



Esther Short Neighborhood



NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

City of

VANCOUVER

WASHINGTON

Approved the Esther Short
Neighborhood Association
September 19, 2006

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**Esther Short Neighborhood Action Planning Committee
Committee Members**

**Tom Jones
Lisa McLennan
Ernie Schurian
J. T. London
Joyce London**

**City Council
Royce Pollard, Mayor**

**Larry Smith
Jeanne Harris
Pat Jollota**

**Tim Leavitt
Dan Tonkovich
Jeanne Stewart**

**City Manager
Pat McDonnell**

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Introduction

The purpose of a neighborhood action plan is to identify issues that are of concern to the residents of the neighborhood, and to devise strategies for addressing these concerns. In conjunction with broader policies and implementation measures contained within the City's comprehensive plan, the neighborhood action planning process is intended to protect and enhance the livability within specific neighborhoods, as well as to help fulfill the overall community vision and to create a more livable city. More specifically, neighborhood action plans are intended to:

- ◆ Educate both city government and neighborhood residents about each others' concerns and visions for the future.
- ◆ Promote collaboration between the city and the neighborhood in order to achieve mutual goals and a shared sense of responsibility.
- ◆ Create a "sense of place" within the community by identifying and developing the assets within each neighborhood.
- ◆ Initiate change, rather than simply reacting to it, by addressing specific issues and opportunities.
- ◆ Achieve sensible and coordinated project and program planning within each neighborhood and between all the city's neighborhoods.
- ◆ Strengthen neighborhoods.

Relationship to the Comprehensive Plan

In general, a comprehensive plan is intended to provide broad policy direction which is implemented through more specific development regulations and capital expenditure programs. Comprehensive plans do not typically address the more immediate needs and concerns of individual neighborhoods. This is the purpose of a sub-area or neighborhood plan.

The Vancouver Comprehensive Plan 2003 – 2023, adopted in May 2004, includes goals and policies to encourage a sense of community. The Plan specifically states that the City should: “Maintain and facilitate development of stable, multi-use neighborhoods that contain a compatible mix of housing, jobs, stores and open and public spaces in a well-planned, safe pedestrian environment.”

In addition to the City’s comprehensive plan, City Council has accepted the Vancouver City Center Vision (VCCV) plan that lays out a strategy for development and redevelopment in the downtown. At the same time that this Neighborhood Action Plan is being updated, an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the VCCV plan is being developed. After the final EIS is issued by the City, the VCCV plan will be modified and approved and height, zoning and other land use regulations will be amended to reflect the vision in the VCCV.

The purpose of the Esther Short Neighborhood Action Plan is to integrate neighborhood needs into the City's budget process, Six-Year Street Improvement Program, Neighborhood Traffic Control Program, Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan, and other planning and funding programs. The general policy statements included in the Action Plan may also be used by the City Council to guide future decisions involving development proposals and plan amendments affecting the neighborhood.



The Neighborhood Action Planning Process

This plan has been developed by the Esther Short Neighborhood Association with assistance from the City of Vancouver Office of Neighborhoods.

A draft version of this Action Plan has been advertised and made available for review and comment by all residents of the neighborhood. After considering and reconciling comments from the residents, the plan has been endorsed by the Neighborhood Association according to their specific by-laws, and then forwarded to the Planning Commission for their consideration. The City Council has endorsed the Plan by resolution.

It is intended that city agencies will utilize the action plans as input in developing more specific work programs and helping to establish city-wide funding priorities. It is recognized that many of the recommendations contained in the action plans are conceptual only and may need to be analyzed in greater detail, both individually and in relationship to other recommendations. It should also be emphasized that funding sources may not exist for implementing all of the recommendations identified in the plan. All of the actions identified in the plan are to be initiated and implemented by residents of the neighborhood and the appropriate city departments.



Overview of the Plan

This Plan contains four components. The NEIGHBORHOOD PROFILE contains a general description of the current conditions within the neighborhood. The VISION STATEMENT describes the neighborhood's sense of identity and vision for its future. The NEIGHBORHOOD OBJECTIVES identifies issues that are of concern to the residents of the neighborhood. The NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION STEPS includes specific potential strategies for accomplishing the identified objectives. Each Action Step is prioritized and identifies the responsible parties for implementing those strategies.

Neighborhood Profile

The Esther Short Neighborhood consists of approximately 144 square blocks and is bounded to the north by 15th and 16th Streets, to the south by mighty Columbia River, to the east by I-5 and to the west by the rail road tracks.

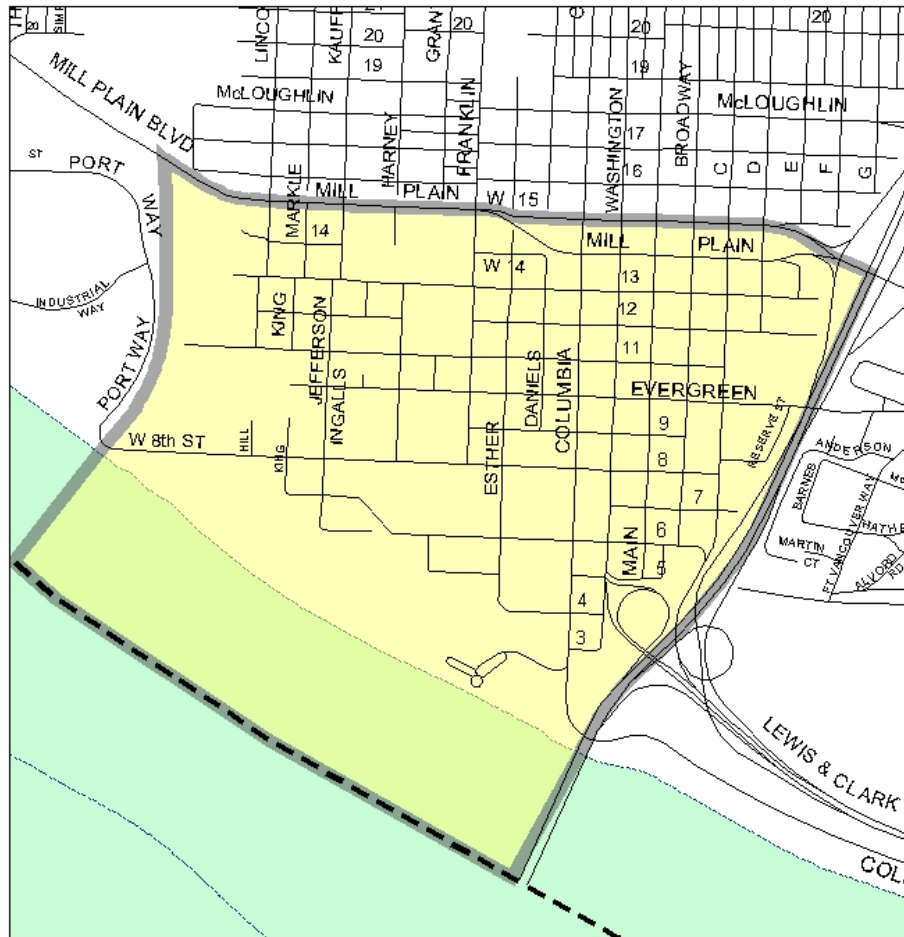
The Esther Short neighborhood is the city's commercial, cultural, financial and municipal center. Within the neighborhood is Vancouver's vibrant and livable downtown with its numerous small shops, restaurants, entertainment, and river front areas, and is home to many residents. Despite being the state's fourth largest city, the downtown has the character of a small town.

Since 1997 approximately \$300 million have been invested in new downtown projects. The proposed redevelopment of the waterfront at the Boise Cascade site and Copps Motors site indicate that even greater investment will be made in the downtown in the next several years.

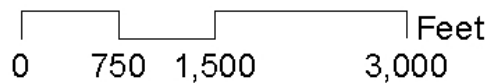
The Esther Short Park (dedicated in 1855) is the oldest public square in the Pacific Northwest and is intended to be heart of the downtown. It represents over five continuous acres in the heart of downtown with a playground, walkways, benches and picnic areas.

Land use within the neighborhood is primarily developed for mixed uses. Approximately ninety percent of the area is zoned for city center uses that provide for high density and commercial and residential development.

Boundaries of the Esther Short Neighborhood Association



Esther Short Neighborhood



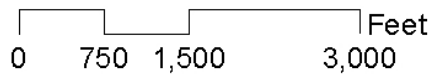
Neighborhood Zoning/Comp Map



Legend

- Urban Lower Density Residential
- Urban Higher Density Residential
- Commercial & Mixed Use
- Industrial
- Public Facility
- Open Space
- Water

Esther Short



Vision Statement

The Esther Short neighborhood will be perceived as safe, convenient, comfortable and familiar.

Mixed use development, like that developed around Esther Short Park since 1997, will flourish throughout the downtown and on the waterfront.

New and existing residential development will be the prime motivator of a vital and attractive city center.

The neighborhood will development as a rich mix of residential, cultural, civic, retail and entertainment places that will attract growth, jobs and energetic urban activities.

Main Street and Broadway will be renovated and will form a central spine of diverse and complementary uses that establish downtown as a center for commerce, culture and urban living.

Objectives and Action Steps

This section identifies issues that are of concern to the residents of the neighborhood, along with potential "action steps" for addressing these concerns. The issues have been stated as "objectives," and are organized into categories similar to those found in the Vancouver Urban Area comprehensive plan. The order in which objectives and action steps appear does not reflect their degree of importance.

The following recommended action items identified as having a "high" priority are considered by the Neighborhood Association to be most important. "Medium" priority action steps are

somewhat less important. "Low" priority action steps are considered least important.

Priority has been assigned by the Neighborhood Association for each action step without regard for the time frame within which the recommendation can realistically be accomplished (short-range, long-range) and without concern for whether funding sources can be practically identified. Accordingly, it is possible that a "High" priority item may not be realized for many years. In contrast, some "Low" priority items could be potentially accomplished in a relatively short amount of time without significant capital expense.

Listed below are abbreviations for the various responsible parties used throughout the document:

BAC	Clark County Bicycle Advisory Committee	VEDD	Vancouver Economic Development Department
BNSF	BNSF Railroad	VDA	Vancouver's Downtown Association
BUS	Neighborhood Business Owners	VFD	Vancouver Fire Department
CC	Clark County	VFM	Vancouver Farmers Market
CCHC	Clark County Historic Commission	VHA	Vancouver Housing Authority
CCRA	City Center Redevelopment Authority	VNA	Vancouver Neighborhood Alliance
CITY	Mayor's Office	VON	Vancouver Office of Neighborhoods
CHRC	Community Housing Resource Center	VPC	Vancouver Parking Commission
CMC	Community Mediation Services	VPD	Vancouver Police Department
CTRAN	C TRAN	VPR	Vancouver Parks and Recreation Department
DRA	Downtown Redevelopment Authority	VPWF	Vancouver Public Works Functions
ESNA	Esther Short Neighborhood Association	VSC	Vancouver Services Clubs
FHA	Federal Highway Administration	VSD	Vancouver School District
GVCC	Greater Vancouver Chamber of Commerce	VTD	Vancouver Transportation Division
HRC	Housing Resource Council	WLCB	Washington Liquor Control Board
NPS	National Park Service	WSDOT	Washington State Department of Transportation
OWN	Neighborhood Property Owners		
PDX	Portland International Airport		
PUD	Clark Public Utilities		
RTC	Regional Transportation Council		
VCA	Vancouver City Attorney's Office		
VCDD	Vancouver Community Development Department		
VCMO	City Manager's Office		

I. DOWNTOWN APPEARANCE

Objective #1

Promote the character and improve the appearance of the Neighborhood's buildings, streetscapes and open spaces.

The character and appearance of the area surrounding Esther Short Park has dramatically improved with substantial public and private investments in redevelopment projects. A fair number of older buildings along Main Street have also been rehabilitated. These types of improvements should be expanded throughout the downtown and the waterfront.

<u>Action Steps:</u>	<u>Priority</u>	<u>Responsible Parties</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the amount of public artwork in the downtown area. 	Medium	VPR, VCDD, ESNA, VDA, VEDD,
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update the downtown design guidelines for the waterfront 	Medium	VEDD, VCDD
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage business and property owners and businesses to improve the front, back and sides of their buildings. 	High	VDA, VCDD, VEDD, ESNA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify specific properties as targets for the façade improvement program. 	High	VDA, VCDD, VEDD
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange for regular updates on economic development activities in the downtown. 	High	VCDD, ESNA, VEDD, VDA, CCRA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer to cooperate with Vancouver's Downtown Association and Vancouver Farmers Market to sponsor Spring and Fall downtown clean up events. 	Medium	ESNA, VDA, VFM, VPWF
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage landscaping, benches and shade on Vancouver Landing. 	Medium	VPR, VPWF, VSC

I. DOWNTOWN APPEARANCE

Objective #2

Encourage and support the enforcement of rules and ordinances.

While a fair number of sidewalks have been repaired or replaced, there are still a substantial number of sidewalks that are hazardous to pedestrians. Some of these problems are caused by inadequate street tree maintenance.

<u>Action Steps:</u>	<u>Priority</u>	<u>Responsible Parties</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage enforcement of the sidewalk ordinance. 	High	VCDD, VPWF, VTD, ESNA, VDA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage adjacent property owners to properly maintain street trees to maximize the benefits of trees. Work with the city to ensure that proper maintenance is done on all trees that it is responsible for to maximize the benefits of trees. 	Medium	VPWF, ESNA, VPR, VDA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with VDA and entertainment businesses to develop ways to minimize the disposal of cigarette butts on sidewalks and in gutters. 	Medium	VDA, BUS, OWN
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request City to consider posting streets to prohibit on-street parking on nights that are scheduled for street sweeping. 	Medium	VPWF, VDA

II. NOISE AND NUSIANCE

Objective #1

Enhance the overall livability and safe environment during all hours.

<u>Action Steps:</u>	<u>Priority</u>	<u>Responsible Parties</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the City to enforce the Noise and Nuisance ordinance related to evening entertainment businesses and activities. 	High	VPD, ESNA, VDA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support City efforts to eliminate BNSF train whistles at the 8th and Jefferson grade crossings. 	High	BNSF, ESNA, VTD, VDA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask the Vancouver representative to the PDX Noise Abatement Committee to relay our neighborhood's concerns at their monthly meeting. 	Medium	PDX, VCDD, ESNA, VDA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request City and WDOT assistance to minimize the operation of the ODOT guns on the I-5 Bridge. 	Medium	ESNA, WDOT, VTD
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request cooperation of downtown merchants and refuse collectors to minimize noise from backup warning bells. 	Medium	ESNA, VDA, VPWF

III. HISTORICAL PRESERVATION

Objective #1

Promote the preservation of the historic design and character in all development efforts.

Vancouver’s rich history is apparent in the downtown area. We must preserve the unique flavor, blending the old and the new.

<u>Action Steps:</u>	<u>Priority</u>	<u>Responsible Parties</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain viable historic buildings by encouraging rehabilitation in lieu of demolition. 	High	VEDD, VCDD, ESNA, CCRA, CCHC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Install public improvements such as lighting, benches, etc with a consistent design. 	Medium	VEDD, VCDD, VPWF, ESNA, VDA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rehabilitate and preserve the AMTRAK Station. 	Low	VEDD, VCDD, ESNA, VDA, BNSF, WDOT, Railroad Museum Groups

IV. HOUSING

Objective #1

Develop a variety of housing types to produce the buying power that will stimulate retail, entertainment and commercial development.

To ensure the successful redevelopment of downtown Vancouver, we need people to live here as well as work, shop, and play.

<u>Action Steps:</u>	<u>Priority</u>	<u>Responsible Parties</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The City should use financial and permitting incentives to encourage a diverse range of housing types of urban design throughout the neighborhood.	High	VCDD, ESNA, VEDD, VHA
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encourage property owners of rental units to maintain and update their properties.	High	VCDD, ESNA, VEDD, OWN

V. PUBLIC / PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT

Objective #1

Ensure redevelopment is consistent in scale and compatible with the rest of the neighborhood by creating a balance between housing and commercial uses.

In order for the redevelopment of Esther Short Neighborhood and Downtown to be attractive, vital and economically sound, it must be carefully modeled to be beautiful as well as functional.

<u>Action Steps:</u>	<u>Priority</u>	<u>Responsible Parties</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish official liaison relationships between ESNA and VDA.. 	High	ESNA, VDA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage building height guidelines that are compatible with the current scale and character of downtown. 	High	VCDD, VEDD, ESNA, VDA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage more retail, specialty, grocery and pharmacy commercial uses. 	High	VCDD, VEDD, ESNA, VDA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage the relocation of the main library to the downtown core area. 	High	VCDD, VEDD, Fort Vancouver Library, VDA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the development of downtown mixed use projects. 	Medium	ESNA, CCRA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage CRC to restore land for urban uses as part of the I-5 Bridge replacement. 	Medium	ESNA, CCRA, VTD, CRC

VI. PUBLIC SAFETY

Objective #1

Improve security and safety throughout the neighborhood.

To encourage citywide and pedestrian use of downtown sidewalks and streets, we need them to be safe for walking. As the population of the neighborhood increases after redevelopment, public safety will be of paramount importance.

<u>Action Steps:</u>	<u>Priority</u>	<u>Responsible Parties</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase and maintain police bicycle patrols to seven days a week and maintain that coverage except in harsh weather. 	High	VPD, ESNA, VDA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase night time police presence in the downtown. 	High	VPD, ESNA, VDA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement and enforce an Alcohol Impact Area ordinance throughout the neighborhood. 	High	VCA, VPD
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage rigorous enforcement of Washington Liquor Control regulations in the downtown regarding the serving of alcohol. 	High	VCA, VPD, WLCB
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify illegal activities and locations within the neighborhood warranting special attention and work with the VPD Neighborhood Response Team to focus on these activities and locations. 	High	ESNA, VPD
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the conversion of bus service on the transit mall to more conventional bus service and the removal from 7th Street of transit supportive infrastructure that encourages loitering. 	High	CTTRAN, ESNA, VTD, VDA

VII. MOBILITY MANAGEMENT

Objective #1

Improve smooth and safe traffic and pedestrian flow throughout the neighborhood.

<u>Action Steps:</u>	<u>Priority</u>	<u>Responsible Parties</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the concept of light rail. 	Medium	VEDD, VWPF, VCDD, VDA, ESNA, C-TRAN
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide and maintain pedestrian friendly sidewalks with adequate trash receptacles and benches. 	High	VWPF, VEDD, ESNA, VDA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage the evaluation of using old fashion, rubber tired trolleys as a downtown shuttle system. 	High	C-TRAN, ESNA, VTD, VEDD, VDA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request City to compel the repair, replacement or removal of defective flush metal vault doors in downtown sidewalks 	Medium	VPWF, BUS, OWN, VDA, VCDD
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply for Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) and other funding sources to complete handicapped access ramps and to repair hazardous sidewalks throughout the neighborhood. 	High	ESNA, VCDD, VPWF
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement speed-slowing devices on 'C' street and Washington Street. 	High	VPWF, VTD, ESNA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement slowing devices on Washington Street toward the I-5 On-ramp to improve pedestrian safety. 	High	VTD, VWPF, ESNA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage ESNA and individual member input on Columbia River Crossing project impacts on the downtown. 	Medium	WSDOT, VEDD, ESNA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Install countdown pedestrian heads at all signalized intersections within the ESNA boundaries. 	High	VTD, VWPF, ESNA

MOBILITY MANAGEMENT

Objective #2

Improve the accessibility and linkage to other neighborhoods.

<u>Action Steps:</u>	<u>Priority</u>	<u>Responsible Parties</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote and support improved pedestrian access to the historic reserve and waterfront. 	High	VTD, VPWF, VCDD, VPR, ESNA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with CTRAN to establish a free shuttle serving the downtown, Central Park and the waterfront. 	High	VTD, C-TRAN, ESNA, VDA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage access into the Southern part of downtown from I-5 as part of the CRC project. 	Medium	ESNA, VTD, WDOT, CRC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage the location of a taxi stand convenient to the convention center. 	Medium	VTD, VPC

Objective #3

Improve quality and quantity of parking in the neighborhood.

<u>Action Steps:</u>		<u>Responsible Parties</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage and support mixed-use parking structures for autos and bikes and/or buildings with underground parking or attached parking structures. 	High	VCDD, ESNA, VEDD, CCRA, VPC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discourage additional surface parking lots. 	High	VCDD, ESNA, VEDD, VDA, CCRA, VPC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage business owners to require employees to use long-term spaces instead of short term metered spaces. 	High	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Request that a position be established on the City's Parking Advisory Committee for a neighborhood association representative. 	High	ESNA, VPC