

**THE CITY OF RICHLAND**  
Swift Corridor and Civic Center Study

**LMN/Lorax/ALD Architects**

2011

The City of Richland

# Contents

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<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction and Background</b>	
	Intent . . . . .	1
	Relationship to Previous Plans . . . . .	1
	Plan Process . . . . .	2
	Plan Development . . . . .	3
	Market Considerations. . . . .	3
	Guiding Principles. . . . .	4

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<b>2</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>	
	Urban Design. . . . .	5
	Property Development Strategies. . . . .	6
	Recommendations . . . . .	17



# 1 Introduction and Background

The City of Richland's 2008 Comprehensive Plan identifies an important goal in its land use element to revitalize declining commercial areas, namely the Central Business District (CBD) by developing an attractive Central Business District with adequate parking, landscaping, and pedestrian access. The Swift Corridor was selected by the Richland City Council in 2010 as a focused area for redevelopment and revitalization. There are several components and opportunities along the corridor that make it a good candidate for playing a significant role in the infill and redevelopment of the downtown, including: Kadlec Medical Facilities expansion, private redevelopment, federal employment and service expansion, library, city hall, fire station, streetscape improvements.

The corridor is unique in the CBD because of the large amount of underdeveloped property along Swift that is under public control. The City has hired a project team that consists of urban design, architecture, construction and development perspectives to conduct an urban design and redevelopment study that includes specific, market-based project opportunities. These opportunities and recommendations range in expense and benefit to the Corridor and the Downtown, but all lead toward the goal of creating a vibrant downtown by catalyzing development in the CBD. With focused strategic public investment, the City can leverage its resources to set the stage to encourage quality infill development.

## INTENT

The intent of this study is to establish urban design and implementation strategies for phases of redevelopment of the Swift Corridor and Downtown to attain greater synergy in Richland core. The plan's ideas are based in market reality, action-oriented, contextual to the greater urban fabric, and range in short, mid and longer term opportunities. This approach assumes that change doesn't occur overnight, but rather over time, step-by-step, with a common vision for change and renewal.

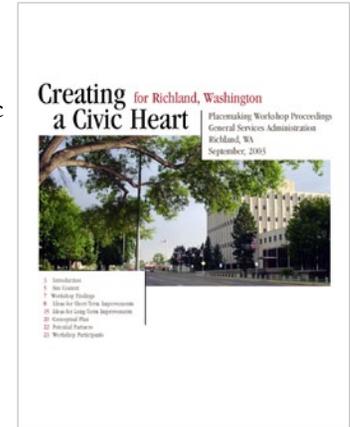
## RELATIONSHIP TO PREVIOUS PLANS

Over the past eight years the City has been involved with several visioning and planning efforts for the downtown. These documents along with discussions with the city council, stakeholders, and the general public are what informed the Guiding Principles that were used to evaluate alternative concepts.

### Placemaking, 2003

This document was the synthesis of a series of public workshops conducted by People for Public Space that highlighted the community's desires for the downtown. Key objectives that were discussed, include:

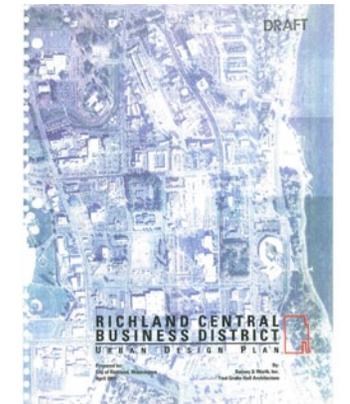
- Improved and activated public spaces and water connections
- Pedestrian-friendly streetscapes and parking lots
- Way-finding
- Redevelopment opportunities



### Urban Design Plan, 2005

This plan identified issues and opportunities for the downtown. It also suggested sub-districts within the CBD and made some preliminary recommendations of improvements to each district, including:

- Streetscape improvements
- Connections (visual and/or physical) to the water
- Public space activation
- Supporting denser development within the CBD



### Economic Development Action Plan, 2005

This action plan set in motion a framework of strategies and actions to be taken on by the city it lists specific goals to improve the CBD and highlights actions and responsible parties to address those tasks. A few of those overarching strategies include:

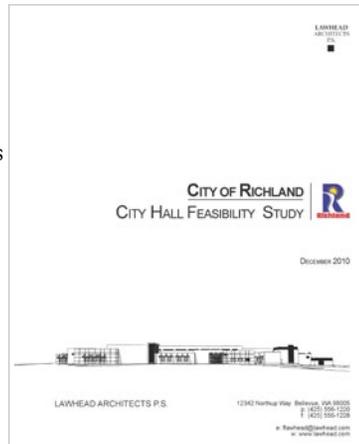
- Create more positive identity for the community
- Stimulate the development of sophisticated retail and entertainment environment
- Promote Arts and Entertainment District

## ARC Study, 2003

This study quantifies retrofitting costs and considerations for the existing city hall. The estimates in this report clearly demonstrated that remodeling the existing city hall building comes with a considerable cost that may not otherwise improve the Corridor.

## City Hall Feasibility Study, 2010

This study analyzes the cost and feasibility of constructing a new city hall along the Swift Corridor. The document summarizes the programmatic requirements and cost estimates on various city hall configurations. This report was used as a reference for some of the siting and cost considerations of the opportunities sites looked at in redevelopment of the Swift Corridor.



## PLAN PROCESS

The Swift Corridor Study has taken place over a 5 month period and included a significant amount of outreach and public participation, including:

- tours with city representatives to other recent successful downtowns and civic center projects
- interviews with stakeholders
- public workshops
- planning commission and city council public meetings

Questions the project team sought to answer during this process included:

- Why doesn't Richland's downtown have more activity?
- What would it take to bring in office, retail, residential to the CBD?
- If it cannot happen, then what are the reasons?
- Is there a private "gap" that could be filled in a public/private development partnership to bring more synergy to the City?

## STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

The stakeholder interviews took place over the first month of the project, these included sit down conversations over a two day period and additional phone interviews. The project team talked with public, private, and institutional interests including representatives from the Ben Franklin transit authority, Columbia Basin College, Kadlec Medical Center, GSA, business and property owners, local real estate and development interests, and city officials. The purpose of these interviews was to gauge the realities of business and property development along the corridor and in downtown. The team was able to learn future planning goals of other institutions, get real numbers on downtown commercial rents, and hear first hand realities about residential development in the Richland CBD. This information was helpful to inform the following stages of the project.

## Public Open Houses

On **March 2nd** the City hosted a public open house to introduce the Swift Corridor Study to interested members of the public. The intent of the meeting was to give the public some background about the study, present initial thoughts of the Swift Corridor, and draft guiding principles for the Study's process. The attendants were asked at the meeting to provide feedback to the Guiding Principles and thoughts about downtown redevelopment.

On the **April 4th** open house, the consultant team returned to present revised guiding principles, a draft concept for the Swift Boulevard (and beyond) streetscape and five opportunity site studies. The attendees were then asked to give feedback to the opportunity sites and streetscape studies.

## PLAN DEVELOPMENT

With the background and public feedback, the project team was able to identify viable development options that would implement the established guiding principles, by bringing in uses and development patterns that could act as a catalyst to future infill of the corridor and downtown. The project team focus was on market reality with their development partner, Lorax.



*April 4th Public Open House - evaluating opportunity site options*

## MARKET CONSIDERATIONS

We have currently been enduring a low point in the development cycle, for all product types, in at least the last 30 years. The good news is that we are moving in a positive direction from these lows as the greater market improves. Lending institutions have slowly opened up the door, and some viable projects are moving forward. We can look at this as an opportunity to take advantage of reduced costs, low interests rates and arrow on the market that has open one way to go in Richland - up. With an eye on what is possible in today's market, and the pulse on projects that will bring the greatest impact to stimulating growth, change is possible in the near team downtown. We will need to be focused and realistic with the viability of various development options:

### Residential -

*Single family*, not appropriate in CBD

*Condo* - not viable for at least a decade, competition with low price, existing single family options will keep this off the table of options.

*For Rent Residential* - this is a bright spot in the tri-cities and in the US. Future apartments in the CBD, however, will compete directly with the nice, new, amenity rich "garden style", 2-4 story apartments in other neighborhoods. This will require CBD development to keep rents equal to the competition AND as deliver equal or better on site amenities. The best chance for success would be a site with water views and access at land and construction prices equal to the competition. While there are a number of new project's in the pipeline in

the greater Tri-Cities area, urban, amenity rich, water accessible downtown will gain the edge in rents in vacancy because of location. Internal sites along Swift corridor, for example, will not work in the near term.

*Hospitality* - Hotels and meeting spaces are another bright spot of potentially viable uses in the downtown. The demand for high-quality, centrally-located accommodations and mid-scale conference spaces for visitors to the Kadlec Medical Center, Hanford, downtown employers, and community and civic groups has grown over the past few years. The addition of these uses can be a great first step of increasing both day and nighttime populations in the downtown.

### Retail -

The tri-cities, like many areas in the US, is over built in retail space. Downtown will not support a new retail center, or a development requiring the lease-out of critical tenant space to make a project work. The opportunity is in build-to-suit retail development for specific tenants. This can be from a new restaurant to a new organic grocer. These opportunities, however, will be in stiff competition with other vacant space in the greater tri-cities.

### Office -

With the growth and strength of the office market in the Research District north of Richland, the possibility for additional office is good. This office growth will expand through to the path of least resistance (least cost) north of the CBD on cheap land. Future office will need to offer surface parking and conservatively designed buildings in order to offer the best rent to price sensitive tenants. HOWEVER, if the city can offer equivalently priced land to an experienced development team in marketing, building and leasing office buildings, future growth could come into the CBD. Office tenants downtown build positive energy, strengthen retail, and active the street as we greatly desire.

### Other (Medical or Educational) -

Kadlec Hospital and the downtown Columbia Basin College are both critical to the health of the Corridor and Downtown. Each bring employees and students downtown that help drive retail sales (during the day in particular). Their continued growth within the downtown will continue to support our goal of greater downtown synergy. Appropriate planning with these entities to keep them harmoniously planned within the downtown will be key. We see a steady growth of these private elements downtown, but these elements will not be the catalyst to change.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following principles were established using the existing adopted public documents, interviews with stakeholders, and public input. They are meant to act as the criteria in which we evaluate the opportunity site options to inform our recommendations.

- ① **Recognize past downtown planning and visioning efforts.**
- ② **Build upon the strong employment base of medical and government users.**
- ③ **Improve streetscapes by promoting safe, engaging experiences for pedestrians and bicyclists.**
- ④ **Attract ongoing private and public reinvestment.**
- ⑤ **Promote sustainable and efficient development while preserving the essential character of Richland, including the strategies to reduce the amount of surface parking.**
- ⑥ **Provide views and connections to Columbia River.**
- ⑦ **Create and enhance connections with adjacent neighborhoods, civic amenities and natural features.**
- ⑧ **Activate public spaces with art, culture and community gathering space.**
- ⑨ **Promote quality design that builds on the existing downtown context.**



Downtown opportunities for connections

# 2 Recommendations

## URBAN DESIGN

The Swift corridor has many positive physical attributes and opportunities to build from. As a major East-West connection it has the opportunity of becoming as a true gateway into the downtown and to the waterfront. The proximity of daytime employees, education facilities, parks, transit center and connections to close-in residential neighborhoods indicate a need to make the corridor a place for all modes of transportation, including bicycle and pedestrian.

### Streets and connections

There are several ways to redefine the existing Swift Boulevard to create a complete street that is walkable, bikable, and maintains appropriate vehicular access. Several street section options were developed for consideration, these improvements could happen in a phased approach as development occurs on the corridor. One approach may include:

- adding large caliper street trees
- including a strong pedestrian and bicycle link along the southern curb line side
- adding parallel parking on the southern side
- including a planted median and pedestrian refuge at crossings at locations in the middle turn lane

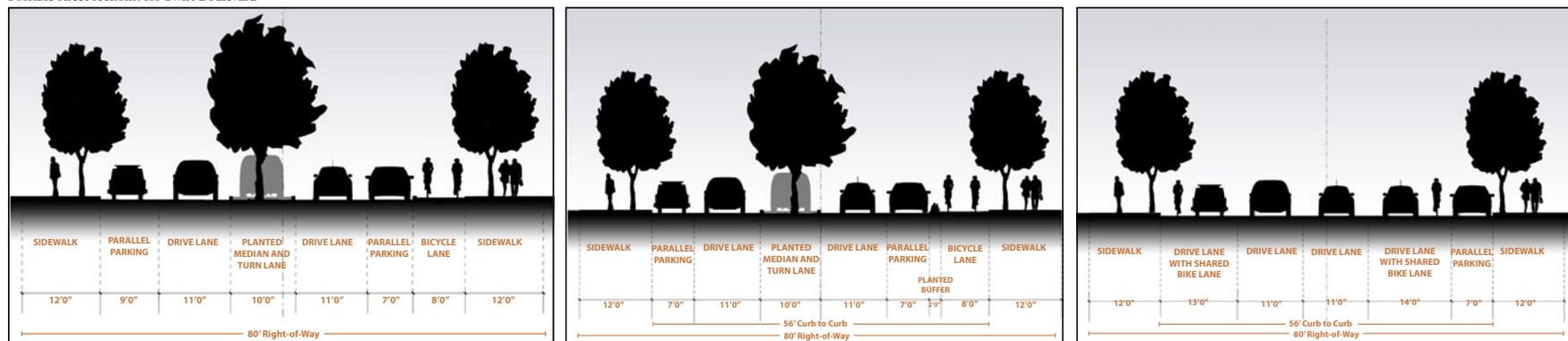


Existing Swift Boulevard



Example street improvements

Possible street sections: for Swift Boulevard



Also, the identified additional connections, including at the terminus of the Swift corridor to the riverfront not only increases access to the water but can help break down the large street grid of the CBD to encourage better walkability and development opportunities.

## PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

Six sites along or in close proximity to the corridor were evaluated for their redevelopment potential. Each site considers costs at rough order of magnitude and is evaluated against the established nine guiding principles.

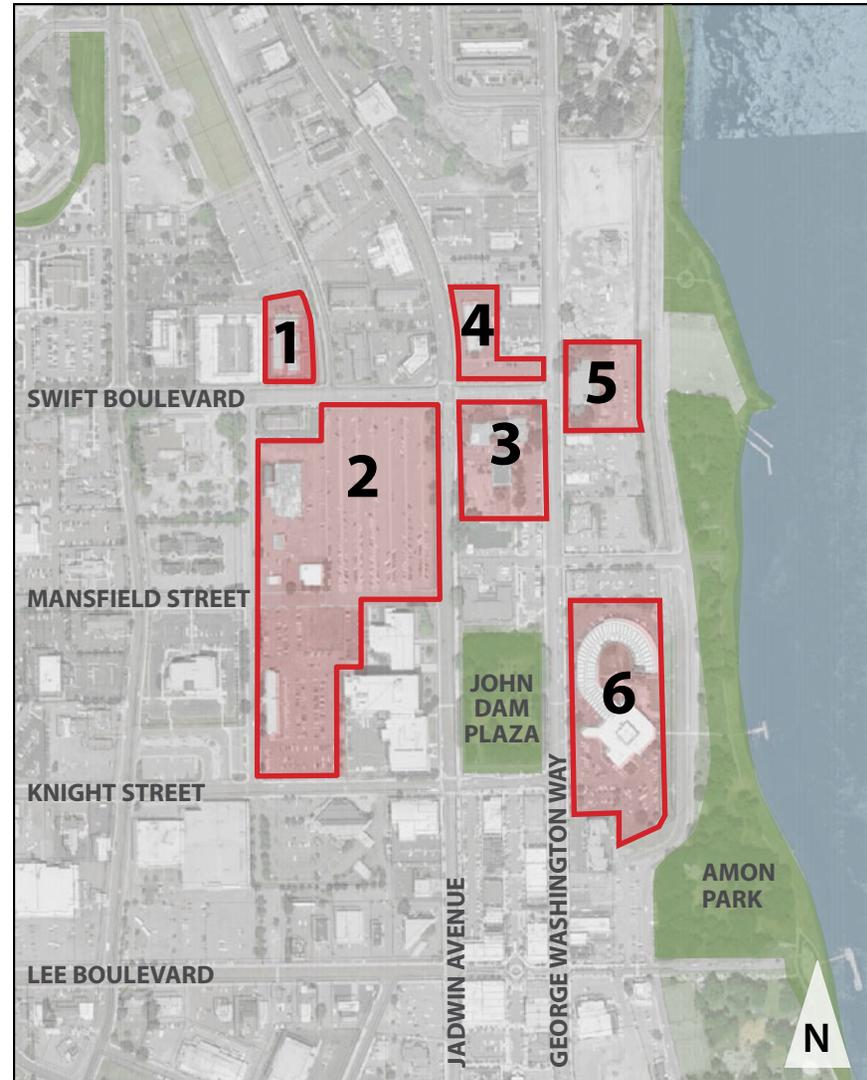
### COST METHODOLOGY

Current construction pricing from Lorax Partners is included in our analysis. These estimates are based on the recently completed Shoreline City Center, Bothell City Hall competition as well as other private developments in the last three years. Included with the project cost is an estimate of monthly cost the City of Richland could expect if they structured a future project using as a lease-to-own 63-20 financed structure. The assumptions include a 25 year amortization, 4.5% interest and fees for the issuance of the bonds.

### STAR RATING SYSTEM



The LMN/Lorax/ALD team created the Star Rating System as a way of judging the value of various projects and their respective ability to bring “synergy-to-downtown”. On one axis we chart a project’s attainment of the “guiding principles” to the future of downtown. The higher the alignment to the principles, the greater the project’s effect on achieving the overall downtown’s vision. On the other axis we placed project’s cost. As the City moves analyzes and moves forward on various redevelopment ideas, optimizing the project’s effect to creating synergy downtown while wisely investing public funds will be key.

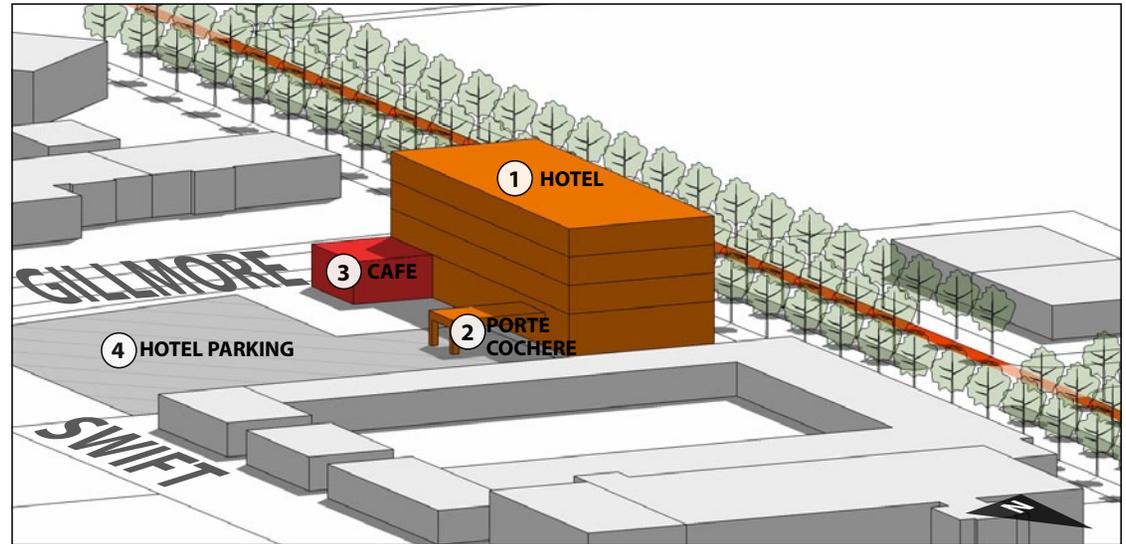


# SITE 1: KADLEC SITE

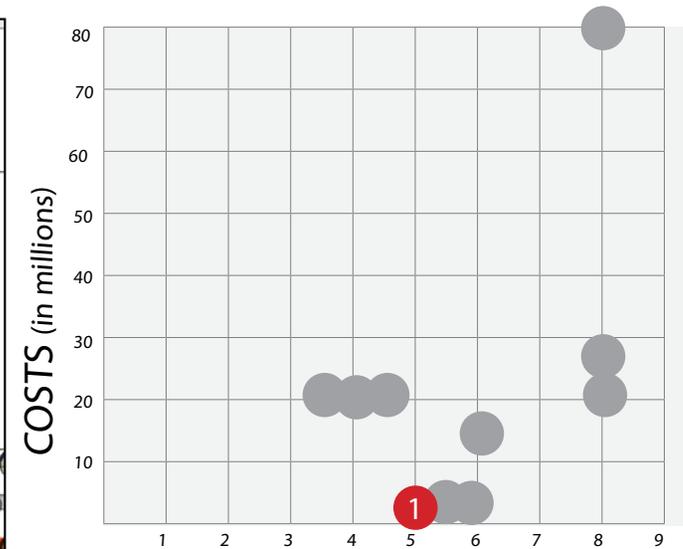
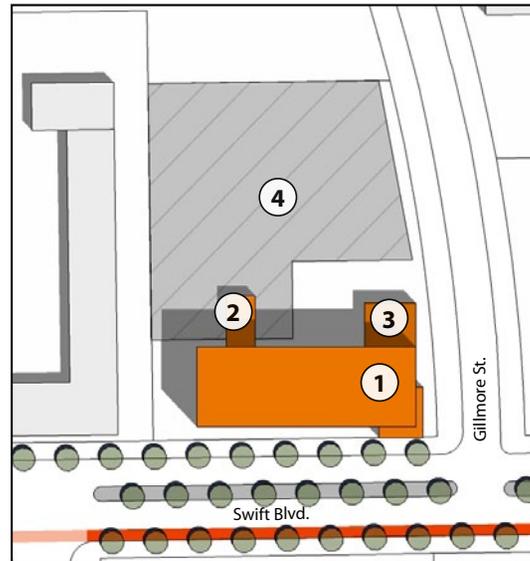


## Key Points

- Strong image on Swift and Gillmore with building set against the street front
- Proposed street improvements to Swift encourage future development and build sense of identity to the commercial core
- 27,000 SF extended stay hotel supports hospital use and benefits from proximity to additional shared parking
- Creates additional 1000 SF cafe/retail use along Gillmore



RATING ★★★★★



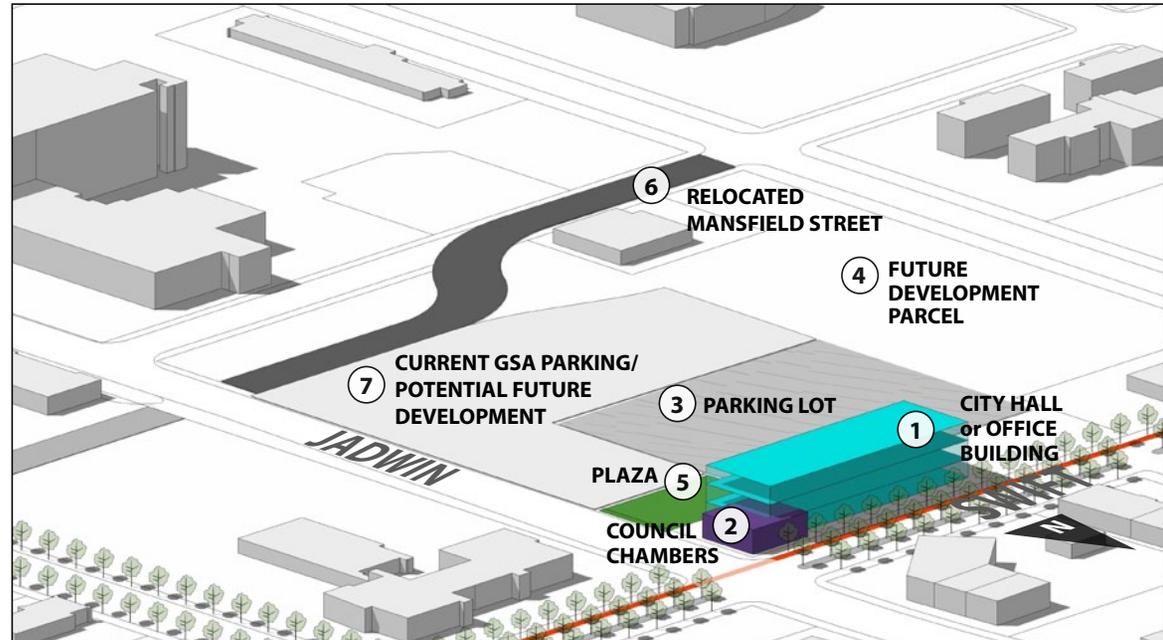
GUIDING PRINCIPLES

# SITE 2: GSA PARKING LOT- PHASE I



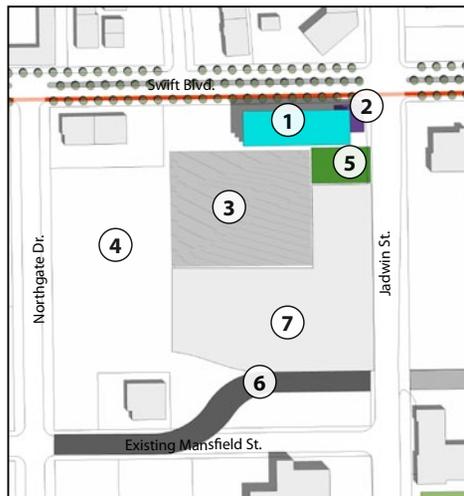
### Key Points

- City secures land swap for property fronting Swift Blvd. with GSA.
- City Hall or office building with surface parking fits well on available land.
- Strong civic image on Swift Blvd. with connection to Public Library.
- City hall based on 45,000 SF with addition 3,000 SF Council Chamber

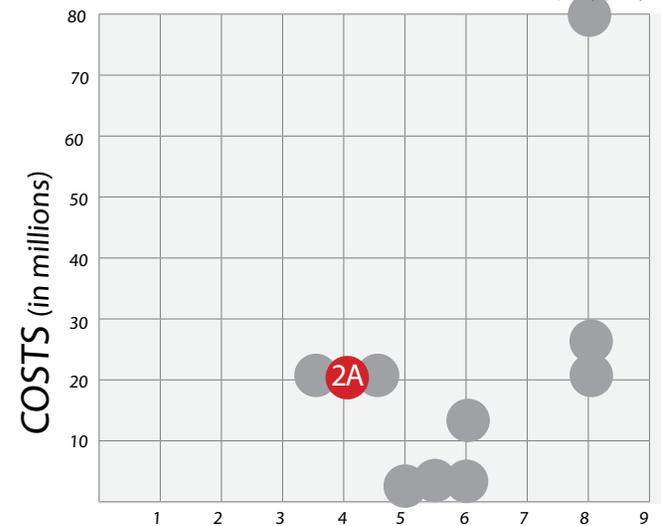


BUDGET (Phase I as City Hall Development)	
Site Development:	\$1,448,000
Parking:	\$700,000
Building Hard Costs:	\$14,125,000
Soft Costs:	\$5,255,838
<b>Total Costs:</b>	<b>\$21,528,838</b>
<b>Leaseback Payment:</b>	<b>\$113,637/month*</b> <b>25 year amortization</b>

\*assumes 63/20 financial design-build process

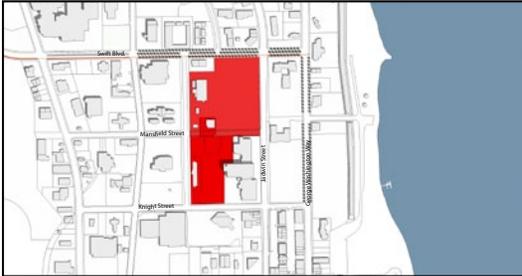


RATING ★★★★★



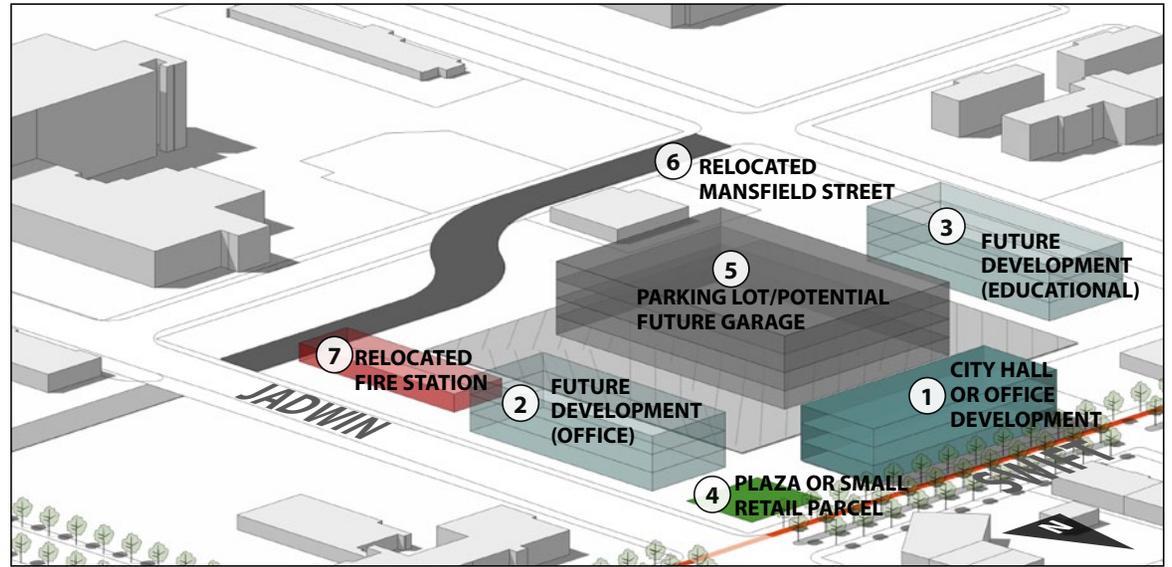
GUIDING PRINCIPLES

# SITE 2: GSA PARKING LOT- PHASE II

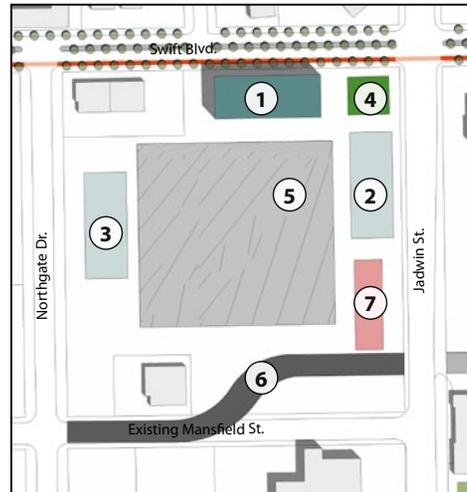


### Key Points

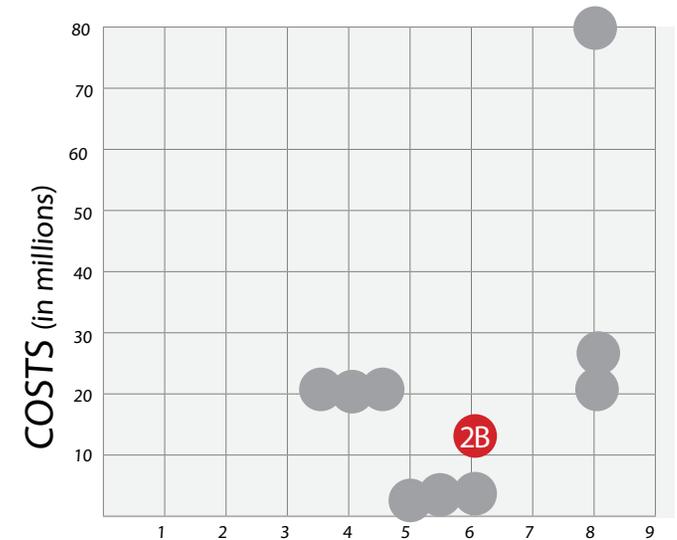
- City secures land swap for land fronting Swift Blvd. with GSA and the right to own additional land with the creation of structured parking.
- Make available the first parcel along Swift Blvd. for office development with surface parking.
- Future private development along Jadwin could be created in combination with educational expansion along Northgate Dr.
- Public funded structured parking required for phase II.
- Future opportunity to align Mansfield St to the water
- Room to relocate Fire Station on less traveled Jadwin St.



BUDGET (Phase II parking garage)	
Parking Structure:	<b>\$15,675,000</b>



RATING ★★★★★☆



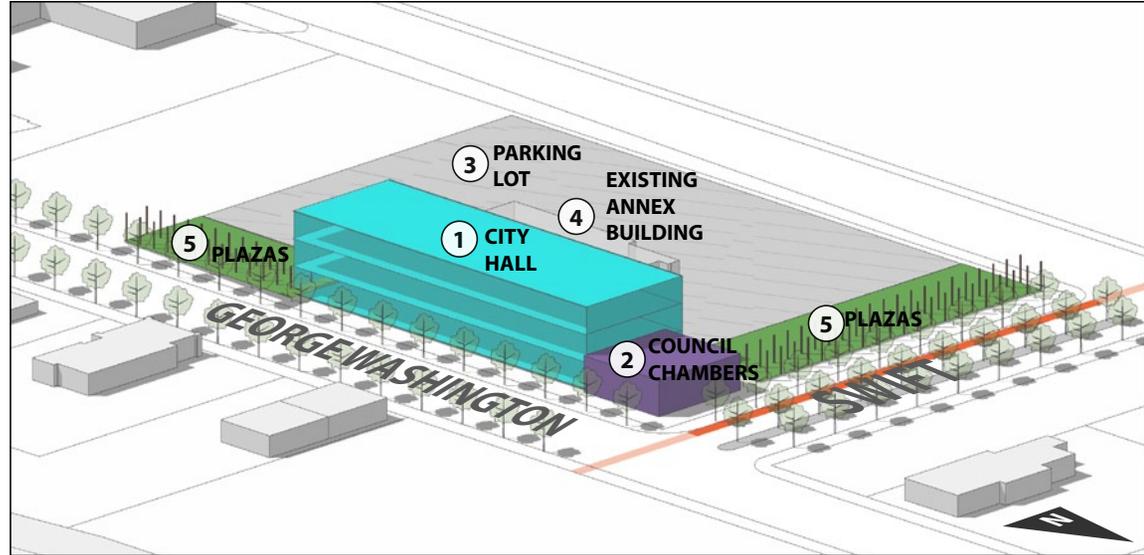
GUIDING PRINCIPLES

# SITE 3: EXISTING CITY HALL - OPTION A



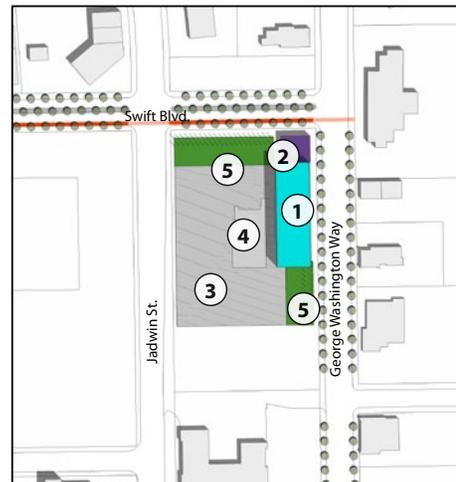
### Key Points

- Strong civic image on George Washington Way.
- Connection to Police Station and onto John Dam Plaza
- No relocation expense as the City Hall is built on parking lot.
- Council Chambers to be built after City Hall completion and demo.
- City hall based on 45,000 SF with addition 3,000 SF Council Chamber

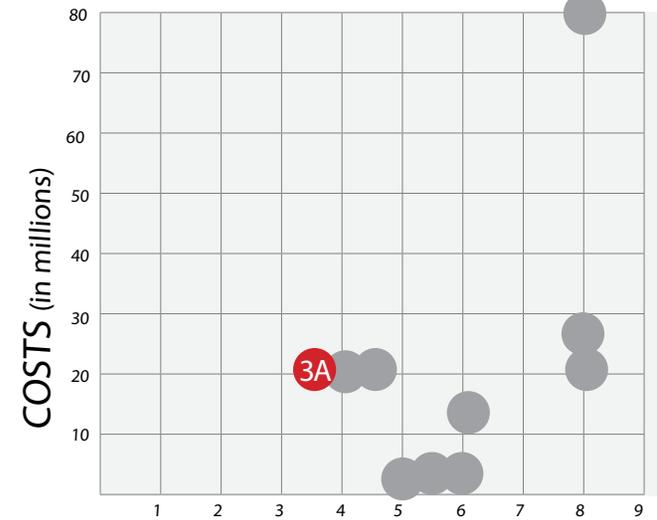


BUDGET	
Site Development:	\$687,800
Parking:	\$700,000
Building Hard Costs:	\$14,180,000
Soft Costs:	\$5,049,758
<b>Total Costs:</b>	<b>\$20,627,558</b>
<b>Leaseback Payment:</b>	<b>\$108,879/month*</b> 25 year amortization

\*assumes 63/20 financial design-build process



RATING ★★★★★



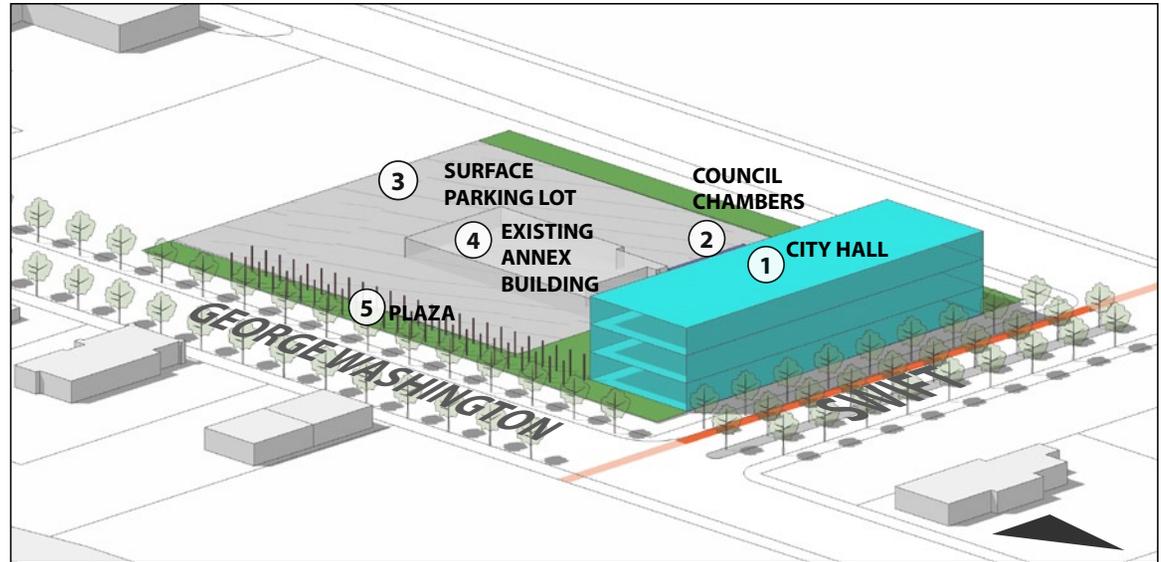
GUIDING PRINCIPLES

# SITE 3: EXISTING CITY HALL - OPTION B



### Key Points

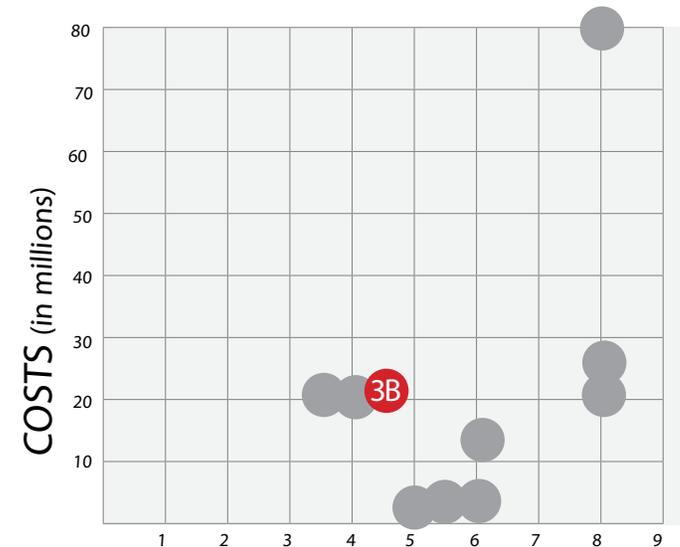
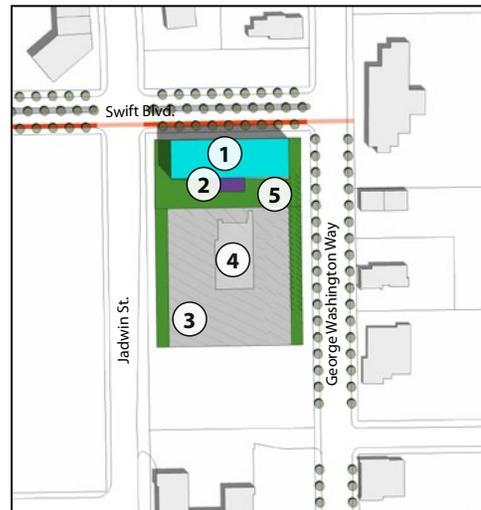
- Strong civic image on Swift Blvd.
- Connection to Library and Hospital
- Relocation expense as majority of space is demolished up front.
- City hall based on 45,000 SF with addition 3,000 SF Council Chamber



RATING ★★★★★

BUDGET	
Site Development:	\$687,800
Parking:	\$612,500
Building Hard Costs:	\$14,410,000
Soft Costs:	\$5,092,000
Relocation Cost:	\$1,500,000
<b>Total Costs:</b>	<b>\$22,312,300</b>
<b>Leaseback Payment:</b>	<b>\$117,772/month*</b> 25 year amortization

\*assumes 63/20 financial design-build process



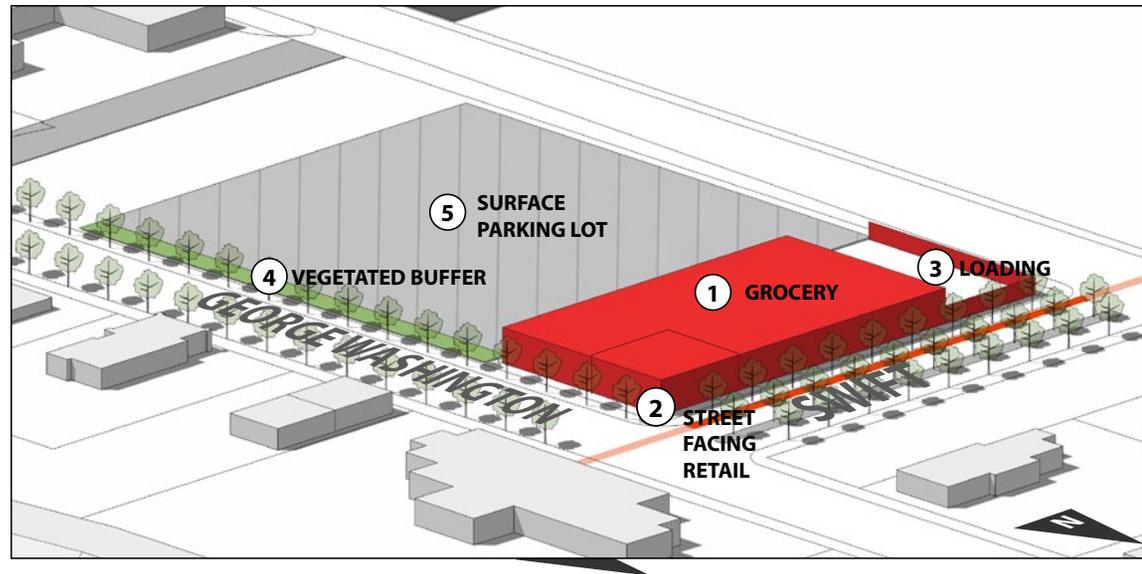
GUIDING PRINCIPLES

# SITE 3: EXISTING CITY HALL - OPTION C

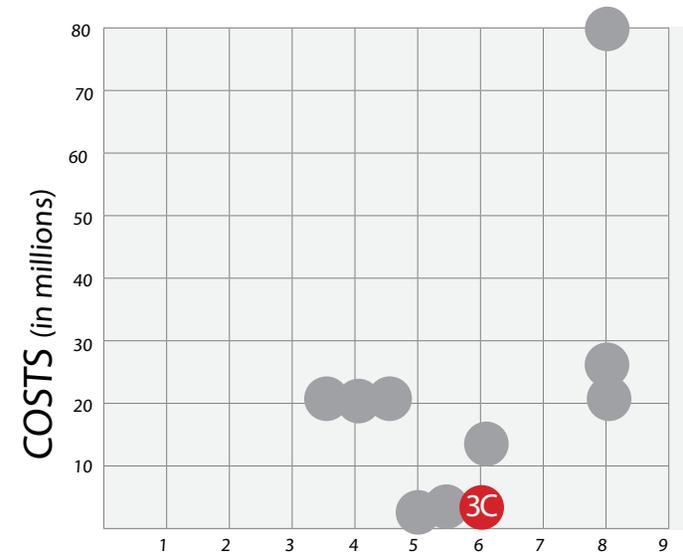
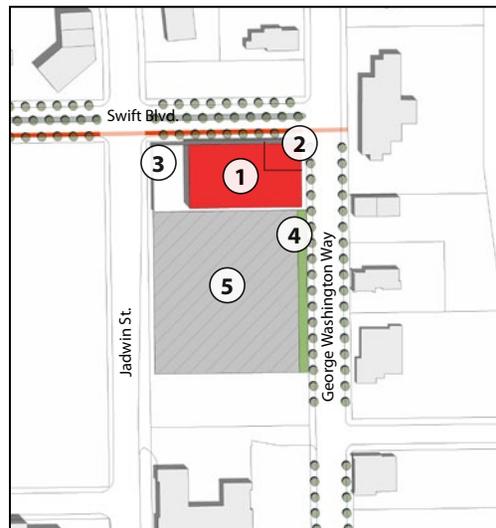


### Key Points

- Consultant Team has received positive interest from a 25,000 SF specialty organic grocer
- Grocery is a huge catalyst to the revitalization of downtown
- Draws interest from residential, tenants, and other retailers
- Timing is critical to make this happen in downtown- City has to move to action
- Design consideration on Swift can be controlled through requirements of future purchase and sale with developer
- Grocer could also fit on site 2



RATING ★★★★★☆



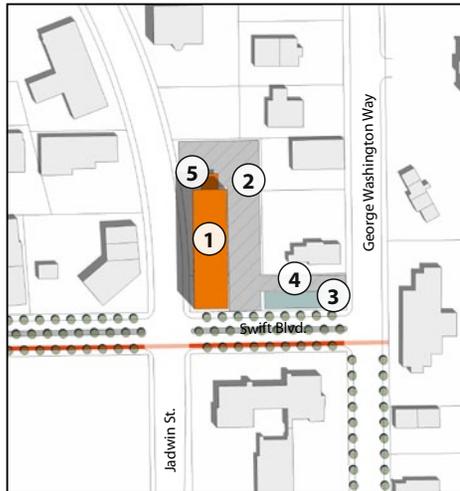
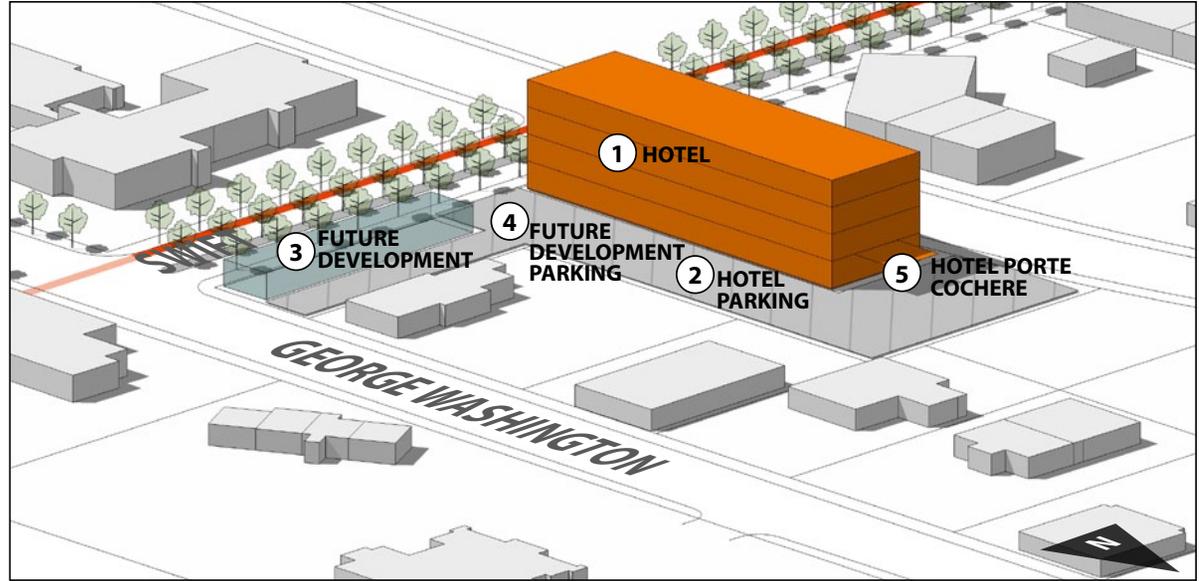
GUIDING PRINCIPLES

# SITE 4: CITY PARKING LOT AND PRIVATE PARCEL

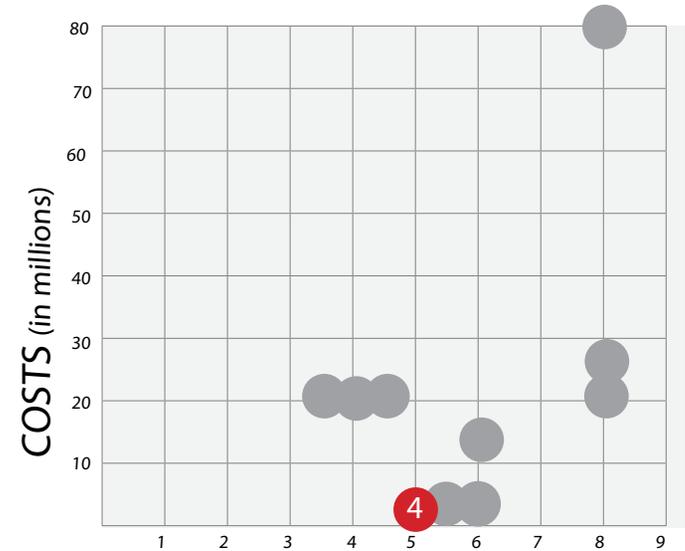


## Key Points

- Desire to give visual strength to the Swift Blvd. entrance and make use of odd City owned land.
- Partnership with land owner Greg Markel or future buyer of his land.
- 60,000 SF hotel grabs much needed presence on Swift with City land.
- Together the combined sites are more valuable than apart.
- Hotel related restaurant/retail (5,000 SF shown) could front Swift and George Washington.
- Site still lacks enough parking, but a parking agreement with the City on the GSA site at night would close the gap.
- Additional parking along Jadwin would also help.



RATING ★★★★★



## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

# SITE 5: EXISTING FIRE STATION



### Key Points

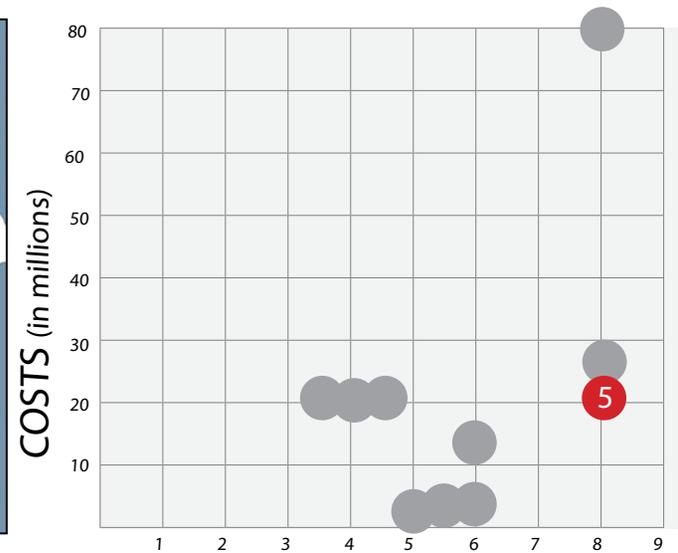
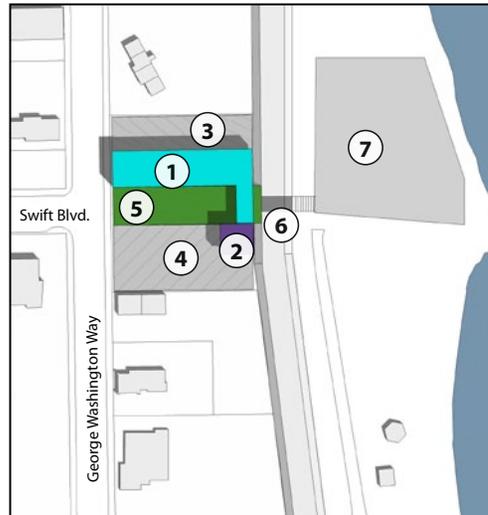
- Bold civic image along George Washington Way, Swift Blvd. and the Riverfront.
- New City Hall to leverage the parking near Amon Park to reduce on site surface parking.
- Graciously opens the connect to the river from Swift Blvd.
- Requires relocation of Fire Station.
- City hall based on 45,000 SF with addition 3,000 SF Council Chamber



RATING ★★★★★☆

BUDGET	
Site Development:	\$1,144,667
Parking:	\$262,500
Building Hard Costs:	\$14,315,000
Soft Costs:	\$5,092,553
Relocation Cost:	\$4,000,000
<b>Total Costs:</b>	<b>\$24,814,720</b>
<b>Leaseback Payment:</b>	<b>\$128,342/month*</b> 25 year amortization

\*assumes 63/20 financial design-build process



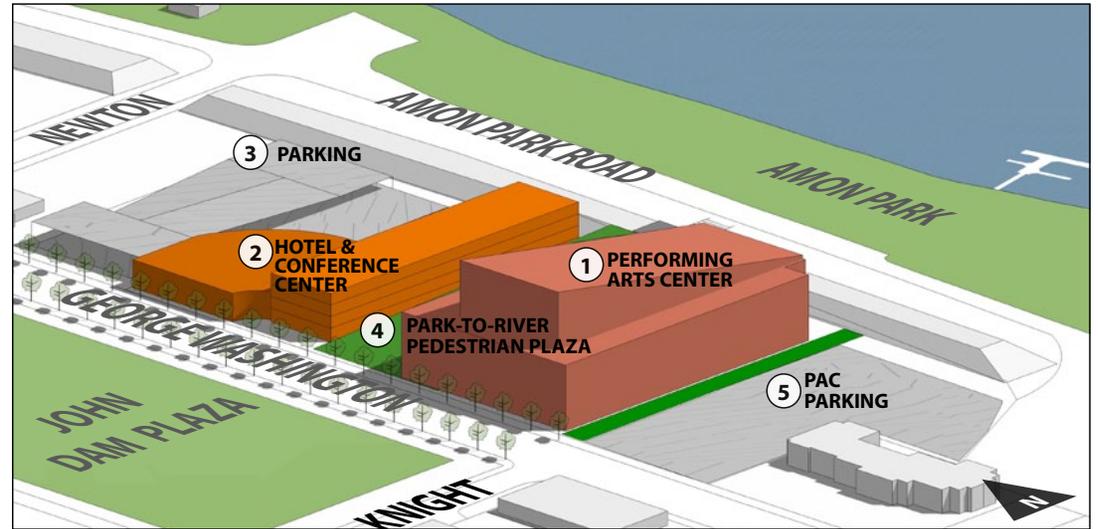
GUIDING PRINCIPLES

# SITE 6: EXISTING RED LION - OPTION A



### Key Points

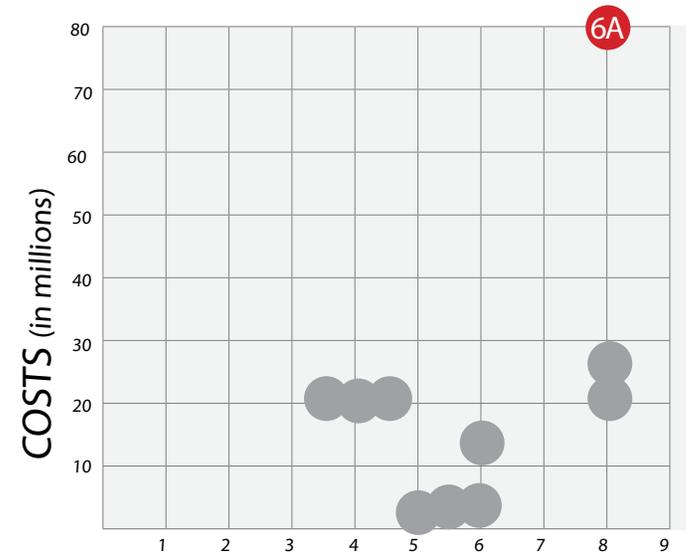
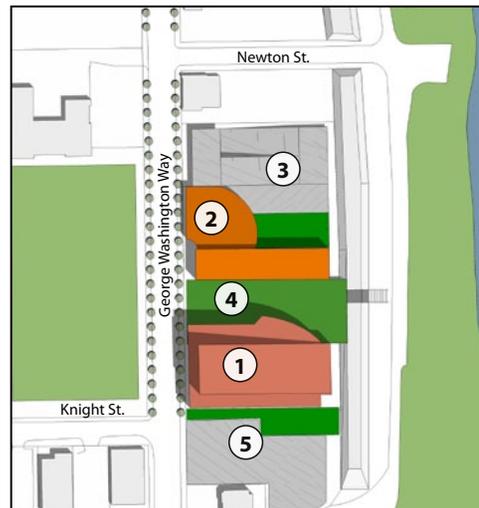
- Redevelopment of Red Lion Site opens up visual and pedestrian access to the river on Knight St. and from John Dam Plaza.
- Project completes the framing of the key civic downtown park that would become activated from all four sides.
- Recommended extension of John Dam Plaza to connect the north end of the Parkway retail.
- Opportunity for the Tri-cities PFD funds to support an iconic, riverfront 2,000 seat Performing Arts Center (shown as approx. 50,000 SF).
- Red Lion has seen these plans and is interested in continuing the conversation.
- Future deal will desire a new hotel and conference center space (shown as approx. 72,000 SF).



RATING ★★★★★☆

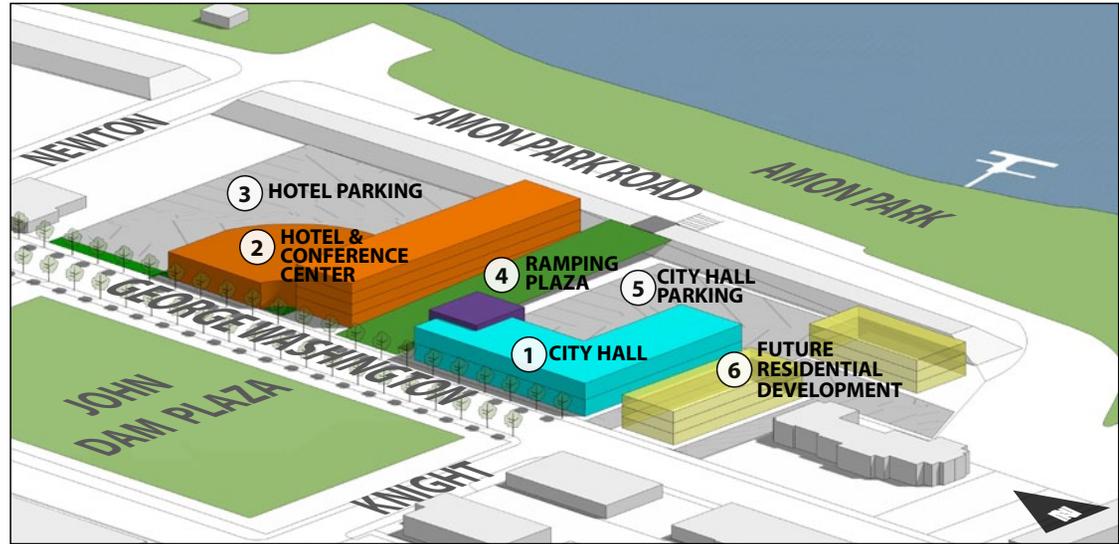
BUDGET	
Site Development:	\$1,936,167
Parking:	\$13,542,500
Building Hard Costs:	\$46,940,000
Soft Costs:	\$22,305,498
Net Land Cost:	\$5,000,000
<b>Total Costs:</b>	<b>\$89,724,165*</b>

**\* cost includes parking garage, ramped plaza, and performing arts building**



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

# SITE 6: EXISTING RED LION , OPTION B



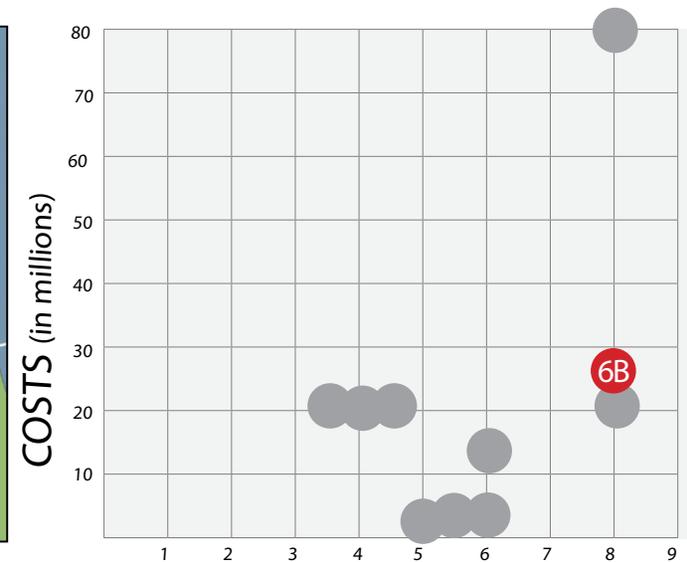
### Key Points

- Redevelopment of Red Lion Site opens up visual and pedestrian access to the river on Knight St. and from John Dam Plaza.
- Project completes the framing of the key civic downtown park that would become activated from all four sides.
- Recommended extension of John Dam Plaza to connect the north end of the Parkway retail.
- Opportunity for exciting new downtown residential and waterfront retail development (shown as 50,000 SF) with access to the riverfront and downtown amenities.
- Red Lion has seen these plans and is interested in continuing the conversation.
- Future deal will desire a new hotel and conference center space (shown as approx. 72,000 SF).
- City hall based on 45,000 SF with addition 3,000 SF Council Chamber

RATING ★★★★★

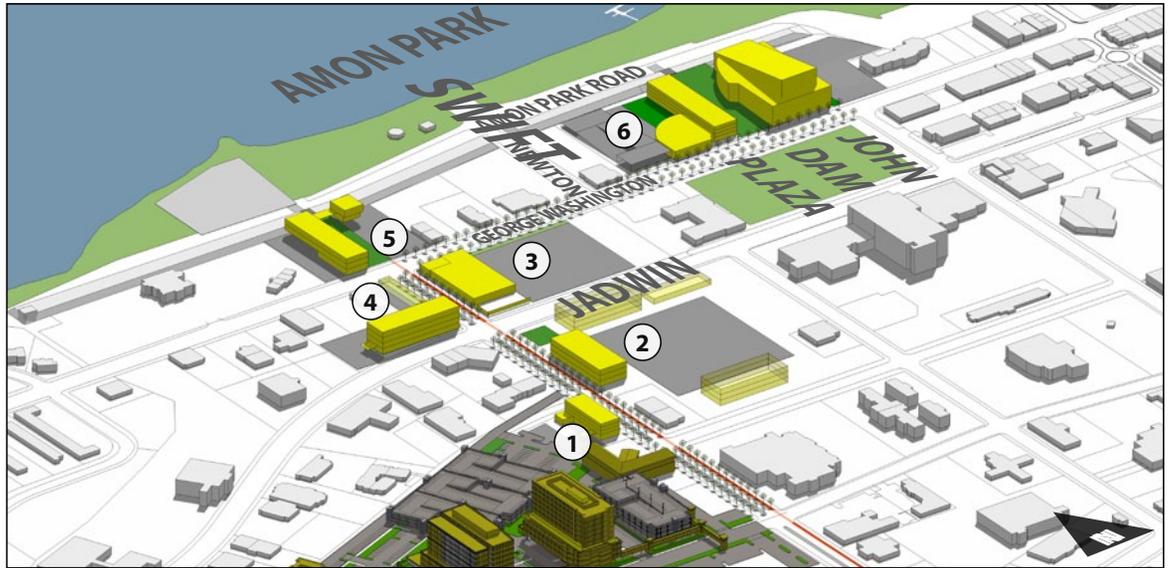
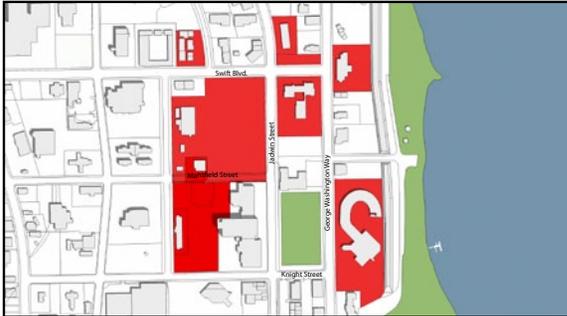
BUDGET	
Site Development:	\$2,100,500
Parking:	\$1,326,500
Building Hard Costs:	\$14,595,000
Soft Costs:	\$5,774,298
Net Land Costs:	\$5,000,000
<b>Total Costs:</b>	<b>\$28,796,298</b>
<b>Leaseback Payment:</b>	<b>\$125,605/month*</b> 25 year amortization

\*assumes 63/20 financial design-build process

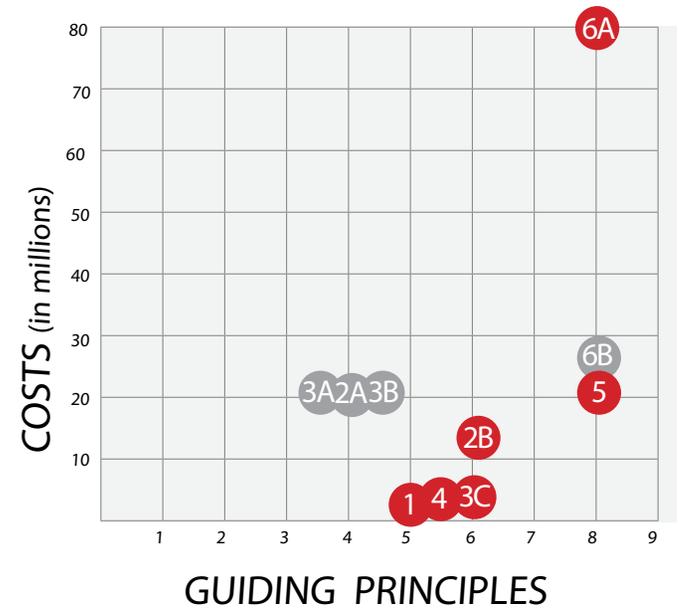


GUIDING PRINCIPLES

# POSSIBLE OPTIONS COMPOSITE



- ① EXTENDED-STAY HOTEL
  - ② OFFICE DEVELOPMENT
  - ③ GROCERY
  - ④ HOTEL and RETAIL
  - ⑤ CITY HALL
  - ⑥ PERFORMING ARTS CENTER, HOTEL, and CONFERENCE CENTER
- may interchange* (between 2 and 3)
- if City does not choose to pursue PAC* (between 5 and 6)



## RECOMMENDATIONS

The goal of creating a more dense, urban, pedestrian oriented downtown for the City of Richland will not come overnight or even in a few years. Great change will take time, requires the vision and courage to stick to the plan to achieve this future goal for the City. The City has already started this effort over the last few years with some beautification and street work projects. That is a start, but maintaining the momentum and focus on the vision will be critical. Our team has put forward a list of small to big steps on “development revitalization” for the City to pursue. This action list comes specifically from the opportunity site study but could be amended to seek out additional redevelopment opportunities by including other partners such as the Tri-Cities Regional PFD, Ben Franklin Transit Authority, Kadlec Medical Center, and Columbia Basin College. Some of these ideas are easy, some will take greater risk and courage. However, the greatest risk for the City is NOT TO ACT. Downtown Richland is in competition with other neighborhoods, other cities and any site that could allow for future development growth. This growth could and should come into the City to build towards the downtown vision. However, this density will continue to wander away from the downtown unless the City bridges the gap by controlling land, improving streets, and building a public-private development, such as a prominently located Civic Campus, can help anchor the downtown center as a “place to be”. This future synergistic “center”, “heart of downtown” will help give desire and reason for private development to also come downtown.

Public investment will need to come first, piece by piece, small project by big project. Together, overtime, the vision will unfold.

ACTIONS – SMALL STEPS	
Action	Note
GSA transfer sites (records building and parking lot)	the political climate is good, make the move now
Swift Boulevard streetscape enhancements	draws attention to the street to encourage infill
Kadlec extended stay hotel	first infill win, ensure the hotel fronts Swift with minimal setbacks
Organic grocery	work with developer group and their tenant to bring store downtown.
Support and encourage business/tech companies in downtown	work with tenants/developers to encourage future office and employment growth downtown
Continued improvements public spaces and connections	John Dam Plaza, ped and bike connections to neighborhoods
ACTIONS – BIGGER STEPS	
Civic Campus – public/private development	A Civic Campus can be much more than a building, it can serve as the catalyst to synergistic development downtown. Review finances, opportunity sites and their viability. Make a decision to move forward using criteria based on catalytic impact to downtown relative to cost.
GSA Sites Phase II	once the City gains control of the GSA land, move to put the land out to private developers for office development in a RFQ.
Performing Arts Center in downtown	make decision to move forward then identify strategies to highlight downtown Richland as the best location for this use
Waterfront access and the fire station	Develop a plan for improved connections to the waterfront, including redevelopment of the exiting fire station at the end of Swift
GW Way Streetscape improvements (Between Swift and Lee: pedestrian lighting, enhanced crossings, additional street trees)	improve connections to John Dam Plaza, Parkway, and waterfront access nodes to encourage infill development and pedestrian movement from waterfront park into downtown