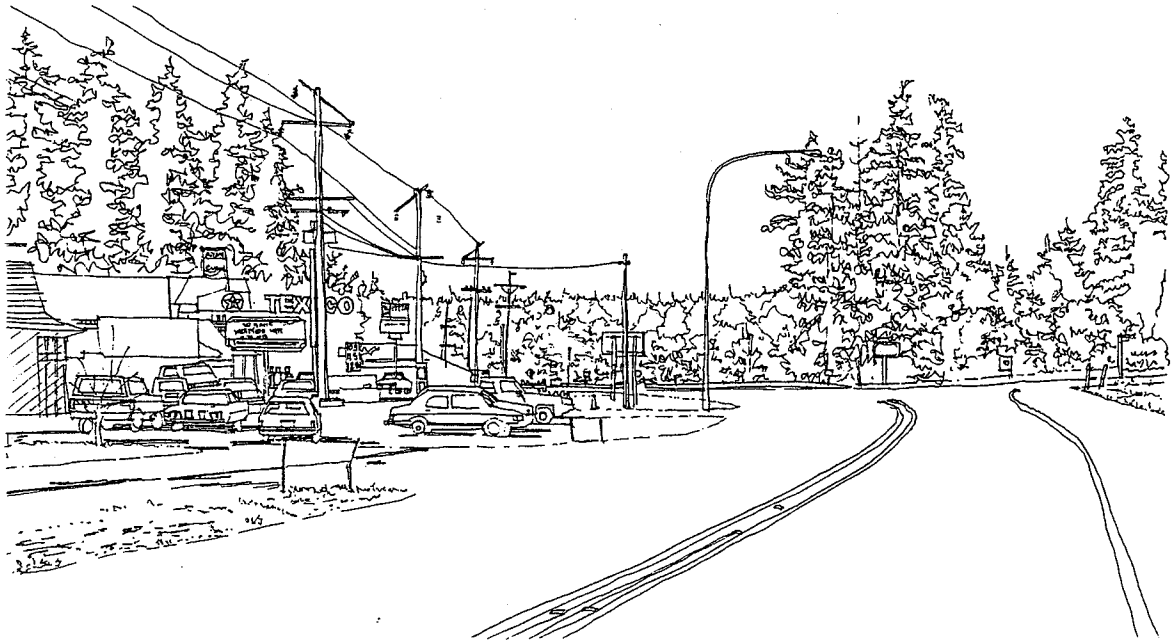
Height Limit and Applicability of Site Design Standards in Freeland Non-Residential Sub-Districts

■ = Guidelines Apply

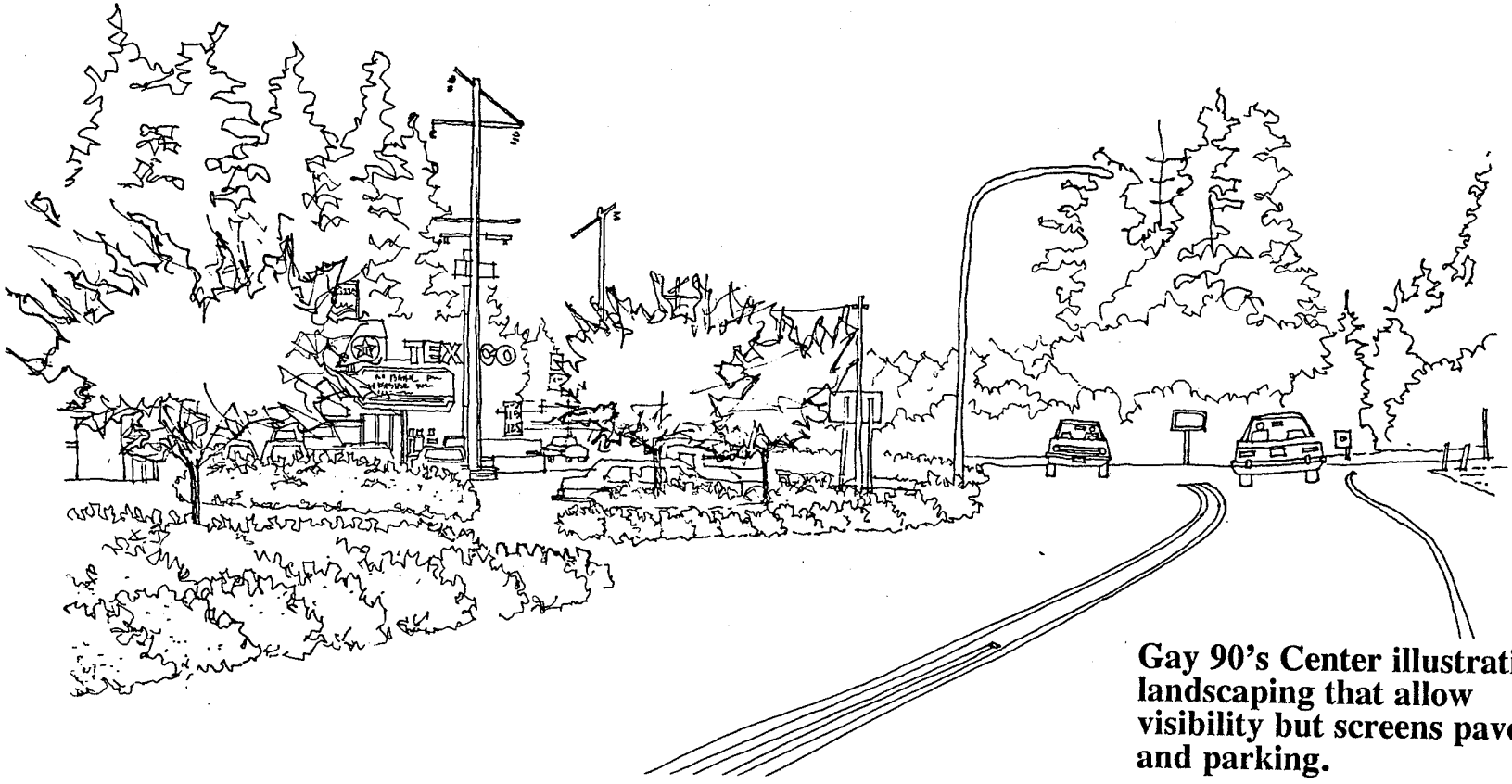
USE	Sub-District						
	A Pedestrian Core	B North Frame	C Highway Core	D North Spur	E West Frame	F South Highway	G West Satellite
Height (in Stories)	3	3[a]	2	2	2	2	3
1. Front yard Parking Lot standards	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
2. Parking Entrances	■	■	■	■	■	■	
3. Sidewalks and Street Trees	■	■[b]	■[b]	■	■[c]		
4. Highway Screening	■		■			■	■
5. Buffering Residences		■		■	■	■	■
6. Site Coverage	■	■	■	■	■		
7. North Spur Standards				■			
8. Materials	■	■	■	■	■	■	
9. Pedestrian Friendly Building Fronts	■	■[c]	■[c]				
10. Blank Wall Treatment	■	■	■	■	■	■	
11. Screening of Service Areas	■	■	■	■	■	■	■



Proposed Design Guidelines for Freeland Downtown Core Sub-District



Gay 90's Center on SR-525



Gay 90's Center illustrating landscaping that allow visibility but screens pavements and parking.

D. Improve Transportation and Pedestrian Circulation

Attention to traffic safety and the need for pedestrian sidewalks and pathways were listed as priority problems at the first town meting. Participants at the second town meeting mentioned more specific circulation issues including the need for intersection improvements near the post office, bicycle trails, a park-and-ride lot and better downtown sidewalks. To pursue traffic planning issues Alpha Engineers undertook a traffic study and prepared analysis that is incorporated into the recommendations below.

The engineering study recommended widening Main Street to three lanes to better accommodate projected traffic increases over the next 20 years. Participants at the town meeting did not favor this suggestion because a two lane street was more in the character of a community based business district. Likewise, the engineering study found that extending E. Harbor Avenue northward to East Harbor Drive would improve circulation. However, this proposal is not recommended in the community plan because of its impact on the residences north of the business core.

D-1 Construct Traffic Improvements at Key Intersections

The traffic study identified the following intersections as requiring improvements to alleviate future safety and congestion problems, based on traffic projections for the year 2010.

SR-525/Honeymoon Bay Road

Widen SR-525 to five lanes with exclusive left turn lanes. Widen Honeymoon Bay Road to three lanes with exclusive left turn lanes. This intersection is warranted for signalization as soon as the Holmes Harbor projects are completed.

Intersection level of service (LOS) without Improvements on Sr-525 = F

Intersection LOS with improvement = C

Note: Level of service indicates the amount of traffic congestion "A" indicates free flowing traffic and "F" indicates very congested.

Estimated costs = $40 - $60,000

SR-525/Main Street

Widen SR-525 to five lanes with exclusive left turn lanes. Widen Main Street to three lanes with exclusive left turn lane. The south leg on Fish Road should be widened to accommodate for a left turn lane. This intersection should be signalized to improve the traffic flow to and from Main Street.

Intersection LOS without improvement on SR-525 = E

Intersection LOS with improvement = C

Estimated cost: $125,000 - $175,000

Main Street/E. Harbor Road

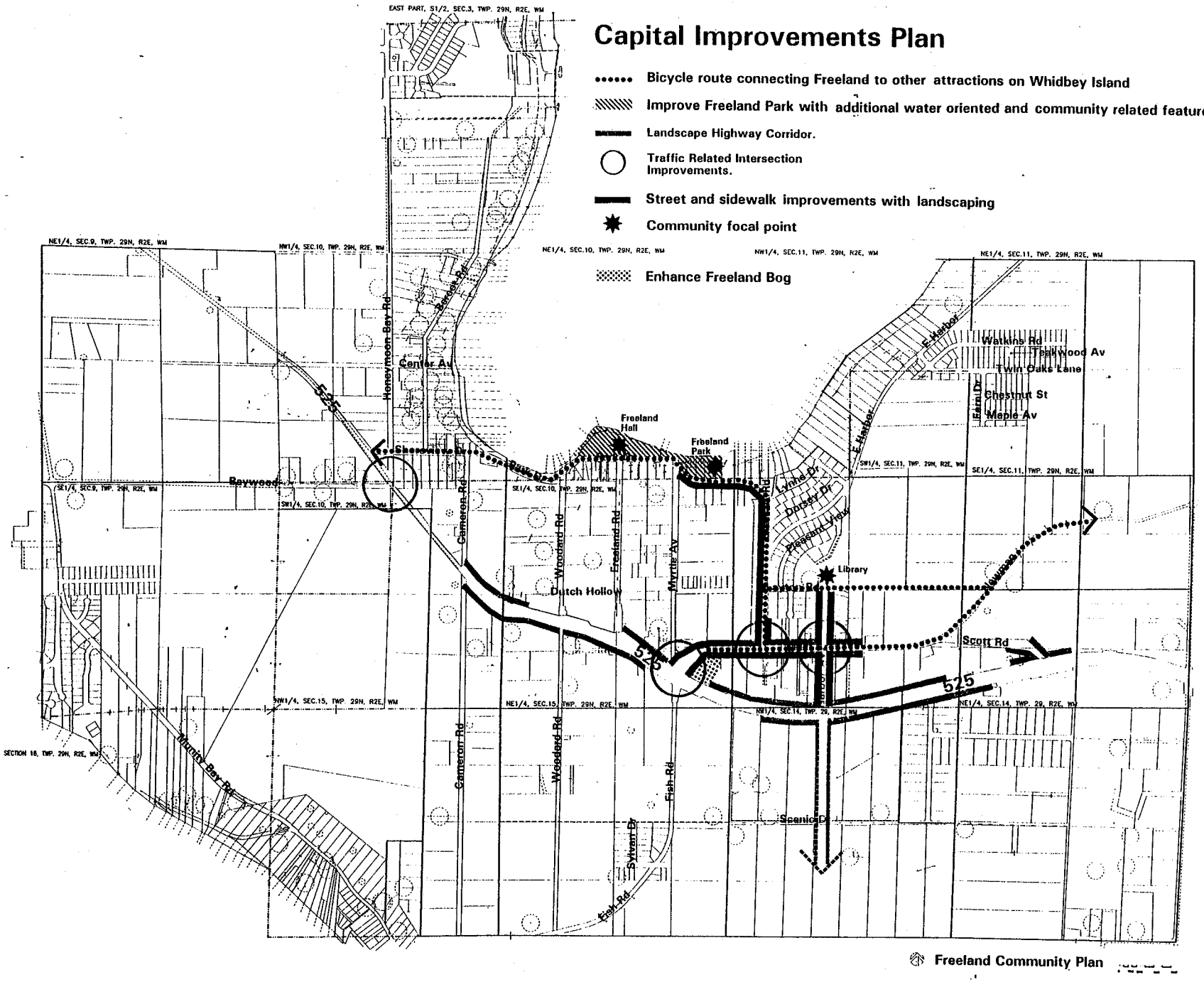
Widen Main Street to three lanes with exclusive left turn lanes. Widen E. Harbor Road to three lanes with exclusive left turn lanes and improved sign distances. This intersection is warranted for a 4-way stop and possible signalization on or before year 2010. Install a stop signalization for each approach.

Intersection LOS without improvement = F

Intersection with improvement and 4-way stop = C or better

Estimated Cost: $20 - $30,000

Capital Improvements Plan



D-2 Install a Pathway and Bicycle Lanes Connecting Island County Bicycle Trail and the Business District to Freeland Park

The construction of pedestrian sidewalks in the downtown core was recommended in Section C above. In addition, safety, comfortable walks or trails and bicycle lanes should be constructed to connect the downtown to the water. Currently there is only a minimal shoulder on either Myrtle Ave. or E. Harbor Drive. Freeland lies at a central point on proposed Whidbey Island Bicycle Trail and so providing adequate bicycle lanes is important. Experience in other towns had shown that linking parks, commercial areas and major features significantly increases their usage and contributes to a sense of community.

With the new emphasis on health and the benefits of walking, especially for mature adults, the provision of at least one walkway long enough for conditioning purposes seems important. For all these reasons it is recommended that a pathway system on Myrtle, E. Harbor Drive and Stewart Road be constructed connecting the downtown, the bike trail and Freeland Park.

Another pathway connection traversing the center of south Freeland Park was suggested, but this proposal met with opposition form those who felt the pathway would disadvantage property owners and so is not recommended in this plan.

The estimated cost of the sidewalk pathway connections is approximately $150,000 to $250,000.

D-3 Park and Ride Lot and Public Transit Facilities

Bus pullouts should be provided along main routs such as Main Street. The right-of-way is sufficient to provide these facilities. The number and locations should be developed with input form the Island Transit and the public. Consideration should be given to the future transit route to serve the Freeland Park. This would enhance park usage and at the same time reduce the demand for vehicle parking.

Freeland serves as a terminus for the Island Transit Express service to the Clinton Ferry and a park-and-ride lot within Freeland is very important for this service. It is possible that it should accommodate upwards of 200 vehicles. Consideration should be given to a location which can combine public and private use in the same area for convenience and cost reduction. It would also be desirable if it could also provide a function during off-hours. A joint use parking lot shared with a church, for example, might be efficient because the lot could service commuters on weekdays and parishes on Sundays.

The more specific criteria for such a facility and possible locations will be examined in detail as part of the Island Transportation Study. A park-and-ride lot located on the periphery of the Main Street downtown business district could also provide off peak parking for the district and encourage use of local businesses. A park-and-ride lot should not be located at the center of the pedestrian core, nor should it occupy central street frontage, where it would introduce more traffic into the pedestrian areas and occupy valuable retail frontage.

E. Increase Community Oriented and Recreational Facilities

This was a value expressed in both the first and second town meetings. Recreation facilities received the second highest priority for desired new features in the first town meeting and participants listed several specific recommendations on the second town meeting include:

- o More park facilities
- o Acquisition of park property
- o Better bicycle trials
- o A meeting place
- o Walking trails

Several of the recommendations made above work toward those objectives, especially the sidewalks and pathways. In addition, a comprehensive program of improvements to Freeland Park is recommended below.

E-1 Enhance Freeland Park

Freeland Park provides an excellent opportunity to develop a first class community park, especially if it is connected to community by a sidewalk/pathway system. Below are listed several possible improvements and with estimated budgets (costs are approximately listed in $1,000's).

1.	Restore boat launch, paving, trailer parking, etc.	$150 - $300K
2.	Picnic shelter and area	$40 - $100K
3.	Improved parking lot for 30 cars	$6 - $12K
4.	Boardwalk and beach enhancement	$100 - $150K
5.	Landscaping, trails, etc.	$75 - $150K
6.	Drainage and floodgate improvements	$20 - $30K
7.	Improve Freeland Hall Shell stabilization, H/C access, mech/elect systems, acoustic treatment, etc.	$25-75K

These improvements can be funded through the county and with State IAC grants with the possible addition of Port contributions for boating related features. The County should also apply to the Department of Ecology for a CZM waterfront planning grant to plan these improvements and provide preliminary designs and costs estimates for high priority features. Developing a park improvement program would also be a very positive way to continue the local public participation begun in this plan. The Department of Ecology solicits grant CZM applications each year. The request might be for about $15,000. Another possible funding source for park improvements is development impact fees that would assess each new residential unit a modest amount. Since the new development is a major reason that more facilities will be needed, development impact fees appear to be a legitimate option.

E-2 Consider Acquisition of Additional Park Area Near Freeland Park

The land directly south of Freeland Park may be available. The additional property would help to meet the growing needs for community oriented recreation facilities in Central Whidbey and should be pursued.

E-3 Support Community Based Efforts to Develop a New Library with Meeting Room

The citizens of Freeland are currently undertaking the construction of a new library with a meeting center. The proposed site is at the end of Harbor Ave. E. one block north of Main Street. When complete, the library will

serve not only as an information resource, but also as a much needed community focus. Fundraising is underway and approximately $100,000 ~~a substantial portion~~ of the approximately $400,000 budget has been secured. There is a major obstacle in obtaining government grants. That is, since Freeland is unincorporated, there is no governmental body to serve as property owner and program administrator. This greatly hampers grant applicant because grants typically require that a responsible governmental entity be responsible for property utilizing the grant funds.

Island County appears to be the most logical government to perform this role. The Friends of the Freeland Library committee can still take the lead in project development to reduce the county government's administrative costs. However, an official sanction of the project is necessary. Therefore, it is recommended that Island County become a partner with the Friends of the Freeland Library. The organizational structure and terms of a working arrangement should be determined as soon as possible so that fund raising can proceed.

Vision

What will Freeland be like in the year 2010? How would it compare to the Freeland community of today if the goals of this plan were met? The most fundamental thing a visitor to the future will notice is that Freeland has not appeared to have changed much. The community still has an open, rural character with a mix of rolling fields, forests, and small residential areas. To be sure, there are many new homes. About twice as many people live here as did in 1991, but the new homes are tucked into wooded hillsides or clustered in small groups to retain open space. Some streets have been widened to accommodate increased traffic, but landscaping, especially along the highway, has helped to maintain scenic corridors.

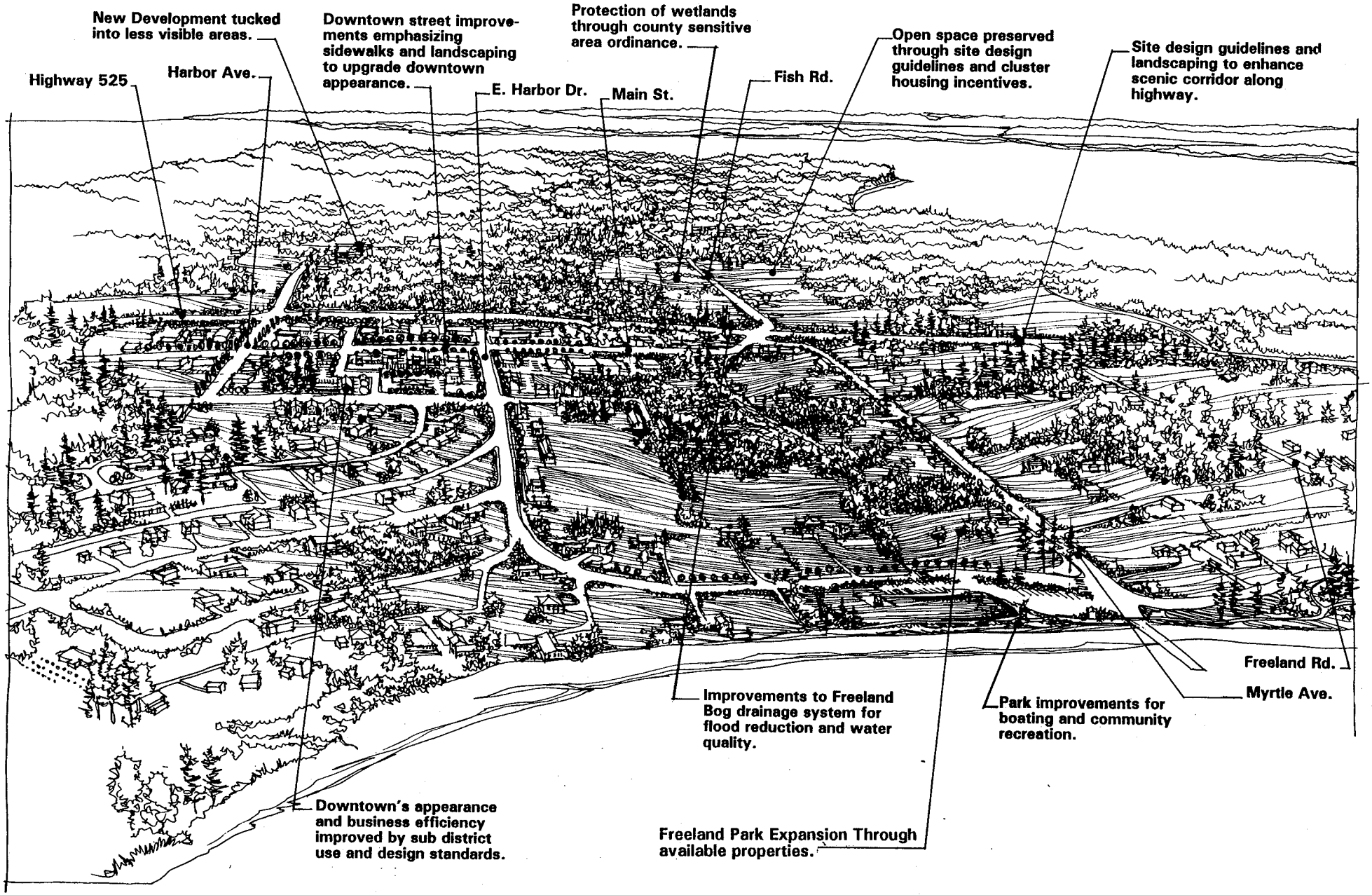
Freeland's downtown has changed, not growing much in land area, but rather in-filling with a greater variety of shops, more efficient parking, new sidewalks and landscaping. The business district remains strictly a community oriented center, a place where local citizens can find nearly all the necessary consumer goods as well as spend some time with their neighbors at the local cafe. Besides retail shops, some small offices have opened, increasing the community's employment base, and there are some expanded light duty manufacturing businesses south of Nichols Brothers Boatyard.

If one looks more closely, several new public improvements can be seen. The public library, constructed in the early 1990's spearheaded the "first wave" of community oriented improvements. After that, Freeland citizens helped acquire funds for expansion and enhancement of Freeland Park. Today it is a popular spot for young families, boaters and those who just want to rest on the beach. The downtown, central residential areas and Centennial Bikeway are all connected to the park with a system of sidewalks and pathways, making the park more accessible for children and providing a pleasant walk-for-conditioning route.

Some of the community's most significant improvements are not immediately apparent. For one, the Freeland Water District has kept up with water demand through sound management, modernization and acquisition of water rights. A new sanitary sewerage system has recently been connected that will protect the community's ground water. The County has done its part in drainage improvements and storm water management, and the enforcement of the environmentally sensitive areas ordinance has protected the community's large natural drainage systems from damage and pollution.

Most importantly, Freeland has remained an active, vital community; a place for all age groups, young families and retired citizens. Because citizens have had to work together to initiate public action, the community is more cohesive and ready to respond to new challenges and opportunities.

Retaining Freeland's rural, small town flavor amidst two decades of dramatic regional change has not been easy. But most local citizens would agree that it has been well worth it.



Freeland Community Plan Objectives: A View to the Future