

# Midtown Task Force

## Meeting #2 Consultant's Report

### by Bill Trimm, FAICP

The Midtown Task Force conducted its second meeting on August 25th remotely via the City's Zoom app. The key focus of the meeting was the presentation and discussion of a Visual Preference Survey. The intent of the survey was to gain an understanding of both the Task Force members and public of their preferred design preferences related to building form, site planning, landscaping, exterior building materials, window elements, parking and streetscapes.

### Visual Preference Survey

Bob Bengford, AICP and Ian Crozier from Makers Architecture and Urban Design presented a series of photographic images of separate land uses including mixed-use, commercial, office, business park, residential and open space. The attendees were asked to rank each image according to a scaled rating system with 5 being the most preferred and 1 being the least preferred. Once all the images were presented and ranked, the attendees discussed their opinions about what design elements associated with the various land uses would best fit into the overall perceived character of Snohomish. Key elements ranked as beneficial and acceptable include the following:

- Building designs that are human scaled with pedestrian-friendly building entrances.
- Incorporation of sufficient landscaping and greenspace.
- Varying roof lines such as gabled, pitched or shed and roof top treatment.
- Window treatment including, size, placement, recessed and trim.
- Varying exterior building material such as wood, brick, stone, hardy board and limited metal and stucco siding.
- Step-back of upper floors of multi-storied buildings.
- Distinctive facades and varying storefronts in multi-tenant buildings.
- Building signage appropriately sized to the building frontage/façade.
- Modern architecture that fits into the Snohomish character: timber form, pitched or gabled rooflines, ample glazing, wood and brick exterior and welcoming pedestrian entrances.
- Well-designed open spaces for public gatherings, building entrances and passive pedestrian usage and seating areas.

### Outcomes

At the first meeting of the Task Force on July 28<sup>th</sup>, the group discussed, and envisioned various land uses that would be appropriate and/or desirable in the Avenue D corridor. For the southern section between 6<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>, they envisioned low to mid-rise multi-family residential, stand-alone commercial and office

buildings, and some limited multi-family residential over retail and office. In the northern section, between 10<sup>th</sup> and the roundabout, the group noted that the majority of redevelopment in the corridor would occur here due to the large surface parking lots. Member and attendees envisioned denser multi-storied mixed-use residential over retail and redevelopment of the Armory site to mixed-use residential, flex-tech and/or lodging. The ideas and suggestions for the County site included multi-storied residential and some mixed-use such as residential over retail fronting on Avenue D and the integration of open space.

### Next Steps

By analyzing the suggested land use types from meeting #1 and the associated preferred design preferences from meeting #2, the consultant team will begin to define common themes that can inform various revisions or new Comprehensive Plan policies, zoning and design regulations. A preliminary draft of suggested policy revisions and design principles and standards will be presented to the City staff for review in the next several weeks. Once reviewed and accepted by staff, the team will prepare a conceptual policy and regulatory approach and present it to the Task Force in mid-October. Comments and suggestions by the Task Force will be used to prepare a draft plan and conceptual development regulations that will be present to an open house later this fall for addition comments and suggestions.