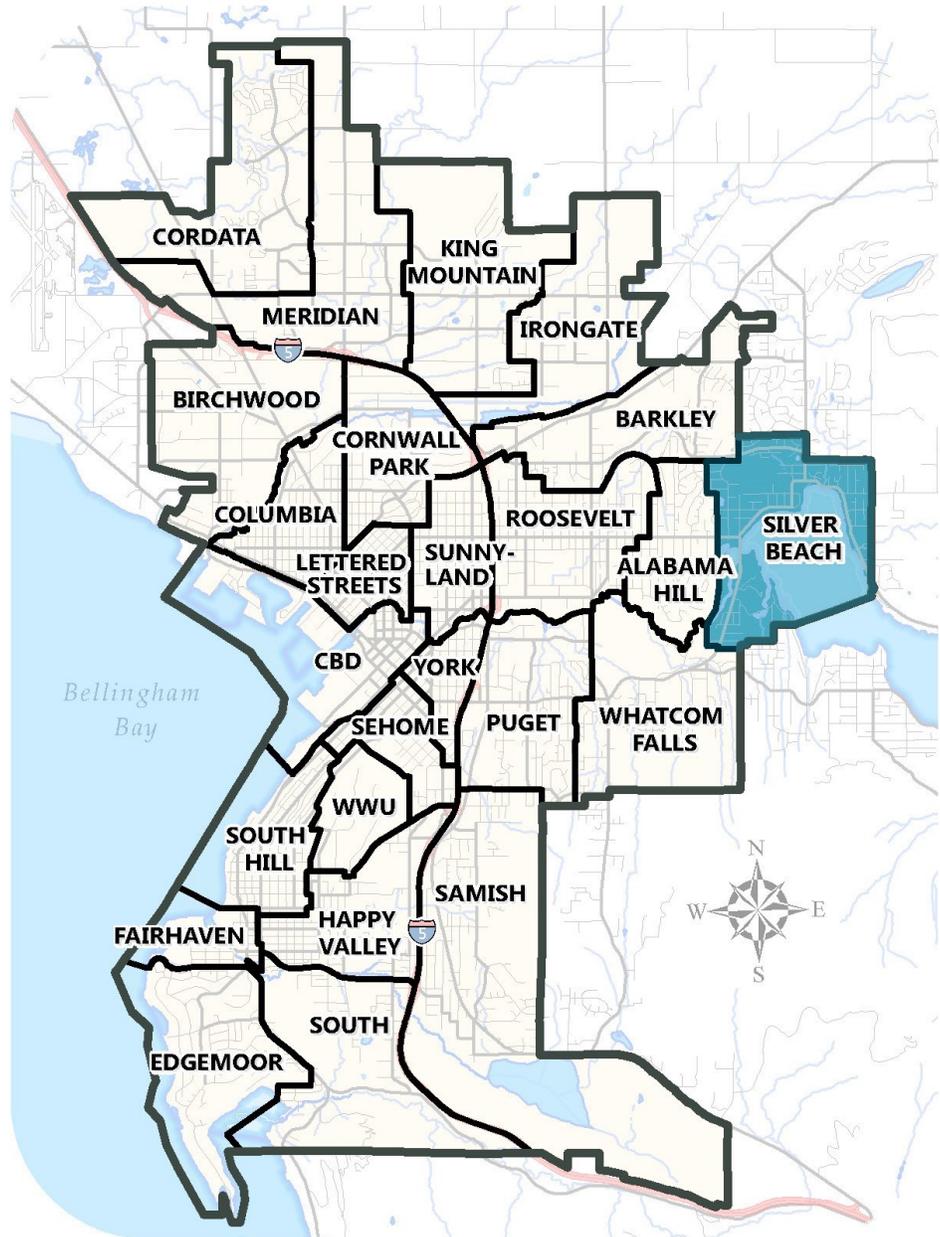




Silver Beach Neighborhood Plan

As adopted by Ordinance No. 8868 and amended by Ordinances 8946, 9018, 9041, 9674, 9702, 2004-12-087 and 2021-10-044.



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.

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Introduction

by the Silver Beach Neighborhood Association

This plan hopes to guide the development and future changes that will occur within the Silver Beach Neighborhood during the next decade and beyond. The current neighborhood is the product of a combination of good and bad planning; wise and poor decisions; an eye to the future and a disregard for future generations; and thoughtful programs and poor stewardship. In short, the neighborhood reflects the same challenges faced by any neighborhood, any city and any state. How much should government intervene in the affairs of its citizens and what is the government's obligation to future generations? It is the purpose of this plan to guide the city leaders in making well-informed decisions and wise policy so that the quality of life within the neighborhood and the city of Bellingham will not only stay the same, but improve. Our hope is that future generations whose parents have not yet been born will recognize the challenges their forebears overcame so they could enjoy a beautiful neighborhood alongside a healthy lake teeming with natural wildlife and vibrant forests.

This plan was developed by a group of committed neighborhood citizens who gathered information from a variety of sources, addressed perceived issues and aggressively solicited feedback from the neighborhood at large. The process lasted over 3 years and involved the submission of two versions of a plan, a review and editing of those by the city, work done by a committee of SBNA members from a wide diversity of views in response to the City's work and ultimately, review and input by Silver Beach Association members and neighbors. (See *Appendix 1: Notification and Meeting Record*) The result of that work is this plan.

Resource information for this plan, specifically Chapter 9, can be found on the SBNA website or in the SBNA records.

Additional staff introduction:

The Silver Beach Neighborhood is located within the Lake Whatcom watershed. The Lake Whatcom Reservoir is the drinking water source for approximately 100,000 city and county residents. As of the adoption date of this plan, the lake is currently listed as an impaired water body under section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act. As such, most properties located in the Silver Beach Neighborhood are subject to additional development regulations and management programs. Throughout this document references to these additional regulations and management programs are identified in applicable Chapters.

Current and potential property owners and residents of the Silver Beach Neighborhood are highly encouraged to consult with City staff prior to any land use actions, development proposals and/or property acquisitions.

Chapter 1: Framework and Goals

Part 1: Vision Statement

In the year 2020 the Silver Beach Neighborhood in the Lake Whatcom watershed will be a model for lake preservation and rehabilitation. The neighborhood will continue to be safe and secure. Silver Beach Elementary School will remain an outstanding school that draws new families to the neighborhood. Each resident's home and property's design and practices will strive to protect Lake Whatcom and preserve and enhance lake views while ensuring individual property rights. Lake Whatcom will be protected from contaminants as a result of proactive efforts of residents and the treatment of stormwater through filters, human practices, pet and wildlife management and road and trail designs. Green spaces and recreation will remain primary assets of the neighborhood. Trails, sidewalks, and streets will be designed to support walking and bicycling within the neighborhood and connect with other Bellingham neighborhoods. Silver Beach will be a beautiful and scenic place.

Part 2: Past and Present

The Silver Beach Neighborhood, one of 24 neighborhoods recognized by the city for planning purposes, is located at the eastern edge of Bellingham on the northwest end of the Lake Whatcom. (See *Map 1 at the end of this chapter*) Silver Beach was named and platted on May 23, 1890 by Edward F.G. Carlyon with Reginald Jones as his attorney. In 1908 Silver Beach was annexed by Bellingham. From its inception to the 1950's, Silver Beach's identity was intrinsically linked to several saw and shingle mills. The largest sawmill was the Larson mill, established in 1901 at the current site of the Bloedel Donovan Park. The mill was surrounded by the modest frame homes of the mill workers. The neighborhood was connected to Bellingham's center by electric trolley and railway lines. The Northern Pacific Railroad cut through the Silver Beach neighborhood, crossed part of the lake on a 1,500-foot trestle, and then followed what is now North Shore Drive to the south end of the lake.

Sewers were built in the 1960s and expanded as residential development occurred. By the 1970's the saw and shingle mills were gone as were the railway tracks and trestle, making the waterfront and surrounding hills prime view property.

From 1980s to 2004 Silver Beach became a scenic lakefront and lake view residential neighborhood with four parks: Bloedel Donovan, a section of Whatcom Falls, Silver Beach Park and Big Rock Garden. Additional park property and watershed protection properties, which were purchased in the early 2000s, are located adjacent to Big Rock Garden and the Silver Beach School. By 2007, most of the platted residential lots were occupied.

As of 2010, the neighborhood occupies 3% of the Lake Whatcom watershed with eight percent of the Lake itself lying within Bellingham city limits. There are approximately 1300 residences and 100 vacant lots. The neighborhood is 1125 acres in size, allocated as follows:

	# of Acres	%
Residential (includes 273 acres of roads, sidewalks & driveways)	687	61
Lake Whatcom	344	31
Parks	65	6
City Watershed Protection Land	18	2
School	10	.9
Commercial	1	<.1

Silver Beach’s population was 3,047 according to the 2000 US census, a density of 3 people per acre. This was 20% of the approximately 15,000 people who live in the Lake Whatcom Watershed. The neighborhood has grown since due to continued development.

Silver Beach Elementary School is the only school in the neighborhood and educates approximately 400 students.

Community activism in Silver Beach has a long history beginning with the Silver Beach Mothers’ Club and Silver Beach Civic Improvement Association near the turn of the 20th century. The residents of Silver Beach, concerned about a reputation as a mill town and host to the sometimes rowdy White City amusement park, petitioned the Bellingham School Board to build a substantial and permanent brick rather than wood frame school in 1911. The Silver Beach neighborhood was recognized in the Residential Land Use Plan of 1960. In 1980 the first neighborhood plan was adopted and a second, actually a minor update of the 1980 plan, was adopted in 2005.

Neighborhood Character

The most distinctive feature of the neighborhood is its proximity to Lake Whatcom. Surrounding the north basin, Silver Beach is the only Bellingham neighborhood to border the lake. The neighborhood extends up Alabama and Barkley Hills to the west and begins to climb Squalicum Mountain to the east. It is a relatively hilly neighborhood with a mixture of green and developed spaces. Wonderful views of the lake and foothills add to the beauty and value of the neighborhood.

The neighborhood is also known for its safety and low rates of reported crimes.

Silver Beach has a wide range of styles and sizes of single-family homes, having only three small sites with multi-residential units. Within the various neighborhood subareas, the housing styles vary from turn-of-the-century, modest rural farmhouses to mid-century suburban ranch and split level homes to premium traditional and contemporary homes occupying prime view and waterfront sites.

Development Patterns

Residential development has generally occurred since the late 1950s to the present. Most remaining undeveloped single-family lots are located on the east side with others dispersed throughout the neighborhood. Residential teardowns are occurring,

sometimes resulting in conflicts in architectural characteristics between new development and established residences, including building scale, design and height. These inconsistencies can lead to impacts on established views to the lake and surrounding mountains. Future multi-residential construction in the designated subareas may create limited population growth.

Special Development Regulations

Land uses and development in both the City and County portions of the Lake Whatcom watershed have been identified as contributing factors to the declining water quality of the Lake Whatcom Reservoir. As such, development activities in most portions of the neighborhood are subject to additional regulations. These regulations can be found in Bellingham Municipal Code (BMC) 16.80 – Lake Whatcom Reservoir Regulatory Chapter, BMC 15.42 – Stormwater Management and within the City of Bellingham’s Shoreline Master Program.

Strengths and Weakness

The neighborhood’s numerous acres of park, lakefront and watershed properties define its natural beauty and provide abundant recreational opportunities for City residents and visitors.

The geographical arrangement of Silver Beach conspires against a strong sense of neighborhood-wide cohesion. There are, however, several smaller areas that have a strong sense of community. Since there is no neighborhood center it is recognized more for its location near the lake than its strong neighborhood identification. Efforts to pull the smaller cohesive groups into larger neighborhood community continue.

Recent attempts to deal with stormwater pollution have been disappointing. While the city has attempted to address the problems created by stormwater runoff, water quality in the Lake continues to deteriorate. New development standards for new construction and redevelopment were adopted in 2009, focusing on treating stormwater at the source instead of relying heavily on large regional systems. Many Silver Beach residents are trying to address this issue through improving infiltration, home and yard design and maintenance. However, many others, including residents outside the neighborhood, continue practices that adversely affect the water quality of the Lake.

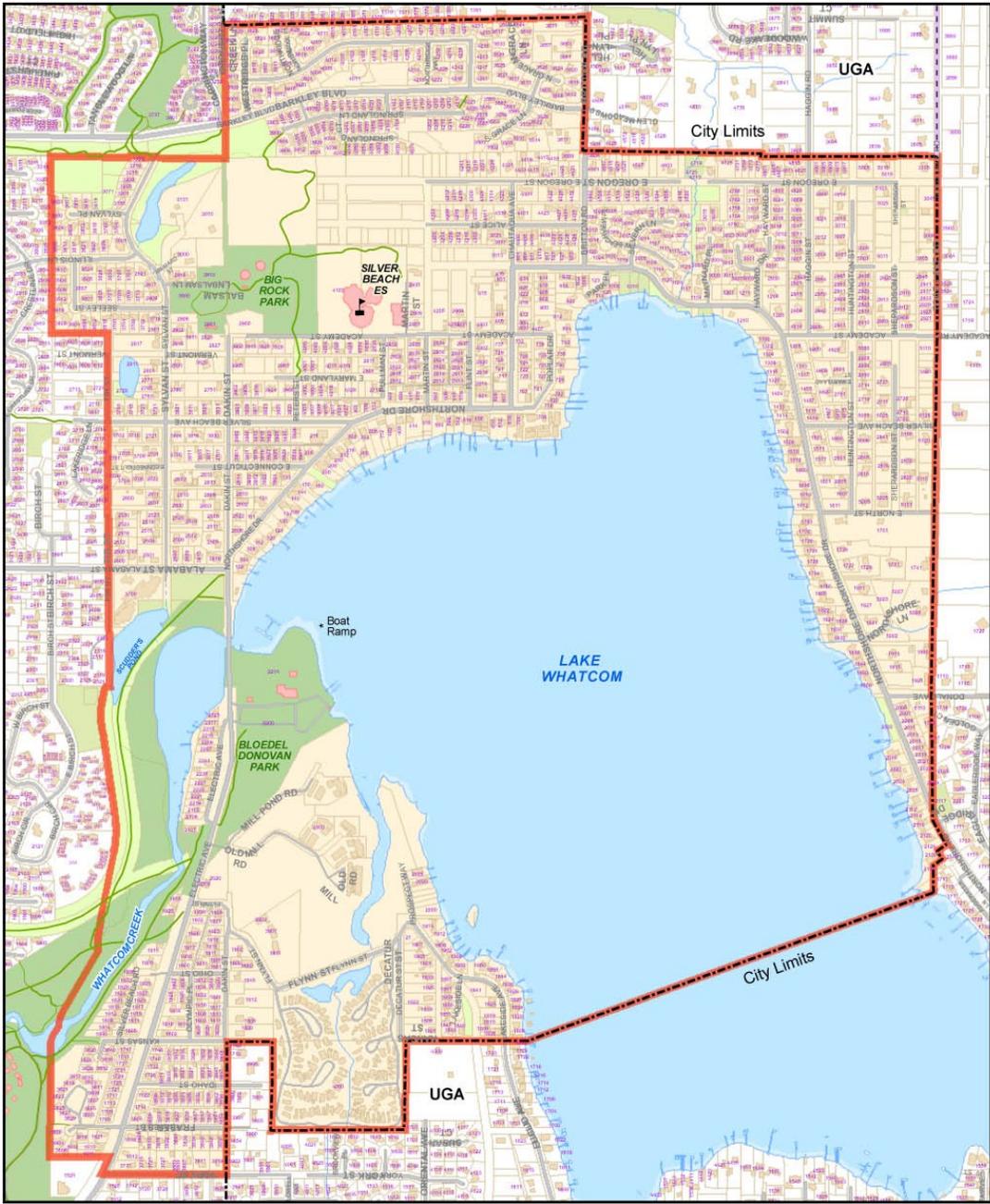
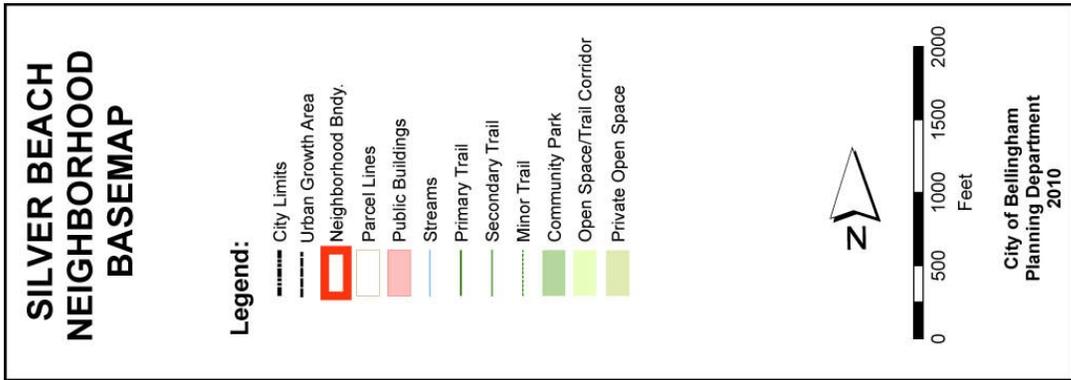
The recreational assets of the neighborhood also present challenges. These assets are more than a recreational center for more than the neighborhood, they draw visitors from the county and beyond. Though the lake and natural areas provide wonderful opportunities, users, both neighbors and visitors, often enjoy the lake in a manner that works against efforts to support its rehabilitation.

Part 3: Broad Goal Statements for the Future

With this plan and citizen action the residents of Silver Beach have an opportunity to protect and improve the neighborhood and its resources. Primary goals as defined by this plan are:

- Silver Beach residents and local governing agencies become the stewardship models for all Lake Whatcom watershed residents;
- Preserve existing lake views and trees for the residents;
- Enhance and promote the lakeside neighborhood's sense of community and
- Preserve recreational opportunities for all its residents.

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



Map

1. 2010
Silver

Beach Neighborhood Base Map (source: City of Bellingham (COB))

Silver Beach Neighborhood

Chapter 2: Silver Beach Land Use

Land uses and development in both the City and County portions of the Lake Whatcom watershed have been identified as contributing factors to the declining water quality of the Lake Whatcom Reservoir. As such, development activities in most portions of the neighborhood are subject to additional regulations. These regulations can be found in Bellingham Municipal Code (BMC)16.80 – Lake Whatcom Reservoir Regulatory Chapter, BMC 15.42 – Stormwater Management and within the City of Bellingham’s Shoreline Master Program.

Part 1: Area Descriptions

As of 2009, the Silver Beach neighborhood consists of eighteen ‘Areas’ designated by the City’s Comprehensive Plan that are diverse in their settings and uses. The following describes each of these Areas and their current uses and comprehensive plan designation. (*See Maps 2 & 3 at the end of the Chapter*) Areas are further divided into sub-areas that designate additional land use limitations, but those are not discussed here. Comprehensive plan and zoning designations come up for review and are subject to change.

Area 1 of the Silver Beach Neighborhood

This area is bordered by the undeveloped portion of E. Oregon Street on the north, Academy Street on the south, Sylvan and Dakin Streets on the west and Martin Street on the east. This property is adjacent to Silver Beach Elementary School and Big Rock Park and has a number of trails and a large section of watershed preserve land. There are significant wetlands and the area supports a considerable variety of wildlife. There are no homes in Area 1 at the present time.

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

Area 2 of the Silver Beach Neighborhood

This area is in public ownership and is the site of the Silver Beach Elementary School.

AREA 2 LAND USE DESIGNATION: PUBLIC

Area 3 of the Silver Beach Neighborhood

This area is bordered on the north by the back of lots located on E. Oregon Street, on the south predominantly by Academy Street, on the east by Haggin Street and on the west by Martin Street. Additionally, it includes lake front property along Northshore Drive from Academy Street south to the city limits. This area is an eclectic mix of lot sizes and housing types from cottages to large estate properties. There are currently approximately 256 houses and 34 vacant lots in this area.

AREA 3 LAND USE DESIGNATION: SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL, MEDIUM DENSITY

Area 4 of the Silver Beach Neighborhood

This area is somewhat triangular in shape and is bordered on the north by the back of lots located on E. Oregon Street, on the east by the city limits and on the west by Northshore Drive and Haggin Street. This area contains approximately 107 homes and 55 vacant lots. Most of the housing was built in the late 1990's and early 2000's, but a few original farmhouses still remain.

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

Area 5 of the Silver Beach Neighborhood

Area 5 is bordered on the north by a property boundary just south of Barkley Boulevard, Alabama Street on the south, Fir Street on the west and by portions of Dakin, Peters and Pullman Streets on the east. Only portions of this area drain directly into Basin 1 of the Lake Whatcom watershed. The area is mostly built out with approximately 156 homes and an estimated 10 vacant lots. The housing in this area is a mixture of new and old, large and small homes.

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

Area 6 of the Silver Beach Neighborhood

This area is bordered by Academy Street on the north and is adjacent to Lake Whatcom on the south from the corner of Alabama Street and Dakin Street to Poplar Drive on the East. There are 128 houses in this area and approximately 5 vacant lots. Thirty-one of the homes are located along the south side of Northshore Drive with direct shoreline access. Most homes in the area are one story built on a slope and have excellent views of the lake. This area also includes Silver Beach Community Church, which is located on Northshore Drive.

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

Area 7 of the Silver Beach Neighborhood

This is a small commercial area bordered on the north by residential property, the south by Northshore Drive, the east by Northshore Drive/Chautauqua Street and the west by Flint Street.

There are three commercial buildings that house a mini-mart, the Lake Whatcom Center, various retail tenants and a dental clinic.

The comprehensive plan designation is Commercial and has been identified as a Pocket Center, the smallest Urban Village designation within the city.

AREA 7 LAND USE DESIGNATION: COMMERCIAL

Area 8 of the Silver Beach Neighborhood

This area is bordered on the north by Northshore Drive, on the south and east by Lake Whatcom, and on the west by a residential property. Area 8 includes 47 condominiums and apartments, all with direct access to the Lake Whatcom shoreline. There are no vacant lots.

AREA 8 LAND USE DESIGNATION: MULTIFAMILY RESIDENTIAL, HIGH DENSITY

Area 9 of the Silver Beach Neighborhood

This area is directly west of Lake Whatcom, with Alabama Street the northern border, Fir Street the western border and the southern border dissecting Scudder Pond. The Lakeview Condominiums dominate the area, though there is also public and private open space and trails including a private lakeside dock and picnic area.

AREA 9 LAND USE DESIGNATION: MULTIFAMILY RESIDENTIAL, HIGH DENSITY

Area 10 of the Silver Beach Neighborhood

This is open space, parts of which are owned by the City of Bellingham and managed by the Parks & Recreation Department, and others owned and managed by the North Cascades Audubon Society. This area includes Scudder's Pond, Whatcom Creek, the lagoon that is the outlet for Lake Whatcom, the dam that regulates the height of the Lake plus hiking and biking trails. There are no buildings in Area 10.

AREA 10 LAND USE DESIGNATION: PUBLIC

Area 11 of the Silver Beach Neighborhood

This is a residential area along Electric Avenue that is roughly defined by Fraser Street on the south, Whatcom Falls Park on the west and Mill Wheel Community on the east. The area includes 160 single-family homes, a low income housing apartment complex and approximately 4 vacant lots. Homes vary from older small homes on small to large lots, to a few newer large homes on large lots. Many homes border Whatcom Falls Park and Whatcom Creek.

AREA 11 LAND USE DESIGNATION: SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL, MEDIUM DENSITY

Area 12 of the Silver Beach Neighborhood

This is a public area known as Bloedel Donovan Park. It is located between Electric Street and Lake Whatcom. It is a mixed-use park that includes facilities for swimming, boats, ball games and more. (See ***Parks, Recreation & Open Space*** section for more information)

AREA 12 LAND USE DESIGNATION: PUBLIC

Area 13 of the Silver Beach Neighborhood

This area consists of Old Mill Village, the Millwood Park Apartments, and Mill Wheel Community, a mobile home park. There are 288 dwelling units in this area, including 136 in Mill Wheel Community. There is a one-acre lot at the corner of Electric and Flynn that now has a small one-story residence.

AREA 13 LAND USE DESIGNATION: MULTIFAMILY RESIDENTIAL, HIGH DENSITY

Area 14 of the Silver Beach Neighborhood

This area is bounded on the south by the City Limits, on the west by Decatur and Flynn Streets, on the north by Old Mill Village property and on the east by Lake Whatcom. There are 35 homes, eighteen that front Lake Whatcom. There are 10 vacant lots of which four are lakefront properties.

AREA 14 LAND USE DESIGNATION: SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL, MEDIUM DENSITY

Area 15 of the Silver Beach Neighborhood

This is a smaller residential area on the east side of Electric, south of Fraser and north of York. There are 19 homes with no vacant lots.

AREA 15 LAND USE DESIGNATION: SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL, LOW DENSITY

Area 16 of the Silver Beach neighborhood

This area is Big Rock Park. (See *Parks, Recreation & Open Space* section for more information)

AREA 16 LAND USE DESIGNATION: PUBLIC

Area 17 of the Silver Beach Neighborhood

Area 17 is bordered on the north by the back of the properties located Northridge Way, on the south by Barkley Boulevard, the east by Britton Road and the west by the back of the properties located Westridge Place. There are approximately 102 houses and 1 vacant lot. Most houses are newer, having been built within the last 10-25 years.

AREA 17 LAND USE DESIGNATION: SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL, LOW DENSITY

Area 18 of the Silver Beach Neighborhood

Area 18 is bordered on the north by Barkley Boulevard, on the south by Area 3, on the east by Britton Road and the west by city property. There are approximately 76 houses with no vacant lots. This includes a small group of freestanding condominiums in the eastern portion.

AREA 18 LAND USE DESIGNATION: MULTIFAMILY RESIDENTIAL, MEDIUM DENSITY

Area 19 of the Silver Beach Neighborhood

Area 19 was annexed into the City in 2011 and is approximately 6 acres in size. The area is developed with 6 single family houses and 3 mobile homes. This area is served by Kansas, Idaho, and Fraser Streets, via Electric Avenue.

The topography is relatively flat with the exception of steep slopes along the eastern boundary. The undeveloped areas are forested with a mix of deciduous and evergreen trees.

The area is divided by the Lake Whatcom and Whatcom Creek drainage basins, with the western portion draining into Whatcom Creek and the eastern portion draining into Lake Whatcom via Oriental Creek.

This area contains “special regulations” outlined in the Bellingham Municipal Code Table of Zoning Regulations, which requires compliance with Bellingham Municipal Code 16.80 – Lake Whatcom Reservoir Chapter for all development located within the Lake Whatcom Watershed.

AREA 19 LAND USE DESIGNATION: SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL, LOW DENSITY

SILVER BEACH NEIGHBORHOOD CURRENT USE

Legend

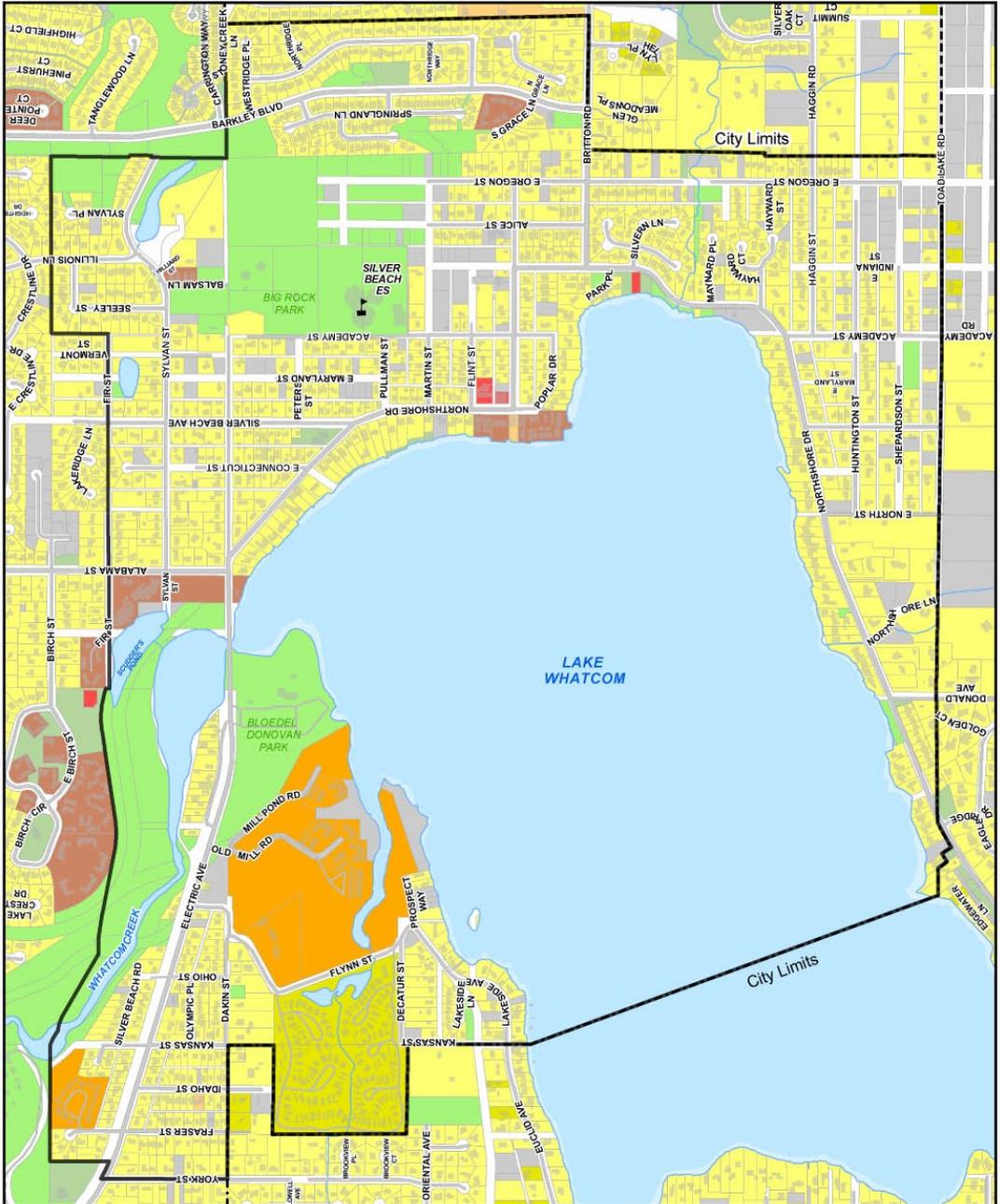
- City Limits
- Urban Growth Area
- Neighborhood Bndy.
- Vacant Land *
- Vacant Housing
- Single Family
- Mobile Home
- Duplex, Triplex, Fourplex
- 5+ Apartments
- Condominiums
- Mixed Use Res/Com
- Group Housing
- Commercial Land
- Port of Bellingham Land
- Industrial Land
- Resource Industry Land
- Public Land
- Quasi-Public Land**

* Vacant Land includes private land with assessed improvement values less than \$10,000 based on Whatcom County Assessor's records. Acreages shown on map are from City of Bellingham GIS and represent gross area.

** Quasi-Public land includes private open-space, religious facilities, private utilities, etc.



City of Bellingham
Planning Department
2010



Silver Beach Neighborhood

Part 2: Analysis and Objectives for Future Land Use

Analysis

The current land use and zoning designations in the Silver Beach neighborhood has their strengths and weaknesses. While some of the current designations recognize and honor the neighborhood's residential character, they have also allowed development and population increases that may have had an adverse effect on the Lake Whatcom and watershed. These negative impacts should be monitored and mitigated to ensure a continued safe drinking water supply for the entire Bellingham community.

Objectives

- **Land Use & Zoning Objective (LUZO) -1:** Protect and enhance the Lake Whatcom watershed in order to ensure a continued clean and safe drinking water source.

Part 3: Implementation Strategy

New development standards were adopted in 2009 via the Lake Whatcom Regulatory Chapter (Silver Beach Ordinance) and the City's Stormwater Management Code. These standards allow for greater private property development opportunities while protecting the lake water quality by focusing on stormwater pollution treatment at its source. Additional building standards could be explored in order to limit the negative potential impacts on existing private and public views, vistas and views, resale values of existing homes and to protect the drinking water supply. The following actions should be explored and adopted as necessary.

Actions

- **Land Use Action (LUA) - 1:** Continue to monitor the water quality of Lake Whatcom to evaluate the existing development standards and land use designations.
- **LUA – 2:** Land use designations should be adjusted to match current uses where appropriate.
- **LUA – 3:** Due to its watershed location, wildlife, wetlands, trails and proximity to Big Rock Garden and Open Space and the Silver Beach School, further development in Area 1 should be discouraged.
- **LUA – 4:** The City should continue and expand their program to purchase sensitive land areas in the Lake Whatcom Watershed. In particular it should consider purchasing the wetlands adjacent to Bloedel Donovan Park and those located within Area 13.
- **LUA – 5:** Protect riparian corridors adjacent to streams.
- **LUA – 6:** City residents and staff should explore and establish building height standards that consider territorial views.

- **LUA – 7:** Neighborhood property owners should be encouraged to participate in stormwater retrofit programs.
- **LUA – 8:** Continue to coordinate with the Department of Fish and Wildlife and Department of Ecology to ensure regulations pertaining to docks are adequate to protect water quality and resources.
- **LUA – 9:** Encourage the continued use and expansion of the commercial facilities in Area 7 to provide a neighborhood retail center and community gathering area that is pedestrian friendly and helps reduce car travel. Services such as a café, garden area, and deli would benefit the neighborhood.
- **LUA – 10:** The city should continue to update and develop an effective property development rights acquisition program to include undeveloped lots within the neighborhood.

Click here to view the [Silver Beach Neighborhood Circulation Map](#)

Chapter 3: Transportation

Part 1: Existing Streets, Pedestrian and Bicycle Routes

The transportation network of the Silver Beach neighborhood consists of pathways of varying scales that have the primary purpose of moving people to and from their homes, greater Bellingham and the surrounding countryside. People move along these pathways on foot, bikes, skateboards, scooters, and motorized vehicles. The purpose of this chapter is to summarize the existing network and direct future maintenance and development of it. The city's current Transportation and Circulation map can be found at the end of this section. (See *Map 4 at end of chapter*)

Currently, the streets within the neighborhood vary in scale from secondary arterials, the largest, to alleys of one lane.

Arterial Streets

The Silver Beach Neighborhood recognizes that arterial streets are part of a larger city-wide and regional transportation network and that arterials must be managed differently than residential streets. The arterial street classifications are not static, and may change with changing population growth and traffic patterns in the Silver Beach Neighborhood.

The Bellingham Public Works Department conducts traffic counts on all arterial streets and publishes a bi-annual Traffic Flow Map. Traffic counts cited in this plan were collected in 2009 or are the most recent counts available.

Secondary Arterial Streets

Currently, '**Secondary Arterial Streets**' in the neighborhood include; Electric, Alabama, Britton, Northshore, and Barkley.

Electric Avenue starts at Lakeway and ends at the intersection of Alabama Street and Northshore Drive. According to the city's 2009 traffic volumes study, 8,500 vehicles travel on Electric over a 24-hour period. The speed limit is 35 mph. There is also a high volume of bike and pedestrian traffic, especially near Bloedel-Donovan Park, both primarily located along road shoulders as sidewalks are rare.

Alabama Street ends where Electric Avenue becomes Northshore. Only 2 blocks of Alabama Street are located in the Silver Beach Neighborhood, but it carries 9,900 vehicles daily between Sylvan Street and Northshore Drive according to the city's 2009 study.

Britton Road provides a link between Mt. Baker Highway and the neighborhood, crossing Barkley Boulevard and ending at Northshore Drive. The portion in the Silver Beach neighborhood is up to standards with bike lanes, sidewalks and a turning lane on to Barkley Avenue. Truck traffic from Britton to Northshore has been limited to local traffic. 2009 traffic volume between Barkley Boulevard and Britton Road was 8,400 vehicles over a 24-hour period.

Northshore Drive is the link between the residents of the neighborhood, those living in

the county northeast of Lake Whatcom, and Bellingham proper. It also serves as the main link connecting all of the other neighborhood secondary arterials except Barkley. It is heavily traveled and traffic is on the increase as development occurs on Squilicum Mountain and Barkley Village. The only commercially zoned property in the neighborhood is located on this street. In 2008, the City reconstructed Northshore Drive from Alabama to Academy to include new and innovative stormwater facilities to protect Lake Whatcom, continuous pervious concrete sidewalk on the north side of the road and pervious concrete bike lanes on both sides of the street. The City of Bellingham Public Works Engineering Division was awarded the "2008 Project of the Year" by the Washington Chapter of the American Public Works Association (APWA). 2009 traffic volume between Alabama Street and Britton Road was 7,800 vehicles over a 24-hour period and truck traffic from Britton to Northshore has been limited to local traffic. 2009 traffic volume on the eastern portion of Northshore Drive between Briton Road and Silver Beach Avenue was 4,400 vehicles over a 24-hour period.

Barkley Boulevard is a main link for our neighborhood to Barkley Village, I-5 and the northern neighborhoods of Bellingham. In addition to high vehicle use, walkers and bikers heavily use Barkley. Barkley Boulevard includes sidewalks and bike lanes on both sides between Britton Road and Westridge Place. The City constructed a flashing crosswalk at the intersection of Barkley Boulevard and Chandler Parkway where a significant trail connection links the Alabama Hill Neighborhood to the Barkley Neighborhood. 2009 traffic counts were not available between Westridge Place and Britton Road, but 2007 counts reveal 5,000 vehicles per day at this location. 2009 counts further west on Barkley show an increase over 2007 counts so it is likely that traffic volumes here are correspondingly higher than 2007 counts indicate.

Residential Streets

Some residential streets carry more traffic than others and by virtue of the amount of use they experience they often serve as '**Neighborhood Collectors**'. They are Silver Beach Avenue, Sylvan, Academy, Flynn and Lakeside. They also serve as heavily used pedestrian and bicycle routes.

Silver Beach Avenue is typical of the streets in its surrounding area. It is a fairly narrow paved street with open stormwater ditches on each side and no sidewalk. It has become a part of WTA's bus routes, connecting Northshore Drive to Alabama Street. It also has become a short cut for some drivers that use it to get to Alabama. There is also a section of Silver Beach Ave on the east side of the lake.

Sylvan Street from Silver Beach Avenue to Alabama is now part of WTA's bus route increasing the accessibility to bus ridership. Neighborhood traffic on this street has been on the increase and residents along Sylvan Street report that speeding has become a problem.

Academy Street is a residential street that exists in two sections split by Lake Whatcom. On the west side of the lake it provides access from a marked school zone crosswalk on Northshore Drive to the Silver Beach Elementary School with sidewalks on the north side of the street. Vehicle traffic is heaviest during peak school delivery (weekday mornings) and pick up times (weekday afternoons). Academy Street on the

east side of the lake from Northshore to Toad Lake Road does not have sidewalks and is heavily traveled due to residential development in Silver Beach, the Bellingham Urban Growth Area, and on Squalicum Mountain.

Flynn and Lakeside Streets act as one street between Electric Avenue and Lakeway Drive. They are both narrow with several curves and some blind corners. Due to recent development there is increased vehicle, pedestrian and bike traffic on these streets, adding to conflicts between these modes of transportation. In 2007, the Bellingham Public Works Department used the Neighborhood Traffic Safety Program (NTSP) to install three 14-foot long x 4-inch high speed humps on Lakeside Avenue in an attempt to slow speeding vehicles and to potentially reduce cut-through traffic between Lakeway and Electric.

The remaining residential streets in the neighborhood are solely for access to homes and, for the purposes of this plan, can be separated into three groups.

First, the streets in the newer developments have paved streets, sidewalks on at least one side and under street stormwater drainage running into a treatment system. These developments are characterized by limited access and no through streets. Examples: Springland Lane, North and South Grace, and Northridge.

Second, the streets in newer developments that are paved, have at least one sidewalk, and storm drainage, but have the potential or are in the process of becoming through streets. This includes Haggin, Huntington, Shepardson and similar streets.

Third, the streets in the older areas that developed over a long period by individual owners. These areas developed in an organic, piecemeal manner. They are characterized by varying widths of paved or unpaved surfaces, open stormwater drainage, and intermittent or no sidewalks. These streets mingle all modes of transportation on the same pathway. Pullman is an example of this situation.

Other Pathways

For the purposes of this Neighborhood Plan, there are many '**Other Pathways**' and connections within Silver Beach Neighborhood and between the neighborhood and Bellingham. Some of the paths are official, e.g. the dedicated alleys and the path from Big Rock Garden to Silver Beach Elementary School, while others are informal and created as needed by the residents to get from one place to the other.

Alleys: Dedicated alleys are primarily located in the sections of the neighborhood that have been developed the longest. They are most commonly used for automobile access to the garages or backs of homes.

Bikeways: There are a variety of bikeways within the neighborhood. They range from established bike lanes on the larger streets such as Northshore Drive, Britton Road and Barkley Boulevard to informal, but well used routes along the residential streets in the neighborhood. Additionally, the trails through the green zones of the neighborhood serve as mountain bike pathways.

Trails: Silver Beach neighborhood has a fine tapestry of trails that convey people

through and around the neighborhood. They also provide road access to the rest of Bellingham. The most apparent and established are the trails that lead into Scudder Pond and Whatcom Falls Park, the trail from Silver Beach Elementary School to Big Rock Garden, and the less developed Klipsun trail on the north side of the watershed management area. There are many other ad hoc trails throughout this area.

Crosswalks: Perhaps due to the original informal development of the Silver Beach Neighborhood, crosswalks are few and far between. Marked pedestrian crosswalks exist at all intersections where they are currently warranted according to existing traffic conditions and pedestrian demand, including Alabama / Northshore, Northshore/Dakin, the Northshore retail center, Northshore/Academy, Northshore/Britton , and Britton/Barkley Blvd.

WTA: Whatcom Transit Authority (WTA) provides bus service in the neighborhood via routes which connect the neighborhood with downtown and the rest of the WTA system.

Part 2: Analysis and Objectives for Transportation

Analysis

While the existing transportation pathways within the neighborhood serve its residents fairly well, the large increase in development in and around Bellingham and the pressing need to improve the water quality of the Lake Whatcom present challenges that should be addressed.

Most of the current road and walkway designs are not environmentally friendly and actually contribute to the increasing pollutant load in Lake Whatcom. Future road development and redevelopment provide unique opportunities to significantly reduce adverse water quality impacts. Many of the smaller, less traveled older roads are in need of updates, either to handle the additional traffic or to address the problems that are caused by stormwater runoff.

Trees play an important role in both the visual and environmental quality of Silver Beach. Several street trees have died, including many along Barkley Blvd, decreasing their effectiveness in treating stormwater runoff and cooling as well as the visual quality of the roadways.

The increased traffic loads and combination of users have created safety concerns. Neighbors have concerns with the surfaces and designs of some of the roads. The most heavily used roads, e.g. Northshore north and east of recent improvements and Electric, are not adequate to handle these loads and mix of users. Improvement is needed to continue to remedy these conflicts.

The residential character of the neighborhood is one of its strengths and the relatively narrow streets and limited access to them has helped to maintain that character. The small number of through streets has also helped to maintain that character. Recent extensions of previous dead-end residential streets have created through streets that, according to neighbors, have attracted more drivers at increased speeds. This has happened to Haggin and could happen to others such as Huntington and Shepardson. The formal trails throughout the neighborhood are a valuable asset and add to its livability.

Public transportation exists in the neighborhood, but its limited nature does not encourage ridership. The current routes allow for direct and easy access to the Barkley Village area, the neighborhood's primary commercial district, but residents have expressed a desire for more frequent service.

Objectives

- **Transportation Objective (TO) - 1:** Maintain the character and scale of the residential streets.
- **TO - 2:** Promote and improve safety among the varying means of transportation.
- **TO - 3:** Rebuild the streets in the neighborhood to treat stormwater runoff before it enters the lake.
- **TO - 4:** Recognize the value of street trees for aesthetic and stormwater runoff treatment purposes by developing a palette of plants to be used the Silver Beach Neighborhood.
- **TO - 5:** Accommodate the multimodal transportation needs of multigenerational residents.
- **TO - 6:** Further develop watershed friendly pedestrian paths that link the various areas within the neighborhood.
- **TO - 7:** Develop 'safe routes' to Silver Beach Elementary School.
- **TO - 8:** Improve access to public transportation for all residents of the neighborhood.

Part 3: Implementation Strategy

In order for the City to accomplish the objectives in this plan they should implement new tools and increase the use of successful existing strategies.

Actions

- **Transportation Action (TA) -1:** The City should adopt 'Green Street' criteria and techniques when redoing and maintaining the residential streets in the Silver Beach Neighborhood. This approach assures that the scale of residential streets in the neighborhood remain residential and that runoff will be treated using basic natural methods within the street right-of-way negating the need for large capital intensive, experimental filtering vaults. Green streets criteria and techniques also address safety and multimodal issues of our streets. The Neighborhood and the city need to work together to address the streets in areas 3,4,5, 6, 11 and 15 that are prime candidates for green street projects. Silver Beach Avenue from Northshore to Sylvan would fall into this group and would be an excellent model project.
- **TA - 2:** Arterial street improvements should incorporate "low impact development" techniques, where possible, while also conforming to traffic engineering requirements and specifications to provide public safety and perform the necessary function of moving large volumes of vehicle traffic.

- **TA - 3:** Install crosswalks, where warranted and appropriate, on Barkley Blvd., Britton, Northshore, and Electric Ave. to improve pedestrian safety. People, especially the young and the elderly, need to cross these busy streets to get to school, to catch a bus or for many other reasons.
- **TA - 4:** Continue improvements on Northshore to the eastern city limits to safely accommodate multi modes of transportation
- **TA - 5:** Resurface and improve the design of Electric Avenue between Lakeway Dr and Alabama St. A sidewalk should be included on at least one side to provide separate and safer lanes of travel for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- **TA - 6:** The project planned to connect Big Rock Garden, the Silver Beach Elementary School and the Klipsun trail is an important link that warrants immediate attention. This would provide a pathway system around the watershed management area connecting the residential areas on either side and allow the center of the area to be returned to its natural state. This also provides safe routes to Silver Beach Elementary School.
- **TA - 7:** Northshore from Poplar Drive southeast to the city's border should be upgraded up to the standards of the other secondary arterials in Silver Beach neighborhood. This is both a watershed quality and safety issue.
- **TA - 8:** Academy on both sides of the lake should be upgraded for safety reasons. The road is heavily traveled and in both cases the intersections of Northshore and Academy have poor sight lines.
- **TA - 9:** Any city plans for residential streets that are being considered for connection with other segments should be carefully considered by both the neighborhood and city staff. If warranted through the City Neighborhood Traffic Safety Program, a traffic circle with a rain garden should be considered to slow traffic at the intersection of Haggin and East Oregon Streets to break up the straightaway within the City limits.
- **TA - 10:** Existing alleys should be evaluated and improved when possible. With little work some may provide opportunities as alternative, and safer, bicycle or pedestrian pathways through the neighborhood. They should also be evaluated with regard to their contribution to stormwater runoff and improved if necessary.
- **TA - 11:** Identify all alleys in the neighborhood that are being used as thoroughfares and upgrade them to meet safety standards.

Chapter 4: Housing

Silver Beach is primarily a single-family residential neighborhood. There are few employers in the neighborhood and only a small amount of land is used for commercial or education purposes.

Part 1: Existing Stock

According to the 2003 City of Bellingham census, there are approximately 948 single-family homes and 522 multifamily units, for a total of approximately 1,470 housing units located in the neighborhood, approximately 5% of the housing units in Bellingham. There has been additional growth since this time with the construction of several single-family homes being built since 2003. While approximately 50% of the housing units in Bellingham are multifamily, the percentage in Silver Beach is closer to 35%.

The City's 2006 Comprehensive Plan notes that the neighborhood should have an additional 67 housing units and 172 new residents to meet its share of the city's in-fill requirements. That number is less than 2% of the total allocated for all city neighborhoods, reflecting the limits on new construction within the Lake Whatcom Watershed.

As of 2009, the number of existing single-family homes represents approximately 15% of the 6,500 single-family homes located in the Lake Whatcom Watershed.

The styles of homes vary widely from new, expensive, multistory lakefront homes to small, one-story older homes. The lot sizes vary from newer lots as small as 1/10 of an acre to several acre lots where typically older homes are located.

According to the Bellingham Housing Authority in 2007 there were approximately 530 public housing units in the city, approximately 30 of which are within the neighborhood.

Part 2: Analysis and Objectives for Housing

Analysis

Silver Beach's residential nature is fairly homogeneous, the vast majority of homes being single-family though there is a wide variety of home styles and values. Due to the limited number of buildable lots, especially along the lake, smaller homes are sometimes demolished and replaced with newer, often larger homes. It is possible this will continue to happen when redevelopment occurs.

The neighborhood has approximately 5% of the city's public housing units, which reflects the percentage of the city's population that lives in Silver Beach.

Objectives

- **Housing Objective (HO) – 1:** Maintain the residential character of the neighborhood.
- **HO – 2:** Protect and improve property values within the neighborhood.

- **HO – 3:** Ensure the neighborhood’s share of affordable housing opportunities through support of both public and private programs.
- **HO – 4:** The city should establish reasonable regulations to allow remodeling and updating of homes and allowing existing structures to be maintained.

Part 3: Implementation Strategy

This section will be developed and submitted in a future year’s update.

Chapter 5: Capital Facilities

Part 1: Existing Facilities

There are three public capital facilities in the Silver Beach Neighborhood. They include the Silver Beach Elementary School, Bloedel Donovan Park, and the Dakin Water Storage Facility.

The **Silver Beach Elementary School** is located northeast of the lake on Academy Drive. It is situated on approximately 10 acres and housed in two buildings totaling approximately 48,000 square feet. It is administered by the Bellingham School District and educates approximately 400 students. Large areas of pavement surround the school and the design of the larger building is reflective of the 1970’s when it was built. It is available for rental, but is rarely rented other than the daily use by the YMCA for its before and after-school programs. The facility and grounds have large areas of impervious surfaces.

The **Bloedel Donovan Park Facilities** are located within the Bloedel Donovan Park and are managed by the City’s Parks and Recreation Department. These facilities are discussed further in ‘**Chapter 8: Parks and Open Space**’.

The **Dakin Water Storage Facility** is located in the northwest area of the neighborhood at the end of Balsam Lane, adjacent to Big Rock Garden and Open Space. It consists of 2 large storage tanks and provides potable water to the households in the northeast area of Bellingham. It is surrounded by Watershed Management Property.

Part 2: Analysis and Objectives for Public Facilities

Analysis

All three facilities play a vital role in the neighborhood. The school not only provides educational opportunities for the community, but its facilities provide a gathering space for neighborhood groups and before and after-school programs. It is centrally located and as such keeps the distance the children need to travel to school to a minimum. Its presence helps to sustain the multigenerational character of the neighborhood.

While Bloedel Donovan Park is addressed primarily in the park section it should be mentioned that its buildings and outdoor facilities not only provide meeting and recreational opportunities for the neighborhood, but for the city as a whole. Their importance in the community’s fabric should not be underestimated.

The water storage facility is operated by the City's Public Works Department and plays a vital role in providing safe drinking water for the community. Protection and ongoing maintenance of the facilities and the site are required to maintain safe, potable water for the community.

Objectives

- **Capital Facilities Objective (CFO) - 1:** Ensure that the elementary school remains in the neighborhood.
- **CFO – 2:** As capital facilities in Silver Beach are updated or renovated their use should stay compatible with the residential character and their design should support improvement of the watershed.

Part 3: Implementation Strategy

Actions

- **Capital Facilities Action (CFA) – 1:** The City, Bellingham School District and Silver Beach Neighborhood should develop a communication plan and process that allows early neighborhood involvement when updating or changing public facilities in the neighborhood.
- **CFA – 2:** The city and Silver Beach Neighborhood should jointly explore the feasibility, vision and funding of Bloedel Donovan Park as a centerpiece of Lake Whatcom and a demonstration project for watershed management best practices including but not limited to pervious paving, rain gardens and watershed appropriate plantings.
- **CFA – 3:** The grounds of the Elementary School have large areas of impervious surfaces that in any future remodels should be designed to treat runoff on-site before it reaches the lake.

Chapter 6: Utilities and Services

Part 1: Existing Facilities and Services

Silver Beach Neighborhood is served by private utility companies that provide electricity (residential and commercial lines), natural gas, cable TV, satellite TV, telephone (via land lines), cellular telephone, and waste pick up (solid, recycle, yard and edible). These private companies pay a franchise fee to the city and the city also levies taxes on these services.

The city also provides water, sewer, stormwater control, street sweeping, police, fire, medical response, emergency services, and litter control. The closest city fire and medic station is located on Yew Street within minutes of most Silver Beach residences. A neighborhood police sergeant is currently assigned to the Silver Beach Neighborhood and the neighborhood is routinely patrolled. Response times for police assistance have increased in the past several years, particularly during night hours. However, 2009 crimes statistics show that Silver Beach has a relatively low occurrence of crime with

property crimes being the largest component. The city has installed fiber optic lines along Barkley Boulevard for its own use.

Lake Whatcom is the source water for the City of Bellingham and some Whatcom County resident drinking water. The preservation and protection of this resource is covered in Chapter 9 of this neighborhood plan.

Part 2: Analysis and Objectives for Utilities and Services

Analysis

In general the private and public sectors provide the neighborhood with adequate utilities and services.

The fees and taxes levied on the private providers are currently retained by the city for general fund uses.

Timely and comprehensive advance notification of proposed projects and maintenance work within the neighborhood has not been provided in the recent past, resulting in strained relationships between the City, private providers and the neighbors. Advance and clear communications are crucial to maintaining a cooperative atmosphere between the neighborhood and those that provide utilities and services to its residents.

In identifying remediation needs, the city, Silver Beach Neighborhood and the utilities should work together on how best to fit these utilities into the neighborhood so that services are provided with a minimal impact to the neighborhood.

Objectives

- **Utilities and Services Objective (USO)-1:**
- **USO-1:** Communications between the city utility and service departments, the private utility providers, and the residents of the neighborhood should be improved to maintain, if not increase, the safety of the neighborhood.
- **USO – 2:** The city should coordinate with utility providers to place utilities underground whenever possible, especially whenever major road upgrades occur.

Part 3: Implementation Strategy

Actions

- **Utilities and Services Action (USA) -1:** The city should explore creating a long-term utility remediation fund to cover costs associated with burying cables, power and telephone lines, restoring trees to streets and removing unneeded structures.
- **USA - 2:** An annual neighborhood review meeting that highlights achievements, lists current and future priorities, evaluates problems and provides recommendations should be presented by all city and private utility providers to the Silver Beach Neighborhood.

- **USA - 3:** The Silver Beach Neighborhood Association will work to expand the Map Your Neighborhood and Block Watch Programs throughout the Neighborhood.
- **USA - 4:** As demand warrants, an increase in police presence in Bloedel Donovan Park and surrounding play areas should occur particularly in summer months to ensure compliance with city codes.
- **USA - 5:** A transparent, concise communication process should be created that all utility providers could use to ensure neighborhood awareness of scheduled projects and maintenance.
- **USA - 6:** The city should explore programs and incentives that encourage neighborhood residents to help control phosphorus load in the watershed.

Chapter 7: Neighborhood Design

This chapter will be added in the future.

Chapter 8: Parks, Recreation & Open Space

Parks and Open Space play a vital role in the Silver Beach neighborhood. This plan encourages multiple uses of the parks and trail system, providing opportunities for people to interact with and enjoy the unique natural assets in a manner that is conducive to responsible watershed management and considerate of other users.

Part 1: Existing Parks & Open Spaces

Parks

Bloedel Donovan Park - #1 *(designation on Map 5)*

2214 Electric Avenue
Bellingham, WA 98226

Current Hours: Daily 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.

Ownership/Maintenance: City of Bellingham Parks & Recreation Dept.

Current Pet Ordinance: The park is designated as an off leash park during daylight hours from October 1 to April 30. From May 1 to September 30, dogs are only allowed off leash in the morning hours until 10:00 a.m. The beach area is open for pet water exercise area during this time. Pet owners are required to pick up and properly dispose of pet waste.

Description and Current Uses: Bloedel Donovan Park includes a boat launch to Lake Whatcom for power boats, a hand-carry launch for kayaks and canoes, access to fishing, a public swimming area, a children's play area, a volleyball court, a basketball court, an open ball field, an off leash area for dogs (limited hours), picnic tables, a train engine on display and buildings available for public use and rental including a 4,368 sq ft gymnasium with seating for 200 people and a kitchen, and a 700 sq ft. pavilion with seating for 50 and a kitchen. Swimming in the park is unsupervised.

On-site stormwater treatment: Two rain gardens, one of which is a demonstration garden and 2 media filter cartridge systems treat the 2.7 acre parking lot

Bellingham Parks Department Future Plans: The city may provide additional fishing, swimming and kayak access to the North end of Lake Whatcom.

Scudder Pond - #2

Electric & Alabama
Bellingham, WA 98226

Current Hours: Daily dawn to dusk

Ownership/Maintenance: North Cascade Audubon Society/volunteer maintenance. Bellingham Parks and Recreation Department maintains the trails.

Current Pet Ordinance: Pets must be on leash. No pets in pond. Pet owners are required to pick up and properly dispose of pet waste.

Description and Current Use: This 2.8-acre park is unique in that it was gifted to the North Cascade Audubon Society in 1987 and has been managed as a wildlife preserve by the Society since. Interpretive signs were added in 2001. The park is home to many bird species including Virginia rails, red-winged blackbirds, mallards, bufflehead, wood ducks and great blue heron. The Scudder Pond trail connects to Whatcom Falls Park trails, Whatcom Creek Trail and the Railroad Trail. Water entering the pond is a combination of surface runoff from the Alabama Hill Neighborhood and the city storm drainage system. It is important for aquifer recharge and flood water retention. Cattails and other aquatic plants improve water quality by providing a natural sediment filtration system.

Whatcom Falls Park - #3

1401 Electric Ave.
Bellingham, WA 98226

Current Hours: Daily 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.

Ownership/Maintenance: City of Bellingham Parks & Recreation Dept.

Current Pet Ordinance: Pets must be on leash in the park except along the Waterline Trail (south of Whatcom Creek) west of the Water Treatment Plant to Bayview Cemetery and along the trail from the Waterline Trail south to Lakeway Drive, east of the Cemetery. Pet owners are required to pick up and properly dispose of pet waste.

Description and Current Use: Whatcom Falls is comprised of 251 acres surrounding Whatcom Creek with only a portion of the park located within the Silver Beach neighborhood. The park trail system connects to the Whatcom Creek Trail and Railroad Trail in several places throughout the park. Access to the park trail system is invaluable to the Silver Beach Neighborhood. Whatcom Falls is also home to a 1939 bridge, built with Chuckanut sandstone as part of President Roosevelt's Works Progress Administration project.

The park includes a stocked fishing pond for children 14 and under, an open play field with back stop and picnic areas, a 1,344 sq ft shelter with seating for up to 72, an 800 sq ft shelter seating 24, two playgrounds for children, tennis courts and a Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife trout hatchery. Swimming in the park is unsupervised.

Big Rock Garden and Open Space- #4

2900 Sylvan Street
Bellingham, WA 98226

Current Hours: Daily 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.

Ownership/Maintenance: City of Bellingham Parks & Recreation Dept.

Current Pet Ordinance: No pets are allowed in the fenced garden area. They are allowed on-leash in the adjacent open space. Pet owners are required to pick up and properly dispose of pet waste.

Description and Current uses: This 2.5-acre park and adjacent 9.5 acre open space overlooks Lake Whatcom. The garden houses many permanent sculptures created by local and international artists. Currently, Big Rock Garden holds an annual International Sculpture Exhibit, which runs May through September featuring 10-20 selected pieces from a variety of accomplished sculptors. The valued annual exhibit is dependent upon yearly funding. In addition to sculptures, the park contains native and ornamental plants, trees, shrubs and trails.

Bellingham Parks Department Future Plans: A master plan for the improvements to the garden area includes improved accessibility, expansion of art display areas, improved parking, new fencing and entry.

Open Space

Connecticut Street-end - #5

Ownership/Maintenance: City of Bellingham

Street Right of Way. Neighbors maintain the informal trail.
This location provides public access from the street end to Lake Whatcom.

Silver Shores - #6

Ownership/Maintenance: PRIVATE

Private access on Northshore Drive near Silvern Lane is provided to Lake Whatcom for homeowners of Silver Shores development.

North Silver Beach Open Space Site - #7

Ownership/Maintenance: Bellingham Parks and Recreation manages this site through a lease agreement with the Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The land is owned by DNR.

This beach site is located off Northshore Drive between Silvern and Maynard and
Silver Beach Neighborhood

provides unsupervised freshwater swimming access, picnic tables and fishing access to Lake Whatcom.

Maynard Place Beach - #8

Ownership/Maintenance: PRIVATE

This privately owned access is located on Northshore Drive near Maynard Place and provides access for Maynard Place homeowners.

North Street-end - #9

Ownership/Maintenance: City of Bellingham

This location provides access from the end of North Street to Lake Whatcom.

Donald Avenue Street-end - #10

Ownership/Maintenance: City of Bellingham

This location provides public access from the end of Donald Street to Lake Whatcom.

Watershed Protection Management Areas

Ownership/Management: City of Bellingham, Department of Public Works.

Property that has been acquired as part of the Lake Whatcom Watershed Protection process is located throughout the neighborhood. The largest parcel (**#11**) is located north of Silver Beach Elementary School. The property acquisition program began in the early 2000's and will continue to play a major role in the city's role in protecting the watershed.

Part 2: Analysis & Objectives for Parks, Recreation and Open Space

Analysis

Bloedel Donovan is a focal point of the neighborhood and has the greatest opportunity for enhancement of all the neighborhood's parks. The multipurpose building and pavilion have been recently upgraded with new kitchens, flooring and roofs. Management of the park and future improvements should be consistent with the residential nature of the neighborhood and responsible watershed practices. Improved management of the boat launch could serve to better protect the Lake Whatcom Reservoir. Bloedel Donovan is a high-use facility with significant impact on the lake. Silver Beach, Bellingham and Whatcom County residents enjoy this park and value the trail connections available here.

There is tension between dog owners and parents/grandparents of children who use Bloedel Donovan. The benefit of allowing dogs off leash is that the Canada goose population is reduced with the presence of dogs. However, many residents have health concerns about pet waste on the beach and in the children's play area. There are complaints that dogs are allowed off-leash throughout the day, even in the summer months when the hours are supposed to only be from 6 a.m. to 10 a.m. Off-leash information on dates and hours should be consistent between the ordinance, the signs in the parks and information listed on various web sites.

Both pet and goose waste contribute to phosphorus contamination of the Reservoir.

Many have expressed concerns about the unsupervised swimming & diving in the Bloedel Donovan area. The need for a lifeguard is also addressed in 'Chapter 9, Lake Whatcom, VI. Recreation'.

Silver Beach and Bellingham residents also enjoy Scudder Pond as a park and use it to access Whatcom Falls Park on a regular basis. It provides a unique educational opportunity regarding stormwater runoff and marsh habitat for the neighborhood as well as visitors.

The Silver Beach Creek outlet is heavily polluted and is another location that would benefit from improvements. The Creek is currently being studied through a joint city / county project.

None of the street-end sites have safe pedestrian crossings or clear signage for pedestrians and kayakers. These sites are also poorly maintained and in some cases, adjacent property owners are using the public property for personal use. Neighborhood safety would be greatly increased with the addition small-scale residential pedestrian and bicycle access points, clear signage for pedestrians and kayakers and regular cleaning and maintenance. Neighbors could adopt these areas through the City's Park Volunteer Program.

The Watershed Management Protection area is a great natural asset within the community. This type of land is vital to maintaining a healthy watershed. There is growing concern that inappropriate uses of this area are contributing to sediment runoff.

Any activity in this area should be conducive to responsible watershed management. In 2009, the city constructed one formal trail route in an effort to eliminate all other informal trails in this area.

Investing in the preservation and improvement of these natural assets, encourages multiple uses of the parks and trail system, providing opportunities for people to interact with and enjoy the unique environment in a manner that is conducive to responsible watershed management and considerate of other users.

Objectives

- **Parks, Recreations & Open Spaces Objective (PROSO) – 1:** Ensure that future generations will be able to continue to enjoy these valuable public spaces.
- **PROSO – 2:** Ensure that improvements are consistent with the residential nature of our neighborhood.
- **PROSO – 3:** Ensure that these resources become models for responsible stewardship.
- **PROSO – 4:** Provide for safer access to and from all public recreation sites in the neighborhood.
- **PROSO – 5:** Continue to improve programs to encourage consideration among multiple users these unique natural assets

Part 3: Implementation Strategy

- **Parks Recreation & Open Space Action (PROSA) - 1:** Future improvements should consider the feasibility of making the buildings LEED compliant when appropriate, serving as a model of appropriate public & commercial construction within the community. The possibility of the site serving as a watershed education center should also be considered.
- **PROSA - 2:** Develop signage throughout parks and trails to indicate this area is a sensitive watershed management area.
- **PROSA - 3:** Develop educational outreach pamphlets that promote responsible use of these natural assets to be distributed throughout the city and neighborhood.
- **PROSA - 4:** Work with DNR to develop a rehabilitation plan for the Silver Beach Creek Outlet site located on Northshore between Silvern and Maynard. Signage should be placed on site to warn swimmers that this site is polluted.
- **PROSA - 5:** Safe, small-scale pedestrian and bicycle accesses should be developed at each public 'Open Space' site listed above. Clear signage that is visible to both land and lake users should be included. Consistent fencing, gates and signage should be installed to clearly identify these sites.
- **PROSA - 6:** The boat launch should be monitored during seasonal peak use to keep park activities consistent with the residential character of the neighborhood and responsible watershed management practices (no refilling gas or oil at the boat launch, etc.). Enforce existing boat launch hours.

- **PROSA - 7:** The use of public art to improve the aesthetics of Bloedel Donovan Park and highlight the stewardship of the watershed should be explored.
- **PROSA - 8:** The primary users of the Bloedel Donovan Park play and swimming area in the summer season are human. While recognizing the value of dogs in reducing the Canada Goose population, clear and consistent off-leash dates and hours should be established and posted in city literature and park signage. Work with dog owners and other citizens to consider revisions to the off-leash areas. Revisions could include allowing year round off-leash activity in the grass and beach area to the east of the buildings at Bloedel Donovan Park while reserving the play area and swimming area north and west of the buildings only for human use during summer months.
- **PROSA - 9:** Signs supporting **Park & Trail Etiquette** should be installed.
- **PROSA – 10:** Lighting in public areas around the lake should be hooded to minimize light pollution.
- **PROSA – 11:** The neighborhood should work with the City and public to review the policy of allowing overflow parking on the multi-use field.

Chapter 9: Lake Whatcom

Silver Beach Neighborhood’s location within the Lake Whatcom Watershed and adjacent to the Lake itself is unique within Bellingham. This location demands that this plan address issues pertinent to the care of the reservoir and the protection of the drinking water source for the citizens of Bellingham and surrounding areas.

Part I: Pure Drinking Water and Improved Lake Water Quality

Pure drinking water is essential to the health of a community and its residents. The fact that Lake Whatcom provides the drinking water for Bellingham residents as well as sections of the county demands that action be taken to continually improve the quality of its waters. Ideally the water would require less treatment and a reduction or elimination of the need for chlorination. It is important that the City cooperate with the County and other governments to facilitate the management of Lake Whatcom, its watersheds and their drinking water treatment facilities.

Stormwater runoff is a major contributor to the pollution of the Lake Whatcom Reservoir and ultimately our drinking water. There are many actions Silver Beach Neighborhood residents can take to ensure that they are not contributing to this pollution. Local and state governing bodies are also responsible to implement actions that will decrease the negative impacts that their current practices have on the watershed. The goal of these efforts is that any water flowing from or across all upland properties within the Lake Whatcom watershed, including gullies and creeks, should be as free of pollutants as is feasible so that the water entering the Reservoir is clean. Monitoring the lake quality, acquisition and proper management of watershed lands, restoration of habitat for native and riparian species are all tools that should be used to ensure the quality of the lake.

Educating the public to the role they play in preserving and protecting the Lake Whatcom Watershed, and ultimately our drinking water's quality, is vital to successfully managing this valuable resource. The city and the neighborhood, along with other partners, must continue to work hand in hand to upgrade and administer an on-going public education campaign for this purpose.

In December 2009 the City Council approved the Draft City of Bellingham Shoreline Master Program (SMP). The Department of Ecology intends to review and approve the City's 2009 draft pursuant to WAC173-26-120. All Objectives and Actions of this Chapter should be consistent with the Priority Restoration Goals as specified in the SMP's Restoration Plan. These are:

- ✓ Improve water quality.
- ✓ Improve connectivity of the shoreline environments to one another and to adjacent habitat corridors and/or habitat blocks that support priority species and species of local significance.
- ✓ Re-establish and restore natural shoreline processes, restore degraded and lost habitat, and wildlife corridors

Resource information for this chapter can be found on the SBNA website or in the SBNA records.

Objectives

- **Lake Whatcom Pure Drinking Water Objective (LWPDWO) – 1:** Reduce levels of pollution in Lake Whatcom Reservoir.
- **LWPDWO - 2:** All residents of the Silver Beach Neighborhood will become knowledgeable stewards of Lake Whatcom Reservoir and its surrounding watershed through continuing education programs that provide the tools necessary to achieve this stewardship.
- **LWPDWO - 3:** The Silver Beach Neighborhood Association should have a seat on any panel, board, committee and commission that is responsible for water quality and management of the lake.
- **LWPDWO - 4:** Develop a program to alert new watershed residents of their responsibilities and the regulations in place intended to reduce the impacts on lake water quality.
- **LWPDWO - 5:** Develop programs and funding opportunities to help residents retrofit their properties to achieve on-site stormwater treatment.
- **LWPDWO - 6:** Consistently upgrade and utilize the most effective stormwater runoff treatment facilities in the Silver Beach Neighborhood. The effectiveness of those facilities should be reported to the public on an annual basis.
- **LWPDWO - 7:** Establish a baseline for all pollutants of concern and where insufficient data exist, instigate reservoir and tributary monitoring.
- **LWPDWO – 8:** Governmental and community agencies should work together to improve education and outreach programs so that residents of the neighborhood,

city and county are more invested in and actively involved with the caretaking of Lake Whatcom.

- **LWPWDO – 9:** Support measures that improve the water quality of the Lake Whatcom reservoir and remove it from the Department of Ecology’s Water Quality Assessment (303d) list for impaired water bodies.
- **LWPWDO – 10:** Support the increase of funding for the Lake Whatcom Land Acquisition Program and ensure proper deed restrictions are in place on all acquired property.
- **LWPWDO –11:** Manage and monitor all acquired and protected land to maximize water quality protection and native wildlife habitat.
- **LWPWDO –12:** Encourage and support efforts to cleanup and restore Silver Beach Creek.
- **LWPWDO –13:** Support adaptive management strategies to ensure the return of a healthy ecosystem for native fish stocks and invasive species prevention.

Actions

- **Lake Whatcom Pure Drinking Water Action (LWPDWA) - 1:** Support the Lake Whatcom Reservoir Management Program (LWRMP), developed by the Inter-jurisdictional Coordinating Team (ICT), to ensure a comprehensive management strategy is in place.
- **LWPDWA - 2:** Identify the pathways by which phosphorus, fecal chloroform, benzene and other pollutants, enter the Reservoir and determine procedures to control these pathways.
- **LWPDWA - 3:** Establish an education program for all Lake boaters addressing proper maintenance and fueling of boats and trailers so as to avoid additional pollution and introduction of invasive species.
- **LWPDWA - 4:** Encourage lake friendly boating products and practices.
- **LWPDWA - 5:** All homes with septic systems within Silver Beach should be connected to the City’s sewer system. Programs and incentives should be developed to make these connections affordable for private property owners.
- **LWPDWA - 6:** Encourage a lake friendly approach to handling and storing hazardous materials.
- **LWPDWA - 7:** Implement humane methods of reducing the Canada goose population in the Lake Whatcom watershed. This could include discouraging the planting of grass adjacent to water frequented by Canada geese and promote alternatives to lawn in areas where geese are known to feed or nest.
- **LWPDWA - 8:** Safely remove all abandoned treated pilings, trusses, wood debris and sawdust in Basins 1 and 2.
- **LWPDWA - 9:** Ensure an appropriate education component is included in the LWRMP that addresses, but is not limited to, personal and commercial yard maintenance and gardening, stormwater management, auto maintenance, construction and earth moving.

- **LWPDWA - 10:** Provide watershed protection training to all city and county employees, including police, fire, public works, planning and elected officials to insure that they understand their responsibility and accountability to report and respond to noncompliance with watershed regulations.
- **LWPDWA - 11:** Establish a single 24/7-point of contact for citizens to report watershed concerns and insure a timely response.
- **LWPDWA - 12:** The City and SBNA in partnership with Silver Beach School staff and student body should plan and implement landscaping changes to enable the school grounds to be a model for best practices for watershed protection.
- **LWPDWA - 13:** Encourage an 'educated neighbors-talking-to-neighbors' program.
- **LWPDWA - 14:** Encourage individual property owners and occupants to install on-site treatment or infiltration/recharge facilities on their own properties, and minimize the amount of water that flows off-site. Many of the solutions involve low technology and low cost such as changes in vegetation, rain barrels or dry wells. The city should explore programs and incentives to reduce financial burdens associated with these improvements.
- **LWPDWA – 15:** Roadway signs and pavement markings should highlight the path and effect of chemicals from vehicles. The City's infiltration/recharge and treatment facilities on public properties should substantially reduce the amount of pollutants that reach the Lake through the use of best practices.
- **LWPDWA - 16:** Continue the current annual reservoir water column and enhanced tributary monitoring programs.
- **LWPDWA – 17:** Clean up old landfills so as to eliminate leachate contamination thereby decreasing the need for continued monitoring.
- **LWPDWA – 18:** Bellingham should seek state, federal and private funding to assist in acquiring remaining undeveloped land in the watershed through outright purchase, conservation easements, or purchase and/or transfer of Development Rights.
- **LWPDWA - 19:** All property acquired by the City for watershed protection should have development rights permanently removed through the use of deed restrictions and/or other legal means.
- **LWPDWA – 20:** All property acquired through the Land Acquisition Program should be managed in a way that is beneficial to and will ensure a healthy watershed.
- **LWPDWA – 21:** Public recognition programs for landowners donating all or part of their watershed properties or entering into a conservation easement that limits future use of the land to watershed protection should be explored.
- **LWPDWA– 22:** In addition to the current Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) and/or Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) programs, creative solutions should be adopted to permanently remove development rights from land in the watershed.
- **LWPDWA - 23:** Evaluate and seek funding to implement the strategy for conservation and recovery of native fish populations currently being developed by Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.

- **LWPDWA - 24:** Continue monitoring water quality in Silver Beach Creek to guide restoration of water quality.

Part 2: Recreation

It is vital to the health of the Lake Whatcom watershed and the quality of our drinking water that recreational activities on Lake Whatcom Reservoir support the natural processes of the reservoir and its watershed.

Objective

- **Lake Whatcom Recreation Objective (LWRO) – 1:** All forms of recreation should be safe and should not contribute to degradation of water quality or natural ecology of the watershed.

Actions

- **Lake Whatcom Recreation Actions (LWRA) –1:** Bloedel Donovan Park should be used as a model to demonstrate ‘Best Practices for Care of the Watershed’.
- **LWRA - 2:** Clearly and publicly post and enforce all boating, skiing, swimming and park rules.
- **LWRA – 3:** Improve water safety within the park by for example hiring lifeguards, eliminating diving from the bridge, etc.
- **LWRA -4:** User fees to pay for necessary services like the improvement of water safety, etc. should be explored.
- **LWRA –5:** When replacing boat docks, aquatic-ecosystem friendly docks should be installed.
- **LWRA – 6:** Encourage public and private partnerships between agencies and groups to promote overall objectives and actions as stated.

Part 3: Enforcement

Enforcement of the codes and programs that have been and will be established to protect the Lake Whatcom Reservoir and watershed are vital to the protection of this valuable resource.

Objective

- **Lake Whatcom Enforcement Objective (LWEO) – 1:** Continue to improve enforcement of regulations and ordinances to protect the Lake Whatcom Reservoir.

Action

- **Lake Whatcom Enforcement Action (LWEA) – 1:** The City shall vigorously pursue funding or reallocate resources to improve the enforcement of regulations and ordinances affecting the Lake Whatcom Reservoir.

Part 4: Long Range Planning

Maintaining a clean source of drinking water is a complex and ongoing process. The City must stay ahead of the problems that arise by continuing and improving long term planning of the Lake Whatcom watershed.

Objective

- **Lake Whatcom Long Range Planning Objective (LRPO) – 1:** Long range planning for the Lake Whatcom watershed should ensure a safe drinking water source and a healthy watershed.

Action

- **Lake Whatcom Long Range Planning (LWLRPA) - 1:** The City should continue to update long range plans and management programs. Alternatives to the current drinking water system might include:
 - Moving the water intake,
 - Changing water treatment processes,
 - Changes to the Middle Fork Nooksack River Diversion,
 - Acquiring a totally new water source, and/or
 - Renegotiating agreements to provide water to non-city residents

Appendix 1: Plan Review Process

Re-establishing the Neighborhood Association

The Silver Beach Neighborhood Association Board (SBNA) was reestablished in November 2006 with a full slate of interim officers. Nominations for permanent officers were forwarded in December and officers were formally elected in January 2007. The board identified two major initiatives:

- 1) Update the neighborhood plan, and
- 2) Reinvigorate the Silver Beach Neighborhood Association.

This appendix describes the process used to accomplish the first item. Through this process, it is clear that the Silver Beach Neighborhood Association (SBNA) has also begun significant movement toward the second action item.

Neighborhood Plan Development

Motivation and Purpose

The old Silver Beach Neighborhood Plan, completed in 1980, was seriously outdated and in a format completely different than the city's Comprehensive Plan. An update of that plan that included few minor changes was adopted by the city in 2005. This latest update has been fueled in large part by concerns that the water quality of Lake Whatcom Reservoir was deteriorating. The Board decided to entirely rewrite the Plan with the City's guidance and aiming for a result compatible with the City's Comprehensive Plan.

First Attempt

The first attempt at updating the plan began in December of 2006 after an interim board was established and nominations for a permanent board were called for. After elections, the process of reviewing the 1980 plan and its 2005 update began. Meetings were broadly advertised on the radio, the newspaper, email and several mailings to property owners. Further, a website was established and carried meeting announcements and minutes from meetings held. Throughout the early part of the 2007 City officials and public agency employees, as guests at SBNA meetings, educated the SBNA regarding topics related to the plan including drinking and lake water quality, zoning and planning, stormwater management, parks and recreation and the history of Silver Beach. Typically these presentations were made during the first hour of the meetings, followed by a work session of subcommittees working on the various sections of the plan. In September of 2007 the first draft of the new plan was presented at the monthly association meeting and feedback was solicited. At the October meeting a revised version of the plan was voted on by association members and non-member Silver Beach residents and land/business owners. The majority of the plan was voted down and only the contents that remained was forwarded to the City for consideration as the replacement plan.

Several members of the original work groups and other individuals decided to submit the original (pre-vote) plan to the City at the same time for consideration as the replacement plan.

The City chose to deny both plans as they were submitted, but instead chose, after discussing the situation with both parties, to edit the plans and return the results to the SBNA for review and re-submittal. That process took almost 2 years and the resulting 'red-lined' plan was returned to the SBNA in August of 2009.

Most Recent Draft

When the City returned its "red-line" copy to the neighborhood association, the SBNA established a committee of 10 people who represented the diversity of opinions regarding the Plan to review the City's work. This committee included Ken Bell, Mike Johnston, Audrey Borders, Mike Robinson, Coreen Hansen, Shane Roth, David Jefferson, Jan Hayes, Lee Baron and Kate Grinde. That committee started work in the Fall of 2009 and met regularly for 5 months to review and edit the City's submittal. The committee's work was presented to the SBNA and Silver Beach community for review, discussion and approval starting in November 2009 and completed in July of 2010.

Neighborhood Notification

Throughout the process of developing the original plan and its revision neighbors and interested parties were notified of meetings through several mechanisms:

- Signs announcing upcoming meetings were displayed throughout the neighborhood. Initially, 15 signs were posted then increased to 20 later in the year.
- A flyer was hand distributed to all SBNA residents notifying them that a revision of the plan was beginning and participation was requested.
- Upcoming meetings notices were submitted to the Bellingham Herald
- Meetings were announced on radio stations owned by Cascadia Radio Group - KGMI, KAFE, KBAI, KISM, and KPUG
- Emails were sent to everyone for whom we had an email address
- A web site was established that advertises impending meetings, posts significant developments and contains important documents relevant to the neighborhood including the Plan as it developed.

Appendix 2: Additional Regulations and References

Land uses and development in both the City and County portions of the Lake Whatcom watershed have been identified as contributing factors to the declining water quality of the Lake Whatcom Reservoir. As such, development activities in most portions of the neighborhood are subject to additional regulations and management programs, including;

- Bellingham Municipal Code – Title 16.80 – Lake Whatcom Reservoir Regulatory Chapter
- Bellingham Municipal Code – Title 15.42 – Stormwater Management
- City of Bellingham Shoreline Master Program
- Lake Whatcom Reservoir Management Program: 2010-2014 Work Plan