EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Soap Lake is a community with an extraordinary asset: Soap Lake mineral water and mud, which has been used for millennia by humans for healing of ailments and relaxation. The water has properties similar to the Dead Sea in Israel and Baden Baden, a famous spa resort in Germany. The mineral water results from Soap Lake’s location at the southernmost end of a string of lakes, and it is fed by underground springs of mineral-laden water. The lakes were carved into their present form during the Ice Age Flood that formed the famous basalt rock geologic formations of the Coulee that surrounds Soap Lake. This unique geology is the major attraction to the Coulee Corridor, a scenic byway and key destination for tourists and sportsmen.

The oral history of the Colville Indian Tribe describes Soap Lake’s unique properties and their historical connection to it. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, Soap Lake was “discovered” by settlers, and the Lake’s notoriety grew rapidly after World War I when sick veterans discovered that the water of Soap Lake arrested the condition of Berger’s Disease, along with Psoriasis and other skin and circulatory ailments. Soap Lake became a resort community, with more than a dozen sanitariums and hotels offering healing and spa treatments to visitors from around the world.

The advent of penicillin and other modern medical treatments caused the decline of Soap Lake’s appeal as a healing destination after the 1950s, and with the exception of a temporary boom during the construction of Grand Coulee Dam, Soap Lake never regained its footing as an economically vibrant community. However, many people who value Soap Lake’s unique properties continue to visit or relocate to Soap Lake, most notably Germans, Russians and Ukrainians. Additionally, a strong artist community and recent influx of retired Baby Boomers attracted to the warm climate have driven growth in population and new construction.

In 2003, community leaders in Soap Lake sought to capitalize on recent trends in natural healing, spa use and wellness by developing a revitalization strategy for their community. The process began with formation of the Soap Lake Revitalization Team (SLRT), and participation in a Washington Certified Economic Revitalization Team (WA-CERT) Symposium, where they developed a vision, goals and list of projects for the community. The active and enthusiastic leaders and volunteers in Soap Lake have made tremendous progress on many of the projects identified since the Symposium. Two of the projects were a Master Plan for enhancement of Soap Lake’s downtown district, and a market analysis for development of a possible spa facility. This Downtown Master Plan document, which includes an analysis of existing and potential markets for business and tourism development, is the result.

Purpose of the Downtown Master Plan

The Soap Lake Downtown Master Plan is intended to:

- Complete a general market assessment.
- Conduct an urban design study.
- Communicate with the community to understand their vision.
- Identify an economic development strategy, especially related to tourism and spa development.
- Create a set of Master Plan Objectives to achieve urban design and economic market goals and develop an Action Plan to achieve Objectives.
- Identify implementation steps to achieve project objectives by providing action tables with timeline, priorities, potential funding sources / partners, and responsible party for each action.
- Develop a “Master Plan” and supporting illustrations to locate site-specific projects.
Master Plan Organization

The Master Plan integrates market and economic strategy with a plan for urban design for the downtown district. The plan is presented in the following order.

1. Introduction and Project Background – provides information about the project purpose, previous community efforts including past plans, unique history and geology, and a review of efforts to engage the community in the planning process.

2. Existing Conditions – reviews market and urban design conditions including socio-economic trends, local and regional assets, circulation, land use, and infrastructure. Existing conditions are synthesized into opportunities and constraints, and strengths/weaknesses/opportunities/threats.

3. Vision and Goals – sets the framework of the Master Plan with a vision statement and goals as developed through previous and current community efforts, and a list of community projects.

4. Market Analysis and Target Markets – describes local, regional, and tourist markets, quantifies visitors, and identifies competition. Based on these findings, a niche and primary target markets are defined for Soap Lake.

5. Key Project Evaluation – considers the potential projects underway as identified by the community prior to the start of the Master Plan.

6. Action Plan – Provides urban design, preservation, and economic development objectives based on the Soap Lake vision and goals, and provides action items to achieve the objectives.

7. Implementation – provides a timeline, potential funding sources, and potential responsible parties to achieve the action plan.

Color Graphic Figures – Provides a master plan to site projects, a typical Main Avenue plan, sketches, example materials, a streetscape strategy, community visioning results, opportunities and constraints, supporting land use diagrams, context, and historic photos.

Planning Process

The process to create the 2005 Soap Lake Downtown Master Plan began with project orientation, establishment of goals, and community interviews. Next, the process moved to research existing conditions, demographics and history. Community feedback was provided regularly into the planning process. Particularly, once an urban design assessment and market assessment were complete, a community workshop took place to confirm project direction and prepared for the formulation of plan recommendations. The action plan was firmly grounded by information received from the community. A tangible implementation schedule will help ensure that the community-based plan is achieved.

About 100 stakeholders participated in the community visioning workshop. Teams worked together to develop their urban design and economic strategies for Soap Lake. Each team presented their ideas to the group.
Soap Lake Existing Conditions

The foundation for the Master Plan’s economic and design recommendations was a thorough understanding of socio-economic trends and Soap Lake’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The following existing conditions were analyzed to establish a baseline from which to plan:

- Soap Lake and regional assets
- Socio-economic trends including population, ethnicity, household income, educational attainment, employment, and housing
- Tourism trends and traffic volumes
- Land use patterns including pattern of commercial development and property ownership
- Comprehensive Plan and development regulations
- Soap Lake infrastructure including water and sewer, the unique mineral water system, and fire protection
- Transportation, including potential traffic signal and nonmotorized transportation
- Storm water and Soap Lake water quality

Key findings of the analyses are summarized below, and detailed in Chapter 2: Existing Conditions.

Soap Lake Context and Regional Assets

Soap Lake (population 1,777 in 2003) is located in Grant County, in central Washington approximately 180 miles from Seattle and 125 miles from Spokane. It is 21 miles from Moses Lake (population 15,000), and 5 miles from Ephrata (population 7,000), and is integrated economically and socially with both cities.

Soap Lake is surrounded by extraordinary outdoor recreation and cultural assets that contribute to quality of life and tourism development. Key highlights include the Lake and geology, warm climate, Coulee Corridor Scenic Byway, 140 fishing lakes, 6 state parks and wildlife refuges, 19 golf courses, 3 casinos, hundreds of miles of hiking and biking trails, museums, galleries, wineries and other tourist attractions and services.

The community of Soap Lake itself has enthusiastic leadership and volunteers, a traditional downtown district adjacent to the Lake, a high quality theater facility, public beach/waterfront park, fun events, high quality school system, and medical care.

Socio-economic Trends

This Master Plan was developed using a market-driven approach: the recommendations are based on the principles of supply and demand, with identified key target markets. Therefore, an analysis of socio-economic and tourism trends in Soap Lake and the surrounding region was fundamental to an understanding of how specific recommendations could benefit Soap Lake’s residents and visitors.

Soap Lake’s population grew by 631 (57%) from 1990 to 2000, and gained another 44 residents by 2003. The county also has grown by about one-third since 1990, gaining a total of nearly 24,000 residents. Within a 25-mile radius of Soap Lake, there are more than 30,000 permanent residents. The residents of Soap Lake are,
on average, older than those of the county or state: in 2000, about 36% of Soap Lake residents were age 55+, compared to 27% for the county and 19% for the state. The low cost of living, available medical services, leisure opportunities and climate in Soap Lake are attractive to retirees. Soap Lake has significant ethnic diversity: more than 12% of residents speak an Indo-European language other than English at home (primarily Russian), and 10% speak Spanish at home.

About one-third of Soap Lake residents have incomes that are below the federal poverty level, and the median household income is less than half of the state average. Clearly, business growth and higher-paying jobs are needed in Soap Lake to improve residents’ quality of life. Workforce training and continuing education opportunities also are needed, because only two-thirds of Soap Lake residents age 25+ have a high school diploma, and only 9% have a college degree (versus 28% statewide).

The largest employers in Soap Lake are the school district, health care and social services sectors, followed by manufacturing, retail, agriculture and tourism-related sectors (lodging, food and beverage, arts, entertainment, recreation). Many Soap Lake residents commute to Ephrata and Moses Lake for work. However, opportunities for business development to occur are not severely limited by lack of available land or housing, as they are in other locales. Housing and land is available for development: of the 996 housing units inventoried in 2000, only 778 were occupied (78%). Many of the housing units are rental properties (355, versus 224 owner-occupied).

Tourism Trends
Tourism spending in Grant County rose from $102 million in 1991 to $129 million in 2000, and the tourism industry generated more than 2,500 jobs (nearly 6% of all jobs). Local taxes generated by tourism doubled during that same time period, due to significant new lodging facility development in Moses Lake, growth in event attendance, and increased awareness of the Coulee Corridor Scenic Byway as a destination. After 9/11, visitor counts at several area destinations declined (Grand Coulee Dam, State Parks), but visitation increased in 2004, and is projected to continue the upward trend in 2005. The year-round average daily traffic on State Route 17 through Soap Lake is more than 4,300 vehicles, with lower volumes during the winter months (average of 3,600 vehicles in January), and higher volumes in summer months (5,600 vehicles in July). More information about tourist markets and visitor trends is summarized on page iv of this Executive Summary, and detailed information is provided in Chapter 4: Market Analysis and Target Markets.

Land Use, Property Ownership and Infrastructure
Soap Lake has two main commercial corridors: State Route 17 (the north-south Coulee Corridor), dominated by highway-oriented businesses, and Main Avenue, the four block east-west oriented downtown district serving local and tourist markets with a private day spa, restaurants, bars, lodging, Masquers Theatre and the Food Bank. More than half of the storefronts on Main Avenue currently are vacant. Residential neighborhoods include a high concentration of small cottage type housing, originally used to lodge visitors in past decades. Immediately south of the City is the Country Club Estates golf-oriented subdivision. Significant public use areas are at the southeast and southwest corners of the lake (East Beach and West Beach).

Roughly one-third (35%) of the properties in Soap Lake are owned by residents of western Washington. There has been limited physical reinvestment in recent decades, which has contributed to the community’s image of economic distress. However, investment and renovation has occurred recently, and there is abundant opportunity for development: more than one-third of all land area within the City limits is undeveloped. The City’s domestic water system is capable of supporting additional growth, and some areas of the City have a unique non-potable supply of mineral water from Soap Lake, although the mineral water distribution system needs to be upgraded to address deterioration and potential cross-connection with domestic (fresh) water. Alternatives to stormwater drainage into the Lake must be found to preserve the integrity and quality of the mineral water especially drainage from surrounding farm land, highway corridors and emerging new residential developments.
Physical Features: Opportunities and Constraints

In addition to the socio-economic and tourism analyses, a general analysis of the physical features of Soap Lake was conducted. The results are summarized below as opportunities and constraints, and are graphically portrayed in Appendix D: Color Graphics Figures. This analysis forms the basis for physical upgrading to enhance the natural and built environment, and to improve economic vitality in Soap Lake.

**Opportunities**

*The Lake:* views of lake and Coulee bluffs beyond, unique qualities of the water and mud, public access

*East & West Beach:* park space on the water. City’s only significant ‘Civic Green’

*Preserved Lake Edge:* largely free of development, opportunity to negotiate public access to the waterfront prior to development

*Existing Trees:* street trees on Main Ave., Cottonwoods and Birch on East Beach, scattered trees in residential areas

*Summer Breezes:* north wind across the lake helps cool the microclimate during summer

*Picturesque Views / Potential Overlook Areas:* existing public rights of way provide potential access to the waterfront

*The Weather / Sun:* 300+ days of sun annually – significant attraction to visitors from western Washington

**Constraints**

*Chilling Winter Wind:* prevailing fall and winter winds blow from the north down the Coulee, bringing cold weather to downtown Soap Lake

*Inaccessible Lake Edge:* waters’ edge of Soap Lake feels inaccessible - connections are not clear

*Rocky Central Vacant Parcel:* large undeveloped rocky parcel City center creates a sense of vacancy

*Construction Setback from Lake:* regulations require 200’ setback from ordinary high water line of Soap Lake – limits development near water

*Main Ave. ‘Turns Its Back’ On Lake:* many buildings on Main Ave. are oriented away from the Lake

*Unimproved Flagpole Overlook:* existing flagpole provides panoramic views; however, it is currently on private land

*Need For Shade:* shade is necessary in hot summer sun, but trees in gathering places are limited

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Large Trees in Civic Green at Canna Street entrance to East Beach Park

Unimproved Flag Pole Overlook at terminus of Aster Street
Access and Circulation: Opportunities and Constraints

**Opportunities**

*SR 17 / Gateway to the Coulee Corridor and Businesses:* SR 17 brings travelers directly through Soap Lake as they visit the Coulee Corridor.

*Connect / Extend Bicycle Trail:* existing bicycle trail extends to southeast Soap Lake, providing opportunity to extend it as a network through town.

*Canna Street Terminus at East Beach:* Canna Street terminus at East Beach provides a strong axis to the Lake from the commercial core of downtown.

*Wide Street Rights of Way allow Urban Design Improvements:* street widths, typically 80’, allow room for urban design and parking improvements.

*100% Intersection at Daisy St. and Main Ave.:* gateway intersection at Daisy St. and Main Ave. needs improvements to be a more visible entrance.

*Back Door into City along Division St. / SR 28:* Division St. provides direct entry into Soap Lake from S.R. 28, entry can be enhanced as a gateway.

*Node at ‘Meander’ of Main and Division St.:* potential interest is created where Main Ave. curves into Division Street.

*Walking loop through town and Lakefront:* two public beaches and unimproved rights-of-way near lake edge create opportunity for interpretive walking loop along lake and connecting back to Main Ave.

**Constraints**

*Need Unifying Streetscape Improvements:* Main Ave., Daisy (SR 17) and other important streets do not have attractive unified system of sidewalks, street furniture, lighting or plantings.

*Proximity of SR 17 to Lake Edge:* north of town, SR 17 follows closely along lake edge, potentially producing noise and stormwater runoff pollution.

*Unattractive South Gateway:* bulk of traffic entering Soap Lake comes from south, but SR 17 streetscape near south entrance to town looks disorganized and unattractive, with unkempt yards.

*Fast Traffic on SR 17 (Daisy St.):* traffic on SR 17 passes through Soap Lake at unsafe speeds, with no traffic signal or traffic calming device.

*Difficult Wayfinding to West Beach:* West Beach is important public beach with strong views, but finding the beach as a visitor is challenging.

*Overly Wide Rights-of-Way:* street widths in downtown Soap Lake are 60’-80’ for only two lanes of traffic, creates sense of openness and vacancy.

*Narrow Sidewalks:* narrow sidewalks in downtown Soap Lake detract from pedestrian environment.

*Definition of Daisy / Main Ave. Intersection:* Daisy/Main Ave. is City’s key intersection, but two of four corners are vacant, and third is service station/convenience mart with no landscaping. The intersection is not friendly to pedestrians, and the directional signage is poor.
## Built Conditions: Urban Design: Opportunities and Constraints

### Opportunities

**Scattering of Historic Buildings:** historic residential and commercial structures are scattered throughout town - can be emphasized to provide connection with Soap Lake history

**Intact Development Pattern:** Soap Lake retains its historic development pattern, including buildings that line the street edge on Main Ave.

**Supply of Vacant Lots For Infill:** large amount of vacant property in Soap Lake provides opportunity for development and additional off-street parking

**Former Cottage Buildings:** supply of former visitor cottages in west half of town provides unique opportunity for development of distinctive housing

**Masquers Theatre:** new Masquers Theatre attracts regional audience to performances, anchors strong arts community in Soap Lake

**Murals and Public Art:** several blank walls have been softened by murals and public art; “Healing Waters” sculpture is planned for East Beach Park; potential for art within publicly supported projects

### Constraints

**Deteriorated Buildings:** several buildings downtown are in disrepair or deteriorating; detract from overall ambience of the city

**Large Vacant Parcels:** vacant parcels of land within city create feeling of emptiness or openness

**Main Ave. Buildings ‘Closed’ to Street:** several buildings on Main Ave. have facades with few windows or little transparency on Main Ave., detracting from character of key commercial zone

**Main Ave. Building Character:** varied mix of building styles and characters along Main Ave., including western and Mediterranean style facades interspersed with historic structures, presents haphazard feel to the city

**Strip Commercial Development on SR 17:** buildings on Daisy Street are oriented to highway traffic with street edge parking lots and highway-scale signage – walkable corridor with picturesque small-town character has not been established

**Former Cottages in Disrepair:** many cottages in downtown residential area are deteriorating; structures are unique and interesting, but without maintenance, create poor housing conditions and contribute to negative image

**New Post Office Removed From City Core:** USPS moved Soap Lake Post Office from former location on SR 17 near John's Grocery, removing everyday local traffic from the business core

**Inactivity in Main Ave. Storefronts:** several Main Ave. storefronts are vacant or operate limited hours, compromising vibrancy of business district

**Food Bank:** Food Bank location on Main Ave. takes away potential for active business that is open more regularly than Food Bank’s one day per week; highly visible location on Main Ave. does not provide privacy preferred by patrons

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Building at the west end of Main Ave. Paint peels back to reveal interesting historic cues.
Soap Lake Vision and Goals

The following is the Vision Statement prepared by Soap Lake stakeholders at the 2003 WA-CERT Symposium, and modified during the Downtown Master Plan process based on input from citizens and suggestions from the consulting team:

**Soap Lake Vision**

“We the residents will revitalize our Soap lake community into a place recognized and appreciated for its healing attributes for the mind, body and spirit. We will support development of small businesses to enhance the sustainability of our community, the quality of life for our residents, and the experiences of our visitors.

In revitalizing our community, we will create an environment for residents and visitors to participate in the arts, culture, and recreational opportunities, to appreciate Soap Lake’s unique heritage and culture, and to learn about its unique geology. We will create improved year-round opportunities to enjoy the healing waters and mud of Soap Lake.

We value the physical character and natural scenery of Soap Lake. We will encourage development that is oriented to the lake and sensitive to the natural context of its surroundings.”

**Community Goals**

During the WA-CERT Symposium, Soap Lake stakeholders developed the following goals for their community:

- Bring the community together
- Proceed with identified community projects of interest
- Create Endowments - for youth, McKay Center, Masquers Theater
- Assist every existing business to stay in business and expand when and where appropriate
- Develop a communications plan so everyone is aware of what is taking place in the Soap Lake area, thus maintain a positive informed community environment
- Create a sense of place
- Provide stewardship for sustainability of Soap Lake
- Fill every storefront in downtown with a viable business or organization
- Inventory community resources and assets

**Community Projects of Interest**

To achieve the goals listed above, the following projects were developed by the community. Many of these projects are either underway or have been completed. This project list has been used as a guide for the Master Plan recommendations; however, some recommendations in the Plan vary slightly from those listed below.

- East Beach Rehabilitation
  - Amphitheater
  - Marketing/PR
  - Mother Teresa McKay Youth Outreach Center
  - Healing Waters Resort
  - Downtown Revitalization
  - Community Clean Up
  - Boat Launch
- Pedestrian Walkway/Bike trails
- Festivals and Events (1+ / month)
- Soap Lake Conservancy Interpretive Center
- Skate Board Park
- Preservation of the Lake
- Create Sense of Place
- Fiber Optics for Soap Lake Area
- Giant Lava Lamp & Museum Calling the Healing Waters Sculpture
- Masquers Theater
- McKay Health and Rehab Center
- Water & Sewer Facilities
Market Analysis & Target Markets

The results of the market analysis are summarized below, with details in Chapter 4 of the Master Plan.

Primary Trade Area

The primary trade area for Soap Lake is the area within a 25-mile radius of downtown (30-45 minute drive). This area contains more than 30,000 residents. Soap Lake residents are generally older, and have lower incomes, than the surrounding communities, so the year-round attraction of customers from throughout the trade area is critical to the survival of most downtown businesses. Soap Lake continues to grow, and become more diverse, with new residents from Eastern Europe, Latin America and western Washington. More affluent newcomers are moving to subdivisions outside the City limits, and to view lots overlooking the Lake.

Tourist Markets

Two recent studies provide valuable insights for identifying target tourist markets and business opportunities in Soap Lake: State Route 17 travelers from July to October 2000, and wine country travelers in Yakima, Benton, Franklin and Walla Walla Counties. Key implications the studies are the following:

- More directional and interpretive signs are critical since 70% of travelers are non-residents
- Services, activities and amenities for children are needed (and need to be promoted)
- Soap Lake needs to be promoted online, in guide books, and at visitor centers along I-90/SR17
- Visitors seek itineraries and packages (driving tours, wildlife viewing, hiking, biking, etc.)
- The Soap Lake Chamber/visitor center need to be open longer hours, focus on marketing/sales
- Travelers seek shopping opportunities, and customer markets could be expanded with online sales
- Soap Lake must seek regional partnerships to market effectively to potential visitors
- Friends and family are key motivators for travel, so marketing to local/regional residents is important

Soap Lake’s Competition

An inventory and analysis of destinations throughout the Northwest that feature spas, hot springs and mineral baths revealed at least 90 such places. The key attraction at each is year-round access to warm water, and accompanying therapeutic amenities (spa/salon, sauna, therapy, massage, yoga, tai chi). Other amenities that draw customers are organic cuisine, wine cellars, retail stores, entertainment, fitness centers, recreation trails, equipment rentals (boats, bikes, cross-country skis, etc.) and meetings rooms. The lodging facilities range in price from $49 to $400+ per night, and spa treatments from $30 to $275. Luxury facilities generally are located with good access to a major airport, cultural attractions and outdoor destinations (beach, ski resort). The rural or remote facilities tend to be more rustic and moderately priced.

Soap Lake’s Niche and Primary Target Markets

Based on the market analysis, Soap Lake’s niche in the marketplace can be described as follows:

- Healing waters & mud (more than just hot water)
- Unique history & geology
- Uncrowded, off-the-beaten-path
- Moderate to higher-moderate pricing
- Link to Coulee Corridor, wine country tours
- Outdoor recreation and wildlife
- Family-oriented
Primary target market segments are the following (see Chapter 4 for details about each):

**Demographic Targets:**
- Spa-Goers
- Healing Seekers
- Heritage & Cultural Travelers
- Outdoor Recreationists (incl. Sportsmen)
- Families / VFR Travelers / “Locals”
- Researchers & Resource Managers

**Geographic Targets:**
- Seattle-Tacoma
- Spokane
- Wine country residents & visitors
- Portland
- British Columbia
- California

**Key Project Evaluation**

Alternative locations for three key projects underway during the time of the Master Plan were evaluated to recommend location and siting criteria. These projects included a public-private partnership spa, a community sponsored “Lava Lamp,” and a new skateboard park. The evaluation recommends that the Lava Lamp be located just outside of the downtown core area causing visitors to pass through downtown, encouraging stopping in town along the way. The evaluation recommends a site central on Main Ave. west of the Inn at Soap Lake for the proposed spa, in order to add vibrancy to west Main while maintaining a connection to the Lake and visibility from State Route 17. The evaluation recommends three options for potential skate park sites.
Action Plan and Implementation: Master Plan Objectives

The following is a list of the Master Plan Objectives. Chapter 6 of the Downtown Master Plan provides detailed actions to accomplish each of the objectives listed above. Chapter 7 provides an Action Table listing each action with a priority level, timeline, responsible organization(s) for implementation, and potential funding resources to implement the action. The physical locations of the items listed in the Action Plan are shown on the Color Graphic Figures in Appendix D. A planning level cost estimate is provided in Appendix B, and funding sources are listed in Appendix C.

Urban Design Objectives:

Objective UD1: Improve and enhance the physical visibility of Downtown Soap Lake by creating a logical entry sequence into town while improving pedestrian and vehicular safety.

Objective UD2: Enhance East Beach so that it becomes an inviting “front door” to the City of Soap Lake from State Route 17.

Objective UD3: Improve the attractiveness and “curb appeal” of the downtown district property and businesses.

Objective UD4: Build a stronger connection between the City and the Soap Lake waterfront, natural scenery, and dramatic views of the Coulee Corridor region.

Objective UD5: Highlight the unique characteristics of Soap Lake – its History and Geology – to create a “Sense of Place”

Objective UD6: Integrate art and culture into the city, particularly the downtown district.

Objective UD7: Provide recreational opportunities to meet the needs of all target market sectors.

Preservation Objective (P)

Objective P1: Partner with developers and conservation groups to ensure the preservation of the quality of Soap Lake water.
Economic Development & Marketing Objectives (EM)

Objective EM1: Encourage enhancements of existing businesses, products, services and facilities to better serve target customer markets.

Objective EM2: Improve the visitor information system for the Soap Lake area.

Objective EM3: Create a strategic, highly targeted and effective marketing program for Soap Lake.

Objective EM4: Work with investors / developers to encourage and enhance spa facilities and amenities.

Objective EM5: Improve business assistance and support systems for existing and new businesses and entrepreneurs.

Objective EM6: Enhance events in off-peak seasons to increase business sales.

Objective EM7: Enhance medical and retirement services in Soap Lake to meet the needs of local residents and healing-seekers.

Objective EM8: Establish benchmarks (baseline data) and track results of economic development and marketing efforts to evaluate effectiveness of strategies and adjust as necessary.

Next Steps

The next steps for Soap Lake leaders and citizens to begin implementing this Downtown Master Plan are the following:

1. Sponsor a final presentation of the Master Plan for public awareness-building and support.
2. Sponsor an official “kick-off” event to begin implementation of one or more of the actions in the Plan.
3. Send copies of the Master Plan to community organizations, Chamber of Commerce Board, School Board, Hospital Board, County Commissioners, Coulee Corridor Coalition and others for their endorsement. Request letters of support/endorsement for future use in fundraising.
4. Send a copy of the final Plan to the Washington Department of Community, Trade & Economic Development (CTED) for their review and endorsement.
5. Begin to seek grant funding for project implementation, move forward with the spa feasibility study, and begin the process of forming a Public Development Authority (PDA) and an Urban Renewal Area or Tax Increment Financing district in order to capture increased tax revenues for reinvestment in the district.
6. Celebrate successes, track progress, and monitor and report results as projects are completed.

Extraordinary opportunities await citizens and businesses in Soap Lake! True teamwork and collaboration will result in achieving the vision, goals and objectives described in this Downtown Master Plan. The Plan provides the blueprint for action. It is now up to all of Soap Lake's partners, including elected leaders, to seize the opportunity and move forward proactively with implementation of this Plan. The result will be economic development and quality of life benefits for all citizens.