

EDGEMOOR NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

I. NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER

The quiet residential character of the Edgemoor Neighborhood is a valued asset. Although densities and housing styles vary throughout the neighborhood, the entire developed portion of the planning area consists of single family detached dwelling units. The western half of the neighborhood contains large single family homes on well-landscaped one-half acre lots. The term "rural estate" has been used to describe this portion of the neighborhood where magnificent views of Bellingham Bay and the San Juan Islands are a highly valued resource.

A smaller, newly developed area in the northern portion of the neighborhood has been platted into smaller lots and the contemporary homes are afforded views northerly of Bellingham Bay and the city. The eastern half of the neighborhood, generally east of Fieldston Road, does not have the panoramic marine view; but in many cases territorial views of Chuckanut Mountain are available. A portion of the area between Clark Road and Cypress is relatively new, and landscaping has not matured to the degree prevalent in other portions of the neighborhood. Much of the eastern portion of the area has not yet been developed, although development plans have recently been approved in the area of Willow Road and Chuckanut Drive.

The entire southern one third of the Edgemoor Neighborhood consists of perhaps the most magnificent property in the city. A large, steep, heavily wooded peninsula, commonly known as Clark's Point, extends into Bellingham Bay, forming the western boundary of Chuckanut Bay. Steep slopes follow the edges of Chuckanut Bay, paralleling Viewcrest Road, and, together with Clark's Point, provide a natural resource amenity identified in the Whatcom County Interagency Park, Recreation, and Open Space Study (1977) as a primary goal for conservation efforts for the benefit of the entire city.

Neighborhood Plan Proposals

II. OPEN SPACE

As previously stated, Clark's Point and steep slopes adjacent to Chuckanut Bay are a principal park and open space resource in the city. While public acquisition of the subject properties would be very expensive, the resource is unique and extremely valuable.

CLARK'S POINT AND THE STEEP HILLSIDES ADJACENT CHUCKANUT BAY SHOULD BE PRESERVED AS VALUABLE OPEN SPACE AND MARINE ACCESS POINTS, EITHER THROUGH ACQUISITION OR PUBLIC EASEMENTS GAINED THROUGH SENSITIVE DEVELOPMENT. THE PEAK SOUTHEAST OF THE INTERSECTION OF VIEWCREST ROAD AND FIELDSTON SHOULD BE DEVELOPED AS A VIEWPOINT.

Although the neighborhood lacks, for the most part, paths or sidewalks, walking is an important activity in the neighborhood. Sensitively designed pedestrian facilities would provide safety and convenience to walkers and cyclists alike.

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES BE IMPROVED ON PARKRIDGE, HAWTHORNE, WILLOW, FIELDSTON, AND CHUCKANUT DRIVE.

The absence of play lots in the neighborhood causes an increasing problem as development occupies previously vacant land, which had been utilized by neighborhood children. The higher densities and present demographic characteristics of the neighborhood indicate that the need for play lots is most prevalent in the eastern portion of the neighborhood.

A PLAY LOT SHOULD BE INTEGRATED INTO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE VACANT LAND BETWEEN CLARK ROAD AND VIEWCREST EAST OF FIELDSTON ROAD.

A SECOND PLAY LOT SHOULD BE ESTABLISHED IN THE DENSER AREA SOUTH OF WILLOW ROAD AND EAST OF FIELDSTON ROAD.

PEDESTRIAN PATHWAYS SHOULD BE DEVELOPED BETWEEN THE PLAY LOTS AND NORTHERLY FROM WILLOW ROAD TO FAIRHAVEN MIDDLE SCHOOL.

Two valuable marine resources, in addition to Clark's Point/Chuckanut Bay, exist in the neighborhood. The first, commonly known as the Edgemoor Lagoon, is located west of Bayside Road and north of Willow Road. A portion of this tidal lagoon is available for access by Edgemoor residents. The lagoon was once separated from Bellingham Bay by railroad bulkheads, but actions by Edgemoor residents resulted in the construction of an opening, and the well-flushed lagoon is an even more attractive neighborhood amenity.

The second area is located north of the lagoon and is separated from the neighborhood by railroad tracks. It is an attractive sandstone outcropping which is accessed by many city residents from the Port of Bellingham's Marine Park via the railroad tracks. While access to this site may be precarious, it offers a unique type of marine/land interface not readily available in the city.

ACCESS TO THE EDGEMOOR LAGOON FOR NEIGHBORHOOD RESIDENTS SHOULD BE MAINTAINED.

PUBLIC ACCESS TO THE SANDSTONE POINT ON THE NORTHERN SHORE OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD SHOULD BE RETAINED, AND THE PROVISION OF SAFER ACCESS SHOULD BE INVESTIGATED.

III. PUBLIC FACILITIES AND UTILITIES

Storm drainage has proved to be a problem in the Edgemoor Neighborhood in past years. As streets were developed, enclosed storm drainage was excluded and, for the most part, shallow roadside ditches carry storm water runoff. Although culverts have been installed in some places, an overall storm sewer system is absent. While development of an overall storm drainage system is needed to alleviate overflow problems, it is also important that new sources of storm water runoff be required to maintain existing levels of drainage volumes so as not to exacerbate problems downstream. The Comprehensive Drainage Plan, authored by Kramer, Chin, and Mayo in 1973, indicates trunk storm sewer improvements needed in the neighborhood and more recent study by the Public Works Department has more specifically identified the overall drainage needs.

AN OVERALL STORM DRAINAGE PLAN FOR THE EDGEMOOR NEIGHBORHOOD SHOULD BE DEVELOPED AND IMPLEMENTED AS IS FINANCIALLY FEASIBLE.

Fairhaven Middle School grounds provide one of the most convenient areas for active recreation in the neighborhood. However, non-vehicular access from most of the area requires travel on either Fieldston/Hawthorne Roads or Chuckanut Drive, neither of which have adequate pedestrian or bicycle improvements.

PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE ACCESS SHOULD BE IMPROVED TO FAIRHAVEN MIDDLE SCHOOL AND FAIRHAVEN PARK.

Water Distribution

The water distribution system throughout the neighborhood is generally adequate. However, in the less developed southern part of Edgemoor, some additional "looping" is desirable.

AS DEVELOPMENT OCCURS, ADDITIONAL LOOPING OF THE WATER DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM SHOULD BE ACCOMPLISHED.

MAP, EDGEMOOR ARTERIAL ROUTES

IV. CIRCULATION

Chuckanut Drive is the only arterial in the neighborhood and forms its eastern boundary. Access to the neighborhood from Chuckanut Drive exists at Hawthorn Road, 16th Street and Viewcrest Road. A fourth access via 4th Street serves the northern portion of the neighborhood. Hawthorn Road is the most heavily utilized access point and joins the Chuckanut Drive arterial at a hazardous five-legged intersection.

The capacity of Chuckanut Drive is limited by the present width of the 12th Street bridge just north of the neighborhood. Capacity improvements to Chuckanut would, therefore, be fruitless until either the bridge was widened or substitute access through Fairhaven was established west of 12th Street. However, it is recommended that:

CHUCKANUT DRIVE BE IMPROVED FOR USE BY PEDESTRIANS AND BICYCLISTS.

Streets, and their ultimate standard, must be designed to perform a required function within a given area. In the lower density areas where on-street parking is uncommon, narrower streets can suffice, while in the higher density areas, off-street parking is not as available, and street standards must reflect that need. Likewise, neighborhood collectors must be constructed to perform a greater function than local residential streets.

IF IS RECOMMENDED THAT FIELDSTON ROAD FROM CLARK'S POINT TO HAWTHORN ROAD, HAWTHORN ROAD FROM FIELDSTON ROAD TO CHUCKANUT DRIVE, AND WILLOW FROM BAYSIDE ROAD TO CHUCKANUT DRIVE BE IMPROVED TO 28 FEET IN WIDTH WITH THICKENED EDGES AND A PEDESTRIAN/BICYCLE PATH ON ONE SIDE, EXCEPT THAT WILLOW ROAD FROM FIELDSTON ROAD TO CHUCKANUT DRIVE BE IMPROVED TO 36 FEET WITH CURBS AND GUTTERS.

STREETS OR IMPROVEMENTS TO EXISTING STREETS WITHIN AREAS 1 AND 2 SHOULD BE 36 FEET WITH CURBS, GUTTERS AND SIDEWALKS. ONE WAY LOOPS MAY BE REDUCED ACCORDINGLY.

FUTURE STREET IMPROVEMENTS WITHIN AREAS 4 AND 7 SHOULD BE A STANDARD OF 24 FEET WITH THICKENED EDGES.

STREETS OR IMPROVEMENTS TO EXISTING STREETS WITHIN AREAS 5 AND 6 SHOULD BE CONSTRUCTED TO A STANDARD OF 28 FEET IN WIDTH WITH CURBS AND GUTTERS AND A PATHWAY ON ONE SIDE, EXCEPT THAT

CONNECTIONS TO EXITING STREETS OF A GREATER STANDARD SHOULD BE DESIGNED TO PROVIDE SMOOTH, SAFE TRANSITIONS.

THE HAWTHORN/COWGILL/12TH STREET/CHUCKANUT, PARKRIDGE INTERSECTION SHOULD BE IMPROVED TO ELIMINATE EXISTING RIGHT-OF-WAY CONFLICTS AND SIGHT DISTANCE PROBLEMS.

MAP, EDGEMOOR LAND USE

V. SUBAREA DESCRIPTIONS AND LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

Area 1

This area is a small portion of the northwest section of the neighborhood. Until recently, this prime view area was undeveloped. A well-designed subdivision has been developed, and the land use designation is a reflection of the area's existing density and style.

AREA 1 LAND USE DESIGNATION: SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL, LOW DENSITY

Area 2

This recently developed portion of the neighborhood is representative of subdivision trends of the early 1970's, having wide, curbed streets and lots smaller than those generally found in the Edgemoor Neighborhood. Again, the land use designation fits the developed trend in this sub-area.

AREA 2 LAND USE DESIGNATION: SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL, MEDIUM DENSITY

Area 3

Area 3 is the Fairhaven Middle School and its adjacent play fields.

AREA 3 LAND USE DESIGNATION: PUBLIC

Area 4

Consisting of large half acre lots, Area 4 exemplifies the "rural estate" characterizes this portion of the Edgemoor neighborhood. The area includes most of the western slope of the neighborhood as well as the residences on the Parkridge and Underhill Roads. The land use designation reflects the developed trend in this sub-area.

AREA 4 LAND USE DESIGNATION: SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL, LOW DENSITY

Area 5

This area was subdivided several years ago into lots smaller than those in the adjacent areas to the west and north. Again, the land use designation reflects existing plat characteristics.

AREA 5 LAND USE DESIGNATION: SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL, LOW DENSITY

Area 6

Some of the more recent subdivisions in the neighborhood have occurred in this area. There are also larger holdings of unplatted land. The land use designation calls for a continuation of the developed trend in this portion of the neighborhood.

AREA 6 LAND USE DESIGNATION: SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL, LOW DENSITY

Area 7

As previously described herein, Area 7 is a highly valued natural resource for which conservation has been a consistent recommendation. While a designation as "public" might seem more appropriate for the area, the land is under private ownership, so a land use designation is made which will permit development while maintaining the exceptional natural qualities of the properties.

AREA 7 LAND USE DESIGNATION: SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL, LOW DENSITY

Area 8

This 1.55 acre area is located on a bluff approximately 60-feet from a shoreline wet meadow and the city's Post Point wastewater treatment Plant. Generally, a level bench covers the majority of the property that slopes down from Shorewood Drive. A steeper downward slope exists at the northern boundary with the City's wastewater treatment plant. This area contains mature timber including evergreen and deciduous trees such as fir, alder and maple. A variety of shrubs and grasses provide additional vegetation cover. Wildlife is prevalent in the area. Hawks, herons, eagles, songbirds, deer and raccoon are found on the site and in the area.

Area 8 was created through a rezone process in 1988 and moved from the Fairhaven Neighborhood to the Edgemoor Neighborhood. The previous single family designation was retained, but the density and use qualifier were changed from 15,000 square feet per dwelling unit, detached, to 8,400 square feet per dwelling unit, cluster attached. This zoning was found to be consistent with Bellingham's comprehensive plan goals and policies.

In 1999, a colony of great blue herons moved to city property located adjacent to Area 8. City Council determined it was in the public's best interest to protect the herons and their nests until such time that the herons move to another site. Towards that end, the Council rescinded the Post Point Vegetation Management Plan that would have allowed

property owners in Area 8 to cut down some trees on city property and thin branches on other trees to provide views to Bellingham Bay.

In 2000, an eight-lot cluster subdivision was proposed for this 1.55-acre parcel of land with views oriented toward Bellingham Bay and away from the City of Bellingham Wastewater Treatment Plant. Special conditions of the plat required a cluster style of development to protect of mature timber, preserve neighborhood character, screening and open space to protect the heron colony. The plat was never developed.

In 2004, the city denied a request to change the density and use qualifiers back to the pre-1988 designations. As a result, a cluster use qualifier was retained to ensure development flexibility and continued protection of the mature timber and heron colony. A change in use qualifier from attached to detached was approved to require a housing type that will accommodate some infill while preserving open space and environmentally sensitive areas.

Notwithstanding any other provision of the Neighborhood Plan or the BMC, all of the housing in this area must be clustered in a manner that provides a buffer between the wastewater treatment plant and the homes along Shorewood Drive. The intent is to preserve the mature timber on the property and to protect the heron and their nests.

AREA 8 LAND USE DESIGNATION: SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL, LOW DENSITY

As adopted by Ordinance No. 8868 and amended by Ordinance 8946, 9762, 2004-12-087, and 2004-12-092.