



URBAN PLANNING & DESIGN

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**DOWNTOWN RAYMOND  
REVITALIZATION REPORT**

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PREPARED BY UW DEPARTMENT OF  
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# 1 Vision Statement

Today, Raymond has the opportunity to reimagine its Downtown as a vibrant, welcoming center of community life. With thoughtful planning and sustained commitment, the community can shape a future with a Downtown that reflects its values, identity, and aspirations.

Like many rural communities once dependent on natural resource industries, Raymond has faced economic struggles as the United States transitioned to a largely post-industrial economy. Competition from online retail and changing consumer patterns led to the closure of many local businesses in Downtown. Yet, other similar communities across the Pacific Northwest have shown that revitalization is possible, offering models of how places like Raymond can adapt and thrive in the face of changing economic conditions.



Willapa Center.



UW Team meets local stakeholders for a tour.

Raymond has pursued Downtown revitalization multiple times over the past 25 years, resulting in some notable achievements: streetscape beautification with metal art pieces, the Americans with Disability Act (ADA) curb cuts, and the completion of the Willapa Center in 2023. However, persistent business turnover and building vacancies highlight the need to reassess strategies and take a more coordinated approach to revitalization.

Community members voiced a clear vision for Downtown Raymond: a Downtown that is walkable, welcoming, and vibrant. A place where a child first learns to swim, a teenager performs in their first play, a local entrepreneur opens a business, and an elderly couple can sit and watch the activity on the street from a busy cafe. It is a gathering space for families and friends, a hub of thriving local businesses, and a destination that is a local and regional draw. A Downtown that reflects the community's resilience, creativity, and pride.

Of course, this transformation cannot happen overnight. It starts with short-term wins that build momentum towards long-term goals. Meaningful progress will depend on consistent effort, strategic planning, and broad community support. Revitalization must be shaped, led, and sustained by the people of Raymond, with a shared sense of ownership over the future of the Downtown.

The Pacific County Economic Development Council and the City of Raymond partnered with Livable City Year to facilitate a community engagement process and develop a document to guide revitalization efforts. This included identifying assets, addressing key challenges, and creating a roadmap for revitalization. The University of Washington Graduate Studio Team (henceforth referred to as the UW Team) worked with the community to identify practical strategies aligned with their vision for the future. This report presents phased recommendations that Raymond may consider as it works towards a more vibrant and connected Downtown.



The UW Team tours Downtown along Third Street during the Site Visit (Feb. 10, 2025).



## 2 Executive Summary

Based on recommendations from previous Downtown Raymond revitalization plans, input from the undergraduate UW Community, Environment, and Planning (CEP) studio team, observations from the UW team's site visit, feedback from the THRIVE Focus Group and Community Open House, and individual stakeholder outreach, the UW team proposes the following next steps to guide the revitalization of Downtown Raymond. These goals emphasize Raymond's strong community pride and spirit. This framework also highlights key priority projects identified through community feedback, specifically the Downtown Raymond Theatre (henceforth referred to as the Theatre) and the Dr. O. R. Nevitt Memorial Swimming Pool (henceforth referred to as the Pool). The UW Team encourages the City of Raymond to incorporate these phased strategies into the forthcoming update of their Comprehensive Plan.

The UW Team's recommendations are phased into short-, medium-, and long-term goals, with highlights for key engines for revitalization and how to better utilize existing assets. Short-term actions include beautifying the Downtown streetscape, organizing community events, and implementing city zoning and code changes to generate early momentum for revitalization. Medium-term goals focus on expanding waterfront programming, improving pedestrian safety, and exploring membership in the Main Street Association to build capacity Downtown and access revitalization resources. Long-term goals include infrastructure upgrades and establishing a Metropolitan Parks District to support ongoing investment in recreation and culture in Raymond, including funding for large-scale projects like regional sports facilities. By implementing these recommendations, Downtown can become a vibrant place that enhances the quality of life for residents, attracts visitors, and supports local businesses.



Third Street during Site Visit (Feb. 10, 2025).



Metal Sculpture by the waterfront (Feb. 10, 2025).

# 3 Strategies Matrix

This strategy matrix illustrates the revitalization steps discussed in depth in this report. The two most critical next steps—the Downtown Advisory Committee and the Metropolitan Parks District Exploratory Committee—are highlighted as they provide the foundation for other strategies outlined. Downtown revitalization requires economic and social capacity to succeed, and these two committees are the initial steps to building capacity in the short-term to achieve long-term revitalization. The remaining strategies are organized from short- to long-term, with additional information on options, leadership, and possible funding mechanisms.

*(See next page for matrix)*



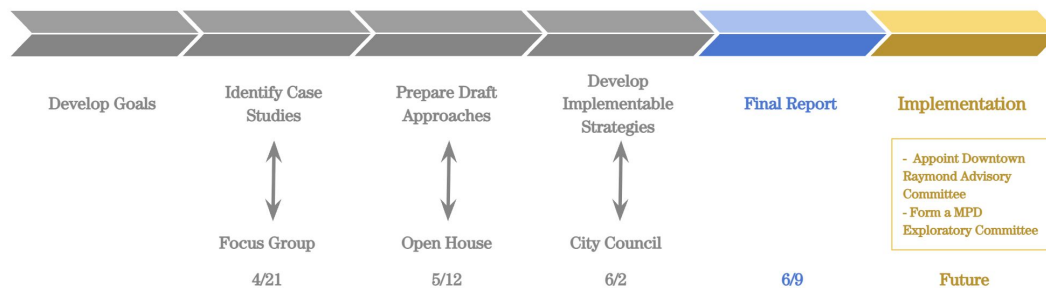
# Strategies Matrix

Strategy	Timeframe	Next Steps	Description	Options	Lead and Participants	Suggested Funding	Origin
Downtown Advisory Committee	Short (in progress)	Mayor to propose potential members. Council to confirm.	Consisting of key stakeholders in the community and those with a strong interest in Downtown. Will focus on all short, medium, and long-term strategies and their implementation. Chairs path to joining WA Main Street Association.	N/A	Appointed by Mayor and City Council	Raymond city staff support	Open House
Metropolitan Parks District (MPD) Exploratory Committee	Short (in progress)	Mayor and Raymond School Superintendent to coordinate with County Commissioners, City of South Bend, Pacific County EDC and School Districts to form this Ad Hoc Committee.	Explore the potential of formation of a Metropolitan Parks District. Will look into a proposed boundary for the district, inventory of existing and proposed facilities to be included, and the funding model.	N/A	Membership is appointed by jurisdictions and agencies. Charge for committee is contained in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which is signed by all participating jurisdictions and agencies.	Participating jurisdictions and agencies prioritize participation of Committee members; staff support addressed in MOU	Focus Group
Beautification	Short (in progress)	Coordinate with School District.	Various improvements to the aesthetic environment of Downtown to make it more visually appealing.	Murals, Art Walk, wayfinding, ramadas, banners, string lights, more trees, shrubbery, planters, hanging baskets.	City, School District, local artists, volunteers.	Ongoing Raymond city staff support; School District has indicated that they will participate	CEP, Focus Group, Open House, Interviews
Signage/Wayfinding	Short (in progress)	Connect with Weyerhaeuser and determine best place for welcome mural.	Improve throughout Downtown, clear signs on US 101.	Signage directing people downtown, signage navigating people through downtown, welcome sign.	City, Weyerhaeuser	City, Weyerhaeuser	Open House, CEP, Site Visit
Themed Branding	Short	Determine branding, Raymond website changes to reflect cohesive branding.	Create and implement a theme and brand for downtown consistent with the recommendations identified in the Open House.	Theme and branding to celebrate the natural environment and rural identity of Raymond and its history.	City	City	Open House
Events Downtown	Short to Medium	Coordinate with community groups to look for potential new events and invest more in existing events (Willapa Fest)	Implementing and improving events in the Downtown area that are exciting to residents and can potentially attract more people there.	Touch-a-truck, Willapa Festival (with live music, etc.).	City, community groups	Sponsors, City, Main Street Tax Credit Incentive Program (future)	Raymond City Staff, Open House
Zoning Changes	Short (in progress)	Examine existing zoning code and continue to investigate precedents to model code changes on.	Changing zoning to encourage desired land use changes (such as more mixed-use).	Retail core rezoned as mixed-use commercial, adjusting some conditional uses so that they are either administratively approved or allowed outright, vacant building ordinance, zoning change for food trucks at 5th Street and Commercial Street (in progress), adjust zoning near waterfront to tie the downtown to the waterfront. Ensure zoning aligns with Comprehensive Plan (opportunity as new Comp Plan process begins July 1), encouraging more activity downtown by allowing light artisanal manufacturing, adopting a complete streets ordinance to ensure future improvements support long-term revitalization efforts.	City	Raymond city staff support	Raymond City Staff, Focus Group
Program that encourages the maintenance, renovation, and use of Downtown building stock	Short to Medium (in progress)	Continue research regarding existing regulations for building maintenance found in other jurisdictions. Evaluate the adoption of the ICC's Minimum Building Maintenance Code.	The program's purpose is to ensure the maintenance of existing buildings and their active use. A primary goal of minimum maintenance standards is public safety. Identify state and federal funding (such as tax credits) for renovating qualifying historic properties. Regarding vacant storefronts, develop flexible options to increase activity, such as allowing pop-up retail, temporary window displays, and murals as approved interim uses for existing buildings. Interim options for vacant lots include allowing planters and/or community gardens (potential liability issues can be successfully addressed if part of a city program). Consider a vacancy tax for non-participants.	Identify allowed interim options to encourage activity. Research the use of a vacancy tax (City of Aberdeen). Should a vacancy tax be adopted and implemented, consider allocating any potential revenue towards physical improvements in downtown.	City, land use attorney	Raymond city staff support	Focus Group, Open House, Raymond City Staff
Main Street Association	Medium	The appointment of a Downtown Advisory Committee is the initial step to developing capacity to apply for Main Street designation.	Build capacity to apply for Main Street designation. When established, Main Street becomes both steward and advocate for a revitalized downtown. Main Street can add events and guide historic preservation and business development.	Committee evolved from initial downtown advisory committee. Registered with WA Main Street Program. Established business development goals.	City, community groups, Downtown Advisory Committee, Pacific County Economic Development Council (EDC)	Main Street Tax Credit Incentive Program	Open House
Waterfront Activation	Medium	Connect with local business owners, discuss vision with state and local entrepreneurs.	Infrastructure, business development, and aesthetic changes to capitalize on the waterfront asset, area by Carriage Museum.	kayak doc, kayak rentals, bike rentals, horseback integration enhance existing "farmers" market.	City, private businesses/individuals, EDC	Private	Open House
Increasing pedestrian accessibility	Medium	As part of the on-going WSDOT corridor studies, City and School District to provide comment on student safety due to unsafe crossing conditions.	School Superintendent indicates that students safety is at risk. Community interest is linking both sides of US 101 for pedestrians and cyclists. Creating a safe crossing will enhance efforts to revitalize downtown.	Crosswalk at intersection of Duryea Street and US 101, Install HAWK (High-intensity Activated Crosswalk) beacon.	WSDOT	WSDOT	Raymond City Staff, Raymond School District Superintendent
Bike Connection and Amenities	Medium	Explore areas where connections could be made.	Getting a connection between the Willapa Hills Trail and Downtown Raymond.	Cut through the waterfront, sharrow down 5th, sharrow down 3rd.	City, WSDOT, Washington State Parks	MPD	CEP, Focus Group, Open House
Pool Upgrades	Medium to Long	MPD Exploratory Committee. Investigate costs for covering pool.	Improvements to the pool to make it more usable year-round.	Pool cover.	City, community groups, EDC	MPD	Site Visit, Focus Group, Open House
Theatre Upgrades	Medium to Long	Form MPD Exploratory Committee.	Improvements to expand programming and revenue sources	Dinner-and-movie nights, local school performances/recitals, addition of dining seating. Coordinate use of kitchen in adjacent American Legion.	Theatre, local businesses, EDC	MPD	Site Visit, Focus Group, Open House
Tournament sports fields	Long	Form MPD Exploratory Committee.	Determine the location and establish a multiple turf field facility to host tournaments.	8th Street School/ Riverdale (6 tournament softball fields).	City, EDC, MPD Exploratory Advisory Committee	MPD	Focus Group (Centralia)
Infrastructure Upgrades	Long	Exploring grant/funding options, updating code (see above) to encourage redevelopment Downtown, take inventory of existing and proposed infrastructure systems.	Improve City facilities, housing stock, utilities.	Piling upgrades, complete streets, increased housing downtown, sewer/water/energy/internet upgrades.	City	WA Complete Street grant program (authorized by RCW 47.04.320) managed by WA State Transportation Improvement Board (complete street ordinance required prior); City: Private	Site Visit, Focus Group
Metropolitan Parks District	Long	After consideration of the recommendations from the MPD Exploratory Committee, call for the election to establish the MPD	Governmental structure that provides funding for regional park and recreation facilities as well as cultural facilities.	Identify existing and proposed facilities that benefit the region. This may include a new tournament sports field. Identify anticipated capital and an ongoing operation/maintenance budget for included existing and proposed facilities. Identify potential District boundary, which may include South Bend, Raymond, and portions of unincorporated Pacific County.	City, Pacific County EDC, MPD Exploratory Committee	Future Tax levy	Focus Group, Open House

# 4 Project Process

Community engagement played a central role throughout the project process. The UW Team visited Raymond multiple times, starting with an initial site visit before hosting a focus group with the THRIVE committee, conducting a community open house at the Raymond Theatre, and presenting their findings to the Raymond City Council. These efforts provided valuable insight into community priorities, including the desire to strengthen public spaces, improve pedestrian access, attract visitors from US 101, and enhance underutilized amenities. Community members also identified new opportunities, such as improving connections from the Downtown to the waterfront. Below is a summary of the planning process and context of each outreach event or visit.

## UW Team Spring 2025 Project Process



## 4.1 Undergraduate Studio: CEP Outreach

The first stage of the Downtown Raymond Revitalization project was led by the University of Washington undergraduate Community, Environment, and Planning (CEP) studio team. The CEP students coordinated a community survey in Fall 2024. The most popular responses cited “more businesses” and “more recreation” in Downtown, mirroring the results of the Focus Group and Open House events. Repeated community outreach is essential for validating the community’s needs and priorities, as demonstrated by the findings from previous research and recent events.



## 4.2

## Graduate Studio: Formation

In January 2025, the second stage of the Downtown Raymond Revitalization Project began with the formation of a studio group with Master of Urban Planning students at the University of Washington. This was conducted with the University of Washington's Livable City Year program. The graduate UW Team consisted of eight students: Wesley Ahumada Newhart, Hannah Autrey, Iona Cich, Alex Dassenko, Walter Donovan Jr., Gabriel Leon, Vince Martinez, and So Sung, working under instructor Rick Sepler.

## 4.3

## Graduate Studio: Preliminary Site Visit and Initial Conditions Report

The UW Team visited Raymond on February 10, 2025, and met with the mayor, city and county officials, local business owners, and other stakeholders. The UW Team toured Downtown, learning about its history, current strengths, and challenges. Following the tour, there was lunch with city leaders and stakeholders, followed by a structured discussion about previous revitalization efforts and hopes for the future. Some key takeaways included the importance of key institutions such as the public pool and the Theatre, the uphill battle with maintaining infrastructure due to geographic conditions, and the seeds of revitalization efforts already in motion. This site visit provided ample information and personal context for the UW Team as they compiled an Initial Conditions Report (ICR) on Raymond's downtown landscape.



UW Team touring Downtown with local stakeholders during the Site Visit (Feb. 10, 2025).



UW Team meeting with local stakeholders during the Site Visit (Feb. 10, 2025).

## 4.4

# Graduate Studio: Focus Group

At the start of the Spring Quarter 2025, the UW Team developed a set of recommendations to support the city's revitalization goals. The approach was informed by best practices in small-town revitalization, case studies from similar communities, and there was an emphasis on local assets such as the Dr. O. R. Nevitt Memorial Swimming Pool and the Raymond Theatre.

On April 21, 2025, the UW Team conducted a focus group with the THRIVE Committee regarding revitalization priorities. The THRIVE Committee is comprised of local and regional stakeholders and was formed to allocate funds from Weyerhaeuser. It was chosen to function as a focus group in the planning process due to the expedited timeline of this project making the formation of a new group difficult. Topics discussed included beautification, zoning code regulations, the formation of Metropolitan Parks Districts, the Pool, and the Theatre. The committee was interested in beautification efforts, but had concerns regarding staff capacity to maintain beautification elements (such as planters and flower baskets) and funding issues for larger initiatives. There was discussion about zoning code changes to incentivize more Downtown retail, strategies for building improvements, encouraging "pop-up" shops such as food trucks, and small-scale events. See **Appendix A** for a summary.

## 4.5

# Graduate Studio: Open House

The Open House event on May 12, 2025, provided the UW Team with valuable insights into the Raymond community's vision for the city and their perspectives on potential Downtown revitalization strategies. The Pacific County Economic Development Council publicized the event via digital channels. The UW Team conducted targeted outreach to Downtown stakeholders not represented on the THRIVE Committee to promote the event. The Open House occurred between 4:00 PM and 7:00 PM at the Raymond Theatre and was structured as a drop-in event with a brief screening of vintage cartoons at 6:00 PM. Approximately 20 community members participated in the Open House. The Open House consisted of four stations focusing on relevant case studies, maps, design and branding, and enhancement ideas for the Raymond Theatre and Pool. Participants expressed interest in forming a downtown association and engaging in beautification projects around town to help implement these strategies. There was also consensus about introducing new businesses and retail Downtown and hosting more community events to maintain Downtown interaction. See **Appendix B** for a summary, **Appendix C** and **Appendix D** for maps and images.





UW Team speaking with attendee during Open House (May 12, 2025).



UW Team member speaks with attendee at Open House (May 12, 2025).

## 4.6

# Graduate Studio: Supplemental Interviews with Key Stakeholders

Beyond the larger engagement events, the UW Team also conducted targeted outreach to individual stakeholders in Raymond. This included the Raymond City Planner, the Raymond School District Superintendent, a major Downtown property owner, and a recent UW graduate and Raymond native in the process of opening a restaurant near the Carriage Museum. These conversations were a critical part of the process, as they helped fill information gaps and provide a clearer understanding of the community's priorities and the feasibility of potential strategies.

## 4.7

# Graduate Studio: City Council

The UW Team's final event with the City of Raymond was the City Council meeting on June 2, 2025. Due to unforeseen circumstances, the presentation was recorded and played live at the meeting, with the UW Team attending virtually to answer questions. Most questions were related to short-term strategies. The final report was distributed on June 9, 2025.

# 5

# Recommendations

## 5.1

## Key Engines for Revitalization

This section discusses two key strategies to drive Downtown revitalization and spur financial and social investment in the city. First, Raymond should join the Washington Main Street Program, which offers grants, resources, and connections for downtown revitalization efforts. Second, a Metropolitan Parks District should be established to fund parks, recreation, and other community enhancements (such as building the tournament sports fields, a favorite idea from the Focus Group and Open House events). These two strategies should begin now, creating the foundation for future revitalization efforts.

### 5.1.1 Main Street Program

To support the successful implementation of Downtown revitalization efforts, the UW Team recommends forming an ad hoc Downtown Advisory Committee composed of local stakeholders appointed by the Raymond City Council. This is the initial step towards joining the Washington Main Street Program by building institutional capacity in the Downtown Raymond community. This committee will play a critical role in guiding the direction of key initiatives and events occurring within the Downtown area while ensuring that community voices remain central throughout the process. The committee's primary responsibilities are twofold: first, it must develop a clear set of deliverables, such as a business support roadmap that identifies short- and long-term strategies for economic development, small business growth opportunities, and targets for historic preservation. The second is performing administrative tasks, such as recommending boundaries for the geographic scope of Downtown revitalization activities and establishing bylaws for the committee.



WASHINGTON STATE  
**MAIN STREET**  
PROGRAM





Establishing this structure is an essential first step towards preparing Raymond to join the Washington State Main Street Program, which offers technical assistance, networking opportunities, and access to funding streams that could not otherwise be accessed. These funding opportunities come in two forms: the Main Street Tax Credit Incentive Program and various rotating state grants. The Main Street Tax Credit Incentive Program provides a 75% Business & Occupation (B&O) or Public Utility Tax (PUT) credit for private contributions to eligible downtown organizations (RCW 82.73). This could provide a source of funding by allowing businesses to receive a tax credit for up to three-quarters of a theoretical donation to a future Raymond Downtown Association.

This has been done successfully in Chelan, WA, and other main streets across Washington. Available grant opportunities change according to legislative funding, but many of the grants in the last funding cycle were directly applicable to Downtown Raymond, including the Historic Theater Grant and the Main Street Planning Grants. While these grants are not a consistent funding source, they can provide valuable funding for key projects in Raymond. By forming a Downtown Advisory Committee with clearly defined goals, the city can build organizational capacity aligned with Downtown Raymond's historic preservation and economic vitality goals and progress toward applying for the official Washington Main Street designation.

## 5.1.2 Metropolitan Parks District

A Metropolitan Parks District (MPD) is a regional, junior property-taxing district authorized under RCW 35.61. An MPD is recommended because it is a governmental structural solution to sustainably fund parks, recreation, and cultural initiatives over the long-term. This district could provide dedicated revenue to maintain and expand assets like the public pool in Raymond, waterfront amenities, and proposed tournament sports fields. Participants of the Focus Group and Open House expressed interest in the idea, particularly if paired with visible and equitable investments in public space. However, there are limitations to an MPD. An MPD must be passed with a simple majority of voters, and is capped at 75 cents for every \$1,000 of property value, meaning that a property assessed at \$100,000 could generate a maximum of \$75 in revenue per year for the MPD. Thus, the MPD Exploratory Committee will need to evaluate the viability of an MPD and assess local attitudes towards the funding model.

Forming a Metropolitan Parks District (MPD) Exploratory Committee is the first step towards formalizing an MPD. The Mayor of Raymond, the Raymond City Council, and the Raymond School Superintendent will coordinate with County Commissioners, the City of South Bend, Pacific County EDC, and School Districts to form this ad hoc committee. The committee's charge will be contained in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed by all participating jurisdictions and agencies.

Participating jurisdictions and agencies will then appoint the committee members. This committee will explore the potential of creating an MPD, looking into a proposed boundary for the district, making an inventory of existing and proposed facilities and assets, and investigating funding models.

One of the MPD Exploratory Committee's first tasks will be identifying existing and proposed facilities that benefit the region. This may include new tournament sports fields. Another task will be identifying anticipated capital and ongoing maintenance costs and creating a budget for the existing and proposed facilities. A potential District boundary may include South Bend, Raymond, and portions of unincorporated Pacific County.



Rendering of large park and waterside trail funded by an MPD.



Northwest Carriage Museum (Feb. 10, 2025).



Children play at the Raymond Playground (Feb. 10, 2025).

## A Phased Approach to Implementation

The phased approach to implementation is designed to build momentum over time, starting with visible, achievable actions and gradually progressing toward transformative change. In the short-term, the focus is on “early wins” that utilize existing capacity. These include beautification efforts, signage, and community events that energize Downtown and foster local enthusiasm. These early improvements should prioritize amenities and experiences for residents, reinforcing a sense of place. In the medium-term, the city can build on this foundation by introducing institutional support (e.g., a Main Street Association) and investing in infrastructure that benefits locals and eco-tourists. The long-term phase aims to position Downtown Raymond as a vibrant and sustainable destination for residents and visitors, with a mature Main Street Association and Metropolitan Parks District. This phased strategy ensures that each stage builds on the success of the last, the cumulative efforts creating a resilient framework for growth.

### 5.2.1 Short-Term Strategies: 0-2 Years

Short-term strategies should focus on easier enhancements in the Downtown area to build momentum for revitalization and increase community involvement in the process. An “early-win” short-term recommendation is Downtown beautification. These efforts are already underway and remain a top priority for immediate enhancement. Community participants consistently emphasized the importance of visual appeal in attracting residents and visitors alike to Downtown Raymond. Adding murals, string lights, ramadas, and seasonal banners are good additions to improve Downtown’s charm.

Beautification efforts could also include expanding greenery throughout Downtown by adding more trees, planters, hanging baskets, and shrubbery. The city’s existing inventory of planters can be used to support these efforts and enhance streetscapes Downtown. To ensure long-term success of these efforts, it is important to plan for ongoing maintenance. Businesses near planters could elect to take on maintenance responsibilities, with additional support from schools or community groups. The vacant lots Downtown also present an opportunity as they can be transformed into pocket parks or used as community gardens by adding planters, creating green spaces that can be maintained by school gardening clubs, science classes, or community groups.



The lack of existing signage and wayfinding is an obstacle for Downtown visitors. Several community members noted difficulty locating Downtown from US 101 as well as navigation challenges once there. A coordinated signage strategy, including welcoming entry points and clear internal wayfinding, will improve accessibility for residents and visitors to the area. The Third Street entrance to Downtown from US 101 is an ideal location for a prominent welcome mural as Third Street is commonly identified as the “Main Street” of Downtown. During the Site Visit, the UW Team learned that Weyerhaeuser may be open to placing a welcome mural on its property at this gateway to Third Street. Improvements in Downtown may also include designated historic plaques on significant local buildings to highlight Raymond’s heritage. These wayfinding and signage improvements may boost business visibility, enhance visitor experiences, and support a more accessible environment for everyone, especially older adults, families with children, and out-of-town visitors. This initiative pairs naturally with the beautification strategy and may be developed with local artists to create a uniquely Raymond experience.

Participants in the Open House also recommended developing themed branding for Downtown Raymond to establish a more coherent identity. Community suggestions included wilderness motifs and broader references to Raymond’s rural heritage. Refreshing the city’s website and adopting a unified visual identity could strengthen Raymond’s digital footprint, drawing in tourists who recognize the Raymond brand. A consistent theme helps tie together signage, events, and future business development, reinforcing a distinct sense of place. A consistent brand can guide beautification efforts, ensuring that they contribute to a unified visual identity throughout Downtown Raymond.

The UW Team recommends community events such as an expanded Willapa Festival with live music and performances and child-friendly events like Touch-a-Truck to build short-term momentum that can be expanded upon in the medium-term. The first year of these events would be local, and as word spreads, they have the potential to become regional events. These events will bring families Downtown, support local vendors and performers, and create tradition and memory around shared spaces. These events can also include community volunteer days Downtown, such as cleanups and plantings. There is also the opportunity to collaborate with local schools to create family-friendly programming, such as a downtown “Art Walk.” During an “Art Walk,” artwork made by students is displayed in shop windows, and families walk through Downtown to locate their child’s pieces. This may increase foot traffic to local businesses and foster a stronger sense of connection and pride among students, families, and the broader community.

Zoning changes can be made soon to encourage the land-use types that the community envisions. Specific actions include rezoning the retail core to encourage mixed-use development, adjusting zoning near the waterfront to create better cohesion between it and the Downtown, allowing artisanal light manufacturing Downtown, and changing some permitted uses to be either administratively approved or allowed outright. Allowing food trucks at Fifth Street and Commercial Street (already in progress) provides flexible, low-barrier opportunities for small business entrepreneurs and may be implemented quickly. These changes help local businesses grow, creating a more diverse and dynamic streetscape.

Zoning changes can be instrumental in addressing current barriers that residents may experience when trying to open a business Downtown. Increasing the number of local businesses is vital for community economic vitality and local investment in improving Downtown.

Another regulation adjustment with a long-term impact is a complete street ordinance encouraging multimodal transportation, with a specific focus on the connection from Downtown to the Willapa Hills State Park Trail. A complete streets ordinance is necessary to unlock future street infrastructure funding mechanisms from Washington State grants (for more information, see 5.2.3). These zoning changes must align with the Comprehensive Plan, which is being updated starting in July 2025.

In the short-to-medium-term, an effort should be made to establish an ongoing program to support the maintenance, renovation, and use of existing Downtown building stock. Specifically, the program should focus on ensuring the ongoing maintenance and continued active use of existing buildings. Minimum maintenance standards play a key role in protecting public safety by ensuring that streets and adjacent properties are safe and well-maintained. This, in turn, encourages foot traffic and supports visits to nearby businesses. Where needed, these standards should be upheld through progressive enforcement.

Progressive enforcement is predicated on direct communication with property owners, identifying a plan to remedy the issue, and agreeing to voluntary action before corrective action is taken. Future enforcement is only required if the agreed-upon actions are not initiated. As many maintenance issues are typically associated with the financial challenges of maintaining historic structures, it is crucial to connect property owners with funding options, including state and federal opportunities (such as tax credits) for renovating qualifying properties. Evaluating the adoption of the International Code Council's (ICC) Minimum Building Maintenance Code to establish consistent standards will streamline the city code and help support subsequent maintenance and development efforts.



Existing local event: Willapa Festival



Downtown storefronts, both occupied and vacant (Feb. 10, 2025).

Although Raymond has many vacancies in its Downtown, strategies can be employed to generate activity and visual interest and overcome the perception of “empty” storefronts. Developing flexible options to increase activity, such as allowing pop-up retail, temporary window displays (such as student artwork), and murals as approved interim uses for existing buildings boosts short-term interest and creates a sense of place, laying the groundwork for future revitalization efforts.

Lastly, the path to forming a Metropolitan Parks District (MPD) and joining the WA Main Street Program begins in the short-term. The first steps for developing the capacity for these key strategies are forming an MPD Exploratory Committee and appointing a Downtown Advisory Committee.



An example of a lot that could host pop-up events (Feb. 10, 2025).



Storefront which could benefit from beautification efforts to improve Downtown's aesthetic (Feb. 10, 2025).

## 5.2.2 Medium-Term Strategies: 2-5 years

Joining the Washington Main Street Program represents a medium-term organizational goal for Downtown revitalization. A mature Main Street Association would evolve from the initial Downtown Advisory Committee, which should be launched in the short-term. Being part of the official network would support historic preservation efforts, coordinate business development, and sustain momentum for projects over time.





Rendering of Main Street with complete street characteristics.



Activated Waterfront rendering.

Activating the waterfront is a significant economic and cultural opportunity. The area near the Carriage Museum is well-positioned to host expanded kayak docks, water recreation equipment rentals, bicycle rentals, and services to support users of the Willapa Hills State Park Trail. Expanding and promoting the existing community market may further draw activity to this underutilized space. Participants from the Open House consistently voiced support for this type of activation. These investments could attract eco-tourists, promote healthy lifestyles, and position Raymond as a regional destination while also making the riverfront accessible to local families and youth. A key first step is engaging local business owners and entrepreneurs to begin discussions about opportunities for the waterfront.

Pedestrian safety was frequently mentioned in the Focus Group and the Open House sessions. Installing a marked crosswalk and a high-intensity activated crosswalk (HAWK) signal at Duryea and US 101—where students frequently cross—may represent a visible and safety-minded investment in the community’s youth. The Raymond School District Superintendent indicated that there are currently safety risks for students who cross at this intersection.

As part of the ongoing Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) corridor studies, the City and School District will provide comments on student safety. WSDOT may provide grants to fund these upgrades and potential improvements to the section of US 101 that bisects Raymond. There is strong community interest in improving pedestrian and cyclist connections between the eastern residential and school side of US 101 and the western commercial core. Connecting both sides with a safe and accessible crossing would help establish Downtown as a more central community space. It would also encourage more young residents to spend time Downtown, contributing to a livelier and more vibrant atmosphere. Ensuring a safe crossing to Downtown from Raymond schools is especially important if strategies such as student-run community gardens are implemented.

Lastly, a possible medium-term goal includes linking the Willapa Hills State Park Trail to Downtown via a dedicated cut-through for cyclists between Downtown and the waterfront, and new shared lane markings (sharrows) along Third and Fifth Streets. Doing so supports Raymond's identity as an outdoor-friendly destination and may assist with navigation for residents and regional visitors. This effort ties recreation to commerce, drawing trail users into Downtown businesses while simultaneously improving accessibility for residents.



UW Team during the Site Visit (Feb. 10, 2025).

### 5.2.3 Long-Term Strategies: 5+ Years

One impactful project that may be supported through the Metropolitan Parks District (MPD) is the construction of tournament sports fields. The Focus Group and Open House participants identified youth sports as a defining characteristic of Raymond's community. Participants in the Focus Group emphasized how similar projects, like in Centralia, WA, attracted youth tournaments and visiting families. These new fields may make Raymond a regional hub for sports, encouraging the development of restaurants, hotels, retail, and similar uses Downtown that benefit from tournament attendees. The Focus Group suggested six turf tournament softball fields at the Raymond School complex on Eighth Street. Along with other upgrades, this may elevate Raymond's profile throughout Pacific County, increasing business capacity and general interest in Downtown. This could draw families from across the Pacific Northwest and boost the local economy.

Infrastructure upgrades are also a critical part of the Downtown revitalization process. These would include improvements to physical infrastructure (such as replacing deteriorating pilings) and facilities (including the in-progress City Hall relocation), and the construction of additional housing Downtown to keep up with demand and replace rapidly aging housing stock.

Historically, housing has been concentrated on the East side of the Downtown area. New housing developments throughout Downtown –including utilizing the vacant upper floors of existing building stock and infill projects– will result in more foot traffic for businesses on key corridors such as Third Street and reduce the distance residents travel for services and amenities. Downtown faces similar challenges of aging infrastructure that many other American communities face, and it is well known among stakeholders in Raymond that repairs to and replacement of these assets will be necessary to accommodate future growth.

Promoting multimodal transportation Downtown through complete street policies will improve safety in all modes of travel (walking, cycling, and driving) and improve economic outcomes as multiple modes of transportation encourage business visits. The Washington State Transportation Improvement Board manages the WA Complete Street grant program (authorized by RCW 47.04.320), which may be a grant that the city pursues. However, there must be a complete street ordinance before pursuing this strategy. Therefore, a complete street ordinance is essential in the short-term to prepare for the future grant. The Downtown Advisory Committee may consider exploring grant and funding options, along with the previously mentioned code updates and an inventory of existing and proposed infrastructure systems to achieve these long-term goals.



Newly finished ADA compatible sidewalks Downtown are part of building a complete street (Feb. 10, 2025).



Two significant capital assets in Downtown Raymond are the Dr. O. R. Nevitt Memorial Swimming Pool and Raymond Theatre. Community engagement efforts illustrated how the community greatly values these assets. They are both currently underutilized but present tremendous opportunities to support Downtown revitalization. The Pool is the only public pool in Pacific County, but it is only open part of the year as it is outdoors. The Raymond Theatre is a historic building centrally located on Third Street in Downtown and is a showpiece of the community. However, it does not show new release movies due to the high distribution cost and only hosts a few live events each month. Addressing the underutilization of these two assets will be important for downtown revitalization efforts. While there are some short- and medium-term strategies to utilize the Pool and Theatre more effectively, physical upgrades to both are medium- and long-term objectives, requiring significant planning before completion of the recommended strategies. Additionally, the desired improvements are expensive and ongoing operations and maintenance are costly. Dedicated funding streams would help support continued use and could be leveraged to address expensive capital expenses.

### 5.3.1 Dr. O. R. Nevitt Memorial Swimming Pool

A short-term goal is new, casual community events at the Pool. These events and programs may increase community engagement and enjoyment without significant initial investment. The Focus Group meeting suggested a poolside movie night, and suggestions from the community included additional swimming lessons and adult swimming hours.

Other suggestions included a “bobbing for pumpkins” event and the introduction of “adult-only mixer” nights. The community expressed interest in more activities catered to adults, expanding the Pool’s audience. Medium-term goals include partnering with neighboring facilities, such as the Theatre and the Raymond Library, to create unique collaborative events and incentives to visit each. Open House participants are already interested in the Library-to-Pool union due to their proximity.

Finally, a long-term goal to plan for involves covering the Pool. The Focus Group and Open House participants shared a desire for year-round pool usage, achievable by installing an inflatable bubble dome.

This long-term goal requires additional planning and budgeting, as it must be customized to fit the Pool's distinctive shape and may be financially burdensome to not only initially fund but also to maintain in the long-term. The MPD Exploratory Committee should lead this effort and would investigate the financial feasibility of covering the Pool for year-round use and evaluate the cost differential between keeping it dormant during the winter months versus open throughout the year.

## 5.3.2 Raymond Theatre

Short-term strategies include showing cult classics and retro films (throwback nights) and increasing the number of performances or recitals in partnership with local schools. The Focus Group participants expressed a desire to feature older films to promote more interaction in the Theatre. Further, the Open House event participants expressed interest in programs such as youth music lessons and partnerships with the school for on-stage student performances.

Medium-term strategies involve sponsored and hosted performances. Feedback from the Focus Group and Open House events showed similar interest in more live viewings, sponsoring talent shows, hosting local performers, and concerts that encourage youth engagement and attendance, which are ways the Theatre can implement this concept.

A potential long-term strategy for the Theatre includes dinner-and-movie experiences. This might consist of a partnership with the American Legion to use their kitchen next door for food service. Another option may be to refit the Theatre to have its own kitchen. Both examples may require renovating the Theatre's mezzanine to allow dining concurrent with events and films. Like the Pool, the MPD Exploratory Committee could potentially take the lead here, in conjunction with the Theatre, local businesses that may want to sponsor or cater events, and the Pacific County Economic Development Council.



Raymond Theatre.



Dr. O.R. Nevitt Memorial Pool (Feb. 10, 2025).



Rendering of food trucks in-front of Raymond Pool.

# 6

## Next Steps

To help the Raymond community realize its vision for a vibrant Downtown Raymond, the UW Team developed a road map of recommended strategies informed by community input and professional assessment. These recommendations cover a range of approaches designed to be implemented over time to support sustainable progress towards Downtown as a lively hub for residents and tourists alike. Next steps should focus on building momentum through continued community engagement, identifying pilot projects, and forming organizations to help carry this vision forward. Further outreach in the community to build capacity and support for revitalization will be essential.

The UW Team recommends a Downtown Advisory Committee, appointed by the City Council and comprised of key community members and stakeholders. This proposed committee will focus on short-, medium-, and long-term strategies and their implementation. It is critical to nominate members who are representative of the community at large. This committee should meet regularly, to strategize for the future and address issues as they arise.

The UW Team also recommends a Metropolitan Parks District (MPD) Exploratory Committee comprising of members representing the county, city, and school district. The charge for this committee is to examine the potential for forming an MPD in Raymond and northern Pacific County. This includes exploring proposed boundaries, taking inventory of existing and proposed facilities, and determining what funding model to implement. Similarly to the Downtown Advisory Committee, the MPD Exploratory Committee should meet regularly to strategize. Eventually, this committee may hold a permanent role if an MPD is established.

While everyone in the community has a role to play, these two committees are immediate next steps to revitalize Downtown. They are the runway to start the process, and their implementation is the first layer in the cumulative efforts for revitalization. Raymond may pursue its vision for revitalization using the UW Team's recommendations as advisory documents. The community may explore and expand its goals and means from these small beginnings as they find what solutions best work for them.

Raymond can achieve a more vibrant, inclusive, and economically resilient Downtown by phasing these goals from short-term beautification and zoning updates to long-term infrastructure investments, using the resources provided by the Washington Main Street Program and the funding source of a Metropolitan Parks District. Ultimately, the choice of which tools are utilized and to what extent lies in the hands of the stakeholders in and around Downtown Raymond.



# Appendix A

## THRIVE Focus Group Summary

As part of the Liveable City Year initiative, the University of Washington (UW) Team conducted a focus group meeting with the THRIVE committee on April 21, 2025, at the Raymond City Council Chambers. The THRIVE committee, responsible for allocating Weyerhaeuser's proposed investment in the city, participated in a discussion with the UW Team. In preparation for the presentation, case studies of nearby small towns were identified to make recommendations on how Raymond wants to proceed in their efforts. The focus group began with a presentation of revitalization strategies and case studies by the UW Team, followed by a conversation with the committee centered on five main questions. The insights gathered informed the planning of the Open House event on May 12, 2025.

### Attendees

*THRIVE Committee:* Mayor Dee Roberts, Tia Channell, Katie Hooker, KC Johnson, Will Hamlin, Melanie Seiler, Susan Yirku, Jeff Karnatz.

*UW Team:* Hannah Autry, Iona Cich, Alex Dassenko, Walter Donovan, Jr., and instructor Rick Sepler.

### 1. What is and isn't working well in Downtown Raymond?

Beautification was seen as a catalyst for broader revitalization, as visible improvements could inspire property owners to invest in their spaces and foster community pride. Participants recalled past initiatives such as community clean-up days and discussed the possibility of involving students in gardening and maintenance of planters through science classes or volunteer programs. Participants discussed how there are already a number of planters that the city owns which can be taken out of storage and used. Maintenance of planters was cited as an issue due to lack of volunteers and is burdensome on city employees.

Assets mentioned included the city's parks, the annual Willapa Harbor Festival, and the Willapa Hills State Park Trail. However, some sections of the trail were noted to be in disrepair, and suggestions included organizing trail clean-up days and installing new signage. Participants also highlighted gaps in downtown services, such as limited food options and the absence of stores selling infant and toddler clothing. This forces residents to travel outside Raymond for basic needs. Third Street was identified as a key area for redevelopment.

# THRIVE Focus Group Summary Cont.

## 2. Reflections on Case Studies

The UW Team's presentation of case studies prompted discussion about strategies that could be adapted to Raymond. A recurring theme was the underutilization of the Raymond Theatre. The committee expressed interest in transforming it into a more dynamic venue, focused mainly on hosting events that combine food, drink, and entertainment, such as cult classic movie nights, and live performances as seen with Hoquiam's 7th Street Theatre. The American Legion's relocation next door presents an opportunity for collaboration, such as providing dinner or snack boxes for theatre events as that building has a commercial kitchen. The Raymond Pool was also identified as a valuable but underused asset. Suggestions included installing an inflatable bubble for year-round use and hosting creative events. Other case study ideas that resonated included leveraging tax credits through the WA Main Street Program, implementing a vacancy tax to encourage development and address public health concerns with deteriorating buildings, and installing decorative lighting across downtown, similar to Wenatchee.

## 3. Revitalization Strategies: Short-, Medium-, and Long-Term

The committee agreed on several strategies for revitalization, listed below.

- **Short-Term:** Using planters, hosting night markets and pop-up events, experimenting with temporary retail spaces, organizing bicyclist events and adding amenities such as bike racks, and exploring a food truck hub on 5th Street.
- **Medium-Term:** Increasing retail diversity, exploring pop-up restaurants, updating zoning codes to streamline development, and implementing a vacancy tax to encourage property use and maintenance.
- **Long-Term:** Encouraging cyclists from the Willapa Hills State Park Trail to come Downtown with amenities like a bike repair shop, highway access points to Downtown, and increased wayfinding; developing a sports complex with turf fields to attract regional tournaments; and redesigning Downtown streets with traffic calming and complete street measures.

## 4. Visioning Without Financial Constraints

The committee's proposed ideas included forming a Metropolitan Parks District to unlock additional grant opportunities, upgrading the Raymond Theatre and Pool, incentivizing downtown retail and infill development, and expanding infrastructure to support food trucks. Barriers to implementation were also discussed. Limited funding and grant competition were significant concerns, considering the city's 10% grant match requirement, which is low compared to larger cities, and the lack of dedicated grant-writing staff. In addition, the city has limited capacity with only 24 employees, including police and fire personnel, many of whom have multiple roles.

# THRIVE Focus Group Summary Cont.

## 5. Strategies for Further Investigation

The committee concluded by identifying several strategies for further exploration:

- Establishing a Metropolitan Parks District (RCW 35.61)
- Encouraging private property improvements by implementing a vacancy tax
- Beautification through planters, lighting, and public art
- Engaging schools in community clean-up efforts
- Creating a sports complex and hosting tournaments
- Joining the WA Main Street Program
- Exploring the formation of a Creative District to highlight Raymond's artistic community



# Appendix B

## Open House Summary

The University of Washington (UW) Team hosted an open house at the Raymond Theatre on May 12, 2025, from 4-7 pm. This event was to gather input on the community's vision for the future of Downtown and their ideas about different revitalization strategies. There were around 20 attendees. The four stations consisted of: demographic and interactive maps for attendees, which identified favorite businesses and areas in need of improvement; case studies displaying successful revitalization efforts in other communities; design and branding, focused on the best way to showcase Raymond's identity in a unified way; and potential enhancements for existing assets –the Raymond Theatre and pool– and examples of how other communities revitalize these spaces.

At these stations, the UW team (Iona Cich, Alex Dassenko, Walter Donovan Jr., Gabriel Leon, Vince Martinez, Wesley Ahumada Newhart, So Sung, and instructor Rick Sepler) collected feedback from community members.

- **Map Station:** Attendees looked over two separate maps, marking their generalized location of residence and workplace on one map and their favorite/most frequented spots in Downtown Raymond on the other. Participants shared their thoughts on what they would like to see in the future, with many mentioning waterfront activation, new business ventures, aesthetic and infrastructure rebuilding, and expanding recreational opportunities for younger residents Downtown.
- **Case Studies Station:** Attendees looked at examples of successful downtown revitalization in other cities and reflected on which ones they liked the most. The most popular initiatives included a Main Street program, a waterfront hub, improved bike trail, a Metropolitan Parks District, and revitalizing community events, such as the Willapa Festival.
- **Design and Branding Station:** Attendees viewed images that reflected Raymond's cultural and historic significance. The branding options included kayakers, shellfish, loggers, and the swing bridge. They also looked at branding elements from other communities, such as murals, planter boxes, light poles, and banners, to introduce new ideas for a cohesive identity for Raymond. The main ideas included maintaining a unified theme through consistent signage, banners, architectural standards, integrating educational elements, highlighting Raymond's connection to nature, and expanding the waterfront community market to improve local food access. Discussions also covered mixed opinions on current artwork Downtown, such as the metal statues, the need for more murals and artwork, enhanced public spaces, and improved street lighting and wayfinding.

## Open House Summary Cont.

- **Pool and Theatre Station:** This station focused on improving the Raymond swimming pool and the Raymond Theatre. Community members expressed a lot of excitement about covering the pool so it can be used year-round use, expanding swimming lessons, senior classes, and aquatic certifications. The theater could be a venue for youth, with music, education, concerts, talent shows, as well as interactive movie nights. Many expressed interest in having a food element, which could involve having food trucks out front or using the kitchen next store.

The UW Team provided an optional **survey** to gauge public opinion on revitalization. A recurring concern was neglected and underutilized spaces. Respondents suggested rehabilitating dilapidated and vacant buildings and suggested replacing them with a mix of retail, housing, and public amenities. Residents noted a lack of foot traffic and business activity downtown, pointing to the need for affordable housing, more local events, and destination-worthy attractions. There was strong support for improving the downtown environment through beautification, including planting more trees (especially to shield views of US 101), adding lighting, and introducing more colorful branding.

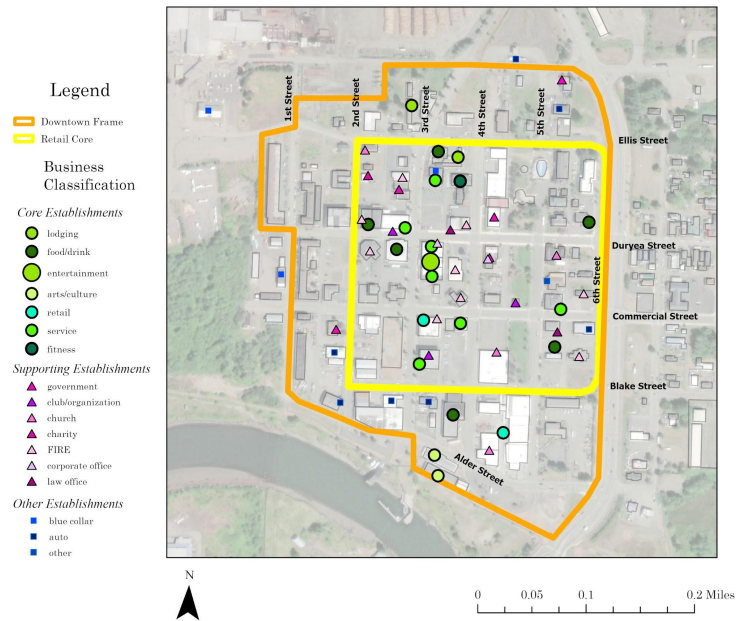
Several responses emphasized the importance of creating new community-oriented spaces and activities. Ideas included opening a large childcare facility, expanding parks and green space, establishing a food truck area, and creating more opportunities for kids and families like with an arcade. The pool and theatre were also identified as important community assets in need of updates. Respondents wanted newer movies, modern seating, and more consistent programming at the theatre, and improvements to the swimming pool's design and accessibility, including the option for indoor facilities and adult-only swim nights.

When asked what makes Raymond special, community members emphasize its rich logging and fishing history, biodiversity, and tight-knit community. It was described as having a peaceful, small-town feel, and one participant described it as "Like Wes Anderson directed a John Deere commercial." Some participants expressed interest in taking active roles in revitalization efforts, such as joining a downtown association, and others expressed interest in participating in beautification projects.

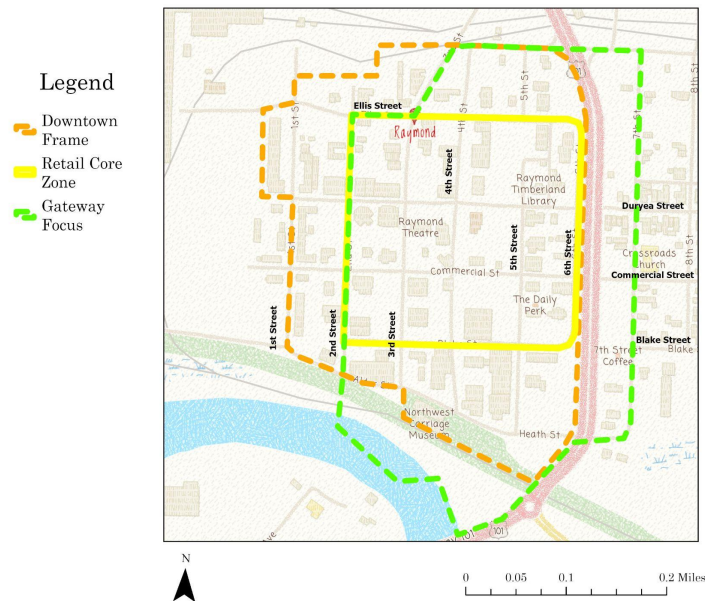
# Appendix C

## Maps

### Business Typology in Downtown Raymond



### Downtown Boundary Concepts





# Maps

## Parks in Downtown Raymond and Vicinity.



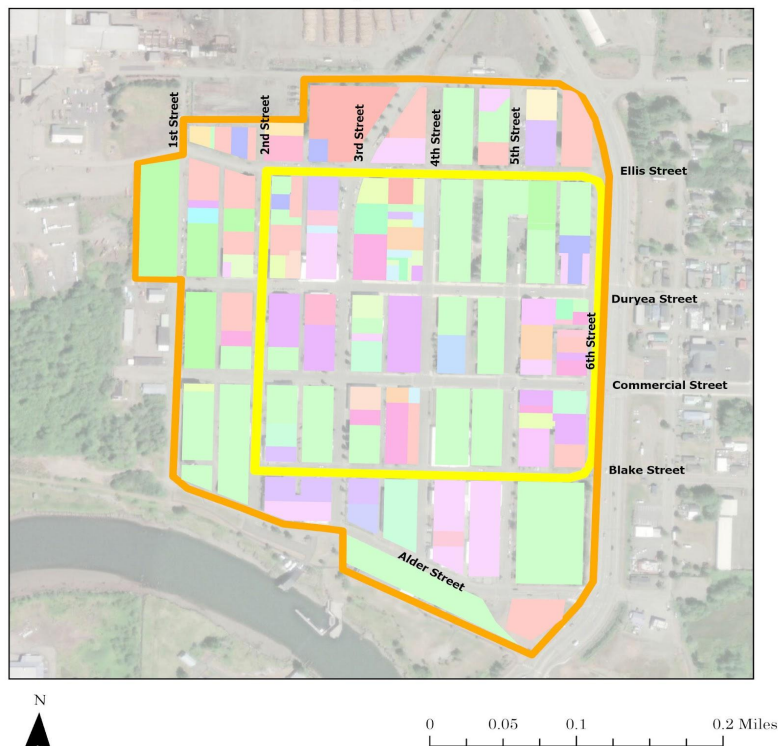
### Legend

- Downtown Frame
- Retail Core

#### Land Use Class

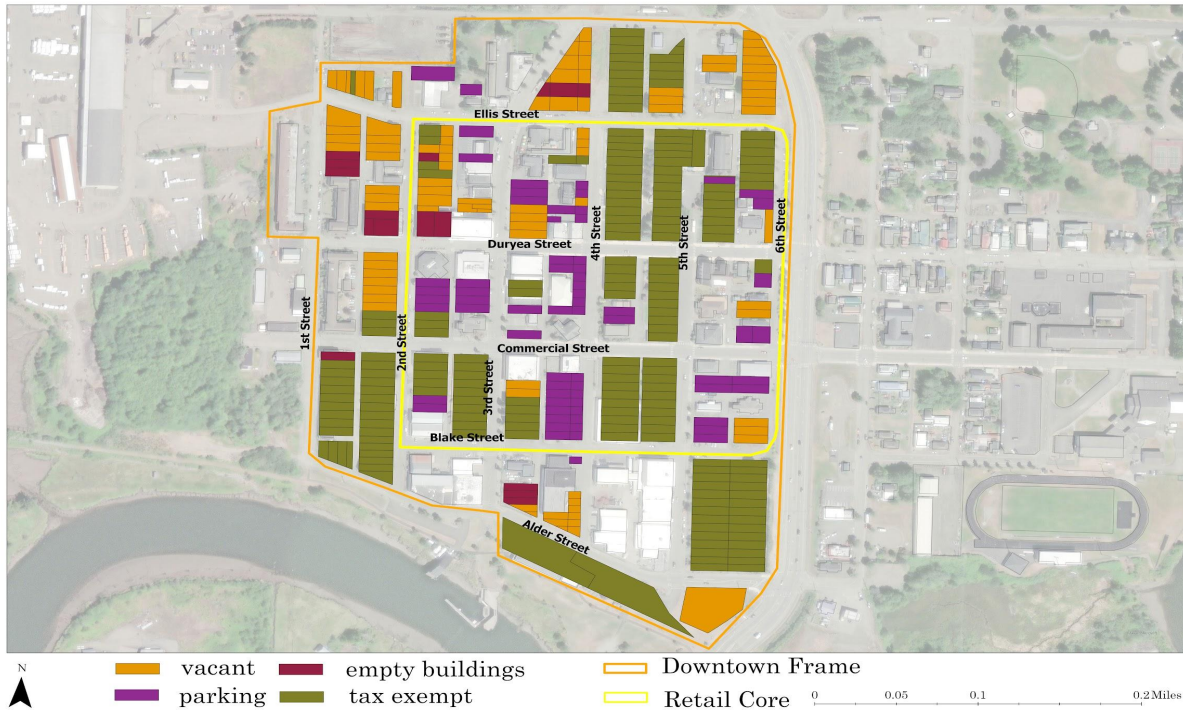
- 11 - Residential - Single Family
- 13 - Residential - Multiunits
- 16 - Residential - Hotels/Motels
- 18 - Residential - All other
- 24 - Commercial - Lumber and Wood
- 46 - Transportation - Auto Parking
- 47 - Transportation - Communication
- 53 - Trade - General Merchandise
- 55 - Trade - Auto
- 57 - Trade - Furniture & Equipment
- 58 - Trade - Eating & Drinking
- 59 - Trade - Other
- 61 - Services - Finance/Insurance/RealEstate
- 62 - Services - Personal
- 63 - Services - Business
- 64 - Services - Repair
- 65 - Services - Professional
- 67 - Services - Governmental
- 69 - Services - Misc
- 72 - Recreational - Public assembly
- 74 - Recreational - Rec. Activities
- 79 - Recreational - Other Recreational
- 91 - Undeveloped - Land
- 97 - Exempt Property

## 2020 Land Use Map of Downtown Raymond

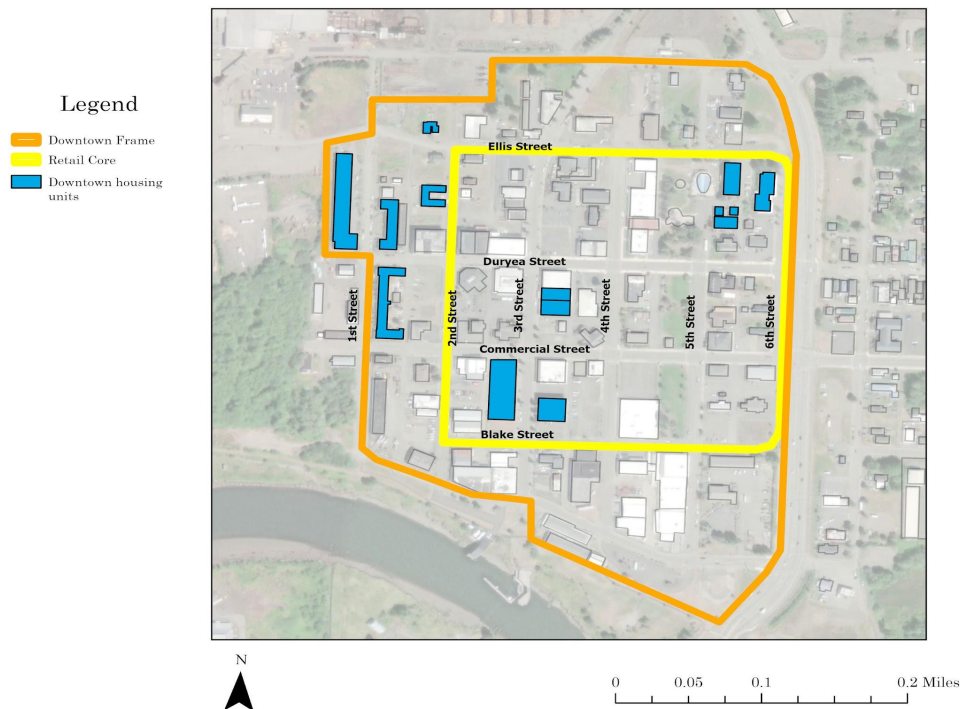


# Maps

## Fiscally Underperforming Lots in Downtown Raymond



## Housing in Downtown Raymond





# Appendix D

## Images



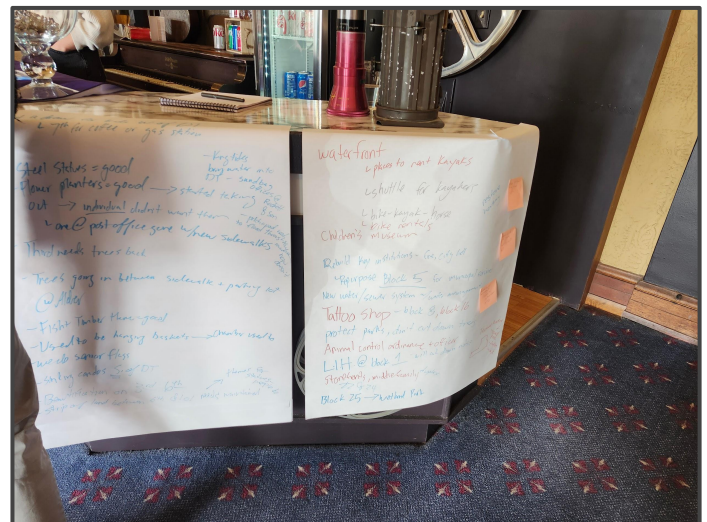
Maps Station at Open House (May 12, 2025)



Flyer for Open House outside Raymond Theatre (May 12, 2025)



Maps Station at Open House (May 12, 2025)



Notes from Maps Station at Open House (May 12, 2025)



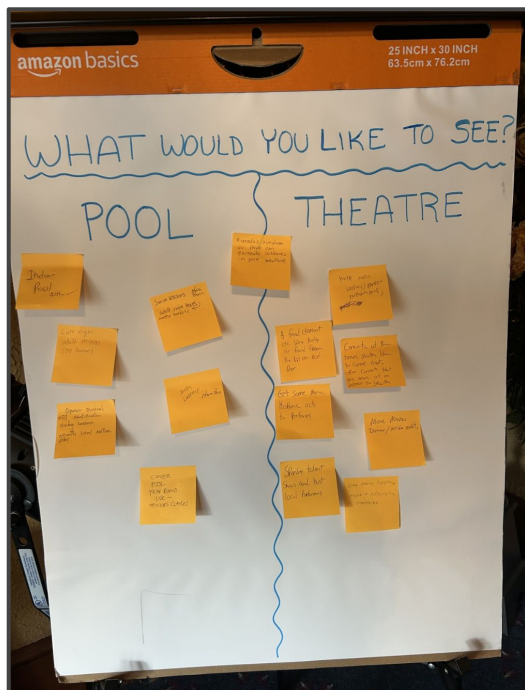
# Images



Case Study Station at Open House (May 12, 2025)



Case Study Station at Open House (May 12, 2025)



Existing Assets Station suggestions at Open House (May 12, 2025)



Case Study Station at Open House (May 12, 2025)



# Images



UW Team Member prepares for Open House (May 12, 2025)



UW Team Site Visit (February 10, 2025)



UW Team Site Visit (February 10, 2025)



Open House begins welcoming attendees (May 12, 2025)