



Samish Neighborhood Plan

As adopted by Ordinance No. 8868 and amended by Ordinance Nos. 8946, 9107, 9142, 9242, 9243, 9297, 10584, 2004-12-087, 2007-12-104, 2014-09-047, 2015-06-024, 2015-06-025 and 2015-06-026.

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.

THE SAMISH NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

2007

SAMISH NEIGHBORHOOD OVERRIDING PRIORITY

THE SAMISH NEIGHBORHOOD STRONGLY RECOMMENDS ANY FUTURE IN THE CONTEXT OF POSSIBLE EFFECTS ON THE ENTIRE NEIGHBORHOOD, BE CONSISTENT WITH BELLINGHAM'S COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, THE SAMISH NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN AND CITY REGULATIONS. THE SAMISH NEIGHBORHOOD STRONGLY RECOMMENDS INFRASTRUCTURE BE CONSTRUCTED WITH OR IN PLACE, AS DEVELOPMENT OCCURS. THE SAMISH NEIGHBORHOOD STRONGLY RECOMMENDS DEVELOPMENT ADDRESS THE NEIGHBORHOOD'S HILLY, ROCKY TOPOGRAPHY AND COMPLEX DRAINAGE PATTERNS.

I. Neighborhood Character

Samish Neighborhood Priorities for Neighborhood Character:

A. The Samish Neighborhood Plan focuses on developing and maintaining neighborhood scale and character, consistent with the 2005 Bellingham Comprehensive Plan Update that is governed by low-density zoning with single-family residences and with current lot size requirements. Opportunity should be provided for increased densities and mixed use development in appropriate locations within the neighborhood. Property owners desiring a change in land use classification, rezone or a development should work with the neighborhood to ensure the proposal meets the neighborhood plan priorities, goals and policies and development guidelines. Whenever increased residential densities and mixed use development are proposed, the approval should be contingent on projects that are done in areas which minimize impact on current single family development. The Samish Neighborhood should be involved in the decision on the appropriateness.

B. Consistent with the Bellingham Comprehensive Plan, the Samish Neighborhood strongly recommends that infrastructure be in place or constructed concurrent with development, taking into consideration the impacts of the development on existing infrastructure.

C. Maintain neighborhood's wooded atmosphere and important physical and natural qualities; development on hillsides should preserve as many trees and views as practicable, and take into account complex drainage patterns consistent with the Bellingham Comprehensive Plan and development regulations. Tree retention and/or preservation language for large undeveloped parcels should be considered for the zoning tables.

D. The Samish Neighborhood highly values its existing views of Bellingham Bay, the San Juan Islands, Mt. Baker and the surrounding foothills. It is, therefore, committed to protecting, maintaining, preserving, and enhancing its existing and future private, as well as public views, vistas, and view corridors. The neighborhood encourages standards of building and site design that are complementary to and enhance their surroundings, especially in regard to building height and bulk.

E. Consistent with the desire to retain existing neighborhood character it is most desirable that traffic be controlled so the existing sense of pedestrian and vehicle safety is maintained. Safe margins for walkers and bikers need to be created.

The Samish Neighborhood was, in the past, very sparsely settled. This is still true to some extent but new development and infilling are changing that aspect of the neighborhood character. Samish Way was a main entrance into the city and development took place adjacent to that street. Older residential areas include the area around Mill Street and in the northern section of the neighborhood. A number of developments along 40th Street at the eastern edge of the neighborhood have occurred sequentially over the past 30 years. The characters of these areas, which include lot size, housing style, and street standards, often contrast greatly with the remainder of the neighborhood. The older parts of the neighborhood lack sidewalks and curbs, which was appropriate for the style and density of prior development. Newer denser development will have different needs than the very low density residential areas.

The open space, pasture land and wooded areas that gave the Samish Neighborhood its pleasant, relaxed atmosphere are rapidly being replaced by a mixture of styles of residential development that are imposing a different, eclectic character on a previously "rural" neighborhood. The cluster development option as allowed by Bellingham code, if carefully and properly administered, can protect the natural environment, the steep slopes and provides for open space and trail corridors, thereby helping to retain the 'neighborhood character'.

Lake Padden Park is a citywide attraction and access to it is made through many areas of Samish Neighborhood. Bikers, joggers, walkers and heavy auto traffic are all important elements of the neighborhood's character.

The closeness of the Interstate, and the interchanges that access directly into the

neighborhood, can be viewed with both a positive and a negative aspect. Living in a wooded atmosphere, and yet close to shopping facilities, is a benefit very few neighborhoods can offer; yet the proximity to stores and the freeway is not without its problems and concerns.

In order to protect the neighborhood character and preserve the natural environment, the Samish Neighborhood strongly recommends special care be taken to manage how remaining development occurs in the neighborhood.

The following guidelines should underlie future development and building:

- 1) The following characteristics are highly valued by residents and should be retained: large lots, single-family zoning, natural open spaces, views and trees consistent with Bellingham's Comprehensive Plan.
- 2) Careful consideration should be given to environmental features such as steep slopes, shallow, rocky soil with exposed sandstone, wetlands and complex drainage patterns, and difficulty of access to some areas when development is proposed.
- 3) The Samish Neighborhood strongly recommends home design and placement on the land respect and conform to natural landscape features. Roof lines should be designed in a manner that preserves views and privacy, provides access to sunlight and maintains neighborhood character in each area of the neighborhood.
- 4) Property owners should be encouraged to replant their developed lots with native trees and shrubs. Not only will this help to retain the wooded character of our neighborhood hillside but it may also help to mitigate freeway noise. Freeway noise has increased in recent years due to heavier traffic and removal of trees. Tree buffers near the freeway would help to provide sound abatement that is far preferable to concrete walls. In addition, existing trees and native vegetation in the Lake Padden watershed should be preserved and protected to the extent possible.
- 5) Development across the remaining, undeveloped hillside needs to be better integrated by the overall design of connector streets.
- 6) Urban villages, cluster developments, and higher intensity land uses may be considered when transportation infrastructure is in place or is concurrent with development and located in appropriate areas of the neighborhood consistent with current zoning, such as along San Juan Boulevard and Governor Road. In judging appropriateness, the distinguishing characteristics of the neighborhood, e.g. drainage, circulation, single family areas, should be considered.

- 7) Land use and zoning variances should enhance neighborhood character.
- 8) Vegetation on skyline and ridges should be preserved so that trees and vegetation will be visible at the ridge top rather than buildings.

II. Open Space and Recreation

Samish Neighborhood Priorities for Open Space and Recreation:

- A. Develop and maintain open space and protect environmentally sensitive areas e.g. streams, wetlands, etc. as development occurs.
- B. Create and maintain neighborhood parks for local use.
- C. Build and maintain neighborhood trails and connectors to Lake Padden as part of a north/south trail system.
- D. The City of Bellingham should purchase property or negotiate easements to allow for the completion of the Samish Hill Trail system, per the Park, Recreation, & Open Space Plan.

In the Samish Neighborhood, there are values associated with the amenities of open space including scenic views, the wooded backdrop for the area, plant and animal life, the relief from crowding, and the recreational opportunities. The open space in this area also provides the basic setting for the neighborhood character. The Samish Neighborhood is one of the few areas left in the City of Bellingham that is not totally developed.

Natural Areas

The Samish Neighborhood is a rising and falling area formed by the Samish Hill. Its varied topography and glacial soils provide the right conditions for poor drainage and wetlands. Wetlands in the Samish Neighborhood along with forested areas are found primarily along the Connelly and Padden Creek corridors, as well as Samish Ridge. Low density development on large lots contribute to the natural areas, particularly in the eastern and southern sections of the neighborhood.

With over 1,100 acres of parks, trails and open space, most of the natural open space in the Samish Neighborhood is located in the Lake Padden Park and Padden Gorge Nature Area. The largest public natural area is the Padden Gorge Nature Area, established to preserve the ravine and ridge, as well as the wildlife habitat they provide. The area is largely forested and enclosed by steep cliffs. This natural area also affords children access to outdoors-environmental learning close to neighborhood schools. It provides space for passive recreation with opportunities to experience nature. Samish Crest Natural Area also lies partially

within our neighborhood affording many walking trails. Since there is no direct public access from the Samish Neighborhood to the Samish Crest Natural Area, the City should purchase property or negotiate easements for this direct public access.

A newer form of open space is the result of stormwater detention and treatment requirements for most new development. Although, bioswales, wetponds, and detention ponds are not usable open space or completely natural areas, their design can mimic natural systems. Detention ponds should be integrated as aesthetic amenities into the design of residential developments.

SN Priority: Provide, maintain and enhance natural open space in the neighborhood.

SN Goal: Develop and maintain open space prior to or concurrent with development.

SN Goal: Create neighborhood green belts and habitat corridors through a variety of means such as planting native plants in undeveloped rights-of-way, connecting open space tracts and natural areas to each other.

SN Goal: Establish a neighborhood tree-planting program.

Parks

In 1980, there were two developed parks in the Samish Neighborhood, Ridgemont and Lake Padden Park. Today there are still only those two developed parks in the neighborhood. We have no schools, so are not afforded the use of school play areas. There is a need for neighborhood parks and play lots, especially in recently developed areas, similar to Ridgemont. Despite some effort from the residents of the area to develop as an active park site, the small pocket park that was set aside in East Meadow remains an open space area with a trail. The major City-owned recreational facility in the neighborhood is Lake Padden Park, which is being used by the entire city, not just our neighborhood. Improved access, especially for bicycles, from the neighborhood to the park is necessary. As part of its Greenway Program, the City has acquired over 120 acres in the Samish Crest Corridor between Lake Padden Park and Lakeway Drive for the purpose of providing parks, trails, and open space corridors and protection of the wooded backdrop, steep slopes and habitat areas.

SN Priority: Create and maintain neighborhood parks for local use.

Naturally landscaped, low maintenance areas should be acquired before, or with, subdivision of the land to assure the land preservation for parks as needed. Centrally located neighborhood parks with access via bike lanes, sidewalks and trails are encouraged. When major subdivisions are considered for approval, the

City should have a clear policy that land be set aside for open green space, accessible neighborhood parks and trails per an adopted plan.

SN Goal: Work with the City to develop a high quality system of multipurpose park trails, bike lanes and sidewalks that access significant environmental features, residential areas, commercial areas, and public facilities including schools, Lake Padden Park and public transportation sites to allow people to walk and bicycle safely.

SN Goal: Work with the City to identify projects for inclusion in the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan. Explore the feasibility of and priority for applying city and neighborhood resources to improve city owned properties as safe and usable areas.

We support the City's adoption of the park impact fee to provide a source of funds to implement the City's Capital Facilities Plan. These fees would serve regions rather than individual developments.

Trails

There are over 10 (ten) miles of maintained trails and another 2.1 miles unmaintained trails in the Samish Neighborhood, most of which appear on the Bellingham Public Lands and Open Space Planning Map. The trail system in the Lake Padden Park serves as the main trail system in the neighborhood, but is isolated from other trails with Samish Way acting as a barrier from the neighborhood to Lake Padden's system.

SN Priority: Build and maintain neighborhood trails and connectors to Lake Padden as part of a north/south trail system.

SN Goal: Work with the City and neighborhood to identify areas for trails and trail links that allow people to walk and bicycle safely from residential areas to the Lake Padden, commercial areas, and schools.

SN Goal: Develop a plan for using undeveloped rights-of-way as trail corridors and natural areas.

SN Goal: Develop natural areas to maximize safety to the users and discourage vandalism to the environment.

Sensitive Areas

Wetlands, streams, floodplains, and steep slopes are considered environmentally sensitive areas. The opportunity exists to maintain the wooded character of the neighborhood while still allowing for residential development. Many of the open

space patterns follow steep hillsides and stream corridors. Both these types of areas are inherently unsuited for development. Stream corridors are also a recreation resource and have value as wildlife areas. Hillside areas provide the scenic backdrops which are an important element of both Bellingham and Samish's character. Cliffs, ravines, and steep slopes occur in the Samish Neighborhood in the southeast portion of the neighborhood, on the north side of the Samish Highlands property north of 40th Street, and immediately adjacent to the neighborhood east of Interstate 5. Slope stability and erosion are the main concerns when building on steep slopes; therefore care should be taken to determine suitability of building in these areas. The amount of contiguous open space that could be preserved, interconnected and used by the area's residents can be achieved with the cluster development option if carefully and properly administered. It is intended that by designating particular future open space patterns and areas, a more usable and integrated open space system can be achieved concurrent with development.

SN Priority: Require tree planting and tree replacement as part of new development and require that trees be maintained until lots are sold.

SN Goal: Preserve sensitive areas and unique geographic formations and connect them with a system of greenway corridors.

Wetlands are sensitive areas that have multiple functions such as storage and treatment of stormwater runoff. Due to urban growth, Samish Neighborhood reflects the national trend of wetland loss while simultaneously experiencing a rapid increase in impervious surfaces. As a result flow rates in Lincoln, Connelly and Padden Creeks, and their tributaries are either over capacity or not enough in the dry season. These factors have profound negative effects on the resident fish and wildlife populations and have increased the potential for flooding. Wetlands have another very important function. They serve as wildlife habitat and natural areas. Maintaining open space would include items such as the preservation of natural drainage systems; decreasing water runoff rates and volumes as compared to urbanizing the area.

SN Goal: Wetlands should continue to be preserved and enhanced in order to protect the many functions they serve, including wildlife habitat.

SN Goal: The Padden Creek corridor should continue to be preserved to protect the many functions it serves, including wildlife habitat.

The Samish Neighborhood is interested in being part of a Conceptual Green Infrastructure Plan, a compilation of suggestions from neighborhoods that build on existing City plans. The neighborhood desires to work with Happy Valley and other neighborhoods to develop and refine such a plan.

III. Public Facilities and Utilities

The Samish Neighborhood is very concerned about down slope drainage problems caused by uphill development. The association strongly believes that any future development be considered on a comprehensive basis. Infrastructure should be constructed with or in place as development occurs. The Samish Neighborhood strongly recommends construction of arterial streets, sewer systems, water towers, storm water drainage systems as development occurs.

Samish Neighborhood Priorities for Public Facilities and Utilities:

- A. Enforce regulations relating to control of drainage, erosion and runoff associated with infill and new building, and minimize disturbance of existing permeable soils in order to minimize possible downslope effects from new development. The City should make sure that existing laws are adequate to address these concerns.
- B. Maintain consistency of sidewalks, street width and curbs throughout neighborhood within appropriate areas, giving consideration to neighborhood residents' input.
- C. Samish Neighborhood strongly recommends infrastructure such as sewer system, water mains and water towers be in place to serve development or constructed as development occurs.

Drainage

Controlling drainage, erosion, and runoff is a high priority for the residents of this neighborhood. The damaging effects of increased drainage, erosion and runoff caused by upslope building on steep Samish Hill have historically been problematic and costly to homeowners. Samish Neighborhood strongly recommends the City enforce regulations relating to the control of drainage, erosion, and runoff associated with infill. Additionally, open space should be designed to fit drainage needs rather than development needs.

Urban development has a profound effect on the amount, duration, and timing of run-off. It has been estimated that urbanization, with its inherent impervious surfaces, may cause a three to tenfold increase in surface run-off. There are two basic ways to deal with drainage problems (a) extending the storm sewer network on the basis of urgency and availability of funding; and (b) handling the run-off problem at its source, by retaining natural drainage ways, preserving natural vegetation and reducing impervious surfaces. Where storm water retention ponds are used, they should be designed to minimize negative visual impact.

Unfortunately, addressing drainage problems by extending the storm sewer network on the basis of urgency and availability of funding tends to treat

symptoms rather than the cause of the problem. Furthermore, in many cases the costs of treatment are paid by the people who suffer damage to their property rather than by the individuals who in fact caused the problem.

IN THE SAMISH NEIGHBORHOOD AREAS THAT HAVE YET TO BE DEVELOPED: HANDLE THE WATER RUNOFF AND DRAINAGE PROBLEMS AT THEIR SOURCES RATHER THAN DOWNSTREAM, RETAIN NATURAL DRAINAGE WAYS, PRESERVE AS MUCH OF THE NATURAL VEGETATION AS POSSIBLE AND REDUCE IMPERVIOUS SURFACES BY MEANS OF CLUSTERING AND URBAN DESIGN CRITERIA

This approach makes it difficult to specify individual recommendations; they are of necessity site specific. These recommendations take the form of limiting the amount of run-off allowed from new development through specific project design. Develop and implement a comprehensive drainage plan.

RECOMMENDATION: Continue improving stormwater accumulation controls on Samish Way and other roads in the neighborhood that cause unsafe conditions on the road when the water freezes and backs up across the road.

Water and Sewer

The primary deficiency in the water distribution system in the neighborhood is the need for an additional water main connecting the Samish Neighborhood with City of Bellingham water supplies. The route of this line would roughly parallel 40th Street. The construction of another storage facility in the vicinity of 38th and Broad is also being recommended although it is not needed to serve the neighborhood. It is required to supplement supplies in the Fairhaven and WWU areas. It is important that a plan for water infrastructure be developed prior to further development in the neighborhood. This will to ensure that future development is consistent with what is currently happening.

There are no sewer trunk problems in the southern portion of the neighborhood; however, the area north of Donovan is presently served by an undersized trunk line. The undersized section is located on Donovan between 24th and 30th Streets. It should have been replaced sometime between 1990 and 2000 when it reached capacity. The City needs to work to provide sewer access for all housing on Samish Hill.

Other Concerns

Recent development in the Samish Neighborhood has pointed out the need for increased public facilities and amenities. Among these increased facilities would be a neighborhood elementary school and a fire station.

The Samish Neighborhood is an eclectic mix of different styles of homes and ages of homes. Recently there has been a great deal of development as the City

has to meet Growth Management guidelines by infilling in this area. As a result there has developed an assortment of different building styles and types. It is important, when considering further development of this neighborhood to maintain consistency of sidewalks, street width and curbs within appropriate areas throughout the neighborhood.

Existing and future cell towers are a concern to neighborhood residents and need to be addressed as further development takes place.

Click here to view the [Samish Arterial Route Map](#)

IV. Circulation

Samish Neighborhood Priorities for Circulation:

A. The Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan provides a circulation plan and layout of neighborhood primary, secondary and collector arterials. The neighborhood strongly recommends that infrastructure be in place or constructed as development occurs. Enhanced circulation and connectivity will relieve pressure on existing arterials and will disperse traffic more equitably throughout the Samish Neighborhood.

B. Plan for adequate access to public services and public transportation for developed and undeveloped areas in Samish Neighborhood.

Existing

Currently, the Samish Neighborhood depends upon Samish Way as its main connection to the rest of Bellingham. Most of this area's development has occurred along narrow residential streets which branch off from Samish Way. Mill Avenue, a typical example, is a steep, narrow street connected to Samish Way via two consecutive right angle turns on a steep grade. This street is barely adequate to serve the needs of the current residents and is incapable of handling additional traffic from future housing developments in the vicinity. Thus, new ways must be found to provide adequate access to the new residences along the Samish hillside.

Westward travel from the Samish Neighborhood is currently limited to the extension of Old Fairhaven Parkway via Connelly Avenue. Old Fairhaven Parkway is currently reached from central Samish by 36th Street and from south Samish by a circuitous route along 36th, South, 37th, Harrison, 38th, Broad, 40th, and Wilkin Streets, (also known as the "Stair step Streets"). Neither route provides a safe or satisfactory connection with the remainder of south and west Bellingham or with the Interstate-5 interchange at the Old Fairhaven Parkway. Traffic problems along this connection may increase as the Samish Neighborhood continues to grow. Therefore, Samish Neighborhood strongly recommends new, more direct routes be developed, to facilitate east/west travel in the Samish area.

The Stair Steps streets are currently classified as an arterial connection to provide a traffic circulation link between the Samish Neighborhood, Interstate-5, and commercial services in the southwestern portion of Bellingham. The neighborhood feels very strongly that the current situation is extremely dangerous. There should be safe passage in the Stair Steps corridor, e.g., sidewalks and or trails, bike lanes, or trails that connect to Padden Creek trail on

at least one side of the street. The streets themselves may not need to be widened if a separated path or other type of pedestrian and bicycle facilities can be provided. The Public Works Department and Samish Neighborhood will work together to address pedestrian, bicycle, and traffic safety on the Stair Step Streets.

The Samish Way / Interstate-5 overpass was reconstructed in 1999, and included the construction of Elwood Ave. from Lincoln/Samish to 40th Street. In recent years, considerable residential development has occurred east of Samish Way especially east of 40th Street. A few years ago, because of efforts of the Samish Neighborhood Association, 40th Street was reclassified from a secondary arterial to a collector arterial. Since the developments east of 40th Street and the completion of 40th Street from Elwood and Ashley to the Samish Way I-5 interchange, there has been a significant increase in traffic on 40th Street. Samish residents feel as though 40th Street has become a *de facto* secondary arterial.

Samish neighborhood residents want to work very closely with the City to ensure that neighborhood residents are part of the process and are involved in discussions about widening, sidewalk installation and bike lanes on 40th Street.

PROPOSALS

Arterials

The Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan identifies the arterial transportation network that is anticipated to be needed to accommodate the future development and population of the Samish Neighborhood and the Yew Street Urban Growth Area.

Private development is required to fund the construction of a Governor Road collector arterial from its current terminus north of Samish Way, over Samish Hill, and connected to San Juan Boulevard in the vicinity of 48th Street (See map of existing and future arterials, below). Private development will also be required to construct Wildwood Drive and Palmer Road as future east-west collector arterials that will tie into the new section of Governor Road. Opportunities for a range of single family and multi family densities along San Juan Boulevard and Governor Road should be considered in addition to mixed uses to support public transportation.

Click here to view the [Samish Future Arterial Route Map](#)

In order to provide traffic relief to 40th Street and encourage alternate traffic patterns, it is important that the expansion of San Juan Boulevard and Governor Road be constructed concurrent with new development to minimize through traffic on local residential streets. All new developments that will generate traffic to these arterials will be required to participate in the development and cost of that new arterial.

Construction of the San Juan Blvd should meet the following conditions:

1. When completed, San Juan Boulevard will be a full standard secondary arterial including stormwater, pedestrian and bicycle facilities along its full length.
2. Bicycle and pedestrian facilities on San Juan Boulevard must be completed, consistent with City Council resolution passed on May 21, 2007, and exceptions should be considered for developments of four or fewer lots.
3. Where possible, Samish Neighborhood strongly recommends San Juan Boulevard employ design and landscaping techniques to provide traffic calming along the corridor.

Residential Street Standards

New residential street construction should be required to meet City street standards.

Existing arterial streets should be made to meet reasonable standards without requiring the additional rights-of-way unless a safety hazard has been determined to exist.

Where right-of-way and/or environmental conditions allow, arterial streets should provide curbs and gutters, planter strips and street trees, sidewalks and bikeways on both sides.

Residential streets should provide a sidewalk on one side, and should allow parking on one side to calm traffic.

Bikeways

Bikeways are needed on all arterial streets.

The 1980 five-year plan recommended the installation of a bikeway along Samish Way from the I-5 overpass to Padden Park.

The 2006 Transportation Element of the Bellingham Comprehensive Plan identifies this project as follows:

- Samish Way corridor needs 3-lane improvements for the entire corridor. Sidewalks should be included along the corridor and enhanced pedestrian crossings should be installed at 40th and 36th Streets. Pedestrian safety improvements should be made at the Interstate-5 Freeway off-ramp at Samish Way. Bike lanes on both sides of Samish Way from I-5 / Elwood to Lake Padden should be a priority multimodal project and take precedence over the widening of Samish Way.

These improvements are desired more than ever with the development of riding trails in Padden Park and the increased bicycle usage. The neighborhood should work with the City to develop a phased approach for multi-modal amenities to encourage alternative modes of transportation.

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS AND COMMENTS

The Samish Neighborhood needs to be forward looking and thinking about long-range planning of circulation matters affecting the neighborhood. Planning and funding needs to be coordinated and well thought-out as development occurs. The Neighborhood strongly recommends that there be neighborhood representation and participation in the long-range transportation planning process.

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

V. Land Use

Samish Neighborhood Priorities for Land Use:

- A. Maintain current density with single-family residences consistent with current zoning.
- B. The neighborhood is extremely concerned about the impacts of illegal rooming houses, and strongly encourages the City to resolve this situation.

The Samish Neighborhood strongly believes that development in the neighborhood be considered on a comprehensive basis with infrastructure (*i.e.*, roads, sewer, water and storm sewer) appropriate for hilly, rocky topography) built concurrent with or in place as development occurs. The Samish Neighborhood wishes to maintain current density with single-family residences consistent with current zoning. Variances and short plat applications, in particular, need to be sensitive to the topography and infrastructure issues.

Developments that provide protection to the environment are sensitive to neighborhood concerns regarding subsurface drainage, encourage multi-modal transportation, and take into consideration the visions of the neighborhood and neighborhood character as described in this plan, will be preferred by the Samish Neighborhood. An approach to accomplishing development of higher densities and mixed uses within the neighborhood may include rezone requests, such as a contract rezone, with input by the Samish Neighborhood. From the earliest stages, development proposals should consider all aspects of the Planning Commission handout titled Suggested Process for Development Projects.

NOTE: The Samish Neighborhood and City staff will work together to review and may consider changes to the Land Use Section and area descriptions.

We have not addressed the adjacent Urban Growth Area in this draft Plan because we were advised by the COB Planning Department that the UGA would be a separate neighborhood with a separate neighborhood association. The Samish Neighborhood wants input into development of the adjacent UGA as the UGA plan progresses.

AREA 1

This area near the Samish Way freeway interchange is designated for Auto Commercial uses. This classification is compatible with an area directly to the north in the Puget Neighborhood. The extension of 40th Street via Ashley Street is the eastern boundary of this area; the southern boundary being the Byron/Consolidation arterial.

Topography rises to the southeast of the property and provides somewhat of a separation from the residential uses to the east. A buffer should be maintained and enhanced where these uses abut. In addition, curb cuts on Lincoln Street and Byron Avenue should be limited for traffic safety.

Improvements to this freeway interchange are proposed to correct the many traffic problems in this general vicinity. The prerequisite consideration for Area 1 relates to these improvements.

Area 1 Land Use Designation: Commercial

AREA 1A

This area is located uphill from the existing Lincoln Creek Transportation Center. This subarea establishes an appropriate transition from the established residential uses north and east of Maple and Ashley Streets and commercial zoned properties to the east.

The riparian buffer associated with Lincoln Creek and the site's topography are unique characteristics of this subarea. These physical features provide natural transition from this area to the properties immediately to the west and the residential neighborhood east of Ashley Street.

Area 1A Land Use Designation: Commercial

AREA 2

The classification of Planned Commercial for this area is based primarily on the proposed traffic improvements to the entire area around the Samish Way freeway interchange being implemented. The prerequisite consideration relates to these improvements. This area will be limited by the new alignment of Samish Way and bordered by the Byron/Consolidation arterial. Because of the traffic considerations, and the fact that an interstate freeway interchange is adjacent to the property, this area is more desirable for commercial purposes than residential use.

While the property is classified Planned, an appropriate use for the area might be a motel and restaurant facility, with the southeast portion of the property, some of which is over 30% in slope remaining undeveloped. This would serve to buffer any development from the surrounding residential area. The Planned designation allows for flexibility in both the type of development permitted and in its location

on the property. This maintains the development potential of the property and at the same time protects the natural amenities of the property and the values of the surrounding properties.

Area 2 Land Use Designation: Commercial

AREA 2A

The area is located between 40th Street and Ashley Street and consists of 14 lots. The topography is rolling to hilly with slopes ranging between 10% and 30%. SN strongly recommends that the steep, wooded slopes be preserved and incorporated into the design of the site. The area is wooded with alder, maple, fir cedar, shrubs and grass. Three streets are adjacent to the residential area, including: Byron Avenue on the north, Ashley Street on the east, and 40th Street on the west. The Samish Neighborhood strongly recommends that street improvements are required for all development in the area.

Special consideration should be given to clearing, access, buffer, and affordable housing. A reduction in the 25' planned residential setback shall be allowed to achieve other site design objectives, such as open space, location of parking and access, better building design and relationship to the street.

Area 2A Land Use Designation: Multifamily Residential, Medium to High Density

AREA 3

This is a Planned Residential area with a density of 5,000 square feet per unit. A Planned designation is intended to encourage a design which is compatible with the topographic and drainage limitations. SN strongly recommends steeper hillsides remain as undeveloped open space buffers to adjacent lower density residential areas, especially those parts of Blocks 9 and 10, Jameson's Bayview Addition to Sehome which are included in this area. The prerequisite consideration relates to the provision of access to the site.

The Planned classification is compatible with an adjacent planned area in the Puget Neighborhood.

Area 3 Land Use Designation: Multifamily Residential, Medium Density

AREA 4

This area is characterized by a mix of relatively small platted lots, large holdings, and the Ridgemont subdivision. Development in parts of this area has taken place at a somewhat higher density than the rest of the neighborhood. To be sure, topographic and drainage features have been a source of problems and concern for many people in the Samish Neighborhood. Because of these problems and the existing development pattern, a 12,000 square foot density is appropriate.

Area 4 Land Use Designation: Single Family Residential, Low Density

AREA 5

This area encompasses the majority of the Samish Neighborhood. The area east of 40th Street is characterized by steep, undeveloped hillsides, lack of sewers, and few existing roads. The homes along Samish Way, the area around Connelly, South and Harrison Streets, and the area accessed from Samish Way up Mill Street comprise most of the residential portions of the Samish Neighborhood.

It is felt that clustering in this area can help to minimize impervious surfaces, minimize disturbance to the steepest, most sensitive areas, provide open space, and to a certain extent mitigate the drainage problems of this area. The special conditions relate to the sensitive character of the land. Mitigating the impacts from these physical characteristics can protect existing development from incurring additional adverse effects and provide a more compatible development pattern in this area.

Area 5 Land Use Designation: Single Family Residential, Low Density

AREA 5A

This area is approximately 2.19 acres in size and is bordered by Lindsay Avenue to the north, Connelly Avenue to the south, and Samish Way to the west. The area was rezoned in 2007 from 20,000 square feet per detached single family residence to 7,201 square feet per detached single family residence.

The area is characterized as forested with the potential for views of Bellingham Bay. Tree retention and / or preservation language should be considered for the zoning table to help maintain the area's wooded atmosphere and important natural qualities.

Area 5A Land Use Designation: Single Family Residential, Low Density

AREA 6

This area is characterized by extremely steep slopes and is bounded by the Padden Creek channel to the north. Access to the area is difficult and it is not presently served by sewer or water. A large part of the area is platted into small lots which, from a practical standpoint, are undevelopable because of the area's terrain. Because of the costs which would be incurred with development of this area, it is expected that few changes will occur in the immediate future. When development occurs it should be carefully regulated to make sure that any proposal is compatible with the area's physical characteristics.

Area 6 Land Use Designation: Single Family Residential, Low Density

AREA 7

The entire area is in public ownership and the existing land use is projected to remain the same.

Area 7 Land Use Designation: Public

AREA 8

This property because of its irregular size and shape and environmental limitations should have the opportunity to develop with some attached housing designed in a manner sensitive to adjacent single family homes, especially to their territorial views. No direct curb cuts should be allowed to Samish Way and clearing limited to the greatest extent possible.

Area 8 Land Use Designation: Multifamily Residential, Low Density

AREA 9

Area 9 is approximately 1.8 acres in size and bordered by Samish Way to the east and Interstate 5 to the west. This area is surrounded by residential zoning; however, adjacent properties to the north, south and east have been developed with non-residential uses. Under the Commercial land use designation, a variety of uses may be permitted such as, but not limited to, retail, office, institutional, mixed, and residential uses that would serve the area, as well as provide opportunities to live and work in the neighborhood.

This area of the Samish Neighborhood is located in the Connelly Creek watershed and flows west into Padden Creek. Deciduous and evergreen trees are located throughout Area 9 and the topography of the area slopes from east to west. Critical areas classified as steep slopes may be located in certain areas within Area 9, as well as within the adjacent Interstate 5 right-of-way to the west. Further site analysis may be necessary to determine the classification and location of these geologically hazardous areas prior to future development within Area 9. Critical areas and associated buffers should be protected and incorporated into the site design as development occurs.

Area 9 is primarily served by Samish Way, a classified secondary arterial street. Future development within this area should meet the minimum street standards as required by City code and vehicle access should be limited. Fire flow improvements to the water system in this area may also be necessary prior to future development.

Area 9 Land Use Designation: Commercial

AREA 10

Area 10, a Commercial, Planned area is approximately 1.9 acres in size. It is surrounded by a mix of single-family, multi-family, and institutional uses. The purpose of this area's Commercial zoning designation is to accommodate certain commercial uses that are compatible with the neighborhood. The Planned use qualifier provides the procedural framework to address site-specific opportunities and concerns and lessen potential development impacts to adjacent areas and uses through site design. Because Area 10 is in proximity to existing residential uses in Areas 4 and 8, only office uses as defined in Title 20 of the Bellingham Municipal Code are currently permitted in this area. Subsequent development in this area should incorporate into the site plan mitigating measures to ease possible detrimental impacts which might accrue to nearby residential neighborhoods, while providing for an effective end to southerly expansion of commercial development.

This area of the Samish Neighborhood is located in the Connelly Creek watershed and includes existing mature vegetation. The topography of the area slopes from east to west. Steep slopes are located in certain areas within Area 10; therefore, development should reflect minimization of grading consistent with slope constraints. Views from upland properties should be considered when developing or redeveloping the site.

Area 10 is primarily served by Samish Way, a classified secondary arterial street. As such, vehicle access should be limited from Samish Way to a minimum number of curb cuts to be determined prior to future development. Fire flow improvements to the water system in this area may be necessary prior to future development.

Area 10 Land Use Designation: Commercial
