

# Whirlwind Beach Neighborhood Meeting

BELLINGHAM



June 3, 2015

Gina Gobo Austin, Project Engineer  
City of Bellingham Parks and Recreation  
Design and Development Division



City of  
**Bellingham**

# Topics for Tonight

- Background
- Greenway connections
- Property ownership
- Work completed
- Trailhead design
- Next steps
- Open discussion



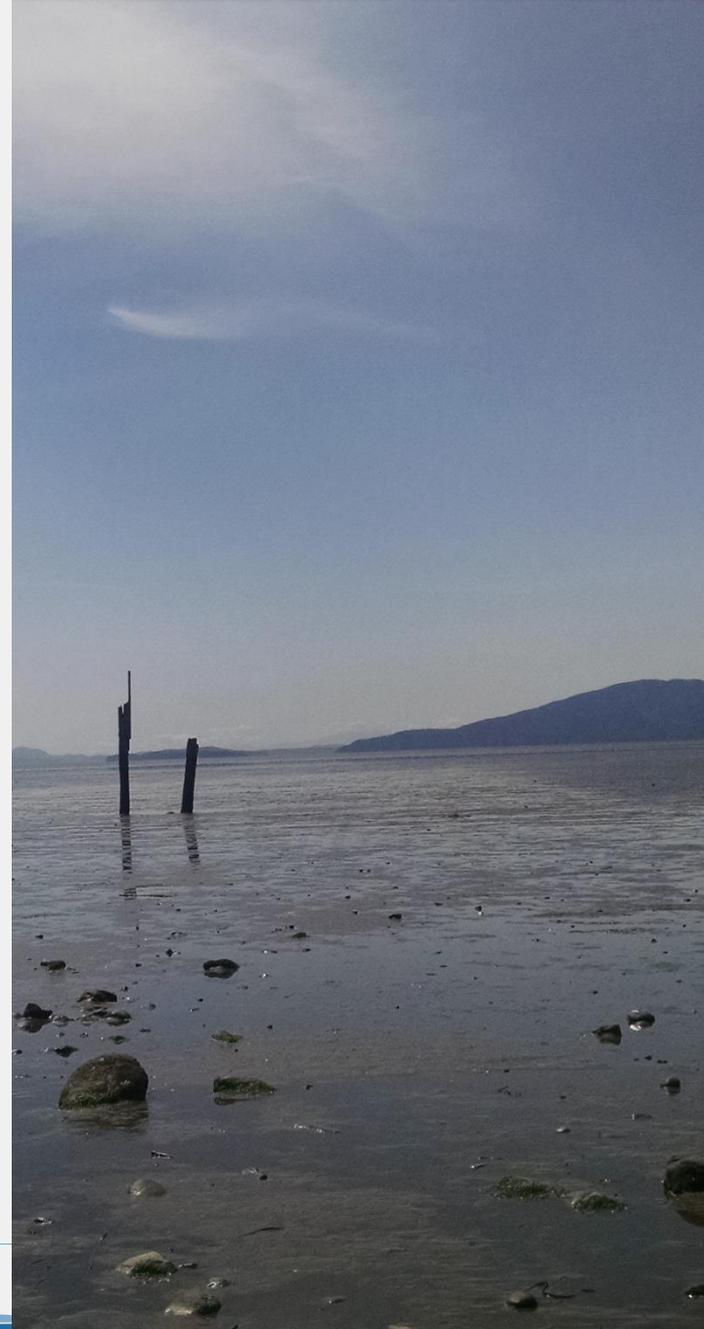
# Background – Why This Site?

- Provide public shoreline access in response to demand
- It's in the City's planned Urban Growth Area
- It's in the City's long term planning documents

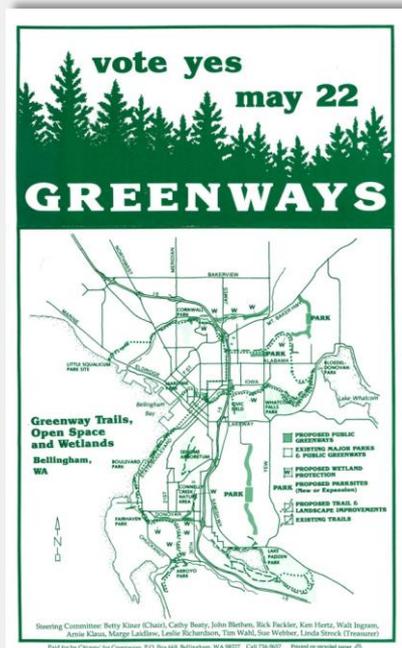


# “Whirlwind” Beach

- Rough English translation made by linguist & ethnologist Wayne Suttles
- He felt it might be a Skalaken name in origin
- The Skalaken controlled northeast Bellingham Bay and the Nooksack River up to just above I-5



# 3 popular Greenway levies have provided funding for shoreline access at & around Whirlwind



1990 Greenway Levy

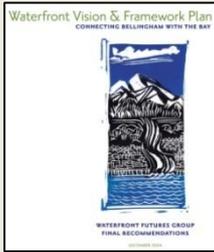


1997 Beyond Greenway Levy



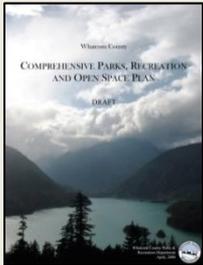
2006 Greenway III Levy

## 2003-5 BELLINGHAM WATERFRONT FUTURES GROUP

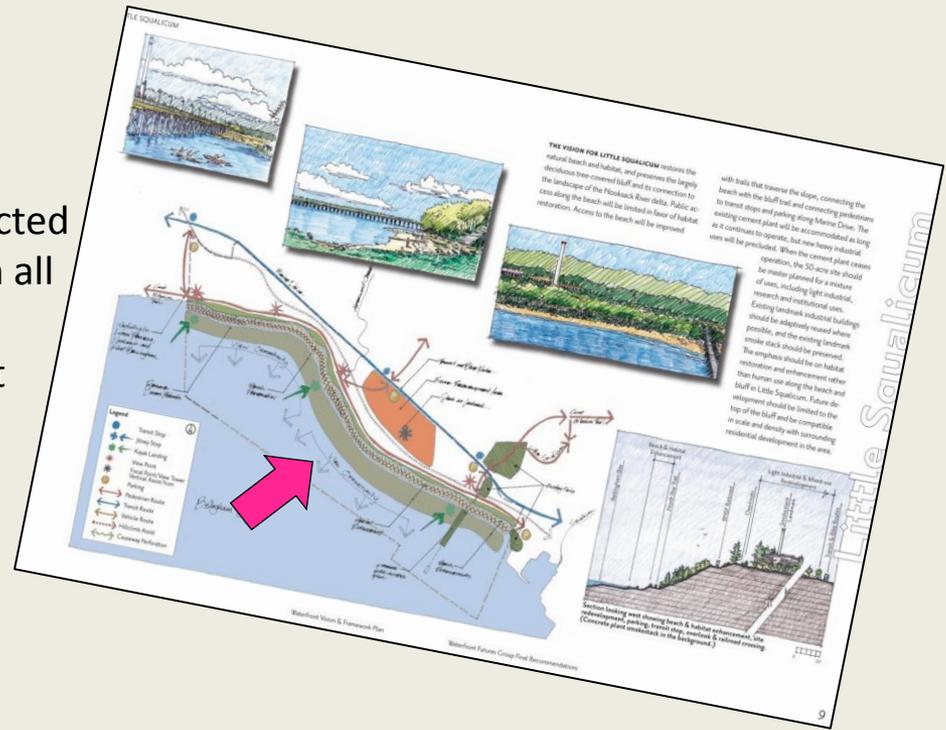


- 2 year citizen-based process
- City Council Res. 2005-04 directed staff to include residents in all plan updates
- Access to Whirlwind from east

## 2007 WHATCOM COUNTY PARKS



- Whirlwind state tidelands are recreational opportunity
- Need for over 2 miles of new marine beach access



# Published Plans & Priorities

## 2008 CITY of BELLINGHAM PARKS



- “Greenway anchor” at Whirlwind
- “North Bay Beachwalk” to Whirlwind
- “Waterfront integration”

# Support for public use & stewardship at Whirlwind began with private efforts

- Chartwell Estates Condominium
- ReSources Inc
- Whatcom County Marine Resources Com
- North Sound Kiteboarding Assn
- North Straits Surfriders

*Recent outreach & support generation by Bellingham Parks has included meetings with all these parties & preparations to engage other stake-holders*

**Whirlwind Beach clean-ups & special events have been web-promoted for years**

**Community Support & Involvement**





# Greenway Connections & Parking



 Existing Public Shore Access

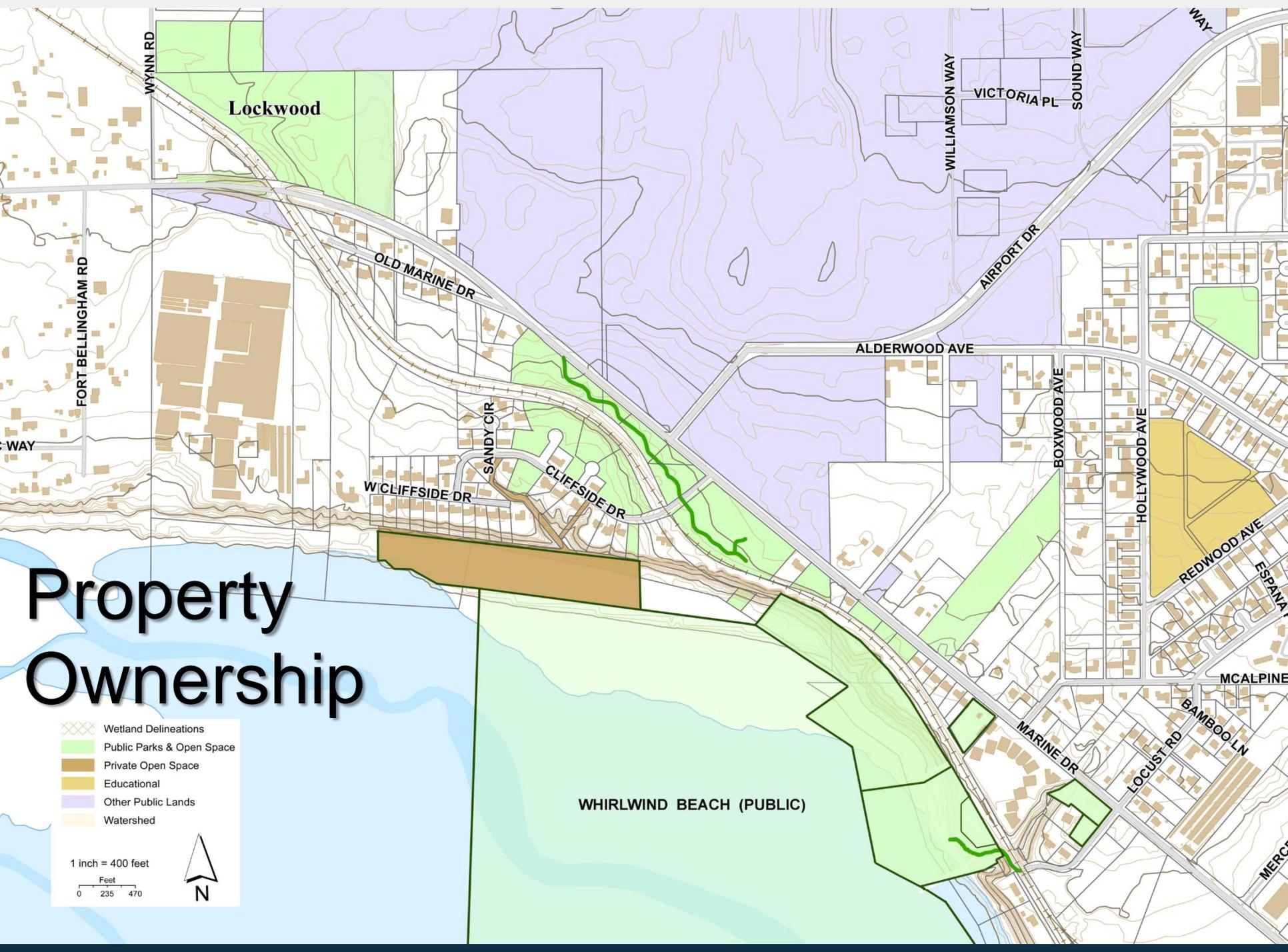
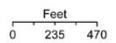
 Planned Public Parking Lots (Tracts A & C)

 Existing Public Parking Lots

# Property Ownership

- Wetland Delineations
- Public Parks & Open Space
- Private Open Space
- Educational
- Other Public Lands
- Watershed

1 inch = 400 feet



STATE TIDELANDS

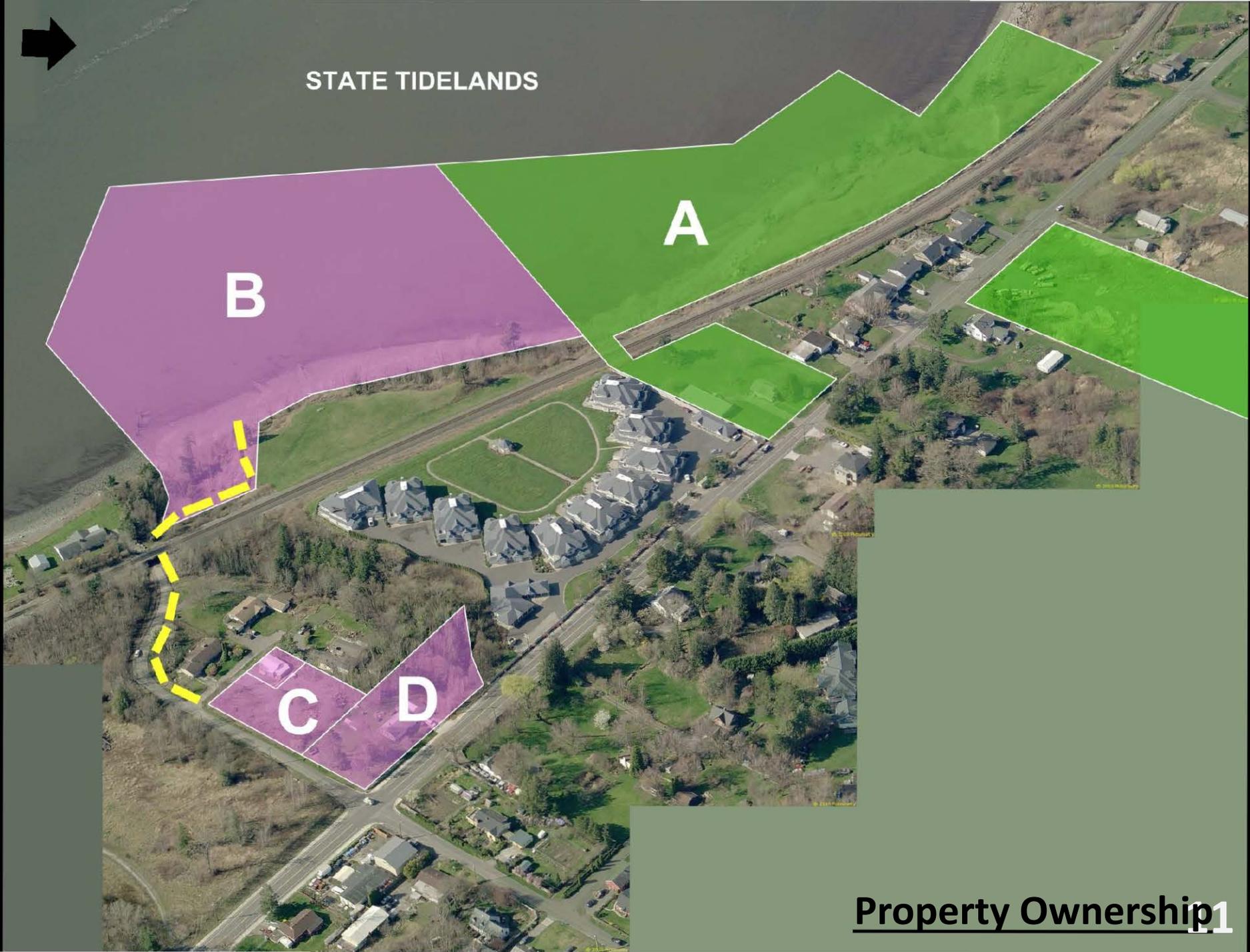


B

A

C

D



# Work completed to date:

- Received grant funds
- Hired consultant
- Met with DNR, WDFW
- Met with County staff, County Law Enforcement & Fire Departments
- City staff tour & design charrette
- Adjoining property owner meeting

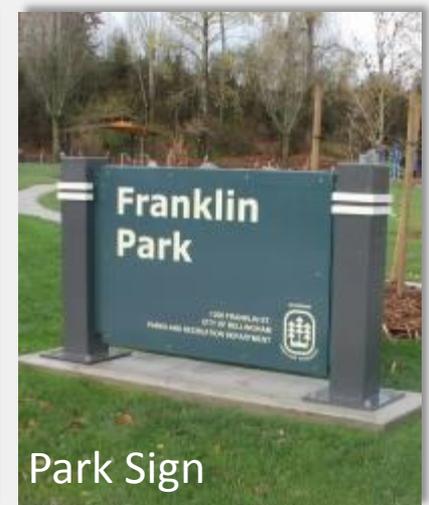


# Trailhead Design

- \$225,000 (approx.)
- Design this year
- Construct next year
- Site amenities:
  - Paved parking
  - Restroom
  - Trash receptacles
  - Signs
  - Security lighting



Way finding Sign



Park Sign



Trailhead Sign



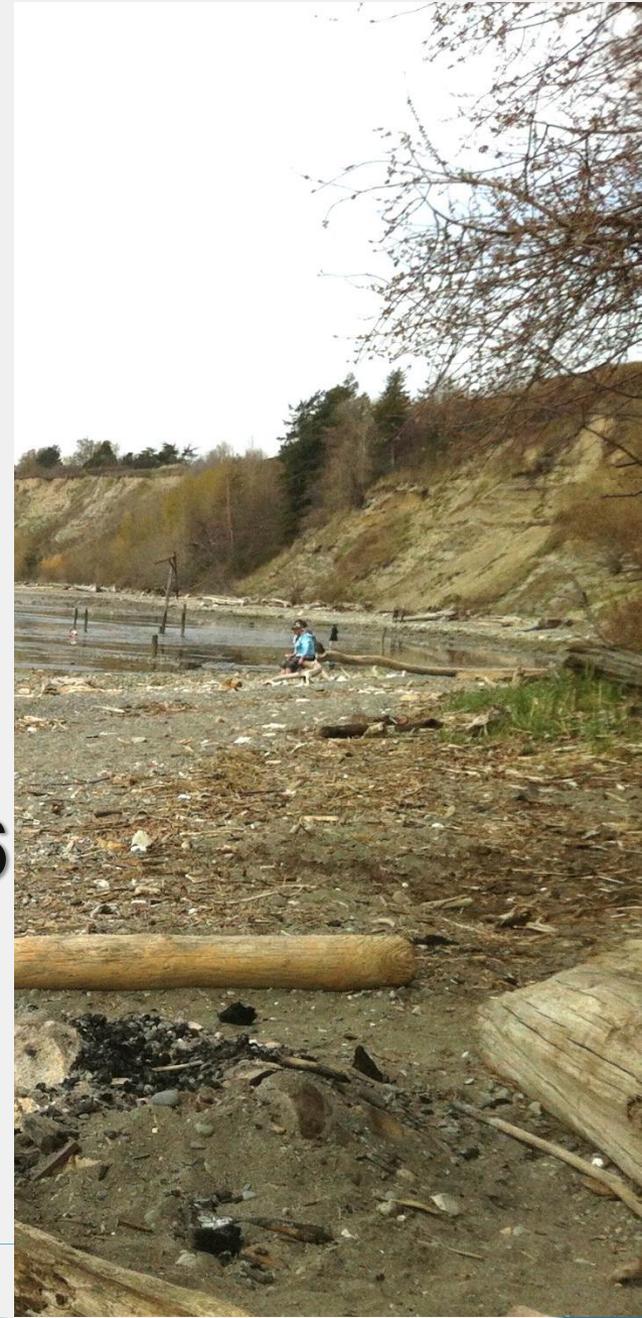
Trash Receptacle



Restroom Building

# Next steps

- Public meeting - 2015
- Design - 2015
- Permits - 2015
- Bid - Spring 2016
- Construct - Summer 2016
- Continue coordination with County staff & neighborhood



# Open discussion, comments, concerns, ideas for success:

- Who is the consultant?
- Long term resident - undue the damage, address issues from the last few years, not a positive experience, sheriff, fires, garbage, parking, public facilities, limit hours (see handout)
- Plans for accessibility for trail, safety
- Limited hours for parking, changes to Locust Ave Parking
- Sheriff cannot enforce rules on public parking
- How to enforce parties on beach, drinking?
- Driving and walking down and using private road – concerns about this. Want physical barrier in this location
- Sheriff will start “emphasis” patrols of this area. (Chartwell received letter)
- Public access was a requirement of the Chartwell development
- Who is going to respond to issues past 10pm? Park staff? No.

# Open discussion, comments, concerns, ideas for success:

- Gate would work – unsure about towing program (2am cars)
- Don't want to rely on neighborhood for enforcement
- Security lighting, signs, not enough
- Port of Bellingham has security and gate. Coordinate with others on the gates
- Consideration of people walking along railroad tracks. Any one talking to BNSF?
- Towing and gating, doesn't have to be one or the other. Use both
- Change the culture
- Coordinate with Railroad? Walking along the railroad and private property
- Monitor activity at beach, fires
- Homeless shelters, camps, using restroom and water

# Open discussion, comments, concerns, ideas for success:

- Need strong presence and enforcement
- Lucky to have this resource. Most problems happen from dusk to dawn. Daytime users have improved. Pack bottles down, problems with those that don't pack it out. Need a night time strategy. Make it easier for trash to be taken care of down at the beach
- Control parking for night time. This may help. Walking a longer distance could discourage parties
- Driveway location – concerned about traveling speeds, cars slowing down to turn into parking lot, could cause potential accidents
- Locking gates, people parking farther away at industrial park and across the street off Marine Drive
- Call sheriff if someone is parked in Bike lane
- Conflicts with bicycles on Marine Drive
- Can this area accommodate a large parking lot? Too much for this beach, not a lot of access during high tide, too many people going to a small park area
- 60 cars in parking lot? where will all the people go?
- How will city maintain? Cannot maintain the properties they already have.

# Open discussion, comments, concerns, ideas for success:

- “no trespassing” signs replaced many times on private property
- Private property issues, some are trying to kill trees
- Kite boarders have been fantastic
- If you increase traffic, kite boarder use could go away
- On one visit on sunny day, counted 118 people at beach. Skim boards, other uses. Parking on both sides of Locust, blocking driveways. Most kite boarders on beach is usually about 30. Use is usually opposite to other users (windy, cold). Beach is a challenge at high tide
- Reduce cars or eliminate on street parking
- 4<sup>th</sup> of July is a big issue
- After city bought property, article in paper advertised the area. Western Front. Site needs to be managed

# Open discussion, comments, concerns, ideas for success:

- Public beach with municipal presence could drive people to do the right thing
- How much has city spent on properties in the area? (follow up needed)
- Don't want to look out front window and see parking lot
- After buildings are initially demolished – access won't be permitted. City will block access.
- Light pollution, security lighting, disrupt neighbors, dogs
- There needs to be a way to enforce and provide consequence for actions
- Gate parking lot, clear area before closing gate
- Try to continue this discussion in the neighborhood among neighbors. Consider neighborhood watch?
- Lights on at night to prevent crime. LED lighting to minimize pollution. Could use motion detectors. Add street light at intersection? Provide four way stop at Locust to slow vehicles down?
- Could lose cyclist on Marine Drive with 4 way stop
- Graffiti an issue on the bridge

# Open discussion, comments, concerns, ideas for success:

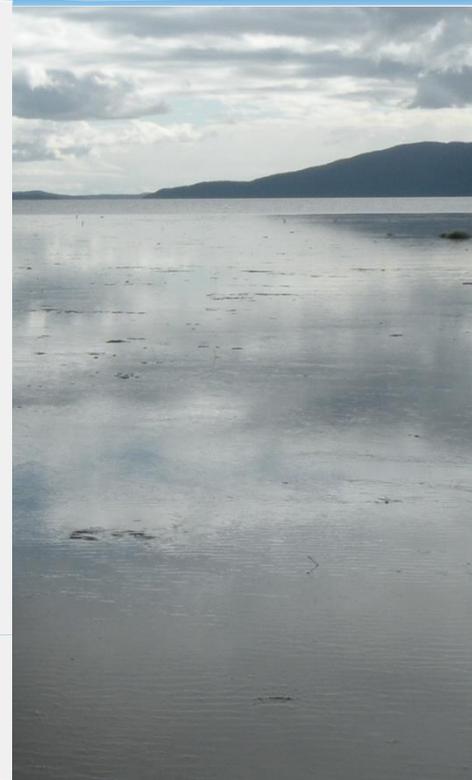
- It's a special place that should be shared with community.
- Please share slides and contact list with this group
- People walk down middle of road. Need dedicated walking path down to trailhead.
- Need to enforce, issue citations, enforce towing
- Provide rinse off station at restroom
- Share preliminary plan with neighbors first before larger public meeting
- Will there be garbage pickup at beach? Will there be a receptacle down at the beach?
- Regulations for pets?
- Increase monitoring at vacant house. Make sure no one inside. Doesn't feel safe.
- Plan another meeting with adjoining neighbors before broader public meeting.
- Make parking design "park" like
- Punish bad behavior
- Is there enough money for everything?
- Include walkway from the parking lot to the beach trail as part of project. It is dangerous now
- Will this impact property values? Want Park-like setting, consider aesthetics, consider traffic on Marine Drive

# Whirlwind Beach Neighborhood Meeting

BELLINGHAM



Presented by: Gina Gobo Austin, PE  
Project Engineer, Parks and Recreation  
Design and Development Division  
(360) 778 – 7000 [gaustin@cob.org](mailto:gaustin@cob.org)



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