

Date: April 30, 2012

To: The Bellingham Planning Commission
From: Ralph W. Thacker
Re: FNUVP Draft of 3/20/12

Dear Members of the Planning Commission:

I am pleased with the progress you are making in your review of the FMUVP Draft of 3/20/12. The modeling shown at your meeting on April 26th of the view preservations to be gained from placing a forty-two foot height limitation on future structures to be built in the extension of the McKenzie Avenue street-width west of Padden Creek and in the extension of the Mill Avenue street-width west of 10th Street led me to ponder the benefits that would accrue if the same approach were to be taken for the vacated Columbia Avenue and for Knox Avenue.*

Because of the elevation differential provided by the 10th Street Bluff and the presence of the South Bay Trail running along the top of the bluff between the Fairhaven Village Green and Douglas Avenue, those benefits would be manifold. The many thousands of people who use the South Bay Trail would continue to enjoy unobstructed views of Harris and Bellingham Bays and the many thousands who pass by on trains and boats would continue to enjoy unobstructed views of Fairhaven's commercial area and the residential blocks to the north.

Moreover, these visual benefits have a significant, concomitant economic impact on Fairhaven businesses. While difficult to measure, the shops and restaurants located near the 10th and Mill trailhead receive considerable patronage from pedestrians and bicyclists using the South Bay Trail. The level of this patronage has greatly increased since completion of the Taylor Avenue Dock. This patronage would be greatly diminished if the views from the South Bay Trail were to be even partially blocked by new construction.

Those views could be completely blocked under Bellingham's present industrial zoning regulations having no height limitation. I believe that the unlimited height option should be replaced with a limit of forty-two feet, with the possible exception of a sixty-six foot height limit for necessary business uses such as a tall bay to permit the indoor repair of larger boats. Otherwise, imposing a forty-two-foot height limit for the rights-of-way of Mill, Columbia and Knox Avenues west of 10th Street might only provide view corridors every 200' with solid walls between them.

While I agree that the City is not required to preserve private views, I do believe that it is obliged to preserve them for public benefit. The view from the South Bay Trail between the Fairhaven Village Green and Douglas Avenue is one of Bellingham's most attractive and valuable features. It deserves to be preserved.

*A recommendation to treat the Gambier and Douglas rights-of-way in the same manner should be noted in the FNUVP and/or officially recorded elsewhere.



happyswede@comcast.net

05/01/2012 11:59 AM

To planningcommission@cob.org

cc Thomas Walstrom <happyswede@comcast.net>, Kevin
Thomas Walstrom <kwalstrom@comcast.net>

bcc

Subject Fairhaven Plan

To: Bellingham Planning Commission
Date: May 1, 2012

From Thomas & Mary Lue Walstrom
3612 Julia Ave.
Bellingham, WA 98229-3200

Subject: Comments on Fairhaven Plan - Fairhaven Power Boat Launch Ramps

- 1, The Fairhaven Power Boat Launch Ramps is owned and maintained by the Port of Bellingham,
not the City of Bellingham
2. Power Boaters living in Fairhaven, Happy Valley, And Samish neighborhoods have enjoyed many years of having convenient launch ramps as compared to driving over to the north port launch ramp complex.
3. As residents of the Samish Neighborhood, it is most handy for us to make the 1 mile drive from home to the launch ramps.
4. Every year we spend thousands of dollars for fuel, boat accessories, fishing gear, and bait at local businesses.
5. We are voters registered in Whatcom and exercise our voting rights each and every election.
6. We are property tax payers of Whatcom County for over 46 years.
7. We are absolutely opposed to any portion of the Fairhaven Plan that would eliminate the use of the Fairhaven Boat Launch Ramps by power boats.
8. We plan to join with many other Power Boaters to attend any further public meetings to make our voice heard until any proposal to limit the Fairhaven Boat Launch ramps to non-powered boats is abandoned. How on earth did this stupid idea ever come into existence?

Thank you for the opportunity to be heard.

Signed,

Thomas A. Walstrom

Mary Lue M. Walstrom

Dear Planning Commissioners,

The Fairhaven parking situation deserves your close attention and objective treatment before moving the FNUVP forward. I am writing today after attending the April 26 Commission work session and learning that the Commission Chairman doubts the scarcity of parking in Fairhaven, because he personally found open parking spaces when visiting Fairhaven. This anecdotal observation contradicts the extensive written and spoken public record connected to the FNUVP plan thus far. The plan itself admits the concern about scarcity to be valid, but its proposals allow the parking supply to continue shrinking – while generating more parking demand by promoting development. The plan promises that the development it ensures will bring long-term benefits to the community. The plan’s recommendations to address the parking situation do nothing similarly ensured to augment the already inadequate parking supply.

Please allow me to try to explain why an open parking space today is not evidence that an acute parking shortage does not exist, and to highlight some of the many social costs and inequitable policies that encumber the public, merchants, property owners, the revenues and reputation of the municipality, and the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan, all resulting from a very real parking shortage, already of long duration, that must be resolved.

Consider first that BMC calculates parking requirements based on a formula that provides a quotient of spaces per square footage of commercial floor area. An exception to the normal formula allows a Parking District to provide aggregate parking for all uses within a specific area, *provided* that the overall supply is consistent with requirements for all of the specific uses within the District, *and* that “a mechanism for providing required parking for the area” also exists (see BMC 20.12.010). Peripheral parking lots are allowed, provided they are within 500’ of the generator. “Satellite” lots, like those recently discussed for Port properties such as the ferry terminal, would need an additional shuttle transportation element, are not codified and would not work well for shoppers.

Parking studies conducted for the area in the 1980’s and 1990’s surveyed required spaces according to the formula given in BMC, resulting in objective numerical quotients (see *Planning Commission Findings* March 17, 1988 and March 31, 1994). The 2011 Transpo parking study relies on a different methodology, assigning quotients to the use of existing spaces. These recently discovered ‘use quotients’ were applied regardless of actual quantity, and have subordinated the objective numerical quantification of spaces. Yet the result of the 2011 study showed unambiguously that capacity *in the Parking District* is exhausted and fully utilized. The spaces provided within the parking district have fallen below numerical requirements by approximately 40% (600 existing public spaces vs. more than 1000 required).

Considered together, the best explanation for any empty parking spaces found today is that untold scores of Fairhaven patrons already have been deterred from visiting Fairhaven because of the parking challenge caused by an absurdly reduced parking supply. This is de facto “demand management” in a severe and irresponsible form,

allowing supply to sink to levels that will not sustain the commercial and recreational purposes of the area. Fairhaven entrepreneurs deserve the same infrastructure as entrepreneurs in all other commercial areas in Bellingham. The hobbled conditions of commerce resulting from inadequate parking also directly affect local and state revenue, substantially reducing sales tax collections from the district that would otherwise be possible under conditions of maintained parking standards.

The record shows that supply within the Parking District continues to shrink and will fall to about 500 spaces after the “pit” and the paved parking adjacent to McKenzie become developed. Those two temporary sites provide perhaps 125 spaces today. As written, the FNUVP will “lock in” zoning that makes future resolution of substandard parking impossible, as the plan acknowledges:

There are already discussions about development of the one of the last remaining surface parking areas in the neighborhood, the “pit.” As consumer confidence increases, more development will follow further reducing parking options. Full saturation will be reached and by that time, all options will have been precluded as there will be neither available land nor funding to address the situation.

(3/20/2012 draft, pp. 27-8)

Within an area already 40% beneath standards due to waivers from the standard parking requirement, further reductions are unnecessary. Yet the proposed development regulations (§20.37.350 F.) allow a 20% additional parking reduction for developers who take steps *expected* to reduce parking demand. The regulations do not guarantee that steps taken actually will reduce demand by 20%, but the quid pro quo is quite certain – the developer *will* enjoy a 20% *additional* irrevocable reduction of required parking. This additional subsidy for development is unnecessary and inexcusable.

The Transpo study showed worse conditions than those which have prompted many jurisdictions to require increased parking. The study, measuring usage quotients, was conducted Thursday, June 30 and Saturday, July 9 of 2011, showing use in the core at full capacity without any extraordinary demand circumstances such as a holiday (Transpo Parking Plan, p.10). The capacity characteristics identified in the study are typical of the entire period between Memorial Day and Labor Day and the entire period between Thanksgiving and New Year holidays. For more than four months each year, parking demand within the Parking District exceeds 95% of capacity for more than several hours each and every day. Many jurisdictions impose requirements to increase parking supply if similar capacity conditions exist for more than three days in any single month of one year.

The comprehensive plan has some policies suggesting a parking space reduction of up to 20% in certain areas. Yet the “transportation mode shift” projections calculate 75% of mobility will continue to be accomplished by automobiles in 2022 (Comprehensive Plan,

TG-28, p. T 78). Parking supply reductions in the Fairhaven Parking District already exceed the maximum recommended in the Comprehensive Plan.

The presentations before the Commission so far, with respect to parking, have been inadequate to address the real issue, scarcity. Task Forces and Parking Management Strategies will just be gimmicks, not tools, until affirmative steps are taken to increase the parking supply in the Parking District.

The plan contains a list of things the City "could do" to preserve and increase the parking supply (Plan, pp. 26-27). Yet nowhere in the proposed development regulations are these ideas implemented. For example, the plan says the City could deny development proposals that would reduce the on-street parking supply (p.27, fifth bullet), but the proposed development regulations contain no such basis for permit denial. I urge you to compare the plan's list with the proposed development regulations. You will find the same gap between most if not all of what the plan says "could" be done and what the regulations say "will" be done. The Commission should find and conclude that these gaps forgo the best means to increase the parking supply, and recommend that they be closed before this plan is approved.

The plan contains another list of things that private property owners "could do" to conserve and enhance the parking supply. For example, the plan says private owners could identify and acquire land for public parking. Of course, private initiative like that cannot be embodied in development regulations, but these proposals are not likely to be taken up by private land owners. Putting aside the scarcity of suitable undeveloped land (none remains due to development), no private owner is likely to see the provision of public parking as adequately profitable.

For that reason it is unreasonable to expect the provision of public parking to be zealously or even willingly pursued by private parties. Yet the plan and the development regulations abdicate this public function and rely entirely on the private sector. For seventeen years, the City has relied on these private owners, who were given the great incentive of a waiver of code-required parking for their properties. Seventeen years of that very valuable incentive, and we have scant parking to show for it but a serious supply problem remaining to be solved. The Commission should find and conclude that the responsibility for public parking belongs to the City, and recommend that any incentives for private owners be renegotiated in the public interest, or eliminated.

If the Commission is powerless to address these plan gaps, then bring the draconian demand management effort to greater public attention so that people are more inclined to adjust their transportation choices. If the plan is to proceed, as written, perhaps policies could be added so that signs would be immediately posted in the Parking District reading "Parking In This Area 40% Less Than Standard," those signs could be ready for change to "... 60% Less ..." after completion of one more large project on an existing parking site. In this way commercial rents also could be adjusted to reflect the benefits of parking demand management.

Sincerely,

David Carlsen

To:
Cc:
Bcc:
Subject: Fw: FNUVP Chapter 1

From: "Ralph W. Thacker" <rwthacker1@comcast.net>
To: "Greg Aucutt" <GAucutt@cob.org>
Date: 05/01/2012 04:01 PM
Subject: FNUVP Chapter 1

Hi, Greg:

Back in January I submitted a proposed rewrite of the history section of Chapter 1. I was pleased to see that corrections of some of the "factual inconsistencies" that pointed out are reflected in the Draft of 3/21. However, several remain. Moreover, the text of Chapter 1 remains unchanged. Guessing that my proposed alternative was set aside for because of its length more than its substance, I have revised it completely. The result is only twenty lines longer than the published version.

Attached are three items:

1. A copy of my latest revision, sans photos
2. A copy of the published version, sans photos, to be used for comparison purposes
3. A dopy of the published version with the remaining "factual inconsistencies" highlighted

Please, enter items 1 and 2 in the public record and forward copies of them to the PC.

Many thanks!

Ralph

PS. I am always available to discuss the comments I submit with any interested staff or commission member.
[attachment "Chapter 1D.doc" deleted by Heather M Aven/planning/cob]
[attachment "Unmarked Draft.doc" deleted by Heather M Aven/planning/cob]
[attachment "Marked Draft.doc" deleted by Heather M Aven/planning/cob]

Background - Natural and Historic Context (Proposed revision of Draft)

An 1880 view of the area now occupied by Bellingham's Fairhaven Neighborhood from the west would have revealed a cove formed by a bluff on the east, a sandy spit on the south terminating at a low hill in the foreground and a creek entering the cove from the south. Beyond the cove, sharp ridges rose on either hand. The entire locale was heavily forested and alive with marine life, animals and birds. Low-impact human presence here traces from over 5,000 years ago as Native Americans camped by the creek to hunt and fish. Intrusive settlement by persons of European origin began in 1853, with the filing of Donation Land Claims, one embracing the cove and three others to the north, east and south.

Twenty-one year old Daniel Jefferson Harris arrived in the spring of 1854 after completing two whaling voyages. He acceded to the claim around the cove that included the low hill which became variously known as "Deadman's Point," "Poe's Point," "Commercial Point" and "Post Point." When the forty-three acre plot that included the point was granted to A. M. Poe, his neighbor on the south, Harris quickly purchased it to insure deep-water access for the seaport town he hoped to found like Sag Harbor in his hometown of Easthampton on Long Island, NY. For thirty years Dan Harris lived in a cabin at the mouth of the creek that came to be called, "Padden," after a later settler to the east of his claim.

Dan Harris filed a plat for the "Town of Fairhaven on Harris Bay" on January 2, 1883. It had ninety-three blocks all 200' square, forty of which were divided into eight 50' x 100' lots. The plat had thirteen numbered streets going north and south and seven named streets and one unnamed street going east and west. Only Douglas and McKenzie were called "Avenues." All streets were 80' wide except for McKenzie which was set at 100'. McKenzie served as Fairhaven's sole east-west street until Padden Creek was bridged in 1889 to link the two sections of Harris. While eight blocks were reserved for industrial uses, no provision was made for official or recreational uses and no alleys were indicated.

After building a three-story frame hotel at the corner of 4th and Harris Streets and an adjacent dock and selling 241 lots, Dan Harris moved to Los Angeles, CA. He died there in 1890, a year after selling his remaining Fairhaven property to railroad-builder, Nelson Bennett, and mining mogul, Charles X. Larrabee for \$75,000. These men formed the Fairhaven Land Company (FLC), which within a year's time during 1889-90 extended Dan's dock, built the much larger Ocean Dock west of 4th Street, completed a railroad line north to Canada and another south to Sedro Woolley, built the landmark, Queen Anne style, Fairhaven Hotel at 12th and Harris and installed water and electric services.

The FLC filed a revised plat of Fairhaven in May 1889, designating the street south of McKenzie as "Larrabee," dropping the twenty-four undivided blocks south of Larrabee and the two divided blocks in the tidelands west of Deadman's Point and dividing twenty-seven of the fifty-seven remaining blocks into sixteen lots each measuring 25' x 100'. The graves in the Cemetery on Deadman's Point on land purchased by the County from Dan Harris in late 1862 were relocated and a cut was put through its hill to make way for the laying of railroad tracks. The FLC publicized Fairhaven nation-wide as the "Chicago of the West," causing its population to soar from 400 to 4,000 from mid-1889 to mid-1890.

In late 1890 Fairhaven was chartered as a city, incorporating the Town of Bellingham just to the north and extending to Lake Padden on the east and as far as the midpoint of Chuckanut Bay on the south. In 1891 the newly-formed Fairhaven Street Railway Company installed a streetcar line between Ocean Dock and New Whatcom. It ran up Harris from 4th to 11th where it turned north. A spur was added on Harris running between 11th and 24th. Passengers transferred between the two lines at 11th and Harris, prompting the edifice erected on the northeast corner of that intersection in 1888 to be called the "Terminal Building." It is one of Fairhaven's oldest, surviving, brick structures.

Most of Fairhaven's historic buildings were erected before 1905. The two tallest were the five-and-a-half story Fairhaven Hotel with gables peaking at 72' and a tower soaring to 100' and the four-story, 68' Waldron Building at the corner of 12th and McKenzie. Seventeen of the surviving historic buildings, mostly located within an area bounded by Larrabee, 11th, Columbia and 12th, were put on the National Register of Historic Buildings in 1977. Recessionary signs arose in 1891. Then the choice of Tacoma as the western terminus for the transcontinental railroad in 1892 and the nationwide depression of 1893 ended Fairhaven's dramatic growth, leaving most of these structures under-utilized.

In 1903-04 Fairhaven merged with Whatcom to form the present City of Bellingham, with all the east-west streets in original plat of Fairhaven being re-designated as "Avenues." After consolidation, the area that had been the City of Fairhaven became known as "South Bellingham" or the "South Side." However, the community's socio-economic structure remained virtually unchanged, as did the size and physical appearance of the commercial area west of the Fairhaven Hotel. One significant change did take place in 1928 when the hotel's iconic tower was removed for safety considerations. On-the-other-hand, development of buildings and docks around the shoreline of Harris Bay was extensive.

The marine-industrial enterprises along Fairhaven's waterfront have always been its major economic engine. Starting in 1883, a succession of lumber mills occupied the eighteen-acre section east of Padden Creek. The largest were Puget Sound Saw & Shingle Company (1897-1903) and its successor, Puget Sound Mills & Timber Co. (1903-33). Others significant operations to locate there were Bellingham Plywood (1941-50), Washington Loggers (1949-73) and Uniflite (1960-84). This area, acquired by the Port of Bellingham in 1937, has been known as the "Fairhaven Marine Industrial Park" (FMIP) since 1963.

From 1888 to 1965, the section of the waterfront west of Padden Creek was dominated by salmon canning operations, primarily Pacific American Fisheries (PAF), incorporated in 1889, which became the largest salmon cannery in the world. In its heyday, PAF had three canneries in Washington, one in British Columbia and twenty-four in Alaska, plus shipyards at Deadman's Point and on Eliza Island. Its site in Fairhaven was filled with docks, a box factory, processing buildings, warehouses, shops and dorms for contract laborers. The PAF can-making facility was in the tidelands further to the north, where "Tin Can Rock" still looms above the surface. Supporting firms lined the south side of Harris.

South Bellingham's industries remained active during World War II and beyond. However, the 1950 closing of Bellingham Plywood by Georgia Pacific, which had purchased it in 1947, began a protracted economic decline. In 1953, the Fairhaven Hotel was destroyed by fire, dissolving the Boy's and Girl's Club which had served as the area's social center. In 1965 the PAF shareholders liquidated the firm to pursue more promising investments and PAF's Fairhaven real estate was sold in 1966 to the Port of Bellingham. The Port built the Bellingham Cruise Terminal in 1989 and remolded the former PAF headquarters building nearby in 1994-95 to serve as the Bellingham Railroad and Bus Terminal.

After fire destroyed the cavernous Uniflite building in 1980, the company's assets were acquired first by Chris-Craft and then by Tolleycraft. Following the latter firm's bankruptcy in 1993, the structures came into the possession of a private developer. When he too declared bankruptcy, the Port of Bellingham purchased the buildings. It replaced the giant burned-out structure with the four steel-frame buildings which now occupy the FMIP along with the three similar structures which had been built previously and the wood-frame building that was originally Bellingham Plywood's log deck.

Loss of waterfront jobs and activity and the completion of I-5 in 1965 drew much of the through automobile traffic away from South Bellingham, causing many commercial businesses to close and leaving only a few basic services. In addition, the age and obsolescence of the many of the local buildings and the number of vacant lots generated a negative perception in the wider community and precipitated the erosion of property values. The resulting favorable prices for both residential and commercial space attracted faculty, students and graduates from the rapidly-expanding Western Washington State College, which became Western Washington University in 1977.

During the Vietnam War era, the South Bellingham commercial district became a center for the counterculture, with new bookstores, artists, improvisational theatres, coffee shops, bars, restaurants and cooperatively-owned businesses. In the early 1970's, investor-developer and Bellingham native, Kenneth Imus, began to purchase historic buildings and vacant parcels in the area and to undertake renovation and modest new construction projects inspired by the vision of creating a "Fairhaven Village." Over the next two decades, Fairhaven enjoyed a gradual rebirth as empty storefronts and new and renovated buildings became occupied and neighboring residential properties regained value.

From 1995 and through 2005, Fairhaven saw an intensive period of new construction and renovation within and immediately adjacent to the historic district. Most of these buildings have incorporated traditional materials and design elements. In some cases however, palpable height and bulk features have compromised the human scale and restricted views. Unfortunately, the following years of

economic recession have resulted in an almost total suspension of new development, high residential vacancy rates in the newer buildings and the closure of several businesses.

Since the plat of Fairhaven was marine-oriented and created before the advent of automobiles, it is the source of several current traffic challenges. When Chuckanut Drive and 12th Street were designated as Alternate US Highway 99 in 1921, 12th Street was changed from a quiet, residential street into a busy arterial. Creation of Finnegan Way in 1935 shifted the heavy traffic flow to 11th Street, making it an unplanned arterial. Completion of I5 in 1965 relieved some of this pressure. However, creation of a truck route to serve waterfront operations via Old Fairhaven Parkway, Donovan, 10th and Harris has upped traffic volume. Hence, Fairhaven streets are greatly stressed by the resulting congestion.

Fairhaven Today

Although Fairhaven is the smallest of Bellingham's neighborhoods, it is the most diverse. From its two-level waterfront setting and its having been a town and then a city, Fairhaven has inherited a compact commercial core with an intimate scale and a warm, turn-of-the-20th-Century feel, a marine-industrial waterfront, a mixture of single-family and multi-family homes and forested areas. The late 20th Century added a multi-modal transportation center, a waste treatment plant, and Marine Park at the foot of Harris Avenue. Five mixed-use structures built in or near the core since 2000, added 67,250 square feet of retail space and 210 residential units, helping raise the population 62% to 880.

Fairhaven has 577 housing units distributed among 139 single-family dwellings, 337 multi-family units and 101 group housing units having an aggregate occupancy rate of 90.5%. Although Fairhaven lacks public schools, the Lowell Elementary School on the near-edge of the South Hill Neighborhood and the Fairhaven Middle School on the near-side of the Edgemoor Neighborhood are within easy walking distance. Bus service provided at fifteen-minute intervals by Whatcom Transit Authority, puts Sehome High School in the Happy Valley Neighborhood within easy reach as well as the campuses of Western Washington University, Whatcom Community College and Bellingham Technical College.

The South Bay Trail with its stunning views links Fairhaven to Boulevard Park on the north via the Taylor Avenue Dock and to Fairhaven Park on the south. Connecting trails lead to and from tree-shaded Padden Creek, the Padden Creek Estuary, the Post Point Great Blue Heron Colony and the restored Post Point Lagoon, all abundant with wildlife. Harris Bay features a public boat launch, a small-boat storage and rental service via the Bellingham Bay Community Boating Center, and a sheltered anchorage from the prevailing southwest winds for vessels of moderate size.

Though smaller than in earlier years, Fairhaven's industrial sector includes the Fairhaven Shipyard and All American Marine, situated on land west of Padden Creek formerly occupied by PAF, and LFS Trawl, Seaview Yacht Systems and Unicraft, situated in the FMIP. Fairhaven's commercial sector has grown with the recent construction of new mixed-use buildings and now numbers more than two-hundred retail shops, restaurants and personal service firms, largely located within short walks from the Fairhaven Village Green, which was created by the City of Bellingham in 1998.

**All of these features combine to make Fairhaven Bellingham's quintessential urban village.
Inspired planning and dedicated administration are needed to maintain and complement them.**

Background - Natural and Historic Context (Text from the 3/20/12 Draft)

The Neighborhood of Fairhaven started as Bellingham Bay's second city, a town in its own right separate from the first settlement at Whatcom and fiercely independent until consolidation into the City of Bellingham in 1903-04. From both a historical and physical perspective, Fairhaven reflects a "town within a city" character providing the City of Bellingham with a distinct sense of place for the South Side.

Fairhaven's origins and early attraction can be traced to the fresh running water of Padden Creek and a fishing camp at its mouth referred to by the Lummi people as Seeseelichem. The creek, which today cuts across Harris Avenue near 8th and empties into an estuary on Harris Bay, provided drinking water on a wind protected, deep water moorage for the first European sailors to visit Bellingham Bay in the 18th Century. West of the mouth of Padden Creek, the land rose to a small hill at the southernmost edge of Bellingham Bay once known as Poe's Point, and originally known as "Dead Man's Point."

The name Fairhaven was attached to the first street plan and plat filed on a donation land claim held by a colorful early settler, Daniel Jefferson Harris. The "Fairhaven on Harris Bay Plat" was filed on January 2, 1883 and it was laid out with a seaport function in mind. The basic grid street pattern ran the town's main street, modestly named Harris, parallel to the shoreline and then configured perpendicular numbered streets beginning at **Poe's Point** up from a series of docks along the waterfront. In time, the highland at Poe's Point, which had served as the county's cemetery since 1862, was leveled to create room for railroad tracks and to extend the shipyard.

A railroad era land boom began in the 1880's and continued through the early 1890's as the town began to take on a permanent architectural form morphing from wood frame structures to refined Victorian era brick commercial buildings. While overwater industries and shipping docks lined the small bay, the hillside intersection of 12th and Harris became the center of the commercial district. Near where the streetcars from Whatcom connected with the waterfront traffic from Fairhaven, a towering Queen Anne style hotel named for the town was completed in 1890. The **Fairhaven Hotel** seemed to crown the red brick town that rolled up the southwest shoulder of Sehome Hill from Harris Bay, announcing the preeminence of Fairhaven to passengers arriving by ship and by train.

The development of Fairhaven was directed in large part by the Fairhaven Land Company owned by Nelson Bennett, (who sold out to Charles X. Larabee in 1891), an engineer and contractor closely connected with the transcontinental railroads that were reaching Puget Sound from the Great Lakes at the end of the 19th century. Like Tacoma, Port Townsend and the Pioneer Square area of Seattle, Fairhaven was envisioned as a future seaport metropolis where shipping trade, banking, and sophisticated travelers would be concentrated. A serious worldwide economic collapse in 1893 brought the hopes to an end and left behind a legacy of well constructed but overestimated buildings and infrastructure. The earliest authentic layer of Fairhaven's built environment dates to this period and comprises many of the contributing resources in the Fairhaven National Register Historic District (NR 1977).

Buildings from this period are constructed on city lots 100 feet deep with frontage divided into 25 foot units. The largest of the masonry buildings were constructed on 100 x 100 footprints. The exterior walls were based on granite or sandstone foundations with unreinforced brick walls reaching up to five or six stories. Due to the weight of the masonry and the need to widen the walls at the base as the height grows, few builders were willing to concede high rent ground floor area for hard to reach rooms five flights of stairs up. The height of buildings in Fairhaven's historic district is also attributable to the construction boom and the need for adjacent owners to agree on the engineering of party walls and window access to fresh air and the remarkable view to the bay. The interior structure of the buildings is uniformly Douglas Fir heavy timber post and beam with milled wood joists and floors. Lath and plaster were typically used for finished walls and ceilings. The radiator heat was from coal and wood fueled boilers and lights were gas.

Fairhaven's waterfront proved to be its most important asset during the first decades of the 20th Century as the Pacific American Fisheries Company (PAF) emerged as a giant in the canned salmon industry. Headquartered in Fairhaven, its builders Roland Onffroy and E. B. Deming built a sprawling salmon cannery on pilings just to the west of the Padden Creek estuary, perhaps the largest in the world at the time. Along with warehouses, office buildings, a China House for workers and mechanical

shops, the complex consumed most of the waterfront and was later expanded to include a massive shipbuilding operation at Deadman's Point (Poe's Point). Box and can manufacturers ("Tin Can Rock" is a memorial), machinery maintenance shops and port facilities filled in the remainder of the shoreline repeating an architectural language that used low pitched gable roofs over timber framed structures with vertical planked siding and industrial scaled double hung windows.

Fairhaven and most of Bellingham's south side settled into a somewhat self-contained district with handmade, wood frame residential neighborhoods like Happy Valley and South Hill growing around the waterfront workplaces on Harris Bay. The commercial district west of the Fairhaven Hotel provided localized neighborhood goods and services while downtown Bellingham grew with new institutional buildings, financial and corporate offices, theaters, and entertainment. During the first half of the 20th century, Bellingham saw taller larger steel and concrete frame buildings rise in the downtown while Fairhaven continued to be identified by two, three and four story unreinforced masonry buildings dating from the 19th century. By the 1930's even the grand Fairhaven Hotel had been stripped of its lofty to and conformed to a four story height.

As the automobile began to replace the streetcars and railroads, Pacific Highway (99) was improved along Chuckanut Drive in 1921 making Fairhaven a gateway into Bellingham from the south. Instead of serving as a dead end streetcar loop on the south side, 12th Street became a state highway and a windfall for the merchants in Fairhaven. Gas stations and tourist related businesses appeared among the Victorian buildings and the main course of activity and traffic patterns shifted from east to west on Harris to north south on 11th and 12th, although most jobs remained on the waterfront. The density of historic commercial and industrial buildings in Fairhaven was notably diminished by the mid 1930's due to the neglect of wood frame structures, fires and replacement as PAF expanded and modernized their operations. The brick building at 4th and Harris marks this era, being built in 1935 to replace the PAF's main office building that was lost to fire.

Fairhaven's shipyards and industries were active during World War II but in the years that followed both the commercial and industrial areas began to decline. As jobs faded so too did the condition of the surrounding houses and residential areas. Refrigeration and the depletion of salmon on Puget Sound led to the sale of PAF property to the Port of Bellingham as the company focused more on its Alaska operations. Many of the warehouses and industrial buildings between Harris Avenue and the shoreline were removed without replacement as the cannery complex disappeared along with its dependant enterprises. The loss of waterfront jobs and activity affected many storefront businesses and the age and obsolescence of the buildings eroded property values along with the civic perception of Fairhaven. In 1953 the Fairhaven Hotel was lost for good to a fire and plans began to reroute the interstate highway inland, bypassing Fairhaven entirely. Many of the remaining commercial buildings became vacant and the number of operating merchants fell to a new low with the only survivors being basic services like a pharmacy, grocery, newsstand, taverns, and a few shops.

In the late 1960's Fairhaven became a center for the counterculture during the Vietnam War era, with coffee shops, bars, and restaurants such as Toad Hall in the basement of Nelson Block, which was linked to the Underground Railroad for young men evading the military draft by slipping over the border into Canada. Artists and cooperatively-owned businesses joined bookstores, local restaurants, bars and art house theatres in reanimating Fairhaven. In the early 1970's investor, developer and Fairhaven native, Kenneth Imus, began to purchase and improve several of the important historic buildings and empty lots in Fairhaven. Imus also collected architectural fragments, building details and salvaged building materials from other locals, which he incorporated into the rehabilitation and in some cases elaboration of his properties. In 1977 the Fairhaven Historic District was formally listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Over the next two decades Fairhaven enjoyed a rebirth as storefronts and upper floors became occupied, owners invested in structural and tenant improvements and the surrounding residential areas regained value.

Beginning in 1995 and through 2006, Fairhaven saw a period of new construction within and immediately outside the historic district. The new construction generally reflected the historic forms, scale and exterior materials that define the district. The density and compact character that Fairhaven's commercial center exhibited during its most active historic period is being revisited today.

The Area Today

While Fairhaven is today one of Bellingham's smaller neighborhoods, it is also one of its most diverse. It is a complete, functioning urban village with a commercial core, mixed use residential development, nearby single-family residential, marine industrial waterfront, ferry, bus and train terminals, and intact historic buildings housing a thriving shopping and tourist district.

According to the 2010 Census, the Fairhaven Neighborhood had 577 housing units and a population of approximately 880. (For perspective, total city population in 2010 was 80,885. Total housing was 36,757 units) Census data also shows that there were about 1,800 jobs in the neighborhood in 2010. (Total citywide jobs was 47,616.) Clearly, the urban village relies greatly on the entire city (and region) for its success.

Fairhaven is endowed with a unique sense of place derived from its waterfront location offering spectacular views of and access to wooded areas and the shoreline of Bellingham Bay, and a built environment with a turn-of-the-20th century character, offering a warm texture and intimate scale.

Perhaps more than any other neighborhood in the City, it is a town within a city, with residential, commercial, and industrial properties in close proximity. A combination of traditional residential, more urban residential, commercial and industrial areas makes this a full-spectrum neighborhood. Carefully planned growth is essential to maintaining the quality of life in these varied areas.

Background - Natural and Historic Context (Marked text from the 3/20/12 Draft)

The Neighborhood of Fairhaven started as Bellingham Bay's second city, a town in its own right separate from the first settlement at Whatcom and fiercely independent until consolidation into the City of Bellingham in 1903-04. From both a historical and physical perspective, Fairhaven reflects a "town within a city" character providing the City of Bellingham with a distinct sense of place for the South Side.

Fairhaven's origins and early attraction can be traced to the fresh running water of Padden Creek and a fishing camp at its mouth referred to by the Lummi people as Seeseelichem. The creek, which today cuts across Harris Avenue near 8th and empties into an estuary on Harris Bay, provided drinking water on a wind protected, deep water moorage for the first European sailors to visit Bellingham Bay in the 18th Century. West of the mouth of Padden Creek, the land rose to a small hill at the southernmost edge of Bellingham Bay once known as Poe's Point, and originally known as "Dead Man's Point."

The name Fairhaven was attached to the first street plan and plat filed on a donation land claim held by a colorful early settler, Daniel Jefferson Harris. The "Fairhaven on Harris Bay Plat" was filed on January 2, 1883 and it was laid out with a seaport function in mind. The basic grid street pattern ran the town's main street, modestly named Harris, parallel to the shoreline and then configured perpendicular numbered streets beginning at **Poe's Point** up from a series of docks along the waterfront. In time, the highland at Poe's Point, which had served as the county's cemetery since 1862, was leveled to create room for railroad tracks and to extend the shipyard.

A railroad era land boom began in the 1880's and continued through the early 1890's as the town began to take on a permanent architectural form morphing from wood frame structures to refined Victorian era brick commercial buildings. While overwater industries and shipping docks lined the small bay, the hillside intersection of 12th and Harris became the center of the commercial district. Near where the streetcars from Whatcom connected with the waterfront traffic from Fairhaven, a towering Queen Anne style hotel named for the town was completed in 1890. The **Fairhaven Hotel** seemed to crown the red brick town that rolled up the southwest shoulder of **Sehome Hill** from Harris Bay, announcing the preeminence of Fairhaven to passengers arriving by ship and by train.

The development of Fairhaven was directed in large part by the Fairhaven Land Company owned by **Nelson Bennett**, (who sold out to Charles X. Larabee in 1891), an engineer and contractor closely connected with the transcontinental railroads that were reaching Puget Sound from the Great Lakes at the end of the 19th century. Like Tacoma, Port Townsend and the Pioneer Square area of Seattle, Fairhaven was envisioned as a future seaport metropolis where shipping trade, banking, and sophisticated travelers would be concentrated. A serious worldwide economic collapse in 1893 brought the hopes to an end and left behind a legacy of well constructed but overestimated buildings and infrastructure. The earliest authentic layer of Fairhaven's built environment dates to this period and comprises many of the contributing resources in the Fairhaven National Register Historic District (NR 1977).

Buildings from this period are constructed on city lots 100 feet deep with frontage divided into 25 foot units. The largest of the masonry buildings were constructed on 100 x 100 footprints. The exterior walls were based on granite or sandstone foundations with unreinforced brick walls reaching up to five or six stories. Due to the weight of the masonry and the need to widen the walls at the base as the height grows, few builders were willing to concede high rent ground floor area for hard to reach rooms five flights of stairs up. The height of buildings in Fairhaven's historic district is also attributable to the construction boom and the need for adjacent owners to agree on the engineering of party walls and window access to fresh air and the remarkable view to the bay. The interior structure of the buildings is uniformly Douglas Fir heavy timber post and beam with milled wood joists and floors. Lath and plaster were typically used for finished walls and ceilings. The radiator heat was from coal and wood fueled boilers and lights were gas.

Fairhaven's waterfront proved to be its most important asset during the first decades of the 20th Century as the Pacific American Fisheries Company (PAF) emerged as a giant in the canned salmon industry. Headquartered in Fairhaven, its **builders Roland Onffroy** and E. B. Deming built a sprawling salmon cannery on pilings just to the west of the Padden Creek estuary, perhaps the largest in the world at the time. Along with warehouses, office buildings, a China House for workers and mechanical

shops, the complex consumed most of the waterfront and was later expanded to include a massive shipbuilding operation at Deadman's Point (Poe's Point). Box and can manufacturers ("Tin Can Rock" is a memorial), machinery maintenance shops and port facilities filled in the remainder of the shoreline repeating an architectural language that used low pitched gable roofs over timber framed structures with vertical planked siding and industrial scaled double hung windows.

Fairhaven and most of Bellingham's south side settled into a somewhat self-contained district with handmade, wood frame residential neighborhoods like Happy Valley and South Hill growing around the waterfront workplaces on Harris Bay. The commercial district west of the Fairhaven Hotel provided localized neighborhood goods and services while downtown Bellingham grew with new institutional buildings, financial and corporate offices, theaters, and entertainment. During the first half of the 20th century, Bellingham saw taller larger steel and concrete frame buildings rise in the downtown while Fairhaven continued to be identified by two, three and four story unreinforced masonry buildings dating from the 19th century. By the 1930's even the grand Fairhaven Hotel had been stripped of its lofty towers and conformed to a four story height.

As the automobile began to replace the streetcars and railroads, Pacific Highway (99) was improved along Chuckanut Drive in 1921 making Fairhaven a gateway into Bellingham from the south. Instead of serving as a dead end streetcar loop on the south side, 12th Street became a state highway and a windfall for the merchants in Fairhaven. Gas stations and tourist related businesses appeared among the Victorian buildings and the main course of activity and traffic patterns shifted from east to west on Harris to north south on 11th and 12th, although most jobs remained on the waterfront. The density of historic commercial and industrial buildings in Fairhaven was notably diminished by the mid 1930's due to the neglect of wood frame structures, fires and replacement as PAF expanded and modernized their operations. The brick building at 4th and Harris marks this era, being built in 1935 to replace the PAF's main office building that was lost to fire.

Fairhaven's shipyards and industries were active during World War II but in the years that followed both the commercial and industrial areas began to decline. As jobs faded so too did the condition of the surrounding houses and residential areas. Refrigeration and the depletion of salmon on Puget Sound led to the sale of PAF property to the Port of Bellingham as the company focused more on its Alaska operations. Many of the warehouses and industrial buildings between Harris Avenue and the shoreline were removed without replacement as the cannery complex disappeared along with its dependant enterprises. The loss of waterfront jobs and activity affected many storefront businesses and the age and obsolescence of the buildings eroded property values along with the civic perception of Fairhaven. In 1953 the Fairhaven Hotel was lost for good to a fire and plans began to reroute the interstate highway inland, bypassing Fairhaven entirely. Many of the remaining commercial buildings became vacant and the number of operating merchants fell to a new low with the only survivors being basic services like a pharmacy, grocery, newsstand, taverns, and a few shops.

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