

City of
Bellingham
WASHINGTON

2016

Comprehensive Plan



Photo by Tore Oftness

November 14, 2016

Ordinance No. 2016-11-037

Amended by Ord: 2017-11-025, 2019-12-044, 2020-12-036,
2020-12-037, 2021-10-041 and 2021-10-043

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Bellingham City Council

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Jeff Brown

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*Term ended prior to Planning Commission recommendation or City Council adoption.

Transportation Commission

Jim McCabe, Commission Chair

James Gephardt

Tim Hostetler

Tim Crandall

Jim Bjerke

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(One new appointee term began March 2016 after review of the plan)

Parks and Recreation Advisory Board

See Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan for list of board members

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Special thanks to the citizens of Bellingham.

Bellingham is a vibrant city of approximately 83,580 people (2015) with a variety of places to live, work, shop and recreate; excellent schools; and a picturesque natural setting on Bellingham Bay with Mount Baker as its backdrop. Serving as the county seat of Whatcom County, the City accommodates about 40% of the county's population and about two thirds of its jobs. The Bellingham community is generally described as the area east of Bellingham Bay and the Bellingham International Airport, west of Lake Whatcom and Squalicum Mountain, north of Chuckanut Mountain and Chuckanut Bay, and south of Kelly Road. As of 2015, the City encompassed approximately 28 square miles, excluding that portion of the City limits covered by Bellingham Bay, Lake Whatcom and Lake Padden.

A Brief History

Prior to white settlement, the Lummi, Nooksack and other Coast Salish tribes thrived on the natural resources of what would eventually become Bellingham. English Captain George Vancouver first explored the area in 1792 and named Bellingham Bay for Sir William Bellingham, Vancouver's British Navy Provisioner. Small communities came and went on the shores of Bellingham Bay through boom and bust cycles during the 1800s. Early settlements around Bellingham Bay began in the 1850s with the construction of a lumber mill at the mouth of Whatcom Creek, and the community that grew around this enterprise was named Whatcom. Within a few years, the settlements of Fairhaven, Bellingham and Sehome were created. The communities grew steadily and, in the 1880s, Whatcom and Sehome incorporated. Fairhaven followed suit in 1890. The communities voted to consolidate into a single municipality called Bellingham in 1903. Much of Bellingham's historic character remains, with a large number of historic buildings in the Downtown and Fairhaven Districts and adjacent neighborhoods.



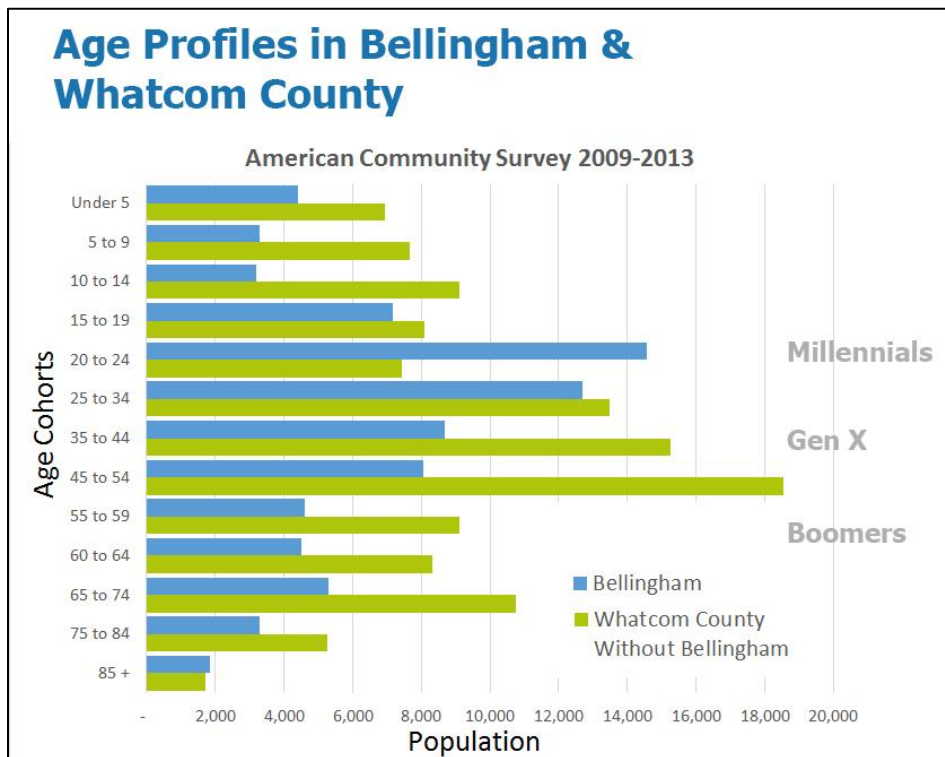
Elk Street, today's State Street, circa 1886.

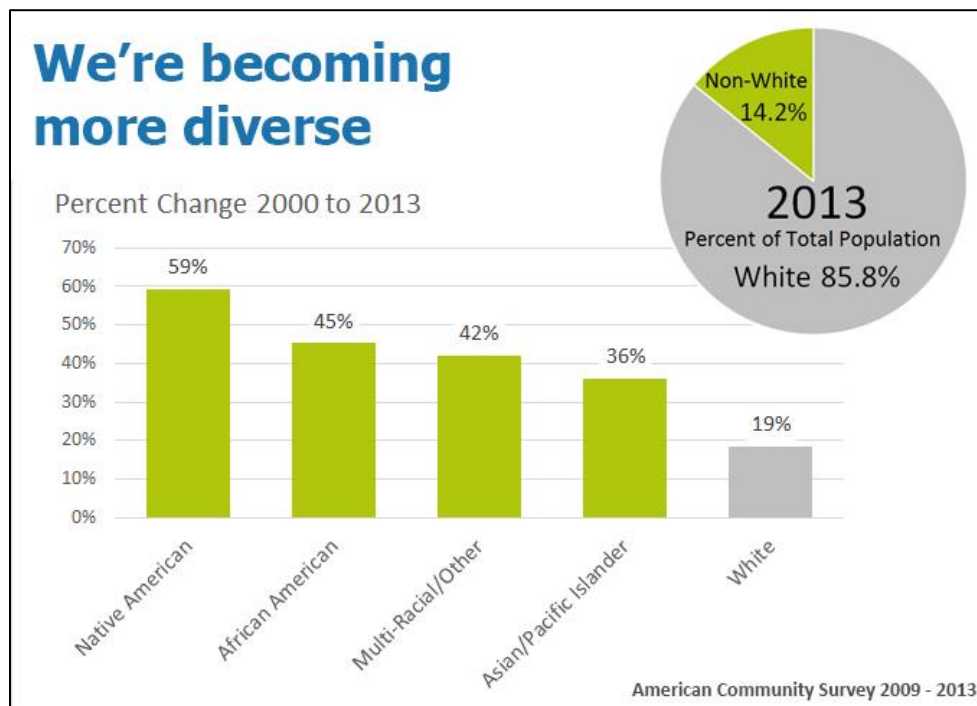
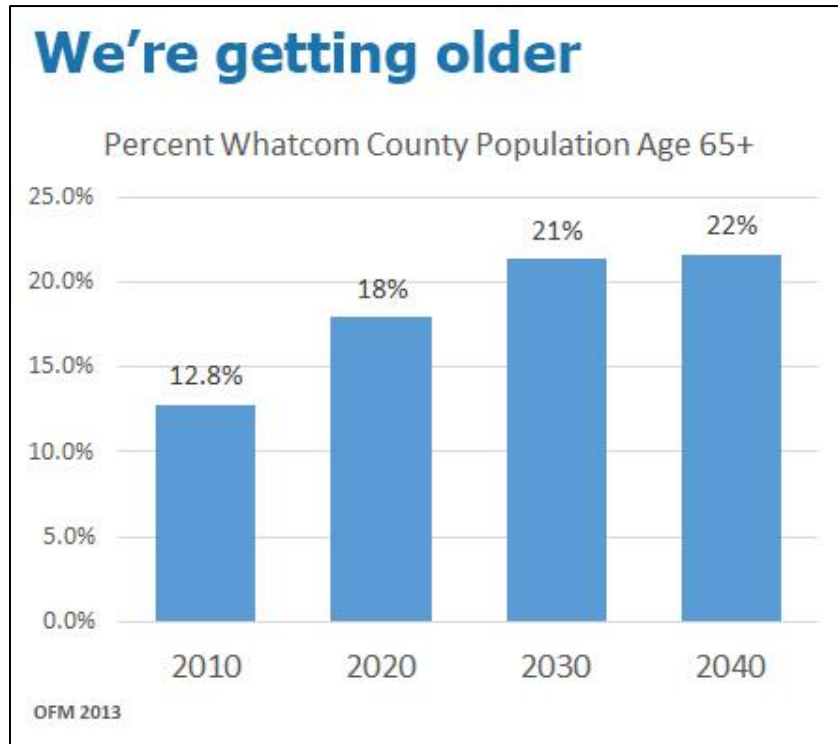
Bellingham Snapshot

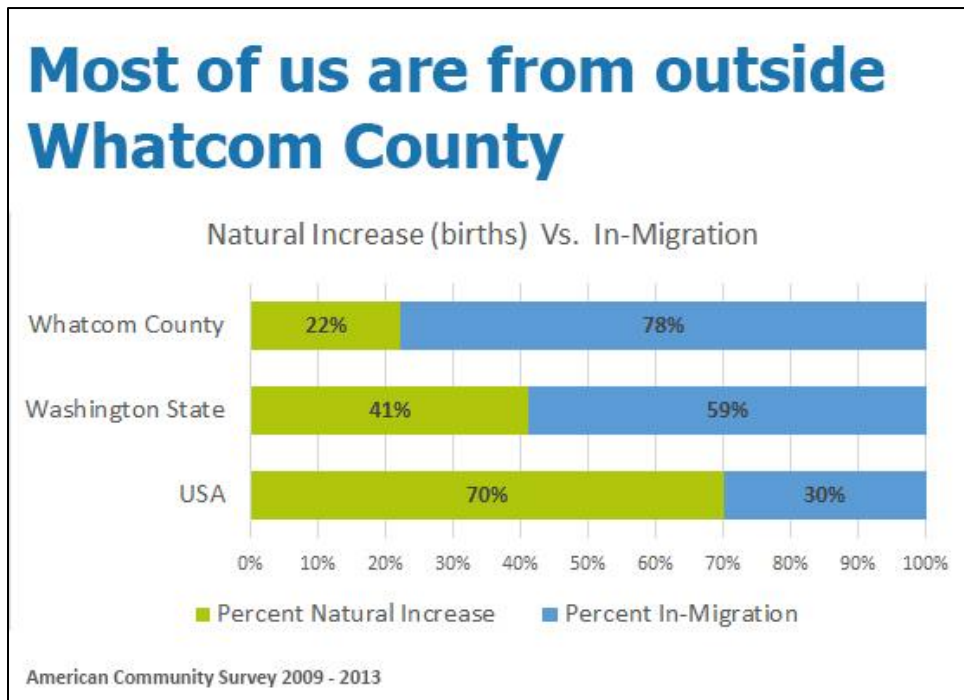
Like the rest of Whatcom County, Bellingham's population growth was slow but steady from the 1950s to 1980s, averaging about 1% annual growth. Beginning in 1986, the growth rate increased to just over 2%. From 1995 to 2015, Bellingham's total population (incorporated and unincorporated urban growth area, or UGA) grew from 67,825 to 93,940 people. This growth represents a 20-year increase of about 26,100 people, or 39%.

In terms of total acreage, residential development is the dominant land use in the City (over half of the City's total land area is zoned residential). Residential development is also encouraged in the City's commercial and urban village zones. Bellingham had approximately 37,825 dwelling units in 2015, about 54% of which were single-family homes. The greater Bellingham area is home to about 64% of the total employment in Whatcom County. Approximately 26% of the total City acreage is zoned for commercial and industrial development.

Bellingham Profile - 2015	
Population	83,580
Area in Square Miles (City Limits)	28
Miles of Paved Road	350
Acres of Parkland	2,776
Miles of Trails	75
Number of Schools (K-12)	21
Colleges and Universities	3
College and University Students	17,600
Total Employment	48,800 jobs
Rank in Employment (WA Cities)	11
TOP 10 MAJOR EMPLOYERS	PeaceHealth St. Joseph Medical Center Western Washington University Bellingham School District City of Bellingham Whatcom County Fred Meyer Zodiac Interiors Matrix Service Inc. T-Mobile Bellingham Technical College







Additional demographic and background information can be found in the supporting information sections of other chapters of this plan.

Planning Framework

Washington cities and counties have prepared comprehensive plans for many years; however, growth management in the state took on new meaning with the passage of the Growth Management Act (GMA) by the Washington Legislature in 1990. The GMA was enacted in response to rapid population growth and concerns about suburban sprawl, environmental protection, quality of life and other issues. The GMA contains 14 goals that were adopted by the legislature to “guide the development and adoption of comprehensive plans and development regulations of counties and cities required to plan under the act” (RCW 36.70a.020). For a plan to be valid, it must be consistent with these goals and the specific requirements of the GMA. The 14 goals are summarized as follows:

- Guide urban growth to areas where urban services can be adequately provided;
- Reduce urban sprawl;
- Encourage efficient multi-modal transportation systems;
- Encourage the availability of affordable housing to all economic segments of the population;
- Encourage economic development throughout the state;
- Assure private property is not taken for public use without just compensation;
- Encourage predictable and timely permit processing;
- Maintain and enhance natural resource-based industries;
- Encourage retention of open space and development of recreational opportunities;
- Protect the environment and enhance the state’s quality of life;
- Encourage the participation of citizens in the planning process;
- Ensure adequate public facilities and services necessary to support development;
- Identify and preserve lands and sites of historic and archaeological significance; and
- Manage shorelines of state-wide significance.

The GMA also requires urban counties and their cities to jointly develop policies that are to be used to “establish a county-wide framework from which county and city comprehensive plans are developed...” (RCW 36.70A.210). In 1993, Whatcom County and the cities within the county developed the Whatcom Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs). The CPPs provide a framework to promote consistency between the cities' plans and address issues that transcend city boundaries, including urban growth areas, housing and job demand, and capital facilities that are regional in nature. The county and cities will continue to work together to amend and update the policies as needed.

What is a Comprehensive Plan?

Since 1980, the guide for Bellingham's growth and development has been the City's Comprehensive Plan. The plan is a broad statement of the community's 20-year vision for the future and includes goals and policies to achieve the vision. It guides decision-making and directs implementation actions that support the vision (see "Development and Implementation of a Comprehensive Plan" graphic). The plan also demonstrates how the various elements, such as land use, housing, transportation, community design and capital facilities, work together to achieve the vision.

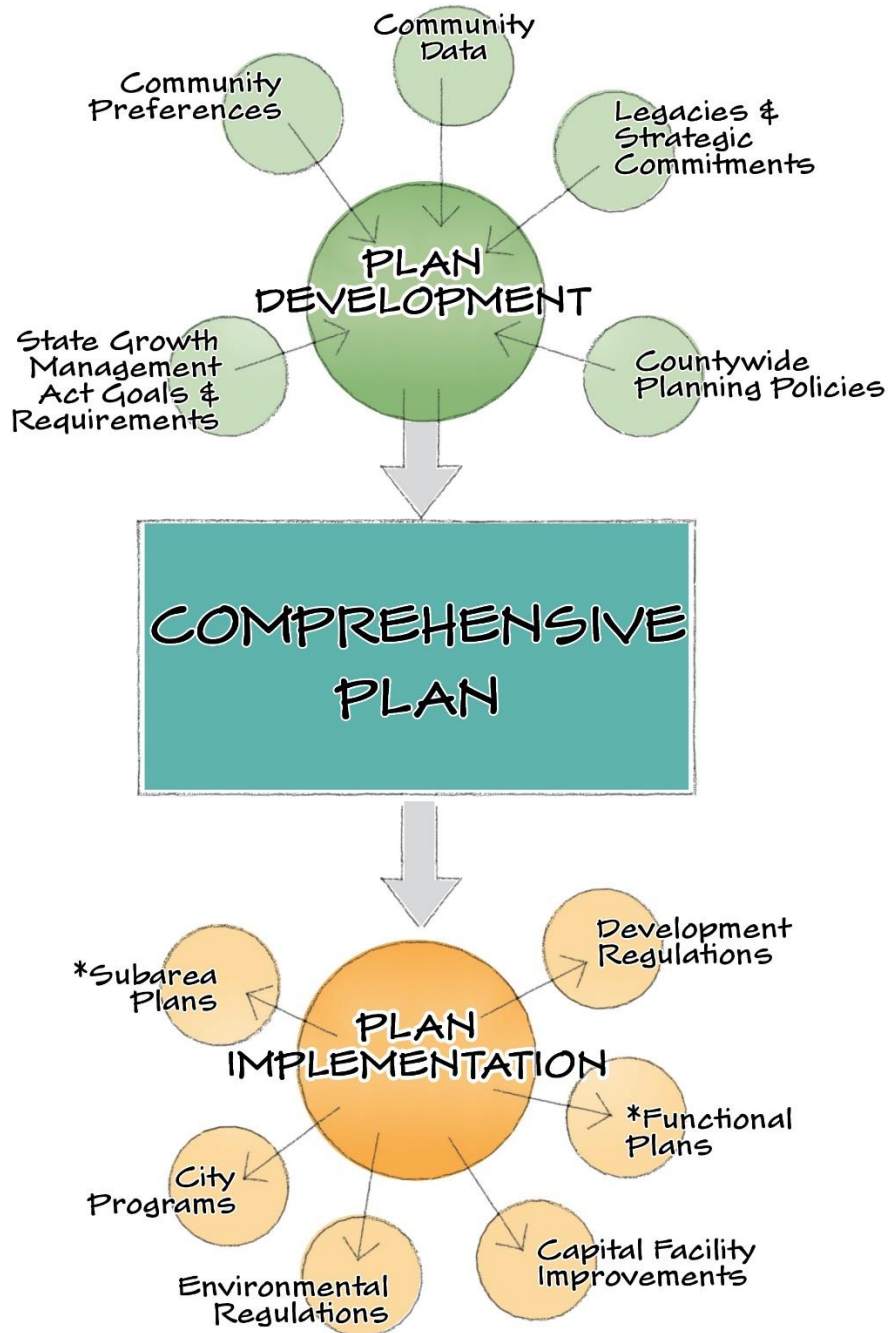
To be successful, the plan must be implemented by the combined efforts of individuals, neighborhoods, civic groups, and local government. Many of the plan's goals and policies reflect this shared responsibility. City government has the primary responsibility to implement the Comprehensive Plan. The City's two main implementation activities are regulating and managing development and funding capital improvements such as roads and parks. Incentives, such as the multi-family tax exemption program, transportation impact fee reductions, and streamlined permitting processes, also help implement the plan.



Kayaker on Lake Padden. Photo by Philip Humphries.

Throughout the 20-year life of the plan, monitoring and evaluation is conducted periodically to assess the effectiveness of goals and policies and to identify new ideas that may need to be added to produce a result consistent with the GMA, the community's visions and values, and changing needs and priorities. Population growth, land supply, development patterns and densities are particularly important to monitor on an ongoing basis to test growth projections and other assumptions made in the plan. Progress toward achieving the Legacies and Strategic Commitments (LSCs) is monitored with the City's [performance measures](#) program. Additional studies and data analysis supplement these measures when necessary.

DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



*Neighborhood Plans, Urban Village Plans, Institutional Master plans, and Functional Plans are incorporated by reference into the Comprehensive Plan

Policy Foundation

During the last update to the Comprehensive Plan in 2006, participants described their values for the community and vision for the future through an extensive public engagement process, which included the 2004 Community Forum on Growth Management. The 1992 Visions for Bellingham and the policy recommendations from the growth forum were included in Chapter 1, Framework Goals and Policies, of the 2006 plan. Many of these policy statements are still relevant today and continue to form the policy basis for the 2016 Comprehensive Plan, as reflected in the goals and policies of this plan. Brief summaries of the key visions from the 2006 plan are included below (see the 2006 Comprehensive Plan for a full list):

- **Development Patterns and Community Character:**

Bellingham relies on distinctive neighborhoods, a vital downtown and respect for its natural setting to retain its unique identity in the 21st century. Growth is accommodated while retaining a compact form through well-designed infill development in its urban villages and other appropriate areas within the City limits.

- **Transportation:**

Whatcom Transportation Authority's (WTA) route enhancements reflect Bellingham's commitment to using public transportation to improve air quality, decrease parking demand and reduce reliance on cars. Pedestrian and bicycle facilities connect living, working and recreational areas throughout the community. Development patterns that encourage walking, biking and transit use are fostered through incentives and zoning regulations.



2016 marked the 13th year of Downtown Sounds, a popular summertime event that features live music and local food vendors.

- **Economic Vitality and Employment:**

Bellingham's employment base combines public and private resources to increase economic diversity and emphasizes renewable resources, clean and quiet industry, high-paying family-wage jobs, small businesses, and home-based cottage industries. The community recognizes that economic vitality requires an increased commitment to education and training.

- **Housing:**

Bellingham encourages and provides incentives for innovative housing and mixtures of housing types that preserve natural resources and consolidate open space. Increased housing density and infill exists in the downtown and other parts of the community that are appropriate for small lots or higher-density housing. Ongoing efforts to address housing affordability for all citizens include continued streamlining of the regulatory review and building permit process, and reviewing costs of infrastructure improvements and their impact on housing costs.

- **Schools, Education and Cultural resources:**

The community supports the highest possible educational quality for its children. To promote economic diversification and achieve full employment, Bellingham's educational institutions increase opportunities for adult education and job training. Bellingham supports ethnic and cultural diversity through community education, expanded cultural events, and opportunities for all segments of the population to participate. The arts

community thrives as incubator facilities for the arts are developed, contributing to the City's attraction as a cultural center.

- **Community Health, Welfare and Safety:**

Bellingham's commitment to providing ongoing training for police and fire professionals contributes to an ongoing sense of security and safety. Residents benefit from access to quality health and child care through programs supported by public and private resources. Citizens who require social services that address homelessness, abuse and a range of disabilities can find the services they need in Bellingham. Bellingham is characterized by clean air and water and low levels of noise pollution.

- **Downtown and the Waterfront:**

Downtown is the heart of the community. It not only serves as host to community events, but it also includes new development of major new office uses and higher-density housing that is well designed and reflects a variety of housing costs. Future waterfront development will include a mix of water-dependent uses and residential, recreational, professional, commercial and industrial uses.

- **Environment and Natural Resources:**

Citizens and property owners join forces to protect the quality of Lake Whatcom, its watershed, the City's other lakes and creeks, and Bellingham Bay. Trees provide a green backdrop and play an important role in the community. Undisturbed natural areas serve as habitat for fish and wildlife, provide connections within greenway corridors and preserve steep slopes and sensitive areas.

- **Parks and Recreation:**

Developed parks and trails are integrated into the City's open space system. The design and location of parks and recreation facilities recognize the demand for indoor and outdoor activities and the need for facilities throughout the community that serve all ages and abilities. Parks are safe and well maintained.



Squalicum Creek Park. Photo by Robin Eldore.

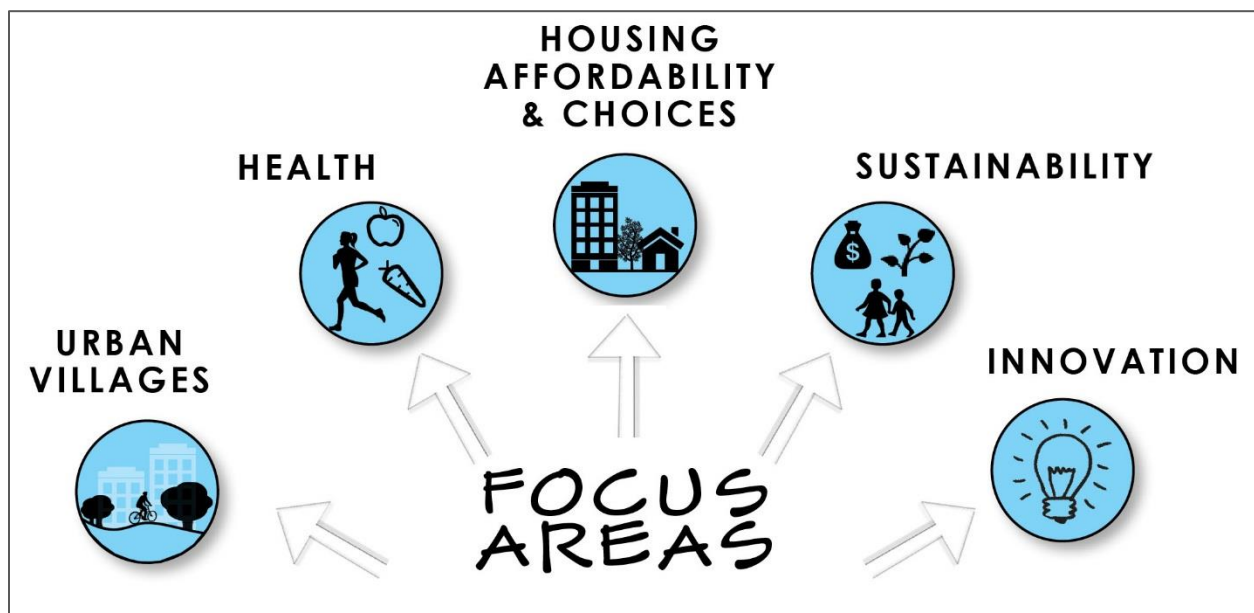
Scope of Update

The 2016 Bellingham Comprehensive Plan is not an overhaul of the existing plan; rather, the plan has been updated to improve readability and reflect changes that have occurred since the last update. The plan's refinements are consistent with the policy framework of the 2006 plan, the public participation process, and the numerous Planning Commission and City Council work sessions and public hearings. The scope of the update includes the following:

- **New formatting.** Each chapter was updated with a new format to improve the plan's readability and consistency among chapters. Photos and other graphics were added to support the text;
- **New public input.** Public participation opportunities included an online survey, open houses, a community engagement website (engage.cob.org), individual and group meetings, MNAC (Mayor's Neighborhood Advisory Commission) and neighborhood association meetings, and Planning Commission and City Council work sessions and public hearings;
- **Changes in state law** since adoption of the 2006 plan, including the need to include policies related to airport compatibility and planning approaches that increase physical activity;

- **The City's Legacies and Strategic Commitments**, which were adopted by City Council in 2009 and emphasize a healthy environment, vibrant economy, sense of place, equity and other important goals. At its core, the LSCs are a sustainability framework, embodying the City's desire for a socially, economically and environmentally healthy community. Each chapter includes relevant Legacies and Strategic Commitments, in many cases as goals or policies, demonstrating that the plan supports these visions.
- **New 20-year population and employment growth forecasts.** The City Council forwarded a recommendation for the mid-range population forecast and high-range employment forecast to Whatcom County in September 2015. This recommendation included the addition of the South Caitac property as a new UGA Reserve area and retention of the South Yew Street area as a UGA Reserve, with no changes to the UGA boundaries. On August 9, 2016, the Whatcom County Council adopted the 2016 Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan. For Bellingham, this adoption included a population growth forecast slightly higher than the mid-range forecast (31,050 new people) and the high-range employment forecast (22,641 new jobs). It also included the designation of the South Caitac area as a new UGA Reserve and the retention of the South Yew Street area as a UGA Reserve. No revisions were made to the UGA boundaries.
- **Refined goals and policies.** Outdated policy statements and text have been updated and goals and policies have been consolidated where necessary to result in a more concise document. The goals are broad statements of intent that describe a desired outcome. Policies generally include actions that the City would take to achieve the goals.
- **Goal and policy modifications to reflect five focus areas** (see graphic below), which are based on the 2014-2016 public input process. These key themes supplement the policy foundation from the 2006 plan and provide a framework for modified goals and policies that reflect changes that have occurred since adoption of the 2006 plan.

Equitable communities are those in which people of all cultures, ethnicities, abilities and economic backgrounds have access to the opportunities they need to advance their well-being and achieve their full potential. Neighborhoods equitably share the benefits of growth and change and no one neighborhood is over-burdened.



Urban Villages

The Comprehensive Plan includes as a key infill growth strategy a system of urban villages and transit corridors that would accommodate a significant share of the City's future growth, while preserving established, stable neighborhoods. This approach promotes the development of mixed-use activity centers along key transportation corridors, with sufficient densities and amenities to support transit and other alternative modes of transportation.

Since the adoption of the 2006 Comprehensive Plan, urban village plans have been approved for the following six areas - the Downtown, Fairhaven, Waterfront, Old Town, Samish, and Fountain Districts (see Land Use Chapter for more information). An urban village plan has not been adopted for the Barkley urban village, although this area functions as an urban village in many ways and is identified as an urban development center in both the Barkley Neighborhood Plan and associated planned development contracts. The updated Comprehensive Plan includes policies aimed at implementing the adopted urban village plans and developing transit-oriented development overlay plans for certain high-frequency transit corridors connecting the urban villages. See the Land Use Chapter for more information about urban villages.

Health

Not only does healthy community design provide a number of benefits across a broad spectrum of community issues, but the GMA also requires inclusion of health-related policies in the Comprehensive Plan. For example, the GMA says that the plan should consider planning approaches that increase physical activity such as neighborhood commercial nodes that encourage walking and cycling to local services, transit- or pedestrian-oriented development, and linear parks and trails networks. The plan is also required to include a pedestrian and bicycle component, identification of critical areas, and policies supporting housing for all economic segments of the community. The updated plan not only addresses these requirements, but it also includes policies supporting investments in existing neighborhoods, accessible health services, and access to healthy food (e.g. urban farms, healthy mobile food vendors and farmers markets).



Taylor Dock at Sunset. Photo by Jess Robinson.

Housing Affordability and Choices

According to the GMA, the Housing Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan is intended to ensure the vitality and character of established residential neighborhoods, encourage the availability of affordable housing to all economic segments of the population, promote a variety of residential densities, and encourage preservation of existing housing stock. The updated plan supplements housing policies carried over from the 2006 plan that address these issues by adding specific policies on housing for the homeless and unsheltered, seniors, and students. The chapter also promotes a variety of housing forms, including "middle" (e.g. duplexes, triplexes, townhomes, etc.) and small-lot housing types available through the City's Infill Housing Toolkit, and potential additional areas appropriate for accessory dwelling units (ADUs). See the Housing Chapter for more information.

Sustainability

In its broadest sense, sustainability encompasses an integrated set of social, economic and environmental principles that work together to provide a better future for current and future generations. Embedded in this definition is the idea that actions and policies can be adopted that will simultaneously create an equitable society, strong economy and healthy environment. The City’s Legacies and Strategic Commitments, adopted by City Council in 2009, serve as the City’s sustainability principles, while the City’s performance measures keep the public informed by monitoring data related to the Legacies. The Legacies are depicted in the graphic below. The full list of Legacies and Strategic Commitments is available here: <https://www.cob.org/Documents/council/legacies-commitments.pdf>.



Innovation

Innovation is broadly defined as the act of introducing new ideas or methods. The GMA states that comprehensive plans should provide for innovative land use management techniques including, but not limited to, density bonuses, cluster housing, planned unit developments, and the transfer of development rights. For many years the City has been encouraging innovative land use practices such as mixed-use urban villages, housing forms available through the Infill Housing Toolkit, cluster subdivisions, density bonuses, and the purchase of development rights. The updated plan includes policy support for forthcoming updates to the Subdivision Ordinance, which may result in additional subdivision flexibility. In addition to innovative land use techniques, innovative policies related to transportation, the environment, economic development and design are also included in the plan.

The Planning Process

Annual Comprehensive Plan Amendments

As per RCW 36.70A.130(2), cities and counties may consider proposed amendments no more frequently than once every year, with some exceptions. Rather than piecemeal changes, proposed

amendments must be considered concurrently so that the cumulative effects of the various proposals can be ascertained. Such amendments are established through a docket of proposed amendments that will be considered together on an annual cycle. The process the City uses to amend the plan is described in the Bellingham Municipal Code. It includes criteria for the Planning Commission and City Council to use to determine whether a proposed amendment is appropriate. The amendment process includes public participation requirements appropriate to the scope of the proposed amendment.

Periodic Update Process for Comprehensive Plans and Development Regulations

The GMA requires a full review and update of comprehensive plans at least every eight years. The Planning Commission has the responsibility to conduct the planning process, review the results, and formulate recommendations for the City Council's consideration. Adoption by the City Council is necessary to make the Comprehensive Plan an official City policy document. RCW 36.70A.035 of the GMA requires that each Washington city and county establish a public participation program and procedures for amendments, updates and revisions of comprehensive plans and development regulations. This requirement ensures that the plan represents the community's "informed consent" with respect to community goals and values.

The Planning Commission reviewed and the City Council approved a scope, schedule and public participation plan for the 2016 update in June 2014. In 2014 and 2015, the City engaged the public in the process of developing final recommendations for the population and employment projections and UGA boundaries. Engagement in 2015 and 2016 was primarily focused on developing the five focus areas and revised policies.



Participants at the March 2015 open house provided input on growth options and other elements of the Comprehensive Plan.

The public participation plan included both in-person and online opportunities. Future updates to the Comprehensive Plan and subarea plans should also include strategies such as these:

- **Online Survey.** The City asked the public where future residents should live and work over the next 20 years in an online survey during the fall of 2014. The survey received over 1,200 responses from neighborhoods throughout Bellingham and its unincorporated UGA.
- **Open Houses.** Over 115 people from all over the community attended an open house on March 17, 2015, at the Squalicum Boathouse. Participants commented on the tradeoffs associated with options for accommodating future growth and development. The input gathered helped frame recommendations on the City's future population and employment forecasts and UGA boundaries. Approximately 50 people attended an open house on September 15, 2015, at Old City Hall. Participants weighed in on the five focus areas through topic tables and focus group discussions with the City's planning and community development director.
- **Written Comment.** Nearly 400 letters and emails were submitted throughout the public input process, beginning in December 2014. Most comments, including verbal testimony

from the 2016 Planning Commission meetings, were addressed by staff via a comment tracker.

- **Small Group Meetings.** Group and individual meetings with neighborhood associations, special interest groups, and other interested stakeholders were held throughout the process. Some meetings were requested by groups, while some were organized by staff.
- **Database of Interested Citizens.** Period emails were sent to approximately 500 interested citizens to keep them informed of the process.
- **Websites.** In 2015, the City launched Engage Bellingham (engage.cob.org), a community engagement website where citizens can connect, communicate and collaborate with decision makers and other residents regarding the future of the community. All materials related to the update process, including letters and emails from the public, are posted on a dedicated Comprehensive Plan update webpage (cob.org/compplan).

- **Planning Commission Public Hearings and Work Sessions.** Twenty one Planning Commission meetings were held from October 2013 to April 2016 in regards to the Comprehensive Plan. The Commission met in a series of work sessions in 2015 to review the population and employment projections and UGA boundaries. Concurrent with the Council process on the projections and UGA boundaries, the Planning Commission discussed the five focus areas. In January 2016, review of the draft chapters commenced with a public hearing and several work sessions. Written comment was taken at any time and verbal testimony was taken at most of these meetings. Planning Commissioners' recommendations, comments, and questions on the draft plan were responded to by staff via a comment tracker available on the plan update webpage.



Focus group meetings were held during the September 2015 open house.

- **City Council Public Hearings and Work Sessions.** Twenty two City Council meetings were held from April 2014 to November 2016 - three public hearings and 19 work sessions. Written comments were accepted throughout the planning process and verbal testimony was accepted at most meetings. The plan was adopted via Ordinance NO. 2016-11-037 on November 14, 2016. City Council members' recommendations, comments and questions on the draft plan were responded to by staff in a comment tracker available on the plan update webpage.

Structure of the Plan

This Comprehensive Plan is divided into chapters dealing with specific issue areas:

- Acknowledgements
- Introduction
- Land Use

- Community Design
- Housing
- Transportation
- Economic Development
- Environment
- Parks, Recreation & Open Space Plan
- Capital Facilities and Utilities
- Appendix

Introduction (this chapter)

The Land Use Chapter contains the population growth forecasts, as well as the residential, commercial and industrial land supply and demand figures that are the foundation of the plan. Also, policies and criteria that are used to set the UGA boundary are included. The UGA boundary sets the limit of urban development and represents the anticipated City limits during the 20-year planning period. Annexation is also addressed in this chapter.

The Community Design Chapter consists of policies that reflect the community's desire to retain Bellingham's distinctive character as derived from its unique physical location, views of important natural features, distinctive neighborhoods, historic resources, and small town atmosphere. This chapter also recognizes the community's desires to retain features that make neighborhoods unique and improve the livability of the built environment as the community grows.

The Housing Chapter contains an analysis of the existing housing situation in Bellingham. It includes recent trends in population, income, and housing availability and affordability. The goals and policies in this chapter reflect the City's commitment to foster a range of housing choices for all economic segments of the community.



The Lettered Streets Neighborhood. Photo by Aarin Wright.

The Transportation Chapter includes the policy base supporting the City's commitment to providing an interconnected, multi-modal transportation network that meets the needs of the community. The chapter includes an analysis of the existing transportation system and projections of future needs. Alternative modes, such as walking, bicycling and transit, are supported by policies requiring coordination between land use and transportation planning.

The Economic Development Chapter highlights and elaborates upon the City's Legacy commitment to create a vibrant, sustainable economy; identifies the City's role in economic development activities; and provides a framework for the City's Economic Development Strategic Action Plan. It includes characteristics of the local economy such as top employers in Whatcom County, employment by industry sector, jobs by occupational sector, and median family and household income.

The Environment Chapter implements the vision of Bellingham as a city with treasured natural features that provide wildlife habitat, healthy air and water, recreation and beauty. It includes a special emphasis on Lake Whatcom, the City's drinking water source, and also incorporates goals and policies related to the City's Shoreline Master Program, critical areas, fish and wildlife habitat, urban forest, air quality, climate change, and energy and resource conservation.

The Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan (PRO Plan) includes an inventory and level of service standards for existing and proposed facilities, and projections for future needs. The policies in this chapter reflect the fact that citizens of Bellingham take great pride in, and place a great importance on, the City's parks and open space system. The policies also contain a commitment to maintain the existing system while providing new facilities, especially in areas of the City where population growth is anticipated. A special emphasis is placed on acquiring and developing lands that will support the goal of having a park and trail within a half-mile walking or cycling distance of every household.



Maritime Heritage Park is located in the City Center.

The Capital Facilities and Utilities Chapter contains a description of existing public facilities and services such as police, fire, libraries, schools, water, sewer and drainage (park facilities are addressed in the PRO Plan). The Capital Facilities and Utilities Chapter includes projections of future needs for facilities and services, integrates the location and capacity of the facilities with the Land Use Chapter, and provides a financing plan to prioritize and accomplish the projects. It also includes a summary of the major private utilities serving the Bellingham urban area, including electricity, natural gas, oil and fuel transmission, telephone (including cellular), cable television and solid waste/recycling.

The Appendix includes the following:

- Plans and Documents Incorporated by Reference (see below).
- [Urban Fringe Subarea Plan](#) for Bellingham's UGA. The Urban Fringe Subarea Plan will be updated after the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan to add new information concerning Bellingham's UGA and UGA Reserve areas and to remove other outdated information.
- [City Council Resolution NO. 2015-14](#) regarding 20-year population and employment growth forecasts and UGA boundaries.
- Bellingham Comprehensive Plan SEPA [Determination of Non-Significance](#).

The plans and documents listed below are incorporated by reference into the Comprehensive Plan (See Appendix for the full list):

Neighborhood Plans. Bellingham's 25 neighborhood plans were adopted as part of the Comprehensive Plan in 1980, 1995 and 2006. This tradition continues as the plans are once again included as part of the Comprehensive Plan. Bellingham's neighborhood plans remain important to achieving the vision and goals of the plan, serving as tools that help maintain neighborhood character and define the future visions of the neighborhoods.

Urban Village Plans. Urban village plans have been approved for the Downtown, Fairhaven, Waterfront, Old Town, Samish, and Fountain Districts. If warranted within the planning period, additional areas may be considered for urban village master plans. Urban village master planning provides an opportunity for residential and commercial property owners, business owners, residents and other community organizations and stakeholders to:

- Encourage a vibrant mix of residential and commercial uses;
- Promote the economic health of the area;
- Encourage a safe, convenient and attractive pedestrian experience;
- Create a redevelopment vision that is unique to the area;
- Provide a level of predictability for redevelopment;
- Plan for minimizing the effects of future development on the character and value of adjacent single- and multi-family residential areas; and
- Concentrate new development in order to preserve natural areas.

Institutional Master Plans (IMP). Two areas are currently served by Institutional Master Plans - Western Washington University and the St. Joseph's Hospital (North Campus). Whatcom County Community College is developing an IMP and anticipates adoption in 2016. The institutional general use type is intended to provide for the development of large campus-type public or quasi-public uses in a planned and coordinated manner.



Telescope at Zuanich Park with Western Washington University and south Bellingham in view. Photo by AJ Barse.

Other Plans. Supporting documents known as "functional plans" address physical infrastructure and are incorporated by reference. They include the Stormwater Comprehensive Plan, Comprehensive Sewer Plan, Comprehensive Water System Plan, Bellingham School District Capital Facilities Plan, Bicycle Master Plan, and Pedestrian Master Plan. A GMA requirement, the Shoreline Master Program, is also incorporated by reference.

In the event there is an inconsistency between a subarea plan and the Bellingham Comprehensive Plan, the Bellingham Comprehensive Plan shall prevail.

Bellingham Comprehensive Plan Land Use Chapter

2016



Photo by Kenni Merritt

I. Introduction

The Land Use Chapter guides the future use of land in Bellingham, ensuring the City's high quality of life is retained and enhanced as the community grows and changes. The requirement for a Land Use Chapter in the Comprehensive Plan is one of the key components of the Growth Management Act (GMA). The GMA requires cities to show how they will be able to accommodate 20 years of growth through sufficient buildable land that is zoned appropriately. This chapter is also consistent with the Whatcom County Countywide Planning Policies, considers planning approaches that increase physical activity, and includes airport compatibility policies, among other requirements.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a framework for improving the health and livability of the community by accommodating carefully planned levels of development that:

- Promote the efficient use of land through a system of mixed-use urban villages and corridors and compatible infill development;
- Create safe and healthy neighborhoods with access to recreational opportunities, housing options affordable to a range of incomes and a variety of transportation choices;
- Foster a vibrant economy and living wage jobs;
- Maintain Bellingham's sense of place by protecting and enhancing the character of existing neighborhoods, the natural environment and important historic and cultural resources; and
- Build a community that is resilient to adverse events, including natural disasters and climate change.

Bellingham accommodates growth primarily through compact development within the City limits, including infill development in areas served existing infrastructure and services and mixed-use urban villages (or "centers") that are connected by vibrant transit corridors (see Supporting Information section). While higher-intensity development occurs in urban villages, the character of established single-family residential neighborhoods will continue to be preserved and enhanced. Vibrant centers of activity make it easier to walk, bike and use transit for daily needs; reduce greenhouse gas emissions; contribute to a sense of community; provide economic benefits; reduce the need for expansion of the City's urban growth area (UGA); and protect open space and agricultural land.



The corner of Holly and Bay Streets in downtown is lively on sunny days. Photo by Philip Humphries.

These concepts are further defined under the following seven categories, which form the organizational basis for the goals and policies of this chapter:

- Residential Development**
- Urban Villages and Transit Corridors**
- Commercial and Industrial Development**
- Public and Institutional Development**
- Urban Growth Area and Annexation**

Public Participation
Sustainable Land Use

The chapter's 10 goals mirror the City's Legacies and Strategic Commitments and emphasize the interdependence of the environment, economy and society:

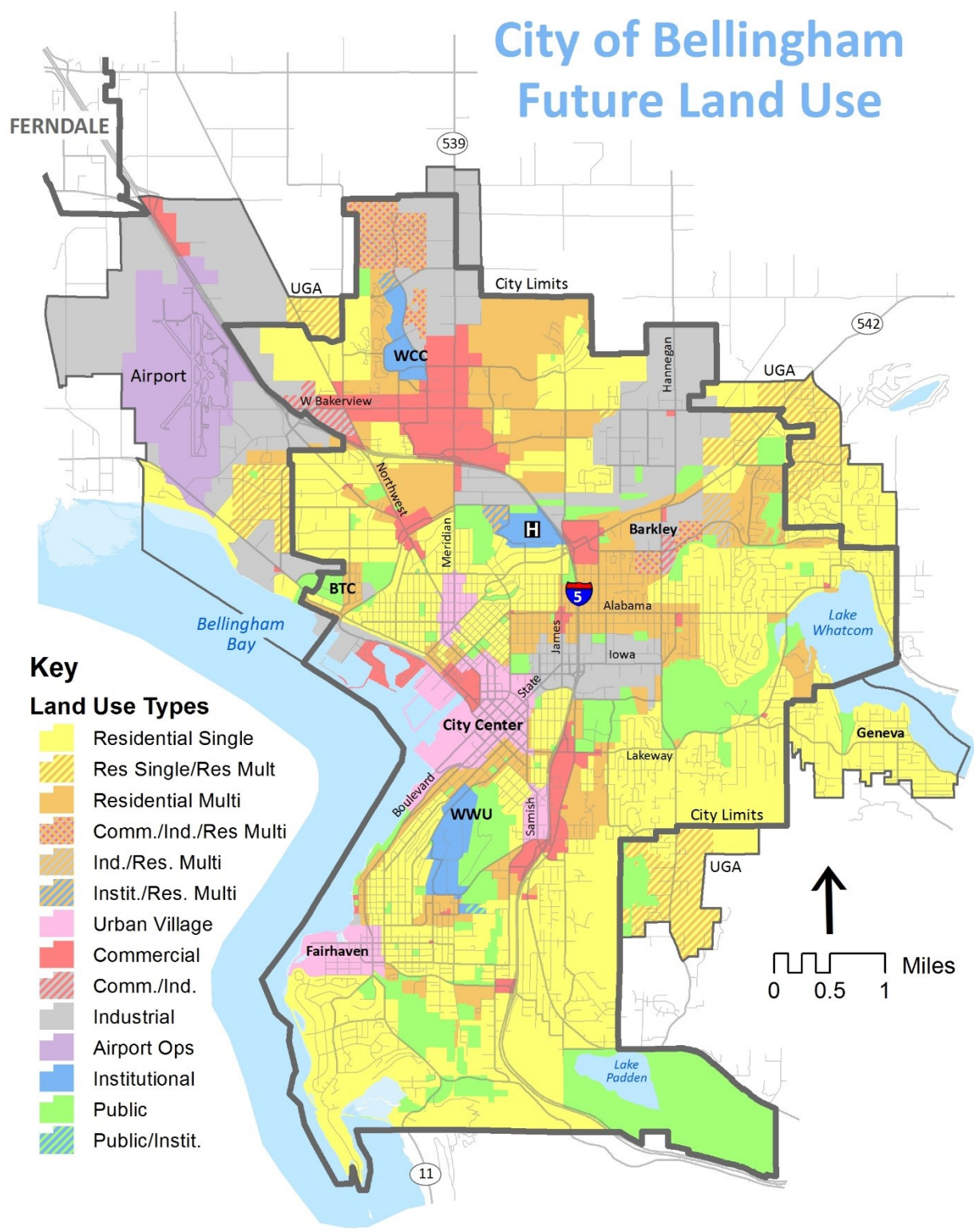
- GOAL LU-1 Support sense of place in neighborhoods.**
- GOAL LU-2 Foster vibrant urban villages.**
- GOAL LU-3 Support a thriving local economy across all employment sectors.**
- GOAL LU-4 Maintain and enhance publicly-owned assets and institutional uses.**
- GOAL LU-5 Support the Growth Management Act's goal to encourage growth in urban areas.**
- GOAL LU-6 Use transparent processes and involve stakeholders in decisions.**
- GOAL LU-7 Protect and restore our community's natural resources (land, water and air) through proactive environmental stewardship.**
- GOAL LU-8 Protect and improve Lake Whatcom and its watershed to ensure a long-term, sustainable supply of water.**
- GOAL LU-9 Preserve historic and cultural resources.**
- GOAL LU-10 Foster community connectedness to improve the health of residents.**

II. Land Use Designations

Land uses within Bellingham are governed by the designations contained in the City's 25 neighborhood plans; zoning designations and development regulations in the Land Use and Development Code; and other design, development and environmental regulations. The City's seven general land use categories and acreages are shown on the Future Land Use Map and Land Use Categories table:

- Single-family Residential
- Multi-family Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Urban Village
- Institutional
- Public

The City's land use categories are further defined in the following Goals and Policies section.



III. Goals and Policies

Residential Development

Over half of the City's total land area is zoned residential, making it the dominant land use in Bellingham in terms of total acreage. Residential development is also encouraged in the City's commercial and urban village zones. Bellingham had approximately 37,825 dwelling units in 2015, the majority of which were single-family homes. During this same year, developed residential areas of the City contained an average density of 6.5 units per acre.

Zoning	Acres	Percent
Residential Single	9,719	42.3%
Residential Multi	3,263	14.2%
Commercial	1,275	5.5%
Industrial	3,908	17.0%
Urban Village	865	3.8%
Institutional	418	1.8%
Airport Ops	1,024	4.5%
Public *	2,517	10.9%
Total Acres	22,989	100.0%

* Note: Some lands in public use are in zones designated for residential, commercial, and other uses.

GOAL LU-1 Support sense of place in neighborhoods.

Policy LU-1 The Single-Family Residential designation permits a range of housing densities to achieve the City's housing diversity and affordability goals. In undeveloped or infill areas, new housing may include single-family detached, single-family attached, townhouses, cottage housing, accessory dwelling units, clustered housing and other small-scale housing forms. Accessory, public and semi-public uses are also allowed.

Policy LU-2 The Multi-Family Residential designation is intended for areas that are able to support higher concentrations of people, while encouraging a desirable living environment within and adjacent to these districts. This zoning also provides a compatible mixture of residential housing types, typical accessory uses, public and semi-public uses, office uses and limited neighborhood commercial uses in appropriate areas.

Policy LU-3 Residential densities are permitted as follows:

Residential, Low Density – 7,201 or more square feet per dwelling unit (5 or less units per acre). The Low-Density Residential designation should be used for land that is not suited for more intense urban development because of environmentally-sensitive areas and/or public facility or utility capacity limitations.



Single-family homes in the Columbia Neighborhood. Photo by Aarin Wright.

Residential, Medium Density – 3,600 to 7,200 square feet per dwelling unit (6 to 12 units per acre). The Medium-Density Residential designation should be used for land that is suitable for moderate density development.

Residential, High Density – 0 to 3,599 square feet per dwelling unit (more than 12 units per acre). The high-density residential designation should be used for land near existing or potential high-frequency transit service and/or adjacent to or near employment and commercial areas.



Multi-family units on High Street.

Policy LU-4 Protect the unique character and qualities of existing neighborhoods, while identifying opportunities for improved livability, safety, and housing affordability and diversity.

Policy LU-5 Foster neighborhoods with a balanced mix of housing prices that are compatible with the wages and incomes in the community.

Policy LU-6 Support higher-density development with parks, art, schools and other public amenities.

Policy LU-7 Periodically review and update the City's residential zoning regulations and design standards to promote quality development that considers and complements existing neighborhoods.

Policy LU-8 Work with the community's institutions of higher education to develop a comprehensive strategy addressing issues associated with off-campus student housing. Potential measures include:

- Build relationships with large student housing providers to provide adequate off-campus housing that is high quality and complementary with its surroundings;
- Provide education to landlords of student housing located in older homes regarding the City's historic preservation program and ways in which to economically improve older properties;
- Expand residential parking zones to lessen the impacts of overflow student parking in established single-family neighborhoods; and
- Enforce the City's Rental Registration and Safety Inspection Program.

Residential parking zones (RPZs) help ease parking congestion in residential neighborhoods, while balancing the needs of all people who use public streets. RPZs help neighborhoods deal with impacts through transportation and parking demand management strategies (see Transportation Chapter).

Policy LU-9 Promote small-scale commercial uses (e.g. corner stores) within neighborhoods, particularly where these uses historically existed, to encourage walkability and provide opportunities for employment and placemaking.

Placemaking: People interacting with one another builds stronger, healthier communities. To make a place great, it should include these qualities: sociability, uses & activities, access & linkages, and comfort & image.

Policy LU-10 To achieve a healthy mix of housing that is affordable to a wide range of incomes, implement and seek new, innovative tools, including, but not limited to:

- Density bonuses;
- Inclusionary zoning;
- Cluster subdivisions that preserve open space, retain natural features and provide other public benefits;
- The Infill Housing Toolkit, which includes small lot homes, townhomes and other housing forms;
- Accessory dwelling units;
- Adaptive reuse of existing buildings;
- Purchase and transfer of development rights (TDR) programs; and
- Public-private partnerships for shared parking facilities, wetland mitigation, and regional stormwater management.



Bellingham Cohousing's condominium homes are privately owned and include features one would expect in a typical residence.

Policy LU-11 As neighborhood plans are developed and updated, important priorities and issues should be identified, including:

- A mix of housing types for all income levels, ages and abilities;
- References to the appropriate adopted plans for parks, bicycle, pedestrian, and transit infrastructure;
- Significant historical, archaeological and cultural resources;
- Walkable and accessible neighborhood schools;
- Significant public vistas and view corridors;
- Placemaking and streetscape amenity opportunities, including public art, street furniture, green infrastructure projects (e.g. street trees and rain gardens), and pedestrian-scale lighting;
- Potential Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) improvements;
- Protection of critical areas and other environmentally-sensitive areas;

Crime prevention through environmental design is a multi-disciplinary approach to deterring criminal behavior through environmental design. CPTED strategies rely on the ability to influence offender decisions that precede criminal acts.

- Spaces for small-scale community gardens, healthy mobile food vendors, and other opportunities for healthy, local food; and
- Potential considerations for areas susceptible to natural disasters and climate change impacts (see [Whatcom County Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan](#)).

Urban Villages and Transit Corridors

The City's urban villages, which are planned to accommodate much of the City's higher-density mixed-use development, are key to preserving neighborhood character while taking advantage of existing infrastructure. Since adoption of the 2006 Comprehensive Plan, master plans, design standards, and regulations have been developed for six urban villages - the Downtown, Waterfront, Fairhaven, Fountain, Samish Way, and Old Town Districts (see Bellingham Existing and Proposed Urban Villages map). These villages are part of a larger "centers and corridors" planning approach that links mixed-use centers of activity through vibrant, high-frequency transit corridors. As implementation of the urban village plans progresses, planning work can begin on the transit corridors that connect them to each other and the surrounding community (see Transportation Chapter).

Urban villages are activity centers that provide pleasant living, shopping and working environments; strong pedestrian accessibility; adequate, well-located public spaces; a connected street system; and a balance of retail, office, and residential uses.

A formal urban village plan has not been adopted for the Barkley District, which functions as an urban village in many ways and is identified as an urban development center in the Barkley Neighborhood Plan. Other potential areas for urban village planning include the James Street, Cordata, Lakeway/Lincoln, and Birchwood/Northwest/Maplewood areas. If the existing planned urban villages continue to succeed and the need for additional centers arises, these areas would be evaluated for potential master planning processes. It's important to note that the designation of an area as an urban village does not preclude the development of mixed-use buildings on a smaller scale elsewhere throughout the community.

A recent review of the success of urban villages indicates mixed results. The Downtown, Fairhaven and Barkley Districts have seen significant development, but others have had limited development activity. Growth has been uneven due to a variety of factors, including availability of land, environmental cleanup requirements, private landowner interest and motivation, economic health, desirability of an area, and development risk. Many of the urban villages were planned during the Recession; thus, they will require time and a healthy economy to attract and leverage new investment and evolve into vibrant centers. A few additional observations include:



The Barkley Urban Village provides living, shopping, employment and recreational opportunities.

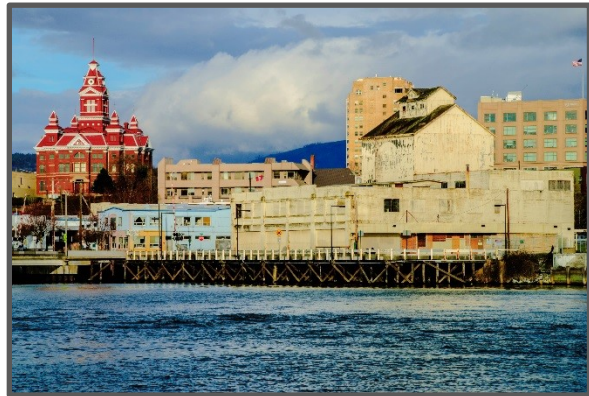
- 1. Incentives can be very effective, but need to be applied in a targeted manner.** The judicious use of incentives can help "jumpstart" development in urban villages. This is evident in the significant increase in housing downtown through the use of incentives such as the multi-family tax exemption program, which has incentivized development of over 600 housing units,

with over 200 more under construction or in building permit review. However, in slow-starting urban centers, incentives alone have not overcome the risks associated with establishing new mixed-use development. It is likely that catalytic "pioneer" projects will be required to establish developer confidence. These types of projects cannot be anticipated in a predictable manner and will likely require location-specific incentives to encourage more timely development.

Spreading incentives too broadly can be counterproductive and will stretch limited City resources. Targeted use of major incentives has resulted in better outcomes than applying them across a broader area, which can dilute their effectiveness.

2. City commitment and public amenities are important. The City's commitment to improving infrastructure and amenities in urban villages can be just as, if not more, effective at attracting development to these areas than direct financial incentives. Just shy of a decade after adoption of the urban village concept, the development community is starting to take a real interest in these areas. The City's focus on the downtown for the past two decades is paying off, with 660 new housing units and 25,000 square feet of new commercial development since 2006. Whenever possible, the City should look for opportunities to leverage expenditures in public amenities and infrastructure with private investment when they are likely to have a multiplier effect, especially for early development in new urban villages.

3. Inherent economies of scale and effort can be beneficial. Larger, multi-project development proposals in urban villages that are under common management/ownership (i.e. Barkley Village and the Waterfront District) provide a unique opportunity for the City to work with proponents to provide predictable growth and more efficient infrastructure.



The waterfront and downtown from Bellingham Bay. The Waterfront District Subarea Plan was approved in 2013. Photo by Kenni Merritt.

GOAL LU-2 Foster vibrant urban villages.

Policy LU-12 The Urban Village designation encourages the creation of intensely-developed mixed-use areas where infrastructure, transit, and other public facilities and services are available or can easily be provided. Urban villages should provide significant job opportunities and a substantial amount of new housing, allowing people to work, shop and recreate near where they live. The ultimate mix of land uses, densities, infrastructure requirements and other typical zoning, design, and development standards should be established in a master plan.

Policy LU-13 Promote and facilitate continued development of the City's seven existing urban villages - Downtown, Waterfront, Fairhaven, Fountain, Samish Way, Old Town and Barkley. These areas are expected to accommodate significant residential and mixed use development over the 20-year planning period (see urban village master plans, design standards, and regulations).

Policy LU-14 Ensure that Bellingham's City Center (i.e. Downtown, Waterfront and Old Town Districts) retains its role as the dominant cultural, civic, financial and service center for the community and region. This area should be unique, attractive, and reflect Bellingham's history and natural setting (see Downtown Bellingham Plan, Waterfront Master Plan, Old Town Subarea Plan, City Center Neighborhood Plan and City Center Implementation Strategy).



Digester tanks on the waterfront are proposed to be incorporated into the area's redevelopment. Photo by Aarin Wright.

Policy LU-15 Continue effective incentives and develop new incentives where needed for the planned urban villages. These incentives should be targeted to areas where they have proven to be successful and/or where the greatest need has been identified. Incentives should be flexible to respond to opportunities and changing markets.

Policy LU-16 Establish benchmarks and annual monitoring of key indicators for urban villages to assess the effectiveness of incentives and implementation progress.

Policy LU-17 In instances where a proponent controls multiple properties within an existing urban village and seeks to address the coordinated provision of infrastructure, cooperatively develop plans, approaches and agreements, including development agreements.

Policy LU-18 Develop new plans and update existing plans as needed to reflect the unique nature of each urban village. The plans should consider the elements identified in Policy LU-11, as well as the following:

- Land uses and adaptive performance-based development standards to encourage compatible new development and greater flexibility in design, particularly when the development context is well defined;
- An appropriate mix of commercial, office and residential uses;
- Parking requirements, including the potential for parking maximums and/or reduced parking requirements, and design standards that support multi-modal transportation options; and



Pedestrian walkway in Fairhaven Urban Village. Photo by Caitlin Forslof.

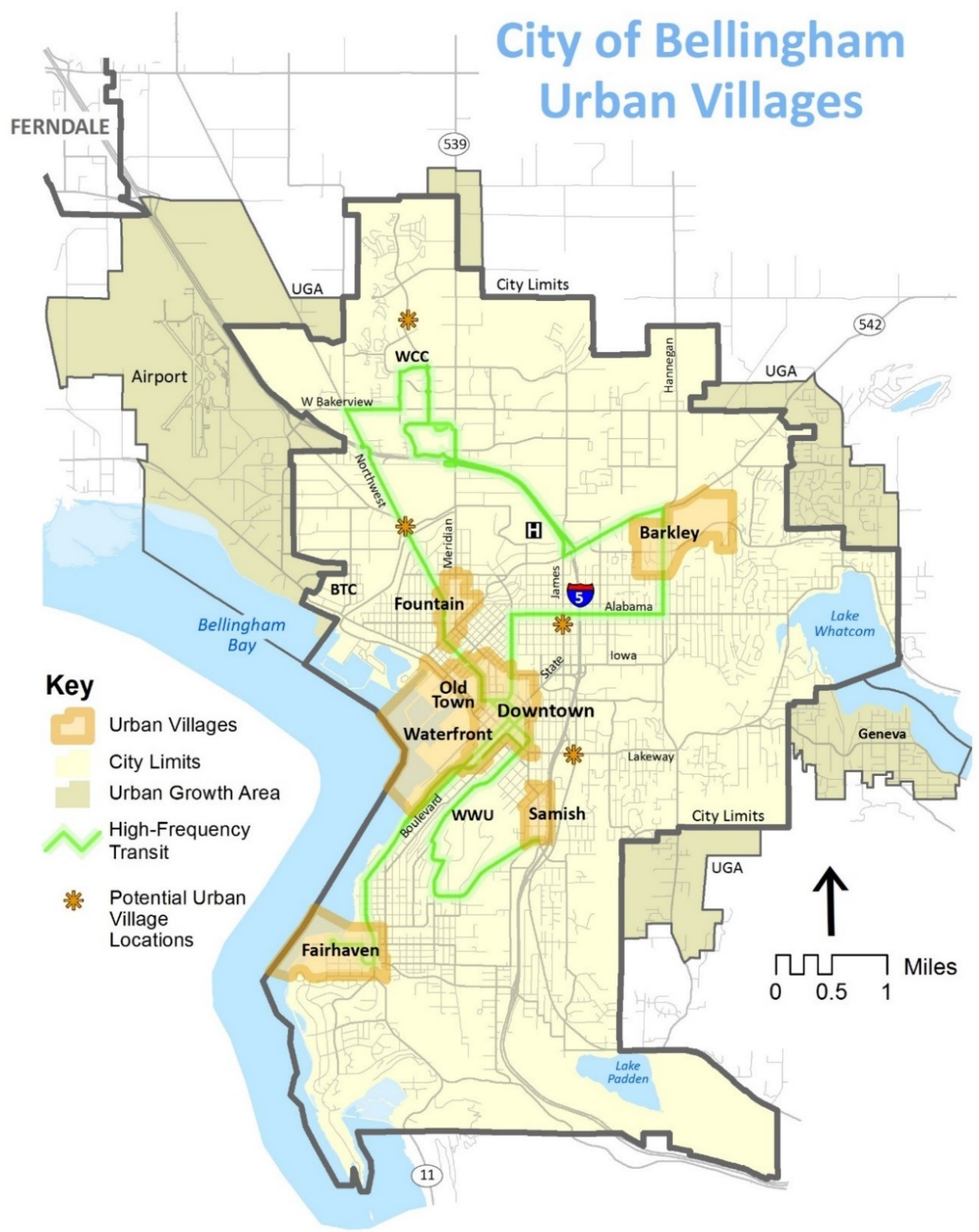
- Sustainable development practices and the use of the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design for Neighborhood Development (LEED-ND) rating system, or similar system, to measure the potential sustainability outcomes of the proposed plans.

***Sustainable development** is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
– Brundtland Report*

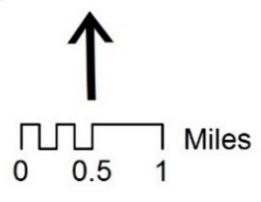
Policy LU-19 Consider developing integrated transportation-land use plans along Whatcom Transportation Authority's (WTA) GO Lines connecting urban villages where appropriate. The planning process should consider the following (see Transportation Chapter):

- A mix of land uses and higher densities within each corridor, resulting in transit-oriented development;
- Design standards that support the multi-modal nature of the corridors;
- Efforts to increase the effectiveness of public transportation along the corridors; and
- The elements identified in Policies LU-11 and LU-18.

***A Transit-oriented development (TOD)** is a mixed-use residential and commercial area designed to maximize access to public transportation, and often incorporates features to encourage transit ridership.*



- Key**
- Urban Villages
 - City Limits
 - Urban Growth Area
 - High-Frequency Transit
 - Potential Urban Village Locations



Commercial and Industrial Development

The Greater Bellingham Area is home to about 64% of the total employment in Whatcom County. In 2013, the City had over 3.2 million square feet of office space and over 8.2 million square feet of retail space. Large commercial and office uses are concentrated in a few areas of the City, including the Downtown District and the Meridian, Cordata, Barkley, and Fairhaven neighborhoods. Smaller commercial and office centers are located at Sehome Village, Sunset Square, the Lakeway/I-5 interchange area, the Fountain District, and along the Northwest Road and Samish Way corridors.

Approximately 26% of the City's total acreage is zoned for commercial and industrial development – 5.5% for commercial uses, 17% for industrial uses, and 3.8% in urban village zones. Many existing zoning categories allow a mix of uses (e.g. commercial uses are allowed in many of the City's industrial zones).

Marine and heavy industrial uses are primarily located on the Bellingham waterfront and in Fairhaven. Light industrial uses are concentrated along the State/James Street, Ohio Street, Iowa Street and Hannegan/Bakerview Road corridors.

See the City's Economic Development Chapter for information on the City's role in economic development activities and additional goals and policies related to economic development. The Economic Development Strategic Action Plan includes strategies to achieve the goals of the Economic Development Chapter.

GOAL LU-3 Support a thriving local economy across all employment sectors.

Policy LU-20 The Commercial designation includes a range of commercial development intensities, from small neighborhood commercial areas to large planned commercial areas. In general, commercial areas should provide a broad range of services, commercial uses, mixed commercial and residential uses, and personal service establishments. Many existing commercial zoning categories allow and encourage mixed-use development, particularly in urban centers.



James Street includes a mixture of Commercial and Industrial zoning.

Policy LU-21 The Industrial category comprises a range of potential uses, including "light" industrial uses (e.g. research and development and water-related industrial uses) and "heavy" industrial uses (e.g. intensive warehousing, manufacturing, fabrication, assembly, and distribution of goods). Commercial uses are allowed in some industrial zones. Industrial designations and zoning are appropriate for areas with large parcels or a number of small parcels.

Policy LU-22 Avoid auto-oriented strip commercial development. Where such areas already exist, prohibit linear expansion and encourage redevelopment into more compact, mixed-use nodes of activity, especially along WTA transit routes.

Policy LU-23 Regularly review and update the City's commercial zoning regulations (e.g. text and associated maps), design standards, and design review process as needed to allow design flexibility and creativity, address emerging issues, and foster compatibility of development with the character of surrounding areas.

Policy LU-24 Encourage the inclusion of context-sensitive elements in the design, maintenance, and update of new and existing mixed-use, industrial and commercial sites (e.g. lighting, signs and landscaping) and buildings (e.g. scale and height).

Context-sensitive design (CSD) refers to development practices and roadway standards that are flexible and sensitive to community values. CSD allows design decisions to better balance economic, social and environmental objectives.

Policy LU-25 Protect adjacent properties and public areas by allowing only non-glare shielded lighting at an intensity level no higher than necessary to meet safety standards.

Policy LU-26 Industrial zoned land in the UGA should be reserved for industrial uses and appropriate accessory uses.

Policy LU-27 Allow nonprofit homeless shelters outright in Industrial zones and conditionally in Commercial zones.

Policy LU-28 Consider social equity and health issues in siting such uses as manufacturing and essential public facilities (EPFs) to limit exposure to harmful substances and environments.



Transition Bikes moved its office and warehouse to Bellingham in 2015.

Policy LU-29 Separate heavy industrial uses from incompatible land uses. Use transition zoning, buffers, and other techniques to protect industrial areas and nearby uses from conflicts.

Policy LU-30 Encourage live/work units in appropriate transitional zones, including light industrial zones. Develop appropriate locational criteria and design/development standards so that they are compatible with surrounding industrial uses.

Public and Institutional Development

Public and quasi-public land uses include schools, government offices, churches, and public recreation such as golf courses. Approximately 2,500 acres of land in the City are devoted to public

uses (11% of the total City acreage), while approximately 418 acres are designated for institutional uses (1.8% of the total City acreage).

Each county and city planning under the GMA (RCW 36.70A.040) must include a process for identifying and siting essential public facilities. EPFs include those facilities that are typically difficult to site such as airports, state educational facilities, state or regional transportation facilities, state and local correctional facilities, solid waste handling facilities, and in-patient facilities. The Bellingham Municipal Code (BMC) includes the process and criteria that the City uses when identifying EPFs.

GOAL LU-4 Maintain and enhance publicly-owned assets and institutional uses.

Policy LU-31 The Public designation is applied to major parcels of land that are owned or leased by public agencies such as city, county and state governments and the Bellingham School District. Certain public uses may be located in other zoning districts as designated in the BMC. Public zoning is used for a range of uses, including parks, recreational facilities, trails, open space, schools, utilities, and other local governmental facilities.

Policy LU-32 The Institutional designation is appropriate for areas containing public or quasi-public institutional uses requiring large land area. Bellingham is home to several large “institutional” public or quasi-public campus-type developments such as Western Washington University (WWU), Whatcom Community College (WCC) and St. Joseph’s Hospital.



The Western Washington University campus includes an Institutional designation. Photo courtesy of WWU Publishing Services.

Policy LU-33 Provide adequate public facilities, including schools, libraries, parks, trails, police and fire services, and transportation and utility infrastructure. Ensure that these facilities are compatible with the City's adopted Future Land Use Map.

Policy LU-34 Set a high standard of design quality for public buildings so that they positively contribute to the community.

Policy LU-35 Promote equitable delivery of, and access to, human services by allowing these uses in suitable locations and encouraging their creation through incentives and other innovative measures.

Human services include childcare, food assistance, medical and dental care, counseling, and transitional shelter.

Policy LU-36 Foster access to quality health and childcare through programs that are compatible with households' economic resources and supported by public and private resources.

Policy LU-37 Ensure that police and fire department staff are highly trained so that they contribute to an ongoing sense of security and safety in the community.

Policy LU-38 Maximize the contributions of the City's educational facilities (primary through higher education). Coordinate with Bellingham School District leadership to assess the impacts of ongoing programs and determine if the location of future facilities is consistent with the goals of the community.

***Infill development** is defined as new development on vacant or underutilized land in existing urban areas that are already largely developed. Directing growth to areas served by existing infrastructure is an efficient use of land and can help achieve community goals such as transit-oriented development and open space protection. Design guidelines are in place for the City's urban villages and multi-family projects.*

Policy LU-39 Retain neighborhood schools in developed areas and locate new schools consistent with the City's commitment to encourage infill development, walkability, and compact growth.

Policy LU-40 Incorporate physical health and well-being into the location, design and operation of public facilities and services by considering the following:

- Sustainable building and development practices, including energy conservation and low impact development (LID) techniques;
- Pedestrian, bicycling and transit access to public facilities;
- Adaptation to natural disasters and climate change impacts;
- Community gardens in accessible public open spaces; and
- Educational and demonstration programs that help foster a healthy environment, physical activity, well-being, and public safety.



The Lightcatcher building, part of the three-building Whatcom Museum complex, includes a green roof. Photo by Jacob Knapp Photography.

Policy LU-41 Maintain a process to site EPFs in the BMC that requires consistency of proposed facilities with the Bellingham Comprehensive Plan; emphasizes public involvement; identifies and minimizes adverse impacts; and promotes the equitable location of these facilities throughout the City, county and state.

Policy LU-42 Discourage incompatible land uses and activities adjacent to the Bellingham International Airport (BIA) to preserve the safety and efficient use of the airport (see BIA Master Plan for more information). Incompatible uses are those that:

- Could be impacted by airplane noise;
- Could create or be impacted by airplane accidents; or

- Create height hazards that could adversely impact aircraft that are taking off or landing.

Policy LU-43 Review and update the BMC as needed for consistency with the BIA Master Plan and applicable airport compatibility regulations.

Urban Growth Area and Annexation

The GMA requires counties to designate urban growth areas that include cities and land outside cities characterized by urban growth or adjacent to areas characterized by urban growth. The UGA boundary is a site-specific line separating the area to be annexed and provided with the full range of urban services from rural areas. The City and the land area within the unincorporated UGA are expected to accommodate urban development and population growth throughout the 20-year planning period (see Section IV for more details on the process to determine the population and employment forecasts and UGA boundaries). Bellingham accommodates growth primarily through compact development within the City limits, including infill development and mixed-use urban villages, thereby limiting the need for UGA boundary expansion (see GOAL LU-2). However, many areas outside the City limits are already developed to urban densities and served by City utilities. These areas have been slow to annex largely due to the absence of commercial development (and its associate revenue) and the cost to the City as a whole to meet adopted level of service standards.

Land uses within Bellingham's unincorporated UGA are governed by the Whatcom County Comprehensive plan, zoning and subdivision ordinances, and other development regulations. City development standards are applied to development in the UGA per an Interlocal Agreement adopted by the City and county. Generally, annexation occurs when property owners in a portion of the UGA submit a petition to the City asking for their land to be annexed. In response to a petition, the City Council determines whether the property should be annexed. Since adoption of the 2006 Comprehensive Plan, the City has approved eight annexation petitions, adding about 1,500 acres of land to the City (about an 8% increase in total City acreage). This land includes 1,334 acres zoned for residential development, mostly single family. The City's Annexation Phasing Plan includes a prioritized list of annexation areas.



This property is part of the recently annexed Dewey Valley area.

Much of the unincorporated UGA includes existing urban levels of development due to past policies permitting the extension of City utilities prior to annexation, or development served by independent water and sewer districts (e.g. Geneva, Hillsdale, Marine Drive, etc.). The City now requires annexation prior to the extension of water and sewer facilities. These areas are sometimes difficult to annex because of urban infrastructure and service costs, as well as a lack of interest from property owners. Due to the presence of urban levels of development, it is fitting for these areas to become part of the City; thus, the City intends to examine potential methods for offsetting annexation costs.

GOAL LU-5 Support the Growth Management Act's goal to encourage growth in urban areas.

Policy LU-44 Focus higher-intensity land uses in mixed-use urban villages and transit corridors, thereby maximizing use of existing infrastructure and services (See GOAL LU-2).

Policy LU-45 Provide sufficient land area and densities to meet Bellingham's projected needs for housing, employment and public facilities. Plan to accommodate a total population of 124,157 people and 84,788 jobs in the City of Bellingham and its unincorporated UGA by 2036.

Future 20-year population and employment growth can be accommodated within the existing City limits and UGA boundaries without changes to existing zoning.

Policy LU-46 The following factors should be considered when determining the size and location of Bellingham's UGA:

- State and county rules and requirements, including the 20-year population and employment growth forecasts and logical boundaries;
- Service and infrastructure costs;
- Varied and affordable housing needs;
- Industrial and commercial zoning, with an emphasis on living wage jobs;
- City infill development goals;
- Livable neighborhoods;
- Environmentally-sensitive areas;
- Open spaces;
- A safe and efficient arterial street system and pedestrian, bicycle, and transit connections;
- Transfer of development rights receiving zones; and
- Additional City priorities, goals, and policies.

In a TDR program, landowners sell development rights from their land to developers or other interested parties who use the rights to increase development densities at other designated locations.

Policy LU-47 Retain the designation of the South Yew Street property as a UGA Reserve area and add the South Caitac property as a UGA Reserve area (see map of City, UGA, and UGA Reserves).

Policy LU-48 Coordinate with neighboring special purpose districts and general purpose governments on development projects and long-term plans in the City's unincorporated UGA to provide economical service delivery and review potential cumulative impacts.



Policy LU-49 Apply the City's design, development, infrastructure improvement standards, and environmental regulations in the City's unincorporated UGA.

Policy LU-50 In cooperation with Whatcom County and other appropriate agencies, update the Urban Fringe Subarea Plan and City/County Interlocal Agreement governing annexations and development in Bellingham’s unincorporated UGA. These documents establish development rules for the orderly and compatible transition from rural to urban uses.

Policy LU-51 Develop innovative means of transitioning previously developed unincorporated UGA areas to the City (e.g. local improvement districts or capital facilities funding districts) and determine priority areas for potential annexation.



Homes in the Northern Heights neighborhood are located in the northeast Bellingham UGA.

Policy LU-52 Update the City's Annexation Phasing Plan. In previously developed annexation areas, phased level of service standards may be considered.

Policy LU-53 Annexations should be considered if they:

- Enhance, improve, or maintain the quality of life for Bellingham's residents, businesses and property owners;
- Consider the anticipated costs (e.g. infrastructure and urban services) and revenues associated with future development in the subject annexation area;
- Improve land use compatibility, promote orderly development, and include multi-modal transportation options; and
- Help mitigate issues associated with prior adverse development patterns.

Policy LU-54 Encourage and support annexations of land in Bellingham's unincorporated UGA consistent with the City's ability to provide urban facilities and services such as police, fire, water, and sewer.

Policy LU-55 Prohibit the extension of utilities prior to annexation unless the exceptions outlined in the BMC are met.

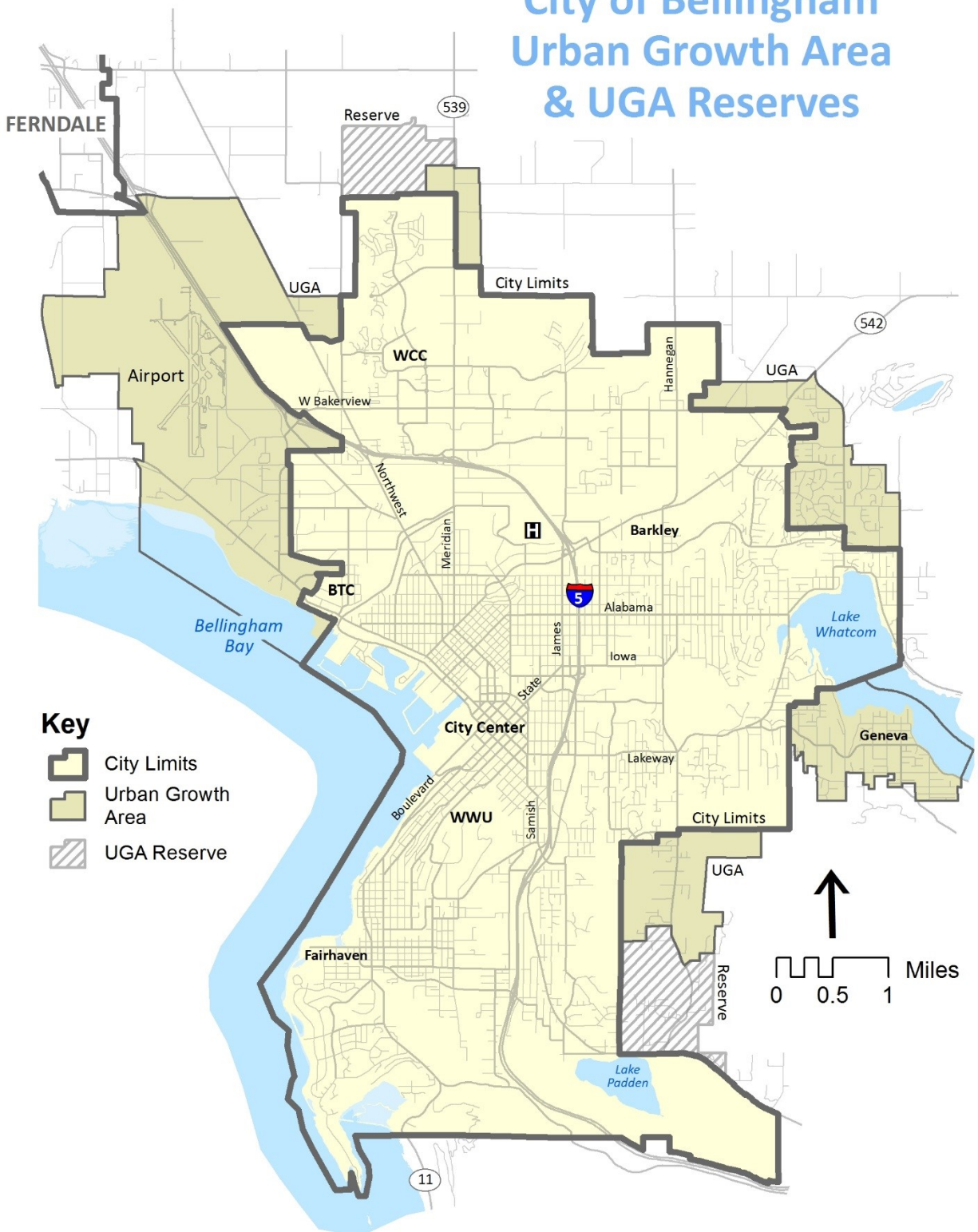
Policy LU-56 Allow new urban development only where the full range of urban facilities and services exists or can be provided.

Policy LU-57 Coordinate with Whatcom County and other appropriate agencies to review and update existing strategies (e.g. TDRs) and develop new tools to discourage development in rural areas outside cities and unincorporated UGAs.

Policy LU-58 Work with the county on a regional growth strategy that preserves land outside the unincorporated UGA for long-term agricultural use, recreation, open space, and other uses consistent with rural character.

- Policy LU-59** Maintain an open space corridor between the Ferndale and Bellingham UGAs. This corridor should include lands useful for recreation, wildlife habitat, trails, and/or connection of critical areas (See Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan for Open Space Map).
- Policy LU-60** Encourage the assembly and redevelopment of key underdeveloped parcels through incentives and public/private partnerships.
- Policy LU-61** Continue using the land supply monitoring program to assess the adequacy and serviceability of the developable land supply for residential, commercial and industrial land uses.
- Policy LU-62** Evaluate all rezone proposals for potential impacts on the available supply of residential, commercial and industrial zoned land.

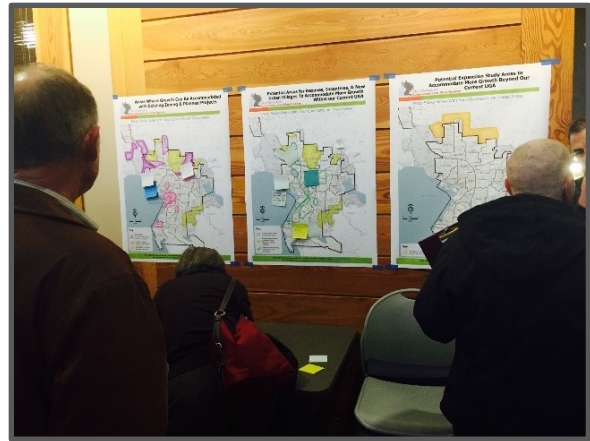
City of Bellingham Urban Growth Area & UGA Reserves



Public Participation

Planning for the 2006 Comprehensive Plan included an extensive public involvement process with dozens of public meetings, open houses in the unincorporated UGA, meetings with neighborhood groups, hearings on the environmental impact statement (EIS), and Planning Commission and City Council hearings and study sessions. One of the highlights of this process was the 2004 community forum on growth management, which engaged over 1,000 citizens to develop the vision, goals and policies for Bellingham's future growth and development. The 2016 update is not an overhaul of the 2006 plan; rather, it builds on the thoroughly vetted visions, goals and policies in the existing plan, incorporating updated and consolidated language where necessary.

In 2014 and 2015, the City engaged the public in the process of developing final recommendations for the population and employment projections and UGA boundaries. Engagement opportunities included an online survey; two open houses; a dedicated discussion forum website (engage.cob.org); a dedicated Comprehensive Plan Update webpage (cob.org/compplan); and numerous group and individual meetings with neighborhoods, nonprofit groups, realtors, developers, and other interested stakeholders. Additionally, four work sessions and one public hearing were held with the Planning Commission, and three work sessions and one public hearing were held with the City Council. Over 100 letters and emails were submitted throughout the process to develop the forecasts and UGA boundaries.



Participants weighed in on growth options at the March 2015 open house.

Numerous Planning Commission and City Council work sessions and public hearings were also held in 2015 and 2016 on the updated Comprehensive Plan chapters. Periodic process updates were sent via email to a list of interested stakeholders. The draft chapters, meeting dates, presentations, public comments, comment trackers, and other information on the process were posted on the Comprehensive Plan update webpage. Approximately 150 comments were submitted between January and October 2016.

GOAL LU-6 Use transparent processes and involve stakeholders in decisions.

Policy LU-63 Encourage active, broad-based citizen participation in the creation of plans, regulations, and development proposals.

Policy LU-64 Develop innovative techniques to reach out to underserved populations and those typically not involved in planning efforts.

Policy LU-65 Support a culture of dialogue and partnership among residents, property owners, the business community, organizations, other interested citizens, and City officials.

Sustainable Land Use

In its broadest sense, sustainability encompasses an integrated set of social, economic and environmental principles that work together to provide a better future for ourselves and future generations. Embedded in this definition is the idea that policies and actions can be crafted that will simultaneously create an equitable society, strong economy and healthy environment. The City's Legacies and Strategic Commitments, which are woven throughout the Comprehensive Plan, serve as the City's sustainability principles. The goals and policies below highlight ways to protect the natural environment through land use decisions and provide guidance on fostering a healthier community.

This section complements the plan's other sustainability goals and policies, including those related to growth primarily within the existing City limits and in areas largely served by existing infrastructure and services, including the City's mixed-use urban villages. This approach reduces the need for additional development further out from the City's existing urban areas, thereby protecting open spaces and agricultural land and reducing dependency on single-occupancy vehicles. Well-designed infill in existing areas also helps balance opportunity and housing choice in every neighborhood.

GOAL LU-7 Protect and restore our community's natural resources (land, water and air) through proactive environmental stewardship.

Policy LU-66 Encourage design flexibility (e.g. clustering and low impact development) to preserve existing site features, including trees, wetlands, streams, natural topography, and similar features.

Low impact development refers to systems and practices that use or mimic natural processes that result in the infiltration, evapotranspiration or use of stormwater in order to protect water quality and associated aquatic habitat.

Policy LU-67 Establish land uses, development densities, impervious surface coverages and stormwater standards that minimize flooding, streambank erosion, and loss of aquatic and other habitat.

Policy LU-68 Through redevelopment opportunities, promote the restoration of streams, creeks and other environmentally-sensitive areas. Improve public access to these sites (when appropriate) and educate the public about their benefits.

Policy LU-69 Promote and encourage the use of sustainability tools and rating systems such as the STAR Community Rating System, Energy Star, LEED and LEED-ND. Explore the effectiveness of these tools in achieving sustainable development practices.



Volunteers helped restore habitat in 2015 as part of the Squalicum Creek re-route project.

Policy LU-70 Identify and strive to preserve scenic vistas of important natural features, such as the Cascade Mountains, Lake Whatcom, Bellingham Bay, Chuckanut Bay, the San Juan Islands and hills, that provide the natural backdrop to the City.

Policy LU-71 Review parking standards to reduce the impacts of parking lots on urban form, pedestrian mobility, and the natural environment. Continue to pursue parking management best practices.

GOAL LU-8 Protect and improve Lake Whatcom and its watershed to ensure a long-term, sustainable supply of water (see Environment Chapter).

Policy LU-72 Continue to designate receiving zones for development rights transferred from the Lake Whatcom Watershed in areas of the City appropriate for higher densities.

Policy LU-73 Continue implementing low impact development techniques in the Lake Whatcom Watershed and encourage LID approaches in new and redevelopment projects elsewhere throughout the City and UGA.

Policy LU-74 Continue working with Whatcom County and other entities to adopt regulations that restrict or prohibit land use practices and activities that cumulatively impact water quality.

Policy LU-75 Continue the Lake Whatcom Watershed Property Acquisition Program.

GOAL LU-9 Preserve historic and cultural resources.

Policy LU-76 Encourage preservation, restoration, and appropriate adaptive reuse of historic properties through code flexibility, fee reductions and other regulatory and financial incentives. Continue to designate and protect historic landmarks.

Policy LU-77 Protect significant archeological resources from the adverse impacts of development.



1303 Astor Street is listed on the National, State and Local Historic Registers.

Policy LU-78 Maintain an ongoing process of identification, documentation, and evaluation of historic properties to guide planning and decision making, as well as to provide reference and research material for use by the community.

Policy LU-79 Create and promote interpretative educational programs and activities about historic and cultural resources through City and nonprofit partnerships.

GOAL LU-10 Foster community connectedness to improve the health of residents.

Policy LU-80 Support implementation of the Whatcom County Community Health Improvement Plan, which is focused on community connectedness and resilience, child and family well-being, healthy active living, and health care access and service delivery (see Housing, Transportation and PRO Plan for additional goals and policies).

A growing body of evidence and best practices increasingly links planning decisions to environments that allow and encourage people to be physically active, eat nutritious food, and live in safe and healthy places.

Policy LU-81 Increase access to healthy food for all Bellingham residents by encouraging and supporting healthy food retail, farmers markets, and small-scale urban farms (e.g. residential and community gardens).

Policy LU-82 Explore incentives and regulatory changes to encourage grocery stores, farmers markets, food carts and other mobile vendors to locate in underserved areas.



The Downtown Farmers Market brings the community together each Saturday during the growing season. Photo by Kenni Merritt.

Policy LU-83 Encourage development patterns that support healthy, affordable food access.

Policy LU-84 Encourage healthy food purveyors, such as grocery stores, farmers markets and community food gardens, to be located near residential areas and public transit.

Policy LU-85 Limit the use of certain restrictive covenants that preclude the use of real property for grocery store operations and sales. Provide exceptions when certain conditions are met.

Policy LU-86 Consider using health impact assessments to assess the potential health impacts of land use and development decisions.

Policy LU-87 Support and encourage informal community gathering places in existing and new neighborhoods.

Policy LU-88 Encourage the integration of arts and culture into public places.

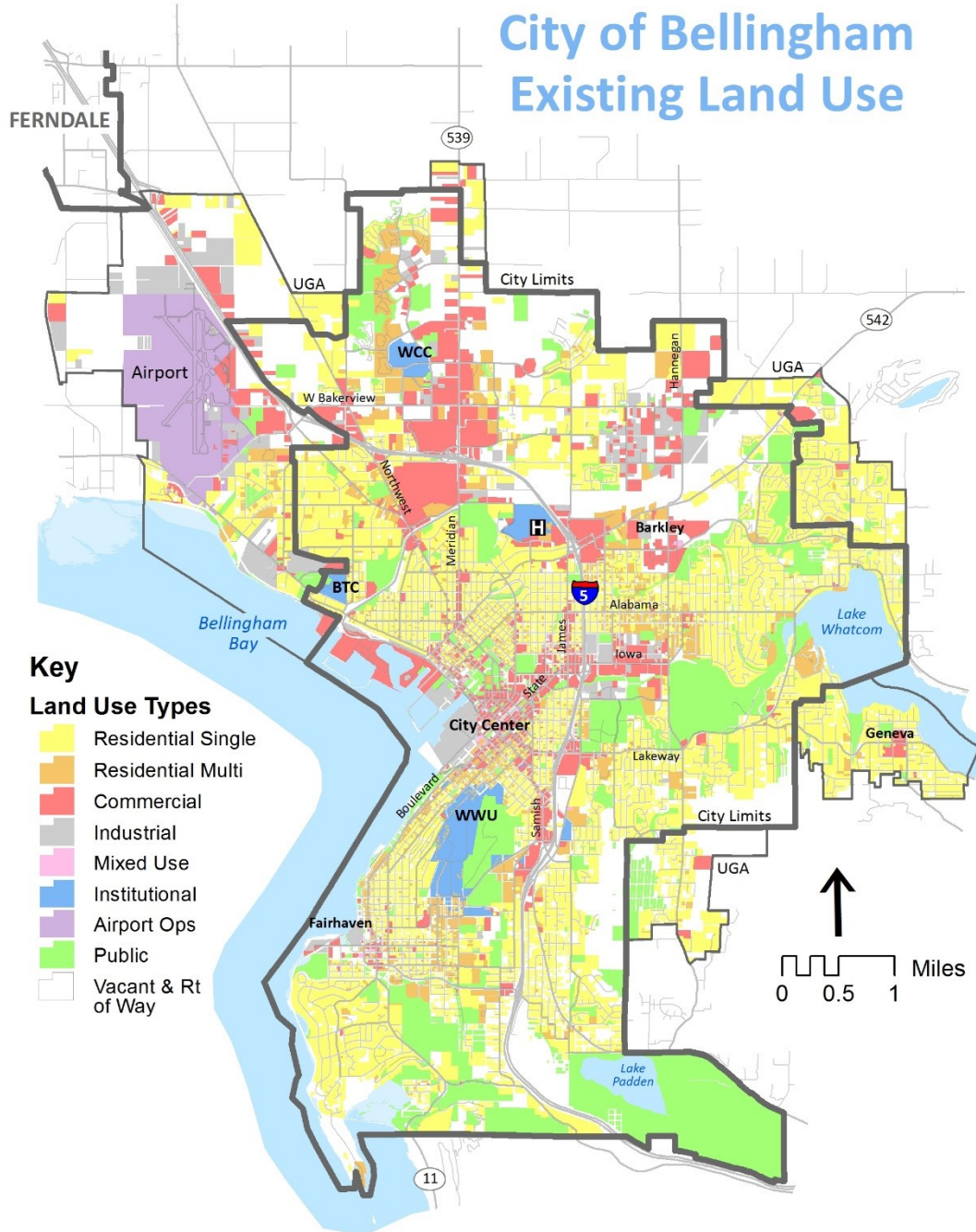
Multigenerational communities promote the well-being of children, youth and older adults, and provide opportunities for mutually beneficial interaction among age groups. Access to quality health and social services is one key element of age-friendly communities.

Policy LU-89 Accommodate the changing needs of residents as they age through considerations such as the design of safe, walkable neighborhoods; the convenient location of senior services; and universal design in building codes.

IV. Supporting Information

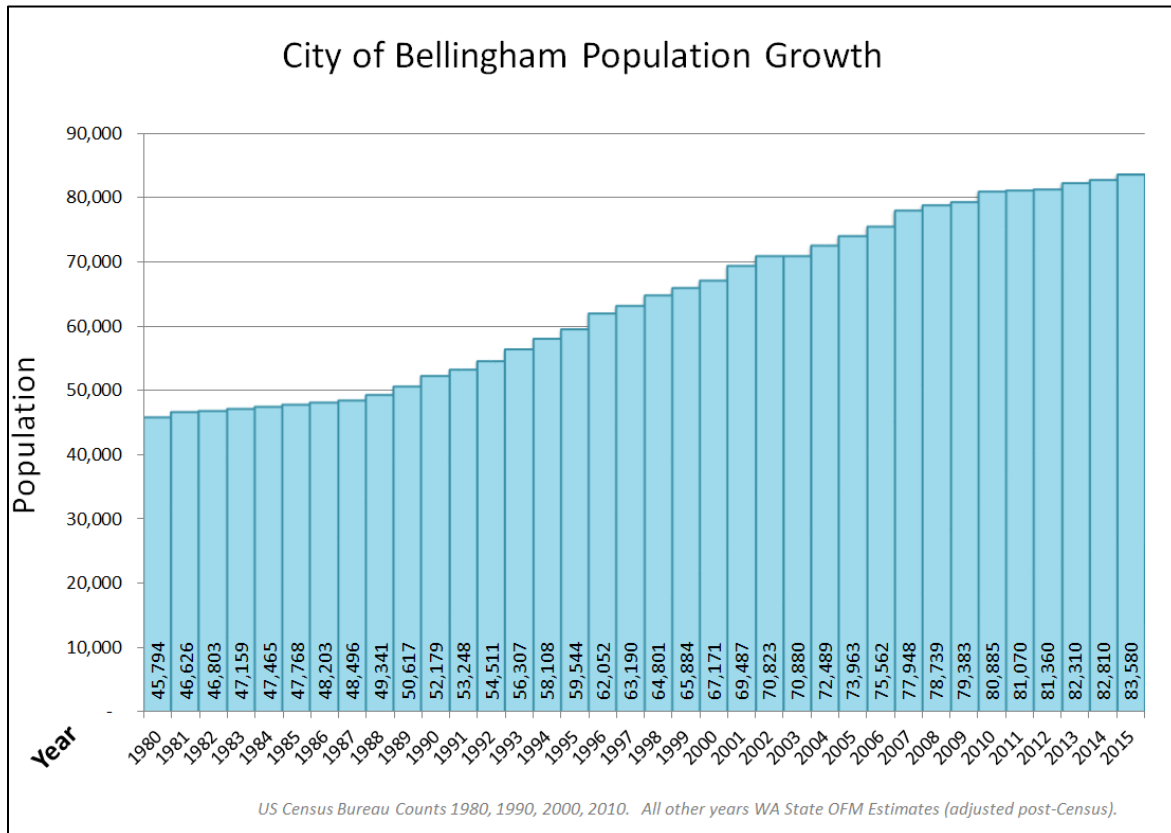
Existing Land Use

In 2015, Bellingham encompassed a total area of 30 square miles, of which 27.8 square miles included land and 2.3 square miles included water (i.e. Bellingham Bay, Lake Whatcom, and Lake Padden). The unincorporated UGA comprised an additional 8.1 square miles of land area.



Population

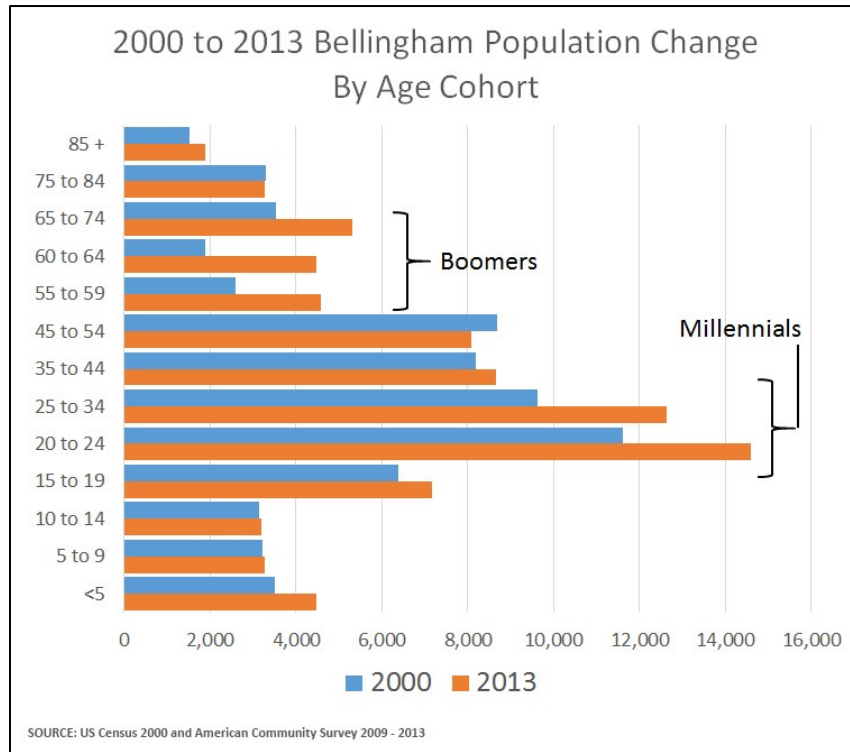
Bellingham's estimated 2015 population was 83,580 people. This is a doubling in population since 1980, with rapid growth through the 1990s and early 2000s (see chart). Growth since 2007 has been slower, but still steady.



The main source of population growth in Bellingham's urban area is in-migration. From 1960 to today, 66% to 75% of the population growth is a result of people moving to Bellingham. The other 25% to 33% of the growth is due to more births than deaths (natural increase).

Demographics

Age - As the "2000 to 2013 Bellingham Population Change by Age Cohort" chart shows, Bellingham and Whatcom County experienced significant growth over the past decade in the 20 to 34 and 55 to 74 age groups. Growth in the 18 to 24 group is primarily due to increased enrollment at the City's university and community colleges (one in five Bellingham residents identified themselves as a college student in the 2010 census). Growth in the 45 to 65 age group represents the aging of the baby boomers and the influx of retirees and others who have flexibility in choosing where they want to live.



Racial Diversity - According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the United States is projected to become a plurality nation by 2044. While the non-Hispanic White alone population will still be the largest, no race or ethnic group is projected to have greater than a 50% share of the nation’s total population. Shifts in the racial and ethnic composition of the future population are projected to occur primarily within the native population, which will become the majority-minority by 2044. The child population within the United States is even more diverse and is projected to experience the majority-minority crossover in 2020, just six years into the future.

Between 2000 and 2010, the proportion of Bellingham’s non-White population increased from 12% to 15%. The largest increase was in the “Asian or Pacific Islander” category, which increased from 4.2% of the total population in 2000 to 5.1% in 2010. People of Hispanic origin increased from 4.6% to 7%. Nearly 13% of persons five years and older speak a language other than English at home. The Bellingham School District reports that 43 different languages are spoken in their schools, with Spanish, Russian and Punjabi as the most common after English.

Households - Bellingham’s average household size was 2.24 persons per household in 2000 and decreased to 2.18 in 2010. This number has been declining for some time and mirrors national trends. Smaller household sizes in Bellingham are likely due to increasing enrollment at the City's three college campuses and increasing numbers of seniors and millennials. College students make up over 20% of the Bellingham's total population, and 70% of Bellingham households have one to two people.

Housing Mix and Tenure - Approximately 44% of the existing housing stock in Bellingham is multi-family. The percentage of multi-family units is likely to continue to increase, as much of the remaining residential land is zoned for multi-family housing. Accordingly, the future demand analysis assumes

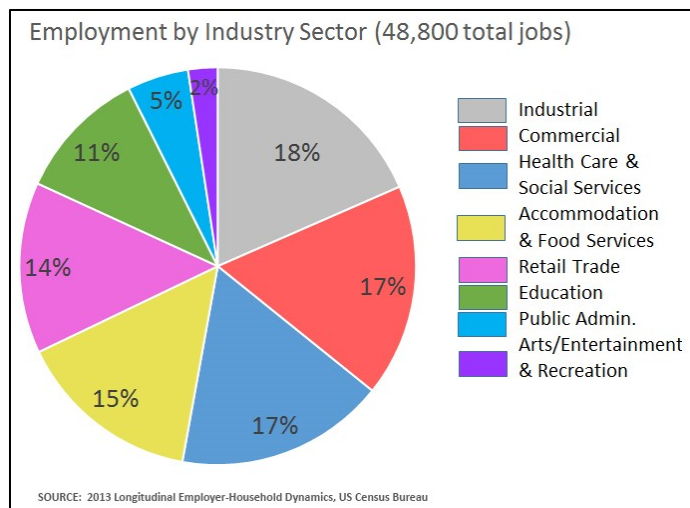
69% of housing growth will be multi-family, resulting in a 2036 mix of 51% multi-family and 49% single-family housing. Since 2000, the percentage of owner-occupied housing units has been decreasing. In 2000, this figure was 48%, while it was 46% in 2013. Renter-occupied housing units comprised 54% of the housing stock in 2013.

College Students - In 2013, the U.S. Census Bureau estimated there were about 17,600 college students in Bellingham (21% of the City's population). Students were split between 93% undergraduate and 7% graduate programs, and about 76% were between the ages of 18 and 24. Enrollment statistics for 2015 from WWU show 15,000 students, of which 90% are from in-state locations. About 75% of the students enrolled at WWU live off campus. Whatcom Community College serves 11,000 part-time students with credit hours equivalent to 4,000 full-time-enrolled (FTE) students. About 570 of these WCC students are part of high school Running Start programs. Bellingham Technical College (BTC) serves 5,500 part-time students with credit-hours equivalent to 2,040 FTE. About 60 of these BTC students are part of high school Running Start programs.

Income - Between 2000 and 2014, Bellingham's median household income increased from \$32,530 to \$42,440. Median family income increased from \$47,196 to \$63,355 during that same time frame. The percentage of individuals at or below poverty level increased from 20.6% to 23.2%. The 2015 Washington State Housing Needs Assessment shows that 20% of Bellingham households are severely cost-burdened, spending more than 50% of their income for housing. Another 18% are cost-burdened, spending more than 30% of their income on housing.

Early experiences and environmental influences can leave a lasting signature on the genetic predispositions that affect emerging brain architecture and long-term health. The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) include abuse or neglect, the death of a parent, parental divorce or separation, witnessing domestic violence, living with someone who has a mental illness or substance abuse problem, and incarceration of a household member. Recently, researchers have proposed adding chronic economic hardship and living in poverty to the list. As the number of ACEs increases, so does the risk for reported lower income, greater unemployment, lowered educational attainment, mental illness, smoking, and early death.

Employment - In 2013, Bellingham and its UGA accommodated 48,800 jobs, or 64% of the total employment in Whatcom County. About 42% of these jobs include workers who also live in Bellingham, while about 58% work in Bellingham, but live elsewhere. About 44% of Bellingham's employed residents commute to other places for work. Employment by industry sector can be seen in the figure at right.

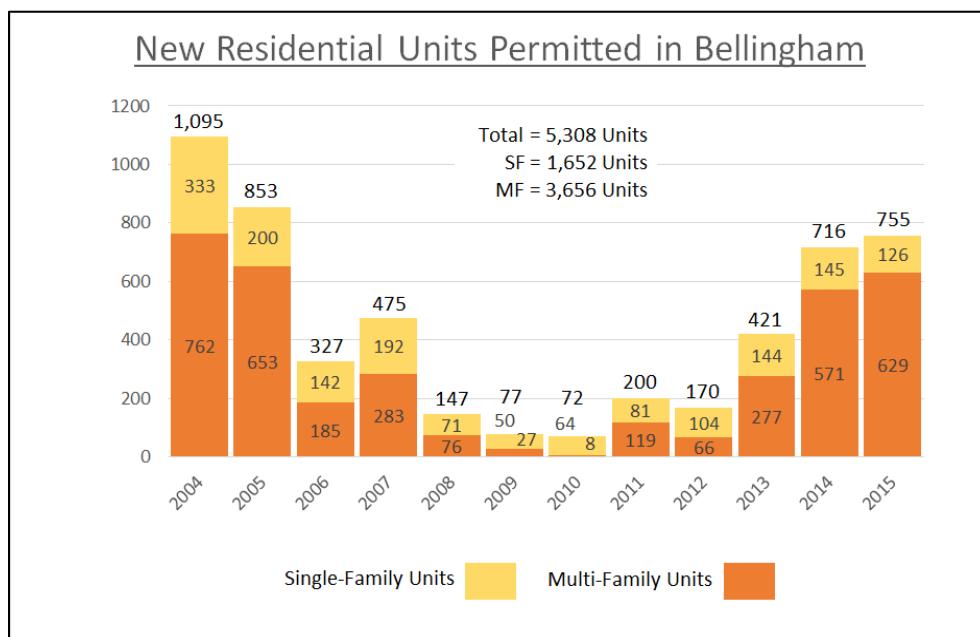


Citywide Development Activity

Bellingham has experienced significant growth throughout the past 10 years. Academic institutions, including WWU, WCC, and BTC, all had significant growth throughout the Recession as a displaced labor force sought training opportunities and

undergraduates pursued affordable, quality education. The St. Joseph's Hospital campus includes a world-class cardiac center and continues to expand its role as the region's primary health services provider. The West Bakerview corridor has seen rapid growth, with over 500 hotel rooms, 400,000 square feet of retail and commercial services, and 350 residential units (with 450 additional units under review). The James/Iowa and Irongate areas have also seen steady light industrial development with a mix of new construction and expansion of existing operations.

After a dip during the Recession, residential building permits are also increasing (see New Residential Units Permitted in Bellingham chart). One hundred seventy units were permitted in 2012, and over 750 permits were issued in 2015. Forty five percent of all housing units built in Bellingham since 2006 were built in urban villages.



Land Capacity and Growth Targets

The GMA requires cities and counties to adopt comprehensive plans and set UGA boundaries to accommodate the 20-year projected population, housing, and job growth. The population growth projections must be within the range provided by the State Office of Financial Management (OFM). Growth forecasts help communities plan future land use, infrastructure and service, school, housing, and parks and open space needs for the projected population.

As a first step in the process, the county and cities hired a consulting firm, BERK, to develop the Whatcom County Population and Employment Projections and UGA Allocations - Phase I Technical Report. This 2013 report included preliminary allocations to UGAs and rural areas primarily based on past growth trends and shares. These figures represented a starting point for public input and discussions by the Planning Commission and City Council. BERK also issued a report titled Background Research on Selected Economic, Demographic, and Housing Trends. The county and cities then issued recommendations to adjust the technical allocations based on county and City goals, public input, infrastructure capacity, land availability, and other factors. This step included

several meetings of the Whatcom Planning Commission, Bellingham Planning Commission, and Bellingham City Council in late 2013 and early 2014.

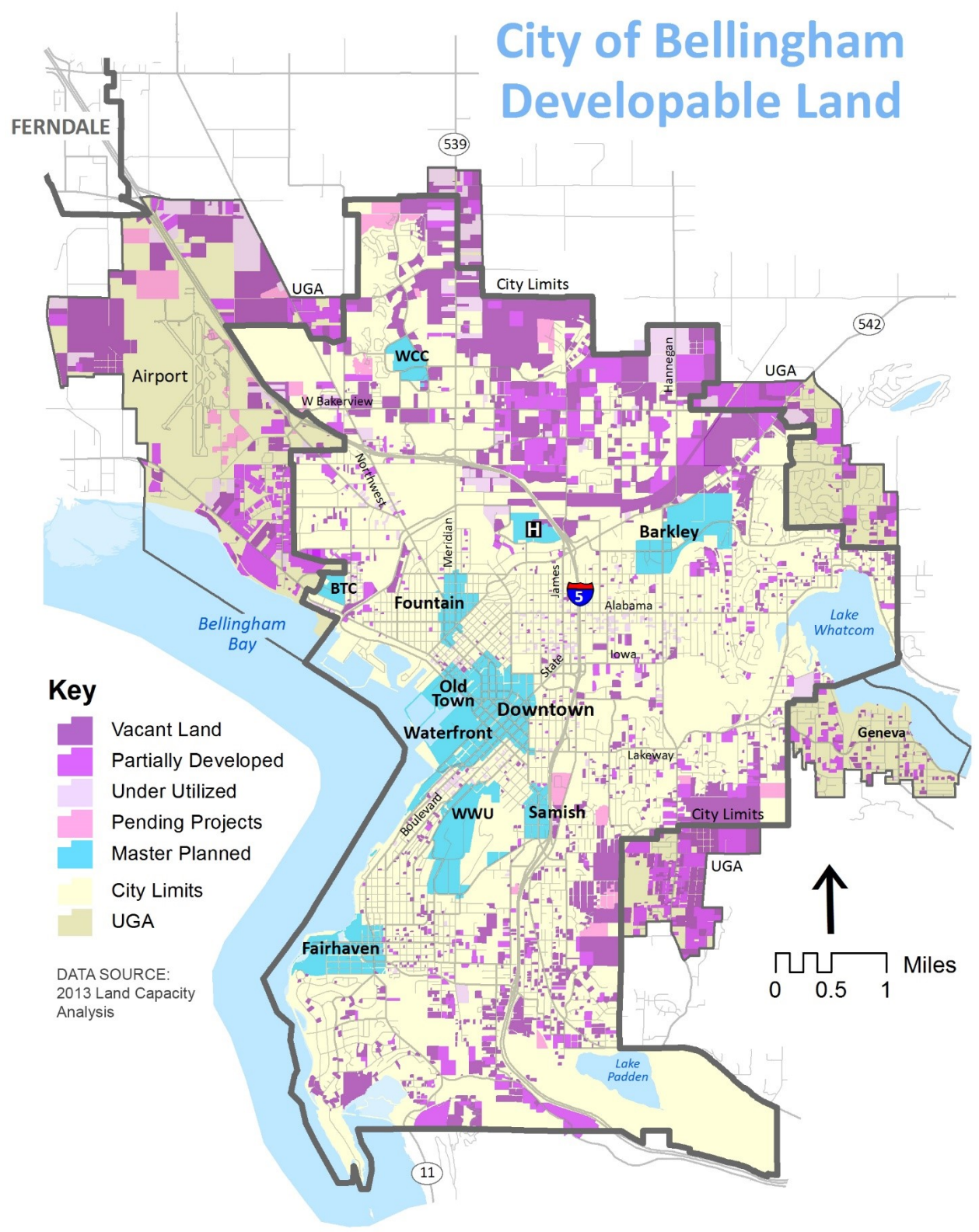
Multi-Jurisdictional Resolution - The next major step included the adoption of preliminary population and employment projections in 2014. The Planning Commission and City Council recommended the high-range population growth forecast of 35,900 people (or 1,562 people per year) and the high-range employment forecast of 22,641 new jobs. The Whatcom County Council concurred with the City's recommendations and included the high-range projections in a non-binding multi-jurisdictional resolution (MJR), which provided preliminary growth allocations for conducting environmental review, further analyzing land capacity, developing draft land use planning proposals, modeling traffic patterns, and formulating draft capital facilities plans for the county and cities within the county. The resolution specifically noted that the allocations were preliminary and subject to change based on subsequent study, review, and input.

Land Capacity Analysis - To evaluate and quantify future housing and employment capacity, the county and cities developed a detailed methodology to use in Whatcom County's Land Capacity Analysis (LCA). The City's input into the process followed the adopted methodology and used parcel-based geographic information system (GIS) data with the best available mid-2013 environmental constraints, ownership, zoning, and infrastructure layers.

The LCA indicates capacity for about 33,006 new people and 27,302 new jobs by 2036. The majority (about 90%) of future housing will be accommodated in existing neighborhoods and urban villages within the City limits, with about 10% accommodated in the unincorporated UGA. Future job growth will be accommodated in urban villages, institutional areas, such as WWU, BTC, WWC, and St. Joseph's Medical Center, as well as through industrial and commercial sites in the northern portion of the City. Downtown is expected to remain the job center for the City and Whatcom County (see Land Capacity Analysis Population, Housing & Jobs Breakout chart and Developable Land map).

Land Capacity Analysis, Population, Housing & Jobs Breakout

Growth Area	2013 Population, Housing & Jobs					Estimated Growth Capacity			Forecast Growth			2036 Forecast Total Population, Housing & Jobs				
	All Housing Units	Single Family Hsg	Multi-Family Hsg	Estim Pop	Estim Jobs	New Housing Units	New Pop	New Jobs	New Housing Units	New Pop	New Jobs	All Housing Units	Single Family Hsg	Multi-Family Hsg	Forecast Total Pop	Forecast Total Jobs
Urban Villages	2,387	602	1,785	8,575	16,549	6,866	11,695	4,740	6,459	11,001	3,930	8,846	986	7,860	19,576	20,479
Other Areas Inside City Limits	34,852	19,209	15,643	73,735	40,736	8,821	18,078	13,400	8,299	17,009	11,113	43,151	23,299	19,852	90,744	51,849
Unincorporated Urban Growth Area	4,218	3,473	745	10,797	4,863	1,436	3,233	9,162	1,351	3,040	7,598	5,569	4,540	1,029	13,837	12,461
Totals	41,457	23,284	18,173	93,107	62,148	17,123	33,006	27,302	16,109	31,050	22,641	57,566	28,825	28,741	124,157	84,789



Areas in the City's unincorporated UGA with some growth potential include those to the northwest, northeast, and southeast of the City limits. Residential growth potential in other areas of the existing unincorporated UGA is limited due to the Lake Whatcom Watershed, Bellingham International Airport, industrial land encumbered by wetlands, and Lummi Tribal Trust land.

The MJR population growth allocation (35,900) exceeds current capacity by about 3,200 people. This shortfall equates to about 1,385 to 1,545 housing units, depending on the mix of single-family and multi-family housing.

Accommodating Growth - As such, the City reviewed potential UGA expansion areas for land suitable for urban levels of residential development. The results indicated that there is very little room for growth outside Bellingham's existing unincorporated UGA. Constraints include Bellingham Bay and the Nooksack River to the west; the Lake Whatcom Watershed and forested foothills to the south and east; and a system of wetlands, low-density rural development, and the Ferndale UGA to the north. Only two areas were identified as potentially appropriate for urban levels of development - the South Caitac property and the South Yew Street UGA Reserve area (see map of City, UGA and UGA Reserves).

Upzones in Bellingham's neighborhoods were not pursued as a means of accommodating additional growth because of the infill capacity already allowed by current zoning and the need to allow time for the adopted urban villages to reach forecasted growth. The LCA shows that the majority of new development will take place in newly designated neighborhoods and existing urban villages without changes to zoning designations. Additional growth capacity exists within potential urban villages that were previously identified but not yet established, along transit corridors connecting urban villages, and in other areas where rezones may be appropriate within the planning period.

Environmental Impact Statement - Also in 2015, the county issued a Draft EIS (DEIS) for the plan, development regulations update, and UGA review. The DEIS describes the existing conditions and identifies probable significant environmental impacts and measures to mitigate these impacts. Four alternatives were studied in the DEIS, addressing a range of population and employment growth levels and patterns.

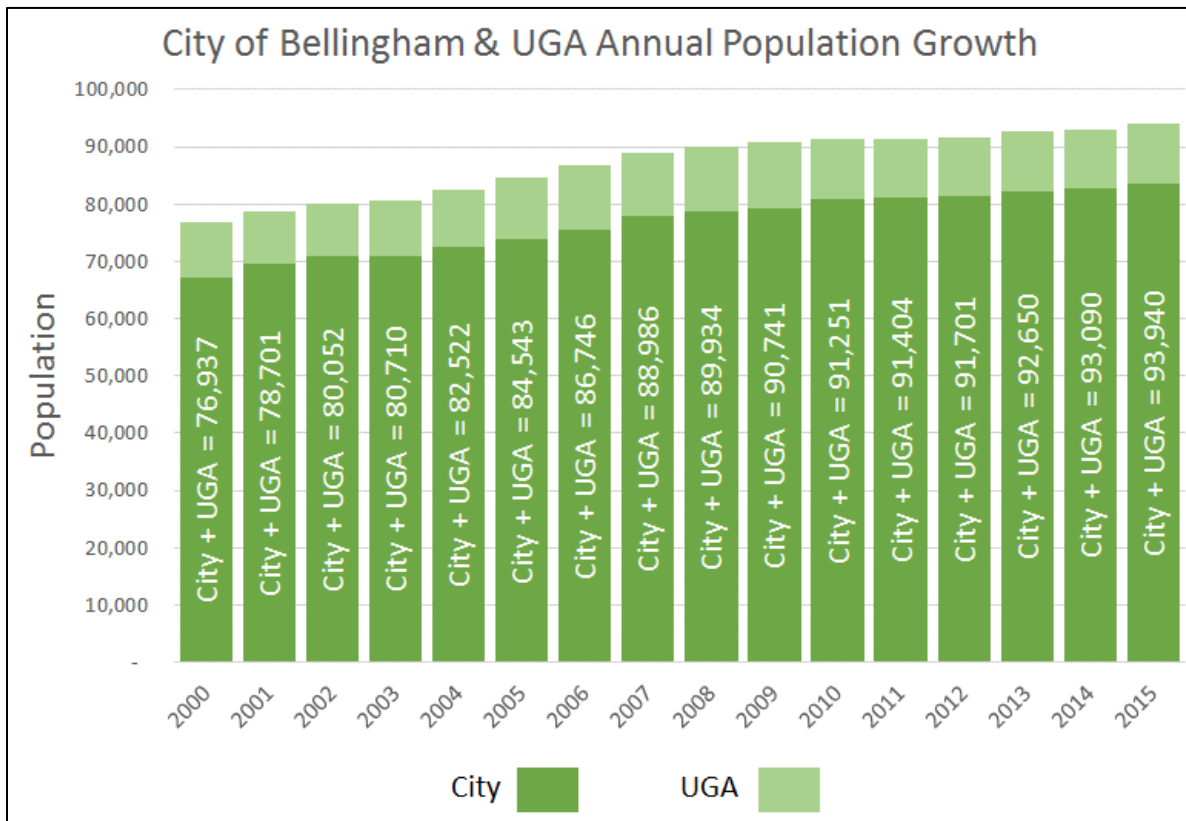
In September 2015, the City Council recommended to the county the mid-range 2036 population forecast of 121,505 people, and high-range employment forecast of 84,788 total jobs.

The Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) indicating the MJR as the preferred alternative was issued in November 2015. With the City's recommended mid-range population forecast, the capacity exceeded the projected growth by approximately 4,280 people (or approximately 15%). As such, the final EIS included a range for Bellingham's 2036 population of 121,505 to 124,157 people. The top of the range includes the existing capacity of the City and unincorporated UGA. To supplement the County's FEIS, the City developed a State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) checklist for non-project proposals, resulting in a Determination of Non-Significance (DNS).

These forecasts do not necessitate upzones of property within the existing City limits or expansion of the City's existing UGA. However, the City did recommend that the South Caitac property be designated as a new UGA Reserve area to protect one of the City's few expansion areas from unsuitable land use patterns that might hinder its ability to accommodate urban development in the

future. The South Yew Street area is recommended to remain in Reserve status (see map of City, UGA and UGA Reserves).

The BERK mid-range 2036 population growth forecast, which is within the range provided by OFM, should be considered the most likely to occur due to the fact that it is the closest to the growth rate of the past 15 years. As such, it represents the least amount of risk (see City of Bellingham and UGA Annual Population Growth chart). It also promotes the City's continued focus on growth within the City limits, including infill and the urban villages, as its main growth strategy and is consistent with recent capital facilities planning and the City's ability to provide the full range of urban services.



The Whatcom County Council adopted Ordinance 2016-034, completing the county's 2016 Comprehensive Plan update and UGA review, on August 9, 2016. The plan includes 2036 figures of 124,157 people and 84,788 jobs for Bellingham. The population projection is slightly higher than the City's recommendation of the mid-range forecast, which would have resulted in a 2036 population of 121,505 people. It also shows no change to Bellingham's UGA boundaries, with the S. Caitac area as a new UGA Reserve and the S. Yew Street area remaining in UGA Reserve status.

Bellingham Comprehensive Plan Community Design Chapter

2016



I. Introduction

Urban design is concerned with the arrangement, appearance, and functionality of the community. It focuses on the shaping and uses of urban public spaces— the public realm—and the way these public places are experienced and used. Architecture and urban form have played a significant role in defining Bellingham’s sense of place within its urban villages, including the downtown core, and neighborhoods.

Carefully planned urban spaces affect the quality of the physical environment and the perception, economic investment, and success of the City. The quality of the built environment is a key factor that affects the local image of Bellingham and sets the stage for economic activity. The City’s cultural identity is an important factor determining why people choose to visit, invest in or relocate here. Well-proportioned public spaces and streets contribute to business visibility, accessibility, and viability. The use of design features, such as appropriately-scaled lighting, street furniture, street trees, and other amenities, can help to define places. An authentic, well-designed urban environment uplifts the community spirit, becomes the stage on which the community conducts its daily life, and helps give identity and meaning to the special places that comprise Bellingham.



The Fairhaven Village Green is lively on a sunny day. Photo by Thomas Calderon.

Building and site design standards have long been discussed in Bellingham. Improvements to existing design standards and guidelines as suggested in this chapter are intended to result in commercial and residential developments that complement or enhance their surroundings, appeal to and accommodate pedestrians, help encourage transit use, and contribute to the economic vitality and perception of the City.

A key objective for the Community Design Chapter is to enhance Bellingham’s sense of place in a manner that reflects the community’s values and its deep connection to the history and traditions that distinguish Bellingham from other cities in the region. Shaping the built environment through high quality urban design requires resources and community consensus. Strong community support and interest exist for preserving and enhancing the City’s historic character while accommodating new growth and change. Good design need not increase the cost of new development; however, the absence of good design can adversely affect the quality of life in a neighborhood, or the commercial success of a commercial district.

Another key objective in this chapter is to promote community design for all ages and abilities, consistent with multigenerational planning principles. By designing for the older population and children, the community is made safer and more accessible for everyone.

Multigenerational planning is a comprehensive approach to community and economic development that enables people of all ages and abilities to lead active and fulfilling lives.

In the future, traditional single-family areas will be complemented by higher-density housing, jobs and services located in a number of urban villages and along high-capacity transit corridors. Urban villages will be linked by corridors that provide transportation choices and help connect residents to

jobs and services. Within and between these places will be green spaces that promote healthy lifestyles. Many of the existing “strip commercial” areas and “big box” retail areas will gradually redevelop into attractive walkable, mixed-use areas.

The purpose of the Community Design Chapter is to provide a framework for shaping the future form and character of Bellingham. This chapter focuses on placemaking and on those physical features which shape the setting for life in the community. It addresses the design of buildings, groups of buildings, spaces and landscapes, open spaces between buildings, streetscapes and other physical features. Policies in this chapter focus on the image and character of the City’s streets, urban villages,



This streetscape along Champion Street includes amenities that make it an extension of nearby businesses.

transit and commercial corridors, and appropriate infill development. They seek to enhance Bellingham’s commercial resources and provide guidance for new growth and redevelopment by strengthening the public realm and the image of the community. Attention is also given to residential neighborhoods and their interface with commercial areas, and historic preservation. The chapter identifies the physical features and spaces desired by the community, and establishes the goals and policies that reflect those desires.

additional element in the Comprehensive Plan. This chapter plays a critical role in maintaining and improving the physical quality of the environments that define the City’s identity and give character to its commercial districts and residential neighborhoods.

The Community Design Chapter is not a required Comprehensive Plan element under state law; however, because of the value Bellingham places on urban design, the City has chosen to include it as an

This chapter has been developed in accordance with the Whatcom County Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs) and is coordinated with the other chapters of the Comprehensive Plan.

These concepts outlined above are further defined under the following eight categories, which form the organizational basis for the goals and policies of this chapter:

- Streets as Places**
- Community Image and Character**
- District and Neighborhood Identity**
- Site and Building Design**
- Urban Villages and Transit Corridors**
- Appropriate Infill Development and Renovations**
- Historic Preservation**
- Public Spaces and Open Space**

The chapter's eight goals mirror the City's Legacies and Strategic Commitments and emphasize the interdependence of the environment, economy and society:

- GOAL CD-1** Promote streetscapes that enhance the economic vitality and overall visual quality of the City, support the circulation network, and support pedestrian-scale streets and patterns of activity.
- GOAL CD-2** Express the City's distinct community identity and sense of place through improvements to the appearance of new development, commercial centers, urban villages, transit corridors and streetscapes.
- GOAL CD-3** Establish and reinforce district and neighborhood characteristics recognized both within the community and throughout the region.
- GOAL CD-4** Provide a well-designed, pedestrian-friendly, and community-oriented environment.
- GOAL CD-5** Ensure that the design and development of urban villages and transit corridors convey a positive image of the district they are located within, contribute to the economic vitality and perception of the City, and improve visual and physical transitions into adjacent neighborhoods.
- GOAL CD-6** Encourage contextually-appropriate infill development projects and property renovations.
- GOAL CD-7** Preserve historic and cultural resources.
- GOAL CD-8** Interconnect parks and natural features by establishing an integrated network of trails, parks and open spaces; maintaining existing trees; and incorporating landscaping into new developments.

II. Goals and Policies

Streets as Places

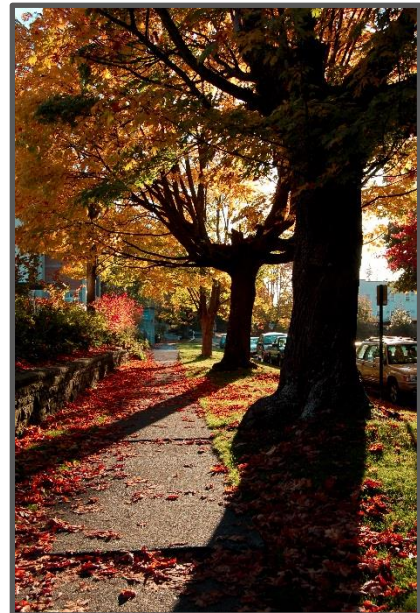
City streets are a major physical component of urban structure and organization. They organize movement from one place to another, providing people with ease, safety, and choice when moving to and through places. City streets also structure how places and uses relate to one other. Major streets serve as gateways to the City and play a key role in expressing the image and character of the City, and of the areas they traverse. Coordinated street landscaping and improvements enhance the character of districts, soften the transition between commercial and residential areas, and create impressions and experiences for Bellingham residents and visitors. See the Transportation Chapter for more information.

GOAL CD-1 Promote streetscapes that enhance the economic vitality and overall visual quality of the City, support the circulation network, and support pedestrian-scale streets and patterns of activity.

Policy CD-1 Enhance the streetscapes along the City's major commercial corridors and other major streets through coordinated public and private improvements to convey a positive image of the district they are located within, contribute to its economic vitality and perception of the City, and improve visual and physical transitions into adjacent neighborhoods.

Policy CD-2 Ensure that land use, fire, and street standards are coordinated to provide greater pedestrian comfort and safety and more attractive alternative modes of transportation. Implementation strategies include:

- Discourage cul-de-sacs where topography allows and encourage well-connected streets in new and existing neighborhoods.
- Connect missing links within the Citywide multimodal transportation network for all modes of transportation, including pedestrians, bicycles, transit, freight trucks, and automobiles.
- Implement street calming measures in street designs to improve speed limit observance.
- Where possible, install physical buffers between the sidewalk and traffic such as site-appropriate street trees and landscaping, street furniture, rain gardens or other low impact development techniques, and on-street parking.
- Orient new development to streets, and effectively frame in the streetscape.
- Encourage commercial activities such as sidewalk retail and outdoor dining.
- Restrict parking to the side or rear of development, or within a structure.



Sidewalk separated from roadway with street trees and on-street parking along Garden Street. Photo by Jane Gershovich.

- Consider allowing on-street parking to count toward off-street requirements in selected mixed-use areas to encourage compact, pedestrian-oriented development and to lessen the size and impacts of large parking lots.
- Encourage the use of alleys for vehicle access and utility installation.
- Coordinate placement of physical features between streets and buildings to accommodate staging areas for emergency response vehicles, including aerial apparatus.
- Prioritize implementation of the above in designated urban villages as outlined in the Land Use Chapter.

Policy CD-3 Coordinate with local utility providers to identify priority areas for undergrounding or relocating overhead electrical and telephone/cable wires to remove visual clutter of existing infrastructure.

Policy CD-4 Install noise buffering in residential, commercial, and industrial development proposals adjacent to Interstate-5. This may include landscaping, berming, sound walls and other methods.

Community Image and Character

At a Citywide level, programs and improvements will be pursued to improve the visual character throughout Bellingham in order to enhance the economic vitality and overall visual quality of the community. The following goals and policies address this desired enhancement of character and identity.

GOAL CD-2 Express the City's distinct community identity and sense of place through improvements to the appearance of new development, commercial centers, urban villages, transit corridors and streetscapes.

Policy CD-5 Promote community identity through streetscape enhancements, building designs, and treatments marking the primary entrances, or gateways, to the City.

Policy CD-6 Strengthen the urban form of the City's urban villages and commercial, industrial, and institutional districts by building on the character of the existing historical and architectural fabric of the community, while allowing for the addition of complementary new development and urban design elements.

Policy CD-7 Ensure that new development is of a type, scale, orientation, and design that maintains or improves the character, aesthetics, and livability of neighborhoods. While compatibility is more of an issue in established neighborhoods, new development needs to take into account the context of the area and should result in an improvement to the surrounding neighborhood.

Policy CD-8 Discourage future extension of linear auto-oriented commercial development along rights-of-way in areas already developed. Existing auto-oriented strip commercial areas should be converted to support and contribute to walkable, mixed-use areas wherever possible.

Policy CD-9 Support public and private investment in improved infrastructure and amenities in existing neighborhoods, particularly in areas with high concentrations of low-income housing.

Policy CD-10 Encourage property owners to maintain their properties to help beautify their neighborhoods, including improvement of parking areas through the addition of landscaping, trees, boundary definition, and other enhancements.

Policy CD-11 Encourage the incorporation of public art features with new development.

Policy CD-12 Periodically review and update the City's zoning regulations, design standards and design review process to ensure they promote quality development and result in projects that consider and complement existing neighborhoods. Specific recommendations include:

- Consider establishing building height and bulk rules for all areas of the City as part of defining the “character” of each area. Impacts on views from identified public spaces should be among the factors considered when establishing height limits.
- Explore the use of form-based codes, incentive zoning and similar regulatory means that may serve well to implement Comprehensive Plan policies related to general land use; building, site and sustainable design; multimodal transportation; environmental protection; and public services and amenities.
- Require the installation and maintenance of adequate landscaping and screening in commercial, industrial and multi-family (including duplex) projects.
- Prohibit invasive species in required landscaping and encourage native plant species whenever possible.
- Allow open space to be satisfied with innovative and flexible applications of landscaping in denser development, including green walls and roofs and more



Statue on Holly Street in downtown Bellingham. Photo by Carol Sheppard.

Form-based codes consist of land development regulations that foster predictable built results and a high-quality public realm by using physical form (rather than separation of uses) as the organizing principle for the codes. They are useful for creating more walkable and adaptable environments.

Incentive zoning consists of a rewards-based regulatory system that is intended to encourage development that meets established urban development goals.

intense landscaping of smaller open spaces, to allow more efficient use of the land for buildings.

- Review auto parking standards to reduce the impacts of parking on urban form, adjacent uses, housing affordability, pedestrian mobility, and the natural environment. Continue to pursue parking management best practices.
- Adopt long- and short-term bike parking requirements.

Policy CD-13 Review and update the City's sign standards to:

- Encourage signs to be complementary in scale to the building architecture and site design.
- Discourage multiple or large signs that clutter, distract, or dominate the streetscape of commercial areas.
- Encourage replacement of pole signs with context-sensitive monument and building signs, and prohibit new pole signs.
- Encourage the consolidation of signs on a single structure where a commercial development includes multiple businesses.
- Encourage signs on multi-tenant buildings to be complementary in size and style for all commercial and mixed-use zones.
- Discourage signs that are distracting to drivers.
- Continue to ensure that there will be no increase in the existing number of billboard signs allowed in the City or in the urban growth area (UGA) as of the date of adoption of this plan, and consider amortization of existing billboards.
- Use design review for new signs to protect views of significant land forms and community features, avoid visual clutter, and ensure Citywide design standards are met.



A downtown business includes attractive signage and pedestrian-scale sidewalk amenities.

Policy CD-14 Provide builders, developers and architects with a set of clear objectives and performance goals which promote the highest attainable standard of quality consistent with economic feasibility for new development.

District and Neighborhood Identity

Bellingham's numerous distinctive residential neighborhoods and commercial districts contribute to the City's identity. However, the interface between these residential and commercial areas in Bellingham presents special challenges. The following goal and policies describe the City's strategies to enhance district and neighborhood identity and the transition between commercial and residential areas through urban design.

GOAL CD-3 Establish and reinforce district and neighborhood characteristics recognized both within the community and throughout the region.

Policy CD-15 Establish appropriate transitions between commercial, industrial, higher-density residential, mixed-use development, and lower-density residential areas. Consider methods such as architectural techniques, landscaped buffers, or transitional uses such as plazas and pedestrian-scale offices, retail, services and live/work units.

Policy CD-16 Encourage the use of creative landscape designs to visually define districts and reduce conflicts between residential and commercial land uses.

Policy CD-17 Create an attractive, walkable environment within and between commercial districts and neighborhoods through careful site planning, architectural design, and pedestrian amenities such as sidewalks, benches, pedestrian-scaled lighting, and other street furniture.



Live/work units on Ellis Street.

Policy CD-18 Encourage development of public spaces and plazas within commercial, mixed-use and residential projects that can accommodate civic events and function as community gathering areas.

Policy CD-19 Foster placemaking by reinforcing key design themes in building facades, public spaces, streetscapes and other built elements within the visual public realm to create a sense of place and inspire a greater sense of community pride and ownership.

Site and Building Design

There is a high expectation for quality design in Bellingham, and a set of adopted design standards provides local guidance. Urban village, multi-family, and many commercial and institutional projects receive a higher level of scrutiny than single-family homes. Many projects are evaluated by a design review board. Some projects with nominal impacts are reviewed at an administrative level using the adopted design standards.

GOAL CD-4 Provide a well-designed, pedestrian-friendly, and community-oriented environment.

Policy CD-20 Encourage high-quality and attractive design that promotes variety between different developments and different areas in Bellingham to maintain and create a sense of place.



Creative architecture on Railroad Avenue in downtown Bellingham.

Policy CD-21 Maintain a system of design review that applies more intense levels of review where the scope of the project has greater potential impacts to the community. Implement this system through a formal design review board process in conjunction with administrative review.

Policy CD-22 Use design standards and design review to accomplish the following:

- Retain and create places and structures in the City that have unique features.
- Ensure elements of design, proportion, rhythm, scale and massing are appropriate for proposed structures and sites and contextually compatible with surrounding development.
- Maintain the integrity of zones with unique or historic qualities such as Fairhaven.
- Encourage the use of high-quality and durable materials, as well as innovative building techniques and designs.
- Promote environmentally-friendly design and building techniques and rating systems such as Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED).
- Encourage the use of low impact development practices where feasible.
- Minimize negative impacts such as excessive lighting and glare and unsightly views of parking.
- Provide reasonable solar access and privacy to adjacent property.
- Consolidate on-site landscaped areas to be large enough to balance the scale of development and functional enough for leisure and recreation.
- Encourage native plant species whenever possible and concentrated seasonal planting in highly visible public and semi-public areas.
- Where feasible, preserve significant trees and mature vegetation.



Walkway with pedestrian amenities in Fairhaven.
Photo by Jacqueline Stambaugh.

Policy CD-23 Design and build Bellingham’s public buildings using best practices in sustainable design and high-quality materials to serve as models for the community.

Policy CD-24 Provide adequate resources to ensure that conditions of approval placed on development projects are monitored and enforced.

The National Crime Prevention Institute endorses a set of guidelines called Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED). CPTED is based on the theory that the proper design and effective use of the built environment can lead to a reduction in the incidence and fear of crime and an improvement in the quality of life. The CPTED concept packages quality planning and design standards into a development tool that supports public safety. If a project is designed with safety in mind and operated with CPTED principles, the likelihood of undesirable behavior or property damage may be reduced.

Policy CD-25 Apply CPTED principles in the review process for development proposals.

Urban Villages and Transit Corridors

The City's primary growth strategy is to accommodate future growth and development through a system of compact, walkable urban villages (or centers) that are connected by transit corridors. Their coordinated development will provide a vibrant mix of housing, employment, services and other uses, as well as convenient and affordable transportation options. Key to their success are master plans (where appropriate) and development and design standards that result in development that is transit supportive, pedestrian-oriented, and bicycle friendly. An objective of this infill strategy is to take development pressure off existing single-family neighborhoods to preserve their continuity.

Growth in urban villages and along transit corridors should benefit all people by increasing economic development and access to jobs, expanding housing and transportation choices, promoting neighborhood character and vitality, and improving public health and environmental quality. Buildings should respond to their context, including nearby buildings, the network of public streets and sidewalks, and natural areas to create a lively and comfortable human environment that builds on Bellingham's urban character.

More information on urban villages and transit corridors can be found in the Land Use and Transportation Chapters, including a map of existing and proposed urban villages.

Since adoption of the 2006 Comprehensive Plan, master plans, design standards, and regulations have been developed for six urban villages - the Downtown, Waterfront, Fairhaven, Fountain, Samish Way, and Old Town Districts. These villages are part of a larger "centers and corridors" planning approach that links mixed-use centers of activity through vibrant, high-frequency transit corridors. As implementation of these urban villages progresses, planning work can begin on certain transit corridors that connect them. A formal urban village plan has not been adopted for the Barkley urban village, but it functions as an urban village in many ways and is identified as an urban development center in the Barkley Neighborhood Plan.

GOAL CD-5 Ensure that the design and development of urban villages and transit corridors convey a positive image of the district they are located within, contribute to the economic vitality and perception of the City, and improve visual and physical transitions into adjacent neighborhoods.

Policy CD-26 Successfully integrate mixed-use development within urban villages and along certain high-capacity transit corridors linking urban villages as outlined in the Land Use and Transportation Chapters, providing residents with shopping and employment within walking distance.

Policy CD-27 Continue to develop and implement plans, programs, and regulations that incentivize higher-density TOD along certain WTA high-frequency transit routes as outlined in the Transportation Chapter.



Mixed-use development on State Street, a WTA high-frequency transit route.

Policy CD-28 Ensure development within urban villages and along transit corridors is compatible with the scale and character of the surrounding neighborhood.

Policy CD-29 Design urban villages and transit corridors to promote reduced dependency on automobiles and provide opportunities for increased pedestrian, bicycle, and public transit access.

Policy CD-30 Ensure that Bellingham's City Center (i.e. Downtown, Waterfront and Old Town) is unique, attractive, and reflects Bellingham's history and natural setting. The bulk and mass of downtown buildings should be recognized as a positive aspect of urban design.

***Bellingham's City Center.** For more information, see the Downtown Bellingham Plan, Waterfront Master Plan, Old Town Subarea Plan, City Center Neighborhood Plan, and City Center Implementation Strategy.*

Appropriate Infill Development and Renovations

Many of Bellingham's older residential and commercial areas are experiencing infill development and redevelopment. At the same time, aging structures in these areas require exterior renovations. Many of these same neighborhoods include some of Bellingham's most affordable homes. It is important to maintain and improve existing housing, so that it doesn't fall into disrepair, making it attractive for demolition and replacement with more expensive housing. The following goals and policies outline the City's preferred strategy to address infill development and exterior renovations in a manner that is sensitive to the context established by surrounding development.

GOAL CD-6 Encourage contextually-appropriate infill development projects and property renovations.

Policy CD-31 Ensure that new infill development contributes positively to the quality of the surrounding corridor or neighborhood, including the potential to provide additional opportunities for parks and other public spaces that are proportionate to the scale and impact of the subject project.

Policy CD-32 Provide development standards that are adaptable to a variety of conditions to allow for diversity in building styles within districts and neighborhoods.

Policy CD-33 Encourage the construction of innovative small-scale housing types that fit the context of single-family neighborhoods such as accessory dwelling units, cottage housing, cohousing, townhomes, zero lot line homes, and small lot housing.



Matthei Place, comprised of 14 single-family homes in the Happy Valley neighborhood, provides affordable homes for first-time homebuyers.

Policy CD-34 Emphasize pedestrian-oriented development that includes building facades that relate to the street and clear pedestrian entries.

Policy CD-35 Allow flexible setback, parking and lot coverage requirements in older neighborhoods with established lots, so that infill housing can conform to the existing neighborhood structures. In established neighborhoods, for example, new buildings should be the same distance from the street as neighboring buildings.

Policy CD-36 Allow lot coverage and density bonuses for multi-unit structures which, through superior design, lessen the appearance of obtrusive height, bulk and parking.

Policy CD-37 Discourage developments with “snout houses” that contain a series of garages that dominate the streetscape.

Policy CD-38 Promote the maintenance and improvement of existing housing stock.

Historic Preservation

Historic resources connect the community with its past, providing a sense of continuity and permanence. Recognizing and preserving historic resources are essential to the long-term maintenance of the City’s character. The community is committed to identifying, maintaining, renovating, and reusing buildings and sites important to its history. These resources may represent architectural styles or development patterns such as small lots typical of specific periods in the past. They may also represent places associated with notable historic persons or important events.

A significant number of historic resources in Bellingham have already been identified and mapped. As of 2015, the City had 39 buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places, two buildings and one barn listed on the Washington State Heritage Register, and 25 buildings listed on the Bellingham Local Register of Historic Places. Bellingham also has eight National Historic Districts, seven of which are primarily residential in character. The Downtown Bellingham National Historic District is primarily commercial, but also has residential units within its boundaries.

Historic resources enhance Bellingham's sense of place. These unique historic and heritage resources should become a key element in the urban design of the Downtown and Fairhaven Districts and the older neighborhoods surrounding them, so that they will remain an integral part of the experience of living in this community.

Additional policies related to historic preservation can be found in the Land Use and Housing Chapters.

GOAL CD-7 Preserve historic and cultural resources.

Policy CD-39 Encourage and assist historically-distinct commercial districts such as the Fairhaven, Old Town, and Fountain Districts to retain their unique identities and qualities as they grow and change.

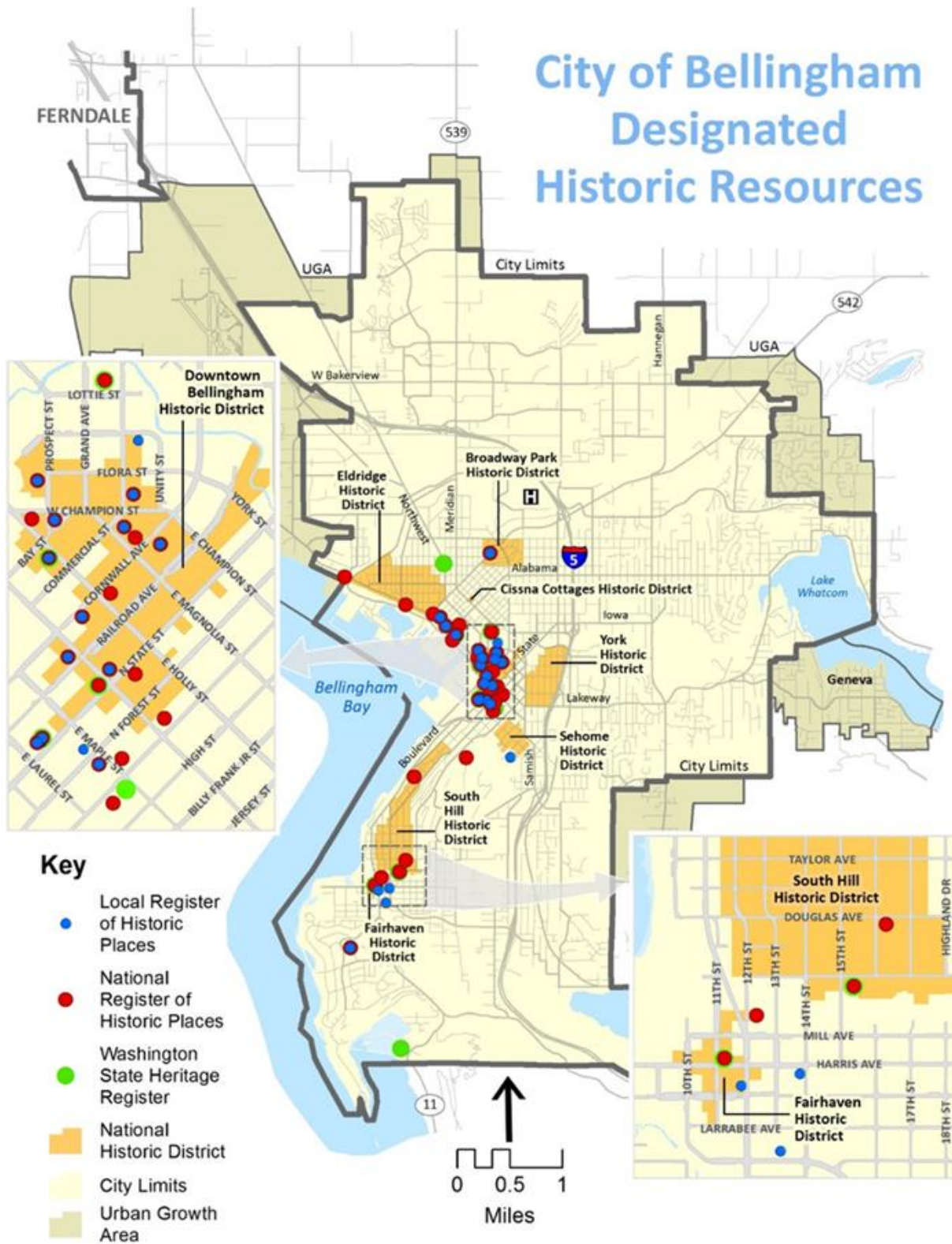
Policy CD-40 Encourage preservation, restoration, and appropriate adaptive reuse of historic properties through code flexibility, fee reductions and other regulatory and financial incentives.

Policy CD-41 Refine and expand existing information on historic resources and significant landmarks in the City to create a more comprehensive historic resources inventory.

Policy CD-42 Incorporate features, such as interpretive signage, historic street names and other elements reflecting original historic structures and sites, into parks and transportation projects and buildings located on historic sites, when feasible, as a means of commemorating past events, persons of note and City history.



The Gamwell House at 1001 16th Street on South Hill is listed on the National Historic Register.
Photo by Margaret Ziegler.



Public Spaces and Open Space

The Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan (PRO Plan) element of the Comprehensive Plan elaborates on the value of providing, preserving, and maintaining open spaces and greenbelts throughout the community for recreational and wildlife habitat benefits. This section focuses on the community design of these areas, particularly when they are provided in conjunction with private development. Publicly-accessible open spaces in high-density areas are valuable amenities to those who work and live here. The best public spaces appeal to all people, regardless of age, ability, income level, or ethnicity.

GOAL CD-8 Interconnect parks and natural features by establishing an integrated network of trails, parks and open spaces; maintaining existing trees; and incorporating landscaping into new developments. (See the Environment Chapter and PRO Plan for more information).

Policy CD-43 Preserve, encourage, and enhance open space as a key element of the community's character through parks, trails, water features, and other significant properties that provide public benefit.

Policy CD-44 Provide public spaces of various sizes and types, including informal gathering places, throughout the community.



Policy CD-45 Provide incentives to create neighborhood parks, green spaces, and other public or private open spaces throughout the City, particularly within commercial areas, urban villages, and transit corridors.

Policy CD-46 Require developers to provide and maintain publicly-accessible, privately-maintained open spaces (e.g. neighborhood pocket parks and plazas) that are proportionate to the scale and impact of the subject project in commercial zones.

Policy CD-47 Consistent with the Environment Chapter and PRO Plan, require or incentivize the connection and linkage of parks, neighborhood greenways, trails, open spaces and greenbelts in new development and redevelopment projects.

Policy CD-48 Encourage land uses that promote and allow public access to and along the Bellingham waterfront.

Policy CD-49 Design public spaces to provide amenities and facilities such as seating, lighting, landscaping, and connections to surrounding uses. Encourage activities in these spaces that contribute to a sense of security.

Policy CD-50 Encourage the integration of arts and culture into public improvements.

Policy CD-51 Encourage the use of native plantings throughout the City.

Policy CD-52 Identify and strive to preserve scenic vistas of important natural features such as the Cascade Mountains, Lake Whatcom, Bellingham Bay, Chuckanut Bay, the San Juan Islands and hills that provide the natural backdrop to the City.



Bellingham Bay, the San Juan Islands and the surrounding foothills can be viewed from many locations throughout the City.

Bellingham Comprehensive Plan Housing Chapter

2016



I. Introduction

The Housing Chapter provides a framework for promoting a diverse housing supply, protecting and improving the health and livability of the City's neighborhoods, and making adequate provisions for the current and projected housing needs of all economic segments of the community. The City must foster housing that is affordable to those at all income levels - from those who are homeless, to low-income and workforce families, and those earning higher wages.

Housing demand is largely driven by economic conditions and demographics. Demographic characteristics influence market demand with regard to the number of households; household size, make-up and tenure (owner v. renter); and preference for styles and amenities. In Bellingham, the student, millennial, and older populations are on the rise. The City is also experiencing a decrease in household sizes and an increase in more diverse populations.



New townhomes on Peabody Street. Some units include an attached accessory dwelling unit.

The community's student population is nearly double the size of this sector in the rest of the county, impacting the local housing market in terms of rental costs and conversion of single-family homes to multi-family units. Recent college graduates (the millennial generation, or those ages 18-34 in 2015) create a strong and growing demand for living in urban places. Location in neighborhoods with convenient amenities and transportation options seems to be a higher priority for this generation than housing type.

According to the U. S. Census Bureau (April 2016), millennials have surpassed baby boomers (those ages 51-69) as the nation's largest living generation.

However, boomers will still have a strong presence throughout the 20-year planning horizon. 2015 population estimates are 75.4 million millennials and 74.9 million baby boomers. As boomers age, they typically stay in the home in which they currently reside. Those who move are likely to downsize to a smaller single-family home or multi-family unit, including condominiums, townhomes or apartments.

Economic changes associated with the Great Recession have also influenced the local and national markets, reducing opportunities for homeownership and eroding rental housing affordability. Between 2010 and 2016, housing prices nearly rebounded and the number of foreclosures slowed; however, recovery has not come to all families. Low-income families are more likely than those with higher incomes to face housing instability. Across three indicators of housing stability (housing affordability, the foreclosure crisis and homelessness), not only were low-income families hit the hardest during the Great Recession, but they have also recovered the slowest (or have not recovered at all) and continue to struggle.

"Middle" housing includes a range of multi-unit or clustered housing types compatible in scale with single-family homes that help meet the growing demand for walkable urban living.

Housing types such as small lot homes, accessory dwelling units (ADUs) and "middle" housing types (e.g. duplexes, triplexes, townhomes, and live-work units) provide options and greater

affordability for many sectors of the community, including smaller households, students, millennials, boomers, and low-income families.

Concern over housing costs and adequate housing options is a nationwide issue. Solving housing challenges for Bellingham requires a concerted effort from both the public and private sectors. The City is committed to its key responsibilities:

- Providing an adequate land supply to accommodate future growth;
- Fostering housing preservation and improvement;
- Ensuring a mix of housing options;
- Providing infrastructure and public services;
- Offering financial and other incentives (e.g. streamlined review processes);
- Coordinating and supporting agencies that provide housing and services;
- Monitoring the housing affordability gap; and
- Implementing the Home Fund (2012 Housing Levy).

Bellingham accommodates growth primarily through compact development within the City limits, including infill development in areas served by existing infrastructure and services, and mixed-use urban villages and transit corridors (see Land Use Chapter and Supporting Information section of this chapter). No upzones or urban growth area (UGA) boundary expansions are needed to accommodate the 20-year population forecast. Not only does this strategy further the community's goal of vibrant, compact neighborhoods, but it also aligns with the Growth Management Act's (GMA) charge of directing growth to urban areas. Public costs to serve greenfield development can be more than double that of the same services closer to the city center, impacting the amount of resources available for investments in existing areas. Low-density development away from the center can also result in higher household transportation costs and impacts to air quality due to greater reliance on automobiles for daily tasks.



The Shannon Building in Fairhaven is a mixed-used building with market rate housing.

This chapter has been developed in accordance with the Whatcom County Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs) and is coordinated with the City's Consolidated Plan and the other chapters of the Comprehensive Plan. Both the Growth Management Act and CPPs encourage the use of innovative techniques to meet the housing needs of all economic segments of the population and require that the City provide opportunities for a range of housing types. The Consolidated Plan includes several housing and community development goals such as working to end homelessness, supporting equitable investment in public facilities and improvements, and assisting the housing and service needs of the elderly.

These concepts are further defined under the following four categories, which form the organizational basis for the goals and policies of this chapter:

Housing Choices and Supply
Housing Affordability
Neighborhood Vitality and Character
Special Housing Needs and Homelessness

The chapter's four goals mirror the City's Legacies and Strategic Commitments and emphasize the interdependence of the environment, economy and society:

- GOAL H-1 Ensure that Bellingham has a sufficient quantity and variety of housing types and densities to accommodate projected growth and promote other community goals.**
- GOAL H-2 Foster housing that is safe, healthy, livable, and affordable for all income levels in all neighborhoods.**
- GOAL H-3 Promote sense of place in neighborhoods.**
- GOAL H-4 Support housing options for special needs populations.**
- GOAL H-5 Existing manufactured home parks (MHPs) should be preserved.**

II. Goals and Policies

Housing Choices and Supply

Housing diversity promotes fair housing. Fair housing is the ability for all people to choose where they live without discrimination based on race, color, national origin, sex, family status or disability - these are the protected classes under state and federal law. Cities may not make zoning or land use decisions or implement policies that exclude or otherwise discriminate against protected persons, including individuals with disabilities.

Approximately 44% of the current housing stock in Bellingham is multi-family. The projected mix (i.e. current mix + growth), which is based on current zoning and the land capacity analysis, is 49% single-family and 51% multi-family. This split not only supports the City's growth strategy, but also provides options for changing demographics.

Increased housing choices can also help meet the needs of an increasingly diverse population and smaller household sizes. Seventy percent of Bellingham households are occupied by one to two people. Household size has been declining for some time and mirrors national trends.

The City already allows a variety of innovative housing styles, including small and smaller lot houses, cottages, townhomes and ADUs; however, some of these options are currently limited to certain land use designations. Consideration should be given to how these housing types might fit into mixed-use and existing single-family neighborhoods to provide increased housing options that are within walking distance to shops, jobs, and amenities.



The collaborative small-lot design of Parkway Gardens created pedestrian-oriented housing consistent with the Infill Housing Toolkit and facilitated the Padden Creek daylighting project.

GOAL H-1 Ensure that Bellingham has a sufficient quantity and variety of housing types and densities to accommodate projected growth and promote other community goals (see Land Use Chapter).

Policy H-1 Support high-density and mixed commercial/residential development in the City's urban villages, high capacity transit corridors connecting the villages and other appropriate areas that allow people to work, shop and recreate near where they live.

Location-efficient development is located and designed to maximize accessibility and affordability. This usually means that it is close to transit and public services and has good walking and cycling conditions and other features that reduce automobile dependency.

Policy H-2 Encourage mixed housing types for new development on greenfield sites, a benefit of which is the integration of people from various socio-economic backgrounds.

Policy H-3 Encourage well-designed infill development on vacant or underutilized properties.

Policy H-4 Continue to support implementation of the Infill Housing Toolkit, which permits innovative housing forms such as small and smaller lot single-family homes, cottages, duplexes, triplexes, common courtyards and townhomes.

Policy H-5 Consider minimum density requirements for residential zones and commercial zones where residential development is allowed.

Policy H-6 Review commercial zoning regulations that require commercial development along with residential development. Consider adding criteria that would allow, in certain circumstances, residential uses to develop independently or within commercial flex space.

Policy H-7 Consider increasing densities in certain multi-family zones with underused development capacity.

Policy H-8 Consider modifying codes to maximize economical wood frame construction.

Policy H-9 Update the City's ADU ordinance with priorities on:

- Evaluating and inventorying ADUs in the City;
- Identifying appropriate areas for detached ADUs;
- Improving permitting and enforcement; and
- Requiring owner occupancy in single-family zones.

Accessory dwelling units are small, self-contained residential units located on the same lot as existing single-family homes. As the term "accessory" implies, ADUs are smaller in size and prominence than the main residence on the lot.

Policy H-10 Permit owner-occupied attached ADUs in single-family and multi-family zones.

In Bellingham, property owners are required to live in one of the units. This applies to the terms "owner occupancy" in Policy H-9 and "owner occupied" in Policy H-10.

Policy H-11 Encourage live-work units in appropriate transitional zones.

Policy H-12 Continue permitting manufactured homes in residential zones in accordance with state and federal laws.

Policy H-13 Consider the impacts on Citywide housing capacity, affordability and diversity when making land use policy decisions and code amendments.

Policy H-14 Actively coordinate with public and private partners in efforts to meet regional housing needs.

Policy H-15 Support fair and equal access to housing for all persons, regardless of race, religion, ethnic origin, age, household composition or size, disability, marital status, sexual orientation or economic circumstances.

Housing Affordability

Perhaps the most pressing and complex challenge facing the City is housing affordability for all economic segments of the community. The quality of any city is defined, in large part, by whether families and individuals are able to find the type and size of housing that fits their household needs at a price they can afford. Communities that offer a range of housing types and affordability provide more opportunity for families and individuals to live where they choose. This allows workers to live near their jobs, older family members to continue to live in the communities where they raised their families, and younger adults to establish new households.

The Washington State Housing Needs Assessment states that approximately 20% of Bellingham households were severely cost-burdened in 2015, spending more than 50% of their income on housing.

While there are a number of jobs that pay a fair wage in Bellingham, not all of them pay wages that are sufficient to afford a home in the community. See Section III of this chapter and the Economic Development Chapter for additional information on this aspect of the housing affordability issue.

"Housing affordability," the standard used by lending institutions, the real estate industry and government, means that no more than 30% of a household's gross monthly income goes toward housing expenses, regardless of income level. For ownership housing, this percentage typically includes taxes, insurance and other related housing expenses. For rental housing, a utility allowance is included in the 30% figure. A household in which housing costs exceed 30% of gross monthly income is considered to be "cost burdened." If costs exceed 50% of gross monthly income, the household is "severely cost burdened" and its ability to afford basic necessities, such as food, clothing, transportation and medical care, is compromised.

"Affordable housing" typically refers to housing that is affordable to households earning 80% or less of the area median income (AMI). These households are also referred to as "low-income" households. Households earning 50% or less of the AMI are "very low-income" households, and households earning 30% or less of the AMI are "extremely low-income." See Section III for more information.



The historic Laube Hotel, located downtown, was restored in 2008 and includes low-income housing and commercial uses.

Although the City does not directly provide or manage affordable housing, it does offer financial assistance to develop and operate low- to very-low income housing through the Housing Levy that Bellingham voters approved in 2012, federal funds received through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and the City's General Fund. Efforts to reduce market-rate housing costs include incentives, improvements to permitting processes, reduced fees and charges for qualifying projects, and innovative housing forms such as those permitted through the Infill Housing Toolkit.

Every five years as a condition of receiving federal block grants from HUD, the City is required to prepare a Consolidated Plan. This plan provides an assessment of the City's community development needs and an analysis of the housing market for low-income households. It also includes the goals, strategies and specific activities that are implemented annually in order to address these needs. The

Consolidated Plan is the community's choice, within HUD parameters, for how the grant funds will be used in the City.

GOAL H-2 Foster housing that is safe, healthy, livable, and affordable for all income levels in all neighborhoods.

Policy H-16 Increase the supply of affordable rental and ownership housing that is context sensitive throughout the City, especially in areas with good access to transit, employment, education and services (see Land Use Chapter for definition of "context sensitive").

Policy H-17 Consider the impacts of transportation costs on housing affordability and accessibility of services and other opportunities when planning for housing.

***Transportation** is the second largest expense for families (housing is first), but few people consider these costs when choosing a place to live. According to the Center for Neighborhood Technology's Housing + Transportation Index, when considering just housing costs for affordability, large areas of Whatcom County are considered affordable. When transportation costs are included, the number of affordable areas in the county is narrowed to areas within Bellingham. This is due in large part to Bellingham's compact, walkable, mixed-use land use patterns.*

Policy H-18 Continue evaluating the recommendations of the City's Community Solutions Workgroup on Affordable Housing, including:

- Detached ADUs, small lot and cottage housing in single-family zones;
- Impact fee reductions for ADUs;
- Reduced parking requirements; and
- Other code changes and incentives that allow and encourage well-designed infill development.

Policy H-19 Continue providing incentives to support housing affordability (e.g. density bonuses, expedited permitting, multi-family tax exemption program and fee reductions) and consider including workforce housing as part of certain incentives programs.

***Workforce housing** policies focus on providing attractive and affordable homes for middle-income workers such as police officers, teachers and nurses in close proximity to their jobs.*

Policy H-20 Consider developing an inclusionary zoning program as a means of increasing the City's affordable housing supply.

Policy H-21 Identify surplus public and quasi-publicly owned land that could potentially be prioritized for housing that is affordable to low- and moderate-income households.

***Inclusionary zoning** refers to planning ordinances that require developers of new market-rate real estate to provide some units that are affordable to low- and moderate-income residents.*

Policy H-22 Support and expand low-income housing programs and public funding (e.g. the Housing Levy and HUD entitlement funds).

Policy H-23 Provide information to residents, including underserved populations, on affordable housing opportunities and first-time homeownership programs.

Policy H-24 Continue streamlining the regulatory review and building permit process and reviewing the cost of infrastructure improvements and their impact on housing costs.

Policy H-25 Monitor the City's housing affordability market, including housing demand by housing type across all income levels and in all neighborhoods, and report on the effectiveness of the City's housing affordability policies.

Policy H-26 Support organizations that construct, manage and provide services for affordable housing, including permanently affordable housing.

Policy H-27 Advocate for regional and state initiatives to increase funding for affordable housing.



These single-family homes in the Cordata neighborhood are generally affordable to moderate-income households ("workforce housing").

Neighborhood Vitality and Character

The City's 25 distinct neighborhoods include residential districts that are differentiated by housing density, age, size, architectural style, condition and other features, and commercial districts with mixed housing types. These neighborhoods, each with their own unique character, offer a variety of housing and lifestyle opportunities.

Bellingham's housing stock is aging, with nearly one-third of the stock over 50 years old. More than half of the housing stock was built before 1980. Residents value the preservation and enhancement of their homes and neighborhoods and derive a sense of place from them. Some community members are concerned about the potential impacts of infill projects on existing neighborhoods, while others support well-designed infill as a strategy to preserve undeveloped land in rural areas and foster transit, better amenities and housing affordability. Regulations that implement policy recommendations outlined in the Comprehensive Plan should strive to balance these concerns and opportunities.



Much of the York Neighborhood is designated as a National Historic District.

The community also values healthy and safe neighborhoods. Conditions of homes and neighborhoods can have powerful effects on the short- and long-term health quality and longevity of its residents. A neighborhood's physical characteristics may promote health by providing healthy food choices and

recreational opportunities that are free from crime, violence and pollution. Neighborhoods with strong ties and high levels of trust among residents may also strengthen health.

GOAL H-3 Promote sense of place in neighborhoods (see Land Use Chapter).

Policy H-28 Protect and connect residential neighborhoods to retain identity and character and provide amenities that enhance quality of life.

Policy H-29 Support public and private investment in improved infrastructure and amenities in existing neighborhoods, particularly in areas with high concentrations of low-income housing.

Policy H-30 Enforce the City's Rental Registration and Safety Inspection Program to ensure that rental housing units comply with life and fire safety standards and provide a safe place for tenants to live.

Policy H-31 Promote high-quality design that is compatible with the overall style and character of established neighborhoods.

Policy H-32 Support the preservation of Bellingham's historically-significant housing through the City's historic preservation program, which maintains a list of historic properties and districts, and provides education and incentives.

Policy H-33 Encourage neighborhoods and property owners to identify high-integrity historic areas that should be protected through the local historic district program.

Policy H-34 Encourage the rehabilitation, relocation and reuse, rather than demolition, of existing housing.

Policy H-35 Continue rehabilitation and housing financing programs that support the maintenance of older/historic housing and assistance to low-income households who want to stay in their homes.



The City's Home Rehabilitation Program provides low-interest loans for home rehabilitation projects. The homes must be occupied by owner households with incomes at or below 80% of the county's median income.

Policy H-36 Encourage health-related improvements to older homes, including the removal of lead-based paint, asbestos, and other potentially harmful materials.

Policy H-37 Encourage housing retrofits that make them more resilient to natural disasters and climate change, are more energy efficient, and provide healthier indoor environments, including good air quality.

Policy H-38 Increase open space requirements for multi-family, high-density development. Locate required open space either on site or in public park space.

Policy H-39 Establish criteria to allow flexibility with planned residential design regulations and increased density in exchange for better quality site and building design and improved usable space.



Millworks Cohousing in the Happy Valley Neighborhood is a Built Green and Energy Star Community.

Policy H-40 Foster innovative housing and mixtures of housing types that preserve natural resources and consolidate open space (e.g. context-sensitive residential clustering).

Policy H-41 Encourage the use of long-lived, low-maintenance building materials; high-efficiency energy systems; and low impact development techniques that reduce housing life-cycle costs and provide better environmental performance consistent with the City's Climate Protection Action Plan.

Policy H-42 Consider using sustainability rating systems when designing housing developments and neighborhoods.

Policy H-43 Work with local institutions of higher education to develop a comprehensive strategy addressing issues associated with off-campus student housing, including adequate off-campus housing that is high quality and compatible with its surroundings (see Land Use Chapter).

College students. In 2014, the U.S. Census Bureau estimated there were about 17,600 college students in Bellingham (21% of the City's population).

Policy H-44 Periodically review and update the City's residential zoning regulations and design standards to promote quality development with timely and predictable outcomes.

Policy H-45 Initiate and encourage equitable and inclusive community involvement in planning processes.

Special Housing Needs and Homelessness

Special needs citizens include people who require some assistance in their day-to-day living such as the mentally ill, people with developmental or physical disabilities, victims of domestic violence, at-risk youth, veterans and the elderly. Housing for special needs citizens may or may not incorporate supportive services, and may be permanent or transitional. Examples include adult family homes, assisted living facilities and group homes for people with developmental disabilities.

Due to rising housing costs and general unavailability of affordable housing for low-income households, homelessness is recognized as the most basic and extreme housing problem. According to the 2015 point-in-time count, there are at least 651 homeless persons (a *person* may be part of a family household or an unaccompanied individual) and 449 homeless households (a *household* may include one or more persons) in Whatcom County. Twenty six percent of all homeless households are considered chronically homeless. According to the 2015 Annual Report by the Whatcom County Coalition to End Homelessness, point-in-time counts generally underestimate the number of people who are homeless.



A resident tends to a garden area at Greggie's House, a community housing resource funded in part by the Bellingham Home Fund, which provides housing for the community's most vulnerable people.

GOAL H-4 Support housing options for special needs populations.

Policy H-46 Work with agencies, private developers and nonprofit organizations to locate housing to serve Bellingham's special needs populations, particularly those with challenges related to age, health or disability.

Policy H-47 Allow housing opportunities for special needs populations in appropriate locations throughout the community.

Policy H-48 Encourage and consider incentives for the dedication of a portion of housing in new projects to special needs housing.

Policy H-49 Support implementation of the Whatcom County Plan to End Homelessness.

Policy H-50 Continue to encourage and support the development of emergency, transitional and permanent supportive housing with appropriate on-site services for people with special needs and the homeless throughout the City and county. Moving people into permanent housing as quickly as possible should be a priority.

Policy H-51 Maintain an inventory and expand the city's supply of interim housing for target populations.



The Sterling Senior Community provides affordable one-bedroom apartments for low-income seniors.

Policy H-52 Foster and support partnerships that have proven to be successful in reducing homelessness, preventing homelessness and assisting the chronically homeless with needed care.

Policy H-53 Support a range of housing types for retirees and seniors, including townhomes, condominiums and assisted living and independent living communities near daily needs and transit.

Policy H-54 Support ways for older adults and people with disabilities to remain in their homes and the community as their housing needs change by encouraging universal design and home retrofits for lifetime use (see Policy LU-84).

***Aging in place** means that people can live in the residences of their choice for as long as they are able. This includes being able to have any services (or other support) they might need over time as their needs change. According to a 2010 survey conducted by the American Association of Retired Persons, 86% of adults 45 and older want to remain in their current homes as long as possible.*

Manufactured Home Parks

There are ten manufactured home parks (MHPs) in Bellingham with a total of about 900 spaces. The parks are located in a number of different neighborhoods. All have residential comprehensive plan and zoning designations except Samish Court, located in the Samish Way urban village. These parks, and the units they contain, are some of the most affordable housing in the city. Therefore, it is appropriate to try to preserve some or all of them.

GOAL H-5 Existing manufactured homes parks should be preserved.

Policy H-55 Identify and evaluate methods to encourage the preservation of existing manufactured home parks to ensure their continued provision of affordable housing.

III. Supporting Information

Growth Targets

Bellingham's estimated 2015 population was 83,580 people. This is a doubling in population since 1980. Bellingham experienced rapid growth through the 1990s and early 2000s, with slower but steady growth since 2007. In September 2015, the City Council recommended to the county the mid-range 2036 population forecast of 121,505 people (see Land Capacity Analysis Population and Housing Breakout table). To plan for these new people and an estimated 16,500 new housing units, the City identified sufficient land (zoning capacity) and strategies to show that there will be available housing and services for this projected population. New housing could include such options as traditional single-family homes, cottages, accessory dwelling units, duplexes, triplexes, townhomes, condominiums and apartments.

Growth Area	2013 Population & Housing				Estimated Growth Capacity				Forecast Growth				2036 Forecast Total Population & Housing			
	All Housing Units	Single Family Hsg	Multi-Family Hsg	Estim Pop	New Housing Units	New Single Family Hsg	New Multi-Family Hsg	New Pop	New Housing Units	New Single Family Hsg	New Multi-Family Hsg	New Pop	All Housing Units	Single Family Hsg	Multi-Family Hsg	Forecast Total Pop
Urban Villages	2,387	602	1,785	8,575	6,866	408	6,458	11,695	6,459	384	6,075	11,001	8,846	986	7,860	19,576
Other Areas Inside City Limits	34,852	19,209	15,643	73,735	8,821	4,347	4,474	18,078	8,299	4,090	4,209	17,009	43,151	23,299	19,852	90,744
Unincorporated Urban Growth Area	4,218	3,473	745	10,797	1,436	1,134	302	3,233	1,351	1,067	284	3,040	5,569	4,540	1,029	13,837
Totals	41,457	23,284	18,173	93,107	17,123	5,889	11,234	33,006	16,109	5,541	10,568	31,050	57,566	28,825	28,741	124,157
Housing Mix		56.2%	43.8%			34.4%	65.6%			34.4%	65.6%		50.1%	49.9%		

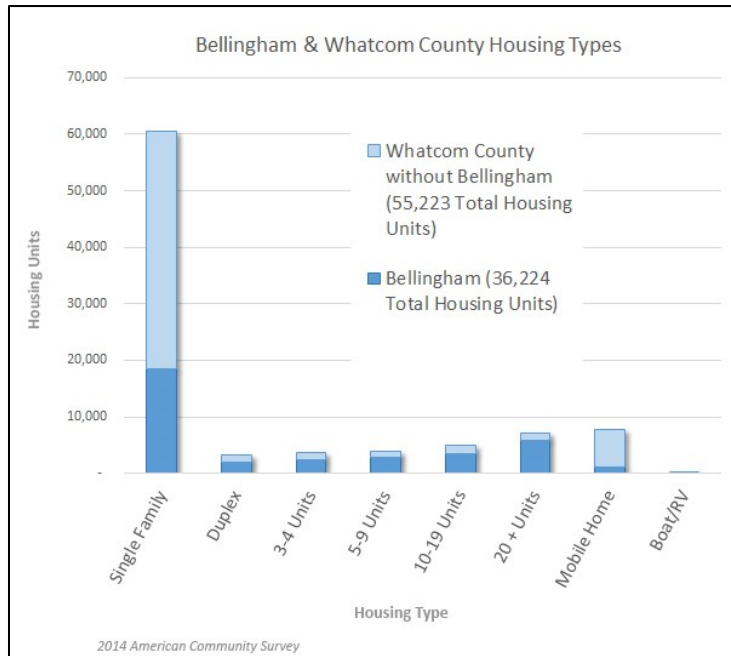
Planning for expected growth requires an understanding of current economic and housing market conditions, demographic trends and household characteristics. The analysis below supports and supplements the City's Consolidated Plan, which includes a needs assessment and market analysis and is updated every five years, as well as the recommendations of the City's Community Solutions Workgroup on Affordable Housing.

Housing Mix

In 2015, Bellingham and its unincorporated UGA included about 42,000 housing units. About 44% of the existing housing stock in Bellingham is multi-family, and this percentage is expected to increase

to about 50% by 2036. Compared to Whatcom County as a whole, Bellingham has a higher percentage of multi-family housing (see Bellingham and Whatcom County Housing Types chart), in large part due to the student population. Approximately 13,600 students live in Bellingham's neighborhoods.

Bellingham has an average of 2.4 bedrooms per housing unit. Twenty one percent of housing units have fewer than two bedrooms. This compares with 8.6% of housing units with fewer than two bedrooms in Whatcom County (outside Bellingham).



Demographics and Household Characteristics

Age - Bellingham and Whatcom County experienced significant growth over the past decade in the 20 to 34 and 55 to 74 age groups. Growth in the 20 to 34 group is primarily due to increased enrollment at the City's university and community colleges. Growth in the 55 to 74 age group represents the aging of baby boomers and the influx of retirees.

College Students - About one in five Bellingham residents is a college student. In 2014, the U.S. Census Bureau estimated there were about 17,600 college students in Bellingham (21% of the City's population). Enrollment statistics for 2015 from Western Washington University show 15,000 students, of which 90% are from in-state locations. Whatcom Community College serves 11,000 part-time students with credit hours equivalent to 4,000 full-time-enrolled (FTE) students. Bellingham Technical College (BTC) serves 5,500 part-time students with credit hours equivalent to 2,040 FTE.

Racial Diversity - Bellingham's population is becoming more ethnically and racially diverse. Between 2000 and 2014, Bellingham's non-White population increased from 12% to 15% and the number of people identifying as Hispanic increased from 4.6% to 7%. The Bellingham School District reports that 43 different languages are spoken in their schools.

Household Size - The City's average household size changed from 2.24 persons per household in 2000 to 2.18 in 2010. About 70% of Bellingham households include just one to two people. See

Household Statistics	2000	2010	2014
Total Households	27,999	34,671	35,903
1-person household	33.1%	35.2%	33.7%
2-person household	35.8%	35.4%	36.5%
3-person household	14.3%	13.8%	14.4%
4+ person household	16.8%	15.6%	15.4%
Family Households	50.0%	46.5%	49.1%
Married-couple households	37.5%	34.2%	34.9%
With children under 18	24.5%	20.7%	22.8%
Non-Family Households	50.0%	53.5%	50.9%
Householder living alone	33.0%	35.3%	33.7%
HH living alone over age 65	8.3%	10.7%	11.8%

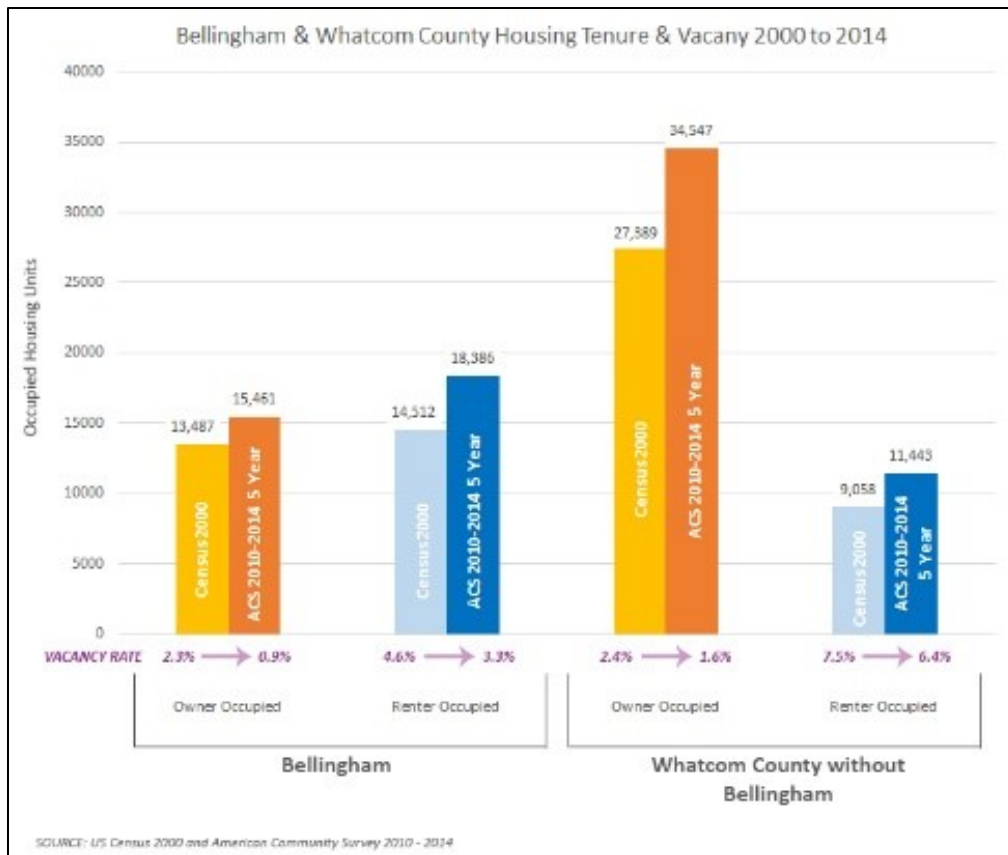
SOURCE: US Census 2000 and American Community Survey 2010 - 2014

Household Statistics table for more information on household size and composition.

Bellingham's changing demographics may impact future housing demand. Newer residents may have different cultural expectations such as extended families living together in shared housing. The increase in the number of singles and older adults in the community suggests that there is a need for homes with a variety of price points designed for smaller households, including accessory dwelling units (both attached and detached) and manufactured homes. Demographic changes may also increase the demand for multi-family housing. Such housing could be provided in single-use buildings (e.g. townhomes, apartments and condominiums) or mixed-use buildings. The City's urban villages are expected to accommodate much of the City's higher-density housing and mixed uses, while other areas throughout the community are also zoned for these uses (see Future Land Use map in Land Use Chapter). Mixed-use development and well-designed infill in central areas close to public transit allow for easier access to neighborhood amenities and services and can reduce dependency on single-occupancy vehicles.

Housing Tenure and Vacancy

In 2014, more than half of the City's housing units were renter occupied (54%) and the rental vacancy rate was 3.3%. The owner-occupied vacancy rate was 0.9%. In comparison, only 25% of housing units in Whatcom County outside Bellingham were renter occupied and the rental vacancy rate was 6.4%. The county's owner-occupied vacancy rate was 1.6%.



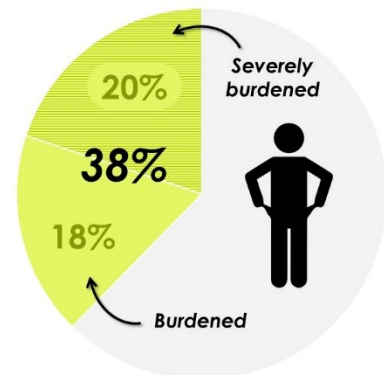
Special Needs Housing

Group Quarters

Group quarters, including nursing homes, correctional institutions or living quarters for people who are disabled, homeless or in recovery from addictions, are not included in the count of housing units reported in the table on page 14. According to the 2015 Washington State Office of Financial Management estimate, about 6.4% of Bellingham's population, or 5,343 people, live in group quarters. This is higher than the percentage of Whatcom County residents living in group quarters. See the Consolidated Plan for more information.

Financially-Assisted Housing

About 2,650 financially-assisted housing units for low- and moderate-income individuals and families exist in Bellingham. The Bellingham Housing Authority and Catholic Housing Services are the two primary organizations in Bellingham that provide affordable rental housing opportunities. Additionally, the Bellingham Housing Authority administers U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) vouchers that assist low-income households with the cost of housing and utilities. Regarding owner-occupied housing, the City partners with local nonprofit groups to assist with the development and acquisition of owner-occupied housing units.



2015 Washington State Housing Needs Assessment

Emergency and Transitional Housing Inventory

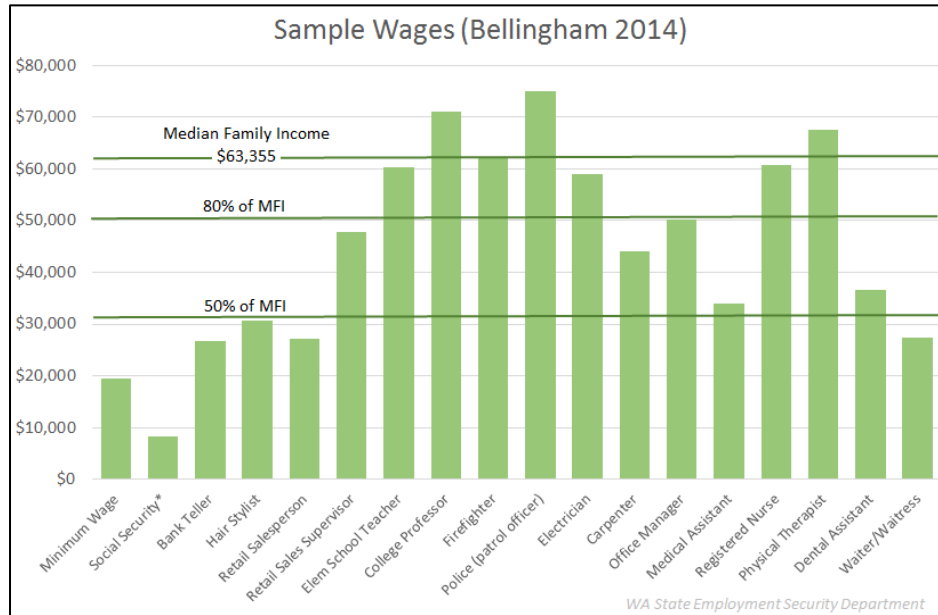
Bellingham has several programs and facilities that provide emergency and transitional shelter. Emergency shelter offers a safe, secure, time-limited place for individuals and families to reside while they prepare to move into permanent housing. Transitional housing is longer-term than emergency shelter, with varying degrees of support services. See the Consolidated Plan for more information.

Housing Affordability

The generally-accepted definition of affordability is a household that pays no more than 30% of its annual income on housing. HUD sets income limits on housing affordability based on an area's median family income (typically for a family of four). When discussing levels of affordability, households are characterized by their income as a percent of the area's median family income. Between 2000 and 2014, the City's median family income for a family of four increased from \$47,196 to \$63,355. A family with an income of \$63,355 would be making 100% of the median income and a family with an income of \$31,677 would be classified at 50% of the median income.

Families that pay more than 30% of their income for housing are considered "cost burdened" and may have difficulty affording necessities such as food, clothing, transportation and medical care. Applying this 30% metric to a family with an income matching the Bellingham median of \$63,355, the amount of housing cost that would be considered affordable would be \$19,006/year, or \$1,584/month. For additional context, see the Sample Wages chart below.

In 2015, approximately 20% of Bellingham households were "severely cost burdened," spending more than 50% of their income for housing, while another 18% were "cost burdened," spending more than 30% of their income on housing.



Assessing housing affordability needs requires an understanding of household incomes and availability of housing that's affordable to residents across all income levels. Household income by tenure, ratio of housing costs to household income and number of homes affordable to income groups are included in the charts below. A more detailed analysis is included in the City's Consolidated Plan.

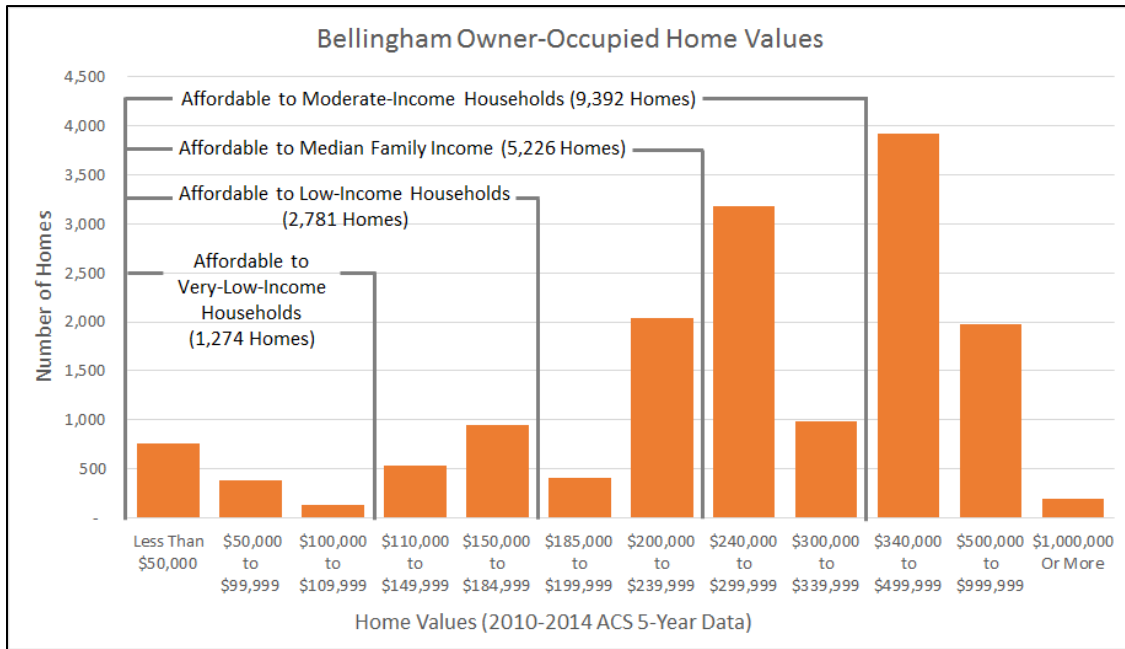
HOUSEHOLD INCOME BY TENURE

Household Income As Percentage of HUD Area Median Family Income	Renter		Owner		All Households	
	Estimate	%	Estimate	%	Estimate	%
0-30% Extremely-low-income	5,460	30.0%	755	4.8%	6,215	18.4%
>30%-50% Very-low-income	2,975	16.4%	1,195	7.7%	4,170	12.3%
>50%-80% Low-Income	4,280	23.5%	2,340	15.0%	6,620	19.6%
>80%-100%	1,585	8.7%	1,540	9.9%	3,125	9.2%
>100%	3,885	21.4%	9,790	62.7%	13,675	40.5%
TOTALS	18,185	100.0%	15,620	100.0%	33,805	100.0%

HOUSING COST BURDEN OVERVIEW - Ratio of Housing Costs to Household Income

Household Income	Renter		Owner		All Households	
	Estimate	%	Estimate	%	Estimate	%
Cost Burden 0-30%	8,095	44.5%	10,770	69.0%	18,865	55.8%
Cost Burden >30%-50%	3,895	21.4%	2,950	18.9%	6,845	20.2%
Cost Burden >50%	5,825	32.0%	1,795	11.5%	7,620	22.5%
Cost Burden Not Available	370	2.0%	105	0.7%	475	1.4%
TOTALS	18,185	100.0%	15,620	100.0%	33,805	100.0%

HUD CHAS Data Published 2015 (ACS 2008-2012)

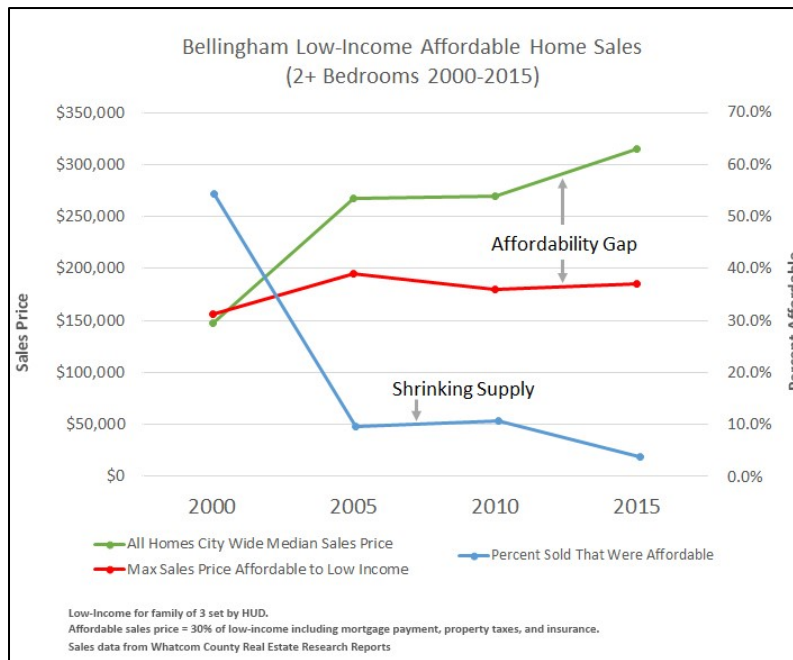


Affordability Gap

The affordability gap is the difference between the percentage of City residents at a particular income level and the percentage of the City's housing stock that is affordable to households at that income level. Where affordability gaps exist, households must take on a cost burden to pay for housing. Low-income households face a severe housing cost burden. Of the current owner-occupied housing stock in Bellingham, 59% is affordable to moderate-income households and 18% is affordable to low-income households. As can be seen in the Bellingham Low-Income Affordable Home Sales chart below, the number of affordable homes for low-income households has shrunk from more than 50% of the available supply in 2000 to less than 4% of the available supply in 2015. Of the 944 single-family, two+ bedroom homes sold in Bellingham in 2015, only 37 (3.9%) were affordable to a low-income family of three.

Year	All Homes City Wide Median Sales Price	Max Sales Price Affordable to Low Income	Affordability Gap (Median - Affordable)	Total Number of Homes Sold	Total Number Sold That Were Affordable	Percent Sold That Were Affordable
2000	\$147,900	\$156,600	(\$8,700)	953	518	54.4%
2005	\$267,725	\$195,500	\$72,225	1156	111	9.6%
2010	\$270,000	\$180,000	\$90,000	624	67	10.7%
2015	\$315,000	\$185,000	\$130,000	944	37	3.9%

Low-Income for family of 3 set by HUD. Affordable sales price = 30% of low-income including mortgage payment, property taxes, and insurance. Sales data from Whatcom County Real Estate Research Reports and Whatcom County Assessor.



Rents

Between 2000 and 2014, median monthly rent in Bellingham increased 46% from \$613 to \$901. Median monthly owner costs increased only 5% from \$1,133 to \$1190. Over the same period, rental vacancy rates have dropped from 4.6% to 3.3%. The increasing price of rental housing may be limiting housing options that are affordable to younger or fixed-income residents and smaller households.

Housing Costs and Neighborhoods

Based on 2015 home sales, the Citywide median sales value was \$289,250. The most affordable neighborhoods with median sales values below the Citywide median include Birchwood, City Center, Cordata, Fairhaven, Happy Valley, Lettered Streets, Meridian, Puget, Roosevelt, Sehome, South, Sunnyland and York. The least affordable neighborhoods with median sales values above the Citywide median include Alabama Hill, Barkley, Columbia, Cornwall Park, Edgemoor, King Mountain, Samish, Silver Beach, South Hill and Whatcom Falls.

Generally, areas with distinct pockets of concentrated wealth and poverty have lower economic mobility than places with integrated socioeconomic classes. This chapter supports such integration with policies that support mixed housing types located throughout the community.

City Housing Programs and Incentives

The Great Recession, combined with major reductions in supportive services, created a housing crisis affecting Bellingham and many other communities throughout the country. Families' incomes were not keeping pace with housing costs, forcing many to live in substandard housing or without shelter altogether. Vulnerable populations, especially seniors with fixed incomes, people with disabilities, veterans and low-income families, were not receiving the housing or services they needed. Approved in 2012, the Bellingham Home Fund is addressing the issues caused by the housing crisis by providing safe, affordable homes and supportive services to vulnerable populations. Seventy four percent of the funds go to the lowest income group, or those who earn \$6.85 per hour for a full-time job.

Rental Assistance and Services

The City allocates Bellingham Home Fund, federal HUD funds and City General Funds to support housing, human and social services for low-income people in the community. These funds also support rent payments and emergency winter shelter. Some of the major recent initiatives include:

- Homeless Outreach Team (Whatcom Homeless Service Center);
- Intensive Case Management (Whatcom Alliance for Health Advancement); and
- Housing services provided by groups such as Lydia Place, Northwest Youth Services, Opportunity Council and Catholic Community Services.

Rental and Transitional Housing

The Bellingham Home Fund supports the development of new rental housing units for households that earn less than half of the area median income. In less than three years, the Home Fund has committed to creating 238 units of housing and preserving 118 units of rental and transitional housing.

Homeownership

Homeownership provides housing stability, independence, and opportunity for economic advancement. Since 2002, the City has partnered with Kulshan Community Land Trust to help homebuyers with down payment and closing costs. One hundred four homes are now permanently affordable to low-income households (a family of three earning no more than \$48,720). In 2013, the Bellingham Home Fund allowed the City to support the Opportunity Council in expanding their services to repair and weatherize owner-occupied manufactured homes. Additionally, since 1977, the City has offered financial assistance to low-income homeowners to repair their houses, helping more than 730 families stay in their homes.

Incentives

In 2015, the City kicked-off a new [incentives package](#) that offers more reductions and discounts than any other such program in Washington State. The program covers Citywide development incentives for affordable housing, sustainable development and historic preservation, along with incentives specific to urban villages. These incentives offer a variety of benefits, including expedited permitting, tax and fee reduction and more. Examples include:

- The **Multi-Family Tax Exemption Program**, which includes an eight-year state and local property tax exemption on the residential value of new multi-family construction in targeted areas (12 years for projects that dedicate a minimum of 20% of the units for low or moderate incomes).
- **Density bonuses**, which provide an opportunity for more units (or floor area) than underlying zoning allows in exchange for public benefits such as affordable housing or public space.
- City-funded affordable housing projects and others approved by City Council are eligible for a **waiver of up to 80% on school, transportation, and park impact fees and utility system development charges**.
- Development projects in the Downtown and Old Town urban villages are eligible for up to a **50% reduction on all permit fees and system development charges**. Projects in urban villages also receive an automatic reduction in transportation impact fees, with additional discounts when located on a high-frequency transit route.
- **Reduced parking requirements** for Infill Housing Toolkit projects.
- **Special Valuation Tax Exemption Program** for qualifying historic building renovations.

- A **Registered Plan Program** for all residential projects.
- **Regional stormwater facilities** when in conformance with state and local policies and regulations.
- Several **other incentives** have been recommended for study by City Council, including density bonuses for affordable housing demonstration projects and expedited permitting for qualifying affordable housing projects.

Bellingham Comprehensive Plan Multimodal Transportation Chapter

2016



I. Introduction

Transportation planning is intricately tied to land use, the pattern of development, and the local economy that evolves as an urban area grows. Bellingham's Citywide multimodal transportation system includes various travel modes such as pedestrian, bicycle, transit, automobile, freight truck, marine ferry, railroad, and airplanes. Bellingham strives to provide, manage, and maintain safe, well-connected **complete networks** for major modes of transportation and users. The ability for people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds to travel safely, comfortably, and efficiently, using various means of transportation, contributes to the high quality of life that Bellingham residents enjoy.



The Wharf Street roundabout, constructed in 2013, accommodates bicycles, pedestrians, transit, freight, and automobiles.

The purpose of the Transportation Chapter is to:

- Highlight and elaborate upon the **City Council Legacies and Strategic Commitments for Mobility and Connectivity**.
- Update **goals, policies, and implementation strategies** for Citywide multimodal transportation improvements, including arterial streets within the Bellingham urban growth area (UGA).
- Provide guidance for the implementation of **Bellingham's Complete Networks** approach to annual tracking, monitoring, and reporting on progress made toward achieving Citywide multimodal transportation planning goals.

These concepts are further defined under the following five categories, which form the organizational basis for the goals and policies of this chapter:

Integration of Land Use and Transportation Planning
Complete Networks
Non-Motorized Transportation
Transit and Single-Occupancy Vehicles
Transportation Planning Requirements

The chapter's six goals mirror the City's Legacies and Strategic Commitments and emphasize the interdependence of the environment, economy and society:

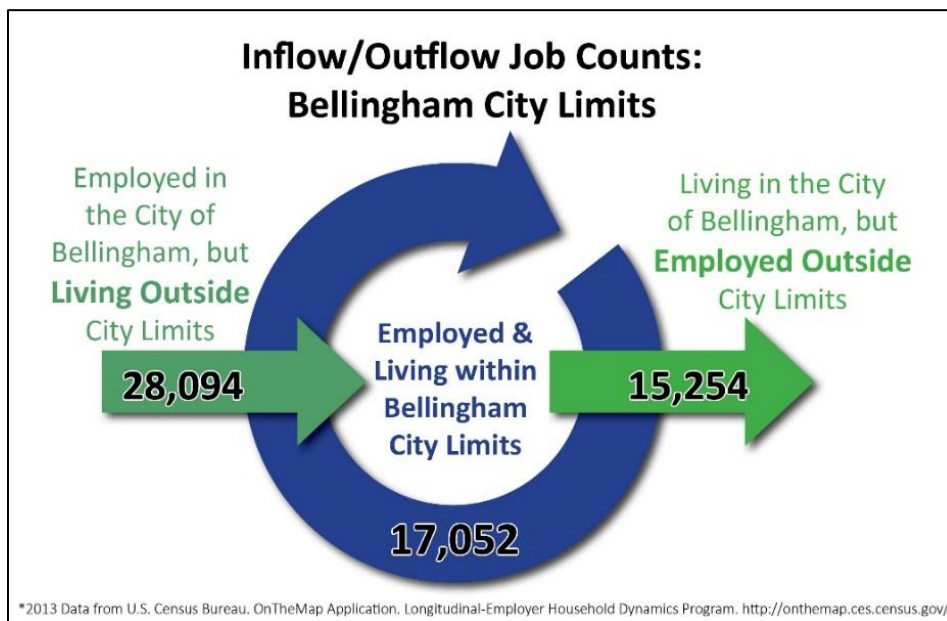
- GOAL T-1** **Limit urban sprawl by linking land use and transportation planning.**
- GOAL T-2** **Provide safe, well-connected, and sustainable mobility options for all users.**
- GOAL T-3** **Increase infrastructure for bicycles, pedestrian, and non-single-occupancy vehicle modes of transportation.**

- GOAL T-4** **Reduce dependence on single-occupancy vehicles.**
- GOAL T-5** **Maintain and improve streets, trails, and other infrastructure.**
- GOAL T-6** **Ensure that social equity needs are addressed in all transportation projects.**

II. Goals and Policies

Integration of Land Use and Transportation Planning

Due to Bellingham’s status as the largest population, employment, and service center in Whatcom County, the local multimodal transportation network is significantly affected by regional traffic generated from outside the City limits. The affordability of housing options, individual choice to live in the county or another city and commute to work in Bellingham, and the attraction of Canadian shoppers from lower mainland British Columbia just 20 miles to the north all contribute vehicle traffic generated from outside the City. This presents Bellingham with significant challenges in using land use and transportation planning policies to encourage infill development, maintain a compact urban area, and promote transportation mode shift, while also managing increasing vehicle traffic congestion on the Citywide multimodal transportation system.



Bellingham has the highest concentrations of residential density in the Whatcom region. Well-connected pedestrian and bicycle networks and convenient high-frequency transit service become more cost-effective and efficient as residential and urban density increase. For this reason, Bellingham is striving to employ integrated land use and transportation planning policies and regulations that support and incentivize higher-density residential areas located close to employment, shopping, and service centers to provide residents with more opportunities to walk, bicycle, or ride high-frequency transit buses provided by Whatcom Transportation Authority (WTA).

GOAL T-1 Limit urban sprawl by linking land use and transportation planning.

Policy T-1 Continue to develop and implement plans, programs, and regulations that incentivize infill and emphasize multimodal transportation in urban villages. Examples include:

- Urban village master plans and mixed-use districts;
- Multimodal Transportation Concurrency Program (BMC 13.70);
- Urban Village Transportation Impact Fee (TIF) Reduction Program (BMC 19.06.040);
- [2012 Pedestrian Master Plan](#) (incorporated herein by reference);
- [2014 Bicycle Master Plan](#) (incorporated herein by reference); and
- 2016 WTA Strategic Plan.



Pedestrians walk along Railroad Avenue. Downtown is one of seven urban villages in Bellingham.

Policy T-2

Balance land use efficiency with transportation safety and mobility by prioritizing street connectivity within the City limits, mobility for people and goods, and high-occupancy vehicles over single-occupancy vehicles (SOVs). Implementation strategies include:

- Recognize that peak hour vehicle traffic congestion is to be expected in higher-density urban and commercial areas, as well as entry/exit points to Bellingham;
- Prioritize safety and connectivity improvements for all modes of transport over improvements focused solely on reducing vehicle traffic congestion;
- Continue to work with WTA to strategically employ transit as a key high-occupancy mode of transportation between the City's employment, education, parks and recreation, shopping, and entertainment centers and residential concentrations in Whatcom County; and
- Promote active non-motorized forms of transportation over motorized forms of transportation to improve public health and minimize environmental impacts.

Active non-motorized transportation includes both walking and bicycling for transportation (destination-oriented trip making) rather than recreational purposes. This can include trips on Bellingham's recreational Greenways Trail network, but is primarily focused on Bellingham's Primary Pedestrian and Bicycle Networks, which are made up of on-street sidewalks and bikeways.

Policy T-3

Encourage higher-density transit-oriented development (TOD) along certain WTA high-frequency transit routes ("GO Lines") connecting urban villages. Implementation strategies include:

- Documentation of existing zoning, allowable densities, housing types, and commercial or office development along WTA high-frequency transit routes.
- Engaging neighborhood associations, other interested stakeholders, and the development community to create a TOD overlay mechanism that could allow higher-density development along WTA high-frequency transit routes if TOD performance measures, such as those listed below, can be met.
 - Design review is required for any new development;
 - Mixed-use (ground-floor commercial, upper-floor residential) development is encouraged;
 - Commercial development: Non-auto-oriented uses, no drive-thru windows, and no vehicle parking fronting high-frequency WTA corridors;
 - Residential development: TOD-oriented townhomes (Peabody example), small-lot development, and multi-family housing with WTA bus passes purchased for residents through the Urban Village TIF Reduction Program;
 - Auto parking: On-site parking requirements are reduced or waived with criteria. Street parking and/or off-site parking along the transit corridor may count toward commercial parking requirements;
 - Bike parking: Adopt long- and short-term bike parking requirements.
- If a TOD overlay is approved, work with WTA to coordinate higher-density development proposals with WTA's plans to maintain or increase high-frequency transit service along various corridors.



This mixed-used building on Dupont Street is located on the WTA Green GO Line.

Transportation is the second largest expense for families (housing is first), but few people consider these costs when choosing a place to live. Compact, mixed-use development close to good transit, jobs, schools and daily needs can save families money by offering transportation choices that reduce automobile dependency.

Policy T-4 Continue to work with Whatcom County to develop a unified standard for the Bellingham UGA to provide safe and efficient multimodal movement of people and goods and adequate levels of service as these areas develop to urban densities and are ultimately annexed into the City.

Complete Networks

Prior to the popular rise of the national "Complete Streets" movement, Bellingham expanded its Citywide focus of transportation planning to include multiple modes of transportation with goals, policies, and project recommendations to accommodate pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders, as well as vehicle drivers on all arterial streets. In 2004, Bellingham worked with WTA to establish a Primary Transit Network and with the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) to develop the 2006 Bellingham Transportation Element. Since then, Bellingham has created both Primary Pedestrian and Bicycle Networks through a 2012 Pedestrian Master Plan and a 2014 Bicycle Master Plan.

Bellingham's multimodal transportation planning has evolved into a **Complete Networks** approach, which incorporates the principles of the Complete Streets movement, but also provides an annual assessment of the progress made toward the completion and improvements to each modal network.



Bicyclist uses green bike boxes on Ohio Street.



The [Transportation Report on Annual Mobility \(TRAM\)](#) provides an annual inventory and assessment of progress for Bellingham's Complete Networks approach to multimodal transportation planning. The TRAM includes individual chapters on Bellingham's pedestrian, bicycle, transit, automobile, and freight truck networks, with performance measures and status reports for each modal network, as well as an annual update on transportation mode shares to track progress toward Bellingham's transportation mode shift goals. The TRAM also includes a chapter on Bellingham's [Transportation Benefit District No. 1 \(TBD\)](#), which serves as the annual TBD Report to the TBD Board of Directors. TBD sales tax revenue provides dedicated funding for arterial street resurfacing

(including re-channelization for bikeways) and specific bicycle and sidewalk projects. The TBD Report includes information on the financial status of the TBD and highlights various transportation improvements that have been constructed or are programmed for TBD funding.

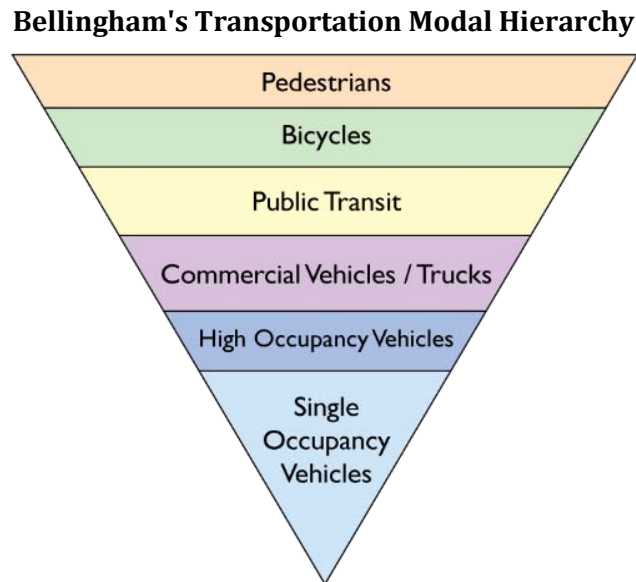
GOAL T-2 Provide safe, well-connected, and sustainable mobility options for all users.

Policy T-5 Connect missing links within the Citywide multimodal transportation network for all modes of transportation, including pedestrian, bicycle, transit bus, freight trucks, and private automobiles.

Policy T-6 Design multimodal transportation improvements on existing and new streets with the safety and mobility needs of all user groups considered and with priority emphasis placed on the most vulnerable user groups, as illustrated below.



Riders wait for the bus to arrive. Photo courtesy of WCOG.



Policy T-7 Provide mobility choices and opportunities for people with special transportation needs, including persons with disabilities, school children, senior citizens, and low-income populations.

Policy T-8 Work with WTA to maintain average speed and on-time performance metrics for WTA transit bus routes identified in the WTA Strategic Plan.

Non-Motorized Transportation

The City's Complete Networks approach to transportation planning is geared toward completing mobility networks for all users. Much of this effort involves building new sidewalks or bikeways on the existing street network or including sidewalks and bikeways on new streets when they are constructed by either public or private interests.

Bellingham's Pedestrian Master Plan identifies a 266-mile Primary Pedestrian Network and 343 individual sidewalk and intersection crossing projects that have been subject to significant analysis and prioritized according to the needs of pedestrians. Bellingham's Bicycle Master Plan identifies a 160-mile Primary Bicycle Network and 185 individual bikeway projects that have been subject to significant analysis and prioritized according to the needs of bicyclists. Both of these extensive multi-year planning efforts were informed with broad community input and are incorporated into the Transportation Chapter by reference.

GOAL T-3 Increase infrastructure for bicycles, pedestrian, and non-single-occupancy vehicle modes of transportation.

Policy T-9 Incorporate sidewalks, crosswalks, and bikeways identified in the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plans into all transportation capital improvements on public streets, wherever feasible.

Policy T-10 Work closely with WTA to support the WTA Strategic Plan, ensure that City and WTA policies are consistent, and prioritize transportation improvements that support transit ridership for neighborhood residents.

Policy T-11 Require all new development to construct sidewalks on all public streets identified as part of Bellingham's Citywide Pedestrian or Transit Network per City street standards (BMC 13.04). Where possible, sidewalks should be separated from roadways with landscape strips, street trees, rain gardens, or other low impact development techniques.



Kids walk to school in the Columbia Neighborhood. Photo by Gabriel Boon.

Policy T-12 Require all new development to construct bike lanes on all arterial streets identified as part of Bellingham's Citywide Bicycle Network per City street standards (BMC 13.04). Where possible, bike lanes should be constructed of pervious asphalt or concrete.

Policy T-13 Develop an administrative process that allows for departures from required infrastructure improvements in cases where no public purpose would be served by strict compliance with the required standard.

Policy T-14 Work closely with the Bellingham School District to prioritize the construction of sidewalks and bikeways to support Safe Routes to School.

Policy T-15 Allow private developers to fund and construct sidewalk and bikeway improvements identified in the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plans if there are not enough Person Trips Available (PTA) in a Concurrency Service Area (CSA) as a form of transportation concurrency mitigation (BMC 13.70).

Policy T-16 Employ Transportation Demand Management (TDM) and Transportation System Management (TSM) strategies, including, but not limited to, those listed below to increase the safety, efficiency, and long-term sustainability of the Citywide multimodal transportation system.

TDM Actions:

- Enhance the WTA Primary Transit Network and encourage transit-oriented development along high-frequency GO lines and transit-supportive development throughout Bellingham;
- Educate and encourage the public to use bicycle and pedestrian modes of transportation;
- Implement urban village plans and Multifamily Design Review Guidelines to encourage development to be transit supportive, pedestrian oriented, and bicycle friendly;
- Encourage compact land use patterns that reduce vehicle trips and vehicle miles traveled;
- Monitor U.S. Census data and report annual progress in the TRAM toward achieving transportation mode shift goals for increasing the share of work trips made by bicycle, pedestrian, and transit trips and reducing work trips made by SOVs;
- Support and implement a Commute Trip Reduction program aimed at reducing congestion, air pollution and energy consumption by requiring large employers and major new developments to reduce the number of SOVs being driven to and from those projects;
- Encourage car sharing organizations to locate vehicles close to major employment centers and WTA transit stops to offer an alternative to automobile ownership;

***Transportation Demand Management** refers to methods used to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of a community transportation system by reducing travel demand generated by users rather than physical expansion to increase system supply.*

***Transportation System Management** refers to methods used to improve the safety and efficiency of a community transportation system by providing better connectivity and mobility for all users of the system.*



The City of Bellingham and WCOG co-sponsor Bike to Work and School Day in May of each year. Photo courtesy of WCOG.

- Encourage the presence and success of ride sharing organizations to offer alternatives to making unnecessary SOV trips; and
- Review parking standards to reduce the impacts of parking lots on urban form, pedestrian mobility, and the natural environment. Continue to pursue parking management best practices.

TSM Actions:

- Complete pedestrian and bicycle networks, which help to reduce energy consumption and promote physical activity to improve public health;
- Explore the financial feasibility of a privately-funded bike share program for Bellingham;
- Identify opportunities to improve local arterial street connectivity of the Citywide transportation network that will create better mobility throughout the City for all transportation modes;
- Identify and seek available state and federal transportation grant funding and collect transportation impact fees to support necessary multimodal transportation system improvements; and
- Demonstrate the success of local funding sources such as Transportation Benefit Districts.

Transit and Single-Occupancy Vehicles

The City and WTA continually strive to increase opportunities for, and the convenience of, making trips by walking, biking, or riding transit, while also encouraging people to make fewer SOV trips. The City's aim is not to eliminate private automobiles, but to encourage the use of other transportation modes, while reducing the costly transportation capacity demand made by private automobiles on City arterial streets.

As illustrated in the inflow/outflow graphic on page three of this chapter, Bellingham's multimodal transportation network is significantly affected by regional traffic generated from outside the City limits, much of which is work-related. Bellingham works with major employers, WTA, and the Whatcom Council of Governments (WCOG) to reduce SOV trips through the Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) and Smart Trips programs. Bellingham constructs sidewalk and bikeway infrastructure to create more opportunities for walking and biking and promotes non-automotive trip making whenever possible. WTA offers high-frequency transit service to all of Bellingham's urban villages and along major transportation corridors where many of Bellingham's largest employers are located.

Whatcom Smart Trips is a program that helps community members make more of their trips by walking, bicycling, sharing rides or riding the bus. The program is operated by WCOG with financial support of the City of Bellingham, Whatcom County, the Whatcom Transportation Authority, the Washington State Department of Transportation and the U.S. Department of Transportation.

The program includes these features, among others:

- *An online trip diary*
- *Smart Trips incentives*
- *Emergency rides home*
- *School Smart Trips program*
- *EverybodyBIKE*
- *Targeted outreach to seniors and women*

The City uses American Community Survey (ACS) data from the U.S. Census Bureau to track transportation mode-to-work patterns, with five-year averages reported at the beginning of each year. This data is the most widely accepted, standardized, and comparable data to use when

measuring progress relative to other cities with similar situations and characteristics. This data is included each year in the TRAM and allows the City to track progress being made toward its long-term transportation mode shift goals.

Regardless of fuel source, it is likely that private automobiles will continue to be the dominant mode choice for the majority of the regional population for the next 20 years. However, there are important technological innovations occurring in the transportation industry that will affect both individual mode choices, as well as the availability, safety, and efficiency of various transportation modes. Examples include car sharing organizations, ride sharing networks, working remotely from home, and innovations in driverless and connected vehicle technology. The City will continue to provide a safe and efficient transportation network for automobiles while also incorporating and adapting to technological innovations.



The Whatcom Transportation Authority provides fixed route, paratransit and zone service; two transit stations; and a vanpool program throughout Bellingham and Whatcom County. This photo was taken at WTA's northern hub, Cordata Station.

Given Bellingham's circumstances as the major population, employment, and service center in Whatcom County, City leaders recognize that they cannot build their way out of traffic congestion by continually widening arterials and intersections to add capacity for automobiles. Instead, City leaders expect that there will be vehicle traffic congestion in some locations, especially during the local evening rush hour (p.m. peak period), and that this is a normal urban condition.

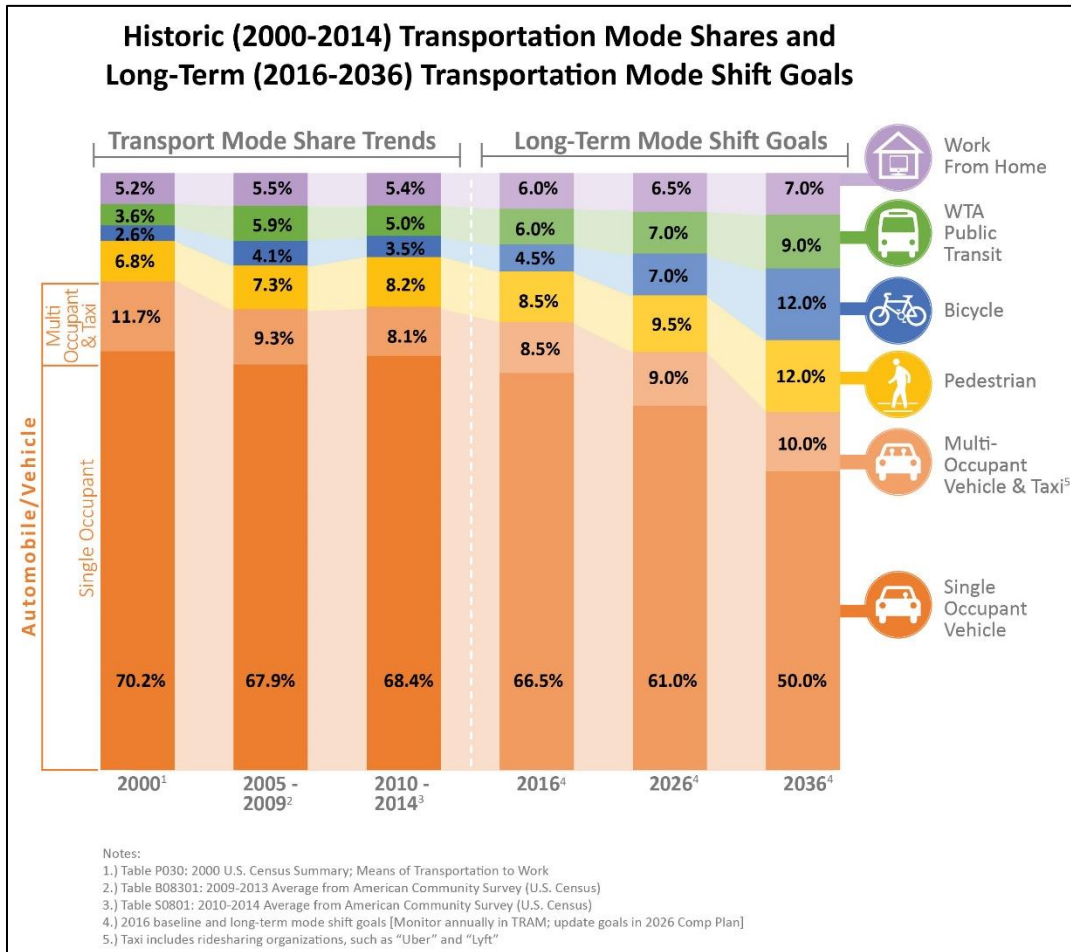
The City focuses transportation funding on improvements that will make walking, bicycling, and transit safe, comfortable, and convenient. The City is committed to enhancing the public realm at the street level, which is everyone's community space, and designing the urban streetscape primarily for people rather than automobiles. At the same time, there are some significant vehicular transportation improvements needed to support regional economic development, especially in the northern portion of Bellingham. Bellingham's overarching goal for transportation is to provide facilities and opportunities for safe, convenient, and reliable movement of people and goods throughout the City by multiple modes of transportation.

Streets are a public stage where life unfolds. From town parades and trick-or-treating, to markets and public gatherings, they're where people celebrate and come together with their neighbors.

Bellingham's focus is to view streets in their entirety - not just their function in transporting people and goods, but the vital role they play in animating the social and economic life of communities.

GOAL T-4 Reduce dependence on single-occupancy vehicles.

Policy T-17 Strive to decrease SOV work trips, while increasing work trips made by walking, biking, public transit, and ridesharing, as illustrated in the Mode Shift Goals graphic.



Policy T-18 Report standardized ACS data from the U.S. Census Bureau to track transportation mode to work patterns, with five-year averages reported at the beginning of each year in the TRAM.

Policy T-19 Continue to work with WCOG to administer the state-required Commute Trip Reduction program for large employers and encourage smaller employers to help both employees and customers make local trips by walking, biking, and riding transit or sharing rides.

Policy T-20 Encourage WCOG to continue reinforcing the link between City sidewalk, bikeway, and transit infrastructure improvements and travel decision-making by Bellingham residents and employees through the WCOG Smart Trips program.

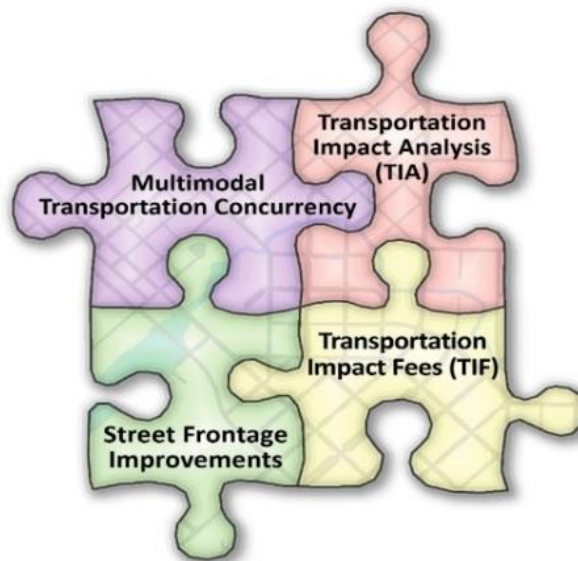
Transportation Planning Requirements

In order to maximize benefit and minimize cost, it is important to look for opportunities to take advantage of cost efficiencies when preparing and prioritizing publicly-funded transportation capital improvements. For example, when underground sewer, water, or stormwater utilities need repair, it may provide an opportunity to add a bikeway identified in the Bicycle Master Plan. When asphalt resurfacing is scheduled, sidewalk and curb ramp upgrades are automatically required by the federal Americans with Disabilities Act, which offers an opportunity to include improvements identified in the Pedestrian Master Plan. Asphalt resurfacing also offers an opportunity to re-channelize an arterial street to include bikeways identified in the Bicycle Master Plan. Likewise, if infrastructure improvements are scheduled on a corridor in an urban village that has been identified for placemaking opportunities, efficiencies may be gained in constructing both the transportation and placemaking improvements, provided funding can be allocated for all of the work. All of these examples also provide an opportunity to make these improvements using funding from sources (sewer, water, stormwater) other than transportation-specific funds (Street, TBD, grants).



Installation of rain gardens downtown was coordinated with pedestrian improvements.

The City also requires private development to help fund and construct transportation infrastructure that is needed to accommodate new growth and development. Both new development and redevelopment in Bellingham is subject to review to ensure that projects meet both local and state transportation planning regulations. The City has adopted multimodal LOS standards, a multimodal transportation concurrency ordinance, multimodal street standards, and multimodal transportation impact fees. The graphic to the right illustrates the four major transportation planning requirements used to review development proposals.



Multimodal Transportation Concurrency

The Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA) requires local jurisdictions to adopt level of service (LOS) standards for local arterials and transit service, as well as transportation concurrency management ordinances, to monitor and maintain locally adopted LOS standards [RCW 36.70A.070 (6)(a)(iii)(B) and WAC 365-196-430]. These GMA requirements are intended to ensure that local transportation infrastructure is adequate to serve the level of planned future growth in the community.

The state does not dictate any particular LOS standard, concurrency methodology, or what constitutes adequate transportation infrastructure in any community. These important decisions are made by each local jurisdiction, but coordination and consistency with other agencies and adjacent jurisdictions is required. In Bellingham, providing adequate transportation infrastructure to serve future planned growth occurs through the completion of mode-specific networks that have been adopted and constitute Bellingham's Complete Networks approach described above.



The multi-modal roundabout at Cordata Parkway and Kellogg Road was the first roundabout in the City (2002).

GOAL T-5 Maintain and improve streets, trails, and other infrastructure.

Policy T-21 Calculate “**Person Trips Available by Concurrency Service Area**” as Bellingham's adopted LOS standard to serve planned growth in different parts of the City. Per BMC 13.70 Multimodal Transportation Concurrency, Bellingham and the UGA are divided into Concurrency Service Areas (CSA) based on differing land use contexts and multimodal LOS is calculated for each CSA using the following performance measurements:

- Completeness of sidewalk network;
- Completeness of bicycle network;
- WTA transit capacity, transit route frequency, and transit ridership;
- Vehicle traffic volume to capacity; and
- Access to multiuse trails.

The City's LOS standards provide measurable criteria to judge the adequacy of the multimodal transportation system for new development by calculating person trips available for transportation concurrency evaluations, which are a pre-application requirement. As required by GMA, new development will be prohibited unless adequate person trips are available or multimodal transportation system improvements are made concurrent with the development. While adding vehicle capacity to an arterial street or intersection may be necessary in some circumstances, continual road widening is not a long-term solution to p.m. peak (rush-hour) traffic congestion. The City's transportation policies are focused on managing the multimodal transportation network safely, efficiently, and sustainably for all modes without unnecessarily widening arterial streets simply to add capacity for automobiles.

Policy T-22 Publish an annual report on adopted LOS standards and adequacy of the Citywide transportation system according to its Multimodal Transportation Concurrency Program (BMC 13.70) and the TRAM.

*A **Level of Service (LOS) standard** is a threshold that is adopted by a City to define what constitutes an adequate and acceptable condition at which the transportation system performs.*

***Transportation Concurrency** is a GMA requirement to ensure that a City transportation system keeps up with and can serve the amount of growth that is planned for in the community.*

***Multimodal Transportation Concurrency** is Bellingham's award-winning program, which integrates land use and transportation planning and establishes LOS measurements for all modes of transportation (pedestrian, bicycle, transit, vehicles, and multiuse trails).*

Policy T-23 Allocate adequate levels of local funding for ongoing maintenance and repair to sustain the substantial investments that the City has made to construct the sidewalk, bikeway, freight, and street networks.

Policy T-24 Strive to achieve silver certification using the Greenroads sustainability rating system for transportation improvement projects that exceed \$500,000 in costs, where feasible and appropriate, with the exception of arterial resurfacing and sidewalk repair projects.



The Meador-Kansas-Ellis Trails project received a silver Greenroads certification. The project's sidewalks are composed of recycled toilets ("poticrete").

Policy T-25 New transportation facilities should be sited, designed, and constructed to avoid or minimize environmental impacts to the extent feasible, consistent with the mitigation sequencing requirements in the Critical Areas Ordinance.

Transportation Impact Analysis (TIA)

The City's [Development Guidelines and Improvement Standards](#) require that a Transportation Impact Analysis ("Traffic Study") be completed for larger development projects that produce significant new p.m. peak hour vehicle trips or where there are known traffic congestion or public safety issues at nearby signalized intersections. Development projects that are required to complete a TIA will not be issued Transportation Concurrency Certificates until the TIA is complete and accepted by the City, including any off-site mitigation that may be required through State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) regulations.

Policy T-26 Develop innovative new methodology to measure, forecast, and mitigate negative impacts that new vehicle traffic may have on pedestrians, bicyclists, and public transit bus service when Transportation Impact Analyses are completed for new development.

Multimodal Street Standards

The City requires all new development abutting substandard public streets to fund and construct multimodal improvements to bring the street edge up to current Bellingham multimodal street standards (BMC 13.04). If a subdivision is proposed, then the developer must provide residential streets that have concrete curb, gutter and sidewalks unless there are special circumstances. If new development abuts an arterial street, then it must provide concrete curb, gutter, and sidewalk, as well as bicycle lanes at a minimum.

Policy T-27 Incorporate the needs of pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and vehicle drivers of all ages and abilities into Bellingham’s multimodal street standards (BMC 13.04).

Policy T-28 Encourage WSDOT to improve bicycle and pedestrian facility safety in all state highway projects, wherever possible.

Multimodal Transportation Impact Fees

The GMA allows local jurisdictions to assess transportation impact fees on new development to recover a proportional share of the local costs of providing transportation system improvements that are needed to accommodate planned future growth. The City has assessed Transportation Impact Fees (BMC 19.06) on new development since 1994. In 2011, Bellingham adopted the Urban Village TIF Reduction Program (BMC 19.06.040 E.), which is an economic development incentive to reward developers in compact, mixed-use urban villages that have complete sidewalk and bicycle networks and are served with WTA high-frequency transit service.

The transportation system improvements needed to accommodate planned future growth in Bellingham include sidewalk projects on the Primary Pedestrian Network and the bikeway improvements on the Primary Bicycle Network that are funded with local dollars. State and federal grant funding is not included in the assessment of TIFs for new development.

Policy T-29 Assess all new development for transportation impact fees to recover a proportional share of the costs of constructing planned transportation system improvements, including those in the Primary Pedestrian and Bicycle Networks that are necessary to accommodate the level of growth planned for 2016-2036.



A bicyclist rides with traffic in Barkley Village.

Policy T-30 Continue to incentivize infill development and redevelopment with the Urban Village Transportation Impact Fee Reduction Program.

Environmental Justice

Public Works produces a Title VI Annual Update Accomplishment Report to the Mayor, which demonstrates the measures that have been taken to comply with federal Title VI requirements for non-discrimination. This annual report provides a policy statement which assures that no person shall on the grounds of race, color, national origin, or sex, as provided by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987 (P.L. 100.259) be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity. The policy statement further assures every effort will be made to ensure non-discrimination in all of its programs and activities.

Public Works incorporates social equity and socio-economic needs into all multimodal transportation plans. Low-income housing, social services, and public transit needs were weighted heavily in the project prioritization process for the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plans and Whatcom Transportation Authority (WTA) specifically focused on under-served populations in the 2015 WTA Strategic Plan Update, which is also incorporated into Bellingham's multimodal transportation planning and the annual six-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

GOAL T-6 Ensure that social equity needs are addressed in all transportation projects.

Policy T-31 Provide accessible pedestrian and bicycle facilities for all through equity in public engagement, service delivery, and capital investment.

Policy T-32 Through a balanced prioritization process, invest in pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure in all Bellingham neighborhoods.

Policy T-33 Provide opportunities for Bellingham residents regardless of age, gender, ethnicity or income to engage in pedestrian and bicycle related activities.

Policy T-34 When communicating about multimodal transportation programs or projects, develop outreach materials that are accessible through various media to a wide range of constituents in multiple languages.

More Information

Further explanation of Bellingham's adopted LOS standards, Multimodal Transportation Concurrency Program, long-range transportation planning, annual six-year TIP, TIF, the Urban Village TIF Reduction Program, and other multimodal transportation issues are available on the City's website at <https://www.cob.org/services/transportation/>.

III. Bellingham's Multimodal Transportation System

NON-MOTORIZED TRANSPORTATION NETWORKS

Bellingham's Pedestrian Master Plan and Bicycle Master Plan are incorporated into the Bellingham Comprehensive Plan Transportation Chapter by reference. Each of these long-term master plans include primary networks and extensive project lists that have been prioritized according to significant analysis, mode-specific needs, and broad community input.

Pedestrian Network

Bellingham's Pedestrian Master Plan identifies a 266-mile Primary Pedestrian Network and 343 individual sidewalk and intersection crossing projects that have been subject to significant analysis and prioritized according to the needs of pedestrians and broad community input. Importantly, not all streets and intersections are included on the Primary Pedestrian Network. The planning-level cost to complete the pedestrian network is estimated to be \$225 million or more (2012 dollars).

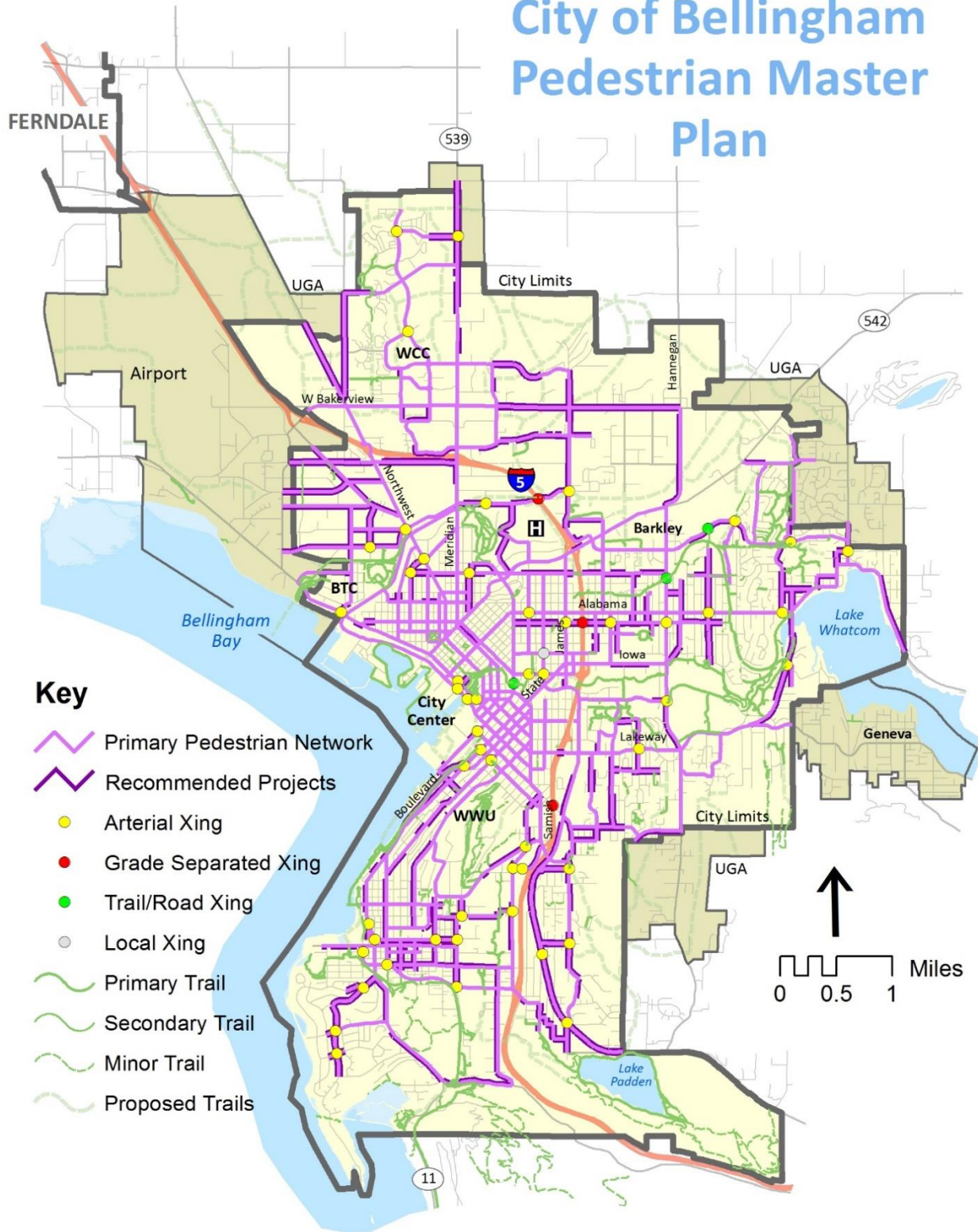
Bicycle Network

Bellingham's Bicycle Master Plan identifies a 160-mile Primary Bicycle Network and 185 individual bikeway projects that have been subject to significant analysis and prioritized according to the needs of bicyclists and broad community input. Importantly, not all streets and intersections are included on the Primary Bicycle Network. The planning-level cost to complete the pedestrian network is estimated to be \$30 million or more (2014 dollars).

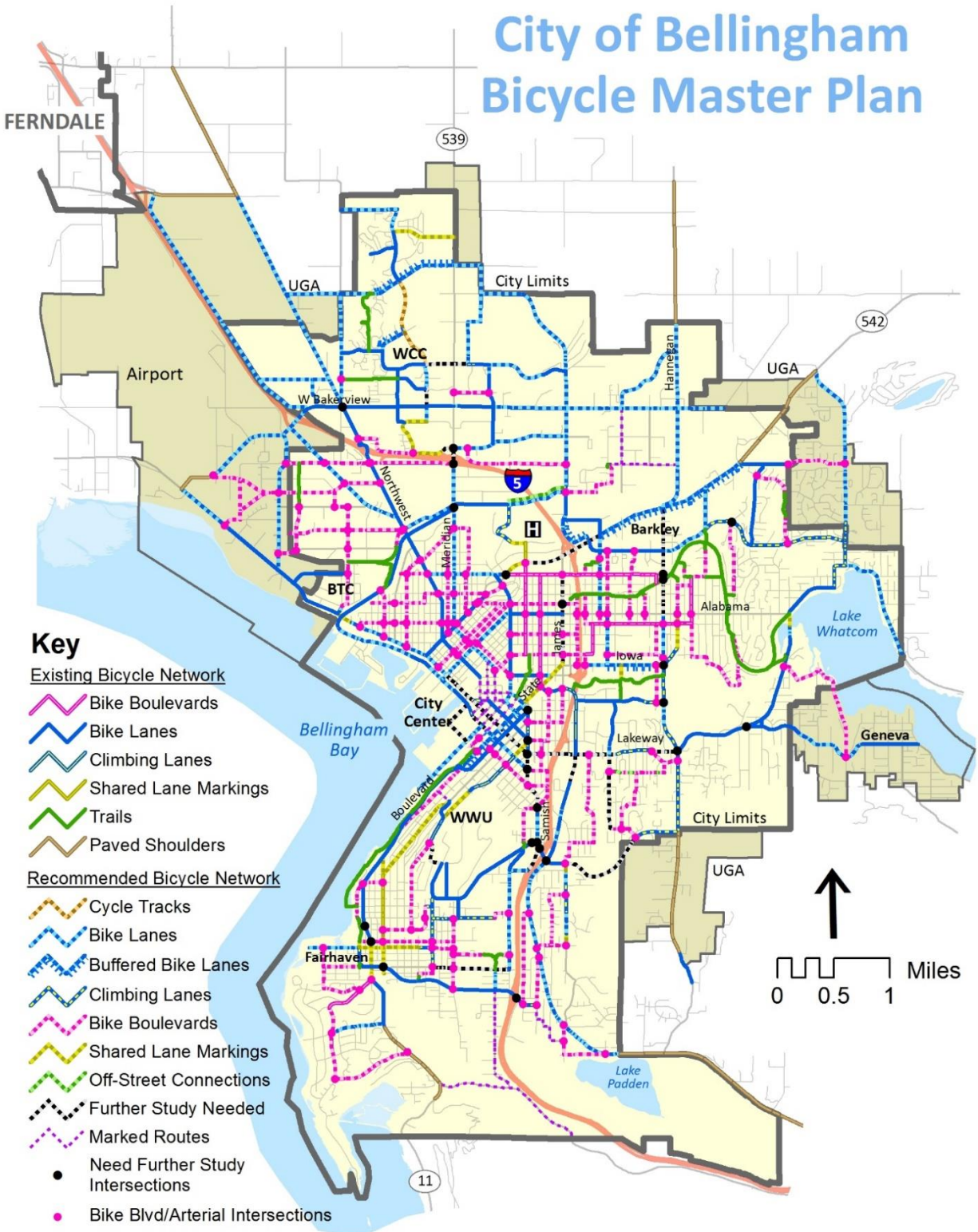
Multiuse Trail Network

The Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PRO) Plan identifies an existing 65-mile multiuse trail network and future plans for many more miles of public multiuse trails. While many trails in Bellingham are used by residents to travel, most trails are primarily for recreational use with transportation being a secondary benefit. While sidewalks are dedicated pedestrian facilities and bikeways are dedicated bicycle facilities, Bellingham's multiuse trails are used by a wide spectrum of users, which poses potential conflict issues between user groups. The gravel surfaced multiuse trails are also usually less direct routes to destinations for walkers and bikers. The multiuse Greenways trail network is complementary to, but not part of, the non-motorized pedestrian and bicycle transportation networks.

City of Bellingham Pedestrian Master Plan



City of Bellingham Bicycle Master Plan



MOTORIZED TRANSPORTATION NETWORKS

Public Transit Network

The [Whatcom Transportation Authority \(WTA\)](#) provides public fixed route transit bus service, paratransit bus service, and a vanpool program available to the public and employers. WTA is funded by sales tax revenue generated in a Public Transit Benefit Area (PTBA) that is contiguous with the boundaries of Whatcom County. WTA serves the City of Bellingham, as well as the smaller towns and communities of Ferndale, Lynden, Blaine and Birch Bay, Lummi Nation, Sudden Valley, Kendall, Everson, Nooksack and Sumas. WTA also cooperates with Skagit Transit in neighboring Skagit County to provide service between Bellingham and Mount Vernon.

Fixed Route Transit Bus Service

WTA's fixed route transit bus service in Bellingham features 30 routes, including a network of four high-frequency (15-minute) corridors called "GO Lines," which are branded with color schemes (Green, Gold, Blue, and Red). Service is offered seven days a week, with more limited service on Saturdays, Sundays and evenings. WTA transit service moves greater numbers of people in a safe, convenient, comfortable, and more efficient manner than capacity-consuming SOVs, and WTA transit service plays a critical role in helping Bellingham to meet its long-term mode shift goals.

Integrated Transit and Transportation Planning

The City of Bellingham works directly with WTA on both land use and transportation issues and all of Bellingham's urban villages are served with high-frequency 15-minute transit service. The City worked directly with WTA in the development of the 2004 WTA Strategic Plan and WTA staff worked directly with the City in the development of the 2006 Transportation and Land Use Chapters of the Bellingham Comprehensive Plan so that City and WTA plans are fully integrated with one another. The City and WTA also worked directly with each other as both agencies updated the 2015 WTA Strategic Plan and 2016 Transportation Chapter.

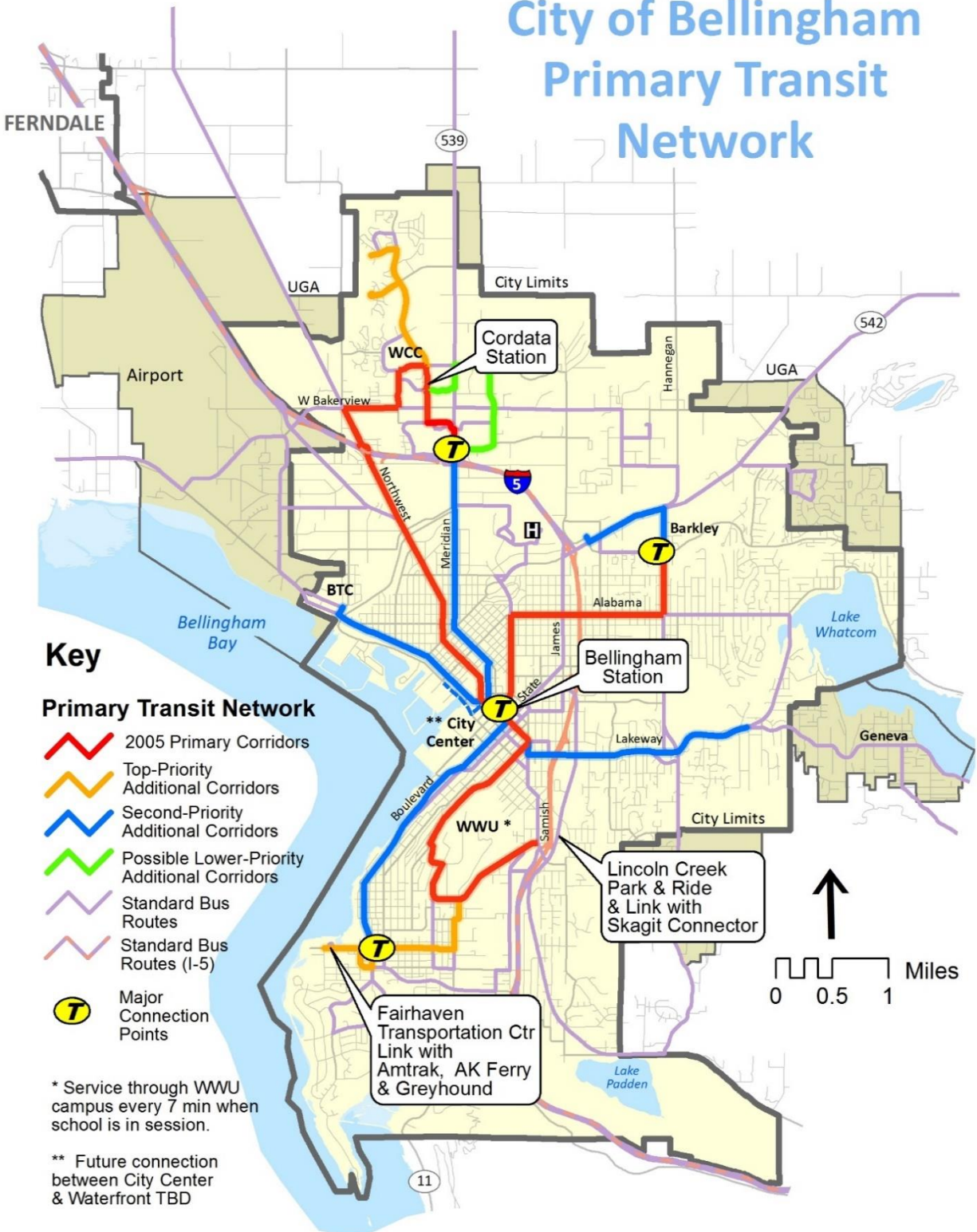
Paratransit Services

WTA's paratransit service area and span of service mirrors the WTA fixed route transit bus service and area. WTA provides an average of 600 paratransit trips per weekday.

Fleet and Facilities

In 2015, WTA's fleet included 60 full-size buses (including eight hybrid electric buses), 37 paratransit minibuses, and 39 vanpool vans. WTA operates four transit centers: Bellingham Station, Cordata Station (in north Bellingham), Ferndale Station and Lynden Station.

City of Bellingham Primary Transit Network



Arterial Street Network for Motorized and Non-motorized Users

Local arterial streets and traffic controls (signals and roundabouts) support motorized transportation, such as WTA transit buses, private automobiles, and freight trucks, but also provide benefits to non-motorized users, including pedestrians and bicyclists. The City requires sidewalks and bikeways on all arterial streets and the non-motorized and motorized networks are integrated with one another. State Highways are managed by the [Washington State Department of Transportation \(WSDOT\)](#), but are also integrated with the local arterial street network. This section primarily focuses on arterial streets and infrastructure as they relate to automobile and freight trucks use and describes the existing and planned arterial street network needed to accommodate Bellingham's planned growth and development.

Bellingham's arterial street network is locally classified into Principal, Secondary, and Collector arterials, with 2015 lane mile totals as follows:

- **Principal Arterial:** Major regional transportation corridors and state and federal highways that provide connections into Bellingham from other cities, Whatcom and Skagit Counties, and Canada. Access management is a critical safety issue for these streets.
- **Secondary Arterial:** Major local transportation corridors that provide connections within and between different parts of Bellingham.
- **Collector Arterial:** Local transportation corridors that provide connections from neighborhood residential streets to secondary and principal arterial streets.

These local classifications are different than the federal functional classifications administered by WSDOT.

In 2015, Bellingham's 265-mile arterial street network included the following major features:

- 105 lane miles of principal arterial;
- 103 lane miles of secondary arterial;
- 57 lane miles of collector arterial;
- 118 intersection traffic signals;
- 5 multimodal roundabouts;
- 27 pedestrian-activated flashing crosswalks;
- 6 pedestrian hybrid signals ["high-intensity activated crosswalks" (HAWKs)];
- 26 automated school zone flashers; and
- 2 variable message radar speed signs.

City of Bellingham Arterial Routes



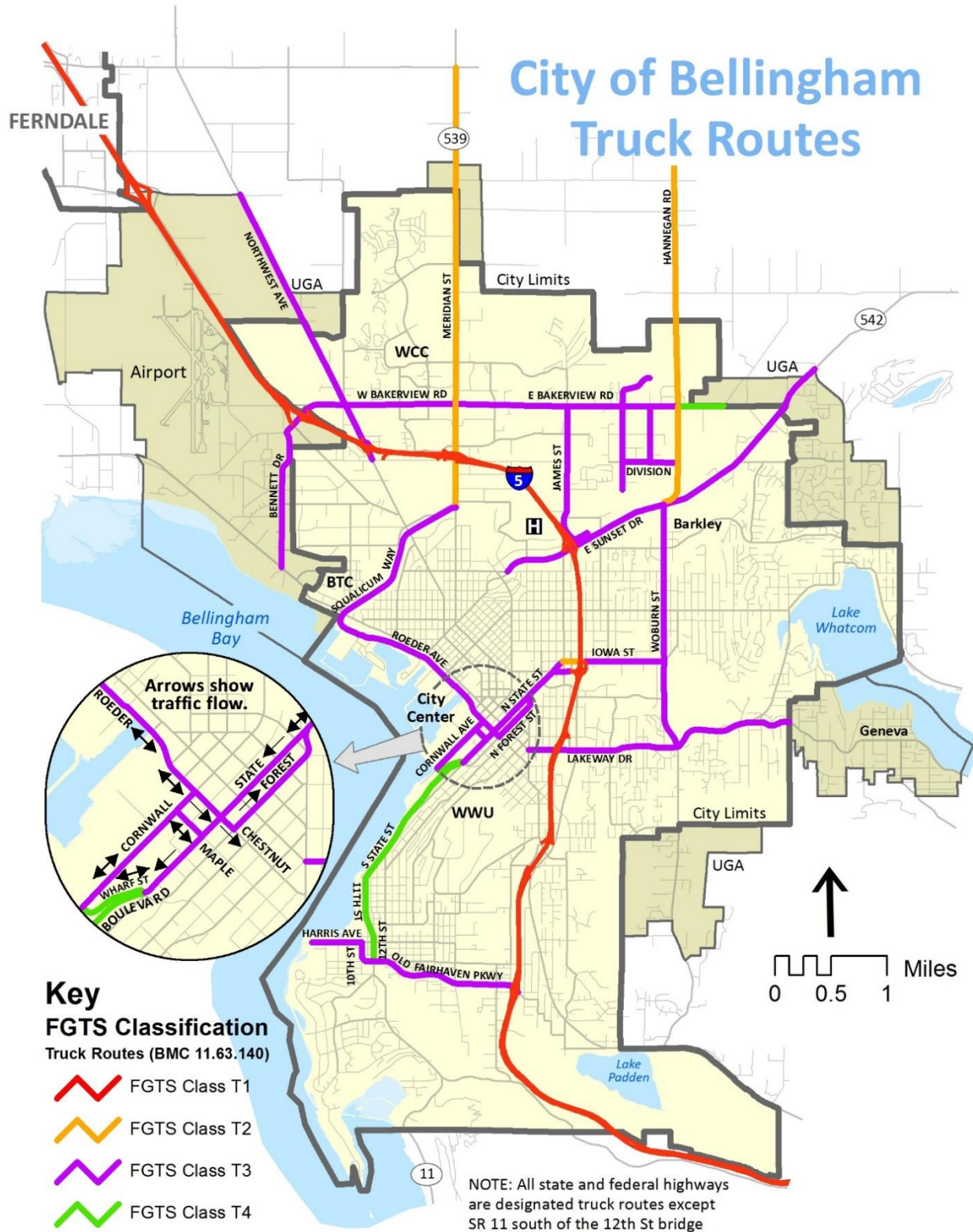
- Key**
- Principal Route
 - - - Principal Route (Proposed)
 - Secondary Route
 - - - Secondary Route (Proposed)
 - Collector Route
 - - - Collector Route (Proposed)
 - - - Residential/Other (Proposed)
 - Interstate 5

Designated Freight Truck Network

The City has classified several arterial streets and all state and federal highways as Designated Freight Truck Routes, as depicted below. The City encourages major freight shipping companies to direct their drivers to primarily use the designated freight truck routes, but freight delivery trucks cannot be prevented from using any public street for deliveries unless there are weight restrictions on bridges or other public safety access restrictions. As an example, if a family is moving into or out of a house and has hired a moving company to load or unload their belongings, a large semi-sized moving van must have access to its house via the local residential street. The same is true for large construction vehicles arriving to residential remodel sites.

In 2015, Bellingham worked with WCOG to collect freight truck counts and update Designated Freight Truck Route classifications by annual freight tonnage according to WSDOT Freight and Goods Transportation System (FGTS) requirements, as shown below.

Bellingham Designated Freight Truck Route Classifications		
Classification	Annual Tonnage	Example (see map)
T-1	> 10 million	Interstate 5
T-2	4 - 10 million	SR 539 (Guide Meridian)
T-3	300,000 - 4 million	SR 542 (Mt. Baker Highway)
T-4	100,000 - 300,000	12th St-State-Boulevard
T-5	< 100,000	None designated



State Highways

State highways are managed by the Washington State Department of Transportation. In Whatcom County, the state highway system includes one freeway (Interstate 5) and seven state highways - SR 9 (Canadian Border – King County), SR 11 (Chuckanut Drive), SR 539 (Guide Meridian), SR 542 (Mount Baker Highway), SR 546 (Badger Road), SR 548 (Grandview Road-Blaine Road), and SR 543 (Blaine Truck Crossing). State highways play a very important role in the Whatcom County, Bellingham and UGA street networks. In fact, with the exceptions of Hannegan Road and Lakeway Drive, all major points of entry into and through Bellingham are state highways.

Interstate 5 is the major north-south connection for the west coast of the United States providing a continuous transportation connection between Vancouver, B.C. and Tijuana, Mexico to the south. SR 9 is indirectly connected to Bellingham via SR 542 (Mount Baker Highway) and provides connections between Canada, Sumas, eastern Whatcom County, and north King County. SR 11 (Chuckanut Drive) connects Bellingham to Skagit County, SR 539 (Guide Meridian) connects Bellingham to Lynden and Canada, and SR 542 (Mount Baker Highway) connects Bellingham to eastern Whatcom County and the Mount Baker Snoqualmie National Forest recreational lands and wilderness areas. All of these highways fall under the administration of WSDOT and long-range improvements to state highways in the Bellingham UGA are listed in the [Washington Transportation Plan](#). Under RCW 47.06.140, Interstate 5 and SR 539 are defined as Highways of Statewide Significance and are essential state public facilities under the GMA (RCW 36.70A.200).

Sunset Drive (SR 542) and Old Fairhaven Parkway - Chuckanut Drive (SR 11) are designated as "State Highways of Regional Significance" and also play a significant role in the movement of people and goods. All of these state highways, which are also locally classified as arterial streets, are accounted for in Bellingham's Annual Assessment as to whether the transportation system has adequate capacity to serve the level of growth that is planned for. This is reported each year in the publication of the TRAM.

State Highways in Bellingham and the UGA		
State Route	Bellingham Name	Local/UGA Name
SR 5	Interstate 5	I-5
SR 11	Chuckanut Drive/Old Fairhaven Parkway	Chuckanut Drive
SR 539	Meridian Street	Guide-Meridian
SR 542	Sunset Drive	Mt. Baker Highway

While state highways allow a large volume of vehicle traffic to move people and goods into and through Bellingham, they can also create an impediment to efficient, safe functioning of the bicycle and pedestrian networks and pedestrian/transit connections. The mobility barrier created by I-5 creates a need to plan and engineer safe crossing locations for bicycles and pedestrians. SR 539 (Guide-Meridian) and SR 542 (Mt. Baker Highway) also serve as principal arterials, but do not have adequate sidewalks or bikeways. The heavy traffic volumes on these state routes also create obstacles to connecting neighborhoods and achieving connected and continuous bicycle and pedestrian networks. A lack of regular maintenance and sweeping of debris on these state routes can also create challenges and safety concerns for bicyclists. The City of Bellingham encourages WSDOT to improve bicycle and pedestrian facility safety in all state highway projects, wherever possible.

OTHER TRANSPORTATION AGENCIES AND SERVICE PROVIDERS

Port of Bellingham

The Port of Bellingham (Port) operates a variety of facilities within Bellingham and the UGA, including Squalicum Harbor, Whatcom International Shipping Terminal, the Fairhaven Terminal and Bellingham International Airport (BIA). These facilities support a full range of activities, including freight and passenger movement, retail businesses, industrial production, commercial services, recreation, foreign trade and tourism. Access to these facilities covers different modes of transportation, including air, water, rail, trucking and commercial buses. More information on Port of Bellingham facilities and services is available at <https://www.portofbellingham.com/>.

Squalicum Harbor

Located on 327 acres, the Squalicum Harbor facilities include the Harbor Center building, two retail malls, two yacht clubs, a major hotel complex, several restaurants, industries, fish processors, and a regional U.S. Coast Guard station. A year-round public moorage facility with capacity for 1,650 commercial and pleasure boats is located on 207 acres at the harbor. There is also a public boat launch with parking for 96 car/truck-trailer combinations. In addition to permanent moorage facilities, 1,500 feet of visitor moorage are available for transient vessels. The Squalicum Harbor multiuse trails connect to City trails.

Bellingham Shipping Terminal (BST)

Located in downtown Bellingham, the BST is a year-round marine cargo facility with three berthing spaces for cargo ships. Warehouse space of over 85,000 square feet is available to service cargo movement, storage and product processing. In the past, the BST handled shipping of aluminum ingots, liquid chemicals, lumber, fertilizer and automobiles. More recently, this facility has been used for manufacturing, storage of equipment, and fabrication of modules to support the oil industry and to offload and moor marine vessels and barges. The Port and City are working together to plan the City's waterfront, including multimodal access to the waterfront and integration of the waterfront with downtown Bellingham in the 21st century to take advantage of this deep water asset.

Fairhaven Transportation Center and Fairhaven Shipyard

The Fairhaven Transportation Center and Fairhaven Shipyard are located on the City's south side and includes the Bellingham Cruise Terminal, Fairhaven Station, dry docks, seafood processing plants, and a public boat launch. This multimodal transportation facility serves passengers arriving and departing by Greyhound bus, Amtrak Cascades rail service, the Alaska Marine Highway System, and privately operated commuter ferries to and from the San Juan Islands and local passenger charter vessel operations. WTA bus service and taxi service are available at the Fairhaven Transportation Center, providing easy access to state highways, I-5, and local medical and education services.

Air Transportation - Bellingham International Airport

The Port operates the Bellingham International Airport, which is the third largest commercial aviation facility in the state. BLI is classified by the Federal Aviation Administration as a small hub commercial and general aviation service airport. The airport is home to nearly 200 based general aviation aircraft, two fixed-based operators and air-taxi charters, and employees around 700 direct employees. In 2014, over 1 million passengers traveled through the airport. BLI provides commercial service to 10 nonstop destinations and is an international point of entry for general aviation. Facilities include a 6,701 foot precision instrumented air carrier runway, an air traffic control tower and a newly-expanded commercial service passenger terminal. Existing facilities at the airport

include terminal buildings and parking lots, an Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting facility, and a U.S. Customs inspection station. For detailed information on future plans at BIA, see the Bellingham Airport Master Plan available from the Port of Bellingham.

The Bellingham International Airport is located in the UGA adjacent to Bellingham's northwestern City limits, four miles northwest of downtown Bellingham and four miles southeast of downtown Ferndale. The airport was originally built as a federal facility in 1941 and was originally constructed with three runways, two of which have since been closed. The airport property consists of an irregularly shaped parcel of land bound on the east by I-5; on the south by Airport Road, Bancroft Road and the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad; on the west by Wynn Road and the Curtis Road industrial area in the westernmost UGA; and on the north by the Interstate Northwest Industrial Area and the Ferndale UGA. Opportunities to extend the airport's runway are severely constrained by existing roads, including I-5 to the north. Some potential exists to extend airport property to the west into rural Whatcom County; however, the Port currently has no plans for expansion.

Rail Transportation Facilities and Services

As was the case with many cities in the western United States, railroads played a significant role in Bellingham's early development. Industrial land use patterns in and near Bellingham are dependent on rail lines in the City and rail service to the Port's industrial areas is an essential link in the transportation system. Although the City has little control over the railroads within its boundaries, the railroads do have significant impacts on the community. The Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Railroad owns the railroad tracks and operates freight trains that serve Bellingham. The City works with BNSF staff to address at-grade railroad-street crossing issues and opportunities to reduce noise levels as trains move through the City.

Amtrak operates passenger trains between Portland, Seattle, and Vancouver, B.C. The Amtrak station in south Bellingham is part of the Fairhaven Transportation Center and provides an important link with the Greyhound bus terminal, Amtrak Cascades rail service, the Alaska Marine Highway ferry service, privately-operated commuter ferries to and from the San Juan Islands and WTA bus service. The location also provides easy access to state highways and Interstate 5. Railroad tracks can sometimes create a barrier to safe bicycle and pedestrian access to the waterfront and trail system to and along the waterfront. Opportunities to develop grade-separated railroad crossing should be explored wherever feasible.

Whatcom Council of Governments

WCOG is the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) responsible for carrying out federal transportation requirements and the Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO) responsible for state and regional transportation planning requirements required by the GMA. WCOG fulfills its MPO and RTPO function by adopting the Whatcom Transportation Plan (WTP) for Whatcom County. The WTP was adopted by the RTPO and MPO Policy Boards and will be referenced as the regional component of City and County Comprehensive Plan Transportation Elements.

The WTP consists of three basic components: 1) a comprehensive set of policies for roadways, public transportation and non-motorized transportation, 2) a set of recommendations for each mode, and 3) lists of future transportation projects in each jurisdiction. Specific transportation improvement projects are detailed in three sections: 1-3 year projects, 4-6 year projects, and 7-20 year projects. The WCOG oversees a regional travel demand model that allows local transportation planners to

analyze and forecast future transportation scenarios at the regional or macro-network level (see Section IV). More information about WCOG responsibilities and services is available at <http://wcog.org/>.

Intergovernmental Regional Coordination

Coordination is required to provide and manage an efficient multimodal transportation network throughout the City limits and the adjoining UGA to address regional transportation planning issues and project funding. To that end, the City works with many other agencies and jurisdictions, including:

- Whatcom Transportation Authority
- Whatcom County
- Port of Bellingham
- City of Ferndale
- Lummi Nation
- Whatcom Council of Governments
- Washington State Department of Transportation
- Federal Highway Administration

Various public agencies and private companies also provide transportation services and facilities in Bellingham and the UGA. The Port of Bellingham provides and manages marine and air transportation facilities for both passengers and freight. Railroad passenger transportation is provided by Amtrak and railroad freight transportation is provided by the Burlington Northern Santa Fe railroad. The Alaska Marine Highway system operates out of the Bellingham Cruise Terminal and provides vehicle and passenger service between Bellingham and Haines, Alaska. Greyhound Bus Lines operates out of the Fairhaven Transportation Center and provides nationwide bus passenger service. WSDOT builds, maintains, and improves state highways and the Interstate 5 freeway through Bellingham. Many private companies provide local bus, ferry, auto and truck rental, taxi, and air passenger service.

As transportation providers, the City of Bellingham and Whatcom County are responsible for improving and maintaining the network of local public streets, bike lanes, trails, and sidewalks. With the exception of state and interstate highways, transportation infrastructure in the Bellingham UGA is the responsibility of Whatcom County, but is connected to, and directly affects, the transportation infrastructure inside the City. Therefore, new public roads, bike lanes, and sidewalks will be constructed to connect different portions of the Bellingham UGA as it develops.

According to the GMA, an underlying assumption of UGAs is that the City will ultimately annex these areas and assume responsibility for the road network. Therefore, a carefully planned and coordinated transportation system is essential. Whatcom County and the City of Bellingham must continue to work together to develop a unified standard for the Bellingham UGA to provide safe and efficient multimodal movement of people and goods and adequate levels of service as these areas are annexed into the City and develop to urban densities.

IV. Forecast of Future Transportation Needs

The GMA requires a forecast of vehicle traffic for at least 10 years, including land use assumptions used in estimating travel (RCW 36.70A.070(6)(i)(d)). Bellingham works with WCOG staff in using the

regional travel demand forecast model to predict 20-year (2036) vehicle traffic conditions for Whatcom County. While travel demand forecast models can help to identify locations on the multimodal transportation network that may experience higher levels of vehicle traffic congestion, they often do not provide a comprehensive assessment of a transportation system's true multimodal capacity, overall performance, or need for improvement.

Travel demand models incorporate land use assumptions (population, housing, employment) and vehicle traffic counts, which means they are primarily vehicle based. Household travel surveys can help to inform travel demand forecast models on local trip making and transportation mode usage, but are very expensive to conduct and become dated fairly quickly. The WCOG travel demand forecast model has a base year of 2013, but relies on 2008 household travel survey data, which does not necessarily provide an accurate reflection of trip making in 2016, nor does it account for land use and transportation changes that have occurred between 2008 and 2016 that have altered personal trip-making choices in and around urban villages.

As Bellingham completes gaps in the pedestrian and bicycle networks, more people are anticipated to walk and ride bicycles for local trips in the City. As urban villages experience higher-density residential and commercial development, transit service is expected to become increasingly efficient and cost effective. As vehicle traffic congestion increases in certain locations, people may consider not driving during peak traffic hours, altering travel routes to avoid congested locations, or using a different means of travel such as walking, biking, or transit. Bellingham's transportation mode shift goals are based on this rationale, which is consistent with GMA goals for compact urban areas served by multimodal transportation systems.

The forecasts made by the WCOG travel demand forecast model are used as a starting point in analyzing future transportation needs. The City then applies local knowledge, local transportation goals, policies, and strategies, as well as professional judgement to consider long-term transportation improvement needs. While new arterial streets will be needed to support urban levels of growth and development in some parts of Bellingham, retrofitting arterial and residential streets on the pedestrian and bicycle networks will help to accommodate growth and development in other parts of the City. Improvements to support new growth and development can also be made by using the existing transportation systems more efficiently and effectively.

Transportation Demand and System Management

Transportation Demand Management refers to methods used to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of a community transportation system by reducing travel demand generated by users rather than physical expansion to increase system supply. Transportation System Management refers to methods used to improve the safety and efficiency of a community transportation system by providing better connectivity and mobility for all users of the system (see **Policy T-16**).

Bellingham Comprehensive Plan 2016 Multimodal Transportation Chapter

Table A. below shows transportation intersection and arterial street improvements that are necessary to accommodate planned growth and development inside of the 2016 City limits in the first five years of the planning period (2016-2021) and the amount of funding that has been secured for construction. The linear foot (LF) costs of these funded arterial street improvements also serve as a basis for preliminary cost estimates for yet-to-be-funded future transportation improvements in the tables that follow.

Arterial Street Improvements Needed to Accommodate Planned Growth and Development: 2016-2021												
A. Arterial and Intersection Improvements Fully or Partially Funded 2016-2021												
2016 City Limits Project Location	From	To	Linear Feet	Transportation Improvements <i>(Note: All include Sidewalks & Bikeways)</i>	Estimated Cost	Funded?	Federal	State	Local	Private/TIF	TIF Eligible?	Construction
12 th /Mill	Intersection		400	Intersection Realignment/Reconstruction; curb extensions; bikeways improvements	\$660,000	Yes	\$0	\$300,000	\$200,000	\$160,000	Yes, for local funds	2016
James/Woodstock	Intersection		400	Intersection Realignment/Reconstruction	\$1,850,000	Yes	\$1,850,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	No, 100% federal	2016
Arctic Ave	Bakerview	Mahogany	1,280	New Urban Arterial - Sidewalks, bike lanes, 2 travel lanes, left-turn lanes.	\$2,000,000	Yes	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$2,000,000	No, 100% Private	2016
Mahogany Ave	Northwest	Pacific Hwy	3,200	New Urban Arterial - Sidewalks, bike lanes, 2 travel lanes, left-turn lanes.	\$7,500,000	Yes	\$1,250,000	\$2,250,000	\$3,000,000	\$1,000,000	Yes, for local funds	2016-2017
Granary-Laurel Ave	Roeder	W. Laurel	1,270	New Urban Arterial - Sidewalks, bike lanes, 2 travel lanes, left-turn lanes.	\$10,500,000	Yes	\$6,700,000	\$0	\$3,800,000	\$0	Yes for local funding	2016-2017
W. Maplewood, Phase 1	Northwest	Alderwood	2,640	Reconstruct to Urban Arterial standard - Sidewalks, bike lanes, 2 travel lanes.	\$3,000,000	Yes	\$895,000	\$0	\$2,000,000	\$105,000	Yes for local funding	2017
Cordata/Stuart	Intersection		400	Convert Stop Control to Roundabout	\$2,100,000	Yes	\$0	\$1,500,000	\$400,000	\$200,000	Yes for local funding	2017
W. Horton Road Phase 1	Pacific Rim	Aldrich	1,340	New Urban Arterial - Sidewalks, bike lanes, travel/turn lanes. Include sidewalk & bike lane to Cordata ES.	\$5,500,000	Yes	\$3,400,000	\$0	\$0	\$2,100,000	No, 100% fed/pvt	2017-2018
Birchwood Extension (formerly Orchard)	Squalicum	James	2,900	New Urban Arterial - Sidewalk north side, bike lanes, 2 travel lanes, signal at James/E. Orchard	\$11,450,000	Yes	\$1,250,000	\$10,000,000	\$200,000	\$0	Yes for local funding	2018
James/Bakerview	Intersection		400	Convert Signal to Roundabout	\$3,900,000	50%	\$385,000	\$1,400,000	\$2,000,000	\$115,000	Yes for local funding	2018
Aldrich Road	Mahogany	Cordata ES	1,100	Widen east side to Urban Arterial - Sidewalk, bike lane, 2 travel lanes	\$1,900,000	Yes	\$778,127	\$0	\$1,046,873	\$75,000	Yes for local funding	2018
W. Bakerview / I-5	Pacific Hwy	Maplewood	1,200	Yet to be determined. Possible new northbound on-ramp on east side; possible bridge widening	\$10,000,000	Yes	\$0	\$10,000,000	\$0	\$0	Yes for local funding	2019-2020
Total			16,530	Total Costs	\$60,360,000	100.0%	Federal	State	Local	Private/TIF		
			15,330	<i>minus intersections = ~ \$3,250/LF¹ for arterials</i>			28.0%	45.0%	19.0%	8.0%	100.0%	
Total Funded				Funded Arterial Street & Intersection Projects	\$58,360,000	96.7%	\$16,508,127	\$25,450,000	\$10,646,873	\$5,755,000	\$58,360,000	
Yet to be Funded				Project Funding Still Needed	\$2,000,000	3.3%			\$2,000,000			
Citywide				Arterial Street Resurfacing, Repair, Maintenance	\$25,000,000	Yes			100%		No	2016-2022
Ped Master Plan				Various Unknown Tier 1, 2, 3 Sidewalk Links	\$7,000,000	Partial	5%	15%	75%	5%		2016-2021
Bike Master Plan				Various Unknown Tier 1, 2, 3 Bikeway Links	\$6,000,000	Partial	5%	25%	65%	5%		2016-2021
				Total Funding Needs 2016-2021	\$98,360,000							

Bellingham Comprehensive Plan 2016 Multimodal Transportation Chapter

Table B. below shows transportation intersection and arterial street improvements that are considered necessary to accommodate planned growth and development inside of the 2016 City limits in the second five years of the planning period (2021-2026). The estimated costs are based on the linear foot costs of the funded arterial street improvements in the first five years (2016-2020).

Arterial Street Improvements Needed to Accommodate Planned Growth and Development: 2022-2027												
B. Arterial and Intersection Improvements Not Yet Funded 2022-2027												
2016 City Limits Project Location	From	To	Linear Feet	Planned Improvements	Estimated Cost ¹	Funded?	Federal	State	Local	Private/TIF	Plan to Fund?	Construction
Bakerview/Northwest	Intersection			Feasibility study for safety improvements	\$100,000	No					Local	2022-2027
Bakerview/Northwest	Intersection		400	Safety improvements for vehicle collision reduction could include access management and, if possible, conversion of signal to roundabout	Unknown	No					State, federal grants; local Street fund	2022-2027
Connelly/I-5 SB on/off	Intersection		400	Construct a 4-way traffic signal	\$400,000	No					WSDOT; grants; local	2022-2027
Northwest/Aldrich	Intersection		200	Install right-in; right-out only turn restrictions	\$50,000	No					Local	2022-2027
Northwest/Maplewood	Intersection		400	Construct a 4-way traffic signal	\$400,000	No					State, federal grants; local	2022-2027
N. Samish Way, Phase 1	Ellis	Bill Mac		Road/Transit/Bikeway Feasibility Study	\$100,000	No					Local	2022-2027
N. Samish Way, Phase 2	Ellis	Bill Mac	3,700	Asphalt Resurfacing & ADA upgrades (5-foot sidewalks)	Unknown	No					Local	2022-2027
Cordata/Horton	Intersection		400	Convert Stop Control to Roundabout	\$2,000,000	No					State, federal grants; local Street fund	2022-2027
Meridian/Birchwood and Meridian/Squalicum	Intersection		1,000	Reconstruct Traffic Signals to Roundabouts	\$8,000,000	No					State, federal grants; local Street fund	2022-2027
James/Orchard	Intersection		400	Construct a 4-way traffic signal	\$400,000	No					State, federal grants; SEPA; local funds	2022-2027
James/Telegraph	Intersection		400	Construct a 4-way traffic signal	\$400,000	No					State, federal grants; local	2022-2027
James Street, Phase 1	E. Orchard	Bakerview	2,600	Widen to Urban Arterial - Sidewalks, bike lane, 2 travel lanes, left-turn lanes,	\$8,450,000	No					SEPA mitigation; local TBD	2022-2027
Railroad Quiet Zones	Through	Bellingham		Meet federal requirements for "Quiet Zones"	\$10,000,000	No					State, federal grants; local	2022-2027
				Total Yet to be Funded	\$30,300,000		28.0%	45.0%	19.0%	8.0%	100.0%	
Citywide				Arterial Street Resurfacing, Repair, Maintenance	\$25,000,000	Yes			100%		No	
Ped Master Plan				Various Unknown Tier 1, 2, 3 Sidewalk Links	\$7,000,000	Partial	5%	15%	75%	5%		2022-2027
Bike Master Plan				Various Unknown Tier 1, 2, 3 Bikeway Links	\$6,000,000	Partial	5%	25%	65%	5%		2022-2027
Total			9,900	Total Funding Needs 2022-2027	\$68,300,000							Unfunded

Bellingham Comprehensive Plan 2016 Multimodal Transportation Chapter

Table C. below shows transportation intersection and arterial street improvements that are considered necessary to accommodate planned growth and development inside of the 2016 City limits in the years 10 through 20 of the planning period (2027-2036). The estimated costs are based on the linear foot costs of the funded arterial street improvements in the first five years (2016-2020).

Arterial Street Improvements Needed to Accommodate Planned Growth and Development: 2028-2037												
C. Arterial and Intersection Improvements Not Yet Funded 2028-2037												
2016 City Limits Project Location	From	To	Linear Feet	Planned Improvements	Estimated Cost ¹	Funded?	Federal	State	Local	Private/TIF	Plan to Fund?	Construction
James Street, Phase 2	Bakerview	Kellogg	1,750	Widen to Urban Arterial - Sidewalks, bike lane, 2 travel lanes, left-turn lanes	\$5,688,000	No					Private; SEPA mitigation	2028-2037
James Street, Phase 3	Gooding	Van Wyck	3,600	New Urban Arterial - Sidewalks, bike lanes, 2 travel lanes, left-turn lanes.	\$11,700,000	No					Private; SEPA mitigation	2028-2037
W. Maplewood, Phase 2	Alderwood	City limit	2,250	Reconstruct to Urban Arterial standard - Sidewalks, bike lanes, 2 travel lanes.	\$7,000,000	No					Private; SEPA mitigation	2028-2037
Van Wyck	James	SR 539	2,800	New Urban Arterial - Sidewalks, bike lanes, 2 travel lanes, left-turn lanes.	\$9,000,000	No					Private; SEPA mitigation	2028-2037
Tull	Kellogg	Stuart	1,100	New Urban Arterial - Sidewalks, bike lanes, 2 travel lanes, left-turn lanes.	\$3,500,000	No					Private; SEPA mitigation	2028-2037
Deemer	Stuart	Horton	2,000	New Urban Arterial - Sidewalks, bike lanes, 2 travel lanes, left-turn lanes.	\$6,500,000	No					Private; SEPA mitigation	2028-2037
East Bakerview	Deemer	Hannegan	3,500	Widen to Urban Arterial - Sidewalks, bike lanes, 2 travel lanes, center left-turn lane	\$11,000,000	No					Private; SEPA mitigation	2028-2037
E. Horton	SR 539	Deemer	1,150	Widen to Urban Arterial - Sidewalks, bike lane, 2 travel lanes, left-turn lanes	\$3,700,000	No					Private; SEPA mitigation	2028-2037
Kline	Cordata	Aldrich	2,500	Widen to Urban Arterial - Sidewalks, bike lane, 2 travel lanes, left-turn lanes	\$8,100,000	No					Private; SEPA mitigation	2028-2037
Irongate	Ross Rd	Hannegan	1,300	New Urban Arterial - Sidewalks, bike lanes, 2 travel lanes, left-turn lanes.	\$4,200,000	No					Private; SEPA mitigation	2028-2037
Larrabee	Aldrich	Northwest	1,600	Reconstruct to Urban Arterial standard - Sidewalks, bike lanes, 2 travel lanes.	\$5,200,000	No					Private; SEPA mitigation	2028-2037
Arctic	Mahogany	June	1,300	New Urban Arterial - Sidewalks, bike lanes, 2 travel lanes, left-turn lanes.	\$4,200,000	No					Private; SEPA mitigation	2028-2037
June	Arctic	Northwest	200	New Urban Arterial - Sidewalks, bike lanes, 2 travel lanes, left-turn lanes.	\$700,000	No					Private; SEPA mitigation	2028-2037
San Juan	Pacificview	40th St	4,000	New Urban Arterial - Sidewalks, bike lanes, 2 travel lanes, left-turn lanes.	\$13,000,000	No					Private; SEPA mitigation	2028-2037
Governor	Mahonia	San Juan	5,300	New Urban Arterial - Sidewalks, bike lanes, 2 travel lanes, left-turn lanes.	\$17,200,000	No					Private; SEPA mitigation	2028-2037
Wildwood	Whitewater	Governor	1,000	New Urban Arterial - Sidewalks, bike lanes, 2 travel lanes, left-turn lanes.	\$3,200,000	No					Private; SEPA mitigation	2028-2037
				Total Yet to be Funded	\$113,888,000		15%	15%	20%	50%		
Citywide				Arterial Street Resurfacing, Repair, Maintenance	\$45,000,000	No			100%		No	
Ped Master Plan				Various Tier 1, 2, 3 Sidewalk Links	\$12,000,000	No	5%	15%	75%	5%		2028-2037
Bike Master Plan				Various Tier 1, 2, 3 Bikeway Links	\$10,000,000	No	5%	25%	65%	5%		2028-2037
Total			35,350	Total Funding Needs 2028-2037	\$180,888,000							Unfunded

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Table D. below shows transportation intersection and arterial street improvements that are considered necessary to accommodate planned growth and development inside of the 2016 UGA boundary in the years 10 through 20 of the planning period (2027-2036). The estimated costs are based on the linear foot costs of the funded arterial street improvements in the first five years (2016-2020).

Arterial Street Improvements Needed to Accommodate Planned Growth and Development in UGA: 2016-2037												
D. UGA and UGA Reserve Arterial and Intersection Improvements Not Yet Funded 2016-2037												
2016 Bellingham UGA				Estimated							Plan to	Construction
Project Location	From	To	Linear Feet	Planned Improvements	Cost	Funded?	Federal	State	Local	Private/TIF	Fund?	
Lakeway Drive	City limit	Lakeview	4,300	Rechannelize to Urban Arterial Standards - ADA sidewalks, bike lanes, 2 travel lanes, center left-turn lane, traffic signal at mid-point (Oriental)	?	No					Grants; County Road Fund	2016-2037
Bennett Drive	Airport	Marine	5,450	Rechannelization to Urban Arterial Standards - ADA sidewalks, bike lanes, 2 travel lanes	?	Yes					Grants; County Road Fund	2017
W. Horton Road, Phase 2	Aldrich	Northwest	2,600	New Urban Arterial - Sidewalks, bike lanes, 2 travel lanes, left-turn lanes. Roundabout at Northwest/Horton, signal at Aldrich/Horton	\$12,000,000	Partial 8.5% PE/ROW	\$1,000,000				State, federal grants; local funds	2022-2037
Deemer Road	Horton	Kelly	4,000	New Urban Arterial - Sidewalks, bike lanes, 2 travel lanes, left-turn lanes.	\$13,000,000	No					Private; SEPA mitigation	2028-2037
West Maplewood Avenue, Phase 3	City limit	W. Bakerview	1,350	Reconstruct to Urban Arterial standard - Sidewalks, bike lanes, 2 travel lanes.	\$5,000,000	No					Private; SEPA mitigation	2022-2037
			17,700		\$30,000,000							Unfunded
2016 Bellingham UGA Reserve				Estimated							Fund?	Construction
Project Location	From	To	Linear Feet	Planned Improvements	Cost	Funded?	Federal	State	Local	Private/TIF	Fund?	
Cordata Pkwy	Kline	Smith	6,850	New Urban Arterial - Sidewalks, bike lanes, 2 travel lanes, left-turn lanes.	\$22,200,000	No					Private; SEPA mitigation	2028-2037
Palmer Road	Yew Street	Governor	2,200	New Urban Arterial - Sidewalks, bike lanes, 2 travel lanes, left-turn lanes.	\$7,100,000	No					Private; SEPA mitigation	2028-2037
Total			9,050		\$29,300,000							Unfunded

V. Funding Transportation Improvements

In addition to a forecast of vehicle traffic for at least 10 years and transportation improvements necessary to serve planned growth and development, the GMA requires an analysis of future funding capability to judge transportation improvement needs against probable funding resources (RCW 36.70A.070(6)(a)(iv)(A)).

Six-Year Transportation Improvement Program

As required by State law (RCW 35.77.010), the City prepares an updated six-year TIP each year for public review, recommendation by Transportation Commission, and adoption by the City Council. The TIP document serves as a planning tool for transportation planners and engineers to plan, program, and seek funding for multimodal transportation projects that are necessary to serve planned growth and development. Most transportation grant funding agencies require eligible transportation improvement projects to be adopted in the City's six-year TIP or require that the project be adopted in the TIP prior to grant funding being obligated by the City. The TIP must be adopted by July 1 of each year and then must be transmitted to WCOG for inclusion in the Whatcom TIP and WSDOT for inclusion in the state TIP.

Annual Available Transportation Funding

Transportation capital improvements are typically very expensive and often funded through a variety of sources, which can include, but are not limited to, those listed below. All funding sources listed are affected by frequent changes in economic conditions, annual budgeted funding levels, and grant program eligibility requirements and scoring criteria. The City works with a variety of agencies to understand changes to grant program requirements and scoring criteria, which helps to maximize grant funding opportunities and make recommendations for projects to be added to the six-year TIP each year.

Local Funding Sources

Bellingham Street Fund: The Public Works Street Fund is comprised of the motor vehicle gas tax and a portion of the total sales tax collected by the City. From 2016 to 2026, it is anticipated that approximately \$2.3 to \$2.8 million will be available annually in the Street Fund for transportation capital improvements and street resurfacing.

- **Bellingham Transportation Benefit District:** Comprised of 0.2 cents of the total 8.7 cents per dollar of annual sales tax receipts collected within the City limits to fund the following transportation needs: arterial resurfacing, WTA transit, and non-motorized transportation infrastructure. The Bellingham TBD was approved by voters, is governed by the City Council, and is effective January 1, 2011, to December 31, 2020. From 2011 through 2015, the TBD has provided approximately \$4.1 to \$4.5 million annually. From 2016 through 2020, Bellingham anticipates that approximately \$4.9 to \$5.3 million in TBD funds will be available annually. In 2020, the TBD could be re-approved by Bellingham voters, which would provide almost \$34 million from 2021 through 2026 and over \$24 million from 2027 through 2030.
- **Bellingham Real Estate Excise Tax (REET):** Comprised of $\frac{1}{2}$ of one percent of the total real estate revenue for a given year. REET funding is divided into first quarter ($\frac{1}{4}$) and second quarter ($\frac{1}{4}$) and can be used for limited types of transportation projects. With the exception of Waterfront District infrastructure, it is not anticipated that REET funding will be available for transportation capital improvements.

- **Bellingham TIF:** The proportional share contribution from private developments for annual City transportation investments per BMC 19.06. From 2007 through 2015, Bellingham has collected approximately \$900,000 to \$1 million annually in TIF assessed from private development for Citywide transportation system improvements. From 2016 to 2026, the City anticipates that \$1 million to \$1.4 million will continue to be available annually in TIF assessed from private development for Citywide transportation system improvements.

Washington State Funding Sources

- **Transportation Improvement Board (TIB):** State grant funding for urban arterials and sidewalks. TIB is one of Bellingham's primary grant funding sources. From 2006 through 2015, the City was awarded \$12,726,000 in TIB grant funding, which is an average of \$1,272,600 per year, for Citywide transportation capital improvements. From 2016 through 2026, the City anticipates a slight annual increase in funding with an expectation to maintain an average of \$1.5 million in TIB grant funding.
- **State:** Includes State-funded educational institutions such as Western Washington University (WWU), Whatcom Community College (WCC), and Bellingham Technical College (BTC). From 2006 through 2015, the City worked with WWU, WCC, and BTC to create funding partnerships for transportation capital improvements surrounding each institution's campus, including traffic signals, roundabouts, new arterials, sidewalks, bikeways, and right-of-way dedications. The City expects to maintain positive and mutually-beneficial relationships with each of these institutions in the future, and anticipates that each will contribute to transportation improvements that benefit the institution.
- **SDOT:** Biennium budget - State gas tax revenue ear-marked for "Connecting Washington" transportation improvement projects administered through WSDOT, including the Birchwood (formerly Orchard) extension beneath Interstate 5, the Bakerview/Interstate 5 interchange, and a bicycle-pedestrian crossing of a state highway. WSDOT also administers a biennial bicycle and pedestrian grant funding program and from 2006 through 2015, the City was awarded \$593,000, which is an average of \$118,600 for each biennial funding cycle. From 2016 through 2026, the City anticipates a more aggressive pursuit of WSDOT bicycle and pedestrian grant funding and assumes an average of \$1 million each biennial funding cycle for a total of approximately \$5 million.

Federal Funding Sources

- **Federal:** Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA), or U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT)-administered grant funding programs, including the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP), as well as other programs. From 2006 through 2015, Bellingham received \$1,811,824 in HSIP grant funding, which is an average of \$362,365 for each biennial funding cycle. From 2016 through 2026, Bellingham anticipates a more aggressive pursuit of HSIP grant funding and assumes an average of \$500,000 each biennial funding cycle for a total of approximately \$2.5 million.
- **Safe Routes to School (SR2S):** As a 'first-class' medium-sized city, Bellingham receives federal, rather than state, SR2S funding. From 2006 through 2015, Bellingham received \$3,649,587 in federal SR2S funding, which is an average of \$729,917 for each biennial funding cycle. From 2016 through 2026, Bellingham anticipates a more aggressive pursuit of federal SR2S grant funding

and assumes an average of \$1,000,000 each biennial funding cycle for a total of approximately \$5 million.

- **Highway Bridge Program (HBP):** Federal funds for structural repair or replacement administered by the Washington State Bridge Replacement Advisory Committee (BRAC) with calls for projects every two years. From 2006 through 2015, Bellingham received \$5,142,000 in federal BRAC grant funding, which is an average of \$1,028,400 for each biennial funding cycle. From 2016 through 2026, the City anticipates maintaining an average of \$1 million for each biennial funding cycle.
- **Surface Transportation Program (STP):** Provides federal funds administered through MPOs to construct, maintain, and expand eligible regionally important arterial street systems. WCOG administers federal STP grant funding in Whatcom County with calls for projects every two years. From 2006 through 2015, Bellingham received \$14,635,000 in STP grant funding, which is an average of \$2,927,000 for each biennial funding cycle. From 2016 through 2026, Bellingham anticipates a slight increase in funding to maintain an average of \$3 million for each biennial funding cycle.
- **Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP):** Provides federal funds administered through MPOs to construct and enhance facilities for non-motorized transportation modes. WCOG administers federal TAP grant funding in Whatcom County with calls for projects every two years. From 2006 through 2015, Bellingham received \$700,000 in STP grant funding, which is an average of \$140,000 for each biennial funding cycle. From 2016 through 2026, Bellingham anticipates a slight increase to maintain an average of \$200,000 million for each biennial funding cycle.
- **Other Miscellaneous Grant Funding Programs:** It is likely that additional state and federal grant funding sources will become available to the City for transportation system improvements, but funding levels are unknown.

Public and Private Funding Partnerships

- Whatcom Transportation Authority
- Port of Bellingham
- Whatcom County
- Economic Development Investment (EDI) Board
- Bellingham School District (BSD)
- SEPA mitigation from private development
- Private business investment (right-of-way dedication, funding contribution, etc.)

The City has been very successful at creating transportation funding partnerships with other local agencies and private businesses to leverage limited local funding into significant grant funding awards from state and federal agencies. The City expects to maintain positive and mutually-beneficial relationships with these agencies and development interests in the future, and anticipates that each will contribute to transportation system improvements that benefit their interests.

Private SEPA Mitigation Funding

In many undeveloped portions of Bellingham, the UGA, and the UGA Reserve, private development will be required to fund and construct new arterial streets to urban standards, or provide mitigation funding to the City.

VI. Multi-Year Financing Plan

The planning-level cost estimates for transportation improvements within the 2016 Bellingham City limits are identified in Tables A - C and, when measured against the probable public funding resources available to the City, there appears to be a shortfall of approximately \$30 million dollars. Several arterial projects and intersections listed in Tables B and C will require private SEPA mitigation funding contributions or they will not be constructed. In many undeveloped portions of Bellingham, the UGA, and the UGA Reserve, private development will be required to fund and construct new arterial streets and intersections to urban standards, or provide significant mitigation funding toward construction, or the City will not approve the development or issue building permits. Some projects listed may prove to be financially prohibitive, which may result in less development in some of the more challenging locations to develop such as areas with steep slopes, salmon streams, wetlands, and wildlife habitat.

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E. Anticipated Funding Available for Transportation System Improvements 2016-2027													
LOCAL FUNDING	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	Totals
Street Fund ¹	\$2,300,000	\$2,350,000	\$2,400,000	\$2,450,000	\$2,500,000	\$2,550,000	\$2,600,000	\$2,650,000	\$2,700,000	\$2,750,000	\$2,800,000	\$2,850,000	\$30,900,000
TBD ²	\$4,900,000	\$5,000,000	\$5,100,000	\$5,200,000	\$5,300,000	\$5,400,000	\$5,500,000	\$5,600,000	\$5,700,000	\$5,800,000	\$5,900,000	\$5,950,000	\$65,350,000
TIF ³	\$950,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,050,000	\$1,100,000	\$1,150,000	\$1,200,000	\$1,250,000	\$1,300,000	\$1,350,000	\$1,400,000	\$1,450,000	\$1,500,000	\$14,700,000
REET ⁴	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Totals	\$8,150,000	\$8,350,000	\$8,550,000	\$8,750,000	\$8,950,000	\$9,150,000	\$9,350,000	\$9,550,000	\$9,750,000	\$9,950,000	\$10,150,000	\$10,300,000	\$110,950,000
STATE FUNDING													
TIB	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000	\$16,500,000
Bike-Ped		\$1,000,000		\$1,000,000		\$1,000,000		\$1,000,000		\$1,000,000		\$1,000,000	\$5,000,000
Connecting WA			\$10,000,000		\$10,000,000								\$20,000,000
Totals	\$1,500,000	\$2,500,000	\$11,500,000	\$2,500,000	\$11,500,000	\$2,500,000	\$1,500,000	\$2,500,000	\$1,500,000	\$2,500,000	\$1,500,000		\$41,500,000
FEDERAL FUNDING													
HSIP	\$500,000		\$500,000		\$500,000		\$500,000		\$500,000		\$500,000		\$3,000,000
SR2S		\$1,000,000		\$1,000,000		\$1,000,000		\$1,000,000		\$1,000,000		\$1,000,000	\$5,000,000
STP		\$2,000,000		\$2,000,000		\$2,000,000		\$2,000,000		\$2,000,000		\$2,000,000	\$10,000,000
TAP		\$200,000		\$200,000		\$200,000		\$200,000		\$200,000		\$200,000	\$1,000,000
Totals	\$500,000	\$3,200,000	\$500,000	\$3,200,000	\$500,000	\$3,200,000	\$500,000	\$3,200,000	\$500,000	\$3,200,000	\$500,000	\$3,200,000	\$22,200,000
PARTNERSHIP FUNDING													
Miscellaneous ⁵	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000		\$1,100,000
PRIVATE SEPA MITIGATION FUNDING													
New Development													Unknown
2016-2027 Total												\$175,750,000	

Notes:

1. Assumption: Street Fund revenue increases approximately 1.5% - 2% annually.
2. TBD expires 12-31-2020. Assumption: TBD reapproved by Bellingham voters in 2020 and TBD revenue increases approximately 1.5% - 2% annually.
3. Assumption: Transportation Impact Fees (TIF) revenue increases approximately 1.5% - 2% annually.
4. Assumption: REET funding continues to be allocated solely to Waterfront District infrastructure to support redevelopment.
5. Includes WWU, WCC, BTC, WTA, BSD, Parks, and Private Businesses

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F. Anticipated Funding Available for Transportation System Improvements 2028-2037											
LOCAL FUNDING	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036	2037	Totals
Street Fund¹	\$2,900,000	\$2,950,000	\$3,000,000	\$3,050,000	\$3,100,000	\$3,200,000	\$3,250,000	\$3,300,000	\$3,350,000	\$3,400,000	\$31,500,000
TBD²	\$5,900,000	\$6,000,000	\$6,100,000	\$6,200,000	\$6,300,000	\$6,400,000	\$6,500,000	\$6,600,000	\$6,700,000	\$6,800,000	\$63,500,000
TIF³	\$1,450,000	\$1,500,000	\$1,550,000	\$1,600,000	\$1,650,000	\$1,700,000	\$1,750,000	\$1,800,000	\$1,850,000	\$1,900,000	\$16,750,000
REET⁴	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Totals	\$10,250,000	\$10,450,000	\$10,650,000	\$10,850,000	\$11,050,000	\$11,300,000	\$11,500,000	\$11,700,000	\$11,900,000	\$12,100,000	\$111,750,000
STATE FUNDING											
TIB	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000	\$15,000,000
Bike-Ped		\$1,000,000		\$1,000,000		\$1,000,000		\$1,000,000		\$1,000,000	\$5,000,000
Totals	\$1,500,000	\$2,500,000	\$1,500,000	\$2,500,000	\$1,500,000	\$2,500,000	\$1,500,000	\$2,500,000	\$1,500,000	\$2,500,000	\$20,000,000
FEDERAL FUNDING											
HSIP	\$500,000		\$500,000		\$500,000		\$500,000		\$500,000		\$2,500,000
SR2S		\$1,000,000		\$1,000,000		\$1,000,000		\$1,000,000		\$1,000,000	\$5,000,000
STP		\$2,000,000		\$2,000,000		\$2,000,000		\$2,000,000		\$2,000,000	\$10,000,000
TAP		\$200,000		\$200,000		\$200,000		\$200,000		\$200,000	\$1,000,000
Totals	\$500,000	\$3,200,000	\$500,000	\$3,200,000	\$500,000	\$3,200,000	\$500,000	\$3,200,000	\$500,000	\$3,200,000	\$18,500,000
PARTNERSHIP FUNDING											
Miscellaneous⁵	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$1,000,000
PRIVATE SEPA MITIGATION FUNDING											
New Development											Unknown
2028-2037 Total											\$151,250,000

Notes:

1. Assumption: Street Fund revenue increases approximately 1.5% - 2% annually.
2. Assumption: TBD reapproved by Bellingham voters in 2020 and again in 2030 with TBD revenue increasing approximately 1.5% - 2% annually.
3. Assumption: Transportation Impact Fees (TIF) revenue increases approximately 1.5% - 2% annually.
4. Assumption: REET funding continues to be allocated solely to Waterfront District infrastructure to support redevelopment.
5. Includes WWU, WCC, BTC, WTA, BSD, Parks, and Private Businesses

Bellingham Comprehensive Plan Economic Development Chapter

2016



Photo by Buff Black

I. Introduction

The City of Bellingham has long recognized the benefits of a strong and diverse local economy. The City's Visions for Bellingham community goal-setting process completed in the early 1990s acknowledged the importance of sustainable economic growth in a series of goal statements that became the basis for the 1995 Comprehensive Plan. Additional goals and policies were added to the visions in the 2006 Comprehensive Plan as a result of additional community workshops; however, neither of these earlier versions of the plan had a chapter devoted solely to economic development. In 2013, the Economic Development Chapter was added to the Comprehensive Plan to identify goals and policies to help achieve the Legacies.

What is Economic Development?

No single definition incorporates the many aspects of economic development. It is typically described as the **creation of jobs** and wealth and the **improvement of quality of life** for all residents. Economic development can also be described as a process that influences the growth and restructuring of an economy to enhance the economic well-being of a community – its citizens, businesses and government. Economic development activities can help existing and new businesses reach their goals. Economic development programs do not directly create jobs; businesses do. Even so, the City can play an important role in providing a positive environment within which economic opportunities can thrive (see "The City's Role in Economic Development" section).

The **main goal** of economic development is to improve the economic and social well-being of a community through efforts that encourage the creation and retention of jobs, enhance the tax base and improve the quality of life. There is no single strategy, policy or program for achieving successful economic development.

Although definitions, policies and strategies differ, it is clear that without a strong, diverse and sustainable economy, the outstanding public safety agencies, cultural amenities, recreational facilities and other services provided by the City will become increasingly difficult to sustain. While cities typically have a somewhat limited role in economic development activities, the City does have the ability (and the responsibility) to **protect and enhance the "livability" attributes of Bellingham** – the parks, trails, open spaces, libraries, playfields, historic buildings, successful downtown, diverse neighborhoods, excellent public safety services and healthy natural environment. Maintaining these assets is critically important in attracting and retaining employers and a talented, educated workforce.



The Granary building will be repurposed into a mixed-use building as part of the first phase of redevelopment of the Waterfront District. Photo by Angelica Orozco.

The City can also take the lead in ensuring that economic growth is balanced with other community values of environmental quality and social equity. Implicit in this concept is the development of a measurement system. Through the annual "**Performance Measures Program**", the City uses a series of measurable attributes ("metrics") to track achievement of a variety of economic,

environmental, social and other community goals. It is important that this program continue and be enhanced as a way for the City to monitor progress toward achieving the economic development and other goals in the Comprehensive Plan.

Coordinated Economic Development Activities

In Bellingham and Whatcom County, various agencies, both private and public, are dedicated to economic development activities. The City can provide leadership to support this effort by working to enhance coordination and communication between agencies and organizations.

Economic development is not an isolated activity within the borders of a city and can be affected by events occurring at the county, state, national or international levels. To be successful, economic development activities must be carried out through **partnerships** with other governments and agencies.

The City partners with numerous agencies throughout Whatcom County to provide workforce and economic and community development services that enhance Bellingham's economic vitality. These partnerships offer opportunities for coordination and synergy.

The purpose of this chapter is to:

1. Highlight and elaborate upon the City's Legacy commitment to create a "**vibrant, sustainable economy**".
2. Identify the **City's role** in economic development activities.
3. Provide a framework for the City's **Economic Development Strategic Action Plan (ED-SAP)**.

The City's Role in Economic Development

The City's **PRIMARY ROLES** in economic development activities include:

ROLE 1: Provide strong **LEADERSHIP** to create a **POSITIVE ENVIRONMENT**, both physical and social, that supports business activity and a high quality of life for employees and residents. Examples of potential activities:

- Periodically review the Economic Development Strategic Action Plan to prioritize and help achieve the City's economic development goals, policies and Legacies and Strategic Commitments (see "Positive Business Climate" section).
- Support agencies with missions explicitly directed at economic development activities and improving the business climate.
- Continue to provide and support high quality amenities that make Bellingham a desirable place to live and do business.

ROLE 2: Ensure that there is enough properly zoned, developable **LAND and INFRASTRUCTURE CAPACITY** to accommodate the expected 20-year employment growth. Examples of potential activities:

- Periodically review and update employment lands demand and supply data.
- Provide and maintain high quality infrastructure to support employment lands.

ROLE 3: Provide **EXCELLENT SERVICES** that foster business growth and retention, and minimize expenses. Examples of potential activities:

- Provide timely, predictable and cost-effective permitting processes.
- Periodically assess the effects of City tax and fee policies on economic development goals.

Economic Development Resource Documents

In addition to the City Council's adopted Legacies and Strategic Commitments, **several other documents** provide direction for economic development efforts in Bellingham and the greater Whatcom County region. The policies and other information in these documents informed the development of many of the goals and policies in this chapter.

Examples of **policy documents** and additional resources include:

- [City of Bellingham Consolidated Plan](#)
- [Whatcom County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy](#)
- [City of Bellingham Employment Lands Study, Phases I and II](#)
- [Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan](#)

In 2010, Phase I of the **Regional Economic Development Strategy** listed above was completed. The report includes the results of a business survey and series of interviews conducted by a collaborative team of economic development practitioners and partner agencies. The project lead was the Northwest Economic Council in contract with Western Washington University's (WWU) Center for Economic and Business Research. The online survey was designed to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the business environment in Whatcom County. Roughly 400 businesses responded. In addition to the survey, the project team identified and interviewed 21 key business leaders, economic development professionals and City leaders. The survey results were combined with the results of the interviews to produce an analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (or SWOT) related to the economies of Bellingham and Whatcom County. The results of the SWOT analysis were used in the development of this chapter (see Section IV).

The **SWOT assessment** identified **several reoccurring themes**: business diversity, quality of life/location (e.g. natural beauty, proximity to Canada, agricultural lands, employment center), infrastructure (e.g. transportation, utility, technology) and business resources (e.g. higher education, economic development organizations and nonprofits). The SWOTs are further defined and explained under the following five categories, which form the organizational basis for the goals and policies of this chapter:

Positive Business Climate
Economic Diversification
Land and Infrastructure
Vibrant Commercial Centers
Quality of Life

The chapter's five goals mirror the City's Legacies and Strategic Commitments and emphasize the interdependence of the environment, economy and society:

- GOAL ED-1** **Build and maintain a positive and competitive business-friendly climate that will retain, grow and attract high-quality businesses.**

- GOAL ED-2** **Accommodate a broad mix of employment opportunities, while actively seeking a greater proportion of living wage jobs that will benefit a broad cross-section of Bellingham residents.**

- GOAL ED-3** **Maintain an adequate supply of developable employment lands and supporting infrastructure to accommodate forecasted growth and accomplish the City's economic development goals.**

- GOAL ED-4** **Foster vibrant urban villages.**

- GOAL ED-5** **Continue to invest in the quality of life attributes that provide the City with a competitive advantage in terms of economic development.**

II. Goals and Policies

Positive Business Climate

A positive economic climate is a significant factor in business locational decisions. A mutually-beneficial relationship between government and business is also an important component for promoting economic development and prosperity. For the purposes of this chapter, the definition of a positive and competitive business climate is the creation of a supportive environment for business retention and expansion via the efficient delivery of governmental services; a cost-effective tax, fee and regulatory structure; and effective partnerships with agencies that engage in direct economic development activities. The City can promote a positive business climate in a number of ways as identified in the following goal and policy statements.

GOAL ED-1 Build and maintain a positive and competitive business-friendly climate that will retain, grow and attract high-quality businesses.

Policy ED-1 Periodically review and assess the impacts of the City's regulatory structure, taxes, fees and utility rates on Bellingham's economic development goals and make adjustments as appropriate.



Staff at the City's permit center answer zoning and permit questions daily.

Policy ED-2 Establish incentives to promote economic development activity and environmentally-responsible business practices.

Policy ED-3 Recognize and consider the potential economic impacts of proposed legislative actions prior to adoption.

Policy ED-4 Continually review and evaluate the City's permit processes in order to provide timely, cost-effective services and predictable outcomes.

Policy ED-5 Continue the City's Performance Measures program as a means of monitoring progress toward achieving the economic development and other goals in the Comprehensive Plan.

Examples of metrics related to economic development include average wages in Whatcom County, annual City sales tax receipts and number of jobs.

As stated in Section I (Introduction), this chapter of the Comprehensive Plan is intended, in part, to provide the framework for the City's Economic Development Strategic Action Plan. The ED-SAP defines and prioritizes the City's activities with respect to achieving the economic development goals and policies in the Comprehensive Plan.

Policy ED-6 Periodically review the ED-SAP to help achieve the City's economic development goals and policies.

Policy ED-7 Implement the ED-SAP to encourage and stimulate business activity.

Economic development is regional in nature and, as a result, no single entity or agency can carry out all the necessary activities. Developing a culture of collaboration and enhanced coordination both in Bellingham and among neighboring communities is important in creating a positive climate for businesses and for the economic well-being of the City and its residents.

Policy ED-8 Coordinate City activities and share resources with agencies and organizations that provide direct economic development and other business services such as business retention and growth counseling, start-up assistance, recruitment, marketing, and environmentally-responsible business practices.

Policy ED-9 Aid the efforts of business associations to promote economic activities and tourism.

Policy ED-10 Continue to build strong working relationships with Whatcom County, the Port of Bellingham and the small cities within Whatcom County to address regional economic development issues and support a thriving regional economy.



Kayaker enjoys Bellingham Bay, with downtown and Mount Baker in the background. Photo by Jamie Valenta.

Policy ED-11 Provide and support initiatives that enhance quality of life amenities, expand job training opportunities and support other economic development goals and policies.

Policy ED-12 Continue to support the expansion and infrastructure needs of Western Washington University, Whatcom Community College, Bellingham Technical College, the Bellingham School District, PeaceHealth (St. Joseph's Hospital medical facilities), the Port of Bellingham and other major employers that offer a diverse range of living wage jobs.

Policy ED-13 Support the ongoing efforts of Bellingham's educational institutions to partner and build connections with economic development agencies and local businesses.

*Bellingham is home to several **institutions of higher education** that contribute new ideas and innovations, cultural offerings and training and internship opportunities that benefit students and businesses. These institutions, along with the City and several business networks, can offer resources to businesses large and small.*

Policy ED-14 Support the efforts of business and educational institutions to train workers to meet the current and future needs of local businesses.

Policy ED-15 Continue to provide internships and other job training opportunities in city government.

Policy ED-16 Support startup efforts to make it easier for businesses to get started in Bellingham.

Policy ED-17 Support access to working capital and other forms of financial assistance to encourage entrepreneurship, innovation and business growth.

Economic Diversification

In Whatcom County, employment data show that the number of jobs has grown consistently since 1982. Local job growth has been consistent with state and national trends - the services sectors (trade, services, government, financial, transportation) have grown over time, while goods production (mining, construction, forestry, fishing and manufacturing) has decreased as a share of total employment.

Bellingham is fortunate to be the home of a variety of large, diverse employers representing the medical/health services, education, government, light industrial, communications and retail sectors. The top 20 employers account for one out of every four jobs in Bellingham. Table 1 in Section III shows the top 25 employers in Whatcom County, many of which are located in Bellingham or its unincorporated urban growth area (UGA). Section III also includes figures that illustrate the share of jobs in Bellingham and the UGA by industry sector and compares the occupations of people living in Bellingham with the remainder of Whatcom County. For more detailed information on the economy of Bellingham and Whatcom County, see the State of Washington's Employment Security Dept. and Office of Financial Management websites and WWU's Center for Economic and Business Research website.

While the City is home to a number of large employers, small businesses make up an important part of the local economy. Sixty percent of businesses in Bellingham have four or fewer employees. These small businesses account for about 12% of the total jobs in the City and UGA.

What is Economic Diversification?

A fundamental aspect of the "quality of life" characteristics of a city is a robust and diversified economy. A diversified economy is one that provides a wide variety of job opportunities in various sectors suited to all skill levels of the workforce. Such an economy would provide opportunities for all segments of the community, from manufacturing and marine trades to medical research and high technology. A diversified economy is able to absorb inevitable market changes and business cycle fluctuations. Overreliance on any one sector of the economy makes a community more vulnerable to inevitable business cycle downturns and market changes.



Ryzex, a local company with a worldwide customer base, employs about 150 people and sells, repairs and refurbishes new and used data collection equipment.

A strong and diverse economy is also one that provides a sustainable tax base to meet community needs. A robust economy is more likely to provide the revenues necessary to sustain the outstanding public safety agencies, unique cultural amenities, world class recreational facilities and other facilities and services that community members have come to expect.

Economic strength also means jobs that pay a "living wage". A living wage is one that allows households to meet their basic needs for food, shelter, transportation, child care and other needs.

This is an especially important issue in Bellingham, where wages have typically lagged behind those of other cities in Washington State.

Bellingham's wages have also been below the county and state averages (see Table 2, Median Family and Household Income, in Section III). According to a recent United Way ALICE (asset limited, income constrained, employed) report, ALICE households coupled with those in poverty, comprise 49% percent of Bellingham households. ALICE families are those that earn more than the U.S. poverty level, but less than the basic cost of living for the country. At the same time, according to the Council for Community and Economic Research (January 2015), the cost of living in Bellingham is 17% higher than the national average, with housing being the primary cost factor. While it is important to increase living wage jobs, it is equally important for housing costs to be within reach and comparable to earnings (see Housing Chapter for additional information on housing affordability).

On the upside, Whatcom County and Bellingham have not suffered the level of economic downturn faced in other regions of the country. Local business leaders credit the diversity of businesses as one of the primary reasons for Whatcom County's resiliency. The county's proximity to Canada provides a large potential customer base to support retail sales and an ideal entry point for Canadian businesses to locate distribution and marketing centers. In return, opportunities exist for Whatcom County businesses to export products to the Canadian market. These locational factors can contribute to economic diversity.



PeaceHealth St. Joseph Medical Center, located in Bellingham, is the largest employer in Whatcom County.

Because most of Bellingham's future employment growth will likely come from expansion of businesses that are already located here, economic development resources and activities should first be focused on retaining and growing existing businesses.

GOAL ED-2 Accommodate a broad mix of employment opportunities, while actively seeking a greater proportion of living wage jobs that will benefit a broad cross-section of Bellingham residents.

Policy ED-18 Increase Bellingham's competitive advantage in international trade by assisting Canadian businesses seeking a United States-based presence and Bellingham businesses seeking access to the Canadian market.

Policy ED-19 Support the retention and growth of Bellingham's small businesses.

Policy ED-20 Continue to lead and manage the redevelopment of City-owned properties for maximum public benefit, using public-private partnerships when appropriate.

Policy ED-21 Support the Port of Bellingham's role in growing Bellingham's economy in areas such as the waterfront and in and around the Bellingham International Airport.

Policy ED-22 Working with the Port of Bellingham, Whatcom County and others, explore and pursue opportunities to solicit/attract new investment and expansion from businesses outside the Bellingham area, both regionally and nationally.

Policy ED-23 Encourage an environment supportive of entrepreneurial activities and explore methods to encourage low-impact enterprises and emerging business models.

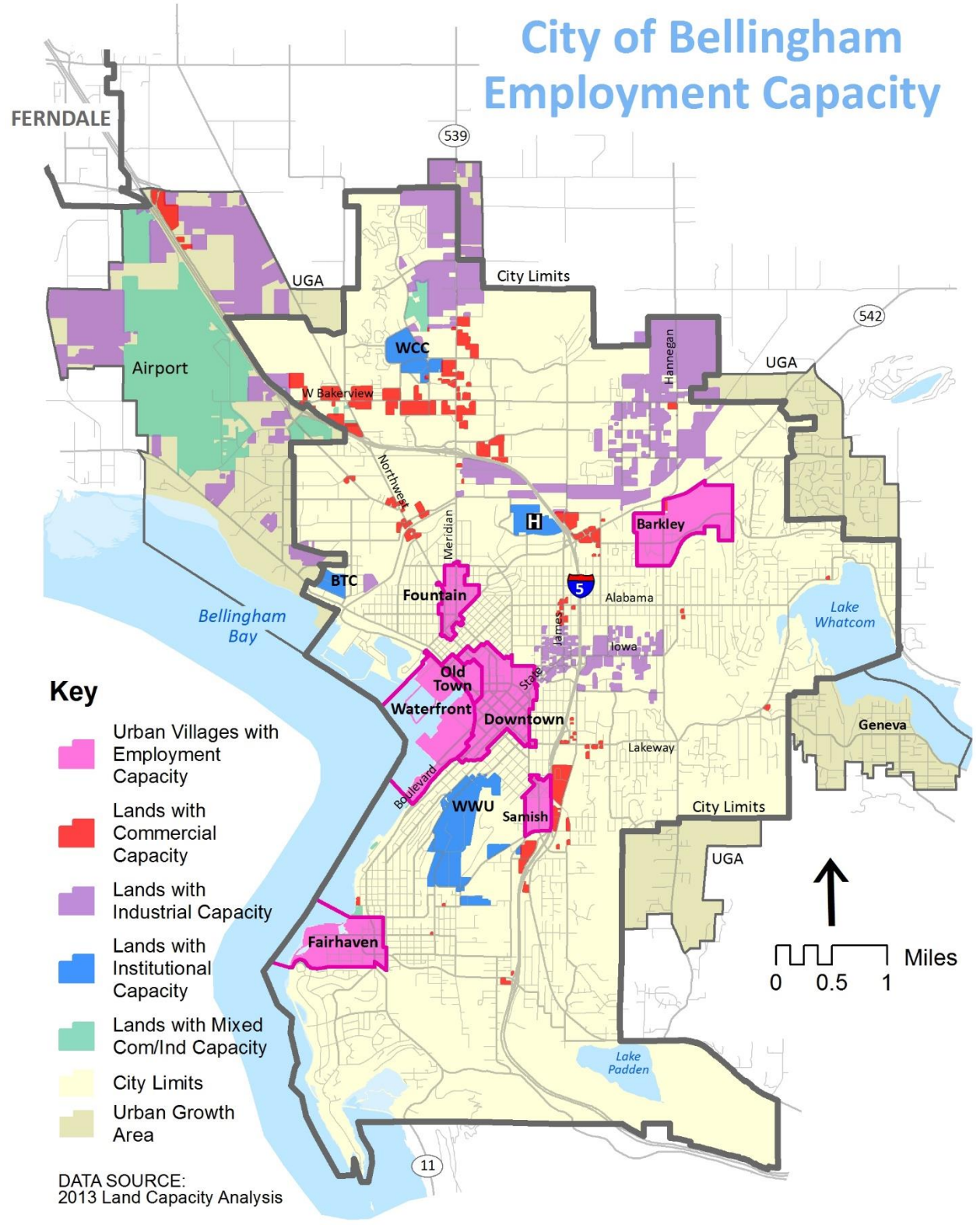
Land and Infrastructure

Bellingham's urban area (land in the City and UGA) is the main employment center for Whatcom County, containing approximately 65% of total countywide jobs. An adequate land supply and corresponding infrastructure are key to growing existing businesses and creating opportunities for new business. Of the more than 7,000 acres of vacant "employment lands" (land in the City limits and UGA with commercial, industrial, institutional or mixed-use zoning), approximately 820 acres are available for development, according to the 2013 Land Capacity Analysis. Critical areas and their buffers impact nearly half of the available acres. Additional capacity exists within the City's seven urban villages, several of which are experiencing significant infill and redevelopment.

Most of the undeveloped land is located in the northwest and north central portions of the City and UGA. Vacant land in the City has about 66% of the total employment capacity and the UGA lands have about 34%. About 26% of the capacity in the current City limits is inside urban village areas. It is estimated that the developable land in the City and UGA can accommodate growth of about 27,300 jobs - 7,840 industrial jobs, 16,650 commercial jobs, and 2,810 institutional jobs (see Employment Capacity map). This capacity is more than adequate to accommodate the 2036 forecast employment growth of 22,641 jobs. See the Land Use Chapter (Commercial and Industrial Development Section and Land Capacity Analysis Section) for additional information on future employment capacity.



Undeveloped industrial land in the Cordata Neighborhood.



Bellingham's critical infrastructure, including shipping terminals, rail, interstate highway and local street and utility networks, fiber-optic connectivity and truck routes, are important to many industry sectors. Business leaders interviewed as part of Phase 1 of the Regional Economic Development Strategy indicated general satisfaction with Bellingham's transportation system. They also noted the importance of the airport as a key link to communities outside of the Pacific Northwest and described the recent runway restructuring and terminal expansion projects as positive developments (see SWOT Analysis, Section IV).

GOAL ED-3 Maintain an adequate supply of developable employment lands and supporting infrastructure to accommodate forecasted growth and accomplish the City's economic development goals.

Policy ED-24 Periodically assess the adequacy of the supply of vacant and redevelopable employment lands in Bellingham and the UGA, especially land zoned for industry.

*The remaining **vacant and re-developable employment lands** in the City and UGA should be used as efficiently as possible to reduce the pressure to expand the boundaries of the UGA into rural areas.*

Policy ED-25 Land with industrial zoning in the UGA should be reserved for industrial uses and appropriate accessory uses.

Policy ED-26 Review land use regulations, development standards and design guidelines to ensure that the existing developed and remaining vacant or underutilized employment lands are used as efficiently as possible.

Policy ED-27 Evaluate rezone proposals and changes to development regulations for potential impacts on the supply of land zoned for employment activities.

The City's [2009 Employment Lands Study, Phase II](#), includes a target industry evaluation that identifies desirable, mutually-supportive employment sectors for Bellingham. These sectors were identified based on their potential for growth, wage and salary rates, and presence or concentration in the City and region. Based on this analysis, a number of employment sectors were identified as desirable for Bellingham. Examples include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Marine trades
- Professional, scientific and technical services
- Computers, internet and telecommunications
- Equipment and instrumentation manufacturing
- Adventure-related recreation
- Food processing
- Health care
- Education, including workforce training
- Advanced manufacturing



Bellingham has an established fishing port that includes a fleet and local processing facilities.
Photo by Jake Hilleary.

Policy ED-28 Ensure that there are suitable locations for the targeted employment sectors listed above.

Policy ED-29 Support the retention and growth of the industrial/manufacturing sectors and seek to attract new businesses to provide opportunities for skilled employment and living wage jobs.

Policy ED-30 Develop or support programs that seek to provide an increased supply of workforce housing.

Policy ED-31 Continue to provide adequate and efficient community infrastructure such as roads, water, sewer, stormwater management and other public facilities and services.

Bellingham's transportation network and other infrastructure are important assets that encourage and accommodate economic development.

Policy ED-32 Identify employment land that lacks sufficient infrastructure and coordinate City investments in utilities, transportation and other public facilities with business and employment opportunities whenever possible.

Policy ED-33 Strive to maintain level of service (LOS) standards that support Bellingham's high quality of life.

Policy ED-34 Select wetland mitigation sites for unavoidable impacts based on current state mitigation guidance documents and first consider on-site and in-basin mitigation before considering a mitigation bank or in-lieu fee program.

Policy ED-35 Consider regional stormwater detention when low impact development techniques are not feasible and where it can be shown to limit maintenance costs, improve the management of stormwater and increase the development potential of properties.



Wharf Street multi-modal roundabout serves as a gateway to several key locations.

Policy ED-36 Encourage continued and expanded transportation options connecting Portland, Oregon, Seattle, Bellingham and Vancouver, British Columbia, and ferry service to the San Juan Islands, British Columbia and Alaska.

Policy ED-37 Support the Port of Bellingham's efforts to advance the Bellingham International Airport, providing greater access to other marketplaces, while also benefiting the local economy.

Policy ED-38 Encourage and support the development of technology and telecommunications infrastructure Citywide and throughout the region.

Policy ED-39 Promote the efficient use/reuse of employment lands by coordinating with other levels of government to support and encourage the cleanup of contaminated soil and other environmental remediation activities.

*Many opportunities exist to **reclaim and repurpose vacant, obsolete or contaminated land and buildings** to improve community health and safety, increase environmental quality and provide economic benefits in these areas.*

Policy ED-40 Identify and remove barriers to redeveloping underutilized and/or vacant land and buildings.

Vibrant Commercial Centers

Central to the City's economic development efforts is the promotion of a strong and vibrant downtown and other mixed-use urban villages with approved master plans, including Barkley Village. To achieve the City's infill and urban village growth strategies, growth should be directed to these areas with strategic investments in the facilities and services necessary to support the development. Sufficient housing is a key component in successful urban villages.

Mixed-use urban villages offer tremendous opportunities for job growth. Each urban village master plan contains goals, policies and strategies specific to that particular village to support the City's growth management and economic development goals (see the Land Use chapter for information regarding the City's urban village infill strategies).



Downtown Bellingham is the heart of the community, serving as host to many community-wide events.

GOAL ED-4 Foster vibrant urban villages.

Policy ED-41 Provide a wide range of permitted uses in emerging urban villages to encourage these areas to develop as employment centers.

Policy ED-42 The City should invest in parks, historic and cultural resources and other amenities to stimulate the development of housing and businesses in urban villages.

Policy ED-43 Implement the visions of the Downtown Bellingham Plan, which strive to further a downtown that:

- Is economically healthy;
- Is clean, safe and welcoming;
- Uses environmentally-friendly building and business practices; and
- Offers a variety of residential, retail, office, service, cultural, civic and recreational opportunities.

Policy ED-44 Provide infrastructure and public amenities to support the redevelopment of the Downtown, Old Town and Waterfront Districts consistent with the adopted subarea plans.

Policy ED-45 Support the Port of Bellingham's efforts to attract private investment to the Waterfront District, delivering a mix of land uses at a pace that supports redevelopment of the Downtown and Old Town Districts.

Quality of Life

The region's location and beauty are Whatcom County's "special ingredients". Bellingham's locational advantages include easy access to Seattle and Canada, a small town feel, world class cultural and recreational amenities, marine-to-mountain natural features and leadership on environmental issues. Participants in the business leader interviews (conducted as part of the Regional Economic Development Strategy, Phase 1) were passionate about Whatcom County's unique beauty and the many natural assets contributing to the area's quality of life. A reoccurring suggestion regarding the development of a Regional Economic Strategy for Whatcom County was offered by many participants - "communities need to figure out how to wisely use existing opportunities and assets, accentuating the positive". Bellingham is well suited for such a strategy, as it is in a beautiful location, has excellent schools and offers a great quality of life. The population is educated; the City is home to an outstanding university, community and technical colleges. The community has a genuine downtown; a wealth of cultural, arts and historic resources; and a world class parks/greenways system.



Boulevard Park at dusk. Photo by Sean Stockburger.

To have a positive environment for businesses and residents, the City also regards investments in major quality of life amenities and services as "infrastructure". These include parks, trails, playfields, the aquatic center and recreational programs; outstanding views of, and proximity and access to Bellingham Bay, the surrounding county and the nearby hills and mountains; access to high quality healthcare facilities; schools; arts and cultural attractions such as museums and art galleries; and outstanding police, fire and emergency medical services. Providing a high quality of life and maintaining the livability of Bellingham are very effective tools for attracting and retaining quality businesses - a fact that was reiterated in staff interviews with local business leaders.

Over the years, the City and its residents have wisely invested in public improvements such as new schools, an aquatic center, the Mount Baker Theatre, the Whatcom Museum (Lightcatcher, Old City Hall and Syre Education Center), parks, trails, playfields, greenways, farmers markets and expanded sanitary sewer capacity. These assets help spur private sector investments that increase the City's revenue base, supporting existing facilities and additional community improvements.

GOAL ED-5 Continue to invest in the quality of life attributes that provide the City with a competitive advantage in terms of economic development.

Policy ED-46 Continue to provide a healthy community that includes clean air and water, public open spaces, natural and recreational areas, and "green infrastructure" such as street trees and native vegetation.

Policy ED-47 Explore options and partnerships to allow continued recreational use of the Galbraith Mountain trails, which serve as a regional amenity.

Policy ED-48 Use education, regulations and incentives to help maintain and improve the health of natural systems such as air and water quality and aquatic habitat.

Policy ED-49 Continue to employ sustainable practices, such as those that reduce energy use, waste and single-occupancy vehicle trips, and encourage the private sector to take part in these activities.

The quality of the built environment in Bellingham provides an important component of our "sense of place". The City's design standards and design review process should be performance based to allow for unique circumstances, creativity and new technologies, resulting in high quality and economically-viable development.



Lake Padden Park is a popular spot for fishing, picnicking and other recreational activities. Photo by Amy Woodward.

Policy ED-50 Through the adoption and application of design standards, encourage high-quality urban design in new public and private development projects.

Policy ED-51 Encourage locally-based food production, distribution and choice through the support of community gardens, farmers markets, and other small-scale initiatives.

Local food systems are generally defined by marketing arrangements such as farmers selling directly to consumers at farmers markets or schools. Statistics suggest that local food markets account for a small, but growing, share of U.S. agricultural production.

III. Characteristics of the Local Economy

Table 1. Top 25 Employers in Whatcom County 2015

Whatcom County Top 25 Employers

Rank	Business	Employees
1	Peace Health (St Joseph's Medical) *	2,750
2	Western Washington University *	1,690
3	Bellingham School District *	962
4	City of Bellingham *	825
5	BP Cherry Point	820
6	Whatcom County *	809
7	Fred Meyer (Kroger) *	760
8	Zodiac (Heath Tecna) *	607
9	Lummi Nation	600
10	Alcoa Intalco	586
11	Silver Reef Casino	513
12	Matrix Services Inc *	455
13	Alpha Technologies *	439
14	T-Mobile *	437
15	Bellingham Technical College *	432
16	Lynden School District	405
17	Smith Gardens	400
18	The Markets *	392
19	Family Care Network *	380
20	Anvil Corporation *	372
21	Faithlife (formerly Logos *)	361
22	Lynden Door	360
23	Ferndale School District	307
24	Cascade DAFO	281
25	WECU *	279

* Employers located primarily in Bellingham. Source: WWU Center For Economic & Business Research - 2015

For more information on the local economy, see the following sources:

1. Washington State Employment Security Department
2. WWU Center for Economic and Business Research
3. Washington State Office of Financial Management
4. U.S. Census/American Community Survey

Figure 1

Figure 1 depicts employment by industry sector. In 2015, Bellingham and its UGA accommodated 48,800 jobs, or 64% of the total employment in Whatcom County. About 42% of those jobs included workers who also live in Bellingham, while about 58% work in Bellingham, but live elsewhere. About 44% of Bellingham's employed residents commute to other places for work.

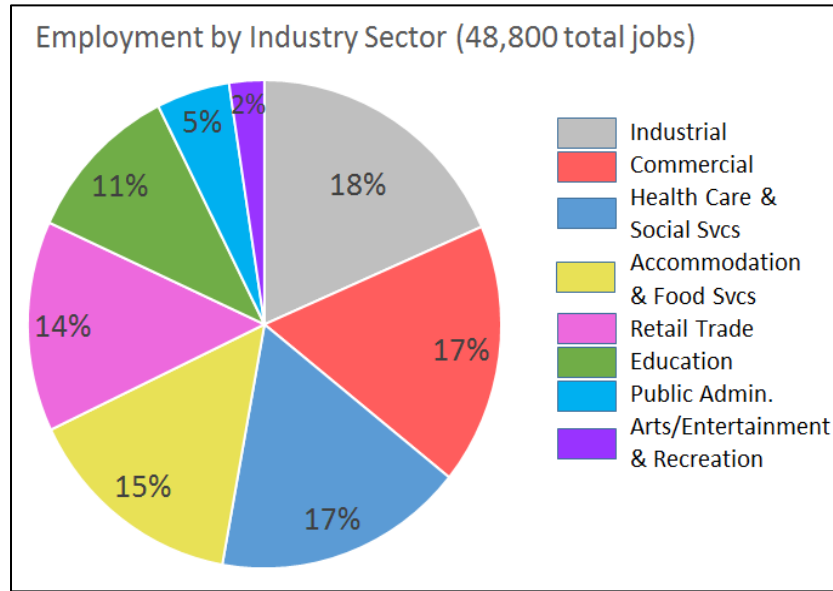


Figure 2

Figure 2 from the American Community Survey compares the occupations of people living in Bellingham with the remainder of Whatcom County.

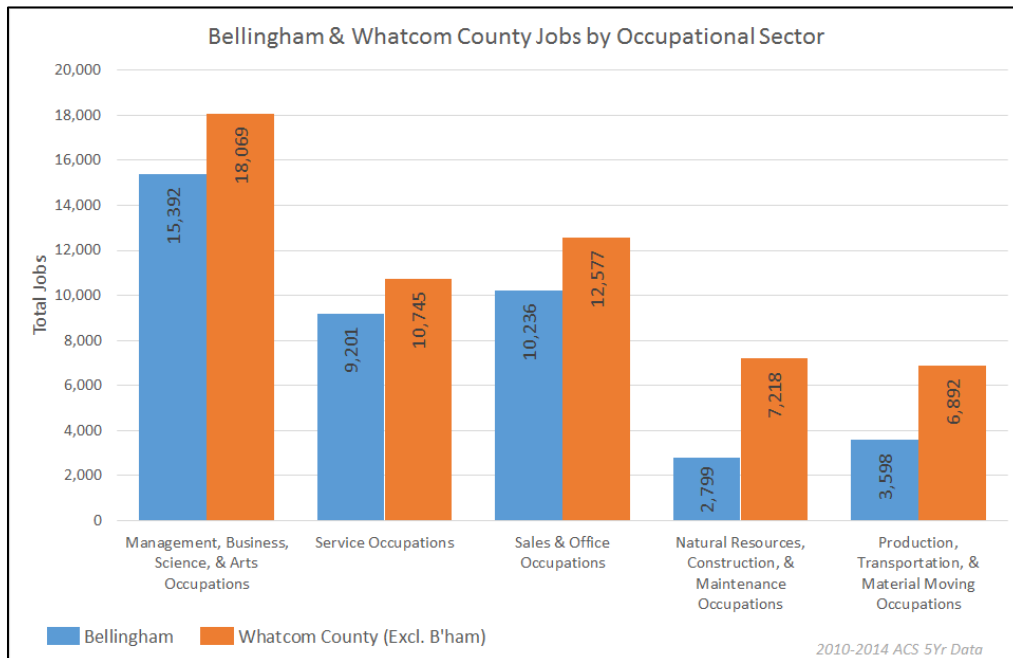


Table 2: 2000 - 2014 Median Family and Household Income

Bellingham's median household income is consistently about 70% of Washington's statewide average (2000 to 2014). The large percentage of college student households is the largest factor in this difference. The median family income is less influenced by students and is about 86% of the statewide average. Whatcom County's median household and family incomes are about 87% and 93% of the statewide average, respectively. Bellingham's totals also influence the countywide average. The 2000, 2010 and 2014 median household and family incomes for Washington, Whatcom County and Bellingham are shown below.

Year	Washington		Whatcom County		Bellingham	
	Median Household Income	Median Family Income	Median Household Income	Median Family Income	Median Household Income	Median Family Income
2014	\$60,294	\$73,039	\$53,025	\$68,084	\$42,440	\$63,355
2010	\$57,244	\$69,328	\$49,031	\$64,586	\$38,136	\$58,149
2000	\$45,776	\$53,760	\$40,005	\$49,325	\$32,530	\$47,196

US Census Bureau 2000 & 2010 Decennial Census, and 2010-2014 ACS 5-Yr Data

IV. SWOT Analysis (2010)

See page three of this chapter for more information on the SWOT analysis.

STRENGTHS

- Diversity both in size and type of Whatcom County businesses, helped stabilize the county's economic performance during the recession.
- The region's beauty is our "special ingredient" - Whatcom County's marine-to-mountain natural features and highly-accessible cultural and recreational amenities contribute important quality of life assets to business owners and employees across all sectors.
- The airport is a key link to accessing communities outside Pacific Northwest; recent runway expansions are a positive sign.
- Prime agricultural soils provide a critical, irreplaceable resource for Whatcom County's agricultural sector.
- Higher education institutions contribute assets, such as new ideas, cultural offerings, and internship opportunities, which benefit Whatcom County citizens and businesses.
- Bellingham Technical College is especially responsive to business training and staffing needs.
- Bellingham is the employment center for Whatcom County, bringing workers from across the region.
- A strong network of non-profit social service providers assist those in need and provide a "social safety net" in difficult economic times. Well-established partnerships between local non-profit funding organizations and the public/private sector provide alternative means of financing new business and public-private partnership ventures.
- Proximity and availability to critical infrastructure such as Interstate 5, waterfront shipping rail facilities, and high-quality and affordable utilities.
- Fiber optic connectivity.
- The availability of low-cost, high-quality technical assistance and business services supports new and expanding businesses in Whatcom County.
- As the retail center for Whatcom County and lower mainland, Bellingham is able to support a variety of national and local retailers.

WEAKNESSES

- A business-owner perspective that business growth and economic development is not wanted in Whatcom County makes it unclear where and how business should expand.
- The pace and curriculum format within higher education institutions may limit opportunities for faculty and students to work with business on today's challenges in industry and to respond to community needs.
- Most business-support organization offerings are geared toward newer businesses needs in the areas of technical assistance, financing, and business-to-business relationship building, rather than supporting and growing existing businesses.
- Typically higher unemployment rate and lower average earnings than the state and nation, along with a high cost of living, present challenges with affordable housing and general affordability of the area.
- A lack of large and/or affordable industrial and commercial parcels within the City limits and UGA limits the opportunities for traditional large commercial and industrial business relocation.

- Complex Land Use Code and zoning structure may create uncertainty for new development proposals.
- Lack of public transportation to the waterfront and airport.

OPPORTUNITIES

- A positive business climate has as much to do with “how” regulators work with businesses as it does with “what” the regulations mandate.
- Straight forward development regulations and process provide predictability for business to invest in Bellingham.
- Local and state economic development assistance services, including data analysis, financing assistance, market analysis, have been helpful in challenging assumptions and testing new markets.
- Variety of economic development service providers and non-profit partners are located in the county, with access to multiple resources to assist business.
- Whatcom County has been an ideal entry point for Canadian businesses seeking to locate U.S.-based distribution and marketing centers, and for Canadian customers to support Bellingham as the center for retail.
- Business owners have cited their suppliers, distributors and colleagues from out of the region as the primary resources for business innovation ideas.
- A coordinated strategy to realize the higher-intensity redevelopment potential in existing employment areas, such as the Waterfront, Old Town, and Downtown Districts and other mixed-use areas, through urban village and comprehensive planning efforts.
- Bellingham shipping terminal.
- Increasing community interest in local supply chain development creates opportunities for additional connections and internal growth.
- “Legacy industries”, such as fishing, lumber, farming, and marine trades, are making a resurgence nationally and in the worldwide economy, while shifting to a more sustainable approach.

THREATS

- Border security, fluctuating exchange rates, and trade policy impacts to local business.
- State, federal and international policy creates external threats to the local community.
- Interdependence of land use, cost of living, and farmland conversion negatively impacts the availability of affordable housing and quality of life.
- Recruiting technical staff is a challenge across sectors, especially in growing industries, e.g., food manufacturing, process control, welding, software, and sciences.
- Affordable, high-quality water in sufficient quantities for Whatcom County’s agricultural, residential, manufacturing, and ecosystem.
- Available and affordable power, broadband telecommunications.
- Vacant real estate may not meet current needs or desires within the marketplace.
- Negative perception of safety within the downtown commercial core.
- Insufficient available land to support traditional land-intensive development models.
- Conflicting policy direction/goals.

Bellingham Comprehensive Plan
Environment Chapter

2016

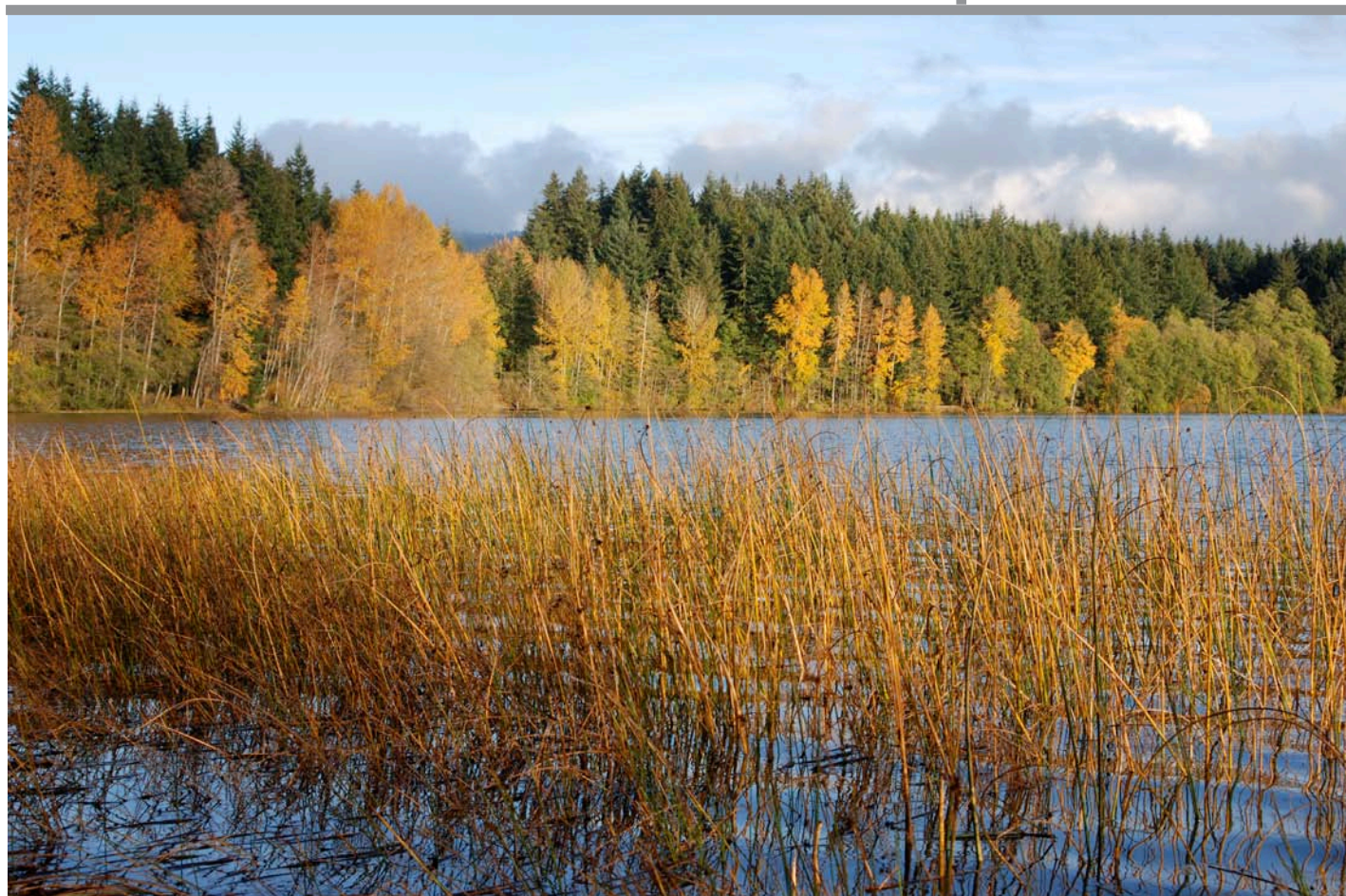


Photo by Shannon Sweeney

I. Introduction

The Environment Chapter implements the vision of Bellingham as a city with treasured natural features that provide recreation, wildlife habitat, healthy air and water, and astounding beauty. The lakes, streams, forested hillsides, marine shoreline, and other natural features have shaped Bellingham's character. Residents and visitors value the natural resources and count on them being protected to enjoy into the future.

This chapter addresses the key environmental features and values of Bellingham. Residents and City government want to be good stewards of the environment so that future generations of people, and wildlife, can enjoy the same benefits. As a steward, the City is committed to protecting, preserving and restoring the natural environment through , long-range plans, regulations, programs, incentives, educational resources, partnerships, and leadership. The City is planning for future growth and development by being considerate of its environmental features along the way.



Photo by Patrick Kennedy.

With increasing costs of infrastructure, cities are starting to understand and rely more on ecosystem services, or the work provided by nature that benefits people and their communities. Ecosystem services have an economic value that can be calculated when the cost of replacing those services with manmade substitutes has to be considered. For example, without the natural flood protection service wetlands provide, some areas may experience property damage and engineered solutions would need to be developed to lessen the impacts of high volumes of water.

The City strives for sustainability in its projects, practices, and plans so that each of these sectors - the environment, the economy, and the people of Bellingham - are equally considered. Bellingham continues to be an environmental leader with its projects and plans, including habitat restoration projects, energy conservation practices, and Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plans, to name a few.

The following eight categories address the City's main environmental topics and form the organizational basis for the goals and policies of this chapter:

- Lake Whatcom**
- Shoreline Master Program**
- Critical Areas**
- Fish and Wildlife Habitat**
- Urban Forestry**
- Air Quality**
- Climate Change**
- Energy and Resource Conservation**

The Environment Chapter's nine goals mirror the City's Legacies and Strategic Commitments and emphasize the protection and restoration of resources:

- GOAL EV-1 Protect and improve drinking water sources.**
- GOAL EV-2 Limit development in the Lake Whatcom watershed.**
- GOAL EV-3 Protect and restore ecological functions and habitat.**
- GOAL EV-4 Limit urban sprawl and promote sustainable land use planning.**
- GOAL EV-5 Protect and improve the health of lakes, streams, and the Salish Sea.**
- GOAL EV-6 Conserve and maintain natural resources, including the urban forest.**
- GOAL EV-7 Maintain good air quality.**
- GOAL EV-8 Reduce contributions to climate change.**
- GOAL EV-9 Promote interdependence of environmental, economic, and social interests.**

II. Goals and Policies

Lake Whatcom

Lake Whatcom is a local treasure. In addition to its interesting past of coal mines, logging, work boats, summer homes, and a railroad, the lake has served as the City's municipal water supply since 1968. Located on the east side of Bellingham, Lake Whatcom is 10 miles long, includes 5,000 acres in surface area, and is comprised of three "basins", with the northernmost basin, Basin One, situated within the City limits. The area within the City limits is about two percent of the entire 36,135-acre watershed. The zoning within the City limits is primarily residential.

Maintaining a sustainable supply of clean drinking water is paramount to the City and the citizens relying on it. Because it is a multiple-use watershed with active forest lands, recreational uses, and residential development, Lake Whatcom faces several significant water quality challenges.

*A **watershed** is a basin-like landform defined by high points that descend into lower elevations and stream valleys, lakes, or marine waters. A watershed carries water "shed" from the land after rain falls. Watersheds come in many sizes. For example, within the Whatcom Creek watershed, there are smaller watersheds such as the Lincoln Creek and Cemetery Creek watersheds.*

In 1998, Lake Whatcom was placed on the state's list (known as the 303(d) list of the Clean Water Act) of impaired waters for failing to meet standards for dissolved oxygen levels. In subsequent years, total phosphorus and fecal coliform were added to the list of water quality impairments. In response to these listings, a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) study was developed by the Washington Department of Ecology (DOE) to determine the actions needed to return the lake to acceptable water quality standards.

It is largely recognized that residential development is a significant contributor of phosphorus because of runoff characteristics from developed surfaces, particularly lawns. According to the City's Lake Whatcom Watershed Annual Build-out Analysis (February 2016), the watershed includes 6,976 homes, 1,610 of which are within the City limits. The remaining development potential is estimated to be 114 units. Special development regulations for the Lake Whatcom watershed are aimed at minimizing impacts from new development and retrofitting those areas currently developed to mimic the natural cycling of water and nutrients.

Joint management of the lake by local jurisdictions commenced formally in 1998 with the signing of the Interlocal Agreement between the City of Bellingham, Whatcom County, and the Lake Whatcom Water and Sewer District (known then as Water District 10). Together, these entities have undertaken many physical projects and regulatory changes to reduce phosphorus loading to the lake.

Efforts the City has undertaken to protect and improve the water quality of Lake Whatcom include:

- Constructing and upgrading stormwater facilities with best available technology;
- Acquiring large land tracts and development rights;
- Adopting stringent development regulations;
- Engaging in public outreach/education;
- Offering homeowner incentives;
- Retrofitting streets with low impact development (LID) components;
- Banning phosphorus fertilizer; and

- Banning carbureted two-stroke boat engines.

GOAL EV-1 Protect and improve drinking water sources.

GOAL EV-2 Limit development in the Lake Whatcom watershed. (See the Land Use Chapter and Capital Facilities and Utilities Chapter for more information on the City's goals and policies for limiting development in the Lake Whatcom Watershed.)

Policy EV-1 Focus on protection over treatment in managing Lake Whatcom and its watershed.

Policy EV-2 Emphasize prevention of invasive aquatic species from entering Lake Whatcom.

Policy EV-3 Continue to work in collaboration with Whatcom County, the Lake Whatcom Water and Sewer District, and the Sudden Valley Community Association to develop and implement the five-year Lake Whatcom Work Program.

Policy EV-4 Support the adopted Lake Whatcom Work Program and dedicate the resources to continue to update and implement it.

Policy EV-5 Manage recreational uses on the lake and in the watershed in a manner that prevents degradation of water quality and habitat.

Policy EV-6 Implement programs, regulations, and incentives that result in sustainable land use practices, such as LID, that prevent the degradation of water quality in the lake.

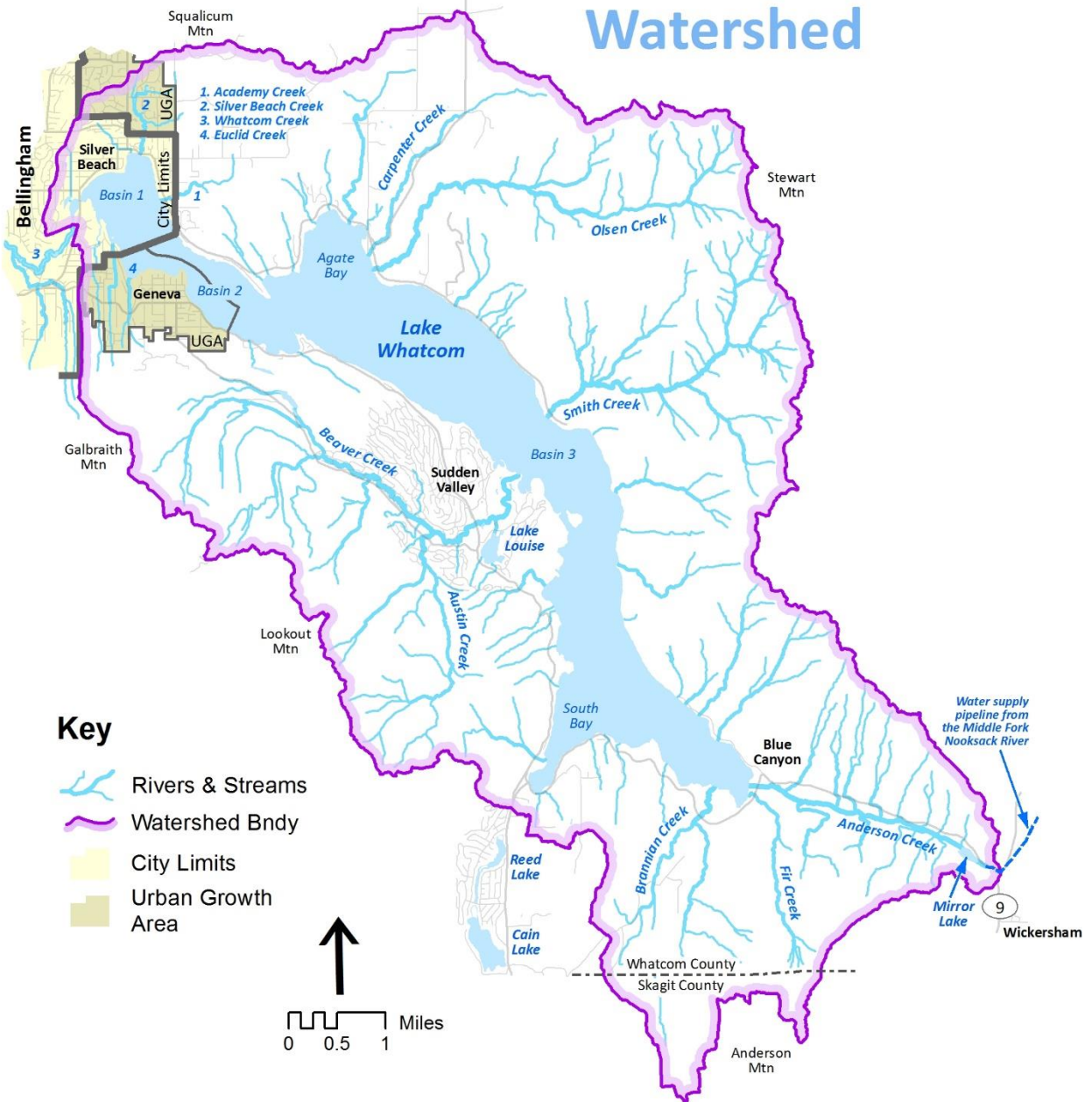
Policy EV-7 Continue to designate receiving zones for development rights transferred from the Lake Whatcom watershed in areas of the City appropriate for higher densities.

Policy EV-8 Continue the Lake Whatcom Watershed Property Acquisition Program.



Sunrise at Bloedel Donovan Park at the shores of Lake Whatcom. Photo by Lou Nicksic.

Lake Whatcom Watershed



Shoreline Master Program

Shorelines are another valued resource in Bellingham. Shorelines are a specifically-designated environmental feature and are protected and managed by the City's Shoreline Master Program (SMP). In Bellingham, the water bodies that are designated as shorelines are Bellingham Bay, Lake Whatcom, Lake Padden, and Chuckanut, Whatcom and Squalicum Creeks, as well as immediately adjoining uplands, wetlands, and floodplains associated with these water bodies.

Adopted in 2013, the SMP implements the Washington State Shoreline Management Act and its policies. These policies include protecting the ecological function of the state's shorelines and their associated natural resources by identifying areas for preferred uses and economic development, restoring previously impacted shorelines, and providing opportunities for the general public to have access to and enjoy shorelines.

The SMP includes an extensive characterization and inventory of shorelines citywide. The goals and policies of the SMP are incorporated into the Environment Chapter by reference. All other parts of the SMP, including use regulations, are considered part of the City's development regulations.

Shorelines under the SMP have a specific definition. They include all the waters of the state, together with the lands underlying them, except on segments of streams upstream of a point where the annual flow is less than 20 cubic feet/second and shorelines on lakes less than 20 acres in size and the wetlands associated with both.

See the latest adopted [Shoreline Master Program](#) for related goals and policies.

Critical Areas

Critical areas as defined in the Growth Management Act (GMA) include wetlands, fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas (including streams), frequently flooded areas, geologically hazardous areas, and critical aquifer recharge areas (there are none in the City). The GMA requires the City to adopt development regulations to protect the functions and values of critical areas and to protect public safety. Each of the City's critical areas are discussed below.

The City adopted its first complete Critical Areas Ordinance (CAO) in December 2005, in accordance with the GMA. The CAO replaced the Wetland/Stream Regulatory Chapter, which was adopted in 1991 as the City's first set of regulations to protect wetlands and streams. The City has adopted several updates to the CAO in order to be consistent with best available science as required by GMA.

Wetlands are common in Bellingham and its environs due to specific soil types and abundant hydrology. Wetlands occur in vegetated communities, such as meadows and forests, or as open water, including estuaries. They are found in forests and in fields, with even the smallest wetland providing some ecological function. Wetlands support ecosystems in many ways, including attenuating floodwaters, providing wildlife habitat, and uptaking pollutants and excess nutrients.



Cinnamon Teal at wetland in the Cordata Neighborhood. Photo by Patricia Herlevi.

Fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas (HCA) include streams, small lakes, and habitats and species that are designated "priorities" by the state. A good local example is the great blue heron colony adjacent to the marine shoreline at Post Point. The colony and the species are listed in the state's Priority Habitats and Species (PHS) list and require protection through an HCA designation.

Priority Habitats and Species are those resources determined to be unique, special or fragile enough to warrant special regulatory protection. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife maintains the PHS list and provides maps and specific protection guidelines.

Frequently flooded areas in Bellingham are those areas that are within the 100-year floodplain and all other areas that are locally known to flood frequently, but are not in a FEMA-designated floodplain. Frequently flooded areas are designated for protection to ensure maintenance of natural stream processes, protect habitat, and reduce the risk to public safety and properties.

Geologic hazard areas are the type of critical area that is regulated mostly to protect public safety and properties. These include geologic features such as landslide-prone areas, seismic hazard areas, and areas where past mining practices may have created hazards. The marine bluffs found along Bellingham Bay are a visible example of areas that could pose a hazard and, therefore, warrant regulation of nearby activities in order to protect public safety and properties.

GOAL EV-3 Protect and restore ecological functions and habitats.

GOAL EV-4 Limit urban sprawl and promote sustainable land use planning. (See the Land Use Chapter for more information on the City's goals and policies on sustainable land use planning.)

Policy EV-9 Use best available science to preserve and enhance the functions and values of critical areas through policies, regulations, programs, and incentives.

Policy EV-10 Incorporate sustainable land use and design elements into projects early in the planning stages to avoid impacts to critical areas (see Land Use and Community Design Chapters).

Policy EV-11 Promote the use of the Bellingham Habitat Restoration Technical Assessment and other natural resource assessments conducted by the City in project design, development review, and restoration and mitigation project selection to achieve the maximum benefits for preservation and restoration of critical areas.

*Other applicable studies the City has conducted include the Water Resource Inventory Area (WRIA) 1 **Nearshore and Estuarine Assessment and Restoration Prioritization (NEARP)** and Citywide wetland inventories.*

Policy EV-12 Safeguard the long-term functions and values of critical areas through effective mitigation measures when avoidance is not feasible.

Policy EV-13 Select wetland mitigation sites for unavoidable impacts based on current state mitigation guidance documents and on the watershed approach with an emphasis on the ecologically-preferable site.

Policy EV-14 Encourage development of mitigation options such as a mitigation bank or in-lieu fee program.

Policy EV-15 Protect, enhance, or restore ecological functions such as flood storage, habitat, and conveyance in frequently flooded areas.

Policy EV-16 Pursue mapping and an inventory of the full range of wildlife species within the City and UGA.

Policy EV-17 Protect critical areas and riparian zones by prohibiting camping in these areas.

Fish and Wildlife Habitat

Bellingham is home to a wide variety of wildlife, from the great blue heron colony at Post Point to chinook salmon in Whatcom Creek, and many more species not always associated with urban areas. The unique geographical setting of Bellingham between mountains and marine waters, combined with intentional efforts of preservation, afford a wide range of habitats and the wildlife that depend on them.

Bellingham is a community that values wildlife, including protection for and restoration of wildlife habitat. Unlike many urban areas, Bellingham is fortunate to have functioning wetlands, streams, and forests within the City limits. Nevertheless, fragmentation and loss of habitat have occurred over the decades. Therefore, the City recently developed the first Bellingham Habitat Restoration Technical Assessment (November 2015), a science-based document meant to guide habitat restoration and preservation efforts.

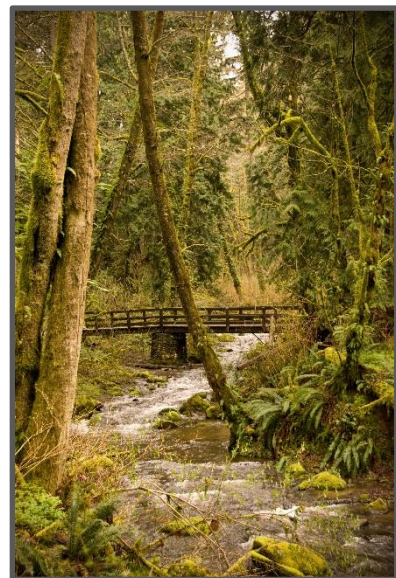
The main way in which wildlife and habitat is sustained in urban environments is through preservation and restoration of both site-specific and interconnected habitat corridors and blocks. Through planning, connections can be preserved even as development occurs. The Bellingham Habitat Restoration Technical Assessment, combined with the CAO, SMP, and State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA), provide the basis for protecting habitat and the wildlife dependent on it.

Water Quality and Quantity

Among Bellingham's many natural resources are the numerous streams that flow through the City, most of which support fish and other aquatic life. Water quality is of the utmost importance in sustaining the community's aquatic resources. Restoration projects installed to improve fish habitat will not be successful without good water quality and quantity.

All drainage courses, streams, lakes, wetlands, and marine waters, also known as "receiving bodies", support aquatic life. With the City's interest in protecting the community's natural resources, a great effort has taken place to enforce stormwater regulations,

*The City's 2015 **Bellingham Habitat Restoration Technical Assessment** will help City departments, developers, environmental groups, and citizens select restoration, mitigation, and preservation opportunities and determine where to focus general restoration and protection efforts within the City and UGA.*



Arroyo Park Bridge. Photo by Linda Wright.

build and maintain stormwater facilities, and provide citizens with knowledge about what they can do to protect and improve water quality.

Controlling pollutants and discharge rates is best done at the source, and the most effective way to achieve that is through best management practices (BMPs) such as those found in the state's Stormwater Management Manual for Western Washington. The DOE continues to revise its list of BMPs to improve their effectiveness in protecting water quality in order to meet state standards with recent emphasis on LID techniques.

LID is a stormwater management strategy that emphasizes the use of existing natural site features integrated with small-scale stormwater controls to more closely mimic natural hydrologic patterns with a focus on infiltration. LID techniques include preserving existing native vegetation, designing development to fit site characteristics, minimizing impervious surfaces, and infiltrating stormwater on site.

Restoration

The goal of restoration is to re-establish ecological processes and functions into a persistent, resilient system. Re-establishing ecological processes creates habitat structure that results in improved habitat function. Restoration in urban areas presents several challenges, including limited site availability, contamination, fragmented habitat, and/or competing needs for land resources.

The City gives special consideration to protecting the streams and other ecological resources that support fish through the CAO, SMP, and floodplain regulations. Because life cycles of fish depend on functions throughout the watershed, effective measures to conserve and protect them must comprehensively address watershed conditions, water quality, the rate of stream flow, and the condition of the immediate riparian habitat.

*The **Squalicum Creek Re-route** project involves re-routing large sections of Squalicum Creek around Bug Lake and Sunset Pond into a new channel, reactivating remnant channels and reconnecting the stream with its floodplain.*

The City has focused on the restoration of fish habitat and related water quality of all streams. The three main streams (Squalicum Creek, Whatcom Creek, Padden Creek) that flow through the urbanized areas of Bellingham have all undergone major restoration to restore natural stream functions and improve fish habitat. Still, many tributaries and contributing drainages are subject to stormwater runoff quality and quantity that are heavily impacted by urban runoff.

Acquisition

Fish and wildlife habitat is retained, in part, through the City's purchase and management of parks, open space, trail corridors, some of which are funded by Greenway levies. Acquisition has been an important



The Padden Creek daylighting project will improve creek conditions for salmon and other wildlife.

tool in preserving habitat, retaining habitat connectivity and corridors, and providing the opportunity for restoration.

GOAL EV-5 Protect and improve the health of lakes, streams, and the Salish Sea.

Policy EV-18 Identify and conserve wildlife habitat, considering the full range of the life-cycle needs for the species dependent on it.

Life cycle refers to the stages through which a living organism passes from the beginning of life to the end. Salmon, for example, have a complex life cycle of six states, starting with the fertilized egg and ending as a spawning adult salmon.

Policy EV-19 Ensure coordination among City departments in planning, constructing, and maintaining City facilities and infrastructure to maximize protection of fish and wildlife habitat.

Policy EV-20 Work in cooperation with other agencies and organizations to support biodiversity and protection and preservation of native vegetation, fish, wildlife, and pollinator habitat.

Policy EV-21 Maximize the use of LID techniques to protect water quality and sustain watershed processes.

Integrated pest management (IPM) uses knowledge of pest control biology to develop monitoring tools and control technology that result in economically sound, environmentally compatible, and socially responsible pest management in diverse systems (e.g. crop production, urban, and natural settings).

Policy EV-22 Maximize the use of integrated pest management and discourage the use of herbicides and pesticides.

Policy EV-23 Protect habitat and habitat corridors used by wildlife, fish, and pollinators from the impacts of development, where feasible.

Policy EV-24 Incorporate sustainable land use and design elements into projects early in the planning stages to avoid impacts to fish and wildlife (see Land Use and Community Design Chapters).



Great Blue Heron. Photo by Trisha Offin.

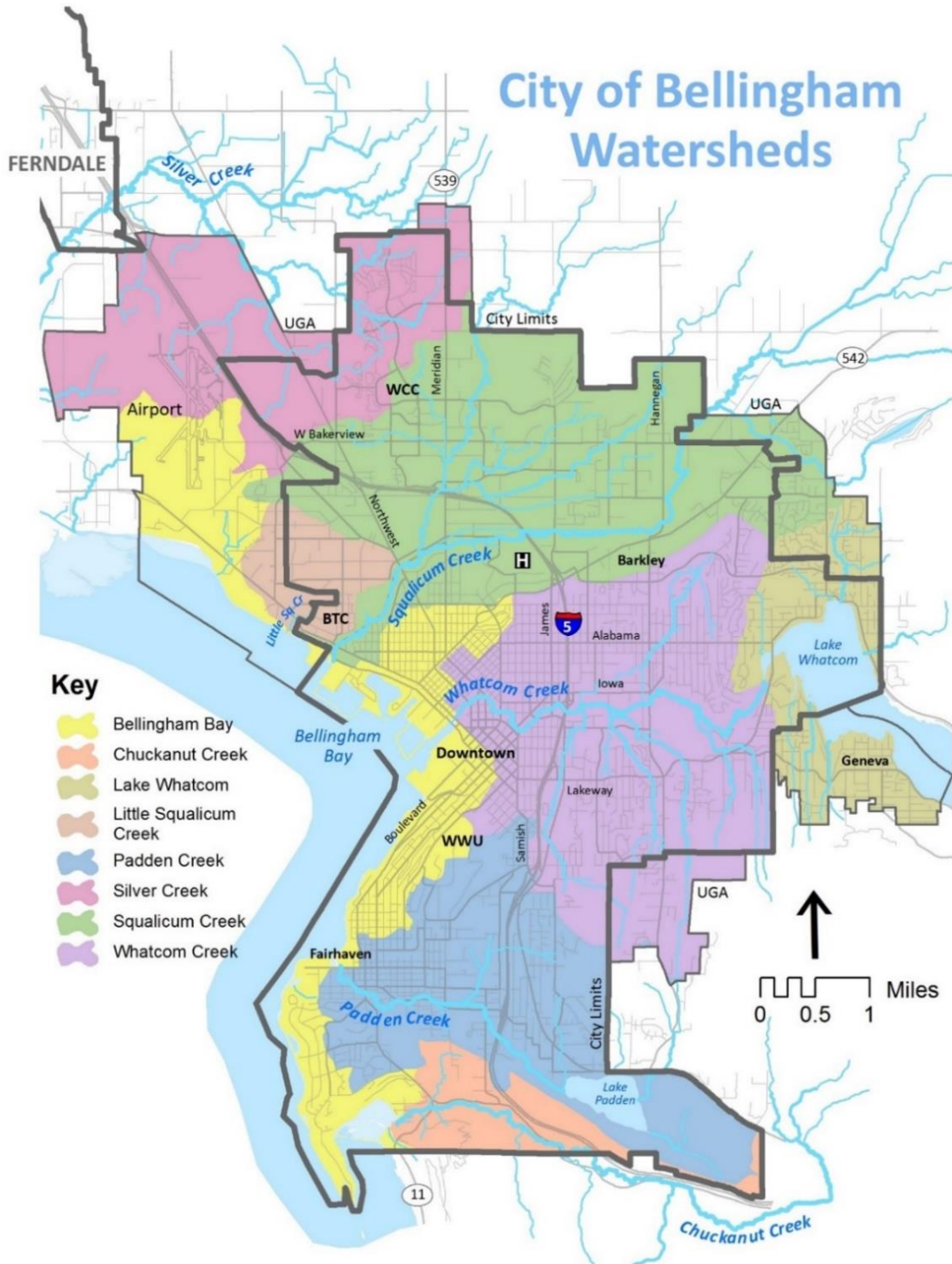
Policy EV-25 Protect and restore habitat through policies, regulations, programs, and incentives.

Policy EV-26 Limit public and pet access and their impacts to the most sensitive and unique habitats and employ measures to minimize impacts from public access.

Policy EV-27 Minimize light and noise impacts on fish and wildlife habitat.

Policy EV-28 Provide natural area and open space linkages within developed areas.

Policy EV-29 Share data and emerging science on sea level rise with habitat restoration planners early in the planning process.



Urban Forestry

Bellingham's urban forest consists of all the trees in the City on both public and private property, including street trees, park trees, forested parklands, trees on institutional campuses and trees in many private ownership settings, ranging from parking lots to backyards. Trees not only beautify an area, but they also provide shade, reduce levels of noise and dust, increase property values, reduce stormwater runoff, produce oxygen, absorb carbon dioxide, improve wellbeing, and provide habitat for wildlife.

The City's urban forest should be managed in a way that optimizes the environmental, economic and social benefits it provides. An urban forestry management plan is the best tool for maintaining a healthy and desirable urban forest. This type of plan guides a broad range of actions to achieve a sustainable urban forest. A baseline inventory of the existing tree canopy is key to determining future canopy targets and goals. As of 2013, approximately 29.9% of Bellingham included tree canopy, defined as vegetation at least 20 feet high.

Trees and forests are integral elements of the community's "green infrastructure". These resources, along with restoration projects, are some of the only infrastructure whose value increases over time.

The citizens of Bellingham value the beauty and benefits of trees and make an effort to preserve them. Since 1995, Bellingham has been designated by the National Arbor Day Foundation (NADF) as a "Tree City USA". That means that the City has met the NADF criteria that address regulatory protection and have allocated resources for tree care. The 2015 Bellingham Habitat Restoration Technical Assessment provides a starting point for mapping and managing open spaces, including urban forests.

GOAL EV-6 Conserve and maintain natural resources, including the urban forest.

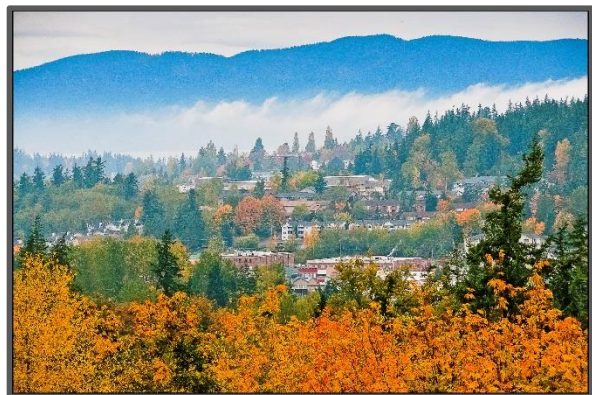
Policy EV-30 Create and support a comprehensive urban forestry management plan that includes such elements as a Citywide tree canopy baseline, Citywide tree canopy target, and street tree goals.

Policy EV-31 Provide operation and maintenance resources for management of the urban forest and public open space areas.

Policy EV-32 Promote greater knowledge of trees and tree care to the citizens of Bellingham.

Policy EV-33 Utilize the ecological benefits of trees when designing and installing stormwater management facilities.

Policy EV-34 Encourage the preservation and planting of street trees and trees on private property using the "right tree, right place" concept.



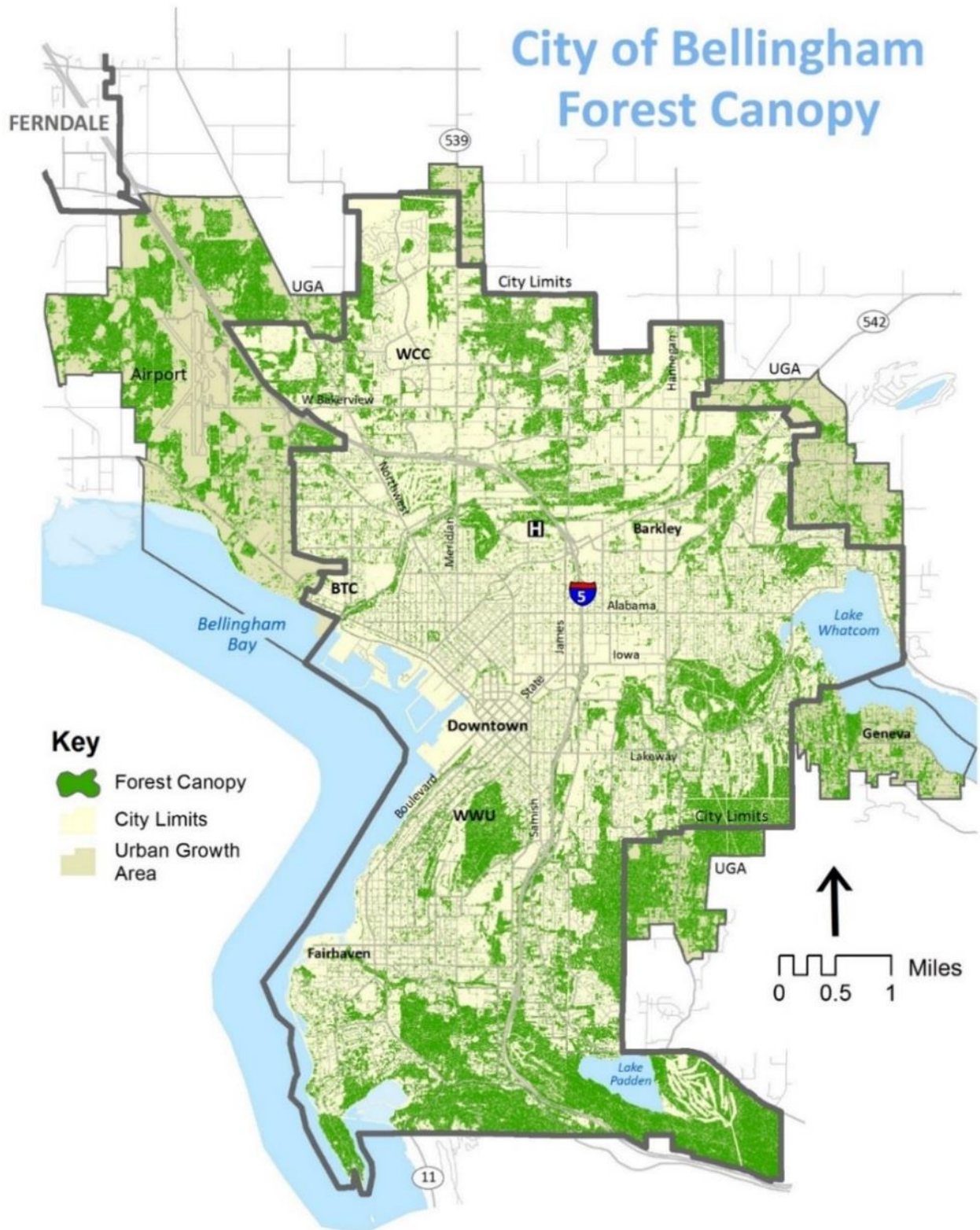
Happy Valley Neighborhood with Lummi Island in the background. Photo by George Cvetkovich.

Policy EV-35 Consider the role of trees as habitat when evaluating sites for development and making decisions about trees.

Policy EV-36 Encourage the removal of invasive plant species in forested areas and educate the community about invasive species that impact local trees and forests.

Policy EV-37 Provide mechanisms for identifying and protecting trees that the community places a high value on, such as heritage or landmark trees.

The Right Tree for the Right Place.
Trees provide substantial economic, ecological, and community benefits. As the City continues to urbanize, the key to realizing these benefits is to select the right tree and plant it in the right place. This assures a healthy tree that will not be in conflict with human activities.



Air Quality

Bellingham's geographic position, combined with hydroelectric power as its principal means of generating electricity, result in good air quality, as reported by the DOE and Northwest Clean Air Agency. Combustion of fossil fuels to generate electricity is the largest single source of carbon dioxide emissions in the United States, followed by the transportation of people and goods. Bellingham is fortunate to have power from hydroelectric facilities.

Promoting sustainable growth and development is essential if the City is to maintain its good air quality in the long term. Land use policies that promote a decreased reliance on single-occupancy vehicles, planning practices that place greater emphasis on multimodal transportation options, natural resource conservation practices that reduce the urban heat island effect, and green building practices that increase resource efficiency make clean air easier to achieve.

Ozone occurs in two layers of the atmosphere - the stratosphere and troposphere.

Ozone found high above the Earth in the stratosphere is considered "good" because it protects people, plants and animals from the sun's ultraviolet rays.

Ground-level ozone in the troposphere is considered "bad" because it affects human health and the environment. Ozone pollution forms when emissions from sources such as vehicles, lawn mowers and industrial uses react with heat and sunlight. It is harmful for everyone, especially children, the elderly, and people with respiratory problems.

GOAL EV-7 Maintain good air quality.

Policy EV-38 Continue coordinated land use and transportation planning through implementation of the City's urban village plans and transit-oriented development along transit corridors (see Transportation and Land Use Chapters).

Policy EV-39 Promote alternatives to the single-occupancy vehicle, including car-sharing, telecommuting and transit, as strategies for reducing vehicle-related air pollution (see Transportation Chapter).

Policy EV-40 Advocate for healthy indoor air quality and support education and outreach on measures individuals can take to protect their health.

Policy EV-41 Consider the role of trees in maintaining good air quality.



Photo courtesy of Whatcom Council of Governments.

Climate Change

Leading scientists worldwide predict that climate change will have serious environmental, economic, and public health consequences in coming years. The burning of fossil fuels and deforestation on a global scale have caused heat-trapping greenhouse gases (GHGs) to increase in the atmosphere and prevent the heat from escaping into space.

The City became active in addressing climate change issues in 2005 when the City Council adopted Resolution 2005-08, committing the City to participation in the Cities for Climate Protection (CCP) Program. This program is administered by the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI), of which the City is a member. The resolution was a commitment by the City to achieve ICLEI's five milestones. Three milestones have already been achieved - the development of a baseline emissions inventory and forecast of future emissions growth, identification of an emissions reduction target, and adoption of an action plan.

Climate Protection Action Plan

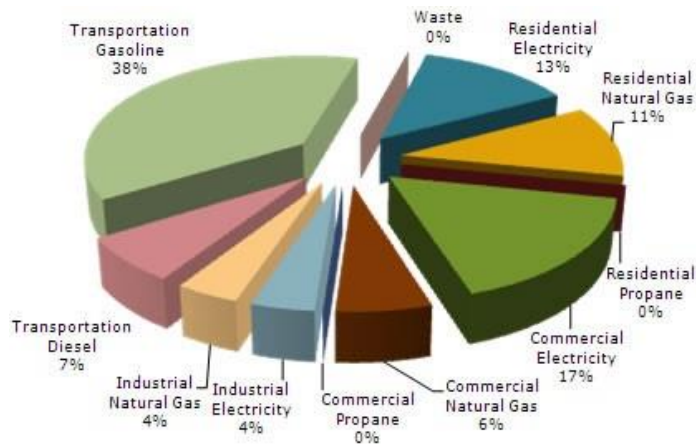
The 2007 Climate Protection Action Plan (CPAP) describes three phases of municipal government and community actions aimed at reducing the City's GHG contributions, as well as actions to adapt to the impacts of a changing climate. Phase I quantified actions taken between 2000 and 2007 to reduce GHG emissions. Phase II identified next steps toward reducing GHG emissions from both municipal operations and the community. Phase III is incorporated into the 2016 CPAP update and focuses on climate adaptation measures, GHG emissions' monitoring, and evaluating and updating past and future GHG reduction measures.

GHG emissions were inventoried for the base year of 2000 and for the interim analysis year of 2005. Based on the findings of the inventory, a survey of existing and possible measures and a review of other communities' targets, GHG reduction targets were adopted for municipal operations and separately for the entire community.

Greenhouse gases trap heat in the atmosphere, making Earth warmer. Carbon dioxide is the most important greenhouse gas emitted by humans, but other gases, such as methane, nitrous oxide and fluorinated gases, also contribute to climate change.

The GHG targets for City government are: reduce GHG emissions by 64% from 2000 levels by 2012 and by 70% from 2000 levels by 2020. GHG reduction targets for the community are a 7% GHG reduction from 2000 levels by 2012 and 28% from 2000 levels by 2020.

In the base year 2000, the community of Bellingham emitted approximately 950,793 tons of carbon dioxide. By far the largest emissions came from the transportation sector, with diesel and gasoline emissions accounting for 44.2% of all emissions. When electricity-based emissions from residential, commercial and industrial sectors were combined, they accounted for 34.7% of the total community emissions. The figure below shows the breakdown of community emissions by sector and source type.



Bellingham Greenhouse Gas Emissions, 2000 - 2020 (Source: CACP Model output)

Climate Change Adaptation

In addition to implementing measures to reduce GHG emissions, the City has developed a draft Climate Adaptation Plan (CAP) that identifies strategies that will increase the community's resiliency to expected and unavoidable impacts to our natural and built environments. The main sectors anticipated to be most affected by climate change and those addressed in the CAP are water resource management, energy management, and ecosystem management, including coastal infrastructure.

Climate change adaptation strategies for western Washington encourage planning for a sea level rise of up to 50 inches by the end of the century, according to the University of Washington Climate Impacts Group. Sea level rise poses threats to infrastructure and public safety. If combined with a storm surge, sea level rise can threaten coastal infrastructure such as railroads, roads, trails, buildings, water and wastewater distribution systems and other utilities. Impacts can also occur to nearshore ecological processes with increased shoreline and bluff erosion and inundation of coastal nearshore habitat features.

GOAL EV-8 Reduce contributions to climate change.

Policy EV-42 Mitigate for and adapt to climate change through implementation of the City's Climate Protection Action Plan.

Policy EV-43 Continue to develop and adopt the City's Climate Adaptation Plan.

Policy EV-44 Promote resiliency to climate change and natural disasters and coordinate efforts with neighboring jurisdictions (see Whatcom County Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan).

Policy EV-45 Strive to meet or exceed the City's goals and commitments for reducing greenhouse gases.

Policy EV-46 Promote energy efficiency in both municipal buildings and in buildings throughout the community.

Policy EV-47 Encourage renewable energy sources such as solar power.

Policy EV-48 Promote integrated land use and transportation planning (see Land Use and Transportation Chapters) and sustainable building practices to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.



Solar panel retrofit on building near Old Village Trail.

Policy EV-49 Foster a multimodal transportation system that minimizes environmental impacts, connects people to services and jobs, and reduces reliance on fossil fuels (see Transportation Chapter).

Policy EV-50 Preserve the existing water supply and ensure an adequate future water supply despite capacity impacts associated with climate change.

Policy EV-51 Encourage public-private partnerships with higher education institutions, nonprofit groups and other agencies to reduce GHG emissions.

Energy and Resource Conservation

In 2007, Bellingham was recognized by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as Washington's first Green Power Community. The community also received the EPA's Green Power Purchaser Award in 2007 for making a significant purchase of renewable energy, which helps build the market for green power. Recognizing that buildings use a large amount of energy and resources, the City has embarked on a number of programs in its municipal operations, as well as with the community, to reduce energy consumption.

In 2009, the City adopted the Energy and Resource Conservation (ERC) Policy to increase conservation efforts through operational and behavioral changes within municipal operations. Ultimately, this policy is designed to ensure a sustainable future by reducing the impact of City government operations on the environment.

Bellingham was one of the first cities in the nation to be awarded an EPA grant as a Climate Showcase Community. An outgrowth of that is the Community Energy Challenge (CEC), which began in 2010 and since that time has resulted in county-wide energy improvements to homes and businesses that have reduced greenhouse gases and energy use. The CEC was also designed to create local contractor jobs, which was a focus during the Great Recession.

The City has been promoting green building methods since the early 2000s. In 2005, the City approved Resolution No. 2005-21, committing the City to meeting the LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Silver rating for the construction of all new and renovated City buildings over 5,000 square feet when the City provides the majority of funding. In 2010, the City instituted a program that expedited building permit review for projects that implemented LEED or Built Green techniques. The program became permanent and continues to be used by residential, commercial, and institutional building projects.

As a renewable energy source, solar power is rapidly growing in our region, partly because cities like Bellingham are reducing installation barriers. Also, the utility companies support it. In April 2016, Governor Jay Inslee proclaimed Bellingham as one of several Northwest Solar Communities, acknowledging community initiatives that have increased residential solar installations by nearly 500 percent since 2013.

GOAL EV-9 Promote interdependence of environmental, economic, and social interests.

Policy EV-52 Provide convenient means for energy and resource conservation within municipal operations and throughout the community.

Policy EV-53 Investigate the economic feasibility of developing and implementing district heating systems.

District heating is the use of a centralized boiler installation (heat-only boiler or heat from a combined heat and power plant) to provide heat for a number of buildings.

Policy EV-54 Increase the efficiency of water and energy use in municipal facilities.

Policy EV-55 Encourage energy-efficient site and building designs to increase efficiency, preserve natural resources, and reduce life-cycle costs.



Kateri Court is a LEED-certified building consisting of commercial spaces and affordable studio and one-bedroom apartments.

Policy EV-56 Promote and encourage the use of green building rating systems, such as LEED, in all buildings.

Policy EV-57 Reduce solid waste generated from municipal facilities through increased opportunities, capacity and education for recycling and composting.

Policy EV-58 Encourage the preservation and renovation of historic structures for multiple benefits, including energy and resource conservation.

*On its most basic level, **historic preservation** is the practice of conserving resources. Not only do restoration and redevelopment projects consume less energy than demolition and new construction, but preservation also recovers the worth of past energy investment.*

Policy EV-59 Promote the disposal of hazardous and other wastes, including pharmaceuticals, in a manner that is safe to the environment and public health.

Policy EV-60 Coordinate with state and federal agencies to support and encourage the cleanup of contaminated soil and other environmental remediation activities.

Policy EV-61 Foster policies and programs so that environmental benefits are equitably distributed and environmental burdens are minimized.



**Parks, Recreation and
Open Space Plan**
November 14, 2016



Acknowledgements

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CONSULTANT

Applied Research Northwest - survey

November 14, 2016

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- B. Existing Facility Tables
- C. Proposed Facility Tables
- D. North Bellingham Trail Plan
- E. 2014 Adopted Capital Facilities Plan (6 Year)
- F. Revenue Source Descriptions

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Survey Results and Public Comment Summaries available at:

<https://www.cob.org/Documents/parks/development/projects/2014-pro-plan-update-survey.pdf>

<https://www.cob.org/documents/parks/development/projects/pro-plan-update-public-comment-tracker.pdf>

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The City's Park, Recreation and Open Space Plan (PRO Plan), an element of the City's Comprehensive Plan, is the overarching document that guides the expansion of our park and recreation system as the community grows. The PRO plan must be updated every six years in order for the City to remain eligible for grants under the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program. As an element of the City's Comprehensive Plan, the PRO Plan undergoes a legislative review process, including Planning Commission and City Council approval. Since a full update of the plan occurred in 2014, minor modifications have been made to this 2016 update in order to be consistent with the 2016 Comprehensive Plan.

1.1 Growth Management Act

The Growth Management Act (GMA) establishes goals for cities and counties to ensure that their quality of life is sustained as their communities grow. One of these goals is to “retain open space, enhance recreational opportunities, conserve fish and wildlife habitat, increase access to natural resource lands and water, and develop parks and recreational facilities” (RCW 36.70A.020(9)).

The parks and recreation element of a comprehensive plan must contain the following features:

- Consistency with the capital facilities element;
- Estimates of park and recreation demand for at least a 10-year period. This plan estimates demand for a 20-year period;
- An evaluation of facilities and service needs; and
- An evaluation of intergovernmental coordination opportunities.

Mission Statement:

*Support a healthy
community by providing
high quality parks and
recreation services.*



The plan includes urban growth areas to ensure that open space and greenbelt corridors are identified within and between urban growth areas, including lands useful for recreation, wildlife habitat, trails, and connection of critical areas.

Projects prioritized during the planning process are included in the City's six-year Capital Budget, which is updated at least bi-annually.

1.2 Overall Vision

Mission Statement

The mission of the Bellingham Department of Parks & Recreation is to “Support a healthy community by promoting high quality parks and recreation services.” A high quality park system should serve the needs of the community with a range of services and facilities for all age groups and abilities provided in a safe environment. The PRO Plan outlines the steps to continue to achieve a quality parks system for the future.

Throughout the planning process themes emerged that set the vision for the coming years. These themes centered on:

- Equitable access to park facilities and programs - all neighborhoods should be provided with access to equitable parks and recreation facilities and programs. All residents should live within ½ mile walk of a park and trail.
- Water Access - Access to the water, for viewing, boating, fishing and general enjoyment is important and waterfront park development is a priority;
- Environment – A strong recognition of the value of and access to the natural environment as a core component of the Bellingham park system, as well as recognition that access to natural areas may be limited in order to meet the City's environmental goals and regulations (see Environment Chapter);
- Newly Emerging Sports – Recognition that Bellingham residents pride themselves on living outside the “recreation box” with strong interests in newly emerging sports such as mountain bike skills, pickle ball, lacrosse, rugby, paddle sports and others; and
- Variety – The desire for the system to continue to offer the variety of choices, for recreational activities of all types, for all ages and abilities.



1.3 Previous Plans

This PRO Plan, prepared in 2013-2014 and updated in 2016, builds on previous comprehensive planning efforts and is an element of the Comprehensive Plan for Bellingham. The PRO Plan considers parks, recreation and open space land, facilities and programs.

Bellingham continues to grow and change as a community. Greater infill development is occurring within the central part of the city, while new development is expected in annex areas. New types of recreation are emerging and activities once considered “extreme” are now “mainstream.” The park system also attracts a greater number of users than ever before and requires more flexibility of park resources to respond to new trends and increased population.

1.4 Objectives & Approach

The specific objectives of this planning effort are to:

- Describe the Community Setting – Establish the framework within which park, recreation, and open space facilities should be provided, including natural features, historical context, land use implications, current recreation trends and demographics.
- Inventory the Existing Park System – This includes lands owned and operated by the city or other public agencies, both within the planning area and beyond. The planning area is defined in section 1.6 of this chapter.
- Analyze Needs & Opportunities – Analyze the needs for future park, recreation, and open space facilities or programs and develop recommendations, including the necessary resources for meeting and maintaining those needs.
- Establish Goals and Objectives – Identify the goals to be met and objectives to carry out those goals as the PRO Plan is implemented
- Adopt a Level-of-Service – Based on the existing park system and the recommendations of the community, establish proposed level of service standards and lay the groundwork for revised standards to help guide development of the park system over the next 10 to 20 years.
- Create an Implementation Plan – Establish the overall estimated cost of achieving the proposed level-of-service, based on the community’s recommendations, prioritize those recommendations, and



Squalicum Creek in Cornwall Park. Photo by Kristen Krussow.

develop a plan to implement the priority recommendations through a six-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). In addition, develop general strategies to be considered for the projected population growth over the next 20 years.

1.5 Public Involvement

Public input is important to a community-based parks and recreation plan. The citizen members of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board (PRAB) served as the Steering Committee to help oversee the process, provide input and evaluate the recommendations. A random sample household phone survey, a web-based survey, a public work shop and a public meeting were also conducted to augment and inform the Committee’s discussions. Public hearings were held with the Planning Commission and City Council prior to final adoption. The public involvement process included the following:

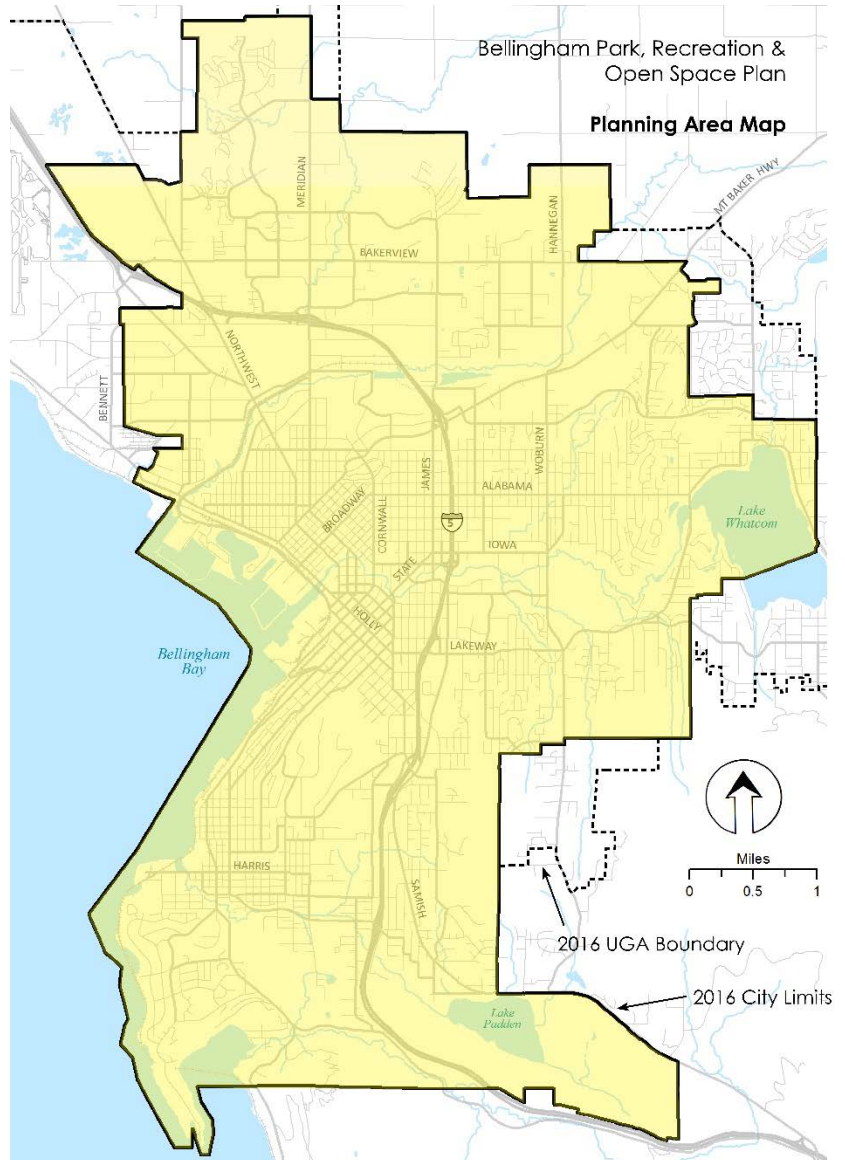
Meeting/Action	Topic	Month
2013		
Steering Committee/PRAB	Introduction, Process and Schedule	February
Steering Committee/PRAB	Population projection and Level of Service	March
City Council Update	Project status report	March
Steering Committee/PRAB	Ch. 5 Goals and Objectives, Facility Recommendations	April
Steering Committee/PRAB	Trail Recommendations	May
Steering Committee/PRAB	Visioning	June
Public Workshop	Visioning	June
Steering Committee/PRAB	Visioning Results and Public Opinion Survey	July
Steering Committee/PRAB	Survey Questions and Ch. 6 Recommendations	August
Telephone and Web Survey	Public Opinion Survey Conducted	August-Sept
Steering Committee/PRAB	Plan Review	September
Steering Committee/PRAB	DRAFT Plan Approval	October
Public Meeting	Plan Recommendations	October
City Council	Update	October
Planning Commission	Public Hearings and Work Sessions	November

Meeting/Action	Topic	Month
2014		
Steering Committee/PRAB	Final Plan Approval	January
City Council	Public Hearing	January
City Council	Preliminary Approval	February
City Council	Comp Plan Amendment	July
2016		
Steering Committee/PRAB	Update overview	January
	Review major changes	February
	Final Recommendation	March
Planning Commission	Public Hearing	March
City Council	Public Hearing	November

1.6 Planning Area Boundary

The planning area for this process includes the Bellingham City Limits and the adopted Urban Growth Area (UGA).

Parks, recreation and open space facilities not owned or managed by the City and located outside of the planning area were inventoried and considered, but are not included in any specific calculations within the PRO Plan (level-of-service, cost estimates, implementation). Whatcom County is responsible for planning the area outside of the UGA; however, the planning efforts of each agency must be coordinated. Any areas added to the UGA in the future, or areas currently within the UGA that may be annexed will need to address parks, recreation and open space needs concurrent with that action. Also, for the purposes of the PRO Plan, it is assumed that residents who currently live within the UGA are served by existing parks, by the end of the 20-year planning period, or 2036, all UGA areas will be incorporated into the City. The proposed facilities, population, level-of-service and any other recommendations projected to the year 2036 include both the existing City and the entire UGA. If all of these areas are not annexed, some of the recommendations would not be implemented.



1.7 Plan Documentation

This plan is organized into seven chapters including:

- Introduction and overview;
- Community setting;
- Inventory of existing facilities;
- Demand for new land and facilities;
- Goals and objectives in fulfilling those demands;
- Recommendations to meet the demand;
- Implementation of the recommendations.

Appendices include:

- Park type classifications;
- Detailed tables of existing and proposed park system facilities;
- North Bellingham Trail Plan;
- Capital Facilities Plan;
- Revenue Source Descriptions; and
- Public opinion survey results.

Chapter 2

COMMUNITY SETTING

Nestled between the mountains and the sea in northwest Washington State, Bellingham is at the center of a uniquely picturesque area offering a rich variety of recreational, cultural, educational and economic activities.

2.1 Location, Topography and Climate

Bellingham is located in northwest Washington on the shore of Bellingham Bay. The inland urban area is framed by the slopes of Stewart, Lookout, and Chuckanut Mountains, at the edge of the Cascade foothills with Mount Baker in the background.

Topography ranges from sea level to about 500 feet on the hilltops around Bellingham. Elevation increases to 3,050 feet at the top of Stewart Mountain, and eventually to 10,785 at the top of Mount Baker. The landform is generally flat to rolling within the urban growth area, though the plateau edge overlooking Bellingham Bay can drop off abruptly in slopes ranging from 40% to 75%.

Bellingham has a mild maritime climate. Mean temperatures vary from a high of 73 degrees in July to a low of 31 degrees Fahrenheit in January. Average annual precipitation is about 35 inches. Approximately 80% of the precipitation occurs from October through March with less than 6% falling during the summer months.

2.2 Natural Features

Bellingham citizens are blessed with living in an area of incredible natural beauty and have a long legacy of placing high value on the environment. The first Greenway Levy passed largely in response to citizen interest in protecting valuable wildlife habitat corridors, shoreline, riparian, wetland and unique upland areas and providing public access to those unique areas.

In 2005, Bellingham strengthened protection of wetland and streams by adopting the Critical Areas Ordinance which also protects steep slopes and frequently flooded areas. The Shoreline Master Program (SMP) was updated in 2013, adding more protection for shorelines and providing habitat restoration guidance while supporting public access.

In 2012, the City Council adopted a new Environment Element (*Chapter 9*) of the Comprehensive Plan to address environmental protection and ensure compliance with the Growth Management Act (GMA).

The City recently developed a Habitat Restoration Technical Assessment and a marine nearshore assessment. The plan uses a science-based prioritization framework to guide the preservation, restoration, and recovery of the City's terrestrial, aquatic and riparian habitats.

Enhancing and preserving existing habitats supports the City's adopted legacies regarding Clean, Safe Drinking Water and a Healthy Environment.

Following is a list of important environmental features with public recreation elements in and around the Bellingham area.

2.2.1 Creeks

Three major creeks and multiple minor creeks drain the Bellingham area. Squalicum, Whatcom, and Padden Creeks and tributaries are on the Washington State list of impaired water bodies. Preventing further degradation and improving water quality of the City's creeks is important to ensure the resources they provide to the community are protected.

- Squalicum Creek – A major creek that starts at Squalicum Lake and flows southwest to the mouth of Bellingham Bay. The Bay to Baker Trail is planned within the Squalicum Creek Greenway Corridor.
- Whatcom Creek – A major creek that drains from the northwest end of Lake Whatcom west into Bellingham Bay. Whatcom Creek Trail and Greenway generally follows the alignment of Whatcom Creek.
- Padden Creek – A major creek that drains from the Lake Padden west into Bellingham Bay. Upper and lower Padden Creek Greenway Trail follows the corridor.
- Little Squalicum Creek - A perennial stream northwest of Squalicum Creek that flows through Little Squalicum Park and into Bellingham Bay.
- Connelly Creek – A perennial stream that drains south from Sehome Hill into Padden Creek. The 26 acre Connelly Creek Nature Area preserves valuable habitat and provides walking trails.
- Chuckanut Creek – A perennial stream that drains from near Lake Samish west into Chuckanut Bay, through Arroyo Park.



Whatcom Creek in Whatcom Falls Park

2.2.2 Lakes, ponds and estuaries in and near Bellingham

Lakes are defined here as water bodies greater than 20 acres in size or more than 6 feet in depth.

- Lake Whatcom is 10 miles long with a surface area of approximately 5,000 acres. Since 1968, the City has relied on Lake Whatcom for its municipal water supply. The lake is on the Washington State list of impaired water bodies. As of 2012, Lake Whatcom has at least eight aquatic invasive species and one invasive mollusk, the Asian clam. Preventing additional invasive species from entering the lake is important in ensuring that Lake Whatcom and the resources it provides to the community are not degraded. Public swimming and boating access to the lake is provided at Bloedel Donovan Park. Other public access within the UGA is available at the North Shore DNR lease property, Euclid Park, and several unimproved street rights of way.
- Lake Samish located south of the urban growth area, is 3 miles long with a surface area of approximately 809 acres. Most of the lake shoreline has been developed for private residential uses. Whatcom County has developed Lake Samish Park with swimming, fishing, and boat access.
- Lake Padden is one mile long with a surface area of approximately 151 acres. The entire lake is within the boundaries of Lake Padden Park with a perimeter trail, swimming, boating and fishing access.
- Toad Lake is 1/2 mile long with a surface area of approximately 28 acres. Washington State Fish & Wildlife has developed swimming, fishing and boat access on the south end of the lake. The rest has been developed with primarily residential uses.
- Sunset Pond is a man-made freshwater retention pond at Sunset Pond Park with improved perimeter trails.
- Bug Lake is a man-made freshwater retention pond with informal walking trails.



Lake Padden

- Padden Lagoon is a saltwater estuary at the inlet of Padden Creek into Bellingham Bay. The shoreline has been partially restored and preserved but has no on-water access.

Most of the other small ponds or lakes in the Bellingham urban area have either been developed for private residential use and/or are too small in size to support public access activities.

2.3 Park Development in Sensitive Areas

Intense park activities should be separated from sensitive areas by maintaining and enhancing buffers to protect habitat function. Access to select sensitive areas may be provided through low impact trails, only when public access does not impair ecological function.

Where appropriate and consistent with City goals and policies, the PRO Plan should identify areas to preserve and enhance for open space and other low impact or no impact park uses, in recognition of the fact that open spaces are set aside for preservation of natural buffers (See Section 3.1.4). Mature shoreline trees, snags, and downed logs should be preserved where possible to allow wildlife species to coexist in urban areas.

When preserving or enhancing natural areas, the City should:

- **Limit** – harmful activities
- **Remove** – invasive plant species that displace native materials and habitat,
- **Plant** – native trees and shrubs that support and retain native wildlife species, and
- **Cluster** – park improvements to preserve natural shorelines and contiguous open spaces for wildlife habitat.



Whatcom Falls. Courtesy of Whatcom Museum archives.

2.4 Historical Development

Lummi, Nooksack, and Samish Indians lived in and around the Nooksack River and Bellingham Bay area. These tribes fished in saltwater and the river. The tribes also exhibited some agricultural and hunting characteristics common to eastern or interior tribes. Village sites were located along Bellingham Bay and the Nooksack River.

In 1792, the first western exploration of Puget Sound was accomplished by British explorer Captain George Vancouver. Vancouver charted Bellingham Bay and named it in honor of Sir William Bellingham, Controller of the British Navy.

In 1852, Henry Roeder and Russell Peabody arrived from California and started the Roeder-Peabody-Page sawmill on Whatcom Creek Waterway to process virgin red cedar and Douglas fir.

By 1854, the towns of Whatcom, Sehome, Bellingham, and Fairhaven were settled around Bellingham Bay; the Washington Territorial Legislature established Whatcom County and the county seat. Whatcom was derived from an Indian term meaning “rough tumbling waters” – a reference to lower Whatcom Falls.

In 1903, the towns of Whatcom, Sehome, Bellingham, and Fairhaven were consolidated into the City of Bellingham. Tideland areas were filled and the Great Northern Railway constructed passenger and freight

depots in the Whatcom "Old Town" business district to service the rapidly expanding city. As Bellingham continued to expand the core business district gradually moved onto the hill overlooking Whatcom Creek and Bellingham Bay.

2.5 Population

2.5.1 Population Trends

The 2015 population for Bellingham was estimated to be 83,580. Bellingham’s official census population for 2000 was estimated to be 67,171 resulting in an average annual increase of 1.47% per year over the 15 year period. The unincorporated Urban Growth Area (UGA) for Bellingham has an estimated 10,360 people for a total UGA population of 93,940 in the year 2015.

2015 City Population	=	83,580
2015 UGA Population	=	10,360
2015 Total Population	=	93,940
2036 Projected Population	=	124,157

2.5.2 Population Projections

According to the 2016 Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan, the City’s population will increase to 124,157 persons by the year 2036 assuming all UGA areas are incorporated, or by another 30,217 people from the 2015 population. This is equal to an annual average increase of 2% per year over the 20 year period.

2.6 Demographics

The following demographic information was taken from the United States Census 2007-2011 and 2010-2014 five-year average American Community Survey Demographic Profiles for Bellingham. Demographics are important to consider in reviewing various opportunities for specific recreation proposals or in evaluating new trends or interests in recreation programming or facilities.

TABLE 2.6.1

Economic Characteristics		
Census Year	2007-2011 ACS	2010-2014 ACS
Mean travel time to work in minutes	17.7	17.6
Median household income*	\$ 39,299	\$42,440
Median family income*	\$ 61,051	\$63,355
Per capita income*	\$ 24,396	\$24,864
Families below poverty level	10.7%	14.0%
* all income listed is in inflation-adjusted dollars		

TABLE 2.6.2

Housing Characteristics		
Census Year	2007-2011 ACS	2010-2014 ACS
Occupied Housing Units	93%	93.4%
Vacant Housing Units	7%	6.6%
Owner-occupied Housing Units	45.8%	45.7%
Renter-occupied Housing Units	54.2%	54.3%

TABLE 2.6.3

Age Characteristics		
Census Year	2007-2011 ACS	2010-2014 ACS
Median Age	30.6	31.0
Under 5 years	4.8%	5.0%
5 to 19 Years	17.1%	17.0%
20 to 34 Years	33.5%	33.1%
35 to 64 Years	32.2%	31.6%
65 Years and Over	12.4%	13.2%

TABLE 2.6.4

Ethnic Characteristics		
Census Year	2007-2011 ACS	2010-2014 ACS
White	86.6%	84.8%
Hispanic or Latino	7.3%	8.3%
Black or African American	1.4%	1.1%
Asian	4.8%	5.3%
American Indian and Alaska Native	1.7%	1.8%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.1%	0.1%
Two or More Races	3.3%	4.7%
Other	2.1%	2.2%
Language other than English at home	11.9%	12.8%

TABLE 2.6.5

Physically Impaired Population		
Census Year	2007-2011 ACS	2010-2014 ACS
Disability Status	3.0%	5.1%
Ambulatory Difficulty	2.0%	3.8%
Vision Difficulty	2.2%	3.9%

2.7 Recreation Trends

Similar to the rest of Washington State, Bellingham has seen a steady increase in organized sports. In Bellingham, that increase has also included new types of activities, such as pickle ball, rugby, lacrosse, ultimate Frisbee and disc golf. There is also an increased interest in emerging sports, such as mountain bike skills, paddle boarding and rock climbing.

A changing demographic and an increase in cultural diversity in the Bellingham area have brought new types of interests in recreational activities and programs. It has also brought a greater need for more general recreational activities and financial assistance to residents where needed for recreational program or facility fees.

Similar to trends across the nation, Bellingham residents continue to demand more off road walking and bicycling trails. As trails increase in popularity and the community grows, there are conflicts among trail users, with a high increase of dogs off leash in undesignated areas.

The census data also shows that, much like the rest of the nation, Bellingham's population is aging with the percent of the population over 65 years of age increasing from 12.4% in 2011 to 13.2% in 2014. Ensuring that parks facilities are accessible for those with limited mobility will be key in ensuring our goals of access for all groups in our community.

Nationally, there has been recognition of the importance of recreation and park systems to overall quality of life, health and well-being especially as related to the growing obesity rate across the nation. Research shows that well-designed and accessible parks and open spaces are correlated with better physical health, through increased rates of physical activity, and with many mental health benefits, such as lower rates of depression and stress. Establishing a level of service for parks and trails that ensures equal equitable access and proximity for all populations within the community is an important step towards addressing health disparities and promoting good health for all. Using a community and network based approach to park planning more clearly indicates gaps in services and facilities. The community-based approach is discussed in more detail in Chapter 4 of the PRO Plan.



Disc Golf at Cornwall Park. Photo by Colin Morris.

Chapter 3

EXISTING FACILITIES

An extensive network of park, recreation and open space facilities is provided by the City and other agencies including County, School District, Port and State and is available to Bellingham citizens. The inventory of existing facilities is organized into all those that are owned or managed by the City along with other agency facilities available to the general public within the City/UGA planning area. These are included in the City's level-of-service metrics. Non-City facilities that are located outside of the planning area but enhance the local recreation experience are inventoried to demonstrate the availability of additional recreational amenities in the area, but they are not included in the level of service. Level-of-service (LOS) is further defined in *Chapter 4* of the PRO Plan. School facilities provide an additional public benefit but are not included in the level-of-service as they are not available to the general public on a regular basis.

3.1 Facility Inventory Classifications

The inventory of existing facilities is divided into the following park classifications:

- Neighborhood Park
- Community Park
- Special Use Sites
- Open Space
- Trails

Each classification is described below, along with a map locating and identifying each facility. A detailed inventory of recreation activities within each facility, organized by ownership and classification, is also included in *Appendix B* of the PRO Plan. A more detailed description of each park classification type, including approximate size, service area, development, and acquisition guidelines is included in *Appendix A* of the PRO Plan.

3.1.1 Neighborhood Park (NP)

Neighborhood parks are the basic recreational focus and center of neighborhoods. They should be developed with both active and passive recreation activities and serve those living within a half mile

*"The nation behaves well
if it treats its natural
resources as assets which
it must turn over to the
next generation
increased, and not
impaired, in value."
- Theodore Roosevelt*

walk along a designated pedestrian route, sidewalk or trail. Neighborhood parks should accommodate a wide variety of age and user groups, including youth, adults, seniors and special needs populations. Creating a sense of place by bringing together the unique character of the site with that of the neighborhood is vital to a successful neighborhood park.

3.1.2 Community Park (CP)



Boulevard Park. Photo by Kristen Krussow.

Community parks are generally larger than neighborhood parks and are intended to serve a broader range of activities and users. Their focus is on meeting the recreation needs of the larger community with more specialized activities, as well as preserving unique landscapes, open spaces or environmental features. They allow for group activities and offer other recreation opportunities, such as lighted programmed sports facilities not generally found at the neighborhood level. Due to their larger size, they are often designed to serve both as a neighborhood park function as well as having expanded and unique activities. Community parks should be distributed throughout the City with approximately one park for every four square miles, and served by designated pedestrian routes, sidewalks or trails.

3.1.3 Special Use Site (SU)

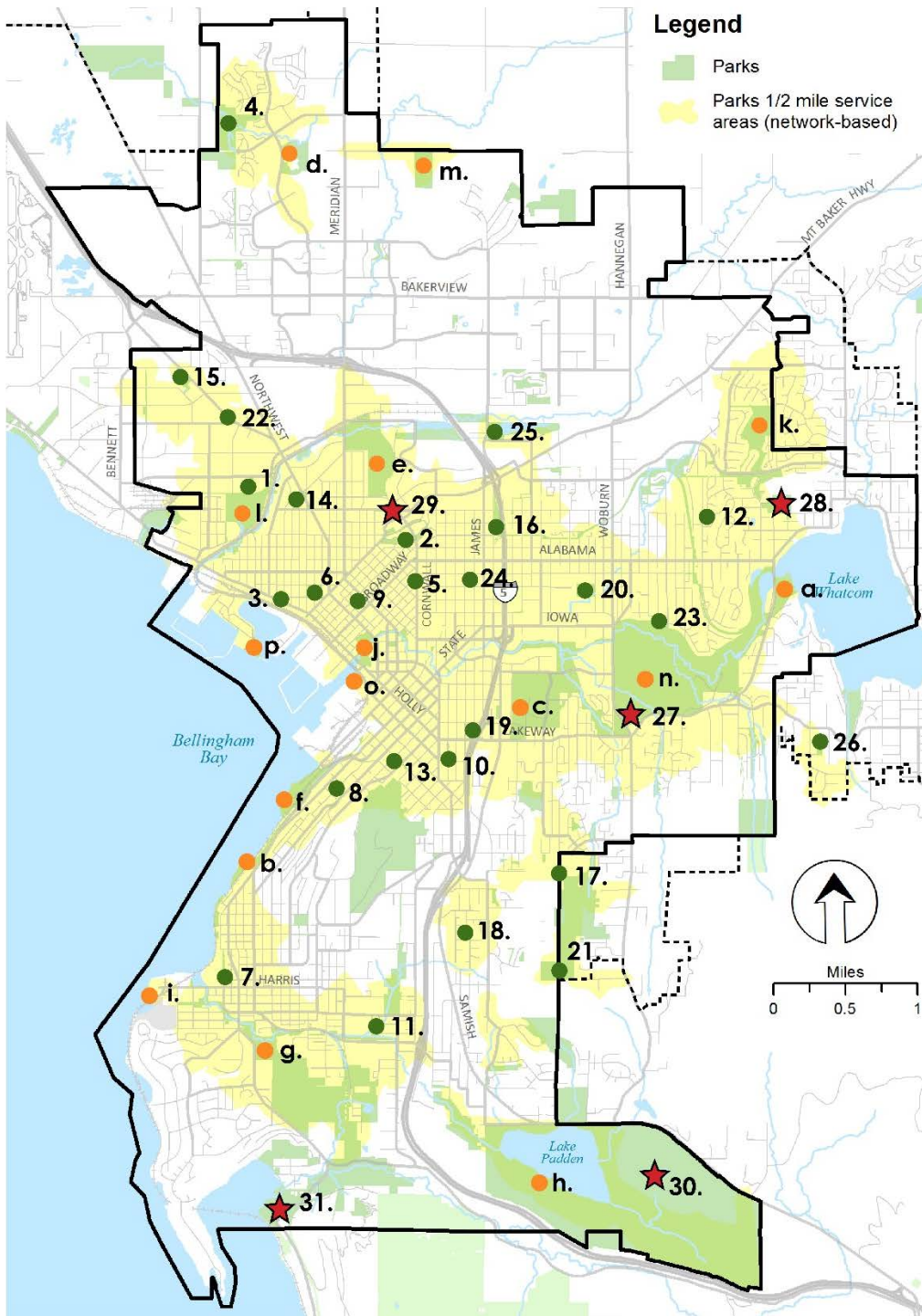
The special use classification covers a broad range of parks and recreation facilities oriented toward a single-purpose use. They often fall into three general categories:

- **Cultural Facilities** – unique resources offering historical, educational, visual/performance art or other similar experiences. These include gardens, art displays, and historic sites.
- **Indoor Facilities** – focused toward indoor uses, such as gymnasiums, community centers, teen/senior centers, aquatic centers, ice arenas, etc.
- **Unique Sites** – generally a single use, but not necessarily of a significance that draws from a larger region. These may include arboretums, cemeteries, plazas, sports stadiums, golf courses, etc., especially when they are not in conjunction with other typical park amenities.



Fairhaven Village Green. Photo by Valerie Polevoi.

EXISTING FACILITIES PLAN • PARKS AND SPECIAL USE SITES



3.1.4 Open Space (OS)

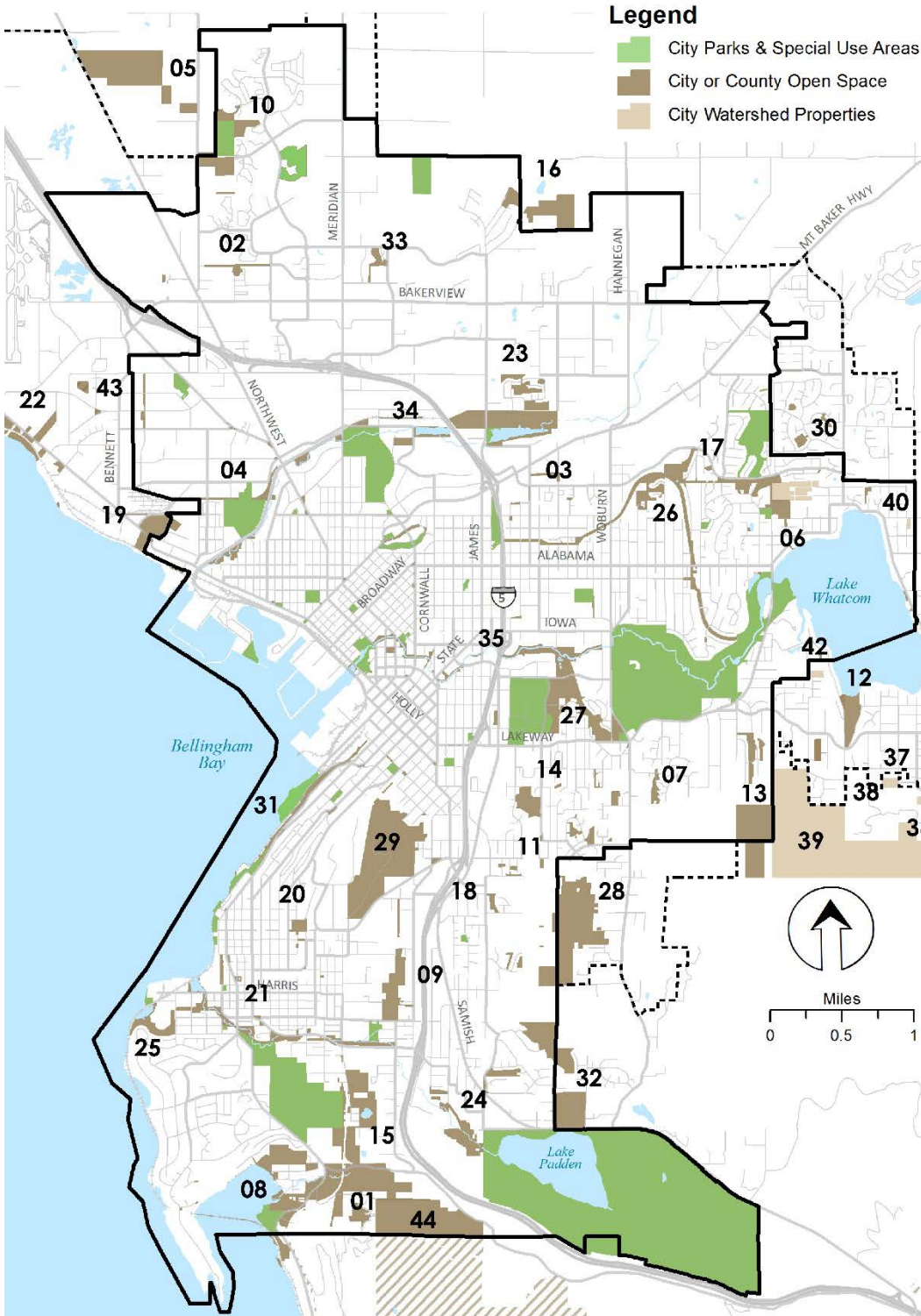


Open space sites are generally lands set aside for preservation of significant natural resources, unique landscapes, or visually aesthetic or buffer functions. One of the major purposes of open space is to enhance the livability and character of a community by preserving as many of its natural amenities as possible, as well as providing wildlife habitat in urban areas. Examples include sites with steep slopes, old or second growth forests, wetlands, stream corridors, tidelands, meadows, agricultural lands, shorelines (salt or fresh water), storm water features, and/or watershed or aquifer recharge zones.

Open space areas may be developed with trails, educational exhibits, picnic facilities or other similar activities with community benefit where public access is not incompatible with preservation goals.

In accordance with the Growth Management Act (GMA), Bellingham adopted a critical areas ordinance in 2005 to preserve and protect significant natural areas from development. The Bellingham Municipal Code defines the parameters within which a site with critical areas may be developed. These sites are often encumbered with an easement or covenant to ensure their protection. Preserved critical areas may be either public or private.

EXISTING FACILITIES PLAN • OPEN SPACE



Open Space

1. Arroyo Nature Area
2. Bakerview Open Space
3. Barkley Greenway & Trail
4. Bay to Baker Greenway
5. Bear Creek Greenway
6. Big Rock Open Space
7. Cemetery Creek Greenway
8. Chuckanut Bay Open Space & Tidelands
9. Connelly Creek Nature Area
10. Cordata Open Space
11. East Meadow
12. Euclid Park (City & County)
13. Galbraith Open Space (City & County)
14. Hawley Open Space
15. Interurban Greenway & Trail
16. King & Queen Mountain Open Space
17. Klipsun Greenway & Trail
18. Lazy E Ranch Open Space
19. Little Squalicum Park
20. Lowell Park Open Space
21. Lower Padden Creek Open Space & Trails
22. North Bay Open Space (City & Port)
23. Orchard Estates Wetlands
24. Padden Gorge
25. Post Point Treatment Plant Open Space (Public Works)
26. Railroad Greenway & Trail
27. Salmon Woods Open Space
28. Samish Crest Open Space
29. Sehome Hill Arboretum
30. Silver Creek Open Space
31. South Bay Greenway & Trail
32. South Samish Crest Open Space
33. Spring Creek Nature Area
34. Squalicum Creek Greenway
35. Whatcom Creek Greenway & Trail
36. Lake Geneva (watershed)
37. Laplante (watershed)
38. Macate & Wells (watershed)
39. Oriental Creek (watershed)
40. Silver Beach (watershed)
41. Strode (watershed)
42. Zarnowitz (watershed)
43. Alderwood Open Space (County)
44. Chuckanut Mountains (County)

3.1.5 Trails (TR)

While trails may be categorized into many different types, for the purpose of the PRO Plan, trails are generally limited to non-motorized off-road trails. Trails are intended to form a network of connections and linkages in and around the planning area, between neighborhoods, parks, schools, open spaces, civic facilities and commercial centers.

On-road systems (sidewalks and bike-lanes) are included in the transportation element of the Comprehensive Plan. The City recently developed a pedestrian plan and a bike plan. Pedestrian and bike facility improvements can increase safe access to existing parks and trails. The community has expressed the desire for all non-motorized elements to be coordinated with an integrated system of directional signage and overlay maps. Therefore, the trail system should be coordinated and connected to the street system.

Trails should be developed for a variety of uses including walking, biking, running, and horseback riding. Trail widths and surfacing varies depending on the type of use and location. While multi-use trails are generally desirable, not all trails are appropriate for all uses. Narrower trails or trails in sensitive areas may be suitable for pedestrians only. Trails in Bellingham are often located within greenway corridors that preserve and enhance native vegetation and wildlife habitat.

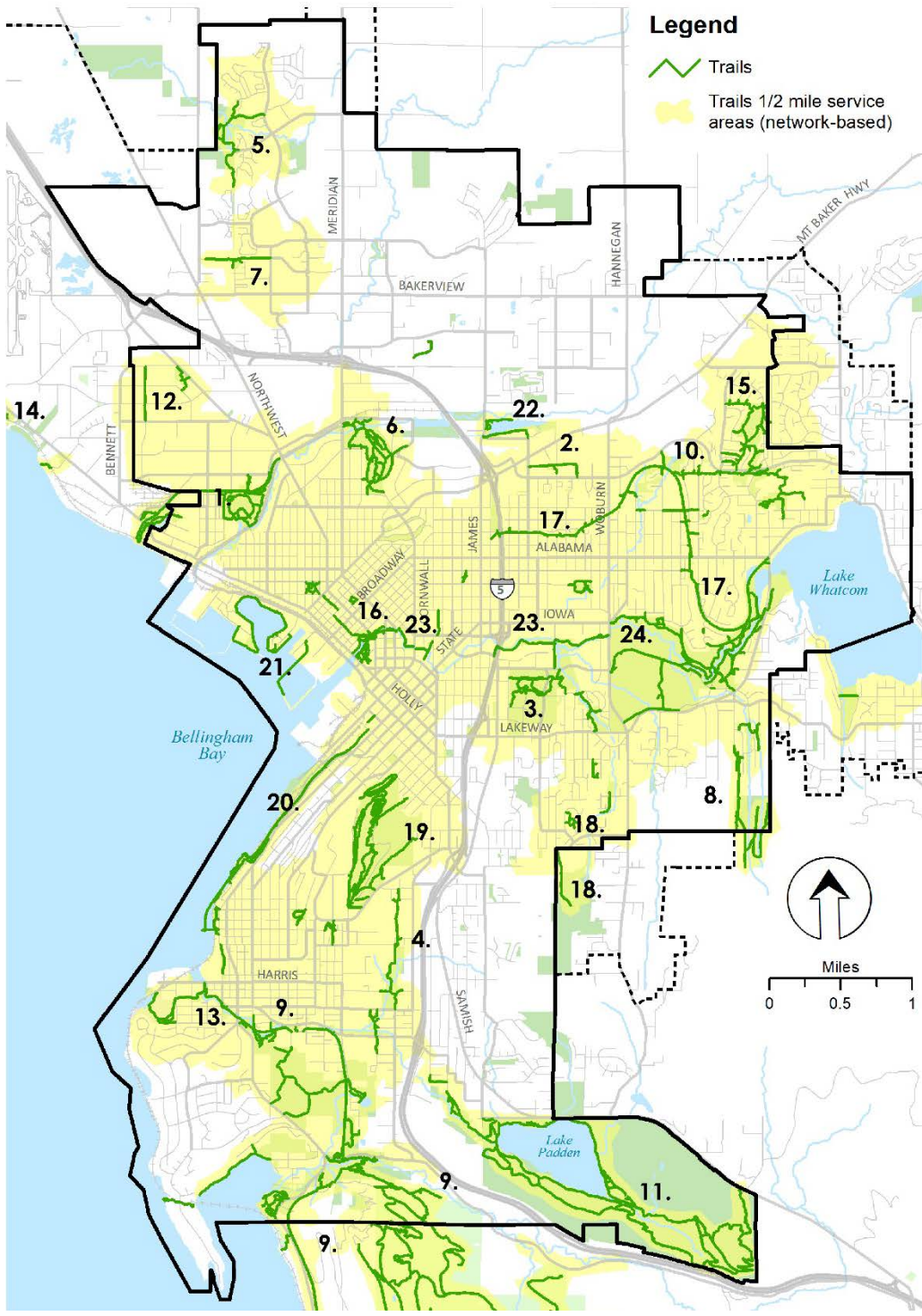


Old Village Trail



Trails that parallel established vehicular corridors or other transportation systems should be separated from them with a physical and/or visual barrier (vegetation, low walls, etc.). Trail corridors may include picnic areas, educational features or trailhead development located independently or shared with other types of park facilities.

EXISTING FACILITIES PLAN • TRAILS



Trails

1. Bay to Baker Trail
2. Barkley Trail
3. Civic Athletic Complex & Salmon Woods Open Space Trails
4. Connelly Creek Nature Area Trails
5. Cordata Park Trails
6. Cornwall Park Trails
7. Division Street Trail
8. Galbraith Mountain Trails
9. Interurban & Chuckanut Mt. Trails (City & County)
10. Klipsun Trail
11. Lake Padden & Padden Gorge Trails
12. Laurelwood Trail
13. Lower Padden Trails
14. Marine Drive Trail (Port)
15. Northridge Park Trails
16. Old Village Trail
17. Railroad Trail
18. Samish Crest Trails
19. Sehome Arboretum Trails
20. South Bay Trail
21. Squalicum Harbor Trail (Port)
22. Sunset Pond Trail
23. Whatcom Creek Trail
24. Whatcom Falls Park

3.2 Outside the Planning Area

An inventory of existing facilities owned or managed by other agencies outside the planning area is listed in *Appendix B* of the PRO Plan. These facilities are not included in the level-of-service metrics or cost estimates associated with the PRO Plan. They are listed for reference only. They were considered during the planning process as facilities that provide additional service to area residents in the overall evaluation of opportunities available in the area. Ownership of these facilities includes:

- Washington State (WS)
 - Parks Department
 - Department of Natural Resources
 - Department of Fish & Wildlife
- Whatcom County (WC)

Also included in this category are existing school-owned facilities. Since these facilities are available on a limited basis during non-school hours, they are not included in the City's overall level-of-service metrics, but are considered when evaluating neighborhood amenities. s. The schools include:

- Bellingham School District (BSD)
- Whatcom Community College (WCC)
- Bellingham Technical College (BTC)
- Western Washington University (WWU)

Chapter 4

LAND AND FACILITY DEMAND

A community-based level-of-service is used in this process to more accurately depict local values, interests and populations.

Level-of-service (LOS) standards for park, recreation, and open space land and facilities can help a community plan and budget for the demands of a growing and changing population. This plan used a community-based approach to develop specific land and facility demands through the 20 year planning period, or 2036. Utilizing this approach allowed the citizens of Bellingham to influence the process through public meetings and surveys in which they were asked to evaluate the existing system and express demand for additional facilities. Level-of-service is expressed several ways in this plan: the proximity of facilities to the population (service area), as a ratio of land to the population (acres per 1,000 people), and an overall system dollar value per capita. The process considered the community-expressed interests and needs for a park system and the plan recommendations were based on these preferences.

A community-based approach is recommended to respond to the needs, values and goals specific to Bellingham.

4.1 Service Area LOS

Parks levels of service may be measured in a multitude of ways, including quantity of acres per person, walking distance proximity to parks and trails, public satisfaction with facilities, participation in parks programs, costs to maintain the park system, and facility service areas.

The City is developing additional tools to better understand level of service. These tools will help assess existing access in all neighborhoods, and provide data to prioritize where additional resources are needed, including programming, development of new facilities, maintenance of existing facilities and land acquisition. These new tools are:

- 1) A complete assessment and inventory that evaluates the facilities and amenities in each of the City's parks, and
- 2) Data and analysis to evaluate equity and distribution of park facilities using income, population density, and other demographic characteristics.

Chapter 4

Citizens desire easy access to park and recreation facilities with equitable distribution across the community. The City has adopted a goal that every resident live within a one half mile walk for both a park and a trail. The recommendations in this plan were developed with this level-of-service goal in mind.

The Port of Bellingham and Whatcom County provide additional land for park, recreation and open space within the UGA planning area that is included in the service area LOS. School facilities are not included in the service area LOS as they are not always available, but are considered when determining the facilities available to a neighborhood.

Non City owned facilities outside the urban growth area (and therefore not part of the City's purview,) are not included in the area LOS but are inventoried in Appendix B. Other major recreational areas, such as the Mount Baker National Recreation Area, North Cascades National Park, and Mount Baker National Forest, also provide a variety of recreational opportunities at a more regional level.



Community input meeting at Bloedel Donovan Park

4.2 Population Ratio LOS

The demand for park, recreation and open space is often estimated using a ratio of a facility to a unit of population, such as 19 acres of community parks per 1,000 residents. The ratio method is relatively simple to compute and can be compared with national or local park, recreation and open space measurements.

-The National Recreation & Park Association (NRPA) recognizes the limitations of the population ratio methodology first developed in 1930 and since 1996 has recommended a community-based ratio be developed to reflect the specific conditions and unique nature of each community

The existing ratio of land to population level-of-service standard uses existing population estimates from the average American Community Survey Demographic Profiles. The ratio is calculated by dividing the total City or UGA acres of land in each park classification by the respective population. The same calculation is used for existing or proposed (existing acres divided by existing population and proposed acres divided by proposed population) as expressed per 1,000 people. UGA population includes both the City and UGA 2015 estimated populations. The plan recognizes residents of the unincorporated UGA are already using existing parks and are therefore included in calculating the existing land ratio of acres/1,000. This is detailed in Table 4.5.1.

4.3 System Value LOS

Table 4.5.1 shows the existing park acres per 1,000 and system cost per capita and the 2036 proposed acres per 1,000 and cost per capita within the Bellingham planning area.

The per capita value of the existing park system of \$5243/person was derived by adding total land facility improvements for the existing park system and dividing by the 2015 City population. This is done for City-owned facilities only, since that is the basis of the Park Impact Fee. Cost data used to develop these estimates are defined by each activity type (i.e. cost per acre of land, ball field or playground) in the **Existing Facilities Table** in *Appendix B*.

Proposed land and facility quantities were derived by applying average park sizes and facility improvements to the parks, open space, and trails identified through the community process. Specific recommendations such as the location of each proposed park or trail are described in greater detail in *Chapter 6* and specific detail in *Appendix C*. The values are based on current dollar cost data developed from land sales information, land value data, bid documentation, and other local cost data. Raw land cost and facility improvement or construction costs are included.



St. Clair Park playground

The total value of the proposed recommendations is divided by the projected 2036 population to determine the proposed value per capita LOS standard. A more detailed description of how these figures relate to the Park Impact Fee calculation can be found in the Bellingham Municipal Code, Chapter 19.04.

4.4 Future Growth Implications

The forecast population for Bellingham and the Urban Growth Area (UGA) projects an increase from 93,940 people in 2015 to an estimated 124,157 people by the year 2036, an increase of 30,217 people for the 20 year planning period. This number assumes all current UGA areas will be incorporated into the City within the planning period. This forecasted population will require all types of park, recreation and open space lands and facilities within the planning area.

2015 Value City Only = \$5,243/Capita

2036 Value All UGA = \$6065/Capita

4.5 Conclusions

Over the 20 year planning period, residents should not experience a noticeable reduction in the level of service for parks. The proposed recommendations, if implemented, require the addition of approximately 203 acres of land for neighborhood and community parks, special use sites, trails and open space. Although the overall land acreage ratio is expected to decrease, more of the population will live within a one-half mile walk of a park and a trail. The recommendations, if implemented will provide a balance of passive and active recreational opportunities that are well distributed throughout the community. Special use sites and open space often reflect unique opportunities and environments and may not be equally distributed by neighborhood throughout the community.

Since the PRO Plan is updated every six years, the growth, cost and budget implications can be monitored and adjusted based on revised community preferences and population projections with the 2020 plan update. The City can use community input provided during the regular six-year PRO Plan updates in combination with new LOS tools and population forecasts to adequately plan for future growth. If the proposed recommendations are not implemented the City may experience a loss of public accessibility and lack of preservation of more sensitive and appealing environmental sites, particularly within the developing urban growth areas and could preclude the purchase and development of, suitable lands for active recreation, such as playgrounds, picnic shelters, athletic fields and courts, and other land-intensive recreational facilities. This may result in crowding of existing recreational facilities, and reduce the availability of organized programs requiring travel to other jurisdictions outside the planning area to meet the demand. The following Table 4.5.1 shows a comparison between the existing and 2036 proposed population and acres per 1,000 population if the recommendations are implemented.

TABLE 4.5.1

2015 CITY Estimated Population	83,580
2015 UGA Estimated Population	93,940
2036 UGA Projected Population	124,157

Ownership	Total Land (acres)	Neighborhood Park (acres)	Community Park (acres)	Special Use Park (acres)	Open Space / Trail (acres)	Total Park System Value/Capita*
EXISTING PARK SYSTEM ACRES - CITY & UGA						
City of Bellingham	3400.8	78.6	1582.9	305.6	1433.7	\$5,243
City Watershed	241.7				241.7	
Port of Bellingham (UGA)	37.2		7.9	4.3	25	n/a
Whatcom County (UGA)	131.1	6.7		1.5	122.9	n/a
TOTAL EXISTING UGA	3810.8	85.3	1590.8	311.4	1823.3	n/a

PROPOSED PARK SYSTEM ADDITION ACRES - CITY & UGA*						
City of Bellingham (UGA)	203.2	36	5	1.5	160.7	\$822
City Watershed (UGA)						n/a
Port of Bellingham (UGA)						n/a
Whatcom County (UGA)						n/a
TOTAL PROPOSED CITY & UGA ACRES BY YEAR 2036	4,014	121.3	1,595.8	312.9	1984	

PARK SYSTEM STANDARD - CITY & UGA						
2015 CITY Existing / 1000	45.6	1.02	19.03	3.7	21.8	\$5,243
2015 City + UGA Standard/ 1000	40.6	0.9	16.9	3.3	19.4	n/a
2036 City + UGA Standard /1000	32.3	.97	12.9	2.5	15.98	\$6,065
NRPA LOS Standard/ 1000	34.5	2.0	8.0	n/a	6.0	

* Park system values includes land and facility value. See Appendix B of the PRO Plan for facility cost details

Chapter 5

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The mission of the Bellingham Department of Parks & Recreation is to “Support a healthy community by providing high quality parks and recreation services.”

The following goals and objectives of the Parks and Recreation Department have been organized under the Bellingham City Council Legacies and Strategic Commitments which were adopted in 2009 to ensure that future generations will benefit from the work being done today.

Goals are broad statements of intent that describe a desired outcome. Objectives, on the other hand, are both measurable and specific. Objectives help define when a goal has been met.

5.1 Council Legacy: Sense of Place

Council Strategic Commitments

- Support sense of place in neighborhoods
- Encourage development within existing infrastructure
- Preserve historic & cultural resources
- Protect natural green settings & access to open space
- Support people-to-people connections

Parks and Recreation Related Goals and Objectives

5.1.1 GOAL

Provide a high quality, parks, recreation and open space system for a diversity of age and interest groups.

5.1.1.1 OBJECTIVES

- A. Provide Neighborhood and Community Parks.
 - a. Provide a system of neighborhood and community parks so that all residents live within one half mile safe walking distance of a developed park.
 - b. Emphasize acquisition and development of parks in underserved areas.
 - c. Provide equitable access to parks with activities for all age groups and abilities, distributed throughout the community.

Bellingham City Council

Legacies and Strategic

Commitments:

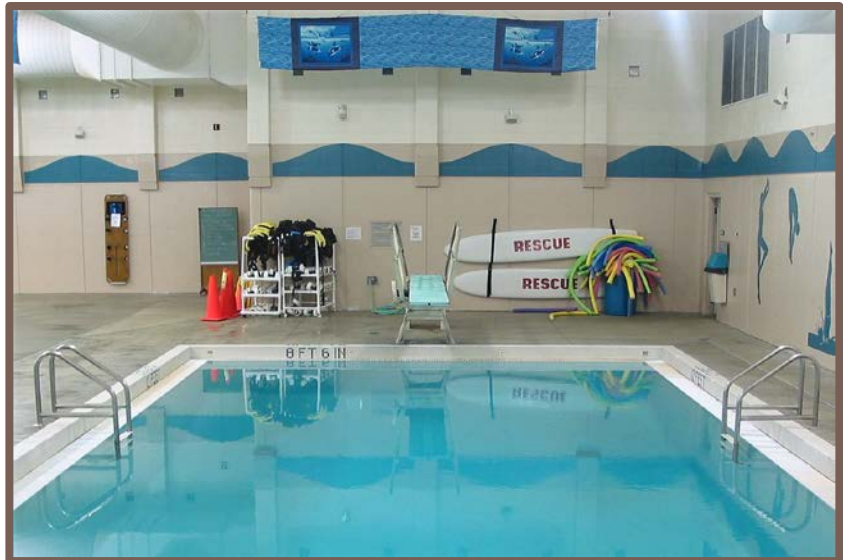
"We are working today so future generations will benefit from:

- *Clean, Safe Drinking Water*
 - *Healthy Environment*
 - *Vibrant Sustainable Economy*
 - *Sense of Place*
 - *Safe & Prepared Community*
 - *Mobility & Connectivity Options*
 - *Access to Quality of Life Amenities*
 - *Quality, Responsive City Services*
 - *Equity & Social Justice"*
-

- d. Add capacity to existing parks by expanding facilities or adding land to accommodate increased population.
- e. Identify potential park opportunities in redeveloping areas, including depressed commercial or economic centers.
- f. Coordinate with other City departments, public and private agencies and private landowners to set aside land and resources on the most suitable sites.
- g. Acquire additional shoreline access where appropriate for waterside trails, waterfront fishing, wading, swimming, boating and other water related recreational activities.
- h. Develop athletic facilities that meet the playing standards and requirements for all age groups, skill levels, and recreational interests.
- i. Provide a mix of court and field activities like skateboard, basketball, tennis, volleyball, soccer, baseball, and softball that provide for a variety of user groups placed equitably throughout the City and near transit corridors for ease of access.
- j. In conjunction with the Bellingham School District, Western Washington University, Whatcom Community College and other public and private agencies, develop a select number of facilities that provide the highest competitive playing standard.
- k. Develop new or improved multi-use facilities to increase flexibility of use for new activities such as pickle ball, disc golf, lacrosse, cricket, rugby, parkour or other new recreation trends as demonstrated by community need.
- l. Where appropriate and as funding is available, incorporate art into park facilities such as railings, benches, buildings and other park amenities.
- m. Provide adequate funding and staff for operation and maintenance to ensure safe, serviceable, and functional parks and facilities.

B. Provide Special Use Sites.

- a. Where appropriate and economically feasible, coordinate with other agencies to develop and operate specialized and special interest recreational facilities like boat launches, aquatic centers, ice arenas, mountain biking and golf courses.
- b. Develop indoor community spaces for activities such as arts and crafts, music, video, classroom instruction, and meetings serving all age groups on a year-around basis.
- c. Maintain and expand multiple use indoor recreational facilities that provide aquatic, gymnasium, physical conditioning, recreational courts, and other athletic spaces for all age groups, skill levels and community interests on a year-around basis.
- d. Support development by the Bellingham School District, Whatcom Community College, Bellingham Technical College, Western Washington University and other organizations of special meeting, assembly, and other community facilities that serve school age populations and the community-at-large at schools and campuses within the Bellingham urban growth area.



Arne Hanna Aquatic Center dive tank

- e. Develop and operate special indoor and outdoor facilities and programs that enhance and expand music, dance, drama, and other opportunities for the community-at-large.
- f. Develop a mixture of watercraft access opportunities including canoe, kayak, and other non-power boating activities on Lake Padden, Bellingham Bay and Lake Whatcom when not in conflict with drinking water protection mandates.
- g. Provide adequate funding and staff for operation and maintenance of existing and new special use sites.

5.2 Council Legacy: Mobility & Connectivity Options

Council Strategic Commitments

- Provide safe, well-connected mobility options for all users
- Maintain & improve streets, trails & other infrastructure
- Limit sprawl
- Increase infrastructure for bicycles, pedestrians & non-single-occupancy vehicle modes of transportation
- Reduce dependence on single-occupancy vehicles

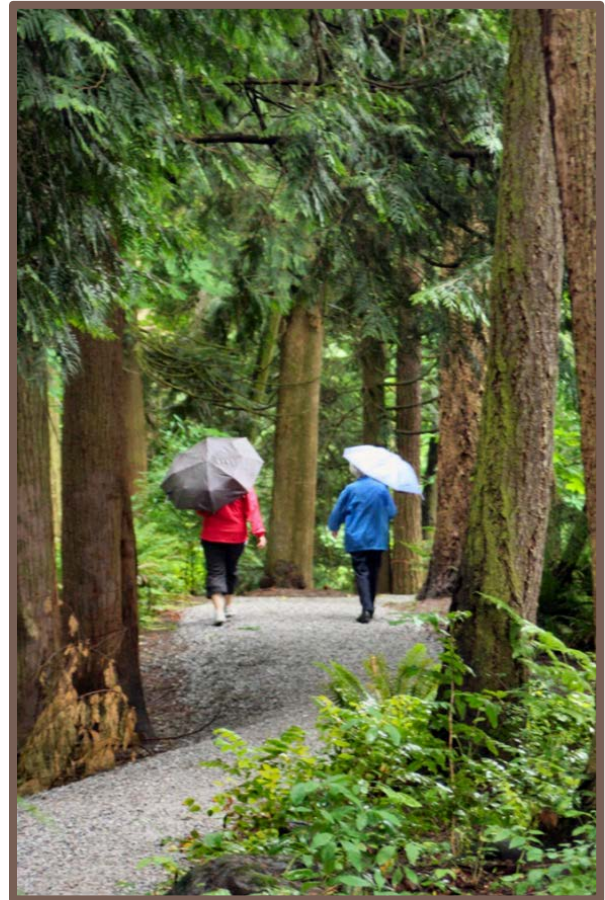
Parks and Recreation Related Goals and Objectives

5.2.1 GOAL

Provide an interconnected system of accessible multi-use trails and greenway corridors that offer diverse, healthy outdoor experiences within a rich variety of landscapes and habitats, with connections to public facilities, neighborhoods and business districts.

5.2.1.1 OBJECTIVES

- A. Connect and unify the community with trail and greenway corridors.
 - a. Provide an interconnected system of trails so that all residents are within a one half mile safe walk of a trail.
 - b. Provide a comprehensive system of multipurpose off-road trails through public landholdings and cooperating private properties
 - c. Provide a system of trails that link residential areas to community facilities including parks, special use sites, the waterfront, downtown and other unique or frequented destinations.
 - d. Expand existing trail systems into new and growing neighborhoods.
 - e. Promote trail links to neighboring communities.
 - f. Work with other landowners including Whatcom County, WA Department of Natural Resources, private landowners and other appropriate parties to link and extend trails around Bellingham and with King, Stewart, Galbraith, and Chuckanut Mountains.
 - g. Provide adequate funding to maintain existing and new trails.



Cornwall Park trail. Photo by Sandi Heinrich.

- h. Coordinate with other City departments to identify opportunities for trail linkages through large development projects.
 - i. Expand transportation options by connecting trails with transit stops, bike routes, and sidewalks to create a comprehensive network of non-motorized transportation throughout Bellingham.
- B. Provide opportunities for outdoor and local history education within trail corridors.
- a. Collaborate with local education providers to create outdoor classroom opportunities for learning opportunities and programs.
 - b. Utilize interpretive materials to highlight features such as native flora and historic points of interest.
- C. Encourage outdoor recreation for a diversity of ages and ability levels.
- a. Provide multi-use trails that comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act.
 - b. Offer easy access to trails.
 - c. Provide a variety of trail experiences and trails that serve multiple uses.
- D. Promote healthy physical and mental well-being.
- a. Where appropriate, encourage multiple uses of trails: walking, running, bicycling, and horseback riding.
 - b. Provide ample opportunity for rest and contemplation.
 - c. Site trails to take advantage of unique scenic lake, bay, mountain and regional views.
 - d. Offer recreational programs that utilize trails, including fun runs, bike rides and nature walks.
- E. Develop standards for trail amenities.
- a. Develop trail improvements to a design standard that facilitates maintenance, security, and accommodates necessary personnel, equipment, and vehicles.
 - b. Furnish trail systems with appropriate interpretive, directory and mileage signage as well as rules and regulations for trail use.
 - c. Provide site furnishings such as benches, bike racks, dog waste stations, trash containers.
 - d. Locate trailheads in conjunction with parks, schools, and other community facilities to increase local area access to the trail system and to take advantage of access to restrooms and drinking water.
 - e. Use appropriate native vegetation where feasible.
 - f. Develop and implement a Low Impact Development trail standard.
 - g. Develop and implement a dog waste management plan for existing and new trails.



South Bay Trail at Taylor Dock

- F. Advance City-wide priorities to protect, rehabilitate and maintain functioning habitats and corridors in collaboration with other City departments.
 - a. Develop trails and greenway corridors that protect, rehabilitate and maintain natural resources, including plant and animal habitats.
 - b. Complete trail connections, in a manner that is appropriate, along greenways corridors like Squaticum, Whatcom, and Padden Creeks to provide a high quality, diverse sampling of area environmental resources.
- G. Provide a safe trail environment.
 - a. Utilize Crime Prevention through Environmental Design concepts.
 - b. Provide lighting in high-use areas and where appropriate.
 - c. Provide safe parking areas.
 - d. Avoid blind corners on trails.
 - e. Where appropriate, provide for surveillance of trails from adjacent property.
 - f. Provide safety education for trail users.
 - g. Provide safe crossings of roads, including grade separated crossings of major corridors such as I-5 and Guide Meridian Street.
 - h. Clearly mark dog off leash areas along trails and enforce on leash rules where they apply.
- H. Encourage community involvement and stewardship of trails.
 - a. Continue and expand the Parks Volunteer Program.
 - b. Continue and expand the Adopt-a-Trail program.
 - c. Develop inter-local trail management agreements.
 - d. Encourage participation in community trail events.
 - e. Expand on existing relationships with schools, business and non-profit organizations to promote and provide trails throughout the community.

5.3 Council Legacy: Access to Quality of Life Amenities

Council Strategic Commitments

- Maintain & enhance publicly owned assets
- Foster arts, culture & lifelong learning
- Provide recreation & enrichment opportunities for all ages & abilities
- Ensure convenient access to & availability of parks & trails City-wide

Parks and Recreation Related Goals and Objectives

5.3.1 GOAL

Provide high quality recreational programs and services throughout the community that provide fun, educational, accessible and safe environments for people of all ages, ethnicities, and abilities.



Summer day camp at Bloedel Donovan Park

5.3.1.1 OBJECTIVES

- A. Support arts and crafts, classroom instruction in music and dance, physical conditioning and health care.
- B. Provide meeting facilities, preschool, after school, and other program activities for all cultural, age, physical and mental capability, and income groups in the community.
- C. Support basketball, volleyball, tennis, soccer, baseball, softball, and other team sports, including instruction and programs for all age, skill level, and income groups in the community.
- D. Assist with programs and exhibits that document and develop awareness of Bellingham's heritage.

5.3.2 GOAL

Design and develop facilities that are sustainable, accessible, safe, and easy to maintain, with a consideration of City-wide long-term costs and benefits. Ensure that development is compatible with habitat protection and restoration goals and policies.

5.3.2.1 OBJECTIVES

- A. Design outdoor picnic areas, trails, playgrounds, courts, fields, parking lots, restrooms, and other facilities to be accessible to individuals and organized groups of all physical capabilities, skill levels, age groups, income, ethnicity and activity interests.
- B. Design indoor facility spaces, activity rooms, restrooms, parking lots, and other improvements to be accessible to individuals and organized groups of all physical capabilities, skill levels, age groups, income, ethnicity and activity interests.
- C. Design and develop facilities that reduce overall facility maintenance, operation requirements and costs.
- D. Where appropriate, to the greatest extent possible, use low maintenance materials, or other value engineering considerations that reduce maintenance and security requirements, and retain natural conditions and experiences.
- E. Develop a maintenance management system to estimate and plan for life cycle maintenance and replacement costs.
- F. Implement the provisions and requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other design and development standards that improve park facility safety and security features for park users, department personnel, and the public-at-large.
- G. Develop and implement safety standards, procedures, and programs that will provide proper training and awareness for department personnel.



Madrona tree at Inspiration Point

- H. Define and enforce rules and regulations concerning park activities and operations that will protect user groups, department personnel, and the general public-at-large.
- I. Where appropriate, use Adopt-a-Park programs, neighborhood park watches, park police patrols, and other programs to increase safety and security awareness and visibility.
- J. Develop and utilize standardized identification, enforcement and wayfinding signage.
- K. Work with the Whatcom County Health Department to complete an inventory of Park amenities and develop a "Parks Prescription" website for use by health care providers to direct patients to specific parks for rehabilitation and exercise.

5.4 Council Legacy: Healthy Environment

Council Strategic Commitments

- Protect & improve the health of lakes, streams & bay
- Protect & restore ecological functions & habitat
- Reduce contributions to climate change
- Conserve natural & consumable resources

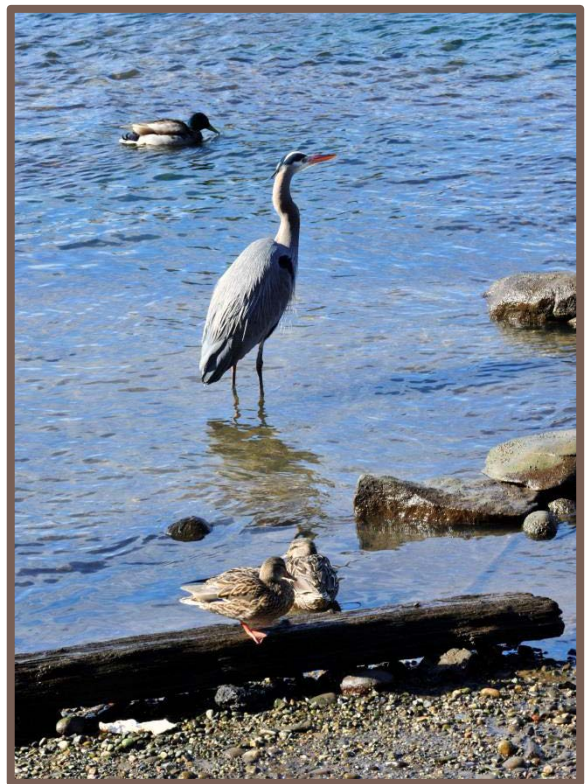
Parks and Recreation Related Goals and Objectives

5.4.1 GOAL

Contribute to a healthy environment in the selection of new properties, and the development and maintenance of park facilities.

5.4.1.1 OBJECTIVES

- A. Utilize efficient, ecological techniques to mitigate stormwater at developed park and trail facilities such as infiltration and natural dispersion, where feasible.
- B. Utilize Low Impact Development practices in the development and renovation of park facilities.
- C. Train staff on the best management practices to be incorporated in new development projects and in ongoing maintenance.
- D. Conserve natural and consumable resources by using environmentally friendly products and practices.
- E. Ensure that development is compatible with habitat protection and restoration goals and polices.
- F. Provide recycling opportunities and facilities at public parks and points along trails.



Marine wildlife at Maritime Heritage Park

5.4.2 GOAL

Provide a high quality, diversified open space system that protects and enhances significant and diverse environmental resources and features, including wildlife habitat, migration corridors, agricultural lands, natural meadows, urban forests, and water resources. Work with other City departments to achieve the following objectives:

5.4.2.1 OBJECTIVES

- A. Define, maintain, and protect a system of open space corridors and buffers to provide separation between natural areas and urban land uses within the Bellingham developing area.
- B. Maintain, conserve and restore natural area linkages for trails.
- C. Maintain land for the re-establishment, protection and enhancement of ecological functions and habitat.
- D. Protect significant environmental features including wetlands, woodlands, prairies, meadows, shorelines, waterfronts, functioning urban forests, and hillsides that reflect Bellingham's natural character.
- E. Balance the demand for public access and interpretive education with protection of environmentally sensitive areas and sites that are especially unique to the Bellingham area.
- F. Identify and conserve wildlife habitat including nesting sites, foraging areas, and migration corridors within or adjacent to natural areas, open spaces, and the developed urban area.
- G. Restore, protect and improve habitat sites, including creeks and streams that support threatened species and urban wildlife.
- H. Maintain and restore unique environmental features or areas in future land developments and increase public use and access. Cooperate with other public and private agencies and with private landowners to set aside unique features or areas as publicly accessible resources.
- I. Provide operation and maintenance resources for forestry management, habitat protection and code enforcement in existing and new open space areas.
- J. When necessary for mitigation, develop, maintain and monitor wetland enhancement sites for successful establishment.
- K. Involve the community in on-going habitat restoration and maintenance activities through the Parks Volunteer Program.
- L. Limit access by people and pets at high priority habitat protection, restoration and enhancement sites.
- M. Cooperate with ongoing City-wide habitat restoration efforts.



Deer at Woodstock Farm

5.5 Council Legacy: Vibrant Sustainable Economy

Council Strategic Commitments

- Support a thriving local economy across all sectors
- Promote inter-dependence of environmental, economic & social interests
- Create conditions that encourage public & private investment
- Foster vibrant downtown & other commercial centers
- Preserve farmland & the agricultural economy

Parks and Recreation Related Goals and Objectives

5.5.1 GOAL

Meet the needs of the present without compromising the needs of future generations. Make decisions today that sustain our activities and the natural environment for the future.

5.5.1.1 OBJECTIVES

- A. Promote sustainable landscapes to protect, maintain and restore ecological functions of natural areas. Protect park and open space lands by reducing adverse impacts to the environment during development and long term use.
- B. Reduce emissions, pollution, and toxic materials to protect water and other natural resources. Mitigate the use of fossil fuels by reducing energy and vehicle use. Promote multi-modal transportation by developing trails and locating parks on bus routes or within walking distance of residents.
- C. Foster environmental stewardship through education programs and activities.
- D. Provide safe and convenient access to public lands, conservation areas, and water that does not damage critical areas.
- E. Instill a love of nature and a commitment for caring for our resources through the Park Volunteer program.
- F. Choose durable products to promote human health in a safe environment and consider life-cycle analysis of material options. Incorporate green building technology including nontoxic materials and sustainable development practices. Select local products where feasible. Consider environmental as well as economic impacts.
- G. Provide scholarships for low income families to participate in recreation activities.
- H. Maintain a world class park system that attracts tourism and benefits the local economy.



"Dirty Dan Harris" at Fairhaven Village Green. Photo by Kenni Merritt.

- I. Foster volunteer groups that support special use facilities such as the Woodstock Farm Conservancy and Friends of Big Rock Garden.
- J. Provide spaces for community events equitably throughout the City such the Farmer's Market and the outdoor cinema at Fairhaven Village Green.

5.6 Council Legacy: Quality, Responsive City Services

Council Strategic Commitments

- Deliver efficient, effective & accountable municipal services
- Use transparent processes & involve stakeholders in decisions
- Provide access to accurate information
- Recruit, retain & support quality employees

Parks and Recreation Related Goals and Objectives

5.6.1 GOAL

Create effective and efficient methods of acquiring, developing, operating and maintaining facilities and programs that accurately distribute costs and benefits to public and private interests.

5.6.1.1 OBJECTIVES

- A. Investigate innovative means to finance maintenance and operating needs in order to reduce costs, retain financial flexibility, match user benefits and interests, and increase facility services.
- B. Consider joint ventures with other public and private agencies such as the Bellingham School District, Whatcom County, Port of Bellingham, Whatcom Community College, regional, state, federal, and other public and private agencies including for-profit concessionaires, where feasible and desirable.
- C. To best serve and provide for area residents' interests, create a comprehensive and balanced park, recreation, and open space system that integrates Bellingham facilities and services with resources available from the Bellingham School District, Whatcom County, Port of Bellingham, Whatcom Community College and other state, federal, and private park and recreational lands and facilities.
- D. Coordinate with the Bellingham School District, Whatcom County, Port of Bellingham, Whatcom Community College and other public and private agencies to avoid duplication, improve facility quality and availability, and reduce costs through joint planning and development efforts.
- E. Create effective and efficient methods of acquiring, developing, operating, and maintaining park and recreational facilities that accurately distributes costs and benefits to public and private user interests - including the application of impact fees where new developments impact level-of-service standards.
- F. Develop and operate lifetime recreational programs that serve the broadest needs of the population, while recovering program and operating costs with a combination of registration fees, user fees, grants, sponsorships, donations, scholarships, volunteer efforts, and the use of general funding.



Elizabeth Park tennis court maintenance

- G. Where appropriate, provide recreational programs, like golf and boating facilities, for user groups willing to finance the cost through donations, registration fees, volunteer efforts or other means and methods.
- H. Investigate and pursue innovative means of incorporating social media and other technologies to efficiently provide information to and engage the public.

5.6.2 GOAL

Develop, staff, train, and support a professional Parks and Recreation Department that effectively serves the community.

5.6.2.1 OBJECTIVES

- A. Employ a diverse, well-trained work force that is knowledgeable, productive, courteous, responsive and motivated to achieve department and City-wide goals.
- B. Encourage teamwork through communication-, creativity, positive image, risk taking, sharing of resources, and cooperation toward common goals.
- C. Provide staff with education, training, equipment and supplies to increase personal productivity, efficiency, and pride.
- D. Monitor work load and staffing needs to maintain an adequate, efficient work force.
- E. Provide sensitivity training for proper awareness of protected classes.

5.7 Council Legacy: Clean, Safe Drinking Water

Council Strategic Commitments

- Protect & improve drinking water sources
- Limit development in Lake Whatcom watershed
- Use efficient, ecological treatment techniques
- Maintain reliable distribution system
- Promote water conservation

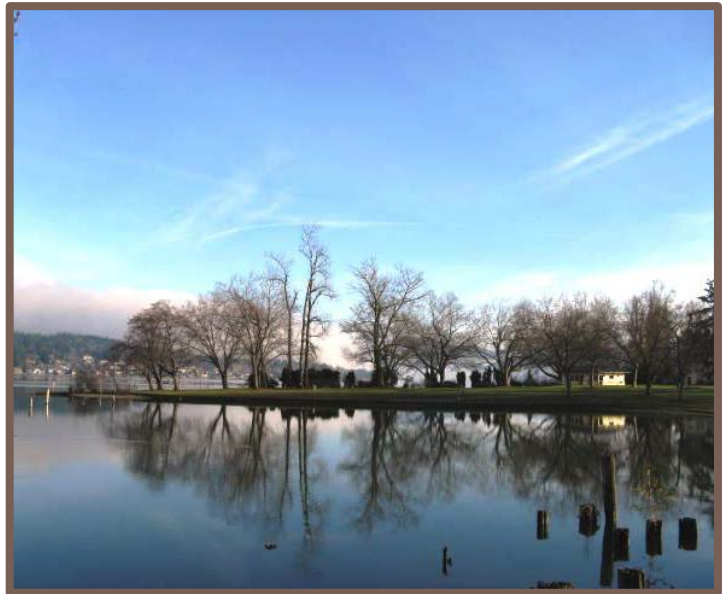
Parks and Recreation Related Goals and Objectives

5.7.1 GOAL

Protect our drinking water source by appropriately protecting, restoring and managing park lands in the Lake Whatcom Watershed.

5.7.1.1 OBJECTIVES

- A. Mitigate public demand for recreation in the watershed with appropriate protection measures through design and maintenance. Limit access where impacts to water quality may occur.
- B. Manage dog off-leash areas to reduce impacts.



Bloedel Donovan Park on Lake Whatcom.

- C. Implement on-site stormwater infiltration to reduce runoff.
- D. Maintain and enhance the forested condition of park properties in the watershed.
- E. Work with private organizations to promote non-motorized boating on Lake Whatcom.
- F. Cooperate with boater education, safety and inspection programs.

5.7.2 GOAL

Promote water conservation at all park facilities.

5.7.2.1 OBJECTIVES

- A. Utilize drought tolerant plants where appropriate.
- B. Reduce irrigation of established lawns.
- C. Incorporate programmable irrigation systems which are operated by a central computer system at ball fields and at Lake Padden Golf Course.
- D. Provide non-irrigated landscape demonstration sites.

5.8 Council Legacy: Safe and Prepared Community

Council Strategic Commitments

- Prevent and respond to emergencies
- Prevent and respond to crime
- Ensure safe infrastructure
- Increase community readiness and resilience

Parks and Recreation Related Goals and Objectives

5.8.1 GOAL

Contribute to making Bellingham a safe and prepared community.

5.8.1.1 OBJECTIVES

- A. Assess and manage risks associated with trees and vegetation on City property.
- B. Incorporate crime prevention through environmental design and maintenance.
- C. Consider emergency access in trail and open space design and maintenance.
- D. Promote safe and fun recreational opportunities that are deterrence to crime.
- E. Provide lifeguard and water safety programs at Arne Hanna Aquatic Center.
- F. Provide First Aid/CPR/AED certification classes and training through Arne Hanna Aquatic Center.
- G. Cooperate with agencies in providing park property for emergency response training.



- H. Hire and retain professionally certified, trained staff to design, inspect and maintain park infrastructure.

5.9 Council Legacy: Equity and Social Justice

Council Strategic Commitments

- Provide access to problem-solving resources
- Support safe, affordable housing
- Increase living wage employment
- Support services for lower-income residents
- Cultivate respect & appreciation for diversity

Parks and Recreation Related Goals and Objectives

5.9.1 GOAL

Provide equitable access to park and recreation facilities and services to all residents of our community.

5.9.1.1 OBJECTIVES

- A. Provide parks that create places for people to elevate their mental, physical and spiritual health.
- B. Provide a variety of programs that foster social problem-solving, teamwork, cooperation, volunteerism, respect and stewardship.
- C. Support social service providers with outlets to distribute information to the community.
- D. Utilize Community Development Block Grant funds and other resources to provide parks in low income neighborhoods.
- E. Provide scholarships for low income families and individuals.
- F. Offer and support integrated recreation programs for people of all abilities and resources.
- G. Provide public gathering areas where people can assemble for social interaction and to exercise freedom of speech.
- H. Provide culturally appropriate programming and services.



Park Volunteer Program work party

Chapter 6

RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall Vision

- *More Trail and Trail Connections*
- *Equal Access to Park Facilities and Programs*
- *Water Access*
- *Environment*
- *Variety*

The following recommendations for park, recreation and open space facilities in Bellingham are based on the results of existing inventories, needs analysis (trends, population, level-of-service), public input, workshop, and surveys. The recommendations outline the vision developed for the park system within the Bellingham urban growth area through the year 2036, although the PRO Plan is scheduled to be updated again in 2020 for state funding purposes. A detailed list of each proposed facility is included in Appendix C of the PRO Plan.

The recommendations, proposals and projects outlined in the PRO Plan are conceptual and subject to further study, feasibility and funding. It is specifically NOT the intention of this plan that any recommendation included here limit the City's ability to act on an opportunity that may arise provided the opportunity supports the overall vision, goals or objectives of the Parks and Recreation Department in Bellingham as discussed in the PRO Plan.

Coordination with other public or private entities that may be affected by or interested in the final outcome of any particular project, such as adjacent residents or funding partners, may influence the final outcome of a particular recommendation. As a result, all recommendations presented here are done with the understanding that they will only be implemented as opportunity, funding, and feasibility allow. All land acquisitions and capital projects are subject to further approval by the City Council.



6.1 Overall Vision

Throughout the process to develop the PRO Plan, several themes emerged reflecting the high value Bellingham residents place on the park system and how they see themselves using parks, recreation and open space facilities in the years ahead. These include:

- More Trail and Trail Connections - More people use trails in Bellingham than any other recreation facility and trails are mentioned more frequently than other facilities when asked what we need more of.
- Equitable Access to Park Facilities and Programs - All neighborhoods should be provided a minimum level-of-service access to park and recreation facilities and programs. All residents should live within a safe ½ mile walk of a park and a trail. Priority should be given to projects in underserved areas within the City boundary;
- Water Access - Access to the water, for viewing, boating, fishing and general enjoyment is important. Waterfront park development is a priority;
- Environment – A strong recognition of the value of the natural environment as a core component of the Bellingham park system;
- Variety – The desire for the system to continue to offer equitable distribution of a variety of choices, for recreational activities of all types, for all ages and abilities. Some specific ideas suggested during the planning process included prioritizing more programs for youth, seniors and people with disabilities and more recreation opportunities including kayaking, pickle ball, mountain bike skills, lacrosse, rugby, skateparks and others located on transit lines for ease of access.

6.2 Neighborhood Parks (NP)

Neighborhood parks should be developed to provide both active and passive recreation for neighborhood residents, children and families. Neighborhood parks should be located within a safe ½ mile walking distance of residential development. Neighborhood parks may include playgrounds, picnic facilities, trail systems, natural areas, and other amenities as outlined in *Appendix A* of the PRO Plan, to create an accessible neighborhood service system in the Bellingham urban area.

Neighborhood parks may be independent properties or combined with other sites including greenway trail corridors, community parks, special use sites or other public facilities.



Birchwood Park

Specific Recommendations

As a result of the public process and needs analysis, specific recommendations for neighborhood parks in Bellingham include:

- Acquire and develop new neighborhood parks in the City limits and as areas annex to be located in the general vicinity shown on the following map including in the, Bakerview, Barkley, Yew Street and the NW Bellingham areas;
- Develop master plans and/or subsequent improvements at existing undeveloped parks including Cordata Neighborhood Park, Maplewood McLeod Park, Sunset Pond Park and North Samish Hill Park;
- Improve or add restrooms at neighborhood parks where feasible and provide a guide to restrooms that are available during winter months;
- Actively pursue the creation of a centrally-located town square in downtown Bellingham; and
- Provide more small gathering spaces, especially in the urban area as infill occurs, potentially accomplished through development regulations and guidelines.
- Improve safe access to existing neighborhood parks by implementing the trail projects recommended in this plan.
- Renovate and upgrade Shuksan Meadows Park.

6.3 Community Parks (CP)

Community parks provide a wide variety of active and passive recreational opportunities. In general, community parks are larger in size and serve an area of at least a one mile radius. Community parks may also provide programmed indoor facilities and lighted competitive athletic courts and fields including tennis, soccer, football, rugby, lacrosse, softball, and baseball. Adequate off street parking is usually needed to accommodate larger events that occur at community parks. Other community park amenities are outlined in *Appendix A* of the PRO Plan. A community park will often serve a neighborhood park function as well, increasing the use of the park and the overall efficiency of the system.



Lake Padden Park

Specific Recommendations

As a result of the public process and the needs analysis, specific recommendations for community parks in Bellingham include:

- Master plan and develop Cordata Community Park and Van Wyck Park;
- Develop waterfront parks including Whatcom Waterway and Cornwall Beach Parks
- Complete all master planned improvements at Squalicum Creek Park;
- Complete identified shoreline improvements at Boulevard Park
- Replace natural field surfaces with synthetic surfaces to maximize use, where feasible at, Geri Fields, Squalicum Creek Park and other sites;
- Improve drainage conditions at Lake Padden Park;
- Improve restrooms and allow winter access at selected park sites with a guide to those restrooms available in winter months;
- Improve and add off-leash dog areas in existing and new parks to provide a variety of dog areas (fenced, open, water) with pet waste stations and appropriate regulatory signage;
- Implement recommendations for improving Maritime Heritage Park;
- Provide larger event spaces such as enclosed meeting rooms and outdoor shelters suitable for family gatherings, weddings, festivals, charity and corporate events;
- Provide some covered activity areas, such as benches, playgrounds or courts for more year-around use;
- Develop parking and transportation alternatives, such as shuttle routes, safer and more visible bike or trail routes and more convenient public transportation service— especially during group events, festivals or other special activities; and
- Develop improvement plans to enhance and add capacity at existing community parks, such as expanding play areas; and
- Complete a master plan for the Chuckanut Ridge property (a.k.a. Fairhaven Highlands).



Lake Padden Park

Special use sites may be independent properties or portions of other sites that include trail corridors, neighborhood parks, community parks, open spaces or regional facilities.

6.4 Special Use Sites (SU)

Special use sites may be acquired or developed to provide activities for a variety of ages or interests. Special use facilities may include historic or natural interpretive centers, marina and boating activities, golf courses, or similar facilities. Special use sites also include maintenance yards, plant nurseries, and administrative offices necessary to support park and recreation programs and facilities.

A community or recreation center is another type of special use site, as are many other types of indoor recreation facilities. Community centers may be

developed to provide indoor activities for day and evening use on a year-around basis. They may utilize the existing municipal, county, and school facilities by providing space for gymnasiums, physical conditioning, arts and crafts, class and instruction rooms, meeting facilities, teen and senior centers and other resource activities for special populations. Community centers may also incorporate visual or performing arts, historic and interpretive exhibits, and other specialized activities and be developed as stand-alone facilities or jointly with administrative or maintenance activities.

Specific Recommendations

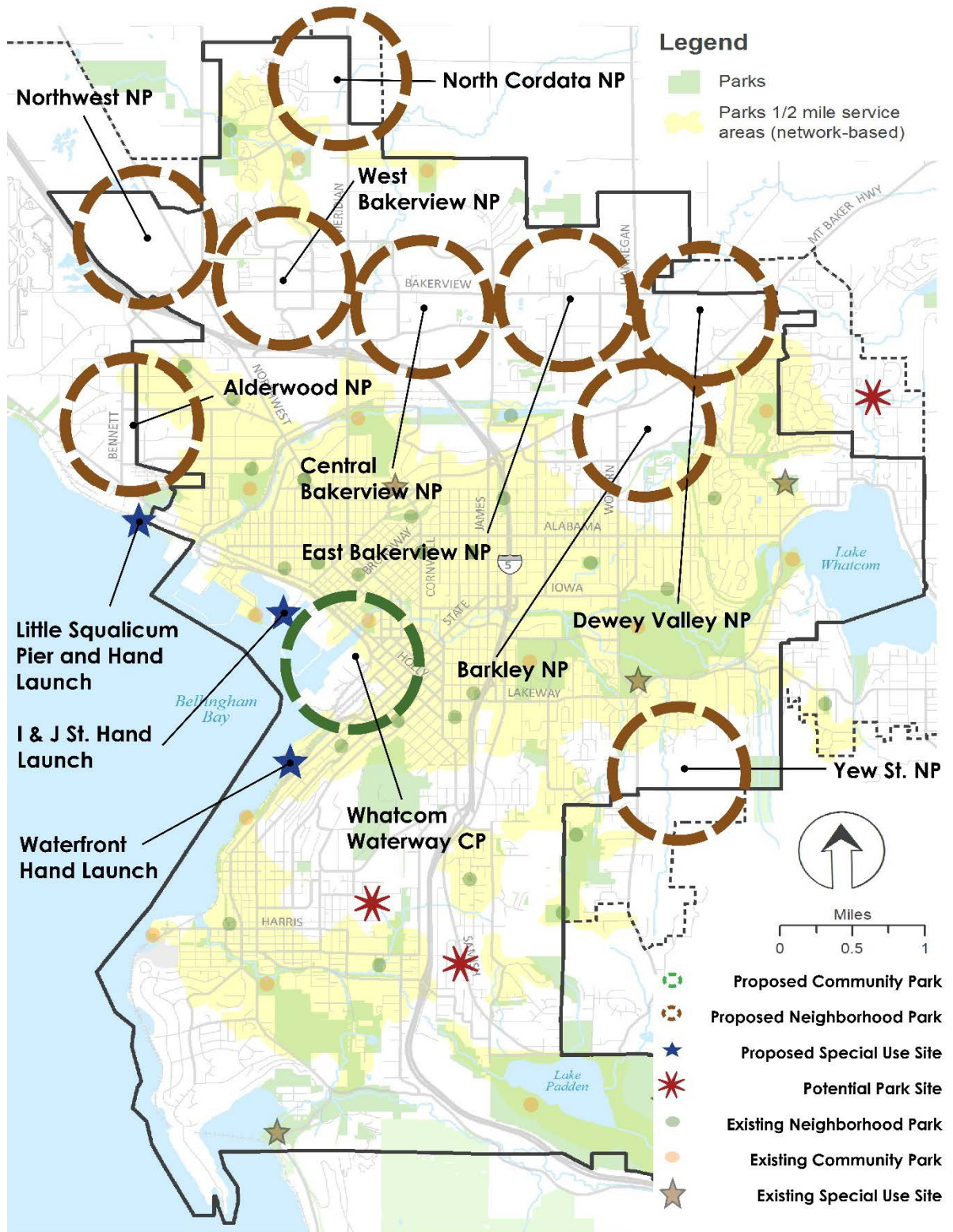
As a result of the public process and the needs analysis, specific recommendations for special use sites in the Bellingham park system include:

- Implement improvements at Woodstock Farm to include parking and a trail access plan and other improvements as feasible. Develop a long range maintenance plan for the site;
- Implement improvements at Big Rock Garden;
- Provide environmental education opportunities such as interpretive signage and/or other educational and stewardship related activities or programs to promote the value of the natural environment throughout the park system;
- Acquire or develop new or improved town square or plaza space downtown and in urban villages such as Old Town, Samish and at Fountain Plaza;
- Acquire and develop new hand-carry boat launch or landing facilities in conjunction with park development in the Waterfront District and at other locations shown on the map on page 48; and
- Acquire and renovate the pier for public access at Little Squalicum Park.
- Access appropriate location for a north end skate park.



Woodstock Farm

RECOMMENDED FACILITIES PLAN • PARKS AND SPECIAL USE SITES



6.5 Open Space (OS)

Open space is generally acquired to protect, restore and provide access where appropriate to wetlands, woodlands, meadows, agricultural lands, foraging and nesting areas and other sensitive or unique ecological features. New open space areas should link to existing open spaces to create a network of wildlife migration corridors and greenway trail corridors. These linked areas visually define and separate developed areas in accordance with the objectives of the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA). The linked areas should lead to open space anchors: larger open space sites that help visually break up development patterns and preserve large tracts of ecologically important areas.

Open space may include trails and interpretive facilities that increase public awareness and appreciation of significant and visually interesting ecological features. Depending on site specific conditions and feasibility, supporting services such as wildlife viewing areas, trailheads, parking lots and restrooms may also be developed.

Open space may be located on independent properties or include portions of other sites provided for parks, recreation, trail corridors or other public facilities. Open space may also be preserved on privately-owned land, subject to public use agreements or easements, or on land acquired for public purposes such as stormwater management, watershed protection, and wastewater treatment sites.

Specific Recommendations

As a result of the public process and the needs analysis, specific recommendations for open space in Bellingham include:

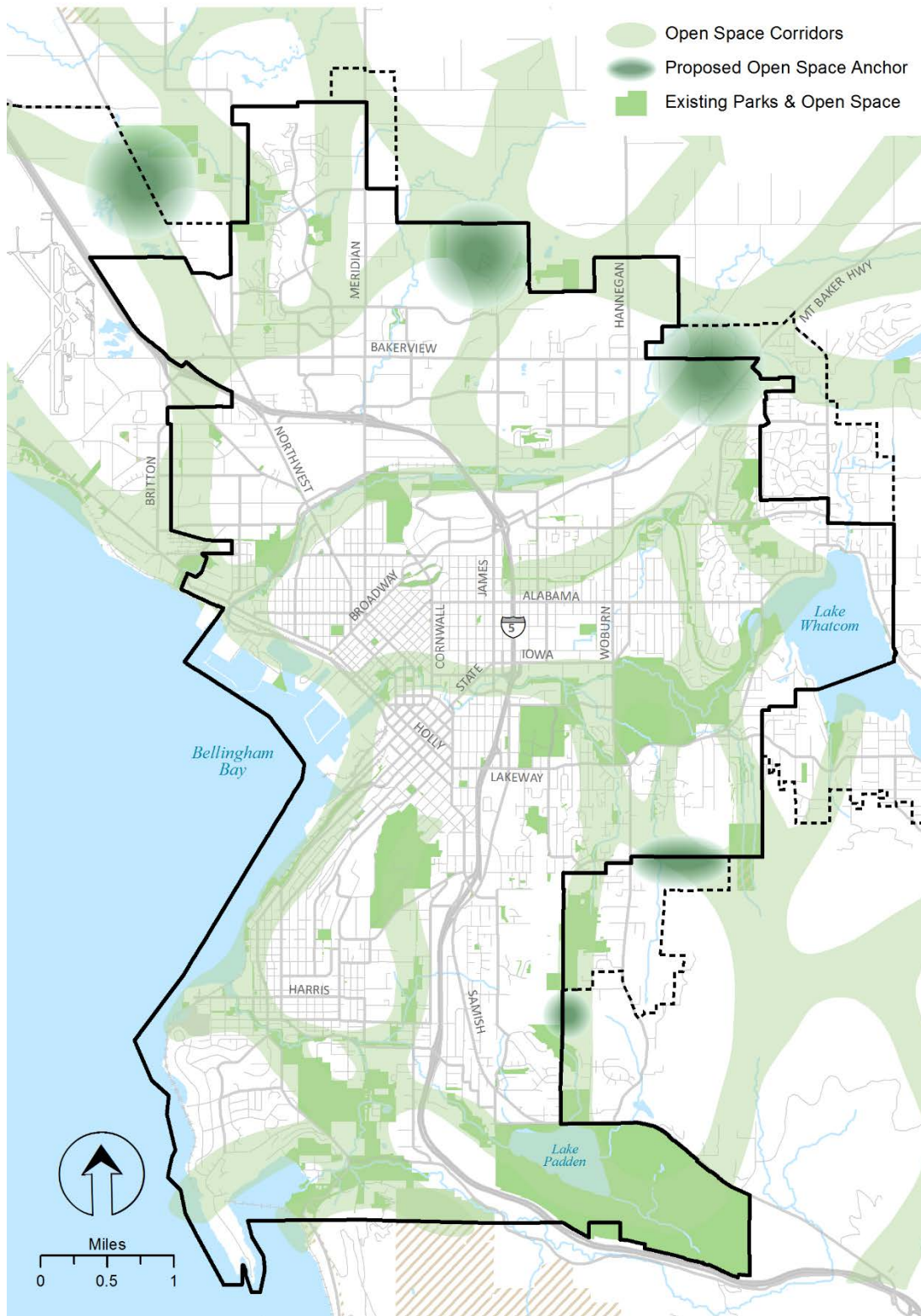
- Acquire additional greenway corridors as identified on the map following this section;
- Acquire additional open space anchors in the general vicinity of the areas identified on the following map;
- Provide environmental education opportunities such as interpretive signage and/or other educational and stewardship related activities or programs to promote the value of the natural environment throughout the park system;
- Acquire additional salt waterfront land and tidelands to expand the network of open space and public access along Bellingham Bay; and

Acquire additional lakefront and creek side land whenever possible to provide increased protection and appropriate access to Bellingham water resources.

General Open Space Guidelines:

- *Protection may occur through acquisition or easements, development rights and other similar non-fee simple arrangements;*
- *Provisions for public access and interpretive use should be included where appropriate;*
- *Conservation of wildlife migration corridors and critical habitats should be considered; and*
- *Tax incentives, density bonuses, transfer rights and other methods should be encouraged.*

RECOMMENDED FACILITIES PLAN • OPEN SPACE



6.6 Trails (TR)

While trails may be categorized into many different types, for the purpose of the PRO Plan, trails are generally limited to off-road trails. Trails should be developed for a variety of uses including walking, biking, and horseback riding. Trails may be developed to link park and recreational facilities, open spaces, community centers, neighborhoods, commercial and office centers, schools, and other major destinations in the Bellingham area. Trail widths and surfacing may vary depending on the type of use and location. While not all trails are appropriate for all uses, multipurpose trails are generally preferred and should be developed to provide for one or more modes of non-motorized travel.

Trails should be developed within corridors separated from vehicles or other motorized forms of

transportation. Trails may be located in separate easements or within parks and open spaces. In some instances when other alternatives are not available, trails may be developed within the right-of-way of vehicular or other transportation corridors, but should be separated by vegetation or other features.

General Trail Guidelines:

- *Conserve natural features;*
- *Define urban identities;*
- *Link community facilities;*
- *Ensure safety/security along trail corridors;*
- *Provide identification, way-finding and directional signage along routes;*
- *Serve people with varied abilities;*
- *Promote commuter and other non-motorized transportation.*

Multipurpose trails should generally be developed to Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) and American Association of State Highway & Transportation Officials (AASHTO) trail standards. Trails may be concrete, asphalt or a fine crushed rock base, provided the material meets the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements and is usable by all age and skill groups. Select trail corridors, including those within the Waterfront District, should be concrete or asphalt to allow for a greater flexibility of use and accessibility.

Off-leash dog use should not be allowed on multi-purpose trails but designated only on trails specifically developed for that use. This may be accomplished through physical designations (i.e., only certain trail corridors) or through time limitations (i.e., late evenings or other non-peak times).

Trail corridors may be improved with trailhead services including benches, parking lots, restrooms, drinking water or other facilities. Where the trail is located in association with another park and recreation improvement or public facility, the trailhead may be improved with picnic, playgrounds and informal lawn areas.

Shoreline trails may be unimproved and may cross over tidelands. Trails may also include boardwalks developed over wetlands, other water bodies or on top of jetty breakwaters to provide access to waterfront activities and viewpoints along lakes, natural areas, or Bellingham and Chuckanut Bays.

Multipurpose trail corridors may be independent properties or include portions of other sites provided for parks, open space or other public facilities. Linked with open space areas and greenways, multipurpose trails create a system of corridors to integrate and define the developed portions of the urban area from each other in accordance with the Growth Management Act's (GMA) provisions for urban separators.



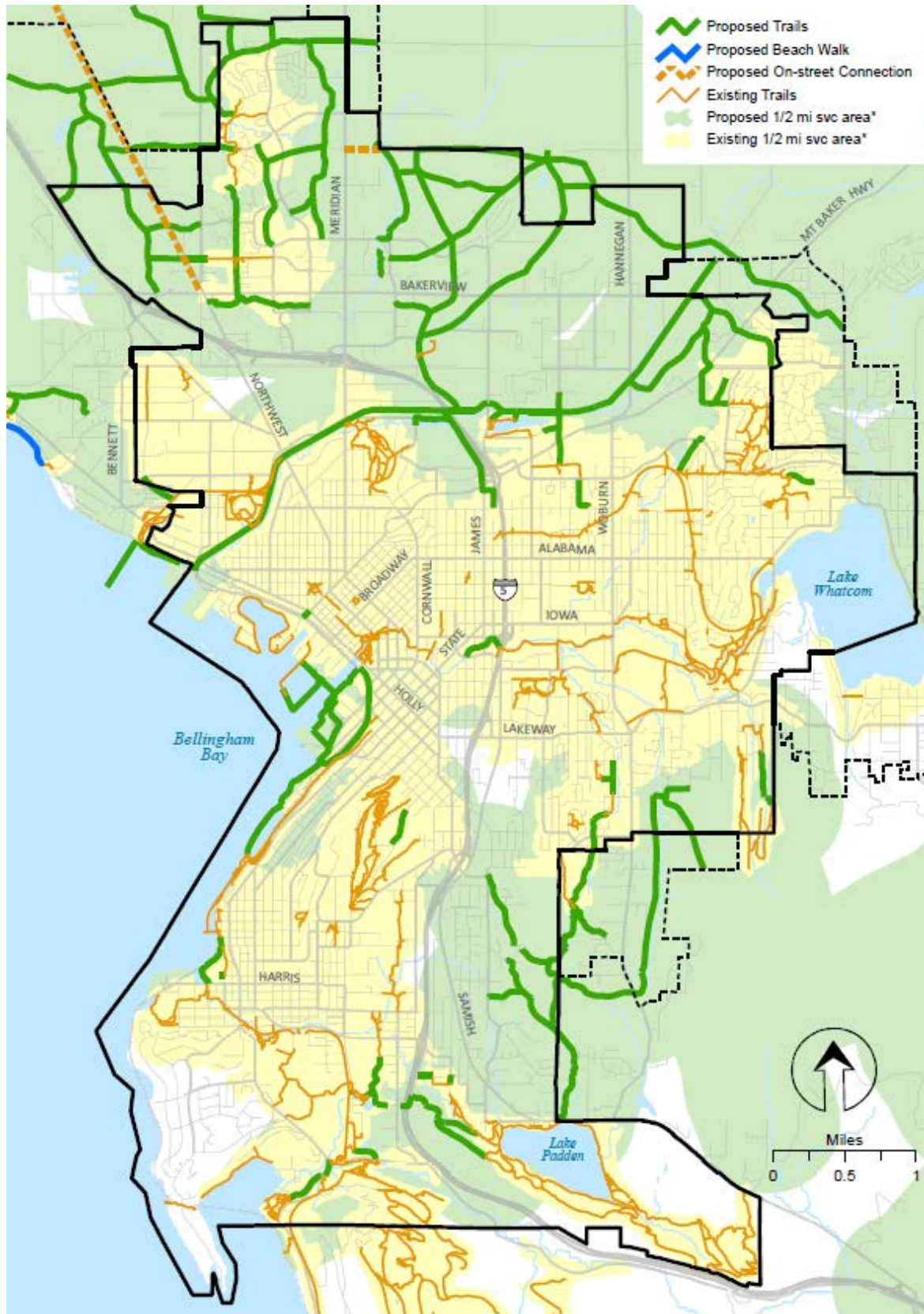
Northridge Park Trail

Specific Recommendations

As a result of the public process and the needs analysis, specific recommendations for multi-purpose trails in Bellingham include:

- Acquire and/or develop new trail connections as shown on the following map in order to provide an off-street trail within a half mile of every resident in Bellingham;
- Coordinate with Public Works to identify opportunities for better trail, sidewalk and bike route connectivity;
- Continue to explore new trail surface alternatives that balance the natural character of Bellingham's trail system with accessibility requirements, long-term maintenance, sustainable development practices and availability of local materials;
- Institute a maintenance replacement program to monitor, maintain, improve and/or replace trail features, including bridges, boardwalks and stairs;
- Acquire and/or develop trailheads (parking, signage, restrooms, picnic areas, etc.) at Whatcom Falls Park, Galbraith Mountain area, Woodstock Farm, Fairhaven Park Forest and North Chuckanut Trailhead;
- Acquire and develop safe multimodal crossings of Guide Meridian Street and Interstate 5 in key locations both generally located on the following map or as new opportunities and needs arise.
- Coordinate with the Port of Bellingham to identify a trail corridor around the airport.
- As areas annex or rezone, consider the need and opportunity for trail connectivity.

RECOMMENDED FACILITIES PLAN • TRAILS



Chapter 7

IMPLEMENTATION

The financial strategy for Bellingham Parks and Recreation for the next six to 20-year period should generate sufficient revenue to maintain existing facilities, provide recreational program services, renovate facilities, and implement priority projects from the proposed recommendations.

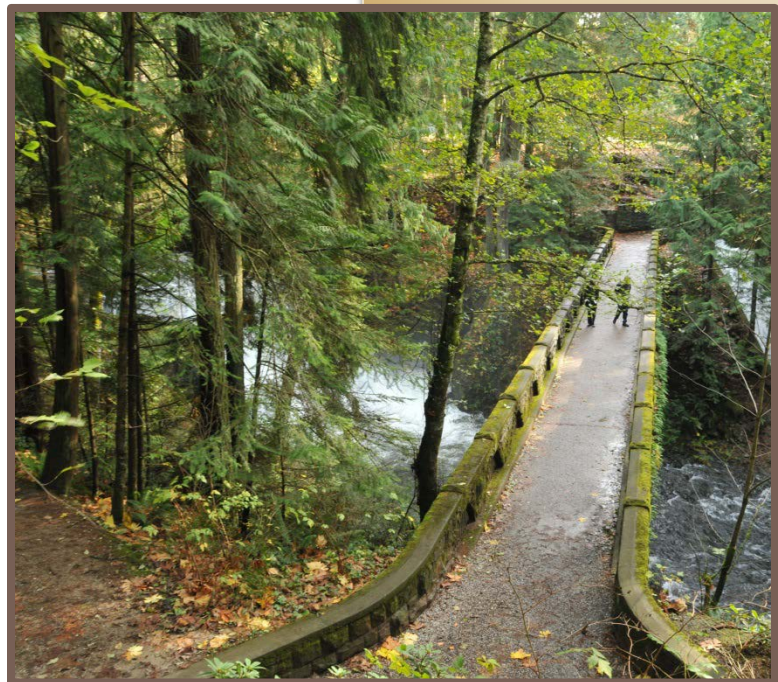
The following forecasts are based on average trends in capital facility fund expenditures by the City during recent years. However, it should be noted that priorities shift over time, responding to new interests, opportunities, and community decision making processes. The City's six-year Capital Facilities Plan (CFP) is updated at least bi-annually in part to reflect these changes.

Recommendations outlined in *Chapter 6* of the PRO Plan total approximately \$104 million in today's dollars. This includes improvements to existing facilities, as well as additional land and facilities to serve new growth. Projected revenue sources for park system improvements through the year 2036 could provide enough funding for the priority projects with traditional funding sources as estimated with the assumptions shown in the following table. Detailed costs for proposed recommendations are included in *Appendix C* of the PRO Plan. The 2015 and 2016 approved six-year Capital Facilities Plans are included in *Appendix E* of the PRO Plan.

7.1 Revenue and Expenditures

Table 7.1 outlines options for capital revenue sources and projected expenditures through the year 2036, and corresponds with the adopted level-of-service discussed in *Chapter 4* and the recommendations included in *Chapter 6* of the PRO Plan. A detailed description of the projects and costs is in *Appendix C* of the PRO Plan. A description of the funding sources and assumptions made for each item in the tables is listed on the following pages.

Priorities and proposed recommendations implemented may change over time based on new interests, feasibility and/or opportunities that may arise.



Whatcom Falls Park

TABLE 7.1 PRO Plan Projected Funding and Expenditures

Revenue	Funding Estimates for 2016-2036				Notes
REET				\$5,000,000	Estimated REET funding for park projects
LIFT				\$5,000,000	Estimated Park Project share of Waterfront Area LIFT funding
Greenway III Levy				\$6,000,000	Existing balance allocated for recommended projects
4th Greenway Levy				\$30,000,000	Assumes a fourth greenway levy for 2017-2027
Grants				\$5,000,000	Estimate based on 5 year history
Park Impact Fees				\$5,000,000	Existing balance allocated for recommended projects
Total Revenue				\$56,000,000	
Needed Park Impact Fees	35%	\$1835	30,217	\$ 55,448,195	Assumes continued 35% fee with added population of 30,217
				\$111,448,195	
	31%	\$1625.33	30,217	\$49,112,596	Assumes reduced fee to 31% with added population of 30,217
				\$105,112,596	

Expenditures	Acres	Cost in Millions (rounded)		
		Land	Facilities	Total
Neighborhood Park	36	\$ 3,420,000	\$ 13,320,000	\$ 16,740,000
Community Park	5	\$ 475,000	\$ 27,345,000	\$ 27,820,000
Special Use Site	1.5	\$ 142,500	\$ 1,295,000	\$ 1,437,500
Open Space & Trails	160.7	\$ 15,262,182	\$ 40,200,000	\$ 55,462,182
Total	203.2	\$ 19,299,682	\$ 84,510,000	\$ 103,809,682
Existing Acres/1000 City	45.6			
Existing Acres/1000 UGA	40.6			
Proposed Acres/1000 UGA	32.3			

As this is a long range strategic plan and not a financing plan, both revenues and expenditures are in estimated 2015 dollars and do not include inflation, assuming that both expenditures and revenues will increase over time and that projects will be implemented as funding becomes available rather than through any specific financing system. As each project is scheduled for implementation, costs and revenues will be updated. Project improvements (acquisition or facilities) will be adjusted as needed to match available revenue sources concurrent with the annual Capital Facilities Plan budget process. The PRO Plan is updated every six years with an updated forecast of revenues and expenditures.

Any potential difference between the total revenue and the actual cost of improvements could be made up through a variety of means including an increase in the park impact fee, bonding for specific project improvements, decreasing the level-of-service, or through the use of development agreements requiring land dedications or improvements as a condition of annexation or rezones.

7.2 Maintenance and Operation Needs

The additional park acres and improvements associated with the recommendations will also require additional maintenance and operations costs. The existing 3,400 acres of City managed parks, open space and trails is maintained by full time and part time or seasonal staff with a full time equivalence (FTE) 48.5. Using the 2015 total maintenance budget of \$ 4,864,581, the cost to maintain parkland is \$ 1,335.32 per acre per year and the estimated additional annual overall cost for maintenance and operations by the year 2036, if all recommendations are implemented, is estimated to be \$ 270,002(203.2 acres x \$1335.32), expressed in 2015 dollars.



Whatcom Creek

An additional 3 FTE staff members would be needed to maintain maintenance service levels for the recommended additional parks and facilities. The estimates are based on a general analysis of the 2015 budget. An increase or decrease in the intensity of maintenance needed based on the type of park or facility would affect the actual costs.

One way to help fund maintenance needs is to increase the amount available in the Greenway Maintenance Endowment and allow for earnings to be used for all types of park maintenance. As the amount needed from a new levy for land acquisition and develop decreases, the amount dedicated for maintenance of facilities can increase.

7.2.1 REET Real Estate Excise Tax

REET revenue has been down in the last few years and has been used to pay off the Civic Field Bond and set aside to fund future waterfront development projects, including parks and roads. As the economy picks up, and bonds are paid off, more REET revenue may be available for capital projects, including development of waterfront parks. A recent change in State law allows more flexibility for using REET funds for maintenance.

7.2.2 Greenway Levies

Bellingham citizens have approved three levies at a rate of \$0.57 per 1,000 property valuation. Included in the table are existing levy balances as well as future revenues, with no growth in valuation assumed. A voter approved fourth levy in 2017 would be needed to achieve funding to complete the plan recommendations. In the household phone survey undertaken for this plan, 78% of respondents indicated a willingness to approve another levy. A larger percentage of the levy collection could be set aside in a maintenance endowment fund to ensure the City's ability to take care of our valuable park resources.

7.2.3 Grants

The City has received an average of \$1 million annually over the last five years from various sources, including Washington Recreation and Conservation Office grant programs, federal Transportation Enhancement grants and Department of Ecology grants. This plan estimates a total of \$10 million in grant funding over a 15 year period.



Maritime Heritage Park Amphitheatre

7.2.4 CAO/SEPA/Mitigation

Land or improvements as a result of the Critical Areas Ordinance (CAO), State Environmental Protection Act (SEPA) and associated mitigation are used by the City to help offset park system improvements. Based on past trends, the City has projected the estimated value of land or improvements as required through development process for protection of wetlands, SEPA or impact mitigation based on historical trends to be approximately \$1 million by the year 2036. Because of the uncertainty, this value was not included in the revenue forecast.

7.2.5 Donations

Donations include park system land and improvements received by the City from private individuals as well as other agencies or organizations. While donations have been on the decline in recent years, special interest groups are still willing to assist with projects that they feel are important. Based on recent trends, the City estimates the total value of future donations to be approximately \$1 million over the next 20 years. Because of uncertainty regarding the ability of the community to make park system donations, this amount was not included in the revenue forecast.

7.2.6 Park Impact Fee

In 2006, the City began assessing a Park Impact Fee on new residential units. Future funding from Park Impact Fees is estimated based on future City population projections. The City expects an additional

30,217 new residents by the year 2036, the difference between the current and projected urban growth area/City population. This calculation assumes that all urban growth areas will incorporate into the City during that time frame. The existing park system value is \$ 5,243 per person. Maintaining the current park impact fee assessment of 35% will result in projected revenues of approximately \$ 55.5 million by the year 2036. If all other estimated projected revenue sources are achieved, the park impact fee rate could be reduced. See Table 7.1

7.2.7 LIFT - Local Infrastructure Financing Tool

Bellingham waterfront capital improvement projects, including parks and roads, are eligible to receive up to \$1 million per year for 25 years. Receipt of State funds is subject to the amount of additional tax received by the State and matching local government contributions.

7.3 Priorities

The proposed funding strategy is based on a major assumption that current funding sources will continue into the future, at or near their current rate. While this may be a reasonable assumption, there is no guarantee of future funding. As such, the following general priorities for park system improvements in Bellingham are recommended based on community input. In all cases, the highest priority identified was to complete currently funded projects and improvements on the waterfront, as well as continue to acquire land in the north Bellingham area. Beyond that, trail improvements, in general, were identified as a higher priority than parks and recreation or open space elements.

Priorities
Highest priority projects were determined to be those that were currently funded, trails and greenway projects and project centered on the north Bellingham area. Waterfront projects were also a high priority.

7.3.1 Priority Park and Special Use Site Projects



Van Wyck Park

The following priorities have been identified and categorized into relative order from highest (Priority 1) to lowest (Priority 3), though items identified within each category are listed in no particular order.

Priorities Currently Funded

- Develop Cordata Park Phase 1
- Make improvements at Lake Padden Park
- Develop Whatcom Waterway Park Phase One

Priority 1

- Develop Cordata Community Park
- Acquire Central Bakerview Neighborhood Park
- Develop Cornwall Beach Park Phase One
- Make improvements at Woodstock Farm
- Develop and expand Sunset Pond Park

Priority 2

- Acquire and refurbish Little Squalicum Pier
- Provide more hand launch boat sites
- Renovate existing parks as appropriate with priority on areas with high density concentration (e.g Shuksan Meadows Park) to improve capacity and/or generate multi-use functions
- Add urban plazas and gathering spaces in the downtown urban villages, and economically depressed areas, generally in combination with new or redevelopment opportunities
- Develop Van Wyck Park



Future Waterfront Trail

Priority 3

- Acquire East Yew St. Neighborhood Park
- Acquire East Bakerview Neighborhood Park
- Complete a master plan for the Chuckanut Ridge property (a.k.a. Fairhaven Highlands)

7.3.2 Open Space

The following priorities have been identified and categorized into relative order from highest to lowest priority, though items identified within each category are listed in no particular order.

Priorities Currently Funded

- Open space corridors associated with funded trail priorities below

Priority 1

- Open space corridors associated with other trail priorities below
- Open space anchors in King Mountain area

Priority 2

- Open space anchor between Samish Crest Open Space and Lookout Mountain
- Open space anchor in Dewey Valley

7.3.3 Trails

The following priorities have been identified and categorized into relative order from highest to lowest priority, though items identified within each category are listed in no particular order.

Chapter 7

Priorities Currently Funded

- Overwater Walkway
- Bay to Baker Greenway & Trail
- Samish Crest Trail corridor
- Chuckanut to Woodstock Trail corridor
- Whirlwind Beach trailhead and trail improvements

Priority 1

- Cordata School to Division Street Trail corridor
- Cordata to King Mt. Trail corridor
- All Waterfront trails
- Bay to Baker to King Mt. Trail corridor

Priority 2

- Trail connection from Cordata Park north to Bear Creek Area
- King Mountain Trails

Priority 3

- Samish Crest to Lookout Mt. Trail corridor
- Northridge Park to Bay to Baker Trail connection
- Trail connection from Little Squalicum Park northwest to Alderwood/Airport area



Samish Crest Trail Phase I

7.4 Revenue Source Description

A general description of the different types of revenue resources that may be used to fund park, recreation and open space programs or facilities is presented in *Appendix F* of the PRO Plan. Some are restricted to development only while others may be used for operations and maintenance. These are listed in no particular order and with no reference to the feasibility or recommendation of implementing each revenue source. Included are:

General Fund

Special Revenues

Debt Service Funds

- Councilmanic (limited or non-voted) Bonds
- Limited General Obligation Bonds
- Unlimited General Obligation Bonds

Enterprise Funds

Special Legislation

Unlimited General Obligation Bonds

General Levy Rate Referendums

Environmental Impact Mitigation – Subdivision Regulations

Growth Impact Fees

Inter-local Agreements

User Fees and Charges

Special Funding Sources

- REET (Real Estate Excise Tax)
- Greenway Funds
- LIFT (Local Infrastructure Financing Tool)

State Grants

- Washington Wildlife Recreation Program (WWRP)
- Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account (ALEA)
- Salmon Recovery Funding
- Capital Projects Fund for Washington Heritage
- Boating Facilities Program
- Washington State Public Works Commission
- Youth Athletic Facilities (YAF)
- Non-Highway & Off-Road Vehicle Activities Program (NOVA)
- Firearms and Archery Range Recreation Program (FARR)

Federal Grants

- NPS (National Park Service) grants
- Transportation Enhancement Grants
- National Recreational Trails Program (NRTP)
- Boating Infrastructure Grant Program (BIG)

Recreation Service Districts (RCW Chapter 36.69)

Metropolitan Park Districts (SB 2557)

- Chuckanut Community Forest Park District was established in 2013 for the specific purpose of raising funds to pay back the loan used to acquire Fairhaven Highlands.

Special Use Agreements

Public/Private Service Contracts

Public/Private Concessions

Public/Private Joint Development Ventures

Self-help Land Leases

Self-help Contract Agreements

Appendix A

PARK CLASSIFICATIONS

The intent of parks and recreation classifications is to aid in making acquisition and design decisions for park sites, facilities and the organization of recreation space which is responsive to public needs, creates quality recreational experiences and facilities that can be effectively maintained.

Park classifications are primarily based on National Parks and Recreation Association (NRPA) guidelines and consider types of uses, size and relative service area of each park. The classifications used in Bellingham include:

1. Parks & Recreation
 - a. Neighborhood Parks
 - b. Community Parks
 - c. Special Use Sites
2. Open Space
3. Trails

The guidelines below are for general purposes only. Actual acquisition and/or development of a park site will depend on several factors which should be considered in connection with classification guidelines when making planning decisions. These can include goals or needs for a given area, usually defined through a community process, or site-specific information such as topography, critical areas, access, zoning regulations, etc., that may limit the use of a given site.

Park classifications establish several essential elements for park land based generally on the types of recreational uses and services to be provided. The following describes the park classifications for Bellingham, generally modified from the NRPA standards to reflect the Bellingham community preferences. In all cases, the approximate size of each park type shown below is a general parameter only. Actual size should be based on the land area needed to accommodate desired uses. Service areas shown may also vary as physical characteristics, such as topography or major roadways, may reduce the service area if access is limited by these factors. Park lighting and general crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) principles should also be considered during the design process to promote safety and security within park settings.

Neighborhood Parks

1. **General Description:** A neighborhood park is the basic recreational focus and center of a neighborhood. They should be developed for both active and passive recreation activities geared specifically for those living within the service area. They should also accommodate a wide variety of age and user groups, including children, adults, seniors and special populations. Creating a sense of place by bringing together the unique character of the site with that of the neighborhood is vital to successful neighborhood park design.
2. **Approximate Size:** 2 to 10 acres.
3. **Service Area:** 1/2 mile radius.
4. **Acquisition Guidelines:** Neighborhood parks should be centrally located within the neighborhood it serves. Vehicular access may be provided through arterial roadways or local neighborhood streets. Citizens should be able to walk to these parks without having to cross a major arterial street. Some portion of the total acreage should be upland "developable" land of a size sufficient to support the desired uses for that neighborhood.
5. **Development Guidelines:** Since each neighborhood is unique, neighborhood input should be used to determine the development program for the park. In general, development should provide a balance between active and passive recreation uses and should represent the characteristics and context of the community in which it is located. Where active recreation is provided, it should be intended for primarily informal, unstructured activities, or smaller programmed activities that will not overburden the supporting infrastructure (parking, restroom, etc.). The following activities are intended to serve as a general guideline only:
 - a. *Parking* - generally limited to around 2-10 stalls. While the intent is for neighborhood parks to be walkable to most residences in the area it serves, parking may still be needed to support those uses that need greater assistance, such as seniors or those with disabilities. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements should be met in all cases. On street parking may be used to meet these criteria.
 - b. *Site Furnishings* - such as bike racks, benches, trash receptacles, park signage, picnic tables and drinking fountains.
 - c. *Restrooms* - may be provided where space and funding allow. This could include permanent, semi-permanent or portable facilities.
 - d. *Play Area* - with climbing structures, swings or other similar elements, designed for a variety of ages and abilities.
 - e. *Picnic* - tables, barbecue and/or small group shelters.

-
- f. *Open grass lawn areas.*
 - g. *Sport facilities* - compatible with neighborhood setting and park site constraints, such as:
 - Basketball: half court or full court
 - Volleyball, tennis, bocce ball, pickleball
 - Softball/baseball field (informal or youth)
 - Soccer field (informal or youth)
 - h. *Other* - features as need or site conditions allow that may help create diversity and a unique character to each individual park. These may include public art, skateboard elements, climbing walls, or other similar elements. Where provided, these should generally be smaller in nature to fit the scale and context of the neighborhood park setting.

Community Parks

1. General Description: Community parks are larger in size and are intended to serve a broader range of activities and users. Their focus is on meeting the recreation needs of several neighborhoods with more specialized activities, as well as preserving unique landscapes, open spaces or environmental features. They allow for group activities and offer other recreation opportunities not generally found at a neighborhood level. Due to their larger size, they are often designed to serve a neighborhood park function as well and generally include all of the same neighborhood park activities as well as additional unique characteristics described above.
2. Approximate size: 20-60 acres.
3. Service Area: 1 mile radius.
4. Acquisition Guidelines: The land available for anticipated uses and the quality of the natural resource base should play a defining role in locating potential community park sites. They should be located adjacent to a major arterial or other collector street to provide easy vehicular as well as pedestrian and other multi-modal access. The proximity of other park types should also be considered as the types of activities found in a community park may overlap with other park functions. Some portion of the total acreage should be "developable" land of a size sufficient to support the desired uses for that park.
5. Development Guidelines: Surrounding neighborhood and larger community or city-wide input should be used to determine the development program for a community park. In general, development should provide a balance between active and passive recreation uses and should represent the characteristics and context of the community in which it is located. Where active recreation is provided, it is generally intended for larger programmed activities such as sports league practices, games and/or tournaments. Active recreation, such as sports fields, in community parks may have additional support facilities not found at a neighborhood level, such as bleachers,

fencing, dugouts, concessions, synthetic turf and/or lighting. The following activities are in addition to neighborhood park guidelines and are intended to serve as a general guideline only:

- a. *Parking* - generally larger in size to support more organized activities and larger group events. May be anywhere from 20-80 or more stalls depending on the intended uses.
- b. *Restrooms* - should generally be provided and should provide permanent facilities where feasible. Additional portable facilities may be needed during peak season or for special organized events.
- c. *Picnic* - larger group shelters that can be programmed and/or rented out for special events.
- d. *Specialized Uses* - that may not be feasible to provide in every neighborhood park. These may include:
 - Spray park
 - Skateboard Park
 - Off leash area
 - Fishing docks or piers
 - Waterfront access
 - Regional trail connections
 - Education/demonstration areas
 - Outdoor stage/amphitheater
- e. *Concessions/Vendors* - for food, beverage, rentals, etc. as feasible and demand allows.

Regional Parks

1. General Description: Regional parks are generally the largest in size and serve the greatest geographical area, often extending beyond the city or urban growth area limits to include county and/or other adjacent jurisdictions. Their focus is on providing specialized activities, as well as preserving unique landscapes, open spaces or environmental features. They allow for group activities and offer other recreation opportunities not generally found at a community or neighborhood park level. They may also be designed to serve a community or neighborhood park function as well, but are often of a more specialized nature. Bellingham currently has not parks with this designation.
2. Approximate Size: 80 acres or more.
3. Service Area: 5 mile radius or more (as needed).

-
4. **Acquisition Guidelines:** Regional park facilities, because they span many jurisdictions, should be acquired jointly with other agency support when feasible, such as county, school district, port authority, preservation groups and/or other adjacent jurisdictions. They should be situated such that sufficient infrastructure could be developed or already exists to support a large number of visitors, including major arterials, buses and other mass transit capabilities. They should also have access to multi-modal connections.
 5. **Development Guidelines:** Regional parks should be developed to maximize their intended uses, whether for sports fields, mountain biking trails, camping, unique natural or environmental features, or extreme sport venues. They may include the same activities as those found in community and neighborhood park guidelines, but are often intended for a more single, specialized use that requires a larger space than can be supported through a typical community or neighborhood park type. Activities provided will depend solely on the type of intended uses for the park and the influence of the community or region as expressed through a public process, so are not listed individually with this section.

Special Use Sites

1. **General Description:** The special use classification covers a broad range of parks and recreation facilities oriented toward a single-purpose use. They often fall into three general categories:
 - *Cultural Facilities* - unique resources offering historical, educational, visual/performance art or other similar experiences. These include museums, theaters, galleries, libraries and other civic sites.
 - *Indoor Facilities* - geared toward indoor uses, such as gymnasiums, community centers, teen/senior centers, aquatic centers, ice arenas, etc.
 - *Unique Sites* - generally a single use, but smaller than a regional park and not necessarily of a significance that might draw from a larger regional base. These may include arboretums, cemeteries, plazas, sports stadiums, farmer's markets, marinas, etc. - especially when they are not in conjunction with other typical park amenities.
2. **Approximate Size:** Varies.
3. **Service Area:** Varies.
4. **Acquisition Guidelines:** As specialized, single use facilities, special use parks should be selected based on the function that they are intended to serve. They should be situated such that sufficient infrastructure could be developed or already exists to support the intended use, including major arterials, buses and other mass transit capabilities as necessary. They should also have access to multi-modal connections.

-
5. Development Guidelines: Special use parks should be developed to maximize their intended uses. They generally do NOT include the same activities as those found in other park types. Activities provided will depend solely on the type of intended uses for the park and the influence of the community or region as expressed through a public process, so are not listed individually with this section.

Open Space

1. General Description: Open space sites are generally lands set aside for preservation of significant natural resources, landscapes, open space and visual aesthetic or buffering functions. One of the major purposes is to enhance the livability and character of a community by preserving as many of its natural amenities as possible, as well as providing wildlife habitat in urbanized areas. These may include both individual sites that exhibit natural resources, or lands that are unsuitable for development but that offer other natural resource potential. Examples include sites with steep slopes, old or second growth forests, wetlands, stream corridors, tidelands, shorelines (salt or fresh water), storm water features, and/or watershed or aquifer recharge zones.
2. Approximate Size: Varies.
3. Service Area: Varies.
4. Acquisition Guidelines: The quality of the natural resource should play a defining role in locating potential open space sites and may be quite different than other park classifications. For example, they may not necessarily need good access, vehicular or multi-modal, if they are intended for preservation purposes. Limited access in this case may be more desirable. For the same reason, there is not the same need for "developable" land unless the site is intended for regional trailheads, interpretive facilities, environmental learning center, conference/retreats or other similar auxiliary uses. Therefore, acquisition guidelines are much more flexible to respond to opportunities as they may become available.

Sites that connect to other parks, open space or natural features should be considered, as well as those that provide wildlife corridors through urban or urbanizing areas, though no priority is intended in these guidelines, unless stated otherwise in other sections of this plan.

Preservation techniques beyond simple fee acquisition should also be considered, such as preservation easements, dedications, conservation grants or programs, trusts, development regulations and zoning codes. Tax incentives, density bonuses and other "trade-offs" should be considered to help encourage these types of alternative preservation techniques.

5. Development Guidelines: Because open space sites serve primarily a preservation function, development should be limited. Access, where provided, may include trails, minor trailhead and/or educational features. Because of the limited nature of development on these sites, specific activities are not listed individually in this section.

Trails

1. **General Description:** While trails may be categorized into many different types, for the purpose of this plan, trails is limited to generally include off-road multi-use trails only. Trails within parks are shown in individual park development plans and on-street non-motorized facilities (sidewalks and bikeways) are included in the transportation element of the Comprehensive Plan. Trails in this context are intended to form a network of connections in and around the planning area, between neighborhoods and parks, schools, open space, civic facilities and commercial centers.
2. **Approximate Size:** Varies (linear); generally 25'-50' wide.
3. **Service Area:** ½ mile radius.
4. **Acquisition Guidelines:** Trails should be located within open space or greenway corridors whenever possible. They may also be located adjacent to streams, stream corridors or within utility right-of-ways, abandoned railroad corridors or expanded roadway networks where they can be separated from vehicular traffic by landscape or other natural features. Larger areas may be needed at key locations along trail corridors to support trailhead development as outlined below. Trails should be considered an integral part of the transportation network.
5. **Development Guidelines:** In general, trail development should meet local and state departments of transportation or public works standards, as needed. They should also consider AASHTO guidelines and ADA accessibility requirements. Consideration should be given to the trail surfacing and drainage patterns early in the design process. The following activities may be included with supporting trailhead development, as feasible, and is intended to serve as a general guideline only:
 - a. *Parking* - generally limited to around 2-5 stalls unless at a major trailhead location when more parking may be anticipated. On street parking may be used to meet these criteria.
 - b. *Site Furnishings*- such as benches, trash receptacles, wayfinding signage, picnic tables and drinking fountains.
 - c. *Restrooms* - may be provided where space and funding allow. This could include permanent, semi-permanent or portable facilities.
 - d. *Other* - features as needs or site conditions allow.

Appendix B

EXISTING FACILITIES TABLES

See the attached tables of Existing Facilities, both within and outside the planning area as referenced in *Chapter 3* of the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Comprehensive Plan.

Various sources and data are used to calculate existing and proposed land and facility costs including:

- Recent public land acquisition costs
- Real estate digest database of Bellingham area recent vacant land sales
- Professional Real Estate Appraisal services
- Land valuation comparisons - Whatcom County Assessor information
- Public agency bid data including Parks and Recreation, Public Works and Washington State Department of Transportation
- Building Industry Association of Washington construction data
- Means Construction Cost data
- Independent Cost Estimators
- Consultant cost databases
- Contractor information
- Construction trend information

The following abbreviations are used in the tables:

*	Facility not shown on maps in plan
AC	Acre
AQ	Aquatic Land
BSD	Bellingham School District
BTC	Bellingham Technical College
COB	City of Bellingham
CP	Community Park
EA	Each
LF	Linear Foot
NP	Neighborhood Park
N/A	Not Applicable
OS	Open Space
PRI	Private
POB	Port of Bellingham
ROW	Right-of-Way
ROS	Right-of-Way Streetscape
SU	Special Use Site
SF	Square Foot
TR	Trail
X	Facility Exists but is not quantitatively defined
UGA	Urban Growth Area
WCC	Whatcom Community College
WWU	Western Washington University
WA	Washington State

EXISTING FACILITIES
CITY OF BELLINGHAM
 (Within Planning Area)

Name	Land (acres)	Trail (miles)	Picnic Shelters (ea)	Playground (ea)	Restrooms (ea)	Basketball (ea)	Volleyball - sand (ea)	Tennis/Pickleball (ea)	Football/Track/Stadium incl Field & Restrooms (ea)	Multi Use Field (ea)	Baseball/Softball lighted (ea)	Baseball Stadium incl. Field & Restrooms (ea)	Skate Park (ea)	Off-Leash Area (acres), X = designated, n not developed)	Beach (ea) x=unimproved access	Boat Launch (ramp)	Hand Boat Launch
TOTAL EXISTING CITY	3,400.8	70.6	16.0	28.0	25.0	14.0	1.0	12.0	1.0	7.0	10.0	1.0	3.0	3.2	4.0	2.0	4.0
Total Acres in value/capita	3,400.8																
Facility Unit Cost	\$ 90,328	\$ 500,000	\$ 135,000	\$ 175,000	\$ 250,000	\$ 75,000	\$ 25,000	\$ 125,000	\$ 14,000,000	\$ 500,000	\$ 775,000	\$ 6,000,000	\$ 400,000	\$ 150,000	\$ 400,000	\$ 200,000	\$ 75,000
Existing Total Facility Cost	\$ 307,185,656	\$ 35,305,000	\$ 2,160,000	\$ 4,900,000	\$ 6,250,000	\$ 1,050,000	\$ 25,000	\$ 1,500,000	\$ 14,000,000	\$ 3,500,000	\$ 7,750,000	\$ 6,000,000	\$ 1,200,000	\$ 480,000	\$ 1,600,000	\$ 400,000	\$ 300,000
Existing Total Facility Cost / Capita	\$ 3,675	\$ 422	\$ 26	\$ 59	\$ 75	\$ 13	\$ 0	\$ 18	\$ 168	\$ 41.88	\$ 93	\$ 72	\$ 14	\$ 6	\$ 19	\$ 5	\$ 4
Existing Total Facility Cost / Household (2.08)	\$ 7,645	\$ 921	\$ 56	\$ 128	\$ 163	\$ 27	\$ 1	\$ 39	\$ 365	\$ 91	\$ 202	\$ 156	\$ 31	\$ 13	\$ 42	\$ 10	\$ 8

Appendix C

PROPOSED FACILITIES TABLES

See the attached tables of Proposed Facilities, including recommendations as referenced in *Chapter 7* of the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Comprehensive Plan.

Various sources and data are used to calculate existing and proposed land and facility costs including:

- Recent public land acquisition costs
- Real estate digest database of Bellingham area recent vacant land sales
- Professional Real Estate Appraisal services
- Land valuation comparisons - Whatcom County Assessor information
- Public agency bid data including Parks and Recreation, Public Works and Washington State Department of Transportation
- Building Industry Association of Washington construction data
- Means Construction Cost data
- Independent Cost Estimators
- Consultant cost databases
- Contractor information
- Construction trend information

The following abbreviations are used in the tables:

*	Facility not shown on maps in plan
AQ	Aquatic Land
CP	Community Park
NP	Neighborhood Park
OS	Open Space
SU	Special Use Site
TR	Trail

PROPOSED FACILITIES
CITY OF BELLINGHAM
 (Within Planning Area)

(updated 4/29/2016)

Name	Land (acres)	Designation	Trail (miles)	Picnic Shelters (ea)	Playground (ea)	Restrooms (ea)	Basketball (ea)	Volleyball - sand (ea)	Tennis/Pickleball (ea)	Multi Use Field unlighted	Baseball/Softball lighted (ea)	Skate Park (ea)/ Bike Park (ea)	Off-Leash Area (acres, X = designated, not developed)	Beach (ea)	Boat Launch (ramp)	Hand Boat Launch	Paved Plaza (ea)	Community Center / Meeting Room (sf)	Informal Lawn (acres)	Dock/Pier (lf) avg new and renovation	Parking Lot Stalls	Amphitheater (ea, outdoor)	Concessions (sf)	Community Gardens (ea)	Trailhead Parking (ea)	Disc Golf (9 holes ea)	Spray Park (ea)	All Other Misc. \$\$	Notes	
BLOEDEL DONOVAN PARK	n/a	CP																										\$ 300,000.00	Replace existing boat launch docks	
BOULEVARD PARK	n/a	CP												1																Complete Shoreline Improvements
CIVIC ATHLETIC COMPLEX	n/a	CP																										\$ 400,000.00	Gerri field lighting	
CORDATA COMMUNITY PARK	n/a	CP	1	2	2	2	1		1	1		1	1					500	5		100					1	1			
CORNWALL BEACH PARK	n/a	CP	2	3	1	2		2						3		1		1650	2		250	5050					1			Develop per master plan
FAIRHAVEN PARK	n/a	CP	5																					2			\$ 200,000.00	Drainage, entry improvements, trailhead, trails		
LAKE PADDEN PARK	n/a	CP																										\$ 950,000.00	Drainage, field improvements	
MARITIME HERITAGE PARK	n/a	CP			1																									Playground restroom / year-around access
NORTHRIDGE PARK	n/a	CP		1	2	1	1					0									20									Develop existing park
SQUALICUM CREEK PARK	n/a	CP				1					1							500			100									Phase 3, per master plan
VAN WYCK PARK	n/a	CP	1	2	1	2	1			1			1					1200	2		60			1						
WHATCOM FALLS PARK	n/a	CP	1			1						1									10				1					
WHATCOM WATERWAY PARK	5.0	CP/TR	0	1											1	3			1	300							1			Phase 1-3, central pier
POTENTIAL NP PARK SITES	6.0	NP			1		1																							To add parkland in underserved areas as indicated in Recommended Facilities Parks Map
ALDERWOOD NEIGHBORHOOD	3.0	NP	0	1	1		1					1							0.5		10									
BARKLEY PARK	3.0	NP	0	1	1	1	1												0.5		10									Expand existing open space
BROADWAY PARK	n/a	NP			1																									Improve restroom/year-round access
CENTRAL BAKERVIEW PARK	5.0	NP	0		1	1	1						0.5						1		10									
COMMERCIAL GREEN PARK	2.0	NP	0		1												1													

PROPOSED FACILITIES
CITY OF BELLINGHAM
 (Within Planning Area)

(updated 4/29/2016)

Name	Land (acres)	Designation	Trail (miles)	Picnic Shelters (ea)	Playground (ea)	Restrooms (ea)	Basketball (ea)	Volleyball - sand (ea)	Tennis/Pickleball (ea)	Multi Use Field unlighted	Baseball/Softball lighted (ea)	Skate Park (ea)/ Bike Park (ea)	Off-Leash Area (acres, X = designated, not developed)	Beach (ea)	Boat Launch (ramp)	Hand Boat Launch	Paved Plaza (ea)	Community Center / Meeting Room (sf)	Informal Lawn (acres)	Dock/Pier (lf) avg new and renovation	Parking Lot Stalls	Amphitheater (ea, outdoor)	Concessions (sf)	Community Gardens (ea)	Trailhead Parking (ea)	Disc Golf (9 holes ea)	Spray Park (ea)	All Other Misc. \$\$	Notes
CORDATA PARK	n/a	NP		1	1	1	1					0					1				20								Develop existing park
DEWEY VALLEY PARK	1.0	NP	0		1		1														5								
DOWNTOWN SQUARE & PLAZAS	1.0	NP															2												To be determined with redevelopment
E. YEW STREET PARK	3.0	NP	1		1	1	1					0	0.5						1		20								
EAST BAKERVIEW PARK	5.0	NP	1	1	1	1	1					0							1										
MAPLEWOOD MCLEOD PARK	N/A	NP	0	1	1		1					1									5								Develop existing park
NW NEIGHBORHOOD	2.0	NP	1	1	1	1	1												1		10								
N SAMISH CREST PARK	n/a	NP	1	1	1	1	1						0.5						2		10								Develop part of existing open space
S SAMISH CREST PARK	n/a	NP	1	1	1	1	1																						
SUNSET POND PARK	n/a	NP	1	1	1	1							0.5		1				0.5	40									Expand existing open space
WEST BAKERVIEW PARK	5.0	NP	1		1		1						0.5						1		10								
ARROYO PARK	n/a	OS																						1		\$ 200,000.00		Improve N. Chuckanut trailhead, bridges	
DEWEY VALLEY	10.0	OS	2																										
LITTLE SQUALICUM PARK	n/a	OS				1										1				1800	20								Expand Parking, renovate pier
NW BELLINGHAM OS	10.0	OS	2																										
GALBRAITH GREENWAY AND WATERFRONT/TID ELANDS	4.0	OS	2			1																		1					Jointly with County
I AND J WATERWAY PARK	6.0	OS/AQ																											Varies
I AND J WATERWAY PARK	1.0	SU													1				0.3										Phase 4
BIG ROCK GARDEN	n/a	SU	0																		10								Improvements per master plan
COURTHOUSE PLAZA	0.3	SU															1												Per Old Town Neighborhood Plan

PROPOSED FACILITIES
CITY OF BELLINGHAM
 (Within Planning Area)

(updated 4/29/2016)

Name	Land (acres)	Designation	Trail (miles)	Picnic Shelters (ea)	Playground (ea)	Restrooms (ea)	Basketball (ea)	Volleyball - sand (ea)	Tennis/Pickleball (ea)	Multi Use Field unlighted	Baseball/Softball lighted (ea)	Skate Park (ea)/ Bike Park (ea)	Off-Leash Area (acres, X = designated, not developed)	Beach (ea)	Boat Launch (ramp)	Hand Boat Launch	Paved Plaza (ea)	Community Center / Meeting Room (sf)	Informal Lawn (acres)	Dock/Pier (lf) avg new and renovation	Parking Lot Stalls	Amphitheater (ea, outdoor)	Concessions (sf)	Community Gardens (ea)	Trailhead Parking (ea)	Disc Golf (9 holes ea)	Spray Park (ea)	All Other Misc. \$\$	Notes
DEPOT PLAZA	0.3	SU															1												per Old Town Neighborhood Plan
FOUNTAIN SQUARE PLAZA	n/a	SU															1											\$ 300,000.00	Improvements
WOODSTOCK FARM	n/a	SU	0		1																10								Improve access, hand boat landing (no launch)
I-5 TRAIL CROSSINGS *	0.6	TR	0																										Tunnel, bridge, etc. Assumes three: Padden, Squalicum & Bakerview
BAY TO BAKER GREENWAY &	10.9	TR/OS	3																										Complete trail
BAY TO BAKER TO KING MTN	4.1	TR/OS	2																										
CHUCKANUT TO WOODSTOCK	1.0	TR/OS	1																					1					
CORDATA TRAILS	5.0	TR/OS	1																										
INTERURBAN GREENWAY &	n/a	TR/OS	2																					1					Chuckanut Community Forest
KING MTN GREENWAY AND	10.0	TR/OS	2																										
N BELLINGHAM GREENWAY &	75.0	TR/OS	10																					3					All trails per master plan
NORTH BAY GREENWAY &	6.0	TR/OS	2																										North-South connection, assumes two
OVER WATER WALKWAY	n/a	TR/OS	1																	2400									
S. BAY GREENWAY & TRAIL*	3.0	TR/OS	1																										
SAMISH CREST GREENWAY &	4.0	TR/OS	3																										Trailheads assumed with Samish Crest Park (north and south)
PADDEN TO I-5 GREENWAY AND	2.4	TR/OS	1																										
SAMISH CREST TO LOOKOUT MT.	2.4	TR/OS	1																										
SEHOME BLUFF TRAIL -	0.2	TR/OS	1																										
WHATCOM CREEK GREENWAY &	1.0	TR/OS	1																										Complete system
YEW GREENWAY & TRAIL*	5.0	TR/OS	1																										

PROPOSED FACILITIES
CITY OF BELLINGHAM
 (Within Planning Area)

(updated 4/29/2016)

Name	Land (acres)	Designation	Trail (miles)	Picnic Shelters (ea)	Playground (ea)	Restrooms (ea)	Basketball (ea)	Volleyball - sand (ea)	Tennis/Pickleball (ea)	Multi Use Field unlighted	Baseball/Softball lighted (ea)	Skate Park (ea)/ Bike Park (ea)	Off-Leash Area (acres, X = designated, not developed)	Beach (ea)	Boat Launch (ramp)	Hand Boat Launch	Paved Plaza (ea)
TOTAL PROPOSED COB	203.2		51.6	18.0	23.0	21.0	9.5	2.0	1.0	2.0	1.0	3.5	4.5	4.0	0.0	5.0	10.0
Facility Unit Cost	\$ 95,000		\$ 600,000	\$ 150,000	\$ 200,000	\$ 250,000	\$ 80,000	\$ 25,000	\$ 125,000	\$ 600,000	\$ 800,000	\$ 400,000	\$ 150,000	\$ 500,000	\$ 250,000	\$ 100,000	\$ 200,000
Proposed Total Facility Cost	\$ 19,299,682		\$ 30,960,000	\$ 2,700,000	\$ 4,600,000	\$ 5,250,000	\$ 760,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 125,000	\$ 1,200,000	\$ 800,000	\$ 1,400,000	\$ 675,000	\$ 2,000,000	\$ -	\$ 500,000	\$ 2,000,000
Proposed Total Facility Cost / Capita	\$ 155.45	\$ -	\$ 249.36	\$ 21.75	\$ 37.05	\$ 42.29	\$ 6.12	\$ 0.40	\$ 1.01	\$ 9.67	\$ 6.44	\$ 11.28	\$ 5.44	\$ 16.11	\$ -	\$ 4.03	\$ 16.11
Proposed Total Facility Cost / Household (2.08)	\$ 323	\$ -	\$ 519	\$ 45	\$ 77	\$ 88	\$ 13	\$ 1	\$ 2	\$ 20	\$ 13	\$ 23	\$ 11	\$ 34	\$ -	\$ 8	\$ 34

*Average household size 2015 = 2.08

* Average 20' width assumed, off-street system only.

AQ = Aquatic Lands

PROPOSED FACILITIES
CITY OF BELLINGHAM
 (Within Planning Area)

(updated 4/29/2016)

Name	Community Center / Meeting Room (sf)	Informal Lawn (acres)	Dock/Pier (lf avg new and renovation)	Parking Lot Stalls	Amphitheater (ea, outdoor)	Concessions (sf)	Community Gardens (ea)	Trailhead Parking (ea)	Disc Golf (9 holes ea)	Spray Park (ea)	All Other Misc. \$\$	Notes
TOTAL PROPOSED COB	3,850.0	18.8	4,540.0	690.0	0.0	5,050.0	1.0	10.0	1.0	2.5	\$ 2,350,000.00	Funded Capital maintenance
Facility Unit Cost	\$ 500	\$ 100,000	\$ 3,500	\$ 2,500	\$ 1,200,000	\$ 500	\$ 200,000	\$ 400,000	\$ 250,000	\$ 300,000	\$ 1.00	TOTAL COSTS
Proposed Total Facility Cost	\$ 1,925,000	\$ 1,875,000	\$ 15,890,000	\$ 1,725,000	\$ -	\$ 2,525,000	\$ 200,000	\$ 4,000,000	\$ 250,000	\$ 750,000	\$ 2,350,000.00	\$ 103,809,682
Proposed Total Facility Cost / Capita	\$ 15.50	\$ 15.10	\$ 127.98	\$ 13.89	\$ -	\$ 20.34	\$ 1.61	\$ 32.22	\$ 2.01	\$ 6.04	\$ 18.93	\$ 817
Proposed Total Facility Cost / Household (2.08)	\$ 32	\$ 31	\$ 266	\$ 29	\$ -	\$ 42	\$ 3	\$ 67	\$ 4	\$ 13	\$ 39.37	\$ 1,700

Facility Minus Land Value \$ 84,510,000.00

*Average household size :

* Average 20' width assum








AQ = Aquatic Lands

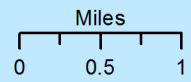
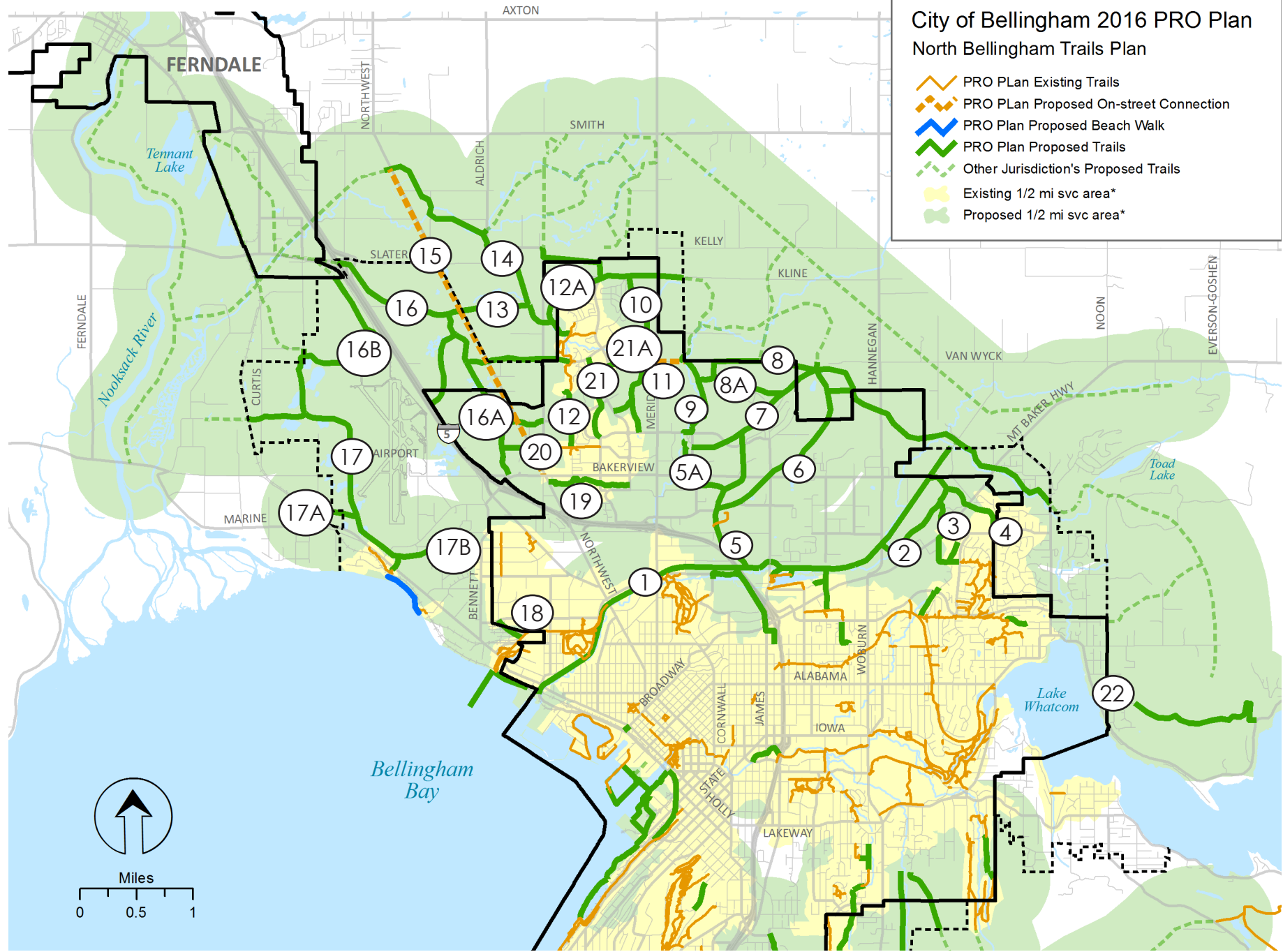
Appendix D

NORTH
BELLINGHAM
TRAIL PLAN

See the attached map and route descriptions.

City of Bellingham 2016 PRO Plan North Bellingham Trails Plan

-  PRO Plan Existing Trails
-  PRO Plan Proposed On-street Connection
-  PRO Plan Proposed Beach Walk
-  PRO Plan Proposed Trails
-  Other Jurisdiction's Proposed Trails
-  Existing 1/2 mi svc area*
-  Proposed 1/2 mi svc area*



North Bellingham Trail Route Descriptions

Map No.	Trail Name	Route Description	Length
1	Bay to Baker Trail	Multi-purpose trail from Roeder Avenue to City Limits on railroad right of way	5.18
2	Dewey Valley Loop	Loop trail off main Bay to Baker Trail through wooded hillside on DNR property	0.87
3	Railroad Trail Connector	Connection from Railroad Trail to Bay to Baker Trail through subdivision open space areas	1.03
4	Bay to Baker - Northridge Link	Multipurpose connector from Bay to Baker Trail (1) to northern Northridge Park	1.44
5	Bay to Baker - King Mountain Link	Connector from bay to Baker Trail north to Kellogg Road and King Mountain	1.42
5A	Deemer Trail	Neighborhood connector to Deemer Road	0.27
6	Queen Mountain Trail	Connector from (Trail 5) to King Mountain Trail Hub	1.77
7	Spring Creek to King Mountain Trail	Connector from Spring Creek Trail (10) to King Mountain Trail Hub	3.01
8	King Mountain East-West Trail	East-West Trail connecting Cordata Trails by way of Guide Meridian Overpass (11), going over King Mountain to Bay to Baker Trail (1), and eastward towards Squalicum Mountain	3.55
8A	King Mountain Trail	Trail from Van Wyck Park to Spring Creek	0.60
9	Spring Creek Trail	From Bakerview north to North Bear Creek Trail (16)	1.35
10	Cordata East Trail	From Kellogg Rd. and WCC north to North Bear Creek Trail (16) at Klein Road	1.71
11	Meridian Overpass	Bike/Ped Overpass from Meridian av Van Wyk/Thomas Roads	0.10
12	West Cordata Trail	From Division Street Trail (27) north to North Bear Creek Trail (16) near Aldrich Road, through proposed Aldrich Elementary School property	1.29
12A	West Cordata Trail Link	From Cordata Park through County property to Cordata Parkway	0.30
13	North Bear Creek Trail	From Bear Creek Trail (16) east to Cordata East Trail (10)	1.00
14	Old Silver Creek Trail	East-west connector from Cordata area west to NW Soccer Fields	2.02
15	Northwest Road Trail	Bike/Ped trail or sidewalks & bike lanes from I-5 north to Old Silver Creek Trail (14) at NW Soccer Fields	3.03
16	Bear Creek Trail	From Bakerview Road north to I-5 at Slater Road	2.75
16A	Cordata to Bear Creek Trail	From West Cordata Trail to Bear Creek Trail	0.50
16B	Bear Creek to Coast Millennium Trail	From Slater Road through north Airport property to Lost Lake area	1.72
17	Coast Millennium Trail	From Marine Drive south of Bellingham Airport north to the Bear Creek Trail (16B)	1.82
17A	West Extension of Coast Millennium Trail	From Coast Millennium Trail (17) west to Wynn Road	0.36
17B	East Extension of Coast Millennium Trail	From Coast Millennium Trail (17) east to Alderwood School	0.61
18	Laurelwood Trail	Extension south to Bay to Baker Trail (1) near Little Squalicum Park	0.26
19	Belleau Woods Trail	From Northwest Road Trail (15) to Cordata Parkway/Bellis Fair Mall	0.74
20	Division Street Trail	From Eliza Street west to Northwest Road Trail (15)	0.59
21	Cordata Pond Trail	From Kellogg Road north to Horton Road	0.77
21A	Cordata to Meridian Trail	Connector trail from Cordata Pond Trail (21) east to Meridian Overpass (11) and on to King Mountain East-West Trail (8)	0.31
22	Bellingham to Mount Baker Trail	From Cornwall Beach Park to the summit of Mt. Baker	n/a
Total Trail Miles Proposed within Bellingham and UGA			40.37

Appendix E

CAPITAL FACILITIES PLAN (6 YEAR)

See the City's adopted 2015-2016 Parks and Recreation Department 6 year Capital Facilities Plan (CFP) on the following pages. Expenditures for 2015-2016 were authorized after budget adoption by the City Council. Expenditures identified for years beyond 2016 are included for information and review of potential future needs. Their inclusion is not a request for approval or budget authorization.

PARK DEPARTMENT					-----Estimates Subject to Revision and Council Approval-----				
Funding Sources and Projects/Purchases	Actual Costs, Revenues Through 2013	2014 Revised Budget	2015 Adopted	2016 Adopted	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total Through 2020
Capital Projects/Purchases Paid from Multiple Funds:									
Bay to Baker Trail								Project Net Total	2,007,889
General Fund	80	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	80
Greenways Fund	56,153	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	56,153
Greenways III Fund	101,656	-	500,000	50,000	200,000	-	-	-	851,656
Parks Impact Fund	-	-	100,000	-	-	-	-	-	100,000
Unfunded	-	-	-	-	-	1,000,000	-	-	1,000,000
Boulevard Park Shoreline								Project Net Total	1,413,409
Greenways III Fund	604,892	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	604,892
Parks Impact Fund	208,517	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	208,517
Unfunded	-	-	-	-	-	600,000	-	-	600,000
Boulevard to Waterfront Park Boardwalk								Project Net Total	8,683,446
1st 1/4% Real Estate Excise Tax Fund	182,344	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	182,344
Greenways III Fund	544,224	1,762,390	-	3,900,000	-	-	-	-	6,206,614
Federal Intergovt Revenue	(505,512)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(505,512)
Parks Impact Fund	-	-	-	800,000	-	-	-	-	800,000
Unfunded	-	-	-	-	-	2,000,000	-	-	2,000,000
Capitalized Labor for Park Projects								Projects Net Total	1,610,173
1st 1/4% Real Estate Excise Tax Fund	-	-	39,456	40,691	42,427	44,397	46,158	48,011	261,140
Greenways III Fund	-	-	112,329	115,889	120,886	126,537	131,621	136,972	744,234
Parks Impact Fund	-	-	91,334	94,214	98,255	102,828	106,926	111,242	604,799
Cordata Neighborhood Park								Project Net Total	3,933,506
Parks Impact Fund	51,858	281,648	50,000	250,000	1,000,000	-	-	-	1,633,506
Unfunded	-	-	-	-	-	2,300,000	-	-	2,300,000
Cornwall Beach Park								Project Net Total	11,262,994
Parks Impact Fund	62,994	-	200,000	-	-	-	-	-	262,994
Unfunded	-	-	-	-	-	1,000,000	-	10,000,000	11,000,000
Samish Crest Trail								Project Net Total	704,631
Beyond Greenways Fund	204,631	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	204,631
Unfunded	-	-	-	-	-	500,000	-	-	500,000
Squalicum Creek Park								Project Net Total	9,638,265
Squalicum Park/Olympic Fund	66,241	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	66,241
Greenways III Fund	42,414	4,000,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	4,042,414
Parks Impact Fund	29,610	500,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	529,610
Unfunded	-	-	-	-	-	-	5,000,000	-	5,000,000

Capital Budget

PARK DEPARTMENT - Continued					-----Estimates Subject to Revision and Council Approval-----				
Funding Sources and Projects/Purchases	Actual Costs, Revenues Through 2013	2014 Revised Budget	2015 Adopted	2016 Adopted	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total Through 2020
Capital Projects/Purchases Paid from Multiple Funds (continued):									
Waterfront Commercial Green								Project Net Total	1,463,741
Parks Impact Fund	863,741	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	863,741
Unfunded	-	-	-	-	-	-	600,000	-	600,000
Whatcom Waterway Park								Project Net Total	1,018,285
1st 1/4% Real Estate Excise Tax Fund	28,205	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	28,205
Federal Intergovt Revenue	(9,920)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(9,920)
Unfunded	-	-	-	-	-	1,000,000	-	-	1,000,000
Capital Projects/Purchases Paid from a Single Fund:									
General Fund									
Fleet Add 1/2 Ton Full Size Truck	--	--	-	-	-	22,000	-	-	22,000
Fleet Add 1/2 Ton Mid Size Truck	--	--	-	-	-	19,000	-	-	19,000
Fleet Add Beach Cleaning Machine	--	--	-	-	13,000	-	-	-	13,000
Fleet Add One Ton Truck for Transporting Large Area Mower	--	--	-	-	33,000	-	-	-	33,000
Fleet Add Power Roller	--	--	-	-	38,000	-	-	-	38,000
1st 1/4% Real Estate Excise Tax Fund									
Annual Boundary Surveys	-	-	6,000	6,000	6,000	6,000	6,000	6,000	36,000
Annual Park Playground Equipment Parts	-	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	140,000
Annual Park Sign Replacement	-	-	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	90,000
Sidewalk and Curb Replacement	-	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	175,000
Trail Surface/Drainage Repairs	-	35,000	34,000	34,000	35,000	35,000	35,000	35,000	243,000
2nd 1/4% Real Estate Excise Tax Fund									
Bloedel Dock Repairs	-	-	125,000	-	-	-	-	-	125,000
Cemetery Scatter Garden	-	-	-	25,000	-	-	-	-	25,000
Parks Facility Asphalt Patching and Resurfacing	-	-	15,000	15,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	130,000
Playground Repairs and Improvements	-	-	-	-	150,000	-	-	-	150,000

PARK DEPARTMENT - Continued					-----Estimates Subject to Revision and Council Approval-----				
Funding Sources and Projects/Purchases	Actual Costs, Revenues Through 2013	2014 Revised Budget	2015 Adopted	2016 Adopted	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total Through 2020
Capital Projects/Purchases Paid from a Single Fund (Continued):									
Greenways III Fund									
Greenway Land Acquisition	-	3,880,000	3,880,000	-	-	-	-	-	7,760,000
Interurban Trail - Chuckanut	-	120,000	-	-	-	680,000	-	-	800,000
Lake Padden Park Improvements	-	-	-	165,000	700,000	-	-	-	865,000
Whirlwind Beach Parking and Trail Improvements	-	-	330,000	-	-	-	-	-	330,000
Parks Impact Fund									
Cordata Trail to Cordata Elementary School	-	-	200,000	-	-	-	-	-	200,000
Land Acquisition - Park in Developing Area	-	-	-	500,000	-	-	-	-	500,000
Miscellaneous Community Parks Construction	-	-	-	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	500,000
Neighborhood Park Improvements	-	-	50,000	50,000	-	-	-	-	100,000
Sidewalks, Paths and Trails	-	50,000	100,000	-	-	-	-	-	150,000
Golf Course Fund									
Fleet Purchase of Surplus Tractor	--	--	9,424	-	-	-	-	-	9,424
Trenching Machine	--	--	29,100	-	-	-	-	-	29,100
Capital Plan Total Estimated Expenditures	3,047,560	10,674,038	5,931,643	6,205,794	2,621,568	9,620,762	6,110,705	10,522,225	54,734,295
Less Unfunded Expenditures	-	-	-	-	-	(8,400,000)	(5,600,000)	(10,000,000)	(24,000,000)
Less Anticipated Revenue	(515,432)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(515,432)
Net Outlay Capital Projects/Purchases	2,532,128	10,674,038	5,931,643	6,205,794	2,621,568	1,220,762	510,705	522,225	30,218,863

Appendix F

REVENUE SOURCE DESCRIPTIONS

The following is a general description of the different types of revenue sources that may be used to fund park, recreation and open space programs or facilities. Some are restricted to development only while others may be used for operations and maintenance. These are listed in no particular order and with no reference to the feasibility or recommendation of implementing each revenue source.

General Fund

The General Fund is derived from property taxes, licenses and permits, intergovernmental revenues including state and federal grants, service charges and fees, fines and forfeitures, and other miscellaneous revenues. General funds are used to finance most government operations including staff, equipment, capital facility and other requirements. Park, recreation and open space programs and operations are funded primarily from general fund accounts.

- Sales Tax - is the City's largest single revenue source and may be used for any legitimate City purpose. The City has no direct control over this source; it is collected and distributed by the State and may fluctuate with general economic and local business conditions.
- Property Tax - under Washington State's constitution, cities may levy a property tax rate not to exceed \$3.60 per \$1,000 of the assessed value of all taxable property within incorporation limits. The total of all property taxes for all taxing authorities, however, cannot exceed 1.0% of assessed valuation, or \$10.00 per \$1,000 of value. If the taxes of all districts exceed the 1.0% of \$10.00 amount, each is proportionately reduced until the total is at or below the 1.0% limit.

In 2001, Washington State law was amended by Proposition 747, a statutory provision limiting the growth of regular property taxes to 1.0% per year, after adjustments for new construction. Any proposed increases over this amount are subject to a referendum vote.

The statute was intended to control local governmental spending by controlling the annual rate of growth of property taxes. In practice, however, the statute can reduce the effective property tax yield to an annual level far below a city's levy authorization, particularly when property values are increasing rapidly.

Special Revenues

Special revenues are derived from state and local option taxes dedicated to specific expenditure purposes, such as the motor vehicle

tax, motor excise tax, real estate excise tax, motel and hotel tax, public art, criminal justice, paths and trails, convention center and the like. Some special revenues may be used to finance limited capital facilities, such as roads or parks, where the local option allows - such as the local real estate excise tax (REET).

Debt Service Funds

Debt service funds are derived from a dedicated portion of the property tax or general fund proceeds to repay the sale of general obligation (voted) and Councilmanic (non-voted) bonds. Both types of bonds may be used to finance park facility improvements - but not maintenance or operational costs.

- Councilmanic (limited or non-voted) bonds - may be issued without voter approval by the Council for any facility development purpose. The total amount of all outstanding non-voted general obligation debt may not exceed 1.5% of the assessed valuation of all city property.

Limited general obligation bonds must be paid from general governmental revenues. Therefore, debt service on these bonds may reduce the amount of revenue available for current operating expenditures and the financial flexibility of the Council may need to fund annual budget priorities. For this reason, Councilmanic bonds are usually only used for the most pressing capital improvement issues. This method was used to fund the 2006 improvements at Civic Athletic Complex.

- Unlimited general obligation bonds - must be approved by at least 60% of resident voters during an election which has a turnout of at least 40% of those who voted in the last state general election. The bond may be repaid from a special levy, which is not governed by the 1.0% statutory limitation on the property tax growth rate. Total indebtedness as a percent of the assessed valuation that may be incurred by limited and unlimited general obligation bonds together, however, may not exceed:
 - 2.5% - provided that indebtedness in excess of 1.5% is for general purposes,
 - 5.0% - provided that indebtedness in excess of 2.5% is for utilities, and
 - 7.5% - provided that indebtedness in excess of 5.0% is for parks and open space development.

Monies authorized by limited and unlimited types of bonds must be spent within 3 years of authorization to avoid arbitrage requirements unless invested at less than bond yield. In addition, bonds may be used to construction but not maintain or operate facilities. Facility maintenance and operation costs must be paid from general governmental revenue or by voter authorization of special annual or biannual operating levies or by user fees or charges.

Enterprise Funds

Enterprise funds are derived from the user fees and charges levied for utility operations including water and sewer, storm drainage, regional water, solid waste and cemetery. The enterprise revenues are used to pay operating costs, retire capital facility debt and plan future replacement and expansion projects. Enterprise funds may be created for a park or recreation activity that has a revenue source sufficient to finance all costs. Enterprise funds have been used on a limited basis for golf courses, marinas and similar self-financing operations.

Special Legislation

Local government representatives can seek state enabling legislation authorizing new or special revenue sources. Senate Bill 5972 (RCW 82.46) is an example of one possible legislative solution. The 1982 bill gave city governments the option of adding an additional 0.0025% increment to the real estate excise tax (REET) for the sole purpose of financing local capital improvement projects including parks, utilities and other infrastructure except governmental buildings.

Like bonds, Senate Bill 5972 funds may not be used to finance operation and maintenance requirements.

Unlimited General Obligation Bonds

Bellingham may come to depend on voter referendums as a means of financing a larger portion of the capital improvement program, since unlimited obligation bonds are not paid from the property tax subject to the 1.0% limitation.

Voter approved capital improvements may be more representative of actual resident priorities than some other methods of validating capital expenditures, and will at the least, ensure referendum submittals provide widespread benefits. However, bond revenue cannot be spent for maintenance and operational issues - and bond referendums must be approved by a margin over 60% of the registered voters who participated in the last election.

General Levy Rate Referendums

Proposition 747, the statutory provision limiting the growth of regular property taxes to 1.0% per year, can be waived by referendum approval of a simple (50%) majority of Bellingham's registered voters. Voters can be asked to approve a resetting of the property tax levy rate that would adjust the amount of revenue the city can generate. The new total revenue that can be generated by a resetting of the rate would be subject to the same 1.0% limitation, however, and the total amount of revenue and the resulting property tax rate would start to decline again in accordance with the Proposition.

However, the adjusted rate and revenue could finance specific capital improvement projects - or programs that involve construction, maintenance and operations aspects that a majority of the voters are willing to pay for under the adjusted rate.

The resetting of the rate can be permanent, subject to the provisions of Proposition 747. Or temporary, where the rate is adjusted until a specific amount of revenue has been generated to finance a project or program - whereupon the rate reverts to the original or a specified amount defined in the referendum.

Bellingham voters have passed three levy rate referendums, to the fund the Greenway Program acquisitions, improvements and maintenance endowment. The current levy will expire in 2016.

Environmental Impact Mitigation - Subdivision Regulations

City subdivision policies require developers of subdivisions within the City, or on lands that may eventually annex to the City, to provide suitably designed and located open spaces, woodland preserves, trail systems, playgrounds and other park or recreational facilities. Such facilities may include major components of the park or recreational system that may be affected by the project's location or development. The City may

also consider requiring developers to provide acceptable long-term methods of managing and financing maintenance requirements. Attractive management systems could include:

- Ownership by a private organization - like a tennis, swimming or golf club, who assumes responsibility for all maintenance responsibilities and costs,
- Ownership by a homeowners or common property owners association - who may contract maintenance responsibilities and assess property owner's annual costs.
- Dedication of property - to an adjacent city or school district who assumes maintenance responsibilities using local city or school funds, or
- Creation of a special recreation service district - where locally elected district representatives manage maintenance requirements and select a local method of financing.

The City should not accept title and maintenance responsibilities unless the land or facility will be a legitimate community park or recreation element that may be supported using public financing. The City may be contracted by any of the other agencies to provide or oversee a maintenance contract on the owner's behalf provided all City costs are reimbursed by an approved method of local financing.

Growth Impact Fees

Bellingham has adopted a growth impact fee provision in accordance with the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA). A park impact fee is applied to all proposed residential developments within the city as a means to maintaining park, recreation and open space levels-of-service. The ordinance makes provisions for setting aside the resources, including lands or monies, necessary to offset the impact new residential development project has on park, recreation and open space facilities.

Land contributions can be accepted in lieu of impact fees if they will be suitable sites for future facilities. Land and fees accumulated under the ordinance must be invested within a reasonable time of impact assessment or be returned to the contributing developer.

Inter-local Agreements

Bellingham could work with Whatcom County to determine an equitable means whereby growth mitigation park impact fees can be collected for residential developments occurring within the urban growth area outside of existing city limits, but within the area the city eventually expects to annex.

A joint growth impact fee should be collected where the county and city maintain the same local and regional or citywide level-of-service (LOS) presently existing within the incorporated (city) and unincorporated (county) sections, and for the urban growth area in total. A common fee could be collected by each agency, then shared on a project by project basis for improvements benefitting local neighborhoods (and potential residents of proposed subdivisions) or residents of the community and urban growth area-at-large.

The City should also work with the Bellingham School District to determine to what extent the City could cooperatively finance shared or common facility improvements. Such improvements could use co-located school and park sites, commonly improved and scheduled fields and facilities, and the sharing of park and school growth impact fees - among other options.

It is to Bellingham's advantage to assist the school district with the development and operation of common facilities since these facilities serve residents of the entire city.

In return, however, the city and school district must determine some equitable means whereby the city and school district perform or reimburse each other for some of the added facility maintenance and operational impacts that users create on each agency's facilities.

User Fees and Charges

The City may increase the number of activities subject to user fees and charges and use the proceeds to purchase land, develop, operate and maintain facilities where all costs are reimbursed by the revenue obtained. Essentially, the City has become a facility developer/operator providing whatever facilities or services the market will support from user revenue.

User fees have been and could be used to provide facilities for park and recreation activities whose profit margins are too low to sustain commercial operations or whose benefiting user group may extend beyond county boundaries. Possible user fee financed facilities include indoor tennis and racquetball facilities, golf courses, horse stables and equestrian centers, boating resorts, recreational vehicle parks and any other facility where demand is sizable enough to warrant a user fee financing approach.

In essence, the market determines which facility's revenues equal costs, and thereby, which programs the City would provide on a direct costs/benefit basis. To date, City user fee revenues provide a significant source of operating funds for recreational programs. While important, this source of finance will likely never pay full costs for all programs, or any operation, maintenance or development costs.

Special Funding Sources

Bellingham has approved or could submit for approval the following special financing options.

- REET (Real Estate Excise Tax) - RCW 82.46 gives city governments the option of adding up to two 0.0025% increments to the real estate excise tax (REET) for the sole purpose of financing local capital improvement projects. REET funds may not be used to finance operation and maintenance requirements.

Bellingham has adopted both REET options.

REET remains a viable financing tool for park, recreation and open space acquisition and development projects. However, REET funds are to be used for all city capital requirements, not just park purposes.

- Greenway Funds - in 1990, 1997 and 2006, Bellingham voters approved property tax levies to fund the acquisition and development of park, recreation and open space projects. The most recent levy, which represented an annual cost of \$57.00 per \$100,000 in property value, will expire in the year 2016. The three levies combined will generate a total of \$71 million in funding.

State Grants

Washington State funds and administers a number of programs for non-motorized transportation and trails purposes using special state revenue programs.

- Washington Wildlife Recreation Program (WWRP) - provides funds for the acquisition and development of conservation and recreation lands. The Habitat Conservation Account of the WWRP program provides funds to acquire critical habitat, natural areas and wildlife categories. The Outdoor Recreation Account of the WWRP program provides funds for local parks, state parks, trails and water access categories.
- Aquatic Lands Enhancement Act (ALEA) - uses revenues obtained by the Washington Department of Natural Resources from the lease of state owned tidal lands. The ALEA program is administered by the IAC for the development of shoreline related trail improvements and may be applied for up to 50% of the proposal.
- Endangered Species Act (ESA) - a Department of Ecology administered water quality program provides grants for up to 75% of the cost of water quality/fish enhancement studies. Referendum 39 monies can be applied to park developments that propose to restore, construct or otherwise enhance fish producing streams, ponds or other water bodies.
- Capital Projects Fund for Washington Heritage - provides funds for the restoration and renovation projects for historical sites and buildings by local governments and nonprofit agencies. The program is administered by the Heritage Resource Center (HRC).
- Boating Facilities Program - approved in 1964 under the state Marine Recreation Land Act, the program earmarks motor vehicle fuel taxes paid by watercraft for boating-related lands and facilities. Program funds may be used for fresh or saltwater launch ramps, transient moorage and upland support facilities.
- Washington State Public Works Commission - initiated a program that may be used for watercraft sanitary pump-out facilities.
- Youth Athletic Facilities (YAF) - provides grants to cities, counties and qualified nonprofit organizations for the improvement and maintenance of existing, and the development of new athletic facilities.
- Non-Highway & Off-Road Vehicle Activities Program (NOVA) - provides funding to develop and manage recreation opportunities for users of off-road vehicles and non-highway roads. An allocation (1%) from the state Motor Vehicle Fuel Tax (MVFT) and off-road vehicle (ORV) permit fees fund the program. NOVA funds may be used for the planning, acquisition, development, maintenance and operation of off-road vehicle and non-highway road recreation opportunities.
- Firearms and Archery Range Recreation Program (FARR) - provides funds to acquire, develop and renovate public and private nonprofit firearm and archery training, practice and recreation facilities. The program is funded from a portion of the fees charged for concealed weapons permits.

Federal Grants

Federal monies are available for the construction of outdoor park facilities from the National Park Service (NPS) Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). The Washington State Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation (IAC) administers the grants.

- *National Park Service (NPS) grants* - usually do not exceed \$150,000 per project and must be matched on an equal basis by the local jurisdiction. The IAC assigns each project application a priority on a competitive statewide basis according to each jurisdiction's need, population benefit, natural resource enhancements and a number of other factors. In the past few years, project awards have been extremely competitive as the federal government significantly reduced the amount of federal monies available to the NPS program. The state increased contributions to the program over the last few years using a variety of special funds, but the overall program could be severely affected by pending federal deficit cutting legislation.

Applicants must submit a detailed comprehensive park, recreation and open space plan to be eligible for NPS funding. The jurisdiction's plan must demonstrate facility need, and prove that the jurisdiction's project proposal will adequately satisfy local park, recreation and open space needs and interests. Due to diminished funding, however, IAC grants have not been a significant source of project monies for city or other local jurisdictions in recent years.

- *Transportation Enhancement Grants* - can be used to finance on and off-road non-motorized trail enhancements along major and minor arterial collector roads or sometimes, within separate trail corridors. The program was adopted in 1993 and is administered by the Regional Transportation Organization on behalf of the US Department of Transportation.

Applicants must demonstrate the proposed trail improvements will increase access to non-motorized recreational and commuter transportation alternatives.

- *National Recreational Trails Program (N RTP)* - is the successor to the National Recreational Trails Act (NRFTA). Funds may be used to rehabilitate and maintain recreational trails that provide a backcountry experience. In some cases, the funds may be used to create new "linking" trails, trail relocations and educational programs.
- *Boating Infrastructure Grant Program (BIG)* - supports development and renovation of areas for non-trailer-able recreational boats over 26 feet and related support elements on US navigable waters. Funds may be used to produce and distribute information and educational materials. The federal program compliments the state-funded Boating Facilities Program (BFP) administered for smaller vessels.

Recreation Service Districts (RCW Chapter 36.69)

State legislation authorizes the establishment of recreation service districts as special units of government that may be wholly independent of any involvement with a county or any other local public agency or jurisdiction. Districts may provide recreational facilities that are specific to the district's boundaries in return for the district residents' agreement to pay the special development, operation and maintenance costs utilizing special financing devices.

Special recreation service districts must be initiated by local jurisdiction resolution or citizen petition following hearings on feasibility and costs studies of the proposed district's facility development or operation costs. The proposal must ultimately be submitted for voter approval including all provisions relating to any special financing agreements. The voters must initially approve the formation of the district and may designate existing elected officials, or a body appointed by existing elected officials, or elect district commissioners or officers solely responsible for park and recreation policy. Separate voter approvals must be sought for 3-year operating levies providing maintenance, repair, operating costs and facility acquisition and development projects.

A recreation service district can be flexible and used to provide local recreational facilities in the same variety of custom service choices with the exception that the governing board may be separately elected. There are no limitations on the number of separate recreation service districts that can be established within a county, provided no district overlaps another.

Metropolitan Park Districts (SB 2557)

In 2002, the state legislature authorized the establishment of metropolitan park districts as special units of government that may be wholly independent of any involvement with a city, county or any other local public agency or jurisdiction. Like recreation service districts, metropolitan park districts may provide recreational facilities that are specific to the district's boundaries in return for the district residents' agreement to pay the special development, operation and maintenance costs utilizing special financing devices.

Metropolitan park districts must be initiated by local government resolution or citizen petition following hearings on feasibility and costs studies of the proposed district's facility development or operation costs. The proposal must ultimately be submitted for voter approval (50%) including all provisions relating to any special financing agreements. The voters must initially approve the formation of the district, and may designate existing elected officials, or a body appointed by existing elected officials or elect district commissioners or officers solely responsible for park and recreation policy.

Unlike recreation service districts, voters must also approve the establishment of a continuous levy as a junior taxing district - compared with 3 year levies under a recreation service district to provide maintenance, repair, operating costs and facility acquisition and development projects.

Like the recreation service district, a metropolitan park district can be flexible and used to provide local recreational facilities in the same variety of custom service choices with the exception that the financing levy may be as a junior taxing district with a continuous levy.

There are no limitations on the number of separate recreation service districts that can be established within a city, county or as a combination of multiple cities and counties provided no district overlaps another.

The Tacoma Metropolitan Park District was established in 1909 and is the largest and oldest recreation park district in the State of Washington. The Chuckanut Community Forest Park District was established in 2013 for the specific purpose of raising funds to pay back the loan used to acquire the Fairhaven Highlands development property.

Special Use Agreements

Special property agreements can often be used instead of property purchases to secure public use rights for land or property at no cost or a nominal fee, particularly where the possible public use is of benefit to the private landowner. Some forms of special use agreements can provide favorable tax benefits if the use agreement can be shown to have an assigned value.

The City could expand the use agreement concept to include complete development, operation or maintenance responsibilities. Package lease agreements will usually provide more effectively maintained facilities than possible where the City must staff specialized, small work crews.

Sometimes package lease agreements covering use and maintenance aspects may be the only way of resolving an equitable agreement with the private ownership. This may include trails on utility corridors where the ownership may prefer to control development and maintenance activities, and the City may prefer to avoid any implied responsibility or liability for the utility worthiness which the City's maintenance of a trail system could imply.

Public/Private Service Contracts

Private market skills and capital may be employed in a variety of ways including the use of public/private services contracts where a private party can be contracted to operate and maintain a facility for a fixed fee cost. Service contracts can be very efficient where the activities are small, scattered in location, seasonal, expert or experimental. Service contracts are also relatively easy to initiate or terminate if area demand fails to provide sufficient use or revenue to justify continued operation.

Service contracts may be very flexible and can include agreements with city, school district or local user groups who can or would be interested in sustaining the activity on a subsidized or sweat-equity basis on exchange for the facility.

Public/Private Concessions

The City could lease a portion of a site or facility to a private party in exchange for a fixed fee or a percentage of gross receipts. The private operator assumes operation and maintenance responsibilities and costs in exchange for a profit. For certain types of facilities, such as enterprise fund account facilities like golf courses, the City's portion of the profits may be used to pay facility development and/or operation and maintenance costs at the same or for similar facility developments.

The City may save considerable monies on concessions where the activities are specialized, seasonal, experimental or unproven. Concessions can be easily initiated, provide direct user benefit/cost reimbursements and relieve the City of a capital risk should market or user interest fail to materialize to at least break-even levels.

Concessionaires could operate a wide variety of park and recreational facilities including horse stables and equestrian centers, boating and bicycle rentals, special group and recreational vehicle compounds, athletic field and court facilities, swimming pools and beaches, shooting ranges and ORV tracks among others.

Public/Private Joint Development Ventures

The City can enter into an agreement with a private or public developer to jointly own or lease land for an extended period of time. The purpose of the venture would be to allow the development, operation and maintenance of a major recreational facility or activity in exchange for a fixed lease cost or a percentage of gross receipts.

The developer assumes development, operation and maintenance responsibilities, costs and all market risks in exchange for a market opportunity providing a profitable return not otherwise available. The City realizes the development of a facility in exchange for a low minimum capital return and no or very little capital risk.

Joint development agreements represent an ultimate benefit/cost resolution that may also provide public revenue that the City could use for other development opportunities. Examples include the possible joint development on City lands of equestrian centers, marinas, hostels, recreational vehicle campgrounds, seminar retreats, special resorts, indoor racquetball courts and athletic clubs, swimming pools and water parks, golf courses, gun and archery ranges and ORV competition tracts, among others.

Self-Help Land Leases

There are instances where an activity is so specialized in appeal or of a service area so broad in scope that it cannot be equitably financed using general public funds. Specialized user groups should be provided options for developing or maintaining facilities in ways that account for equitable public cost reimbursements. Examples include the use of land leases where the City may lease land at low or no cost where a user group or club assumes responsibility for the development, operation and maintenance of the facility. The club could provide volunteer help or use club finances to develop, operate and maintain the facility as a means of meeting user benefit/cost objectives.

Land lease agreements could accommodate organized athletics like soccer, baseball, football, softball and rugby; or very specialized facilities like shooting ranges, archery fields, ORV trails and ultra-light aircraft parks, among others.

Self-Help Contract Agreements

The City can purchase land, develop, operate and maintain a specialized facility under a negotiated contract agreement where a special interest group agrees to defray all costs in addition to or in lieu of a user fee as a means of meeting user benefit/cost objectives. The agreements can be quite flexible and could contract the City, the user group, another public agency or a private operator to be developer/operator.

Contract agreements could accommodate a range of more expensive special purpose facility developments including high quality athletic competition facilities for league organizations and specialized facility developments like shooting ranges and ORV tracks when and where the user organization can provide financial commitments.

Bellingham Comprehensive Plan Capital Facilities & Utilities Chapter

2016



I. Introduction

Capital facilities and utilities contribute to Bellingham's quality of life. Delivering and maintaining public facilities and utility services are essential to providing the citizens of Bellingham with a vibrant place to live, work, and play. This chapter represents the community's policy plan for the delivery and financing of public facilities for the next 20 years, and includes a six-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for financing City public facilities to ensure appropriate levels of service (LOS) are provided. Level of service standards state the quality of service that the community desires and for which service providers should plan.

The CIP is a strategic six-year financing plan matching the costs of future capital improvements to anticipated revenues.

LOS is a measure of the minimum amount of public facility which must be provided to meet the community's basic needs and expectations.

Long- and short-range financial planning presents the opportunity to fund and schedule projects so that the various steps in development logically follow one another with regard to relative urgency, economic feasibility, and community benefit.



Bellingham City Hall is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The purpose of the Capital Facilities and Utilities Chapter is to identify the City's plans to maintain its existing capital facilities, as well as to ensure adequate facilities and utility services are provided to existing and new development in an efficient manner. As the City's projected 2036 growth forecast can be accommodated within the existing City limits and urban growth area (UGA) boundaries, capital facilities and utilities planning is focused on growth strategies established in the Land Use Chapter.

Planning for capital facilities and utility services are two of the required elements of a comprehensive plan for jurisdictions planning under the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA), RCW 36.70A.070. The GMA goal for public facilities and services is to:

"Ensure that those public facilities and services necessary to support development shall be adequate to serve the development at the time the development is available for occupancy and use without decreasing current service levels below locally established minimum standards."

This chapter has been produced in accordance with the GMA and the Land Use Chapter, and is consistent with the Countywide Planning Policies to evaluate the City's capability to provide the public facilities necessary to support the orderly growth in Bellingham and its UGA upon annexation. As required by the GMA, this chapter includes:

1. An inventory of existing capital facilities showing the location and capacities of those services;
2. A forecast of the future needs for such capital facilities;
3. The proposed capacities of expanded or new capital facilities;

4. At least a six-year plan that will finance capital facilities within the projected funding capacities and clearly identify sources of public money for such purposes; and
5. A requirement to reassess the Land Use Chapter if probable funding falls short of meeting existing needs and to ensure that the Land Use Chapter, Capital Facilities Chapter, and financing plan within the Capital Facilities Chapter are coordinated and consistent. Parks and recreation facilities are also included in this chapter.

In accordance RCW 36.70A.070(4), the GMA also requires jurisdictions to identify the general location and capacity of existing and proposed utilities, including but not limited to, electrical lines, telecommunication lines, and natural gas lines.

For organizational purposes, both the capital facilities and utilities elements have been combined into this chapter. This chapter covers:

- **Public facilities**, including but not limited to, streets and sidewalks, street lighting systems, traffic signals, water and sanitary sewer facilities, stormwater systems, government buildings, and schools.
- **Public services**, including fire protection and emergency services, law enforcement, education, recreation, environmental protection, and other governmental services.
- **Private utilities services**, including, but not limited to, electrical lines, telecommunication lines, and gas lines.



The Picket Bridge over Whatcom Creek opened in 1920 and was rehabilitated in 2002. Photo by Carey Thure.

Not all public facilities are owned and operated by the City. For example, schools are owned and managed by the school districts. Additionally, private utility and service companies supply various systems and services to the public that are not provided by the City. Joint planning with non-city public entities and utility providers is essential in maintaining the public service needs of Bellingham and provides the opportunity to coordinate plans to ensure that adequate services are provided in a timely and efficient manner.

The goals and policies in this chapter implement the City's Legacies and Strategic Commitments to assist public decisions on the use of capital funds, prioritize public facility improvements, and coordinate utility and other service facilities.

These concepts are further defined under the following eight categories, which form the organizational basis for the goals and policies of this chapter:

- Public Facilities, Services and Inventory**
- Water, Sanitary Sewer and Stormwater Systems**
- Parks and Recreation**
- Fire Protection - Emergency Services and Law Enforcement**
- Bellingham Public Libraries**
- Whatcom Museum**
- Public Schools**
- Private Utilities**

The chapter's eight goals mirror the City's Legacies and Strategic Commitments and emphasize the interdependence of the environment, economy and society:

- GOAL CF-1** **Deliver safe, inclusive, cost-effective, and accountable public facilities and services.**
- GOAL CF-2** **Protect and improve Lake Whatcom and its watershed to ensure a long-term, sustainable supply of water.**
- GOAL CF-3** **Continue efforts to improve the overall water quality throughout Bellingham.**
- GOAL CF-4** **Support a safe and prepared community that responds to emergencies and protects lives and property.**
- GOAL CF-5** **Provide access to quality of life amenities and foster lifelong learning opportunities for all ages.**
- GOAL CF-6** **Promote arts and culture, and provide access to local, regional, and national history.**
- GOAL CF-7** **Ensure school districts serving Bellingham and its UGA provide adequate public school facilities needed to house the expected future student population.**
- GOAL CF-8** **Promote the delivery of adequate utilities and encourage the design and siting of private utility facilities in a manner that minimizes impacts on adjacent land uses and the environment.**

II. Goals and Policies

Public Facilities, Services and Inventory

The City of Bellingham owns and maintains a variety of public facilities, including: water, sewer and stormwater systems, parks and open space, police and fire facilities, municipal buildings, and transportation infrastructure. Schools are also considered public facilities, however, these facilities are not owned or operated by the City and service is provided by individual school districts.

Several public facilities are administered by individual plans that provide the basis for financing capital projects for six years and forecasting anticipated public needs to a 20-year planning horizon. To ensure that future public facilities and services meet the community's needs and meet regulatory requirements and anticipated growth projections, the City and other public entities prepare a CIP which identifies, prioritizes, and finances capital needs on a six-year plan cycle. School districts prepare capital facilities plans (CFP) in accordance with RCW 82.02 and, if requested and adopted by the City, the district can collect school impact fees on new development to account for new capacity needs to serve growth. For City-related capital projects, the CIP is updated on a biennial cycle as part of the City's budget process, thereby prioritizing capital facility needs to ensure appropriate levels of service with available funding. Only the first two years of the CIP include fully-funded projects.



The Federal Building on Magnolia Street hosts a branch of the Post Office and City offices.

As required by the GMA, an inventory of capital facilities serving Bellingham are shown on the Capital Facilities map, Fire Protection map, and Public School Districts map. For more detailed information concerning capital facilities for water, sanitary sewer, stormwater, and parks and recreation facilities, see adopted facility service plans referenced below. For capital facilities relating to transportation, see the Transportation Chapter.

Other private utility facilities, such as electrical, natural gas, petroleum, and telecommunication services, are discussed in the Utilities section of this chapter. An inventory of private utilities is shown on the Power, Gas, and Wireless Utilities map.

GOAL CF-1 Deliver safe, inclusive, cost-effective, and accountable public facilities and services.

Policy CF-1 Provide, maintain, and upgrade public facilities to meet the primary service needs of the City in a manner which respects social diversity, protects public investments in existing facilities, maximizes the use of existing facilities, and promotes orderly compact urban growth.

Policy CF-2 Adequate public facilities and services should be available at the time a development project is ready for occupancy without decreasing current service levels below locally established standards.

- Policy CF-3** Encourage and support development in areas where adequate public facilities and services exist or can be provided in an efficient manner.
- Policy CF-4** Protect public health, enhance environmental quality, and promote conservation of natural resources through appropriate design and installation of new public facilities.
- Policy CF-5** Promote and consider enhanced public facilities and equipment to deliver cost-effective public services that are energy efficient, technologically innovative, and sensitive to the environment.
- Policy CF-6** Where the City provides the majority of the funding, new and renovated municipal buildings over 5,000 square feet shall contain sustainable design principles meeting a minimum of LEED Silver rating.
- Policy CF-7** Promote LEED and other green building construction practices for public and private development.
- Policy CF-8** Continue efforts to minimize greenhouse gas emissions throughout Bellingham and from municipal operations by implementing the programs and projects identified in the adopted Bellingham Climate Protection Action Plan.
- Policy CF-9** Encourage the preservation, restoration, and appropriate adaptive reuse of public buildings to conserve natural and consumable resources.
- Policy CF-10** When possible, energy savings should be directed to increase energy efficiency and support future renewable energy options.
- Policy CF-11** To prioritize the financing of public facilities within projected funding capacities, the City shall adopt a six-year CIP and update the plan as part of the City's biennial budgeting cycle.
- Policy CF-12** Consider all available funding and financing mechanisms, such as utility rates, bonds, impacts fees, local improvement districts, and grants, for funding public facilities and services.
- Policy CF-13** Consider land use compatibility, public facility needs and financial costs when siting essential public facilities.
- Policy CF-14** Encourage public-private partnerships to finance public facilities and services which promote economic development and quality of life amenities.
- Policy CF-15** Encourage public-public and public-private partnerships in providing a range of social services, resources, and programs to support the welfare of the community.

Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) is a green building certification program that includes a set of rating systems for the design, construction, operation, and maintenance of green buildings, homes, and neighborhoods worldwide.

- Policy CF-16** Coordinate with public and private agencies providing service in Bellingham and its UGA.
- Policy CF-17** New development should pay its proportional share of the cost of new public facilities that serve the subject development.
- Policy CF-18** Reassess the Land Use Chapter whenever probable funding falls short of meeting existing needs and to ensure that the Land Use Chapter, Capital Facilities Chapter, and financing plan (CIP) are coordinated and consistent.
- Policy CF-19** Plan for major transportation, utility, and greenway corridors in Bellingham's UGA. Development should be consistent with these corridors. Whatcom County should ensure conformance through the permit process and incentive programs.
- Policy CF-20** Develop annexation policies and an Interlocal Annexation Agreement with Whatcom County to assure that areas with urban zoning and higher densities are annexed to Bellingham and receive adequate levels of urban services.
- Policy CF-21** Provide opportunities for public participation and comment in the planning of new capital facilities and the development of the CIP.
- Policy CF-22** Recruit and retain quality employees to deliver responsive City services.

Water, Sanitary Sewer and Stormwater Systems

Water System

The City supplies water service to customers throughout Bellingham and to portions of Whatcom County. Lake Whatcom serves as the source of drinking water for more than 96,000 people. As such, one of Bellingham's top priorities is to protect and improve this precious resource and maintain a reliable distribution system. For more information on Lake Whatcom and Bellingham's stewardship to ensure long-term sustainability of the lake, see the Environment Chapter.

The City's municipal water system is managed, maintained and operated by the public works department (PWD). A complete facility inventory, analysis of capacity and need, and capital improvement program are provided in the adopted City's [2009 Comprehensive Water System Plan](#) and [2013 Water System Plan Update](#) (incorporated herein by reference). The Water System Plans are continually evaluated and summarize the improvements planned over the course of the six- and 20-year planning horizons to ensure existing services are maintained and upgraded, and future water capacity needs can be met to accommodate Bellingham's forecasted growth.

PWD Mission Statement:

"Enhance Bellingham's quality of life through the construction and operation of a safe, effective physical environment; protect public health, safety and natural resources; and provide neighborhoods, businesses, and visitors with efficient, quality services necessary to meet the demands of our growing, diverse community."

The City also provides water service to areas within portions of unincorporated Whatcom County and within the City's UGA through existing utility service agreements. In June 2004, the City adopted revisions to the City Council policy regarding Utility Service Zone Extensions, thereby suspending utility sewer extensions in the City's UGA. Generally, the only method available for property owners

to obtain City utility services in the UGA is to annex into the City. Some parts of the City's UGA are serviced by private and other public entities, such as water associations and districts. Each of these entities provides varying degrees of service stability and predictability, which is further detailed in the City's Comprehensive Water System Plan.

Sanitary Sewer System

The City provides municipal wastewater collection and treatment services throughout Bellingham and within Utility Service Zone Extension areas in the UGA and to portions of UGA Reserve areas. As mentioned above, no new sewer utility service extensions were permitted outside the City limits after June 2004, and generally the only alternative to obtain this service is through annexation.

The City's sanitary sewer service area is over 30 square miles in size with a conveyance system of over 325 miles. The Post Point Wastewater Treatment Plant (PPWTP) and sanitary sewer conveyance system are managed by the PWD, with maintenance and operations performed by the operations division. The treatment plant currently has the peak capacity to treat 72 million gallons of wastewater per day. The Lake Whatcom Water and Sewer District provides sewer service to portion of the City's eastern UGA near Lake Whatcom and contracts with the City to provide sewer treatment.



Post Point Wastewater Treatment Plant.

A complete facility inventory, analysis of capacity and need, and needed wastewater system improvements are provided in the adopted [2009 Comprehensive Sewer Plan](#) (incorporated herein by reference). This 20-year plan was developed to evaluate the City's current wastewater system, identify system deficiencies, and provide recommendations for sewer system improvements to ensure Bellingham has the ability to maintain adopted service levels for existing and future

customers. Future sewer capacity needs and system improvements were based upon anticipated growth projections, relating to land use, zoning capacity, and historic sewer data for the established sewer service area. It is the City's intent to provide an effective, safe, and reliable sanitary sewer system, that meets federal, state, county, and local requirements.

Stormwater

Bellingham's surface water drainage features include wetlands, streams, ponds, open channels, culverts, and pipe systems which eventually discharge to the marine waters of Puget Sound. The major creeks in Bellingham are Squalicum Creek, Whatcom Creek, Padden Creek, Silver Beach Creek, Baker Creek, and Chuckanut Creek. In addition, a small area of land in the northern part of the City drains to Silver Creek, a tributary of the Nooksack River. The City's land use varies from forest and agriculture to residential, commercial, and industrial. The City's stormwater drainage system is managed by the PWD, with operations and maintenance executed by the operations division.

The City has an adopted [Surface and Stormwater Comprehensive Plan](#) (incorporated herein by reference). The purpose of this plan is to address requirements and regulatory issues that create the need to plan and resolve difficult stormwater issues. These requirements and issues are included in the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Phase II municipal stormwater permit,

Endangered Species Act regulations, Puget Sound Plan recommendations, and City regulations. The plan also provides stormwater solutions, including both structural and non-structural. The solutions focus on providing practical and environmentally-sensitive options for allowing responsible land use development and maintaining valuable aquatic resources. The City uses the conveyance system sizing information presented in the plan to identify specific projects for in-depth study prior to design and construction.

GOAL CF-2 Protect and improve Lake Whatcom and its watershed to ensure a long-term, sustainable supply of water.

GOAL CF-3 Continue efforts to improve the overall water quality throughout Bellingham.

Policy CF-23 Continue to work in collaboration with Whatcom County, the Lake Whatcom Water and Sewer District, and the Sudden Valley Community Association to develop and implement the five-year Lake Whatcom Work Programs.



Located on the east side of Bellingham, Lake Whatcom is about 10 miles long and 5,000 acres in surface area. Photo by Katheryn Moran.

Policy CF-24 Cooperate with Whatcom County, other cities in the county, tribal governments, federal and state agencies, and public and private utilities in conserving water.

Policy CF-25 Protect water quality and quantity within watersheds and marine water bodies which cross jurisdictional boundaries.

Policy CF-26 Water utility fees should be assessed at a rate adequate to fund the maintenance of the water utility system.

Policy CF-27 Continue implementation of the City's water supply management system and water quality and treatment programs to ensure the distribution of clean, safe drinking water.

Policy CF-28 Water, sanitary sewer, and stormwater services should be provided as adopted in the existing comprehensive system plans.

Policy CF-29 Update comprehensive system plans for capital facilities, stormwater, and other City services whose level of service standards could be affected by aging infrastructure and future growth and development.

Policy CF-30 Manage water, sanitary sewer, and stormwater facilities and plans so that they meet federal and state requirements.

Policy CF-31 City water reservoirs should have adequate storage to meet the fire protection needs of the areas they service.

Policy CF-32 Water line, sanitary sewer line, and stormwater system construction, upgrades and extensions should be accomplished in a coordinated manner so that full City utility services are provided to areas where any of those services are provided.

Policy CF-33 Explore the possibility of retrofitting existing stormwater systems with best management practices (BMPs) that reduce pollution.

BMPs are an effective means of preventing or reducing pollution and sediment from entering water bodies, including wetlands.

Policy CF-34 Explore methods to eliminate toxic materials and minimize solids discharged into the City's wastewater treatment system.

Policy CF-35 To maintain a viable City drainage system, minimize conventional storm drainage design and, where possible, rely upon alternative approaches and low impact development (LID) techniques that use natural features.

LID mimics the pre-development hydrologic conditions of a site by using existing soil, vegetation, and topography to infiltrate runoff and remove pollutants.

Policy CF-36 Encourage residences and businesses to conserve water and use LID techniques.

Policy CF-37 Comply with the Stormwater Management Manual for Western Washington published by the Washington State Department of Ecology.



Policy CF-38 Consider regional stormwater detention when LID is not feasible and where it can be shown to limit maintenance costs, improve the management of stormwater and increase the development potential of properties.

Depot Market Square in Downtown includes bio-filtration, a rain garden and pervious pavers.

Policy CF-39 The City and Whatcom County should coordinate drainage, stormwater management and flood control in UGAs and work toward the development of common standards.

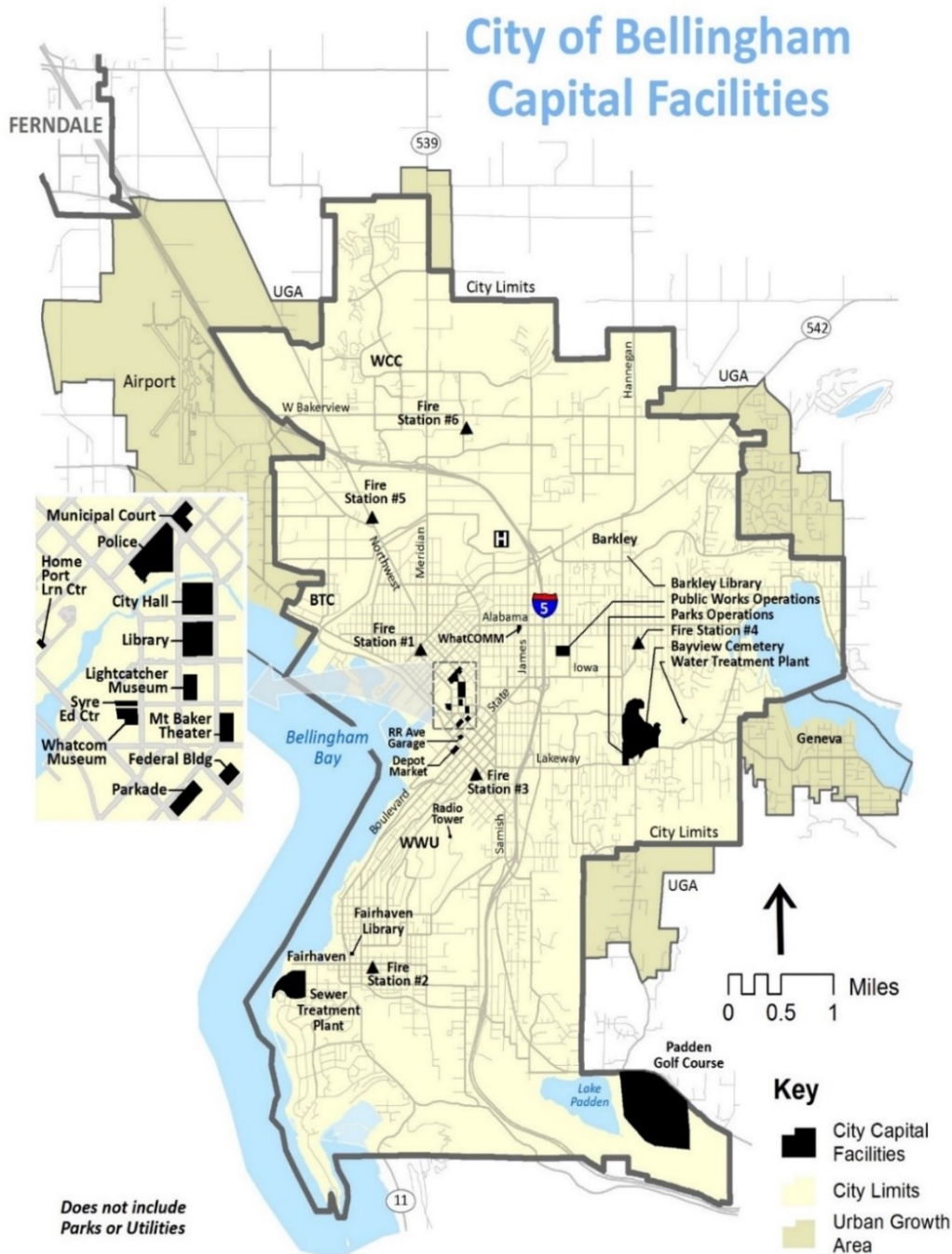
Policy CF-40 Coordinate with public agencies in Whatcom County to create water resource protection areas and adopt zoning to protect those areas. Where there are potential conflicts between designations required by the GMA, such as natural resource lands and critical areas, water resource protection shall have priority.

Bellingham Comprehensive Plan 2016

Capital Facilities and Utilities Chapter

Policy CF-41 Bellingham and the existing service districts within the UGA (water associations, utility districts, etc.) shall execute interlocal agreements to coordinate plans for serving areas within the boundary prior to annexation.

Policy CF-42 New water and sewer utility extensions into the City's UGA should not be permitted prior to annexation, unless approved by the City Council.



Parks and Recreation

The City's parks and recreation department (PRD) supports a healthy community by providing high quality parks and recreational services to the community. As Bellingham continues to grow, there will be a need for more parks, trails, and other recreational facilities that protect natural green settings and provide recreational, health and enrichment opportunities for all ages. The City's adopted Park, Recreation and Open Space Plan (PRO Plan) is the main document to guide, maintain, and plan for existing and future parks and recreational facilities and services for the community. A complete facility inventory, analysis of capacity and need, and funding sources that may be used to fund new parks, recreation, and open space programs or facilities are identified in the adopted PRO plan. In order to remain eligible for grants under the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program, the PRO plan is updated every six years.

PRD Mission Statement:
"Support a healthy community by promoting high quality parks and recreation services."

See the PRO Plan for supporting information, policies and goals related to parks, recreation and open space.

Fire Protection-Emergency Services and Law Enforcement

Bellingham Fire Department (BFD)

The BFD provides emergent and non-emergent services to the citizens of Bellingham and Whatcom County, and to all others who require assistance. The City operates six fire stations that are staffed 24 hours a day. Each station has a crew that operates a fire engine and basic life support (BLS) aid unit. Two of the stations also cross-staff a ladder truck. One fire station is tasked with cross-staffing the Salish Star fire boat for incidents occurring in the Puget Sound and on Bellingham's waterfront. Battalion 1 is the on-duty incident commander for complex emergencies.

BFD Mission Statement:
"Helping People Every Day."

All City firefighters are experienced emergency medical technicians (EMTs) and approximately one third of the firefighters are paramedics and provide advanced life support (ALS) services on three medic units. The BFD responds to all types of incidents, including, but not limited to, emergency medical, structure fires, car fires, motor vehicle collisions, mechanical accidents, chemical spills and release, elevator rescue, water rescue, and numerous other emergent situations that require emergency assistance. The life safety division performs fire code plan reviews for new commercial building construction, coordinates and performs inspections of current commercial/multi-family residential occupancies and investigates fires.

BFD Vision Statement:
"We focus on the value and safety of people as we strive for excellence in providing service to our neighborhoods and community."

The BFD currently maintains a fire protection class (FPC) 3 rating from the Washington Survey and Rating Bureau. The fire protection class rating is a scaled measurement (1-10) of how effectively a property is protected against fire and protected with fire suppression, with 1 being the highest rating. Hazard insurance providers utilize the FPC, both for residential and commercial customers, to determine premiums for fire insurance.

Level of Service–Fire Protection and EMS: (see Fire Protection Map)

The BFD has established the following response time standards, consistent with state law:

<i>BFD Response Time Standards</i>	
1 minute (90% of the time) →	Turnout time.
4 minutes (90% of the time) →	Travel response time to critical EMS and fire emergencies.
8 minutes (90% of the time) →	Travel response time for full first alarm assignment to critical fire emergencies and arrival of a paramedic unit to critical EMS emergencies.

Forecast of Future Needs:

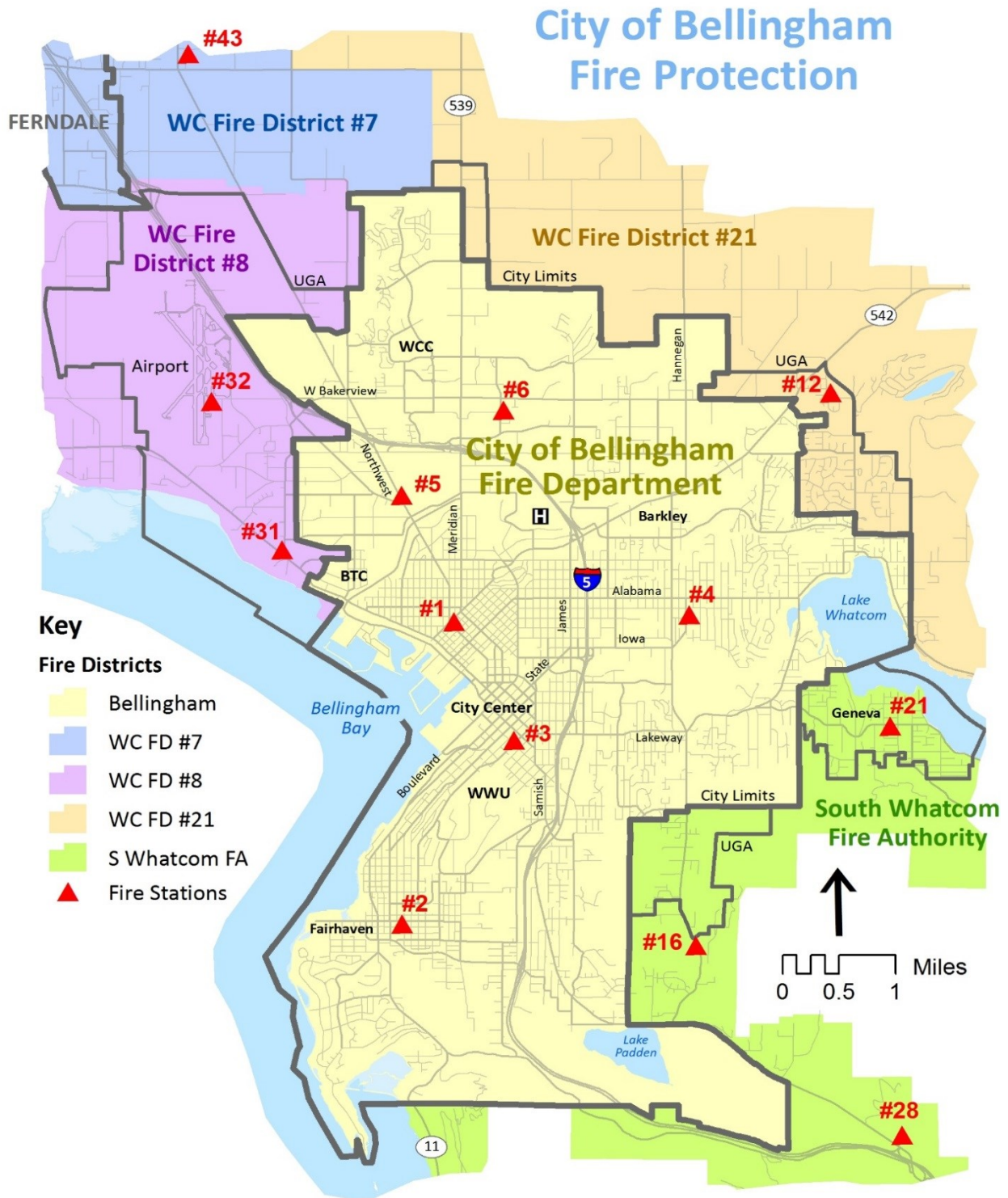
The City remains well served from the existing six fire station locations, however some of the existing fire facilities will likely need to be remodeled and updated to maximize facility use and maintain adopted level of service standards within the planning period. See section III of this chapter for supporting information relating to BFD fire facilities and other emergency agencies serving Bellingham and nearby areas in unincorporated Whatcom County.

Within the 20-year planning period, the need for additional fire stations depends on the location and characteristics of future expansion of City boundaries and continued infilling. If significant area within either or both UGA is annexed and developed, fire station relocation and/or additional fire station facilities and staff may be required. Geographical information system (GIS) mapping and fire department data will be used to determine if additional fire stations are needed and where they should be located. This data would be utilized to determine the ability to meet state law time standards.

The BFD is currently in the process of developing a five-year strategic plan that will identify the department's values and goals and set measurable objectives to maintain or improve fire response and EMS services. Once this strategic plan has been completed, the fire department may need to review its standards of cover and revise as necessary.



The BFD provides emergent and non-emergent services to the citizens of Bellingham and Whatcom County, and to others who require assistance.



Law Enforcement Services

The City of Bellingham Police Department (BPD), Western Washington University Police Department (WWUPD), Whatcom County Sheriff's Office, and Washington State Patrol (WSP) provide local law enforcement service in Bellingham and its UGA. All are part of a mutual aid agreement, which allows law enforcement agencies to assist each other with equipment and personnel when needed.

Bellingham Police Department

The BPD provides a full range of police services, including crime suppression and investigation, traffic enforcement, traffic accident investigation, community-oriented problem solving and partnerships with residents to solve quality of life issues throughout the community. The City's community policing philosophy is based on the premise that a safe community requires positive, trusting, and productive relationships with all stakeholders. Police officers work 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and 365 days a year to prevent crime and respond to emergencies within the incorporated City limits.

BPD Mission Statement:
"Committed to Community."

Level of Service - Bellingham Police Department

In 2013, the BPD conducted research to determine an appropriate staffing formula. Etico Solutions was ultimately chosen as the provider. The Etico formula compares calls for service with the number of officers necessary to meet the call load as determined by the time needed to handle the calls and the time available to answer the calls. The formula takes into account workload, discretionary time, administrative time, reactive time, and current work schedule.

The old staffing formulas of one officer per 1,000 residents and one officer per 750 calls for service do not accurately reflect the amount of staffing needed in the City. Both formulas fail to take into consideration other factors that influence crime, 911 service call loads, and community expectations of the police department. These factors include socio-economic conditions and education/employment opportunities, and can impact crime rates that affect staffing requirements. Etico's methodology is based on a nationally-recognized model. The formula used is similar to the Personnel Allocation Model that is provided by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Data was provided for the past five years (2010 - 2014) to determine if the BPD was adequately staffed to meet the goal of an even split of proactive and reactive time per hour for the next five years (2014 - 2018). Based on the data input, the BPD needed 53 officers assigned to patrol in 2014 and would have to increase by one officer in each subsequent year to reach 57. A similar study is being done for the investigations bureau, which has been staffed at nine detectives since 2008.



The Bellingham Police Department maintains two teams of bicycle officers.

Forecast of Future Needs:

In 2016, the BPD employs 55 patrol officers and nine investigative detectives. According to the Etico solutions LOS measurement, the BPD is currently understaffed by four officer positions. If

calls for service continue to increase at the same average rate (1.8%) over the next five years, the police department could experience a service demand increase of 9% and receive over 57,000 calls for service by 2019. Due to the increased service demand, the BPD will require a total of 63 patrol officers and five additional investigative detectives.

Bringing the police force up to adequate staffing levels to meet the adopted LOS standards will require immediate and ongoing annual hiring in anticipation of increases in population served and calls for service, geographic expansion of patrol areas relating to annexations, and retirements. The investigations detective unit recently completed a benchmarking survey, which also revealed that the City was five detectives short of needed staffing. The BPD is currently expanding this survey to include six similar agencies across Washington State for comparative purposes.

GOAL CF-4 Support a safe and prepared community that responds to emergencies and protects lives and property.

Policy CF-43 Develop a five-year BFD strategic plan, which identifies the department's values and goals and sets measurable objectives to maintain or improve fire response and EMS services.



The BFD is an all-hazards response fire department.

Policy CF-44 Provide, maintain, and upgrade fire and police department facilities and equipment to meet the primary service needs of the City and health and safety of its workers.

Policy CF-45 Coordinate and cooperate with Whatcom County, county fire agencies, and the Port of Bellingham in the planning for fire protection and emergency services in Bellingham and its unincorporated UGA.

Policy CF-46 Develop and maintain interlocal agreements with county fire agencies to ensure the orderly transition of fire/EMS services so that adequate levels of fire protection service will be provided to an area upon annexation.

Policy CF-47 As land in the UGA is annexed, additional funding sources for fire facilities such as bonds or impact fees may be needed to ensure adequate levels of fire protection and EMS are provided to serve growth and new development.

Policy CF-48 Bellingham's Office of Emergency Management should continue to coordinate with local jurisdictions in the Whatcom Unified Emergency Management partnership to prepare and respond to disaster events.

Policy CF-49 Encourage the appropriate use of design and materials for individual buildings to help minimize the loss of life or property in the case of fire or other emergency.

Policy CF-50 Contribute to the City's telecommunication facilities to ensure a reliable communication network to respond to emergencies. As funding allows, support an interconnected communication network with county agencies to provide seamless coverage and increased frequency capacity and interoperability.

***Interoperability** is the ability of public safety personnel from one agency to communicate via mobile radio with personnel from other agencies.*

Policy CF-51 Develop a concurrency management system to assure that adequate fire and enforcement personnel are in place at the time that new development is approved or within a reasonable amount of time.

Policy CF-52 Bellingham's commitment to trained professionals in both police and fire departments contributes to an ongoing sense of security and safety in the community.

Policy CF-53 Strive to achieve adequate police patrol staffing levels to meet the goal of an even split of proactive and reactive time per hour

Policy CF-54 Support construction of law enforcement facilities that will promote the sharing of resources and programs with other law enforcement agencies.



BPD Headquarters.

Policy CF-55 Encourage continued coordination among the BPD, Whatcom County's Sheriff's Department, Port of Bellingham Security Agency, and WWUPD.

Policy CF-56 Encourage crime prevention through environmental design in new development and redevelopment proposals.

Bellingham Public Libraries

The City has a long history of offering public library services. Today, the Bellingham public library (BPL) provides quality, innovative library services in multiple locations and online to residents who live, work, own property or attend school in Bellingham and throughout Whatcom County.

Library Mission Statement:
"Connecting our community with each other and the world to read, learn, meet, and discover."

The Bellingham public library is known throughout the state and nation for its high use by community members. In statewide data, the BPL consistently ranks among the highest circulation per capita and is among the most visited libraries. Library use and services have continued to grow each year, as shown in the 2004-2015 Bellingham Public Library Demand table.

The Bellingham Public Library Strategic Plan (2013-2017) was approved by the Library Board of Trustees in early 2013 after extensive stakeholder and community involvement, consultation with other libraries, and work by the library administration and staff. The plan is intended to support the library to develop forward-thinking programs and services that represent best library practices that are unique to Bellingham and meet the community's vision and needs.

A key goal described in the strategic plan is replacing the Central Library, the now 65-year-old hub of the Bellingham public library system. The reiteration of this goal follows more than a decade of study, with the assertion of this need and formal commitments to next steps detailed in multiple documents adopted by the Bellingham City Council and Library Board of Trustees.



Bellingham's Central Library.

Level of Service - Bellingham Public Library

The following level of service standards relative to capital facilities was adopted by the Bellingham Public Library Board of Trustees on January 19, 2016. It is the first of a series of standards the Board of Trustees expects to consider for adoption in 2016 and 2017. This facility standard is based on an industry standard average and applies to the entire library system, including the central library and its branch libraries, as a means to providing open and equal access to all the community's citizens.

<i>Library Square Footage per Capita</i>		
Low or Minimal	Medium or Operational	High or Optimal
.6 sf/capita	.8 sf/capita	1.0 sf/capita
Minimal = needed to adequately provide the most basic of library services		
Operational = allows the library to adequately provide all needed services		
Optimal = allows the library to enhance services		

Bellingham Public Library Facilities

The BPL operates at three main locations. Holds, pick up and self checkout services also are offered on three local college campuses, and returned materials are collected at drop boxes located throughout the City.

Forecast of Future Needs:

Based on the recommended LOS standards above, the Bellingham public library's three facilities together just meet the minimum basic LOS standard of .6 sf/capita for GMA adequacy. However, the Central Library and Fairhaven Branch library each have issues needing attention during the 20-year planning horizon to maintain adequacy, improve functionality and safety, and preserve historic assets. The adequacy of the Barkley Branch library depends upon a partnership with a private entity. These facility-specific needs are described below.

Early in the 20-year planning horizon, the Central Library building will need to be remodeled, expanded, or replaced to serve Bellingham and its projected growth forecast. Functionally, the Central Library no longer serves our community well. The facility now supports more than

double the population it was originally intended to serve. It falls short of meeting goals of ensuring efficient, reliable, cost-effective facilities with enhanced technological features. Key problems include inadequate space in all areas, inefficient and inflexible configuration, lack of amenities common to modern libraries, maintenance needs typical of aging buildings, and accessibility and mobility problems throughout the building. The need for new or expanded Central Library facilities is well-documented in numerous adopted planning documents during the past decade.

In 2014, the Library Board of Trustees and City officials renewed discussions about replacing or remodeling the Central Library. In late 2014, the Library Board voted to explore expanding and extensively renovating the existing Central Library building, while continuing to work with City officials to consider other alternatives. City and library officials agree planning must be integrated with other plans for City facilities. For example, there is some interest in not demolishing the Central Library or renovating it for library use, but rather using it for different City purposes.



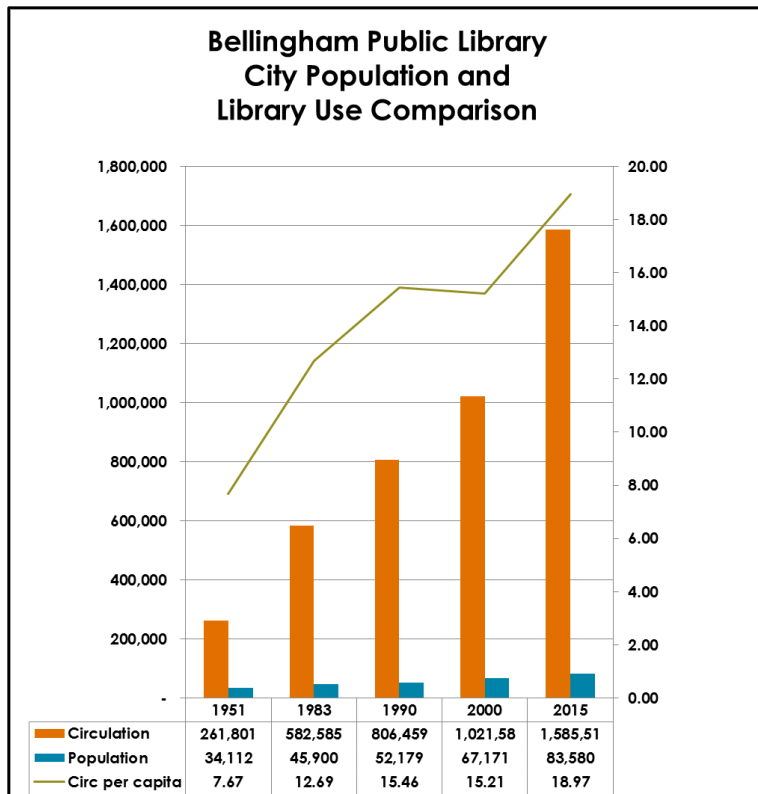
Barkley Branch of the library system.

The square footage of the Fairhaven Branch library facility is adequate to meet the anticipated demand during the 20-year planning horizon; however, continued maintenance and seismic upgrades are needed to protect life safety and preserve this publicly-owned asset.

The Barkley Branch library facility is adequate to meet the anticipated demand during the 20-year planning period, as long as the private building owner continues to provide this space at a reduced cost.

2004-2015 Bellingham Public Library Demand Table					
Year	Circulation	Collection	Visitors	Programs	Program attendance
2004	1,160,753	297,862	699,240	299	11,094
2005	1,195,798	294,010	663,613	345	12,218
2006	1,206,554	296,783	744,856	406	14,359
2007	1,285,450	289,669	816,302	594	19,191
2008	1,418,841	260,476	895,917	670	22,288
2009	1,596,996	252,596	923,814	637	20,909
2010	1,619,252	243,464	858,308	506	18,642
2011	1,645,360	232,683	862,334	737	23,775
2012	1,638,730	236,979	842,242	818	25,207
2013	1,672,401	242,112	825,772	793	26,119
2014	1,632,039	228,946	830,909	993	32,159
2015	1,584,696	251,596	837,716	1,389	41,225

Source: Bellingham Library Administration, 2015



Source: Bellingham Library Administration, 2016

GOAL CF-5 Provide access to quality of life amenities and foster lifelong learning opportunities for all ages.

Policy CF-57 Continue to provide library services, including administration, transportation and major circulation functions, and primary library services, from a downtown facility. The Central Library is a positive asset for downtown, contributes to economic development in the area, and should remain in the City Center.

Policy CF-58 Replace or expand the Central Library and implement the other goals and objectives recommended in the 2013-2017 Bellingham Public Library Strategic Plan.

Policy CF-59 Continue efforts to coordinate library services and facilities with other compatible public and academic libraries to maximize service to the public and minimize duplication and costs.



Fairhaven Library. Photo by Margaret Ziegler.

Policy CF-60 Update plans for seismic and other improvements to the Fairhaven Branch library, and analyze funding options to complete the improvements.

Policy CF-61 Encourage continued coordination between the Bellingham and Whatcom County library systems to provide patrons with consistent services across the two library systems whenever possible.

Policy CF-62 Develop a plan for library services in the northern area of the City, including consideration of a branch location or other type of satellite or co-location facility.

Whatcom Museum

The Whatcom Museum opened in 1941 and became a City department in 1944. By written agreement, the museum is operated by both the City of Bellingham and the nonprofit Whatcom Museum Foundation (formerly Society). The City seeks to stimulate curiosity about Bellingham’s changing cultural, natural and historical landscapes, from the youngest to the oldest minds, and inspire preservation and creative contributions to the region and beyond.

Whatcom Museum Mission Statement:
“Provides innovative and interactive educational programs and exhibitions about art, nature and northwest history.”

The three-building museum campus includes the historic 1892 Old City Hall, Syre Education Center, and the LEED-certified Lightcatcher building, constructed in 2009 through the creation of a Public Facilities District.

Forecast of Future Needs:

The museum facilities are adequate to meet the expected service demand for the 20-year planning period. As funding becomes available, continued maintenance of existing facilities will likely be needed. Seismic and fire suppression upgrades are needed for both the 1892 Old City Hall and Syre Education Center.

GOAL CF-6 Promote arts and culture, and provide access to local, regional, and national history.

Policy CF-63 Maintain and upgrade existing museum facilities.

Policy CF-64 Continue support for the Whatcom Museum of History and Art and its role in providing cultural awareness and educational experiences for the region's population.



Old City Hall is one of three buildings that are part of the of the Whatcom Museum campus.

Public Schools

Three individual school districts provide public education in the City and its UGAs. Each school district is responsible for planning, financing, constructing, and maintaining public school facilities within their district. School district boundaries do not follow City, UGA, or Whatcom County planning boundaries (see Public School District Service Areas map).

The Bellingham, Meridian, and Ferndale School districts currently determine public school facility, personnel, and resource needs based on existing zoning, residential densities, and population growth projections. Population growth and infill development projects are expected to increase the demand for public school services, especially on the north and south sides of the City.

Bellingham School District #501

Bellingham School District (BSD) #501 provides pre-kindergarten through 12th grade public education to all of the City, with the exception of the north half of the Cordata Planned Unit Development. District boundaries also cover most of the City’s UGA (except the industrial and commercial zoned areas north and northeast of the airport). The BSD provides basic educational programs in 14 elementary schools, four middle schools, and four high schools. Students who prefer an alternative to the structure of a traditional high school learning environment may attend Options High School.



Bellingham Public Schools District Office.

In June 2021, the BSD adopted an updated school capital facilities plan (CFP) covering the 2021-2026 planning period and requested this plan be incorporated into the City’s Comprehensive Plan. The CFP examines anticipated school population growth, existing school facilities, and the district’s ability to house the expected future student population for the six-year planning period and to 2035. The district’s student generation rate indicates that 0.285 students will be generated from each new single-family dwelling unit and 0.094 students will be generated from each new multi-family dwelling unit. This projected student enrollment growth will create the need for additional capacity at all three grade levels (elementary school, middle school and high school) within the six-year planning period. If the student enrollment percentages remain consistent through 2035, the district anticipates additional student capacity will be needed beyond the six-year planning period.

The [BSD’s six year CFP](#) is incorporated herein by reference to authorize the collection of school impact fees on their behalf covering the 2021-2026 planning period and through 2027. Adopting the district’s CFP into the City’s Comprehensive Plan will result in a public benefit by ensuring that adequate school facilities are in place to serve new growth and that new development pays a proportional share of the cost of providing new school facilities.



Squalicum High School serves the northeast population of Bellingham, including the area surrounding Lake Whatcom.

Meridian School District #505:

The Meridian School District (MSD) currently provides kindergarten through 12th grade public education in one primary school, two elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school. A majority of the district’s service boundary is within unincorporated Whatcom County; however, its southern service area includes the north half of the

Cordata Planned Unit Development located within the City, as well as portions of the City's northern UGA and UGA Reserve area.

In 2015, the MSD adopted a CFP for the years 2015-2021. The CFP examines anticipated school population growth, existing school facilities, and the district's ability to house the expected future student population. According to the CFP, the district expects moderate enrollment increases in the elementary and middle school levels, and a slight decline at the high school level. As of October 2014, the MSD current student enrollment was approximately 1,251 and it is projected to increase to 1,291 in 2020 (excluding alternative learning experience programs). Assuming legislative funding opportunities, the district plans to implement full-day kindergarten in the 2015-2016 school year and possibly adjust class sizes. It is anticipated that no new permanent capacity facilities will be needed for these planned projects.

Forecast of Future Needs:

Based on the enrollment forecast, current service standard, current inventory, capacity, and future planned classroom space, the district's 2015-2021 CFP identifies sufficient capacity to serve the projected student enrollment within the planning period. The district plans to continually monitor capacity and development activity and, as necessary, will update their CFP to reflect capacity needs and related planned projects.

At this time, the MSD is not requesting the City to incorporate their 2015-2021 CFP into Bellingham's Comprehensive Plan to authorize the collection of school impact fees on their behalf.

Ferndale School District #502:

The Ferndale School District (FSD) serves the northwest portion of Bellingham's UGA consisting of the industrial zoned area north and northeast of the airport and a 10-acre area within north Bellingham situated in the Cordata Neighborhood. This 10 acres within its service area currently has preliminary plat approval for approximately 57 single-family dwelling units.

The FSD provides K-12 public education, serving approximately 4,700 students at six elementary schools, two middle schools, and two high schools.

Forecast of Future Needs:

The FSD is currently in the process of preparing an updated CFP to examine the anticipated school population growth, existing school facilities, and the district's ability to house the expected future student population for the six-year planning period and to 2036. At this time, the Ferndale School District has not specified to have their CFP incorporated into the Bellingham Comprehensive Plan to authorize the collection of school impact fees on their behalf.

GOAL CF-7 Ensure school districts serving Bellingham and its UGA provide adequate public school facilities needed to house the expected future student population.

Policy CF-65 The City and the school districts should continue to work to provide consistency between the district's Capital Facilities Plan and the City's Comprehensive Plan.

Policy CF-66 The school districts should continue to monitor demographic changes (particularly distribution of students) and acquire land as funding becomes available to provide facilities to meet the needs of an expanding student population.

Policy CF-67 Work cooperatively with the Bellingham School District and adjacent school districts to evaluate potential adjustment of their respective boundaries to allow areas within the City limits and designated UGAs (and UGA Reserve areas) to be served by the Bellingham School District.

Policy CF-68 The City should proactively notify school districts, on an annual basis, of changes in land supply and building permit activity. This should help the districts to anticipate future capacity needs.

Policy CF-69 Encourage the continued collection of the impact fee program by the Bellingham School District to collect funds from new development to help offset the costs of new capacity necessary to serve the new development.

Policy CF-70 Encourage all school districts within Bellingham and its UGA to pass school impact fee ordinances and allow the City and county to collect school impacts fees on their behalf, per RCW 82.020.050 - .090.

Policy CF-71 Retain neighborhood schools in developed areas and locate new schools consistent with the City's commitment to encourage infill development, walkability and compact growth.

Policy CF-72 Encourage the shared use of public facilities, especially in cooperation with the county government, the school districts, Western Washington University and the Port District.



Birchwood Elementary School.



Private Utilities

In accordance with the GMA, comprehensive plans must include a utilities section that describes the general location, proposed location, and capacity of all existing and proposed utilities, including, but not limited to, electrical lines, telecommunication systems, and gas lines. The Power, Gas, & Wireless Utilities map provides the location of the main non-City managed utilities serving Bellingham and portions of its UGA.

Private utility and service companies supply various systems and services to the public that are not provided by the City. Privately-owned infrastructure includes pipe or line-based systems for supply, transmission and distribution networks; administrative facilities; and storage and processing areas. Forecasted improvements are typically based on service demand, integration of new technology, and maintenance of the utility network. In general, private utility improvements are financed by rates and fees charged to customers inside the service boundaries. City-managed public utility services for water, sanitary sewer, and stormwater systems are discussed at the beginning of this chapter and shown on the Capital Facilities map.

The federal government and Washington State Utilities and Transportation Commission (WUTC) regulate all privately-owned utilities in the State of Washington, with the exception of telecommunication services, which are governed solely by federal regulations.

The City maintains a number of franchise agreements with utility providers, which allows the City to regulate use of its right-of-way for the support of private utilities serving the community. Franchise agreements are binding contracts that ensure utility providers are operating efficiently to serve the public.

It is essential that Bellingham maintains a reliable utility service network to meet the growing demand of such services. It is also important that utility facilities are aesthetically compatible with surrounding land uses and sensitive to the environment. Under the GMA, Bellingham has the authority to regulate land uses and adopt siting requirements for the location of proposed utilities. Some utility uses may be permitted through a conditional use permit in certain land use designations, while other uses may be sited through the Essential Public Facilities siting process as adopted in the City code. In an effort to minimize the visual impact of utilities and telecommunication facilities, utility lines should be placed underground, above-ground facilities should provide visual buffers to mitigate impacts, and joint-use utility corridors and co-location telecommunication facilities should be encouraged where possible.

***Co-location** is the use of a single wireless communications support structure, or the use of a site by more than one wireless communication provider.*

Supporting information for private utilities are outlined in Section III of this chapter. This information primarily relates to electrical, gas, and telecommunication businesses that provide service to the City.

GOAL CF-8 Promote the delivery of adequate utilities and encourage the design and siting of private utility facilities in a manner that minimizes impacts on adjacent land uses and the environment.

Policy CF-73 Maintain adequate facilities and utility services and support the expansion, maintenance, and upgrading of utility facilities to meet the primary service needs of the City and accommodate anticipated population and economic growth.

Policy CF-74 Coordinate with private utility companies in the planning of service for Bellingham and its UGA. Provide annexation notification as required by law to utility service providers.

Policy CF-75 Recognize regional utility needs, resources and goals in making local decisions about utility transmission and facility siting.

Policy CF-76 Coordinate with other jurisdictions to site utility facilities and essential public facilities which provide regional service to the public.

Policy CF-77 Encourage reliable and cost-effective utility services that contribute to economic vitality and provide access to state-of-the-art technology for citizens.



PSE Substation.

Policy CF-78 Promote joint use of utility corridors by private and public utilities whenever possible to minimize disruption and environmental impact and use land efficiently.

Policy CF-79 Provide timely and effective notice to interested utilities about road construction, maintenance and upgrades to facilitate coordination of public and private utility trenching activities and reduce disruption in the street rights-of-way.

Policy CF-80 Utility lines should be placed underground whenever new streets are constructed or when new utilities are added to existing streets.

Policy CF-81 Provide setbacks and visual buffers to mitigate impacts of above-ground facilities. Noise mitigation may be warranted in some circumstances which involve impacts on nearby residences.

Policy CF-82 Promote and encourage timely and effective notice to residents, informing them of planned maintenance and facility upgrade work on private utility lines and substations.

Policy CF-83 Reduce demand for new energy generation and resources through support of conservation policies, strategies, and incentives programs offered by utility providers.

Policy CF-84 Lead by example by actively pursuing cost-effective energy conservation in City facilities, equipment, and operations.

Policy CF-85 Encourage co-location of telecommunication facilities to minimize the number of wireless communication support structures in the community.

Policy CF-86 Support new telecommunications technologies to provide reliable service to Bellingham customers.

Policy CF-87 Require the placement and design of wireless communication facilities in a manner that minimizes adverse impacts on adjacent land uses.

Policy CF-88 Ensure that new and expanding utility facilities are sensitive to neighborhood character. Telecommunication towers should be discouraged in residential zones.

Policy CF-89 Periodically review and update wireless communication regulations to respond to changes in federal regulations and changes in technology.

Policy CF-90 Process permits and approvals for private utilities in a fair and timely manner consistent with development and environmental regulations.

Policy CF-91 Encourage local public involvement, including neighborhood meetings, in proposals for siting of private utility facilities within Bellingham neighborhoods.

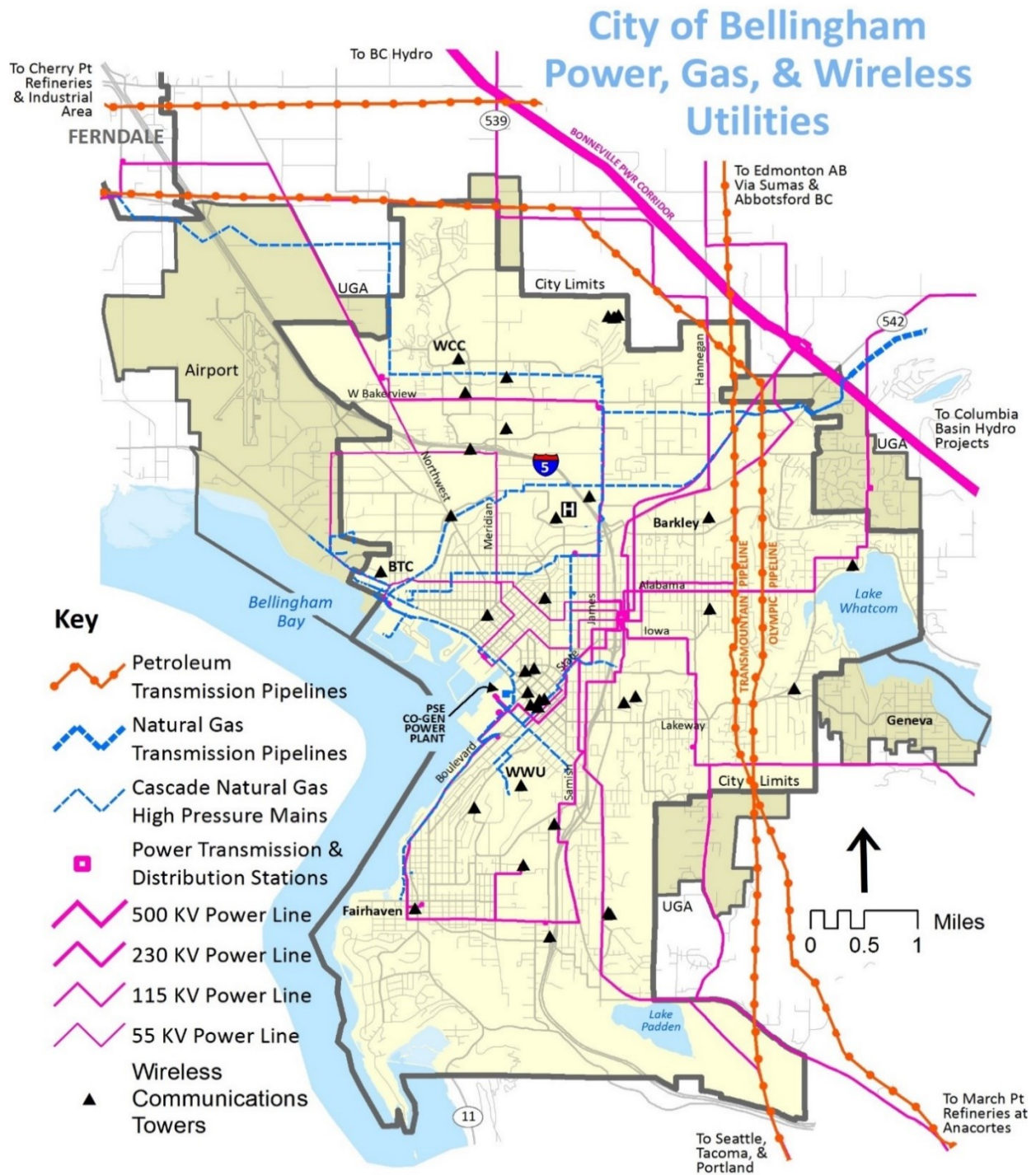
Policy CF-92 Maintain the conditional use process to review construction of utilities in residential and commercial areas.

Policy CF-93 Pipeline safety requirements should be adopted to lessen the risk of third party damage to pipelines and help reduce adverse impacts to the public in the event of a pipeline failure. Specific requirements to improve pipeline safety should include notification requirements, development setbacks, use restrictions, and measures to protect the pipeline during construction.

Policy CF-94 Promote and support efforts for waste reduction and recycling in the community and municipal operations.



Concealed telecommunications monopole in the Happy Valley Neighborhood.



III. Supporting Information

This section presents supporting information regarding City-managed public facilities and services, non-City public facilities and services, and private utility services that are currently serving Bellingham and its UGA. This information is intended to help support the goals and policies established in this chapter, and to ensure adequate public facilities and services are maintained and future needs can be met to accommodate Bellingham’s forecasted growth.

Fire Protection-Emergency Services:

The Bellingham Fire Department presently operates the following fire facilities:

Bellingham Fire Station 1: 1800 Broadway

This station was built in 1992 and serves as the BFD administrative headquarters. This station accommodates the administrative division, the countywide fire dispatch communications division, and the life safety division and operations crews. Operational fire protection and emergency medical resources include one battalion chief, one engine company crew, two medic unit crews, one emergency medical service (EMS) supervisor unit, one reserve engine, one basic life support (BLS) ambulance, one reserve medic unit, and a fire investigation/rehabilitation unit.

Neighborhood Service Areas:

Lettered Streets, Columbia, Sunnyland, and portions of the Central Business District. The two medic units provide Citywide and countywide medic unit response.

Forecast of Future Needs:

The Fire Station 1 facility is inadequate to meet the space needs of all the administrative functions during the 20-year planning period.

Proposed Location or Expansion of New or Existing Capital Facilities:

The training division has been temporarily relocated to Fire District 8's Station 31 to create available space in the administrative offices. As funding becomes available, remodel and updating of the facility will likely be needed in the 20-year planning period to maximize facility use and maintain adopted service levels.

Bellingham Fire Station 2 (Fairhaven Station): 1590 Harris Street

This station was opened in 2001 and provides fire and EMS response for the south side of the City. Currently this station houses one engine company crew, one BLS ambulance, one cross-staffed ladder truck, and a workstation for the Bellingham police department.

Neighborhood Service Areas:

Fairhaven, Happy Valley, Edgemoore, South, and South Hill, and portions of the Central Business District.

Forecast of Future Needs:

The Fire Station 2 facility is adequate to meet the anticipated demand during the 20-year planning period.

Bellingham Fire Station 3: 1111 Billy Frank Jr. Street

This station was built in the mid-1980s and extensively remodeled in the mid-1990s. The crews operating out of this station cover the largest first response territory in the City. This station

accommodates one engine company crew and one BLS ambulance, and currently houses the police tactical operations center vehicle and the police special operations armored vehicle.

Neighborhood Service Areas:

Puget, Samish, Sehome, Whatcom Falls, and York.

Forecast of Future Needs:

The Fire Station 3 facility is adequate to meet anticipated demand for fire protection during the 20-year planning period; however, as funding becomes available, updating of the facility will likely be needed to maximize facility use and maintain adopted service levels. During the 20-year planning period additional space for the police department vehicles may need to be addressed so that additional fire apparatus can be placed in the fire station.

Bellingham Fire Station 4: 2306 Yew Street

This station was built in the late 1980s and provides fire response for the eastern portion of the City. This station currently accommodates one engine company crew, one BLS ambulance/reserve medic unit, and one reserve fire engine.

Neighborhood Service Areas:

Roosevelt, Alabama Hill, Barkley, and Silver Beach.

Forecast of Future Needs:

The Fire Station 4 facility is adequate to meet anticipated demand during the 20-year planning period. As funding becomes available, remodel and updating of the facility will likely be needed in the 20-year planning period to maximize facility use and maintain adopted service levels.

Bellingham Fire Station 5: 3314 Northwest Avenue

This station was built in 1971 and is the oldest of all current Bellingham fire stations and covers the northwestern area of the City. In 1994 the facility was modestly remodeled to improve the kitchen, sleeping, and exercise areas. This station currently accommodates one engine company and one BLS ambulance. This station also staffs the fire boat, Salish Star, located in Squalicum Harbor.

Neighborhood Service Areas:

Birchwood and portions of Columbia and Meridian. This station also provides automatic aid response to UGAs north and west of the City.

Forecast of Future Needs:

This station will need to be replaced during the 20-year planning period. A new station in the western area of the City may be needed if the City continually increases its boundaries to the west to serve new growth and development. Depending on the pace and size of future annexations, City consolidation with Fire District 8 may be necessary.

Proposed Location or Expansion of New or Existing Capital Facilities:

Estimated cost of land acquisition and completion of a fire station in 2018 dollars is approximately \$4.8 million dollars. The proposed location of a new station 5, if different from the current location, will take into consideration any City expansion, development to the north and west, and the functional relationship between the City and Fire District 8.

Bellingham Fire Station 6: 4060 Deemer Road

This station was built in 2002 and serves the north portion of the City. This station currently accommodates one engine company crew, one cross-staffed aerial ladder truck, one BLS ambulance, and two countywide HazMat response units.

Neighborhood Service Areas:

Meridian, Cordata, King Mountain, and Irongate.

Forecast of Future Needs:

The facility is adequate to meet anticipated demand during the 20-year planning period; however, if the north UGA Reserve area gets placed into the City's UGA, additional fire facilities may be necessary to serve this area upon annexation.

Bellingham Fire Station 10: 858 E Smith Road

This station is a house that was built in 1991 and remodeled into a medic station in 2002 to serve the advanced life support (ALS) needs of the north and east portions of the Whatcom County. This station currently accommodates one medic unit.

Neighborhood Service Areas:

Primarily serves unincorporated Whatcom County under the current EMS agreement.

Forecast of Future Needs:

The facility is adequate to meet anticipated space needs during the 20-year planning period; however, if additional ALS resources are moved into the county, the location of the facility may not be optimal for continued coordinated responses within the Whatcom County ALS system. The facility is currently lacking emergency power, creating a situation where the crew has to be relocated during power outages. This and other minor facility issues will need to be addressed during the planning period.

Bellingham Fire Training Center: 620 Alabama Street

This training facility is beyond its useful life in providing crews with the ability to train in simulated fire scenarios. Space restrictions do not provide for multiple apparatus and crews to operate simultaneously as required on actual incidents. There is limited availability for one or more crews to simulate basic ladder and hose deployment techniques. A portion of the office space can be used as a small training/meeting room in a classroom setting.

Forecast of Future Needs:

The City faces the need to replace the existing training center on Alabama Street and develop a new training center. The City will need to construct a modern, centrally-located training center, possibly developed in conjunction with other fire and/or emergency response agencies, with classrooms, offices, and facilities for simulation of fire response conditions within the planning period. This would also allow for the permanent relocation of the training division, relieving some of the space needs for station 1.

Proposed Location or Expansion of New or Existing Capital Facilities:

No cost study is available at this time and the ultimate cost of a new fire-training center will depend on the location. Estimates could be \$10 million for a centrally-located training facility.

Other Fire Protection Agencies and Emergency Services

Whatcom County Fire Protection Agencies (see Fire Protection map)

Fire protection and suppression services in the Bellingham UGA are provided by:

- Whatcom County Fire Districts 4, 7, and 8;
- South Whatcom Fire Authority; and
- North Whatcom Fire and Rescue Services.

The City currently provides fire administration services to Fire District 8 through a 2012 interlocal agreement, and firefighter training to the district's career/paid and part-paid/volunteer firefighters. The City and district continue to work toward a full functional consolidation.

In coordination with the above county fire agencies, the City maintains interlocal and mutual aid agreements with these agencies to provide fire protection and other emergency services in areas near and within the City's UGA. Additionally, the City is party to an interlocal agreement with all county fire agencies to help maintain radio system infrastructure (radio repeaters and related interconnect equipment) needed to sustain radio coverage and frequency capacity in the suburban/rural/wilderness areas outside the City. Currently, this agreement supports the radio system infrastructure within the City, unincorporated UGA, and other areas in the county.

A comprehensive countywide assessment of emergency response agency communication needs was conducted in 2009. The recommendations and preliminary system design identified the need for additional radio tower sites, improvements and interconnections between several existing tower sites, and other radio frequency/equipment improvements necessary to ensure reliable public safety voice and data transmission into the future.

Forecast of Future Needs:

As funding becomes available, radio tower infrastructure/connectivity will need to be upgraded to improve radio/data coverage throughout the City. Ideally, coverage would interconnect with county owned and operated radio/data systems to ensure seamless coverage and increased frequency capacity and interoperability. The City's costs for these improvements has not been identified.

Emergency Operations Plan

In 2013, the City adopted an emergency operations plan (EOP). This plan provides the management structure, key responsibilities, emergency assignments, and general procedures to follow during and immediately following an emergency in which normal operations are interrupted and special measures must be taken to:

- Manage immediate communications and information regarding emergency response operations and safety;
- Provide essential services and operations;
- Provide and analyze information to support decision-making and action plans; and
- Manage City resources effectively in the emergency response.

This plan does not supersede or replace the procedures for safety or other procedures that are already in place for the City. The EOP is primarily intended to supplement those procedures with a

crisis management structure, which provides for the immediate focus of management on response operations and the early transition to recovery operations.

Port of Bellingham

The Port of Bellingham is currently responsible for providing fire protection for aircraft fires and rescues at the Bellingham International Airport. The Port's firefighting staff, called "airport technicians", are trained to provide aircraft crash/fire/rescue first response within the confines of the Bellingham International Airport. The Port also contracts with Fire District 8 to provide structural fire protection of its airport facilities and EMS response at the airport.

Whatcom Medic One

Since 1974, Whatcom Medic One pre-hospital EMS has been the centerpiece of a coordinated system of pre-hospital emergency care linked to the county's single emergency department at Saint Joseph's Hospital. First response EMS is predominately provided by a two-tiered system. County fire agencies provide BLS and EMT response and non-emergent transport in the first tier. Most of the county fire agencies have ambulances and provide BLS transport, while a few agencies still require assistance from Medic One ALS paramedic ambulances for their BLS transports. In the second tier, four ALS ambulances provide advanced emergency medical response and transport throughout the county. Three ALS ambulances are staffed by BFD paramedics. These units are stationed at City fire stations and a satellite station located outside the City.

As a general rule, a paramedic-supported ambulance unit that responds to over 3,000 calls per year is considered very busy and should be considered for relief. Given the large countywide response area, Medic One units have longer out of service times per incident, resulting in the need to begin planning and implementing additional staffed medic units when a unit reaches a 2,500 call threshold. The EMS Technical Advisory Board (TAB), which reports to the EMS Oversight Board, is charged with making recommendations for any additional ALS units.

Any new ALS units will need facilities and, as it stands currently, the agreement doesn't include funding for the creation and maintenance of a new facility within or outside the City limits. Additional ALS units within the City could potentially be located in existing City of Bellingham fire stations.

Whatcom Unified Emergency Coordination Center (WUECC): 3888 Sound Way

In order to prepare for and respond to disaster events, the City of Bellingham Office of Emergency Management works closely with other local jurisdictions in Whatcom County in a partnership known as Whatcom Unified Emergency Management. The WUECC facilities have the sufficient infrastructure to accommodate the data hubs and telecommunications needed to provide regional service coverage.

The City's Public Works Administration Office located at 2221 Pacific Street is the designated alternate City of Bellingham Coordination Center. Other possible alternate locations include the Bellingham Police Department located at 505 Grand Avenue and the Bellingham Fire Department located at 1800 Broadway Street.

Law Enforcement Agencies and Services

Bellingham Police Department Headquarters: 505 Grand Avenue

This station was built in 1994 and serves as the BPD's administrative headquarters. The station comprises approximately 24,000 square feet and the training facility includes approximately 4,500 square feet. Approximately 10,000 square feet of space are leased in accessory buildings at various locations for vehicle and evidence storage.

Whatcom County Sheriff's Office: 311 Grand Avenue

Law enforcement in unincorporated Whatcom County, which includes the Bellingham unincorporated UGA, is provided by the Whatcom County Sheriff's Office. The sheriff's office is located in the Whatcom County courthouse complex (public safety building) on Grand Avenue in downtown Bellingham and consists of four divisions: corrections, services, operations, and Emergency management.

The interlocal cooperation agreement between Bellingham and Whatcom County also provides for a joint local organization for emergency service. The interlocal agreement allows the BPD to perform specific services in the unincorporated UGA and other areas of the county when called upon. Some of these services include providing additional manpower, a canine unit, and a Special Weapons and Tactics (S.W.A.T) team when needed. A Law Enforcement Mutual Aid Response Team (LEMART) was also formed between the agencies to handle major incidents, such as officer-involved shootings, and to assist smaller agencies when dealing with major crimes, such as homicides.

Washington State Patrol (WSP)

The WSP is primarily responsible for traffic enforcement on state administered highways such as Interstate 5 (SR 5), Guide Meridian (SR 539), Mount Baker Highway (SR 542), and Chuckanut Drive (SR 11).

What-Comm-911

Bellingham and Whatcom County operate the 911 emergency telephone system, called What-Comm. The initial call receiving site in Bellingham is responsible for dispatching almost all municipal law enforcement agencies in Whatcom County. What-Comm dispatchers receive and make more than 335,000 calls per year. As the county population increases every year, so do the number of calls for service. All fire and medical related calls are forwarded to the Fire Dispatch Center located at Bellingham Fire Department's Broadway Street Station. The Fire Dispatch Center is responsible for dispatching all municipal fire departments and fire districts in Whatcom County. The BPD operates the What-Comm center and the BFD operates the Prospect Fire Dispatch Center.

Western Washington University Police Department (WWUPD)

Situated in the City, Western Washington University provides law enforcement services to enforce state and local laws on the university campus and adjacent state facilities. In cooperation with the BPD, as well as with other law enforcement agencies, the WWUPD assists in providing equipment and personnel under mutual aid agreements when needed.

Port of Bellingham

On-site uniformed law enforcement at Bellingham International Airport (BLI) is mandated by the Transportation Security Administration. The BLI complies with the federal requirements by working with a contractor to provide a combination of off-duty and on-duty law enforcement officers at the airport. The BLI falls within Whatcom County Sheriff's Office (WCSO) response

jurisdiction and works with WCSO to meet compliance standards for response times. The WCSO is notified for all alleged crimes and has the first right of refusal. In some cases, incidents violate federal law and may warrant response from the FBI, WCSO and/or the BPD. The BPD may provide law enforcement support (SWAT/Hazardous Devises Unit/etc.) at the airport under an interlocal agreement with the Whatcom County Sheriff's office. For policies relating airport compatibility, see the Land Use Chapter.

Bellingham Public Libraries

Library operations are governed by the Bellingham Public Library Board of Trustees, with five volunteer members appointed by the Mayor of Bellingham and approved by the Bellingham City Council.

The BPL serves the residents of Bellingham and Whatcom County, currently circulating approximately 1.6 million items annually to more than 49,000 registered cardholders. The library offers print and digital collections, extensive online services, reference services, free classes and special events for all ages; world-wide interlibrary loans; outreach delivery services for people who cannot readily visit the library; and meeting room rentals.

Current demand and future focus areas include expanded youth services, especially early literacy programs and facilities to support young learners and their families. Interest and demand for additional educational youth activities continues to grow. For example, the library's 13 weekly children's story times are filled to capacity and there is consistent interest in additional educational activities for youth. Other areas of library focus include increasing the number of print and electronic holdings; promoting literacy, language and other skills for all ages; providing instruction and access to technology; and fostering community connections.

The BPL is a department of the City of Bellingham, receiving the majority of its funding from the City's General Fund. The Friends of the Bellingham public library, a nonprofit library advocacy group, provides additional funding each year for library collections and special events.

Through reciprocal use agreements, Bellingham public library patrons also have access to the Whatcom County library system collection and services. The two library systems share an integrated computer catalog and distribution system, and the administrations of the BPL and Whatcom County library systems collaborate to provide patrons with consistent services across the two systems whenever possible.

Central Library in Downtown Bellingham: 210 Central Avenue

The Central Library located in the civic center district of downtown Bellingham was constructed in 1951 to serve Bellingham's population of 34,000 people. It was remodeled in 1983 for an expected 25-year life span for the population of 46,000 people. Today, the Central Library is the 44,000-square foot hub of a library system for a City population of about 83,580 people. The Central Library alone receives about 700,000 visitors per year, or an average of about 1,900 visitors per day. The Central Library houses the library administration, technical services, circulation and transportation services, public computers, children's library, closed stacks and the majority of the library's collection of books and other materials. It also provides two meeting rooms, a teaching and demonstration space and patron seating areas.

Fairhaven Branch Library in Fairhaven: 1117 12th Street

The Fairhaven Branch library, located on the City's south side, was constructed as a Carnegie Library in 1904. The Fairhaven Branch library is listed on the National Register of Historic Places as a primary structure within the Fairhaven Historic District. The 10,000-square foot branch currently houses a small collection of library materials, public computers, a children's room, an auditorium and two meetings rooms. The Fairhaven Branch remains a popular south side branch library, and provides meeting room rentals and community gathering space in Fairhaven.

Barkley Branch Library in Barkley Village: 3111 Newmarket Street

A small branch library was established in Barkley Village in 2008. Library operations are managed by the library, while the Barkley Company provided initial interior improvements and furnishings and continues to provide the 1,400-square foot space on a rent-free, month-to-month basis, with the library paying only a portion of facility operating expenses. The facility, which receives extensive use from area families, includes a small sampling of library materials, public computers and a shared reading room.

North Bellingham Library Services

Between 2014 and 2016, approximately 50% of the new housing growth in Bellingham occurred in the north and northeast portions of the City. This area includes the Cordata, Meridian, King Mountain, Irongate, and Barkley neighborhoods. These neighborhoods are anticipated to grow by an additional 12,000 residents as development continues and annexation of the adjacent northern UGA occurs over the 20-year planning period. Currently, residents in this area depend on Bellingham's Central and Barkley Branch Library facilities for library services. To ensure adequate library services are provided, the City should develop a plan for providing those services, including consideration of a branch or satellite library facility in the northern area of the City. The City should also explore options for private-public partnerships to help reduce costs and maximize facility use and sharing of resources.

Whatcom Museum

The three-building Whatcom Museum campus is accredited nationally by the American Alliance of Museums, which means it is using "best practice" museum management standards and is able to borrow from significant collections housed in important museum institutions around the country. The museum is a Smithsonian Institution affiliate, one of only 200 in the country, and a member of the Washington Art Consortium.

The museum houses permanent and changing exhibitions of art, regional history and natural history, ethnography, and the Family Interactive Gallery (FIG). The FIG today focuses on early childhood education through STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art, and math) interactive stations. New, permanent history exhibits about the local community are being planned currently for the Old City Hall.

The museum manages a significant collection of art, artifacts, ethnographic materials, photo archives (third largest in the state), and a large northwest migratory bird collection, all of which are owned by the City and held in trust for the people of the community. The museum attracts nearly 80,000 visitors from both the local community and the I-5 corridor extending from as far south as Portland, Oregon, to as far north as southern British Columbia. It serves some 20,000 school children from the local community, county, and nearby counties. The museum is open to the public five days

a week for visitors to explore and tour rotating and semi-permanent exhibitions and attend community education programs for all ages.

The museum facilities, like all the other City-owned structures, will need maintenance improvements in the future as financial resources become available. The improvements deal mainly with the 1892 Old City Hall and Syre Education Center, though collections storage improvements are needed for the Lightcatcher building. Both historic structures need seismic upgrades and an updated fire suppression system. The Syre Education Center just had a new roof installed and important HVAC upgrades. The Old City Hall and Syre Center are scheduled for fire panel upgrades in the future. These improvements will be helpful in allowing the museum to meet certain standards in order to borrow items for exhibition from other accredited museums around the country, such as the Smithsonian. And, because of the public-private partnership with the Whatcom Museum Foundation, certain additional improvements, such as collection storage shelving in the new Lightcatcher building, can be funded through one or both entities in the future.

Mount Baker Theatre

In addition to being a prime real estate asset, the Mount Baker Theatre (MBT) is at the heart of the City of Bellingham’s arts and cultural community. Built in 1927 as a location for live performances, including vaudeville, it later became a major motion picture theatre. In the early 1990s a group of local visionaries stepped forward to transform the building into what it is today, and the focus shifted from movies to the performing arts, including the home of the Whatcom Symphony. In addition to the vast variety of performances provided by the Theatre, various venues (main stage, Walton Theatre, and Encore Room) are available to other groups and to the community for a wide selection of activities. The MBT is managed by a professional staff with the oversight of a Board comprised of local business and community members.

Meridian School District #505

<i>Inventory of Existing Meridian School Facilities</i>				
School	Address	Site Size (acres)	Facility Size Sq. Ft.	Capacity
Elementary				
Irene Reither Primary (K-5)	954 E. Hemmi Road, Everson	10**	59,100	624
Ten Mile Creek (K-8 Alternative/PP Program)	960 E. Hemmi Road, Everson	8**	24,970	264 (+64 in portables)
Middle				
Meridian Middle School	861 Ten Mile Road, Lynden	16	71,760	494

High				
Meridian High School***	194 W. Laurel Road, Bellingham	19	128,423	870
TOTAL		53	284,253	2,252

* Permanent Capacity

** Irene Reither Primary School and Ten Mile Creek Elementary School share an 18-acre site.

*** The district's transportation facility is connected to the high school site. The district owns an approximately 19.11-acre site adjacent to the high school site.

Source: Meridian School District 2015-2021 Capital Facilities Plan.

Private Utilities

Electricity

Puget Sound Energy (PSE) builds, operates, and maintains the electrical utility network serving Bellingham and its UGA. Electricity is transmitted into Whatcom County by high-voltage lines from Canada and Skagit County, much of it on lines owned by the federal Bonneville Power Administration (BPA). Puget Sound Energy purchases electricity from BPA and private sources. Puget Sound Energy also transports electricity into Whatcom County from Skagit County.

The electricity is distributed throughout the county via high-voltage transmission lines that connect to distribution substations. These substations reduce the voltage levels for distribution to local loads. Two large and several small substations are located in Bellingham and within its UGA. A large BPA substation is located north of Britton Road and Mt. Baker Highway. Facilities of more than 55,000 kilovolts (Kv) are generally referred to as transmission facilities, and those less than 55 Kv are referred to as distribution facilities. Distribution lines deliver electricity from local substations to residential and most commercial customers. These lines are typically located in public rights-of-way or adjacent utility easements. The location of future distribution facilities is determined by demand and the location of development growth which they serve.

As the region grows, demand for electricity will increase. The electrical transmission system can now carry only a certain amount of electricity. This is called "capacity". When demand exceeds existing capacity, additional capacity must be added or the system begins to fail. Brownouts and blackouts are symptoms of system failure. As of 2016, PSE's electrical distribution system has sufficient capacity to serve Bellingham.

A **brownout** is a reduction in or restriction on the availability of electrical power in a particular area.

Puget Sound Energy and BPA have discussed a number of projects to meet future demand in Bellingham. In order to maintain reliable service, system capacity enhancements will be needed throughout the planning period to provide service to new development, as well to maintain the existing utility network. Potential projects include:

- Upgrading several older transmission lines serving Bellingham;
- Rebuilding or relocating some smaller substations to provide for additional growth and reliable power at mid-winter storm peaks and to forestall storm-related outages; and

- Continually reinforcing transmission capacity and increasing local and Canada/U.S. transmission capacity via the "N.W. Washington Transmission Project".

Puget Sound Energy's goals are to meet future customer needs for electrical service, enhance system reliability, and maintain safe facilities. Another goal of PSE is to be sensitive to the environment through sustainable practices that conserve energy. PSE offers a variety of services and incentive programs to help customers save energy and money by using energy as efficiently as possible. Some efficiency programs include the use of green power to help support production of renewable energy and the use of energy-efficient equipment in homes and businesses. Information and application requirements concerning PSE's incentives and rebates programs are available on their website at www.pse.com.

Green power is clean energy produced from renewable energy sources, including geothermal, wind, solar, water, and biogas.

Natural Gas

Natural gas is distributed in Whatcom County by Cascade Natural Gas Corporation (CNGC). Cascade Natural Gas Corporation builds, operates, and maintains its utility network serving Bellingham and its UGA. Natural gas is a fossil fuel provided to homes and businesses through underground piping for heating, cooking, and electricity generation. Natural gas is colorless, odorless, flammable, and lighter than air. In order to make gas leaks more detectable, an odorant is added to the colorless gas.

Natural gas offers a key alternative for achieving electric power conservation goals. The natural gas used in Bellingham flows from Canada, through Sumas, west to Cherry Point, south to Britton Road, and into Bellingham. Natural gas pipelines enter the City at a pressure of 380 pounds per square inch. The gas is then distributed via supply mains to district stations, which reduces the pressure at various levels before supplying the natural gas to industrial, commercial, and residential consumers in the City.

Not all portions of the City have access to natural gas, although most new subdivisions install gas service lines, along with other utilities services (water, sewer, and stormwater lines), within the street rights-of-way and utility corridors or easements.

As of 2016, CNGC natural gas distribution system has sufficient capacity to serve Bellingham and its growth areas. In order to maintain reliable service, system capacity enhancements may be required throughout the planning period to provide service to new development. Additional system improvements may be needed to upgrade the existing distribution systems. Facility reinforcements can be accomplished by increasing operating pressures of an existing system, looping an existing system to improve gas pressure, or extending a new line. Service lines are updated in an ongoing program to ensure CNG customers receive safe and efficient natural gas service. Currently, CNGC provides service to approximately 28,526 Bellingham customers.

Cascade Natural Gas Corporation encourages the sustainable use of energy and promotes effective energy conservation. CNGC offers a variety of rebates and other incentives to residential and business customers for making energy efficiency improvements to their homes or businesses to help sustain the natural gas resource. Eligible measures include the installation of qualified high-efficiency equipment, including furnaces, water heaters, radiant heaters, boilers, and cooking/cleaning appliances. Other conservation measures include the use of qualified insulation,

building materials, and fixtures. Information and application requirements concerning CNGC incentive programs are available on their website at www.cngc.com.

Telecommunication Services

A wide variety of telephone communications and wireless data services are available in the Bellingham. Telecommunications is the transmission of information in the form of electronic signals or other similar means. Telecommunications services generally include the following categories:

- **Landline Telephone** – Telephone service in Bellingham is provided by CenturyLink, WAVE and Comcast, though local telephone service is now being offered by cable companies. Telephone service lines are normally placed underground; however, some lines are above ground. It is anticipated that the traditional landline telephone systems will need to be upgraded to handle a growing demand for enhanced telecommunications services under a consolidated network.
- **Cable Television, Digital Subscriber Line (DSL), Broadband and Fiber Optic Internet** - Multiple cable operators provide services in Bellingham, including Comcast (Xfinity), Frontier, and CenturyLink. These services provide broadcasting via a network of overhead and underground cables and often include internet and telephone service. In certain areas of the City, satellite or dial-up connections may be the only option for cable or high-speed internet. The City is also served by two satellite providers, Dish Network and Direct TV. Expansion of service is generally based on demand and the integration of new technology to enhance communication.
- **Wireless Communications** – A wide variety of cellular communications and wireless data services are available in Bellingham. Currently, these services rely on ground-based antennae located on a tower, freestanding monopole, or an existing structure or object throughout the City. Some of the main cellular providers include: AT&T, Verizon, T-Mobile, and Sprint. It is anticipated that capacity and technology upgrades to individual networks will be needed throughout the planning period to meet the demand for wireless service, account for changes in technology, and improve service reception. The Federal Communications Commission regulates the cellular telephone and wireless communications industry by controlling where carriers can operate and what radio frequencies can be utilized in their operation. Current wireless communication facilities providing service to the City and surrounding area are shown on the Power, Gas, & Wireless Utility map.

Pipelines

Two hazardous liquid interstate transmission pipelines run through the City and one natural gas transmission pipeline is located adjacent to the City's northern UGA. The transmission pipelines transport a variety of petroleum products, such as gasoline, jet fuel, diesel, and oil. Transmission and natural gas pipelines are regulated by federal and state requirements. Local governments are precluded from regulating the operations of interstate transmission pipelines. However, cities may impose safety provisions (consistent with federal and state regulations) relating to land use and development in areas near transmission and high-pressure natural gas pipelines to lessen the risk of third party damage to the pipelines and help reduce adverse impact to the public in the event of a pipeline failure.

Both of the hazardous liquid transmission pipelines in Bellingham are located near populated areas; thus, a pipeline rupture can pose a significant risk to the public safety and environment due to the

high operating pressures and highly flammable, explosive, and toxic properties of the products being transported.

Particular provisions to improve pipeline safety could include:

- Establishing minimum development setbacks from a transmission/high-pressure pipeline;
- Restricting certain high-occupancy land uses and essential public facilities from locating near a transmission/high-pressure pipeline;
- Requiring early notification to a pipeline company so that suggested changes to improve pipeline safety can be made early in the planning process; and
- Developing measures to protect the pipeline during construction.

Solid Waste Service

The Sanitary Service Company, under contract with the City, provides garbage and recycling services for homes and business in Bellingham and its UGA. SSC is certified by the Washington State Utilities and Transportation Commission and is the largest recycling and waste collection company serving Whatcom County. The City encourages waste reduction, composting, and recycling to manage demand for solid waste services.

IV. 2017-2022 Capital Improvement Plan

RCW 36.70A.070(3) requires that comprehensive plans include a capital facilities plan element consisting of, among other items, "...at least a six-year plan that will finance such capital facilities within projected funding capacities and clearly identifies sources of public money for such purposes..." The CFP includes a complete six-year capital improvement program with identified funding sources. Beyond six years, funding becomes much less certain, and many projects are "unfunded" at this time. In the next year the City will be updating the 2009 Annexation Phasing Plan. The process and the potential outcomes will impact the City's long-range capital facilities planning. Also, the City will be continuing discussions regarding the sustainability of the levels-of-service standards, some of which are included in this plan. The results of that work will also impact future capital facilities planning and budgeting.

The Capital Improvement Plan is a strategic six-year financing plan matching the costs of future capital improvements to anticipated revenues. The CIP is a six-year rolling plan that is updated on a biennial cycle as part of the City's budget process to ensure appropriate level of service with available funding sources. Only the first two years of the CIP include fully-funded projects, while the remaining four years of capital expenditures are provided as estimates of future capital needs to help guide future capital decisions. The CIP also incorporates the Bellingham School District's 2015-2021 Capital Facilities Plan by reference.

The 2017-2022 CIP was developed by soliciting requests from all departments, which were then reviewed by City administration. Policy and planning documents adopted by City Council and the priorities established in the City's Financial Management Guidelines are considered when identifying capital projects to include in the budget and CIP. A list of some of the planning processes and documents considered when developing the CIP follows. Many of the multi-year plans also include annual updates or work plans:

Planning Horizon 20 to 50 Years:

Bellingham Legacies
Waterfront District Subarea Plan

Planning Horizon 20 Years:

Bellingham Strategic Commitments
Bellingham 2016 Comprehensive Plan
Water, Sewer, and Stormwater Comprehensive Utility Plans
Downtown Bellingham Plan and other Urban Village Plans
Whatcom County Coordinated Sewer/Water Service Area Plan

Planning Horizon 10 Years:

Capital Facilities Task Force Report

Planning Horizon 5 Years:

Bellingham Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan
Bellingham Transportation Improvement Plan
Bellingham Consolidated Plan
Lake Whatcom Management Program

Bellingham Comprehensive Plan 2016

Capital Facilities and Utilities Chapter

Fund #	Fund Name	Budgetary Responsibility
001 - General Fund: To account for financial resources not accounted for in other funds. The primary operating fund of the City, it supports general government activities, public safety, recreation, and planning and community development.		
1	General Fund	*Shared by most departments
100s - Special Revenue Funds: To account for the proceeds of specific revenue sources that are restricted or committed to expenditure for specific purposes other than debt service or capital.		
111	Street Fund	Public Works
113	Paths and Trails Reserve Fund	Public Works
125	Federal Building Fund	Public Works
126	Library Gift Fund	Library
131	Olympic Pipeline Incident Fund	Public Works
134	Olympic-Whatcom Falls Park Addition Fund	Parks and Recreation
136	Environmental Remediation Fund	*Shared by departments
141	First 1/4% Real Estate Excise Tax (REET) Fund	*Shared by most departments
142	Second 1/4% REET Fund	*Shared by most departments
151	Police Federal Equitable Sharing Fund	Police
152	Asset Forfeiture/Drug Enforcement Fund	Police
153	Criminal Justice Fund	Police
160	Public Safety Dispatch Fund	Police and Fire
161	Transportation Benefit District Fund	Finance
162	Public Ed & Govt. Access TV Fund	Information Technology Services
163	Restricted Equipment – PEG	PEG subfund for restricted revenues
173	Greenways III Fund	Parks and Recreation
177	Park Impact Fee Fund	Parks and Recreation
178	Sportsplex Fund	Parks and Recreation
180	Tourism Fund	Planning & Community Development
181	Low Income Housing Fund	Planning & Community Development
190	Community Development Block Grant Fund	Planning & Community Development
191	Home Investment Partnership Grant Fund	Planning & Community Development
200s - Debt Service Funds: To account for financial resources that are restricted, committed or assigned for payment of principal and interest. Also to account for the accumulation of resources and payment of general long-term debt, principal, and interest.		
211-235	General Obligation Debt Service Funds	Finance
245	Local Improvement District (LID) Guaranty Fund	Finance
300s - Capital Projects Funds: To account for financial resources that are restricted, committed, or assigned for the acquisition or construction of major capital facilities or other capital assets, excluding those financed by proprietary funds or for assets that will be held in trust for others.		
371	Waterfront Construction Fund	*Shared by departments

Bellingham Comprehensive Plan 2016

Capital Facilities and Utilities Chapter

Fund #	Fund Name	Budgetary Responsibility
400s - Enterprise Funds: To account for operations that are normally financed and operated similar to a private business, in which a fee is charged to external users for goods or services.		
410	Water Fund	Public Works
411	Watershed	Subfund of Water Fund for Watershed
420	Wastewater Fund	Public Works
421	Wastewater LID Spec Assess	Wastewater subfund for LIDs
430	Storm and Surface Water Utility Fund	Public Works
440	Solid Waste Fund	Public Works
456	Cemetery Fund	Parks and Recreation
460	Golf Course Fund	Parks and Recreation
465	Parking Services Fund	Public Works
470	Medic One Fund	Fire
475	Development Services Fund	Planning & Community Development
500s - Internal Service Funds: To account for the financing of goods or services provided by one department to another department, or to other governments, on a cost-reimbursement basis.		
510	Fleet Administration Fund	Public Works
511	Radio Communications	Subfund of Fleet Fund for radio communication operation
520	Purchasing & Materials Management Fund	Public Works
530	Facilities Administration Fund	Public Works
540	Telecommunication and Technology Fund	Information Technology Services
541	Technology Replacement & Reserve	Tech Replacement subfund
542	Computer Infrastructure	Computer Replacement subfund
543	GIS Administration	GIS Internal Services subfund
550	Claims and Litigation Fund	Legal
561	Unemployment Compensation Fund	Human Resources
562	Workers' Compensation Fund	Human Resources
565	Health Benefits Fund	Human Resources
570	PW Admin and Engineering Fund	Public Works
600s - Trust and Agency Funds: To account for resources that are required to be held in trust for the members and beneficiaries of defined benefit pension plans, defined contribution plans, and other employee benefit plans.		
612	Firefighters Pension and Benefit Fund	Human Resources
613	Police Officers Pension and Benefit Fund	Human Resources
700s - Permanent Funds: To account for resources with legally restricted principal. Earnings on the principal may be used for designated programs.		
701	Beyond Greenways Endowment Fund	Parks and Recreation
702	Natural Resource Protection and Restoration Fund	Public Works
900s - Discrete Component Units: To account for legally separate organizations for which the city is legally or financially accountable.		
965	Public Facilities District Fund	PFD Board of Directors

Capital Plan

DEPARTMENT	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	TOTAL
ITSD	2,376,788	2,043,300	410,628	467,803	740,486	537,895	6,576,900
Fire	302,250	15,000	1,693,800	1,807,550	15,000	15,000	3,848,600
NonDepart	1,275,543	1,343,823	710,000	1,360,000	1,410,000	1,460,000	7,559,366
Park	6,470,000	1,276,000	3,656,000	2,146,000	8,207,000	1,781,000	23,536,000
Police	35,000	175,000	191,000	155,000	155,000	155,000	866,000
PW Engineering	22,351,800	19,227,400	15,643,000	30,933,480	11,837,678	6,950,000	106,943,358
PW Nat. Resour	1,480,597	2,910,000	3,150,000	3,850,000	3,525,000	9,525,000	24,440,597
PW Operations	6,055,113	3,321,558	2,852,042	3,563,918	3,090,000	3,090,000	21,972,631
Grand Total	40,347,091	30,312,081	28,306,470	44,283,751	28,980,164	23,513,895	195,743,452

FUND	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	TOTAL
General	600,000	650,000	2,210,000	2,345,000	676,000	650,000	7,131,000
Street	3,570,000	3,423,000	2,515,000	2,740,000	2,600,000	2,700,000	17,548,000
Remediation					8,000,000		8,000,000
REET 1	1,421,228	1,132,228	1,656,000	2,066,000	2,056,000	2,106,000	10,437,456
REET 2	1,689,315	707,595	55,000	55,000	55,000	55,000	2,616,910
Fed. Sharing	35,000	20,000	36,000				91,000
Dispatch		155,000	155,000	155,000	155,000	155,000	775,000
TBD	5,000,000	5,100,000	4,794,000	4,889,880	4,987,678	-	24,771,558
PEG Equip	200,000	122,000	70,000	70,000	70,000	70,000	602,000
Green III	4,380,000						4,380,000
Impact	1,325,000	1,050,000	3,075,000	1,775,000		1,600,000	8,825,000
LIFT	250,000						250,000
WATER	6,550,000	2,550,000	4,100,000	18,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	33,200,000
WATER SHED	1,370,128	1,149,400	2,084,000	1,703,600			6,307,128
SEWER	4,852,000	6,955,000	2,115,000	4,115,000	3,100,000	3,100,000	24,237,000
STORM	1,605,269	2,225,000	2,150,000	3,350,000	3,525,000	9,525,000	22,380,269
SOLID	1,630,000	30,000	-				1,660,000
MEDIC 1	302,250	15,000	233,800	242,550	15,000	15,000	823,600
GOLF	80,000	80,000	80,000	80,000	80,000	80,000	480,000
PARKING			200,000	200,000			400,000
FLEET	2,310,113	2,376,558	1,787,042	1,448,918	1,340,000	1,340,000	10,602,631
PURCHASING	300,000						300,000
TECH	2,164,648	1,921,300	340,628	397,803	670,486	467,895	5,962,760
FACILITIES	700,000	650,000	650,000	650,000	650,000	650,000	3,950,000
TELECOM	12,140						12,140
Grand Total	40,347,091	30,312,081	28,306,470	44,283,751	28,980,164	23,513,895	195,743,452

Bellingham Comprehensive Plan 2016

Capital Facilities and Utilities Chapter

2017-2022 Six-Year Capital Improvement Plan

Capital Item or Project Name	Division	Fund	Fund	2017 BUD	2018 BUD	2019 Est.	2020 Est.	2021 Est.	2022 Est.
Telephone System Equipment Replacements	Telecomm	540	TELECOM	12,140					
Network/Infrastructure - High priority	Technology	541	TECH	67,500	15,000				
Hansen Work Management System Replacement	Technology	541	TECH	100,000	700,000				
GIS Data Update - LIDAR Processing	GIS	541	TECH	26,000					
Financial System Replacement	Technology	541	TECH	1,500,000	1,000,000				
Computer Applications - High Priority	Technology	541	TECH	227,500	120,000				
Chambers Equipment	BTV	163	PEG Equip	130,000	25,000				
BTV10 and Access Bellingham Equipment	BTV	163	PEG Equip	70,000	97,000	70,000	70,000	70,000	70,000
Annual Network Infrastructure Replacements	Technology	541	TECH	243,648	86,300	130,628	217,803	340,486	267,895
Annual Computer Applications - Forecast	Technology	541	TECH			210,000	180,000	330,000	200,000
Staff Vehicles	Operations	001	General			60,000	65,000		
Ladder Truck	Operations	001	General				1,500,000		
Fire Engines (2)	Operations	001	General			1,400,000			
EMS Vehicle	Ambulance	470	MEDIC 1	85,000					
Annual Miscellaneous Equipment	Ambulance	470	MEDIC 1	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000
Ambulance Replacement	Ambulance	470	MEDIC 1	202,250		218,800	227,550		
Mt. Baker Theatre and Children's Museum	Debt Service PFD	141	REET 1				650,000	700,000	750,000
Indirect Cost Allocation Plan	FINANCE	142	REET 2	8,375	8,375	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000
Indirect Cost Allocation Plan	FINANCE	141	REET 1	11,228	11,228	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000
Debt Service Civic Field	Debt Service PFD	142	REET 2	655,940	674,220				
Annual Facilities Maintenance Program Transfer to Reserve	GF	001	General	600,000	650,000	650,000	650,000	650,000	650,000
Woodstock Gates House Boiler Replacement	Operations	141	REET 1			70,000			
Whatcom Waterway Park	D&D	177	Impact	1,000,000					
Van Wyck Park	D&D	177	Impact				1,000,000		
Three Quarter Ton Super Duty Pickup Truck	Operations	001	General					26,000	
Sports Field Lighting Relamping	Operations	141	REET 1	24,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000
Sidewalk and Curb Replacement	Operations	141	REET 1	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000
Samish Crest Trail	D&D	177	Impact		400,000				
Roof Replacement	Operations	141	REET 1			20,000	20,000		
Restroom at Little Squalicum Park	D&D	141	REET 1			200,000			

Bellingham Comprehensive Plan 2016 Capital Facilities and Utilities Chapter

Capital Item or Project Name	Division	Fund#	Fund	2017 BUD	2018 BUD	2019 Est.	2020 Est.	2021 Est.	2022 Est.
Replacement of St. Clair Lift Station	Operations	141	REET 1	10,000					
Replacement of Carpet and Vinyl in Bloedel Community	Operations	141	REET 1	45,000					
Replace Hot Water Tank Bloedel Community Building	Operations	141	REET 1				10,000		
Renovation of Roosevelt Park Restroom Building	Operations	141	REET 1			10,000			
Renovation of North Restroom at Boulevard Park	Operations	141	REET 1	20,000					
Renovation of Geri 1, 2, 3 Restroom Building	Operations	141	REET 1				30,000		
Playground Replacement	D&D	177	Impact	175,000	175,000	175,000	175,000		
Playground Equipment Parts for Various Parks	Operations	141	REET 1	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000
Park Irrigation System Renovations	Operations	141	REET 1	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
Neighborhood Park Acquisition	D&D	177	Impact			500,000			
Maplewood McLeod Neighborhood Park	D&D	177	Impact			100,000	500,000		
Lake Padden Park Improvements	D&D	173	Green III	700,000					
Interurban Trail - Chuckanut	D&D	173	Green III	680,000					
Greenway Land Acquisition	D&D	173	Green III	3,000,000					
Grapple Loader	Operations	001	General				130,000		
Furnace Replacement at Fairhaven Pavilion & Park	Operations	001	General						
Fleet Add Turf Aerator	Operations	001	General			10,000			
Fairhaven Park - Master Plan Update	D&D	177	Impact						100,000
Cornwall Beach Park	D&D	177	Impact		200,000				
Cornwall Beach Park	D&D	177	Impact			1,000,000			
Cordata Park	D&D	177	Impact	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000		
Cordata Neighborhood Park	D&D	177	Impact			1,000,000			
Cordata Neighborhood Park	D&D	177	Impact						1,500,000
Bridge Replacement/Repair	Operations	142	REET 2	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000
Boulevard Trestle Repair or Removal Transfer in from REET	D&D	371	LIFT	(250,000)					
Boulevard Trestle Repair or Removal	D&D	141	REET 1	250,000					
Boulevard Trestle Repair or Removal	D&D	371	LIFT	500,000					
Boulevard Cleanup	D&D	136	Remediation					8,000,000	

Bellingham Comprehensive Plan 2016 Capital Facilities and Utilities Chapter

Capital Item or Project Name	Division	Fund#	Fund	2017 BUD	2018 BUD	2019 Est.	2020 Est.	2021 Est.	2022 Est.
Bloedel Boat Launch Floats	D&D	142	REET 2	(245,000)					
Bloedel Boat Launch Floats	D&D	142	REET 2	245,000					
Birchwood Neighborhood Park Restroom	D&D	177	Impact		175,000				
Big Rock Garden Park Fence Replacement	Operations	141	REET 1		45,000				
Bay to Baker Trail	D&D	177	Impact	50,000					
Bay to Baker Trail	D&D	177	Impact			200,000			
Backyard Lifts	Operations	001	General			90,000			
Annual Golf Course Capital Improvements	Operations	460	GOLF	80,000	80,000	80,000	80,000	80,000	80,000
Annual Boundary Surveys	Operations	141	REET 1	6,000	6,000	6,000	6,000	6,000	6,000
Dispatch CAD project	Dispatch	160	Dispatch		155,000	155,000	155,000	155,000	155,000
Annual Undercover Vehicles		151	Fed. Sharing	35,000	20,000	36,000			
WTP Improvements - Screening Relocation	Water	410	WATER				3,000,000		
WTP Improvements - Dissolved Air Flotation (DAF)	Water	410	WATER	3,500,000					
WTP - Energy Conservation - Solar		410	WATER			2,000,000			
Whatcom Creek Tunnel	Wastewater	420	SEWER		4,890,000				
Whatcom Creek Sewer	Wastewater	420	SEWER			2,000,000			
West Horton Road Corridor Improvements	Street	111	Street		(500,000)				
West Horton Road Corridor Improvements	Street	111	Street		(2,700,000)				
West Horton Road Corridor Improvements	Street	111	Street		3,200,000				
West Horton Road Corridor Improvements	Street	161	TBD		400,000				
West Bakerview Lift Station	Wastewater	420	SEWER	854,000					
TBD Annual Pavement Resurfacing	Street	161	TBD	2,500,000	2,550,000	2,601,000	2,653,020	2,706,080	
TBD Annual NON-Motorized Projects	Street	161	TBD	2,500,000	2,150,000	2,193,000	2,236,860	2,281,597	
Storm for Annual Pavement Resurfacing	Stormwater	430	STORM	50,000					
Sewer Inflow and Infiltration Projects	Wastewater	420	SEWER			5,000,000			
Sewer Inflow and Infiltration Projects	Wastewater	420	SEWER			(5,000,000)			
Sehome Tower Replacement	Communications	511	FLEET	(1,450,000)					
Sehome Tower Replacement	Communications	511	FLEET	1,450,000					
Roeder Lift Station Replacement	Wastewater	420	SEWER		4,418,000	8,582,000			
Roeder Lift Station Replacement	Wastewater	420	SEWER		(4,418,000)	(8,582,000)			

Bellingham Comprehensive Plan 2016 Capital Facilities and Utilities Chapter

Capital Item or Project Name	Division	Fund#	Fund	2017 BUD	2018 BUD	2019 Est.	2020 Est.	2021 Est.	2022 Est.
Quiet Zone Improvements	Street	141	REET 1	250,000	250,000	250,000	250,000	250,000	250,000
Orchard Drive Extension (Bay-Baker Trail)	Street	111	Street	(3,500,000)		(6,500,000)			
Orchard Drive Extension (Bay-Baker Trail)	Street	111	Street	3,500,000		6,500,000			
Mahogany/Arctic Arterial-Water Mains	Water	410	WATER	500,000					
Mahogany/Arctic Arterial-Storm Mains	Stormwater	430	STORM	500,000					
Mahogany/Arctic Arterial-Sewer Mains	Wastewater	420	SEWER	1,000,000					
Mahogany/Arctic Arterial	Street	111	Street	1,000,000					
Kearney Road Pump Station (Cordata)	Water	410	WATER	300,000					
Horton Lift Station	Wastewater	420	SEWER	833,000					
Donovan Water	Water	410	WATER		500,000				
Cordata Stuart RAB	Street	111	Street	200,000	133,000				
Cordata STRS	Street	111	Street		200,000				
Bellingham Waterfront Wet Weather Peak Flow Facility	Wastewater	420	SEWER				1,000,000		
Bellingham Waterfront District Infrastructure	Street	141	REET 1	750,000	750,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000
Annual Watershed Land Acquisitions	Watershed	411	WATER SHED	944,800	964,400	1,084,000	1,203,600		
Annual Water Main Replacement Program	Water	410	WATER	2,000,000	2,000,000	2,000,000	2,000,000		
Annual Sewer System Improvements	Wastewater	420	SEWER	100,000	1,000,000		1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000
Annual Sewer Main Replacement Program	Wastewater	420	SEWER	2,000,000	1,000,000		2,000,000	2,000,000	2,000,000
Annual Pavement Resurfacing	Street	111	Street	2,370,000	2,440,000	2,515,000	2,590,000	2,600,000	2,700,000
Nooksack Diversion Dam and Pipeline Improvements	Water	410	WATER	200,000			10,000,000		
Nooksack Diversion Dam and Pipeline Improvements	Water	410	WATER				2,000,000		
Willow Spring Culvert Removal	SSWU	430	STORM					25,000	75,000
Whatcom Waterway Between Holly and Roeder	Restoration	430	STORM				100,000		1,000,000
Whatcom Cr Gabions	Restoration	430	STORM						1,000,000
West Cemetery Creek Sediment	SWWU	430	STORM	125,000		250,000			
Vehicle	Restoration	411	WATER SHED	35,000					
Sunset (EV 0144) match (25%)	SSWU	430	STORM	115,269					
Sunset (EV 0144) grant revenue (75% TPC)	SSWU	430	STORM	(345,805)					
Sunset (EV 0144) grant funding (75% TPC)	SSWU	430	STORM	345,805					
Summit Street Water Quality Improvements	Watershed	411	WATER SHED			100,000			

Bellingham Comprehensive Plan Capital Facilities and Utilities Chapter

2016

Capital Item or Project Name	Division	Fund#	Fund	2017 BUD	2018 BUD	2019 Est.	2020 Est.	2021 Est.	2022 Est.
Squalicum Creek Phases 4 and 5	Restoration	430	STORM				300,000		2,500,000
Squalicum Creek Creosote Bridge Removal	Restoration	430	STORM		125,000		250,000		
Squal Cr Reroute Phase 3	Restoration	430	STORM		1,322,507				
Squal Cr Reroute Phase 3	Restoration	430	STORM		(500,000)				
Squal Cr Reroute Phase 3	Restoration	430	STORM		(822,507)				
Shoreline Treatment System Design	Watershed	430	STORM				100,000		
Park Place Facility Improvement- match	Watershed	411	WATER SHED				500,000		
Park Place Facility Improvement- match	Watershed	411	WATER SHED	75,000	185,000				
Park Place Facility Improvement- grant revenue	Watershed	411	WATER SHED				(1,500,000)		
Park Place Facility Improvement-	Watershed	411	WATER SHED				1,500,000		
Padden Creek 24th -30th Habitat and Water Quality	Restoration	430	STORM				100,000		1,500,000
Oregon and Alice West of Britton	Watershed	430	STORM				100,000	200,000	
Land Acquisition funding for wetland mitigation program	Restoration	111	Street		500,000				
Huntington/ E. Silverbeach Water Quality Improvements	Watershed	411	WATER SHED			200,000			
Hayward Drive Water Quality Improvements	Watershed	411	WATER SHED			200,000			
E. Oregon match (25%)	Watershed	411	WATER SHED	89,539					
E. Oregon grant revenue (75% TPC)	Watershed	411	WATER SHED	(268,617)					
E. Oregon grant funding (75% TPC)	Watershed	411	WATER SHED	268,617					
E. North (EV 125) match (25%)	Watershed	411	WATER SHED	100,789					
E. North (EV 125) grant revenue (75% TPC)	Watershed	411	WATER SHED	(302,367)					
E. North (EV 125) grant funding (75% TPC)	Watershed	411	WATER SHED	302,367					
Columbia/Roosevelt (EV 120) loan funded	SSWU	430	STORM	765,000					
Columbia/Roosevelt (EV 120) loan	SSWU	430	STORM	(765,000)					
Columbia/Roosevelt (EV 120) grant revenue (75% TPC)	SSWU	430	STORM	(340,000)					
Columbia / Roosevelt (EV 120) grant match (25%)	SSWU	430	STORM	115,000					
Columbia / Roosevelt (EV 120) grant funding (75% TPC)	SSWU	430	STORM	340,000					
Citywide LID Implementation	SSWU	430	STORM			200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000
Birchwood Retrofits	SSWU	430	STORM				100,000	750,000	
Annual WQ Retrofits	SSWU	430	STORM	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000
Annual Watershed Water Quality Improvements Projects	Watershed	430	STORM			200,000	600,000	850,000	950,000

Bellingham Comprehensive Plan 2016

Capital Facilities and Utilities Chapter

Capital Item or Project Name	Division	Fund#	Fund	2017 BUD	2018 BUD	2019 Est.	2020 Est.	2021 Est.	2022 Est.
Annual Storm Replacements	SSWU	430	STORM	200,000	800,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000
Annual Fish Passage Improvements (EV 80)	SSWU	430	STORM		800,000				800,000
Anderson Creek Habitat and Water Quality Improvements	Restoration	411	WATER SHED	125,000		500,000			
Whatcomm Building Replacement	Facilities	142	REET 2	1,000,000	2,500,000				
Whatcomm Building Replacement	Facilities	142	REET 2		(2,500,000)				
Warehouse and Training Facility		520	PURCHASING	300,000					
Radio 800 Digital	Communications	511	FLEET	(1,450,000)					
Radio 800 Digital	Communications	511	FLEET	1,450,000					
Pacific Street Stormwater Retrofit-Resurfacing		530	FACILITIES	(240,000)	(1,000,000)				
Pacific Street Stormwater Retrofit-Resurfacing	Facilities	530	FACILITIES	240,000	1,000,000				
Line Repair Kit	Wastewater	420	SEWER	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000		
Lighting Systems	Street	111	Street		150,000		150,000		
Fleet Replacements Transportation Equipment	Fleet	510	FLEET	711,195	927,640	338,124			
Fleet Replacements Other Machinery and Equipment	Fleet	510	FLEET	124,900	124,900	124,900	124,900		
Fleet Replacements Heavy Duty Work Equipment	Fleet	510	FLEET	130,000	130,000	130,000	130,000	140,000	140,000
Fleet Replacements Heavy Duty Work Equipment	Fleet	510	FLEET	1,194,018	1,194,018	1,194,018	1,194,018	1,200,000	1,200,000
Fleet Hoist replacement, fueling station, improvements	Fleet	510	FLEET	150,000					
Eldridge Municipal Landfill Monitoring		440	SOLID	30,000	30,000				
Cornwall Beach Remediation	Solid Waste	440	SOLID	1,600,000		4,000,000			
Cornwall Beach Remediation	Solid Waste	440	SOLID			(4,000,000)			
Commercial Street Parking Garage	Facilities	465	PARKING			200,000	200,000		
City Hall Generator	Facilities	530	FACILITIES	100,000					
Annual Facilities Maintenance Program (includes ADA	Cap Maint	530	FACILITIES	600,000	650,000	650,000	650,000	650,000	650,000
Annual Emergency Water Repairs	Plants	410	WATER	50,000	50,000	100,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000
Annual Emergency Sewer Repairs	Plants	420	SEWER	50,000	50,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000
	Div	Fund		40,347,091	30,262,081	28,206,470	44,183,751	28,880,164	23,413,895

Bellingham Comprehensive Plan Capital Facilities and Utilities Chapter

2016

City of Bellingham 2016 Asset Inventory

Asset Name	Dept/Fund	Address	Year Built	Capacity Sq. Ft.	FCI*	Replacement Value**
Homeport Learning Center Warehouse	Museums & Misc.	707 Astor St	1975	4,116	20.55%	\$426,744
Mount Baker Theatre	Museums & Misc.	104 N Commercial St	1927	43,200	26.40%	\$15,580,029
Syre Education Center	Museums & Misc.	201 Prospect St	1926	14,743	50.06%	\$4,406,617
Lightcatcher Museum	Museums & Misc.	250 Flora St	2010	41,718	3.73%	\$14,047,812
Whatcom Museum (Old City Hall)	Museums & Misc.	121 Prospect St	1895	24,700	39.34%	\$10,041,575
Arne Hanna Aquatic Center	Parks	1414 Potter	1995	20,000	48.78%	\$7,234,615
Bayview Cemetery Office	Parks	1420 LakeWy Dr	1970	2,039	33.64%	\$407,900
Bayview Cemetery Mausoleum	Parks	1420 LakeWy Dr	1914	2,100	16.86%	\$592,840
Bayview Cemetary Storage	Parks	2701 LakeWy	1990	1,000	56.33%	\$114,864
Site - Bayview Cemetary	Parks	2701 LakeWy	1965		0.00%	\$4,840,965
Big Rock Garden Gazebo	Parks	2900 Sylvan St	1989	613	125.64%	\$44,915
Big Rock Garden Large Storage Building	Parks	2900 Sylvan St	1989	106	24.71%	\$15,128
Big Rock Garden Small Storage Building	Parks	2900 Sylvan St	1989	96	40.81%	\$18,188
Site - Big Rock Garden	Parks	2900 Sylvan St	1989		63.18%	\$111,306
Big Rock Garden Greenhouse	Parks	2900 Sylvan St	1989	1,195	47.00%	\$166,206
Big Rock Garden Restrooms	Parks	2900 Sylvan St	1989	139	8.48%	\$92,749
Big Rock Garden Korean Memorial	Parks	2900 Sylvan St	2003		0.00%	\$92,205
Bloedel Donovan Park Preschool	Parks	2214 Electric Ave	1978	800	37.96%	\$205,234
Bloedel Donovan Park Pavilion	Parks	2214 Electric Ave	1978	1,033	50.08%	\$317,529
Bloedel Donovan Pk Community Bldg	Parks	2214 Electric Ave	1958	8,200	46.63%	\$1,668,797
Site - Bloedel Donovan Park	Parks	Electric Ave	1952		27.92%	\$1,600,349
Boulevard Park Overpass	Parks	480 Bayview Dr	1990		40.91%	\$277,693
Boulevard Pk Woods Coffee and Restrm.	Parks	480 Bayview Dr	1980	2,161	6.38%	\$632,992
Taylor Dock Float Dock & Picnic Pavilion	Parks	Taylor St	2006		0.00%	\$388,628
Boulevard Park Stage	Parks	480 Bayview Dr	2008		0.00%	\$239,233
Site - Boulevard Park	Parks	Boulevard Park	1970		0.00%	\$869,686
Boulevard Park Pattle Point Boardwalk	Parks	480 Bayview Dr	1990		0.00%	\$2,329,837
Taylor Dock Restrooms	Parks	Taylor St	2006	312	4.30%	\$113,505
Boulevard Park North Restrooms	Parks	480 Bayview Dr	1980	576	58.17%	\$175,259
Civic Field Skatepark Restroom	Parks	Civic Field	2006	168	15.67%	\$83,997
Site - Geri Field 1 - 2 - 3	Parks	1300 Fraser St	1990		49.82%	\$539,757
Civic Field North Grandstand	Parks	1355 Civic Field Wy	1971	8,750	6.05%	\$3,131,932
Site - Downer Field	Parks	1301 Orleans St	2006		0.00%	\$11,010
Site - Geri Field 4	Parks	1555 Puget St	1990		28.12%	\$423,306
Site - Joe Martin Field	Parks	LakeWy Dr	1964		0.00%	\$841,717
Downer Field Restrooms	Parks	1301 Orleans St	1979	749	52.19%	\$129,064
Geri Field 4 Restrooms	Parks	1555 Puget St	2001	232	10.50%	\$59,269
Joe Martin Field Storage	Parks	1220 Civic Field Wy	2007	1,125	0.00%	\$130,918
Site - Civic Field	Parks	LakeWy Dr	1961		0.00%	\$3,686,891
Geri Fields 1, 2, 3 Lower Restrooms	Parks	1300 Fraser St	1979	444	39.55%	\$117,621
Civic Field Free Standing Locker Room	Parks	LakeWy Dr	2006	4,400	3.51%	\$882,374
Civic Field Scoreboard	Parks	LakeWy Dr	2006		0.00%	\$52,886
Civic Complex Sportsplex	Parks	1414 Potter St	1997	79,135	12.56%	\$13,270,173
Joe Martin Field Grandstand	Parks	1220 Civic Field Wy	1964	8,330	4.21%	\$2,180,969
Joe Martin Field Scoreboard	Parks	1220 Civic Field Wy	2006		0.00%	\$99,751
Civic Field South Grandstand	Parks	LakeWy Dr	1961	27,389	4.83%	\$9,971,416
Cornwall Park N Admin. Bldg.	Parks	3425 Meridian St	1938	2,654	27.03%	\$673,037
Cornwall Park N. Shelter and Restrm	Parks	3428 Meridian St	1970	2,160	53.84%	\$224,385
Site - Cornwall Park	Parks	3426 Meridian	1970		0.00%	\$1,172,612
Cornwall Park South Restrooms	Parks	3424 Meridian	1970	2,048	62.76%	\$306,525
Cornwall Park South Picnic Shelter	Parks	3427 Meridian	1990	1,152	0.00%	\$47,531
Elizabeth Park Gazebo	Parks	2205 Elizabeth St	1984	523	76.29%	\$43,665
Site - Elizabeth Park	Parks	2205 Elizabeth St	1980		0.00%	\$53,610

Bellingham Comprehensive Plan

Capital Facilities and Utilities Chapter

2016

Asset Name	Dept/Fund	Address	Year Built	Capacity Sq. Ft.	FCI*	Replacement Value**
Elizabeth Park Restrooms	Parks	2205 Elizabeth St	1980	1,054	48.77%	\$182,818
Fairhaven Park Storage	Parks	14th St	1980	594	19.00%	\$73,489
Fairhaven Park Shelter	Parks	107 N Chuckanut Dr	1982	1,984	55.12%	\$256,669
Fairhaven Park Rose Garden House	Parks	14th St	1920	1,566	73.22%	\$351,594
Fairhaven Park Pavilion	Parks	107 N Chuckanut Dr	1982	1,033	66.22%	\$281,780
Site - Fairhaven Park	Parks	14th St	1980		0.00%	\$900,671
Lake Padden Golf Course Restrooms	Parks	Lake Padden	1993	352	26.15%	\$101,981
Site - Lake Padden Golf Course	Parks	Lake Padden	1980		23.20%	\$3,148,445
Lake Padden Golf School Building	Parks	Lake Padden	1971	2,380	30.39%	\$506,211
Lake Padden Golf Course Clubhouse	Parks	Lake Padden	1972	7,600	29.89%	\$1,885,192
Lake Padden Maintenance	Parks	Lake Padden	1973	3,060	52.55%	\$308,097
Lake Padden Park Playground Restroom	Parks	Lake Padden	1980	451	55.12%	\$194,776
Site - Lake Padden Park	Parks	Lake Padden	1970		48.41%	\$3,823,404
Lake Padden Park Large Shelter	Parks	Lake Padden	1980	1,020	0.00%	\$85,286
Lake Padden Park Small Shelter	Parks	Lake Padden	1980	816	0.00%	\$46,532
Lk Padden Pk Bathhouse Restroom	Parks	Lake Padden	1980	1,455	62.76%	\$457,548
Lk Padden Pk Dog Off-Leash Restroom	Parks	Lake Padden	1980	1,380	45.14%	\$269,619
Maritime Heritage Pk Env. Learning Ctr	Parks	514 W Holly St	2004	2,409	7.35%	\$718,623
Site - Maritime Heritage Park	Parks	514 W Holly St	1978	Site	0.00%	\$34,821
Birchwood Park Picnic Shelter	Parks	2709 Cedarwood Ave	2005	575	0.00%	\$148,031
Roosevelt Park Restrooms	Parks	2235 Verona St	1978	968	30.47%	\$160,882
Broadway Park Restrooms	Parks	2700 North Park Dr	1980	756	58.97%	\$151,081
Sehome Arboretum Observation Tower	Parks	Sehome Hill	1981	576	30.74%	\$128,719
Site - Franklin Park	Parks	1200 Franklin St	2009		0.00%	\$30,636
Site - Broadway Park	Parks	2700 North Park Dr	1980		0.00%	\$22,462
Site - St Clair Park	Parks	2015 St Clair St	1978		45.26%	\$99,778
Forest and Cedar Restroom and Storage	Parks	500 North Forest St	1965	756	36.61%	\$142,584
Site - Forest and Cedar Park	Parks	500 N. Forest St	1965		91.93%	\$18,707
Site - Fairhaven Village Green	Parks	Mill Ave	2002		0.00%	\$55,050
Fairhaven Village Green Restrooms	Parks	Mill Ave	2003	700	7.23%	\$148,371
Site - Happy Valley Park	Parks	2700 Donovan Ave	2008		0.00%	\$7,488
St Clair Park Restrooms	Parks	2015 St Clair St	1978	480	63.72%	\$107,776
Fairhaven Village Green Pergola	Parks	Mill Ave	2003	3,024	0.00%	\$1,041,191
Site - Birchwood Park	Parks	2709 Cedarwood Ave	2005		0.00%	\$95,931
Happy Valley Park Picnic Shelter	Parks	2700 Donovan Ave	2008	432	0.00%	\$110,683
Franklin Park Picnic Shelter	Parks	1200 Franklin St	2009	318	0.00%	\$86,522
Parks Operations Horticulture Shed	Parks	1400 Woburn St	2009	1,215	5.56%	\$240,581
Parks Operations Cement Shed	Parks	1400 Woburn St	1995	1,580	10.34%	\$197,610
Site - Parks Operations	Parks	1400 Woburn St	1970		75.03%	\$190,914
Parks Operations Office	Parks	1400 Woburn St	1930	2,520	36.16%	\$550,409
Parks Operations Pesticide Storage	Parks	1400 Woburn St	2007	200	4.85%	\$75,402
Parks Operations Tractor Shed	Parks	1400 Woburn St	1970	864	0.00%	\$64,642
Parks Operations Barn	Parks	1400 Woburn St	1930	3,220	78.99%	\$580,600
Squalicum Creek Park Restroom	Parks	101 Squalicum Cr Pkwy	2007	574	4.85%	\$130,061
Squalicum Creek Park Storage Building	Parks	2800 West St	1980	7,434	35.22%	\$602,201
Site - Squalicum Creek Park	Parks	101 Squalicum Cr Pkwy	2005		0.00%	\$740,407
Van Wyck Park Residence	Parks	325 Van Wyck Rd	1984	2,400	71.02%	\$473,763
Van Wyck Park Shop	Parks	325 Van Wyck Park Rd	1984	938	34.31%	\$107,264
Whatcom Falls Park Large Shelter	Parks	1600 Silverbeach Rd	1968	1,509	45.03%	\$116,324
Whatcom Falls Park Restroom Small	Parks	1600 Silverbeach Rd	2008	195	2.32%	\$93,162
Whatcom Falls Park Small Shelter	Parks	1600 Silverbeach Rd	1968	525	40.63%	\$107,928
Site - Whatcom Falls Park	Parks	1600 Silverbeach Rd	1970		65.16%	\$1,644,709
Whatcom Falls Park Restroom Large	Parks	Electric Ave	1968	836	71.87%	\$205,632
Site - Woodstock Farm Property	Parks	1200 Chuckanut Dr	1910		91.10%	\$1,314,746

Bellingham Comprehensive Plan Capital Facilities and Utilities Chapter

2016

Asset Name	Dept/Fund	Address	Year Built	Capacity Sq. Ft.	FCI*	Replacement Value**
Woodstock Farm Barn	Parks	1200 Chuckanut Dr	1910	2,800	70.36%	\$457,930
Woodstock Farm Studio	Parks	1200 Chuckanut Dr	1910	846	74.71%	\$220,631
Woodstock Farm Lee House	Parks	1200 Chuckanut Dr	1910	6,100	72.79%	\$1,397,136
Woodstock Farm Outlook	Parks	1200 Chuckanut Dr	2009		0.00%	\$398,035
Woodstock Farm Cook's House	Parks	1200 Chuckanut Dr	1910	1,800	66.62%	\$582,325
Woodstock Farm Cottage	Parks	1200 Chuckanut Dr	1924	510	60.91%	\$203,688
Woodstock Farm Garage	Parks	1200 Chuckanut Dr	1910	400	53.99%	\$122,962
Depot Market Square Main Building	PW Enterprise Fund	1100 RailRd Ave	2006	8,010	4.24%	\$2,119,073
Depot Mkt Square Main Shelter 1 (West)	PW Enterprise Fund	1100 RailRd Ave	2006	2,530	0.00%	\$119,661
Depot Mkt Square Main Shelter 1 (East)	PW Enterprise Fund	1100 RailRd Ave	2006	2,530	0.00%	\$119,661
Depot Mkt Square Main Shelter 1 (North)	PW Enterprise Fund	1100 RailRd Ave	2006	2,530	0.00%	\$119,661
Parkade	PW Enterprise Fund	1300 Commercial St	1969	170,320	24.91%	\$16,110,314
Railroad Garage	PW Enterprise Fund	1215 RailRd Ave	1970	37,000	8.61%	\$2,709,318
Sehome Hill Radio Tower	PW Enterprise Fund	Sehome Hill	1981	180	0.00%	\$66,977
Sehome Hill Radio Site Building	PW Enterprise Fund	Sehome Hill	1998	360	50.38%	\$120,827
Site - Sehome Hill Radio Site	PW Enterprise Fund	Sehome Hill	1981		62.50%	\$1,511,641
Public Works Operations - Admin.	PW Enterprise Fund	2221 Pacific St	1968	23,900	40.60%	\$5,698,085
Public Works Ops - Municipal Shop	PW Enterprise Fund	2221 Pacific St	1968	17,134	40.76%	\$3,110,636
Site - Public Works Operations	PW Enterprise Fund	2221 Pacific St	1968		74.88%	\$2,674,336
Public Works Ops - Purchasing & Training	PW Enterprise Fund	2221 Pacific St	1991	1,848	45.60%	\$401,136
Public Works Operations - Wash Building	PW Enterprise Fund	2221 Pacific St	1968	1,050	26.75%	\$192,455
Public Works Ops - Veh. & Equip. Storage	PW Enterprise Fund	2221 Pacific St	1968	14,400	20.37%	\$1,192,088
Public Wks Ops-Annex Off. & Equip. Stor.	PW Enterprise Fund	200 Nevada St	1977	16,200	41.11%	\$2,077,240
Public Works Operations - Warehouse	PW Enterprise Fund	2221 Pacific St	1968	10,455	17.88%	\$1,054,543
Public Works Ops - Materials Storage	PW Enterprise Fund	2221 Pacific St	1991	8,784	4.89%	\$508,914
Post Pt. WW Trtmt. Plant 130 Air Scrub.	PW Enterprise Fund	200 McKenzie Ave	1993	3,360	10.10%	\$873,799
Post Pt. WW Trtmt. Plant Admin. and Lab	PW Enterprise Fund	200 McKenzie Ave	1972	6,640	25.29%	\$2,014,323
Pump Station - Marietta Reservoir	PW Enterprise Fund	1399 40th St	1970	120	44.78%	\$29,577
Lift Station - Oak Street	PW Enterprise Fund	East Oak St	1974	8,500	5.46%	\$3,288,754
Pump Station - Birch Street	PW Enterprise Fund	1280 Birch Falls Dr	2005	616	3.32%	\$199,098
Water Treatment Plant	PW Enterprise Fund	3201 Arbor Court	1973	24,200	16.73%	\$9,313,210
Geneva Gate House	PW Enterprise Fund	4800 LakeWy Dr	1940	540	45.12%	\$104,331
Water Treatment Plant Screenhouse	PW Enterprise Fund	1600 Silverbeach Rd	1940	6,000	35.61%	\$1,113,122
Pump Station - 40th Street Reservoirs	PW Enterprise Fund	1399 40th St	1970	100	44.02%	\$36,828
Post Pt WW Trtmt Plt 740 Emerg Gen Bldg	PW Enterprise Fund	200 McKenzie Ave	1993	2,978	6.53%	\$1,741,934
Post Pt WW Trtmt Plant 320 Oxygen Bldg.	PW Enterprise Fund	200 McKenzie Ave	1993	4,290	11.57%	\$903,043
Pump Station - Otis Street	PW Enterprise Fund	1119 Otis St	1967	1,250	47.04%	\$242,030
Post Point Storage Building	PW Enterprise Fund	200 McKenzie Ave	1993	2,360	19.13%	\$479,825
Post Pt. WW Trtmt Plant 420 Emerg Scrubber	PW Enterprise Fund	200 McKenzie Ave	1993	1,500	9.86%	\$500,596
Post Pt. WW Trtmt Plant 120 Headworks	PW Enterprise Fund	200 McKenzie Ave	1973	3,440	14.28%	\$848,134
Post Pt. WW Trtmt Plant 110 Screenings Fac.	PW Enterprise Fund	200 McKenzie Ave	1993	15,714	18.95%	\$3,109,149
Post Pt. WW Trtmt Plant 340 Sludge Pump Stat	PW Enterprise Fund	200 McKenzie Ave	1993	6,020	13.99%	\$1,143,517
Pump Station - Woburn	PW Enterprise Fund	2838 Woburn St	1987	1,104	50.60%	\$459,013
Lift Station - June Road	PW Enterprise Fund	849 June Rd	2009	225	1.17%	\$81,489
Pump Station - College Way Reservoirs	PW Enterprise Fund	231 Highland Dr	1970	100	18.50%	\$38,706
Pump Station - Consolidation Reservoirs	PW Enterprise Fund	2500 Yew St Rd	1970	100	16.79%	\$42,140
Pump Station 2 - College Way	PW Enterprise Fund	231 Highland Dr	2005	714	2.58%	\$264,225
Pump Station - Samish Highlands	PW Enterprise Fund	Samish Highland	2012	384	0.00%	\$99,950
Lift Station - Roeder	PW Enterprise Fund	2650 Roeder Ave	1974	1,500	11.99%	\$742,003
Pump Station - Governor	PW Enterprise Fund	1895 Governor Rd	1970	100	19.05%	\$27,018
Pump Station - James Street	PW Enterprise Fund	4185 James St Rd	1970	96	30.31%	\$27,776
Post Pt. Wastewater Treatment Plant Shop	PW Enterprise Fund	200 McKenzie Ave	1972	3,200	30.34%	\$602,383
Post Pt WW Trtmt Plant 510 Solids Handling Bld	PW Enterprise Fund	200 McKenzie Ave	1972	16,000	19.90%	\$3,989,083
Pump Station - Short Street	PW Enterprise Fund	200 Short St	1987	1,104	35.75%	\$496,914
Pump Station - Reveille Reservoirs	PW Enterprise Fund	2421 Yew St Rd	1970	100	16.79%	\$42,140

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Asset Name	Dept/Fund	Address	Year Built	Capacity Sq. Ft.	FCI*	Replacement Value**
Post Pt WW Trtmt Plant 420 Chlor Scrub Sys	PW Enterprise Fund	200 McKenzie Ave	1972	2,400	16.80%	\$541,480
Pump Stat - 38th St & Padden Reservoirs	PW Enterprise Fund	2600 38th St	1987	532	23.48%	\$365,586
Pump Stat - Balsam Ln & Dakin Reservoirs	PW Enterprise Fund	3900 Balsam Ln	1987	612	17.13%	\$547,386
City Hall	PW General Fund	210 Lottie St	1939	58,516	39.20%	\$21,847,076
Federal Building	PW General Fund	104 W Magnolia St	1913	55,285	27.04%	\$17,762,670
Fire Station #6	PW General Fund	4060 Deemer Rd	2002	9,874	12.62%	\$2,761,157
Medic One Station	PW General Fund	858 Smith Rd	1991	3,092	52.51%	\$672,873
Fire Station #1 Headquarters	PW General Fund	1800 BRdWy Ave	1990	21,200	55.43%	\$6,382,540
Fire Station #5	PW General Fund	3314 NorthW Ave	1970	5,000	35.55%	\$1,798,761
Fire Station #4	PW General Fund	2306 Yew St. Rd	1987	8,320	46.92%	\$2,705,270
Fire Station #2	PW General Fund	1590 Harris Ave	2000	10,700	22.58%	\$3,020,927
Fire Station #4 Storage Building	PW General Fund	2306 Yew St. Rd	2000	720	6.19%	\$144,994
Fire Station #3	PW General Fund	1111 Indian St	1984	8,938	38.50%	\$2,739,443
Central Library	PW General Fund	210 Central Ave	1951	45,115	47.63%	\$11,611,298
Fairhaven Branch Library	PW General Fund	1117 12th St	1904	10,836	17.77%	\$3,773,743
Municipal Courthouse	PW General Fund	2014 C St	1972	31,400	42.73%	\$9,009,798
Police Station	PW General Fund	505 Grand Ave	1994	24,300	36.00%	\$8,339,297
Police Administration - Building F	PW General Fund	505 Grand Ave	1951	4,500	23.02%	\$1,522,879
Police Administration - Training Building	PW General Fund	505 Grand Ave	1951	4,900	37.22%	\$918,898
WhatCOMM Communications Building	PW General Fund	620 Alabama St	1950	4,688	38.16%	\$2,346,373
Summary				1,145,125	125.64%	\$312,102,740

*Facility Condition Index (FCI) is the ratio of deferred maintenance dollars to replacement dollars.

**Replacement Value in 2015\$

APPENDIX

- Plans and Documents Incorporated by Reference. (see next page)
- [Urban Fringe Subarea Plan](#) for Bellingham's UGA.
- [City Council Resolution NO. 2015-14](#) regarding 20-year population and employment growth forecasts and UGA boundaries.
- Bellingham Comprehensive Plan SEPA [Determination of Non-Significance](#).

Plans and Documents Incorporated by Reference

Neighborhood Plans:

- [Alabama Hill](#)
- [Barkley](#)
- [Birchwood](#)
- [City Center](#)
- [Columbia](#)
- [Cordata](#)
- [Cornwall Park](#)
- [Edgemoor](#)
- [Fairhaven](#)
- [Happy Valley](#)
- [Irongate](#)
- [King Mountain](#)
- [Lettered Streets](#)
- [Meridian](#)
- [Puget](#)
- [Roosevelt](#)
- [Samish](#)
- [Sehome](#)
- [Silver Beach](#)
- [South](#)
- [South Hill](#)
- [Sunnyland](#)
- [Whatcom Falls](#)
- [Western Washington University](#)
- [York](#)

Urban Village Plans:

- [Downtown Bellingham Plan](#)
- [Waterfront District Subarea Plan](#)
- [Fairhaven Neighborhood and Urban Village Plan](#)
- [Fountain District Subarea Plan](#)
- [Samish Way Subarea Plan](#)
- [Old Town Subarea Plan](#)

Institutional Master Plans:

- [Western Washington University](#)
- [St. Joseph's Hospital \(North Campus\)](#)
- [Whatcom Community College](#)

Other Plans and Documents:

- [Surface and Stormwater Comprehensive Plan](#)
- [2009 Comprehensive Sewer Plan](#)
- [2009 Comprehensive Water System Plan](#)
- [2013 Water System Plan Update](#)
- [Bellingham School District No. 501 Capital Facilities Plan \(2021-2026\)](#)
- [2012 Pedestrian Master Plan](#)
- [2014 Bicycle Master Plan](#)
- [2013 Shoreline Master Program](#)

Amended by Ord.: 2017-11-025