



CBD Neighborhood Plan

As adopted by Ordinance No. 8868 and amended by Ordinance Nos. 8946, 9693, 9717, 10317, 2004-12-087, 2008-03-022 and 2013-12-090.

Neighborhood Plan Adoption: In 1980, the Bellingham Plan was adopted and included individual plans for each neighborhood. When the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA) was adopted in 1990, the City was required to update and amend the Bellingham Plan to include comprehensive planning elements required by the GMA. The Bellingham Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1995 and again included all of the individual neighborhood plans.

Neighborhood Plan Amendment: The Bellingham Municipal Code (BMC) 20.20 includes procedures by which individual property owners may petition the City for an amendment to an individual neighborhood plan. This may be a simple text amendment to address a condition or concern in a particular neighborhood or it may be a request for a change to the land use designation in a portion of a neighborhood. Because the neighborhood plans are adopted as part of the Bellingham Comprehensive Plan, the GMA restricts amendments to once per year. The deadline for submitting neighborhood plan amendments to the City is December 1 of each year (See BMC 20.20). An amendment to a neighborhood plan is made by ordinance. All of the changes made to this plan since it was originally adopted are listed on the last page of the plan.

Neighborhood Plan Update: Periodically, individual neighborhood plans merit a complete update due to changes of conditions in the neighborhood and/or the City. A complete neighborhood plan update can be a complex process requiring a great deal of time, public participation, and planning staff resources. Some of the individual neighborhood plans that were originally adopted in 1980 have received complete updates, while others have not.

CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

SECTION 1, NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER

1.1 The Central Business District (CBD) Neighborhood includes the downtown, civic center, cultural district and central waterfront areas of Bellingham. Historically, the area was the commercial, retail, governmental and employment center of the city. That changed in the late 1980s when the major retailers left the downtown for the Bellis Fair regional mall.

In recent years, the downtown area has seen significant new residential, office and retail development. Since 2000, nearly 1,000 new housing units have been constructed or are under construction or in the permitting stage. This new development has contributed greatly to the sense of optimism that surrounds downtown Bellingham.

As established in countless planning efforts over the years, the CBD neighborhood of the future will continue to be the cultural, social and economic center of the region. This role will be reinforced by more pedestrian-oriented streetscapes, housing for the full range of income groups, an improved cultural/entertainment district, increased retail development, an active civic center, parking improvements, and a safe and vibrant street life. The downtown will be home to a mix of uses, so that retail, offices and housing are located near one another. There will continue to be large buildings in the downtown, but design requirements will ensure that new buildings have human-scale detailing such as ground floor retail, view corridors, larger upper story setbacks, attractive awnings, and varied roof forms. The design standards will ensure that boxy, flat, boring buildings and blank walls will be a thing of the past.

1.2 The Bellingham Bay waterfront stretches from the city limits on Eldridge Avenue in the north to Chuckanut Bay on the south. The CBD portion of the waterfront extends from the Squalicum Creek Waterway south to approximately Cedar Street. Included within this area are many commercial, industrial and marine related land uses.

The waterfront has changed dramatically over the years, from a Native American fishing village to a bustling turn-of-the-century shipping center, to an industrial employment center, to the mix of commercial, industrial and recreational uses of today.

Historically, Bellingham's central waterfront has been dominated by the 137-acre Georgia Pacific pulp and paper mill. In 2001, Georgia Pacific closed the pulp mill portion of the plant. While the tissue mill operations continue, the property has been acquired by the Port of Bellingham. Subsequently, the Port and the city agreed to work together to master plan the site for eventual mixed use redevelopment. The planning work is scheduled to be completed in 2006. Site clean-up will continue for many years.

SECTION 2, SUBAREA PLANNING

2.1 - The Central Business District has been the focus of a number of planning efforts over the years. A few of the major downtown planning projects are listed here:

- 1989 Downtown Development Strategies
- 1992 Regional Urban Design Assistance Team (RUDAT) report
- 1992 Visions for Bellingham
- 1996 Whatcom Creek Waterfront Action Program
- 1998 Downtown Development Workshop
- 2002 City Center Master Plan and Design Guidelines
- 2004-05 Public Facilities District - Cultural District plans

While done at different times and by different stakeholders, all these studies had two things in common: 1) they recognized the downtown's immense importance to the city and region; and 2) they reaffirmed the long range vision for the area that includes, among other things:

- Maintaining the downtown as the civic, cultural, commercial, entertainment and employment heart of the city.
- Preserving historical buildings and sites.
- Increasing the supply of housing in and around the downtown.
- Increasing access and recreational opportunities on the waterfront.

2.2 - The City Center Master Plan process was inspired by the many planning efforts that took place in the 1990s. The CCMP was intended to tie the various planning efforts together in one cohesive, coordinated document. After a lengthy public process to develop and review the CCMP, it was adopted as an addendum to the CBD Neighborhood Plan in 2002.

At its core, the CCMP is characterized by the 12 "key strategies" listed in Chapter 1, *Achieving the Vision for "Everyone's Neighborhood"*. The strategies are repeated here to serve as important CBD policy statements to be used in future plans and developments:

Strategy 1 – Develop the City Center as the heart of commerce, cultural and civic activities for the community.

Strategy 2 – Guide the development of key projects such that the maximum public benefits will be realized as well as to leverage funds unavailable to the private sector.

Strategy 3 – Expand the network of urban parks and open space in the City Center.

Strategy 4 – Develop a coordinated walkways and trails system.

Strategy 5 – Improve auto and transit access, circulation and parking.

Strategy 6 – Establish a distinct landscape design image for downtown Bellingham.

Strategy 7 – Clearly identify gateways into the City Center in conjunction with an overall public way-finding system.

Strategy 8 – Establish a proactive program to encourage and build housing for the full range of income levels, either as stand-alone projects or as part of mixed-use developments.

Strategy 9 – Improve Whatcom Creek as a scenic and recreational corridor.

Strategy 10 – Improve public access to the waterfront.

Strategy 11 – Provide public facilities that will enhance livability.

Strategy 12 – Promote a healthy and diverse economic environment in the City Center.

Strategy 13 – Provide the leadership to implement the CCMP.

Much more information about these strategies and other topics such as historic resources, auto circulation, parking, bicycle and pedestrian circulation, parks, and opportunity site development concepts are contained in the CCMP document.

2.3 - Bellingham's central waterfront area has also been the focus of a number of planning efforts over the years. The resulting documents all identified the tremendous potential of the area, while at the same time lamenting the lack of public access and the fact that much of the downtown area had "turned it's back" to Bellingham's waterfront.

The most significant and extensive of the waterfront planning efforts was conducted by the Waterfront Futures Group (WFG) in 2003-04. The WFG was formed in January 2003 by the City of Bellingham and the Port of Bellingham. Eleven citizens were asked to take a fresh and independent look at the entire Bellingham Bay waterfront. Two years, dozens of meetings, and many thousands of working hours later, the group's "*Waterfront Vision and Framework Plan*" and "*Waterfront Action Plan*" were completed. The WFG plans contained:

- A "vision" for the future of each of six defined "character areas" along the waterfront.
- Thirty-nine general "guiding principles" (policy statements) for the entire waterfront and a number of specific principles for each of the character areas.
- Specific recommendations for the character areas and an implementation component designed to help accomplish the visions.

The WFG plans were eventually approved by the City Council in February 2005. In the ordinance approving the plans, the Council directed staff to use the plan's visions, guiding principles and recommendations to "inform the updates to the Bellingham Comprehensive Plan and the applicable neighborhood plans and zoning regulations, the Shoreline Master Program, and in the development of master plans for the central waterfront and Old Town areas". Accordingly, the visions for the six "character areas" along the waterfront and the 39 general guiding principles were included in the Framework Goals and Policies chapter of Bellingham's Comprehensive Plan when it was updated in 2005. Adding the WFG's specific guiding principles for the City Center and Squalicum character areas to this neighborhood plan (see below) will ensure consistency with, and implement, the city's comprehensive plan and the WFG's recommendations for a new Bellingham waterfront.

Two of the WFG's defined character areas are within the boundaries of the CBD Neighborhood – the "*Squalicum*" and "*City Center*" areas¹. These areas include all the waterfront property from the Squalicum Creek Waterway south to the new boundary of the South Hill Neighborhood at approximately Palm Street (see attached New Whatcom Planning Area map). The WFG's vision for the Squalicum and City Center character areas can be summarized in a few of key statements:

Waterfront Futures Group's "*Squalicum*" Character Area Vision:

- Over time, the area will become a diverse center of marine-related activities and also include other light industry, commerce and residences.
- Continue developing the Bellwether Peninsula with retail, support services and some housing.
- Re-create marine habitat at the mouth of Squalicum Creek.
- Enhance public access to the water and around the area.

Waterfront Futures Group's "*City Center*" Character Area Vision:

- Create a mixed-use neighborhood, with a combination of commercial, institutional, educational, retail services and housing.
- Provide a place where people can live, work, study and spend their leisure time without relying on auto transportation.
- Convert the existing ASB into a new marina or marine habitat.
- Maintain deep water and transient moorage and marine-related commerce in and along the Whatcom Creek Waterway.
- Significantly improve public access opportunities throughout the area.
- Locate WWU and/or other educational or institutional facilities in the area.
- Acquire the G.P. property to ensure community involvement in planning for redevelopment and to secure acquisition of land for parks, roads and public access.

Note: 1. A portion of the City Center Character Area also includes Area 1 of the South Hill Neighborhood. As such, the boundary of the South Hill Neighborhood was revised in 2005 to move Area 1 to the CBD Plan and label it Area 21.

The WFG's general guiding principles for the City Center and Squalicum character areas are included in this plan as policy statements. The four "overarching" WFG Guiding Principles listed in bold type as numbers I to IV. The other principles are numbered or bulleted after each overarching principle. A few of the bullet point principles listed in the WFG Vision and Framework Plan are not included in this plan. While all the guiding principles should be considered in the master development plan process, some were considered too specific to include in a policy document like a neighborhood plan.

WFG "Squalicum" Character Area¹ Guiding Principles:

Guiding Principle I – Reinforce the Inherent Qualities of Each Place on the Waterfront:

- 1-1. Make the waterfront a regular part of the lives of more people.
 - . Welcome visitors (coming by water or land)
- 1-2. Respect history, cultures and the arts.
 - . Devise a process of engagement with Native history
 - . Embrace, include and expand upon knowledge of cultural and historical past
- 1-3. Make the waterfront inviting to people on foot.
 - . Establish clear and definitive design and development guidelines
- 1-4. Reinforce a unique "sense of place" at different waterfront locations.
 - . Support transition and re-use of centralized surface parking areas
 - . Nurture diversity of water-oriented activities by including a mixture of light industrial, commercial and residential uses
 - . Establish view preservation guidelines
- 1-5. Complement adjacent uses.

Guiding Principle II – Restore the Health of Land & Water:

- 2-1. Enhance or reintroduce natural systems.
- 2-2. Create and restore habitat wherever possible.
- 2-3. Remediate upland and in-water contamination.
- 2-4. Protect existing natural shorelines.
- 2-5. Seek opportunities to soften existing hardened shorelines.
- 2-6. Tailor environmental cleanup strategies and remediation to planned use.

Note: 1. The Squalicum Character Area Guiding Principles apply to CBD Neighborhood Plan Areas 1, 3, 7, and the portion of Area 2 north of Broadway Street east of Roeder Ave.

- 2-7. Manage stormwater to enhance estuarine habitats.
 - . Treat or otherwise, assure the quality of stormwater used to enhance estuarine habitats.
- 2-8. Require sustainable practices in all development.
- 2-9. Restore, enhance and expand beaches wherever possible.
- 2-10. Connect proposed open space and natural areas to regional open space network and wildlife corridors.
- 2-11. Explore mitigation banking and incentives (such as environmental credits) for environmental resource protection and enhancement prior to redevelopment.

Guiding Principle III – *Improve Waterfront Access:*

- 3-1. Develop strong connections between uplands and water.
- 3-2. Provide links to regional trail systems.
 - . As redevelopment occurs, maintain waterside trails.
- 3-3. Provide multiple modes of access to each area of the waterfront.
- 3-4. Provide convenient connections between different modes of transportation (jitney/bus).
- 3-5. Create and connect large and small parks and open spaces with a “braided” system of pedestrian trails.
- 3-6. Enhance opportunities for visual access to waterfront areas and activities.
- 3-7. Provide the opportunity to walk the waterfront while respecting natural habitat.
 - . Provide viewing that respects industrial activity areas.
- 3-8. Help people find their way.
- 3-9. Provide way finding for the Coast Millennium Trail as a route that follows existing and proposed trails.
- 3-10. Explore the concept of public access “banking” and other financing incentives for improving public access.
- 3-11. Protect and enhance shoreline environmental resources when designing for shoreline access and upland development.

Guiding Principle IV – *Promote a Healthy & Dynamic Waterfront Economy:*

- 4-1. Create new mixed-use areas on the waterfront for commercial, industrial, educational, recreational and residential uses.
- 4-2. Support water-dependent activities and uses.
- 4-3. Create conditions attractive to jobs of the future.
- 4-4. Strengthen the tie between local jobs and resources.
- 4-5. Provide public amenities and infrastructure to support redevelopment.
- 4-6. Improve permitting processes to achieve the goals and principles of the Waterfront Vision.
- 4-7. Explore economic spin-off related to Bellingham Bay Pilot cleanup strategies.
- 4-8. Provide incentives and credits for “green” buildings.

WFG “City Center” Character Area¹ Guiding Principles:

Guiding Principle I – *Reinforce the Inherent Qualities of Each Place on the Waterfront:*

- 1-1. Make the waterfront a regular part of the lives of more people.
 - . Foster a greater sense of ownership and stewardship for the health of the Bay and its shore lands by providing places for people to live, work, learn and play as a regular part of their daily activities.
 - . Create physical and cultural conditions that are welcoming to visitors and encourage their participation in waterfront places and activities.
- 1-2. Respect history, cultures and the arts.
 - . Embrace, include and expand knowledge of our peoples and their cultural heritage.
- 1-3. Make the waterfront inviting to people on foot.
- 1-4. Reinforce a unique “sense of place” at different waterfront locations.
 - . Support development of a vibrant area that integrates water-dependent uses with new commercial, institutional, educational, and residential uses and public spaces
- 1-5. Complement adjacent uses.
 - . Create an urban mixed-use neighborhood that will complement downtown

Note: 1. The City Center Guiding Principles apply to CBD Neighborhood Plan, Areas 4, 11, 15, 17, 21 and the part of Area 2 that lies south of Broadway Street.

Guiding Principle II – *Restore the Health of Land & Water:*

- 2-1. Enhance or reintroduce natural systems.
- 2-2. Create and restore habitat wherever possible.
- 2-3. Remediate upland and in-water contamination.
- 2-4. Protect existing natural shorelines.
- 2-5. Seek opportunities to soften existing hardened shorelines.
- 2-6. Tailor environmental cleanup strategies and remediation to planned use.
- 2-7. Manage stormwater to enhance estuarine habitats.
 - . Treated or otherwise, assure the quality of stormwater used to enhance estuarine habitats.
- 2-8. Require sustainable practices in all development.
- 2-9. Restore, enhance and expand beaches wherever possible.
- 2-10. Connect proposed open space and natural areas to regional open space network and natural wildlife corridors.
- 2-11. Explore mitigation banking and incentives (such as environmental credits) for environmental resource protection and enhancement prior to redevelopment.

Guiding Principle III – *Improve Waterfront Access:*

- 3-1. Develop strong connections between uplands and water.
 - . Utilize existing streets to make pedestrian and vehicle connections to and from adjacent districts and neighborhoods.
 - . Identify areas where pedestrian access is provided when not in use for commercial/industrial purposes.
 - . Provide transient moorage with easy access from water to upland services.
- 3-2. Provide links to regional trail systems.
- 3-3. Provide multiple modes of access to each area of the waterfront.
- 3-4. Provide convenient connections between different modes of transportation (jitney/bus).

- 3-5. Create and connect large and small parks and open spaces with a “braided” system of pedestrian trails.
 - . Create water-oriented parks and open spaces.
 - . Connect parks and open spaces with walkways and bikeways through the City Center neighborhood.
- 3-6. Enhance opportunities for visual access to waterfront areas.
 - . Preserve, improve and create public views to and from the waterfront.
- 3-7. Provide the opportunity to walk the waterfront while respecting natural habitat.
 - . Provide viewing that respects industrial activity areas.
- 3-8. Help people find their way.
- 3-9. Provide way finding for the Coast Millennium Trail as a route that follows existing and proposed trails.
- 3-10. Explore the concept of public access “banking” and other financing incentives for improving public access.
- 3-11. Protect and enhance shoreline environmental resources when designing for shoreline access and upland development.

Guiding Principle IV – *Promote a Healthy & Dynamic Waterfront Economy:*

- 4-1. Create new mixed-use areas on the waterfront for commercial, industrial, educational, recreational and residential uses.
 - . Encourage reuse and renovation of existing buildings.
 - . Identify, preserve and locate sites for water-dependent uses.
 - . Complement existing downtown area with waterfront redevelopment.
 - . Support water-dependent activities and uses.
 - . Retain deep water moorage and entitlement.
- 4-2. Support water-dependent activities and uses.
- 4-3. Create conditions attractive to jobs of the future.
 - . Create a vision for desired businesses and educational facilities.
- 4-4. Strengthen the tie between local jobs and resources.
 - . Encourage and promote fisheries and ocean-related research industries and facilities.
 - . Encourage a range of development and businesses that foster apprenticeships and other educational and training opportunities.
- 4-5. Provide public amenities and infrastructure to support redevelopment.

- 4-6. Improve permitting processes to achieve the goals and principles of the Waterfront Vision.
 - . Promote a “business incubator” model with access to development resources.
 - . Create flexible zoning in the City Center.
- 4-7. Explore economic spin-off related to Bellingham Bay Pilot cleanup strategies.
- 4-8. Provide incentives and credits for “green” buildings.

2.4 Interlocal Agreements/New Whatcom Master Plan. In 2005, the City and the Port of Bellingham approved two interlocal agreements wherein both agencies agreed to work together to plan for eventual redevelopment of Bellingham’s waterfront. The first interlocal created the Waterfront Advisory Group (WAG) to “help ensure thoughtful implementation of the recommendations of the WFG.” (Interlocal Agreement 2005-0006, page 2.) The City also agreed to begin a process to revise existing planning documents such as the Bellingham Comprehensive Plan, Shoreline Master Program and individual neighborhood plans to incorporate the WFG’s visions and principles. In 2005, the WFG’s visions for the character areas and the general guiding principles were added to the city’s comprehensive plan. Later in 2005, the WFG’s specific guiding principles for waterfront areas in the CBD Neighborhood were added to this plan.

A second interlocal agreement (2005-0007), also approved in 2005, established the “New Whatcom Special Development Area. In the interlocal agreement, the City and the Port committed to work together to prepare a master development plan and development agreement for the central waterfront area. The master plan will cover the area from the Bellwether Peninsula to the Cornwall Avenue landfill site as shown on the New Whatcom Planning Area map on page 11. Once adopted, this new development plan will become an “overlay zone” for the applicable neighborhood plan areas. The development plan will identify and locate at a minimum:

1. Permitted land uses,
2. Development regulations such as building height, building setback and landscaping requirements,
3. Public park locations, open space and public access opportunities,
4. Public marine and visitor moorage facilities,
5. Marine habitat enhancements,
6. Historic resources, and
7. On and off-site infrastructure improvements necessary for redevelopment.

2.5 - The Bellingham Bay Demonstration Pilot Project. After 100 years of commercial and industrial activity along the waterfront, the community began in 1996 to formally and systematically analyze the environmental consequences of past industrial use. The Bellingham Bay Demonstration Pilot Project (the “Bay Pilot”) is sponsored by a group of federal, state and local agencies, tribes and businesses. The Bay Pilot project is using a new cooperative approach to achieve multiple objectives:

1. Pollution source control
2. Sediment clean-up,
3. Habitat restoration, and
4. public access.

The project is continuing and clean up activities necessary for the establishment of mixed land uses will continue for years.

SECTION 3, SHORELINE MASTER PROGRAM

The city adopted an update to the Shoreline Master Program (SMP) in 2006. The SMP is an overlay document that regulates aquatic activities (over and under water) and land uses in upland areas within 200-feet of the mean higher high tide. It is critical that these two regulatory documents, the SMP and the neighborhood plan, are consistent and allow/encourage the type of waterfront redevelopment envisioned by the community.

As with the WFG visions and guiding principles, the Shoreline Master Program polices should be used to inform the creation of a master development plan, and in the review of shoreline permit applications and other discretionary permits for individual projects to ensure consistency with the master development plan.

Click here to view the [New Whatcom Planning Area Map](#)

Click here to view the [CBD Neighborhood Plan Land Use Map](#)

SECTION IV, CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

SUBAREA DESCRIPTIONS AND LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

Area 1

Presently this Port of Bellingham owned property is occupied primarily by Bellingham Cold Storage and various subtenants. The uses are appropriate water related uses on the shoreline and should be permitted outright.

The long-term vision for the area is reflected in the Waterfront Futures Group's 2004 Waterfront Vision and Framework Plan. The WFG's plan included Area 1 in the Squalicum Character Area. The long-term vision for Area 1 includes a mixture of both water dependent and non-water dependent light industrial uses. This vision is reflected in the current Industrial land use designation and Light Industrial Mixed zoning classification.

Refer to the CBD section of the Land Use and Development Code for permitted "mixed" uses in this area.

AREA 1 LAND USE DESIGNATION: INDUSTRIAL

Areas 2A and (former) 2B

This area is commonly referred to as Bellingham's "central waterfront area". It was one large area until divided in 2005. The property in Area 2 is now primarily owned by the Port of Bellingham following purchase of the Georgia Pacific holdings in early 2005. Private ownerships remain along the Whatcom Waterway and also adjacent to Roeder Avenue.

Dredging and disposal operations which began in the early 1900's created land area adjacent the two federal waterways. The interior land was created in the 1960's by placing municipal garbage over tideland areas. Finally, Georgia Pacific's water treatment facility known as the aerated stabilization basin (ASB) was completed in 1978. The area was previously zoned for heavy industrial use reflecting its past history.

The dominant structure in the area is the 250,000 square foot tissue warehouse built by the Georgia Pacific Corporation in 1999. The warehouse floor and methane system and surrounding asphalt serves as a remedial fix for approximately half of the underlying Roeder Avenue municipal landfill. Adaptive reuse of the G.P. tissue warehouse should be considered within the context of the development plan and building economics. If the building is reused, renovation of the exterior may be necessary to reduce the impact of the structure's mass and scale.

A number of water dependent uses remain along the Whatcom Creek Waterway and water dependent uses should be incorporated in the development plan for the area. The Whatcom Waterway lying adjacent to CBD Areas 2, 11 and 15 is a federal channel, designated through congressional authorization. The Port of Bellingham is the local designated sponsor for the waterway, responsible for coordinating with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to ensure that adequate and appropriate water access is maintained for adjacent land uses. The Port should ensure that the depth is maintained to support the adjacent land uses as defined in the master development plan.

The long-term vision for the area is reflected in the Waterfront Futures Group's 2004 Waterfront Vision and Framework Plan. The WFG's plan included portions of Area 2 in both the Squalicum and City Center Character Areas and recommended different land uses for each area. Therefore it is appropriate to divide Area 2 into two distinct geographic parts.

Area 2A

Area 2A includes the property north of Broadway, below the Eldridge bluff, and east of Roeder Avenue. The WFG's plan envisioned Area 2A remaining in light industrial use. This recommendation is reflected in the current industrial land use designation and light industrial zoning classification.

AREA 2A LAND USE DESIGNATION: INDUSTRIAL

Area 2B

Area 2B was consolidated with Areas 4, 11, 14, 15, 20, 21 and a portion of Area 7 to create a new area - Area 23.

Area 3

The property in Area 3 is owned by the Port of Bellingham and is primarily characterized by commercial fishing activities and supporting uses. The area includes the Squalicum Marina, Harbormasters offices, Harbor Mall, restaurants, the Squalicum and Bellingham Yacht Clubs, boat launch and docking facilities, and more recently, the Squalicum Boathouse and Zuanich Point Park. Spectacular views of Bellingham Bay, the San Juans, commercial fishing activities, and the presence of the park and shoreline promenade make the area a popular destination point for residents and visitors.

The long-term vision for the area is reflected in the Waterfront Futures Group's 2004 Waterfront Vision and Framework Plan. The WFG's plan included Area 3 in the Squalicum Character Area. The long-term vision for Area 3 includes a mixture of marina and maritime-related commercial uses and some residential uses. This vision is reflected in the current commercial land use designation and waterfront commercial zoning.

AREA 3 LAND USE DESIGNATION: COMMERCIAL

Area 4

Area 4 was consolidated with Areas 2B, 11, 14, 15, 20, 21 and a portion of Area 7 to create a new area - Area 23.

Area 5

The area is occupied by light industrial uses and is adjacent to industrial areas within the Sunnyland Neighborhood. The area should be visually buffered from the adjacent high school athletic fields, and a greenbelt should be maintained along Whatcom Creek.

AREA 5 LAND USE DESIGNATION: INDUSTRIAL

Area 6

This area is the "Civic Center" of Bellingham, including City Hall, the County Courthouse, the Bellingham Public Library and the Whatcom Museum of History and Art.

AREA 6 LAND USE DESIGNATION: PUBLIC

Area 7

Located on the south and east sides of the Squalicum inner harbor, Area 7 was originally created in the early and mid 1980s when the harbor area was dredged and adjacent land area created. Overall, Squalicum harbor is home to more than 1,500 commercial and recreational boats making it one of the largest marine complexes on Puget Sound. The harbor is at or close to capacity, especially for the larger size vessels. The need for additional moorage is well documented and the Port plans to satisfy the demand within the adjacent property known as the ASB recently purchased from Georgia Pacific. The area includes the Harbor Center Building and office/commercial development, a Coast Guard station and the "Bellwether on the Bay" development. Bellwether is a mixed-use waterfront development featuring a hotel, restaurants, office space and a waterfront park, plaza and promenade.

The existing boat launch, trail system and public parks were established by the Port beginning with the early harbor development and completed with the first phase of the Bellwether development.

The Port plans to complete development of the vacant parcels and to explore the possibility of reducing or eliminating the existing boat launch at Bellwether and Roeder Avenue upon relocation within the New Whatcom Development Area. The existing boat launch area should not be permitted to be redeveloped until a new public boat launch facility of comparable size is established.

If the US Coast Guard relocates, pedestrian access should be required to continue along the peninsula perimeter with redevelopment.

The area has been designated as planned commercial for many years, Development has occurred according to an approved planned contract and the special design and development regulations written into the Land Use and Development Code. The planned contract will remain in force and effect until a modification or subsequent plan is approved by the City.

The long-term vision for this area is reflected in the Waterfront Futures Group's 2004 Waterfront Vision and Framework Plan. The WFG plan included Area 7 in the Squalicum "Character Area". The Squalicum character area includes a vision and guiding principles for Area 7 that recommends further mixed-use development, including retail, visitor support services and some housing. This vision can be achieved under the existing commercial designation and planned commercial zoning. Some of the development standards in the Land Use Code may need to be re-evaluated for compatibility with the vision and guiding principles. For example, the vacant parcels have a height restriction of 35 feet. This limitation should be reviewed and pending view impact analysis, raised if appropriate.

A master development plan, once adopted, may modify the existing permitted uses and other zoning requirements for the undeveloped portions of Area 7.

AREA 7 LAND USE DESIGNATION: COMMERCIAL

Area 8

This area is presently occupied by many established commercial and office uses. Whatcom Transportation Authority provides high-frequency bus service in this area. Property immediately adjacent to Cornwall Avenue shall be subject to "approach requirements" which are intended to signal and draw people to the commercial core.

AREA 8 LAND USE DESIGNATION: COMMERCIAL

Area 9

This area functionally serves as a transition between light industrial uses and the commercial core. It is an appropriate area for commercial/mixed use. The mixed uses

emphasize certain light industrial types of uses. Property adjacent to State Street is subject to "Approach" requirements. See the CBD zoning section of the Land Use and Development Code for permitted "mixed" uses.

AREA 9 LAND USE DESIGNATION: COMMERCIAL

Area 10

This area is intended to be used for future core expansion. Permitted uses are similar to those allowed in the "core." Visual buffering of the adjacent industrial area should be accomplished as a part of future development within this area.

AREA 10 LAND USE DESIGNATION: COMMERCIAL

Area 11

Area 11 was consolidated with Areas 2B, 4, 14, 15, 20, 21 and a portion of Area 7 to create a new area - Area 23.

Area 12

The commercial core, intended to accommodate complete commercial facilities within convenient walking distances.

AREA 12 LAND USE DESIGNATION: COMMERCIAL

Area 13

Similar to former Area 11, this area is reserved for future core expansion. Permitted uses are similar to that of the core with more of an auto rather than pedestrian orientation. Property adjacent to State Street shall be subject to approach requirements.

AREA 13 LAND USE DESIGNATION: COMMERCIAL

Area 14

Area 14 was consolidated with Areas 2B, 4, 11, 15, 20, 21 and a portion of Area 7 to create a new area - Area 23.

Area 15

Area 15 was consolidated with Areas 2B, 4, 11, 14, 20, 21 and a portion of Area 7 to create a new area - Area 23.

Area 16

In order to provide for a compatible transition area between the new mixed-use areas to the south and the commercial core to the north, this area is designated for mixed commercial/light industrial usage. The property immediately adjacent to State Street is subject to approach requirements.

See the CBD zoning section of the Land Use and Development Code for permitted “mixed” light industrial uses in this area.

AREA 16 LAND USE DESIGNATION: COMMERCIAL

Area 17

Area 17, commonly referred to as the “foot of Cornwall” is located adjacent to the former G.P. mill site and the Bellingham Shipping Terminal. The Port of Bellingham owns some of the land and the rest is in private ownership. The area was included in the planning work done by the Waterfront Futures Group in 2003-04. The long-term vision for the Area 17 is reflected in the WFG’s Waterfront Vision and Framework Plan, “City Center Character Area”. The area is appropriate for a mix of uses that could potentially include commercial, retail services and residential uses north of Pine Street, and institutional or educational uses south of Pine.

In order to achieve the desired redevelopment, the long-standing industrial land use designation should be changed to a mixed-use classification upon adoption of a specific redevelopment plan for this area. The city and the Port are currently working on a master development plan that includes the land in Area 17. Once adopted, the development plan will contain the permitted uses and other zoning, design and development regulations for this area. Note – the WAG recommended putting the “beach” portion of this area in a public zone to ensure long term public access and use. This could also be accomplished through a requirement in the master development plan.

AREA 17 LAND USE DESIGNATION: INDUSTRIAL/MIXED-USE

Area 18

This area is designated commercial and zoned Planned Commercial for several reasons. First, it is felt desirable to promote commercial, rather than industrial, usage along

State Street, a major approach route to the Central Business District. The small, fragmented ownership would appear to make industrial use unfeasible, as it generally requires larger site area. Finally, the access and intersection areas are dangerous. If properties are developed separately the increased ingress and egress could make the situation worse. Access is noted as a special condition in the CBD zoning section of the Land Use and Development Code, and only one curb cut along the total frontage should be permitted. Mutual access easement among property owners should be required as part of the planned commercial development.

AREA 18 LAND USE DESIGNATION: COMMERCIAL

Area 19

This area includes the Whatcom Transportation Authority downtown transit service hub. WTA provides high-frequency transit service to several areas in the downtown and has future plans to provide similar service to the waterfront area as it redevelops.

AREA 19 LAND USE DESIGNATION: PUBLIC

Area 20

Area 20 was consolidated with Areas 2B, 4, 11, 14, 15, 21 and a portion of Area 7 to create a new area - Area 23.

Area 21

Area 21 was consolidated with Areas 2B, 4, 11, 14, 15, 20, and a portion of Area 7 to create a new area - Area 23.

Area 22

The [Old Town Subarea Plan](#) includes land within the Lettered Streets and the CBD Neighborhoods on either side of Whatcom Creek, with Area 22 comprising the portion of the CBD Neighborhood within the Subarea Plan boundary. The Subarea Plan is intended as a policy document for an overlay zone that will guide future development within the subarea. See Appendix A – Old Town Subarea Plan for details.

AREA 22 LAND USE DESIGNATION: COMMERCIAL

Area 23

The [Waterfront District Sub-Area Plan](#) includes land within the CBD Neighborhood on Bellingham Bay. The Subarea Plan is intended as a policy document for an overlay zone that will guide future development within the subarea. See Appendix B – Waterfront District Sub-Area Plan for details.

AREA 23 LAND USE DESIGNATION: URBAN VILLAGE

As adopted by Ordinance No. 8868 and amended by Ordinance Nos. 8946, 9693, 9717, 10317, 2004-12-087, 2008-03-022 and 2013-12-090.

Appendix A – Old Town Subarea Plan

OLD TOWN SUB - AREA PLAN

City of Bellingham, Washington



Planning & Community Development Department
Adopted by Ordinance No. 2008-03-022
March 2008

Appendix B – Waterfront District Sub-Area Plan

