

# THE waterfront DISTRICT

BELLINGHAM  WASHINGTON



*A D2 Group, L.L.C. Architectural Illustration*

## Sub-Area Plan 2019

A Port of Bellingham/City of Bellingham  
Partnership Project



# Table of Contents

CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.0 Introduction .....	1
1.1 Purpose of the Sub-Area Plan .....	1
1.2 Relationship to the 2016 Bellingham Comprehensive Plan.....	2
1.3 The Planning Process .....	2
<i>Figure 1-1: Waterfront District Boundaries</i> .....	4
<i>Public Investment</i> .....	5
The Waterfront District Planning Process.....	6
1.4 Context.....	7
The Waterfront District Today .....	8
1.5 Redevelopment Potential .....	8
CHAPTER TWO VISION .....	11
2.0 Vision.....	11
2.1 Waterfront Futures Group Vision .....	11
2.2 The Waterfront District.....	14
2.3 City of Bellingham Comprehensive Plan .....	14
2.4 City Center Neighborhood Plan .....	14
2.5 Bellingham Shoreline Master Program .....	15
2.6 Applicants’ Objectives.....	15
CHAPTER THREE ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS.....	17
3.0 Environmental Considerations.....	17
<i>Figure 3-1: State Listed Cleanup Sites</i> .....	18
<i>Figure 3-2: Habitat Restoration Opportunities</i> .....	22
3.1 Environmental Considerations Policies.....	24
3.2 Environmental Considerations Implementation Strategies.....	26
<i>Figure 3-3: Coordinating Site Redevelopment with Cleanup Requirements</i> .....	27
CHAPTER FOUR DEVELOPMENT CHARACTER .....	29
4.0 Development Character .....	29
4.1 Development Character Policies.....	31
<i>Figure 4-1: Waterfront District Development Areas</i> .....	35
<i>Figure 4-2: Waterfront District Urban Village View Corridors</i> .....	37
<i>Figure 4-3: Structures Which May Be Retained/Re-Used</i> .....	40

4.2 Implementation Strategies .....	41
<i>Figure 4-4: Waterfront District Urban Village Land Use</i> .....	44
CHAPTER FIVE MULTI-MODAL CIRCULATION & PARKING .....	45
5.0 Multi-modal Circulation & Parking .....	45
<i>Figure 5-1: Multi-Modal Circulation Framework</i> .....	48
<i>Figure 5-2: Mode Share Assumptions</i> .....	50
5.1 Multi-Modal Circulation and Parking Policies.....	53
<i>Figure 5-3: Parking Strategies</i> .....	55
5.2 Implementation Strategies .....	57
Figure 5-4: Integrated Slopes.....	57
<i>Figure 5-5: Street Types</i> .....	60
Figure 5-6: Waterfront District Street Designs .....	61
CHAPTER SIX UTILITY SYSTEMS.....	65
6.0 Utility Systems.....	65
6.1 Utility System Policies .....	69
6.2 Utility Systems Implementation Strategies .....	70
CHAPTER SEVEN PARKS, OPEN SPACE & TRAILS .....	71
7.0 Parks, Open Space and Trails .....	71
<i>Figure 7-1: Parks, Open Space &amp; Trails</i> .....	72
7.1 Park, Open Space and Trail Policies .....	77
7.2 Implementation Strategies .....	78
CHAPTER EIGHT CAPITAL FACILITIES .....	81
8.0 Capital Facilities .....	81
CHAPTER NINE CONCLUSIONS .....	85
9.0 Conclusions .....	85
9.1 Implementation Strategies .....	85



# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.0 Introduction

Bellingham’s central waterfront is in a state of transition from its long history as an active industrial site to a new mixed-use neighborhood. Over the past several decades, the Port of Bellingham and the City of Bellingham have joined together to create a vision and develop a clear path to transform this under developed brownsfield site into a thriving mixed-use urban neighborhood. In early 2005, the Port of Bellingham acquired approximately 137 acres of waterfront property and tidelands adjacent to Bellingham Bay. This property had been owned by the Georgia-Pacific Corporation, which operated a pulp and tissue mill on the site. This property, along with other Port, City and private properties make up the Waterfront District. See Figure 1-1 Waterfront District Boundary.



### 1.1 Purpose of the Sub-Area Plan

The Sub-Area Plan’s purpose is to provide a framework for future development of the “Waterfront District”. The Waterfront District Sub- Area Plan includes a balance of environmental, economic and community objectives developed to restore the health of the land and water, improve waterfront access, promote a healthy and dynamic waterfront economy, and reinforce the inherent qualities of the waterfront.

The initial 2013 Waterfront District Sub-Area Plan was prepared jointly by the Port and the City of Bellingham with input from residents, landowners, community stakeholders and resource agencies to create a long-term redevelopment opportunity for the Waterfront District. The proposed 2018 update to this plan was prepared by the Port of Bellingham and Harcourt with input from City staff and the public. After additional public input, Planning Commission hearings and City Council review, this plan is intended to be adopted by the Port and City as an amendment to the 2013 Sub-Area Plan.

## 1.2 Relationship to the 2016 Bellingham Comprehensive Plan

The 2016 City of Bellingham Comprehensive Plan establishes goals and policies to guide future decision-making and coordinate growth within the City over a 20-year planning period. The Comprehensive Plan serves as a guideline for designating land uses, infrastructure development and community services, and long-range implementation strategies. The Waterfront District falls within the Waterfront Urban Village defined in the City of Bellingham Comprehensive Plan. Infill within urban villages is an essential element of the City growth strategy.

Comprehensive Plan Goal LU-2 is to “foster vibrant urban villages,” and Policies LU-12 through LU-19 encourage “intensively-developed mixed-use development within urban villages with significant job opportunities and a substantial amount of new housing, allowing people to work, shop and recreate near where they live.” Land Use Policy LU-14 is to “ensure that Bellingham’s City Center (i.e. Downtown, Waterfront and Old Town Districts) retains its role as the dominant cultural, civic, financial and service center for the community and region” and calls for unique, attractive development, which reflects Bellingham’s history and natural setting.

The Waterfront District is located within the City Center Neighborhood, which was formerly called the Central Business District Neighborhood. The Waterfront Futures Group Vision and Guiding Principles are referenced in the City Center Neighborhood Plan. Upon adoption of the 2013 Waterfront District Sub-Area Plan, the Waterfront District was rezoned to a new zoning category called “Waterfront Mixed-Use”. The proposed 2018 amendment to the Waterfront District Sub-Area Plan is consistent with the City of Bellingham Comprehensive plan, City Center neighborhood Plan and Waterfront Futures Group Vision and Framework Plan.

## 1.3 The Planning Process

*Related Planning Processes:* Bellingham’s City Center and Central Waterfront has been a focus of numerous planning efforts since the early 1990’s. Those plans include:

- Regional Urban Design Assistance Team Report (1992)
- Visions for Bellingham (1992)
- Bellingham Bay Demonstration Pilot (1996–present)
- Whatcom Creek Waterfront Action Program (1996)
- Downtown Development Workshop (1998)
- Bellingham Bay Comprehensive Strategy FEIS (2000)
- City Center Master Plan (2002)
- Community Forum on Growth Management (2004)
- Waterfront Futures Group (WFG) Vision and Framework Plan (2005)
- Bellingham Comprehensive Plan (2006)
- Central Business District Neighborhood Plan (2008)
- The Waterfront District Sub-Area Plan (2013)
- Downtown Bellingham Plan (2014)
- City Center Neighborhood Plan (2014)
- The Bellingham Comprehensive Plan (2016)

These planning efforts involved various forms of community input and involvement.

Each process identified the Waterfront District as an underutilized area and a vital link between the Downtown, Old Town, and adjacent residential neighborhoods. Job opportunities, environmental restoration, and increased public access and recreational opportunities on the waterfront have been identified as priorities for this area.

An extensive planning effort was conducted by the Waterfront Futures Group (WFG) in 2003/2004. The Port and City appointed this citizen-led task force to take a fresh and independent look at the future of the entire waterfront in response to the closure of Georgia-Pacific's (GP) pulp and tissue operations. The WFG held 41 public meetings and had 26 guest forums and special events focusing on the future of the waterfront. The WFG completed the community visioning process by publishing the Waterfront Vision and Framework Plan which called for redevelopment of the city center waterfront into "a mixed-use neighborhood that combines commercial, institutional, industrial, retail and residential uses, and that over time will provide many new job opportunities and a substantial amount of urban housing."



*Conceptual Illustration by Stephanie Bower*

The WFG vision was approved by City Council, and the guiding principles and recommendations were used to update Bellingham's Comprehensive Plan and the CBD Neighborhood Plan in 2006 and 2008 respectively. The Waterfront Futures Vision and Implementation Strategies recommended by the Waterfront Advisory Group were included in the Waterfront District Sub-Area Plan in 2013 and referenced in the 2014 City Center Neighborhood Plan. The proposed 2018 amendment to the Waterfront District Sub-Area Plan is consistent with the WFG Vision and WAG Implementation Strategies.



Figure 1-1: Waterfront District Boundaries



### *Public Investment*

After closure of the pulp mill in 2001, GP explored options to fund the required environmental clean-up and market the property for private development, but the cost of clean-up and the required infrastructure investment made it difficult to attract private investors. During this period, the Port studied the potential acquisition of the GP property to determine if public ownership was viable. The Port purchased the GP property in 2005 after extensive community outreach and partnership commitments from the City and the Washington State Department of Ecology to make the long-term public investments necessary to implement the community's vision on the central waterfront. The Port committed to pay for most of the environmental cleanup, to build marine infrastructure, and to dedicate land for parks, public space and rights of way. The City agreed to build new streets and utilities to serve the site, to develop waterfront parks and trails, and to create a regulatory environment that would attract private investment. The Department of Ecology pledged grant support for environmental cleanup costs.

Since acquiring the GP property, the Port and City have secured significant state and federal grant support and have spent a considerable amount of money on environmental cleanup, habitat restoration, infrastructure design and construction of roads, utilities and public access. These public investments are intended to attract substantial private sector investment and generate long-term positive impacts for the community.



*The Whatcom Waterway cleanup project removed 111,450 cubic yards of contaminated sediments from Bellingham's downtown waterfront.*



## The Waterfront District Planning Process

The Port and City launched a public planning process to develop a Sub-Area Plan for the Waterfront District shortly after acquiring the GP property. To ensure this plan was consistent with the community vision, the Port and City appointed the Waterfront Advisory Group (WAG) to integrate recommendations of the WFG into plans, projects and regulations. From 2005-2010, this citizen-led task force held regular public meetings to gather public input and ensure public awareness and participation in waterfront planning.

During these meetings and workshops, the community evaluated a range of design alternatives that illustrated how infrastructure, development, public parks and trails, and new habitat might take shape on the waterfront.

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and subsequent Addendums, Final EIS and Supplemental EIS evaluated alternate street layouts, densities and other mitigating measures to address traffic, view corridors, historic and cultural resources, critical areas and a range of other important considerations. During this process, the public provided input on the Waterfront District's character-defining features, view corridors and vistas, preferred land uses, building heights and design standards. The community discussed the role of Western Washington University (WWU) and its plans to create a campus on the waterfront, multimodal circulation, development character, environmental considerations, parks, trails, plazas, economic viability, block sizes, parking strategies, development phasing, historic and cultural resources, and sustainable strategies.



*Conceptual Site Plan by D2 Groups, LLC*

The proposed 2018 amendment to the Waterfront District Sub-Area Plan was prepared after a series of additional public meetings and public input opportunities, additional SEPA analysis, and will include additional public input during the Planning Commission and City Council review process.

## 1.4 Context

### *Natural and Historical Setting*

Bellingham's current waterfront is made up of land forms created by filling tidal flat areas over the past century. Before this filling occurred, these tide flats provided food and protection to young salmon as they left nearby rivers and adjusted to salt water in preparation for a journey out to sea.



Source J.B.Hann circa 1902

For thousands of years, ancestors of the present-day Lummi Nation and Nooksack Indian Tribe relied upon catching the salmon passing the nearshore areas. The beaches and nearshore areas were used by these Native American tribes as seasonal encampments for fishing and shellfish harvesting.

For the last 100 years or more, Bellingham's waterfront has served the regional economy as a thriving industrial area, transportation gateway and home to many maritime activities. In 1891, the Great Northern Railroad finished an overwater rail trestle across the mud flats on Bellingham's central waterfront allowing the distribution of goods across a new, nationwide rail network. In the early 1900's, the Whatcom Creek federal waterway was established and silt from the dredged waterway was used as fill along parts of the waterfront.

In 1926, Ossian Anderson opened Bellingham's first pulp mill on the south side of the Whatcom Waterway creating a new economic opportunity for Whatcom County's extensive timber resources. In the years after, Pacific Coast Paper Mills and Puget Sound Pulp were founded and operated as major employers on the waterfront. Through the 1930's and 40's, the Bellingham waterfront saw major activity related to the pulp mill and the production of ethyl alcohol (a by-product from pulp mill waste). In the early 1960's, Georgia-Pacific acquired the waterfront mill site. Operations continued through the following decades, discharging various waste products to adjacent waterways and upland properties. During this time, Bellingham's waterfront industries were largely unregulated and there was not a general awareness or understanding of the importance of environmental stewardship.

In 1972, the United States passed the Clean Water Act ushering in a new era of pollution control. In response to the growing framework of environmental regulations, GP built a 36-acre wastewater treatment lagoon on the north side of the Whatcom Waterway to treat process water.

The GP mill adjusted to economic trends over the years, but in 2001 the pulping operation was permanently closed down. This signaled a slow decline that continued until Georgia-Pacific closed its Bellingham site permanently on December 21, 2007.



## The Waterfront District Today

Today, the Waterfront District part of the City Center neighborhood and is bordered by Bellingham Bay to the west, Downtown and Old Town districts to the east, the Lettered Streets and Columbia neighborhoods to the north, and Sehome and South Hill neighborhoods to the south.

Present densities within the Waterfront District are low. There is no residential population and most of the property is vacant with pockets of contamination due to past industrial activities. Despite its prominent location between Bellingham Bay and downtown Bellingham, public pedestrian and vehicular access is limited and the only recreational use of the site occurs at the southwesterly end of Cornwall Avenue where a small pocket beach is located. Most of the shorelines are hardened with industrial wharfs, bulkheads, and non-engineered rip rap.

Redevelopment of the Waterfront District is a “once in a century” opportunity intended to restore public access along the shoreline and convert the upland area closest to the Central Business District to a vibrant mixed-use extension of downtown Bellingham. Other portions of the site will be remediated and marketed for shipping, marine trades and light industrial uses to replace a portion of the jobs lost when the Georgia Pacific mill closed. The City and Port have invested considerable public funding over the past five years to complete environmental cleanup projects, restore a portion of the shoreline, and install arterial roads, parks and utilities to prepare the Downtown Waterfront area for redevelopment.

### 1.5 Redevelopment Potential

The redevelopment of the Waterfront District as an urban neighborhood will help concentrate a significant amount of expected population growth within the existing city limits and reduce impacts on agricultural, forest and rural landscapes in the county. The 2016 Bellingham Comprehensive Plan projects a demand for 6,459 new infill housing units and 3,930 new jobs within Urban Villages by the year 2036. The Waterfront District encompasses a significant portion of the vacant land within City Urban Villages. Redevelopment at urban density is an important element in the City’s adopted infill strategy.



*The Granary Building was built in 1928 for use as a chicken and egg cooperative. This historic building has been redeveloped for commercial and office use.*



There are 237 acres within the planning area of the Waterfront District, including the ASB lagoon, most of which is currently in public ownership by the Port, City and Washington State Department of Natural Resources. Over half of the project area will be retained for public open space and infrastructure, including at least 33 acres of new park land, 4 acres of existing public open space, 60 acres for streets, utilities and railroad rights-of-way, and 29 acres for a marina. The remaining Port, City and private property will be available for industrial use or redevelopment for residential, retail, commercial, and institutional use.

One of the key challenges for this planning effort was the definition of an appropriate goal for the level of development density within the Waterfront District. During initial planning discussions in 2005, the Port and City planning team evaluated a range of alternatives in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). A low-density alternative of 4.0 million square feet, medium density alternative of 6.0 million square feet and a high-density alternative of 7.5 million square feet were analyzed. Based on this analysis and public comment, the medium-range density of 6.0 million square feet of floor space was selected as the preferred alternative in the 2008 Supplemental Draft EIS, 2010 Final Environmental Impact Statement and the assumptions regarding density at full build-out were reduced to 5.3 million square feet in the 2012 EIS Addendum.

As the preferred alternative was further refined, five separate planning areas were defined, each of which has a different redevelopment character and density. The Downtown Waterfront Area is expected to accommodate a density somewhat higher than Fairhaven, while the Marine Trades, Shipping Terminal and Cornwall Beach Areas will be significantly less dense than Fairhaven. The Log Pond Area is proposed to remain in industrial use through the end of the planning period for the Sub-Area Plan. At full build-out, the Waterfront District is projected to have 5.3 million square feet of building capacity, with a mix of commercial, residential, office, institutional and industrial uses.

The proposed 2018 amendment to the Sub-Area Plan does not propose any changes to the assumed density or the mix of land uses.

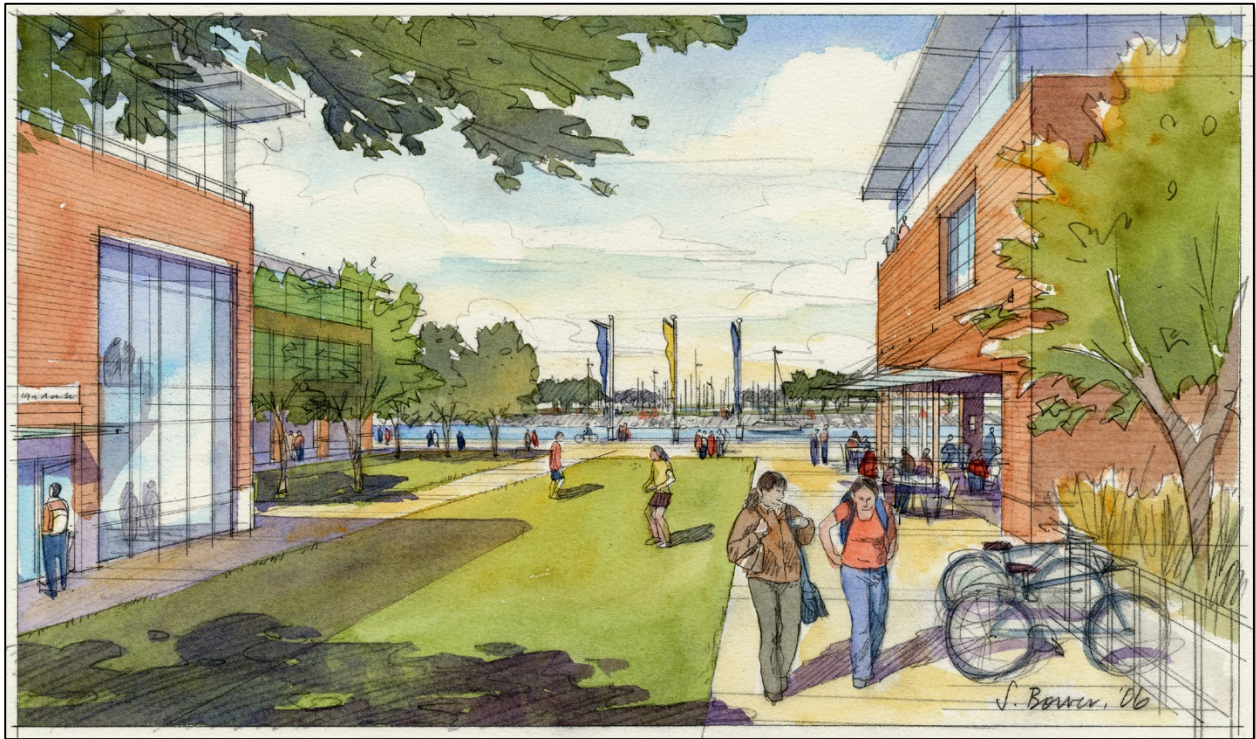


*Conceptual Rendering by D2 Groups, LLC showing an average floor area ratio of 3.0 to 4.0 FAR*



### 2.0 Vision

The community vision for Bellingham’s central waterfront has been developed over more than two decades of planning and strategic investment. Some of the key vision statements from the WFG’s guiding principles for the City Center character and City Center Neighborhood Plan are repeated in this Waterfront District Sub-Area Plan to ensure that the plan is consistent with and implements the City’s Comprehensive Plan, City Center Neighborhood Plan and the WFG vision.



*Conceptual Illustration by Stephanie Bower*

### 2.1 Waterfront Futures Group Vision

***Guiding Principle 1 – Reinforce the Inherent Qualities of Each Place on the Waterfront:***

- 1-1. Make the waterfront a regular part of the lives of more people.
- 1-2. Respect history, cultures, and the arts.
- 1-3. Make the waterfront inviting to people on foot.
- 1-4. Reinforce a unique “sense of place” at different waterfront locations.
- 1-5. Complement adjacent uses.

***Guiding Principle 2 – Restore the Health of Land & Water:***

- 2-1. Enhance or reintroduce natural systems.
- 2-2. Create and restore habitat wherever possible.
- 2-3. Remediate upland and in-water contamination.

- 2-4. Protect existing natural shorelines.
- 2-5. Seek opportunities to soften existing hardened shorelines.
- 2-6. Tailor environmental cleanup strategies and remediation to planned use.
- 2-7. Manage stormwater to enhance estuarine habitats.
- 2-8. Require sustainable practices in all development.
- 2-9. Restore, enhance and expand beaches wherever possible.
- 2-10. Connect proposed open space and natural areas to regional open space network and natural wildlife corridors.
- 2-11. Explore mitigation banking and incentives (such as environmental credits) for environmental resource protection and enhancement prior to redevelopment.



*Conceptual Illustration by Stephanie Bower*

**Guiding Principle 3 – Improve Waterfront Access:**

- 3-1. Develop strong connections between up lands and water.
- 3-2. Provide links to regional trail systems.
- 3-3. Provide multiple modes of access to each area of the waterfront.
- 3-4. Provide convenient connections between different modes of transportation (jitney/bus).
- 3-5. Create and connect large and small parks and open spaces with a “braided” system of pedestrian trails.
- 3-6. Enhance opportunities for visual access to waterfront areas.
- 3-7. Provide the opportunity to walk the waterfront while respecting natural habitat.
- 3-8. Help people find their way.



- 3-9. Provide way finding for the Coast Millennium Trail as a route that follows existing and proposed trails.
- 3-10. Explore the concept of public access “banking” and other financing incentives for improving public access.
- 3-11. Protect and enhance environmental resources when designing shoreline access and upland development.

***Guiding Principle 4 – Promote a Healthy and Dynamic Waterfront Economy:***

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



*The Port of Bellingham built the 57,000 square foot All American marine boat manufacturing facility in 2017 to create additional marine trade jobs and restore the waterfront economy.*

## 2.2 The Waterfront District

### *Guiding Principles and Implementation Strategies*

The Waterfront Advisory Group (WAG) sponsored a public involvement process during 2005 and 2006, which led to the adoption of “New Whatcom Guiding Principles and Implementation Strategies” by the Port and City in 2006. The Implementation Strategies provide further guidance related to redevelopment of the Waterfront District and are listed in the applicable chapters of this Sub-Area Plan. Additional public involvement was conducted during the 2018 Waterfront District Sub-Area Plan update to ensure that the plan continues to implement the Waterfront Futures Group Vision and Waterfront Advisory Group Implementation Strategies.

## 2.3 City of Bellingham Comprehensive Plan

The WFG plans, visions, guiding principles and recommendations were used to inform the 2006 update to the Bellingham Comprehensive Plan and the 2008 Central Business District Neighborhood Plan. These recommendations informed the initial 2013 Waterfront District Sub-Area Plan and the goals and policies in the 2014 City Center Neighborhood Plan and 2016 Bellingham Comprehensive Plan.

## 2.4 City Center Neighborhood Plan

The WFG guiding principles for the City Center character area were summarized and incorporated into the City Center Neighborhood Plan to ensure consistency with, and implementation of the City’s Comprehensive Plan and the WFG’s recommendations for Bellingham’s waterfront.

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

When implemented, this vision will connect downtown Bellingham with the central waterfront and contribute in a significant way toward the vibrancy of the community and the region.



## 2.5 Bellingham Shoreline Master Program

The City of Bellingham adopted an update to its Shoreline Master Program (SMP) in 2013, and adopted a minor amendment to the shoreline designation for the Log Pond area in 2017. The SMP goal for shoreline development within the Waterfront District is:

Coordinate shoreline uses to ensure uses that result in long-term over short-term benefit, protect and restore the shoreline resources and ecological functions, increase public access to the shoreline, and promote economic development and accommodate water- dependent uses.

The proposed shoreline uses, setbacks and development standards in the Waterfront District Sub-Area Plan and proposed 2018 amendment are consistent with and implement the SMP.

## 2.6 Applicants' Objectives

The applicants' objectives prepared for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Waterfront District, and subsequent Addendums and Supplemental EIS documents, reflect the Vision statements adopted over the past two decades of planning and public involvement and are the basis for the plans, policies and implementation strategies included in the Waterfront District Sub-Area Plan:

- Redevelop the industrial site into a mixed use, waterfront neighborhood providing opportunities for a range of uses and activities. Create a vibrant area that integrates water-dependent uses and open space with new office, retail, services, institutional, and residential uses, and enhances the economy and livability of the area.
- Connect the Waterfront District Redevelopment project with surrounding neighborhoods including the Central Business District by: ensuring that the redevelopment is compatible with adjacent areas; encouraging uses that complement, not replace, neighboring uses; and integrating new roadway, pedestrian access and trails with surrounding systems.
- Provide community benefits through the phased construction of public open spaces and beaches, pedestrian trails, and moorage for small vessels that fit within the overall intent of the redevelopment plan.
- Identify opportunities to restore and create habitat along the waterfront environment; creating an economically-viable redevelopment.
- Ensure that redevelopment is compatible with environmental remediation efforts.
- Enhance the region's economic vitality by creating conditions that are attractive to a range of employment opportunities and businesses, including water-related industries, research and development ventures, goods and service establishments, and educational and cultural facilities.
- In conjunction with the City of Bellingham, construct an integrated and economically responsible infrastructure network and public amenities that adequately support phased, long-term redevelopment of the site and stimulate private investment in the project. The ability to provide the infrastructure and public amenity system should be derived from grants and the sale or lease of redevelopment parcels by the Port and from grants, bond financing and tax revenues by the City and other applicable fees and service charges. These sources of capital will be used to offset the initial and ongoing investment in infrastructure and amenities to minimize subsidy from the general tax base of the Port or City.
- Increase public access to the waterfront by developing pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular connections to/from the site and an interconnected system of trails, viewpoints, walkways, streets, parking and boat moorage facilities. Use of non-motorized transportation modes will be a priority.
- Work with non-profit organizations and developers to provide opportunities for a mix of housing products affordable to a range of employees on the site and in the community.
- Work cooperatively with the City of Bellingham and the public to adopt a Sub-Area Plan and Development Agreement that provide the necessary predictability, consistency and expediency for

long-term success of the redevelopment, and allow for flexibility to respond to market factors over time.

- Encourage sustainable and “green” development practices as part of future building and infrastructure design and construction at the site.
- Incorporate features into the planned marina to complement future mixed-use redevelopment, including: boat slip configurations, public walkways/small parks around the perimeter of the marina, and enhanced habitat opportunities.
- Continue to coordinate with state, federal and local agencies, tribes, organizations, institutions, the public and the private sector to facilitate redevelopment planning and implementation that is successful and an asset to the community.

The proposed 2018 amendment to the Waterfront District Sub-Area Plan is consistent with these Objectives.



*Conceptual Illustration by D2 Group, LLC looking southerly toward Sehome Hill. A public plaza above the proposed Bay Street parking garage will overlook a new park in the Downtown Waterfront area.*

# CHAPTER THREE

## ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

### 3.0 Environmental Considerations

Most of the Waterfront District is built on tidelands, which have been dredged and filled to support over 100 years of heavy industrial waterfront activity. Portions of the site are affected by soil, groundwater and/or sediment contamination caused by historic releases of hazardous substances. Bringing this environmentally compromised land back into functioning and productive use is essential to meet the community vision for the central waterfront. Clean up of contaminated properties is regulated by the Washington State Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA). MTCA is a citizen-mandated law enacted through a voter's initiative and is the state counterpart to the federal Superfund law. Ecology is the lead agency responsible for the implementation and enforcement of MTCA. The mission of Ecology is to protect, preserve, and enhance Washington's environment, and promote the wise management of air, land and water for the benefit of current and future generations.

There are six state-listed cleanup sites within the Waterfront District. The MTCA cleanup process includes multiple steps from the initial discovery of contamination, to long-term monitoring to ensure the effectiveness of the cleanup action, to deed restrictions that ensure the long-term integrity of the cleanup action. The Department of Ecology, the Port and the City are working cooperatively to effectively and efficiently integrate site cleanup, habitat restoration, and redevelopment activities. Ecology's cleanup requirements will vary from site to site and will depend on a number of considerations including the nature and extent of contamination and the intended uses of the property.



Ecology must select the most appropriate cleanup action for current and reasonable foreseeable uses of the property. Cleanup methods may include treating, removing, or isolating contaminants in order to reduce exposure to humans and the environment. For each site, Ecology will evaluate a range of cleanup options that meet cleanup requirements given the current and planned uses of the property.

Environmental cleanup can be effectively and efficiently performed in conjunction with redevelopment activities. For example, if an environmental cleanup requires isolation of contaminated soil to reduce exposure, that isolation could be achieved through paving or buildings. The former GP tissue warehouse, located on the north side of the Whatcom Waterway, is an example of the integration of environmental cleanup and redevelopment. This warehouse was built in 1999 on top of a former municipal landfill and a state-listed cleanup site. The warehouse floor and surrounding parking lot were designed to function as an environmental cap which isolates contaminants in the underlying landfill from humans and the environment. The warehouse foundation includes a vapor control system which releases gases generated as the landfill decomposes over time.

Environmental cleanup requirements established by Ecology under state law will be adhered to throughout the redevelopment of contaminated properties within the Waterfront District.



Figure 3-1: State Listed Cleanup Sites



These sites are being actively managed to coordinate cleanup plans with habitat restoration and redevelopment to attain a safe and healthy waterfront.

There are six state-listed cleanup sites within the Waterfront District. These sites include contaminants at levels exceeding state standards in the soil, surface water, ground water and sediments caused by historic industrial activities. The upland sites were originally tide flats and sub-tidal areas in Bellingham Bay that were filled in, beginning in the mid 1800's, to support industrial activities.

Site	Description
Cornwall Avenue Landfill	This site was used to support a variety of industrial activities from the late 1800's to 2004 including sawmill operations, a garbage dump, and pulp and paper mill product storage. The site is primarily contaminated with heavy metals, petroleum compounds, and solid waste caused by use of this property from 1953-1965 as a municipal landfill. The Port acquired this property in 2005 and transferred it to the City in 2012. The Port is currently managing the development of cleanup options, under Ecology oversight, which protect human health and the environment based upon a large waterfront park and mixed-use redevelopment along the bluff.
R.G. Haley	This site was used for a variety of industrial activities from the mid 1800's to late 1900's including lumber, coal and wharf operations. The site is primarily contaminated with petroleum compounds caused by wood treatment operations performed by R.G. Haley and other companies from 1951 to 1986. The City acquired this property in 2010 and is developing cleanup options, under Ecology oversight, which protect human health and the environment based upon mixed-use redevelopment.
Georgia Pacific West	This site was used to manufacture paper products from 1925-2007. The site is primarily contaminated with petroleum compounds, mercury, metals, and caustic caused by pulp, paper and chemical manufacturing operations performed by GP from 1963-1999. The Port acquired this property in 2005 and is developing cleanup options for the Chlor-Alkali Remedial Action Unit (RAU), under Ecology oversight, which protect human health and the environment based upon a combination of industrial and mixed-use redevelopment. The Port completed the cleanup of the Pulp/Tissue Mill RAU in 2016. Property redevelopment activities must maintain the integrity of the cleanup action by complying with the institutional controls in place for the site.
Whatcom Waterway	This site, located within the waters of Bellingham Bay including the Aerated Stabilization Basin, is primarily impacted by mercury contamination discharged from GP's former chemical plant from 1965-1979. The Port is implementing Ecology's selected cleanup action which protects human health and the environment based upon habitat restoration, a new marina, visitor moorage, marine trades and public access along the shoreline.
Central Waterfront	This site was used to support a variety of industrial activities from the early 1900's to the present, including a municipal and wood waste landfill, boat yards, foundry activity, petroleum storage, and pulp and paper mill product storage. The site is primarily contaminated with heavy metals, petroleum compounds, and solid waste caused by a range of historic industrial activities. The Port and City acquired most of the privately-owned portions of this site in 2005 and 2006 and are developing cleanup option plans under Ecology oversight which protect human health and the environment based upon industrial mixed-use redevelopment.
I&J Waterway	This site, located within the waters of Bellingham Bay, has been used since the early 1900's to support a variety of industrial activities including lumber mills, a rock crushing plant, frozen foods processing, and a seafood processing facility. The site is primarily contaminated with metals and phthalates caused by a range of historic industrial activities. The Port is developing cleanup options under Ecology oversight which protect human health and the environment based upon mixed-use redevelopment of the surrounding uplands and ongoing light industrial navigation requirements in the I&J Waterway.

## *Habitat Restoration*

In 1999, Chinook salmon were listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act in the waters throughout the Bellingham area. These fish, the largest of the Pacific salmon, once filled the surrounding waters and represented the natural heritage of the northwest coast. A combination of factors including over fishing, the destruction of habitat in the rivers and the ocean, and dams and other barriers, brought these massive fish to the brink of extinction. The decline of salmon is closely associated with the decline in the health of Bellingham Bay and Puget Sound. Over the past one hundred years, there has been a large recession in the population of species which inhabit the surrounding area including forage fish, bottom fish, orca whales, salmon and marine birds. The restoration of shoreline habitat is critical to a coordinated, ecosystem-wide restoration effort and figures prominently into redevelopment plans for the Waterfront District.



Bellingham's central waterfront was once surrounded by shallow mudflats and extensive eelgrass beds which offered a surplus of food and protection to juvenile salmon as they left nearby rivers and adjusted to salt water in preparation for a journey out to sea. This natural environment has been devastated by more than a century of unregulated heavy industrial activity on the waterfront. Historic industrial development expanded on top of traditional salmon spawning grounds and the shallow mudflats were filled to create new industrial land. Shorelines were hardened with bulkheads, docks, wharves and rip rap and, as young salmon lost their traditional habitat, they became increasingly vulnerable to predators.

Today, the shorelines throughout the Waterfront District include a legacy of failing bulkheads, old docks and over-water industrial structures. While these structures were important to the waterfront operations that supported the local economy for many years, some of the existing overwater structures are now recognized as impediments to the new community waterfront envisioned by the WFG. Removing failing and unused infrastructure will create opportunities to soften and reshape the shorelines to provide richer and more productive habitat for salmon at all tidal stages. Portions of the GP Wharf which are in usable condition will be retained into the future to support public access and water-dependent uses.

The Port and City, working in collaboration with the multi-agency task force, the Bellingham Bay Pilot, have identified the highest priority habitat restoration areas in Bellingham Bay. The Waterfront District will support Puget Sound recovery efforts by restoring several miles of urban shorelines, removing creosote pilings and unnecessary overwater structures, improving nearshore connectivity, and building more than four acres of new shallow habitat benches. Human activities and the natural environment will be balanced through design solutions which integrate shoreline habitat into mixed-use urban redevelopment. While salmon recovery and the customary return of Chinook will ultimately require all causes of decline to be



addressed, the Waterfront District redevelopment will restore critical nearshore salmon habitat and serve as a Puget Sound model for how urban development can be carefully balanced with intricate human-nature interactions.

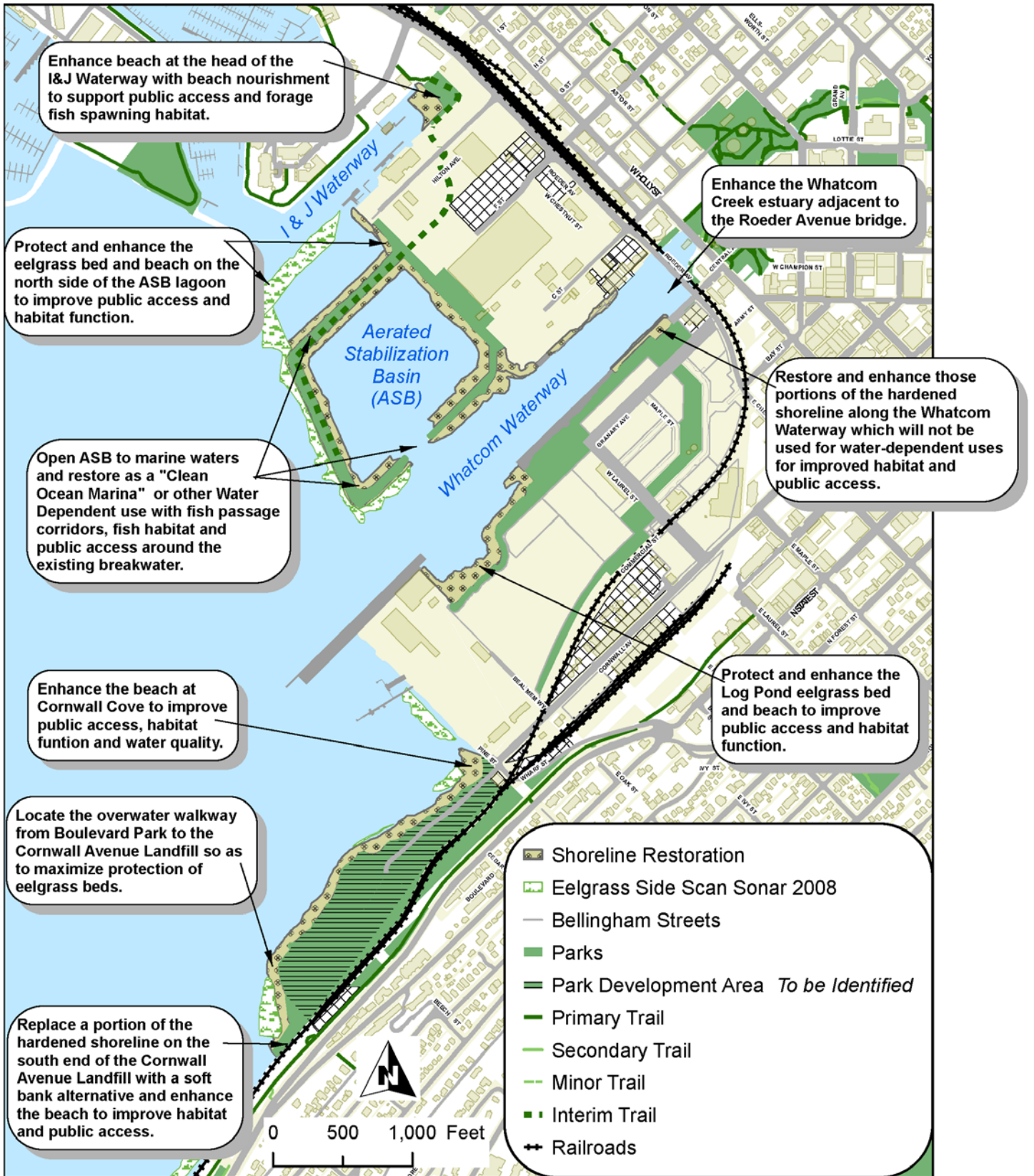
The habitat restoration projects illustrated on Figure 3-2 will occur over time as environmental remediation projects are completed and upland areas are converted to mixed-use development. In 2016, the Port of Bellingham and Department of Ecology completed Phase 1 of the Whatcom Waterway cleanup, which resulted in the removal of 111,450 cubic yards of contaminated sediments and over 250 tons of creosote treated wood and vertical bulkheads from the Whatcom Waterway. The Port of Bellingham is currently reevaluating the proposed future use of the ASB lagoon and working with the Department of Ecology to determine the most appropriate cleanup for Phase 2 of this site.



*Bulkheads, creosote pilings and concrete debris were removed from the Downtown Waterfront shoreline during the Phase 1 Whatcom Waterway cleanup to support public access and habitat restoration.*



Figure 3-2: Habitat Restoration Opportunities



### *Shoreline Development*

The Waterfront District includes approximately 3 miles of shoreline, which is regulated by the City's Shoreline Master Program. (SMP) The Washington State Department of Ecology approved the City's SMP in February of 2013.

The SMP includes the "Waterfront District" shoreline designation under which "Special Area Planning" was conducted as specified in WAC 173-26-201(3)(d)(ix). The stated purpose of the Waterfront District Shoreline Designation is:

*"To plan for, protect and implement restoration of the shoreline ecological function, reserve areas for water- dependent and water-related uses, maximize public access to the shoreline and accommodate shoreline mixed uses and non-water-oriented uses where appropriate."*

The SMP establishes Shoreline Management Policies for the Waterfront District, which were adapted from the WFG Guiding Principles for City Center and the Waterfront District Implementation Strategies. The Shoreline Policies and Implementation Strategies in the Waterfront District Sub-area Plan are consistent with and implement the Waterfront District Shoreline Management Policies in the SMP.

The SMP includes habitat protection and restoration management policies for the Waterfront District that incorporate and are integrated with the Bellingham Bay Demonstration Pilot Project Comprehensive Strategy analysis. The policies include:

- Coordinating with state, federal and local agencies including Lummi Nation and Nooksack Tribe to improve ecological function of the shoreline.
- Cooperative projects and funding for shoreline restoration, habitat enhancement, environmental remediation and public access should be identified.
- Pocket beaches within the Waterfront District should be reserved for preservation and restoration / enhancement as habitat and public access points.



*Restored beach at Waypoint Park*

The SMP also includes a Waterfront District Development Regulation Matrix with minimum and maximum shoreline setbacks, buffers and height regulations for each shoreline use area. A minor amendment to the SMP was adopted in 2017 to modify the shoreline designation for a portion of the Log Pond area.

### *Sea Level Rise*

The Waterfront District infrastructure and development will be constructed to accommodate potential long-term sea level rise and tsunami conditions. Most of the site is currently located at an elevation of 5-7 feet above the Mean High Water Mark, which is 14 to 16 feet above sea level. Recent climate change studies have projected sea level to rise 15" to 50" over the next 100 years. Development in the Waterfront District shall be constructed in accordance with the best available science sea level rise information at the time the development occurs.

The site grade for parks, infrastructure and development pads will be raised to levels appropriate for the design lifetime of the projects. Marine-related industrial uses which need water access and buildings or facilities with a low initial cost or short life span may be located close to current sea level elevations and modified over time to adjust to rising sea level. Commercial, residential and institutional uses with a longer building life or more significant investment will be elevated at appropriate levels to reflect projected sea level rise. The Port has completed an environmental capping project that placed several feet of clean gravel on most of the Downtown Waterfront area in 2016, and the City of Bellingham is working on the construction of Granary Avenue and Laurel Street, which will be 16 to 21 feet above sea level.

### **Waterfront District Guiding Principles and Implementation Strategies**

The WAG sponsored a public involvement process during 2005 and 2006, which led to City and Port adoption of “Guiding Principles and Implementation Strategies” in 2006. The following Implementation Strategies provide guidance related to Environmental Restoration, Habitat and Shorelines:

- Continue to work with State and Federal and local agencies, organizations, institutions, including the Lummi Nation and Nooksack Tribe to be good stewards of the environment. Identify opportunities for cooperative projects and joint funding for shoreline restoration, habitat enhancement, environmental remediation and public access improvements.
- Evaluate sites identified in the Waterfront Futures Group “Opportunities and Ideas for Habitat Restoration and Water Access on Urban Bellingham Bay” and other plans and studies for designation as public access and shoreline restoration sites in the New Whatcom\* Master Plan and City of Bellingham Shoreline Master Program update.
- Designate the natural shoreline areas at the head of the I&J Waterway, the foot of Cornwall, and adjacent to the Log Pond for preservation and enhancement as habitat and public access points.
- Explore opportunities to rehabilitate and enhance hardened shoreline along the Whatcom Waterway, ASB lagoon and other shores for improved habitat and public access.
- Continue work with NOAA to develop a “Clean Ocean Marina” standard which incorporates environmental remediation, habitat enhancement, pollution prevention practices and public access, and apply these standards to the proposed New Whatcom\* Marina.
- Make the majority of water’s edge accessible via non-motorized means of transportation, including pedestrian walkways, bicycle trails, motorized and non-motorized boat access, and transient moorage, connected to a network of parks, trails and transit connections. Restrict or control public access to areas used for water- dependent industry, sensitive habitat or government agency uses where public access would conflict with public health or safety, habitat protection or national security.

\* Note: This planning area, originally called “New Whatcom” has been renamed the Waterfront District.

## **3.1 Environmental Considerations Policies**

### ***Environmental Cleanup***

1. Work with Ecology to coordinate the selection of environmental cleanup strategies that are appropriate and compatible with anticipated land uses.



2. Integrate habitat restoration into Ecology required cleanup actions.
3. When implementing Ecology-required cleanup actions, incorporate sustainable strategies to minimize the net environmental footprint.
4. Identify areas within cleanup site boundaries which best support modified Low Impact Development solutions as part of future upland redevelopment.
5. Evaluate the beneficial reuse of dredge material that meets Ecology standards as fill material and as raw material for construction projects.
6. Clean-up levels will be developed pursuant to state law to be protective of land uses in the Waterfront District.



*The Port has partnered with the Department of Ecology to clean up historic contamination and prepare the Waterfront District for redevelopment*

### ***Habitat***

7. Where appropriate, replace hardened shorelines with natural beach alternatives in coordination with cleanup and redevelopment activities to enhance habitat, improve aesthetics, reduce long-term maintenance costs, and achieve the stabilization and safety of the shoreline.
8. Protect, restore, and enhance eelgrass habitat.
9. Protect, restore and enhance nearshore habitat connectivity.
10. Protect, restore, and enhance natural habitat forming processes such as stream hydrology, tidal hydrology, sediment supply, wave environment, long shore sediment transport, and the food web.
11. Create shallow water habitats by modifying elevations.
12. Remove creosote-contaminated logs, pilings and debris or replace with non-creosote alternatives.
13. Use Low Impact Development stormwater principles to improve wildlife habitat and enhance estuarine functions.
14. Restrict off-leash dog areas and boat anchoring from sensitive nearshore habitat areas.
15. Develop complex riparian vegetation along the shoreline in order to restore habitat. Where appropriate, include designated trails and areas of focused public access to the water.
16. Restoration and enhancement opportunities should be integrated with site clean-up plans to the extent allowed under project-specific regulatory permitting requirements and implemented as specified in the SMP's Restoration Plan, the Whatcom Resource Inventory Area 1's "Marine Nearshore and Estuarine Assessment and Restoration Prioritization" plan and the City's Habitat Master Restoration Plan.

### ***Shorelines***

17. The majority of water's edge should be accessible via non-motorized means of transportation, including pedestrian walkways, bicycle trails, motorized and non-motorized boat access, and transient moorage, connected to a network of parks, trails and transit connections.
18. Public shoreline access may be restricted in areas used for water-dependent industry, sensitive habitat or government agency uses where public access would conflict with public health or safety, habitat protection or national security.

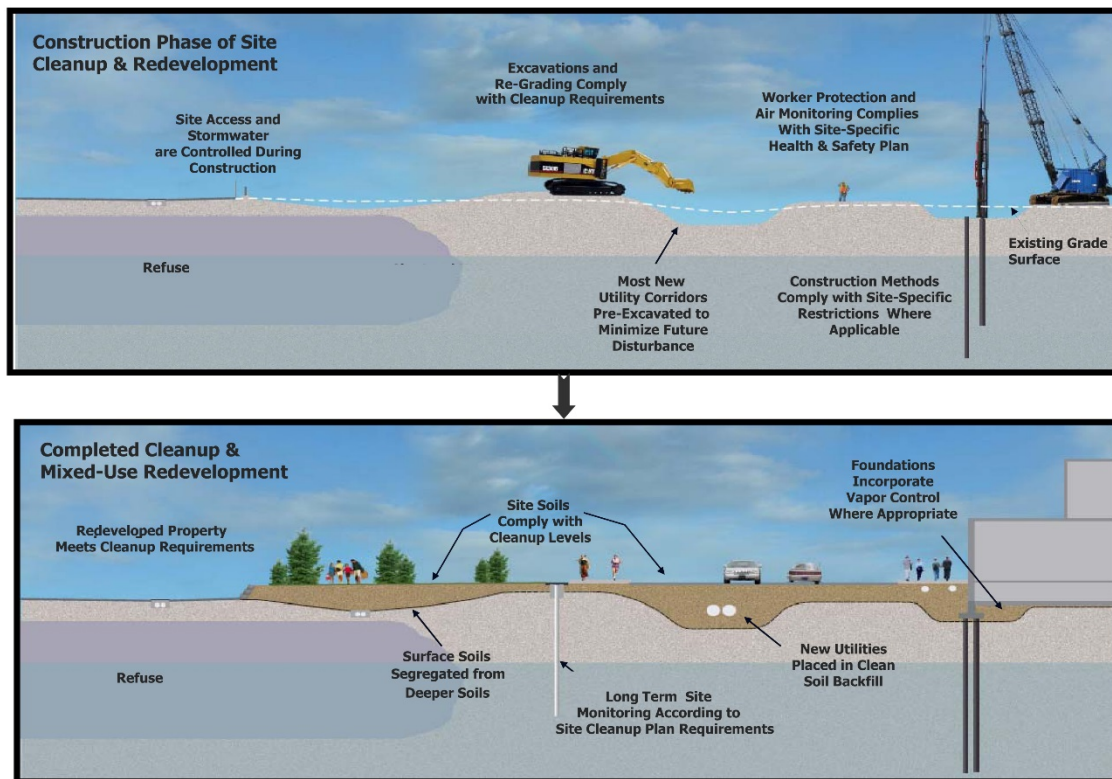
19. Shoreline areas within the Cornwall Beach, ASB lagoon and the head of the I&J Waterway are designated as a Recreational Shoreline Environment where the primary uses within shoreline jurisdiction are public recreation, open space and habitat restoration. Accessory uses intended to support public recreation or serve park visitors should also be permitted in this area. These shoreline areas will be restored for public access and habitat function. Water-dependent, water-related and water-enjoyment uses are also permitted within Recreational Shorelines.
20. The shorelines within the Downtown Waterfront area and the Log Pond are designated as Waterfront Mixed-Use Shoreline Environments where the water's edge is reserved for habitat and public access, with variable building setbacks to allow businesses, residences, and public facilities to be located within shoreline jurisdiction.
21. Buildings located within shoreline jurisdiction along the Whatcom Waterway should have variable shoreline setbacks and open space between buildings to avoid construction of a wall of buildings close to the water.
22. The Bellingham Shipping Terminal and Marine Trades Area of the Waterfront District are identified as appropriate locations for water-dependent and water-related uses and ancillary activities to support commercial fishing, recreational boating and maritime industries, including boat building and repair.
23. Parking within shoreline areas should be located under buildings or within parking structures located on the upland side of the development unless associated with a water-dependent use or unless no other feasible alternative exists. Surface parking, with appropriate stormwater management, may be developed as an interim use on areas planned for future redevelopment. Where interim surface parking is permitted, the long-term parking strategy and timing of the proposed redevelopment should be specified in the shoreline permit for the project.
24. Streets within shoreline jurisdiction should be designed and aligned in such a manner that the minimum width of travel way for vehicles is provided to facilitate circulation and accommodate future land uses.
25. Shoreline buffers should be managed to preserve, enhance and restore native vegetation and habitat functions. Public trails to provide water access should be permitted within shoreline buffers, provided they are designed and managed to protect or enhance shoreline ecological function.
26. Parks, trails, public plazas, artwork, signs benches and outdoor seating areas should be allowed within shoreline setbacks outside of designated shoreline buffers, other than areas designated for habitat restoration in future park plans.
27. Site grades should be raised to accommodate potential long-term sea level rise and tsunami conditions appropriate to the design life-time of the project.

### **3.2 Environmental Considerations Implementation Strategies**

1. Replace a portion of the hardened shoreline on the south end of the Cornwall Avenue Landfill with a soft bank alternative and enhance the beach to improve habitat function and public access in coordination with cleanup and redevelopment activities in the Cornwall Beach Area.
2. Locate the overwater walkway from Boulevard Park to the Cornwall Avenue Landfill so as to protect eelgrass beds from construction impacts. Enhance the Cornwall Cove beach to improve public access and habitat function in coordination with cleanup and redevelopment activities in the Cornwall Beach Area.
3. Enhance stormwater management at Cornwall Cove beach in accordance with Ecology stormwater standards, in coordination with the upgrade of Cornwall Avenue.

4. Enhance the Log Pond beach to improve public access and habitat function in coordination with cleanup and redevelopment activities in the Log Pond Area.
5. Protect and enhance the Log Pond eelgrass bed.
6. Portions of the hardened shoreline along the Whatcom Waterway which are not being retained for water-dependent uses should be restored and enhanced for improved habitat and a variety of public access experiences upon completion of environmental remediation and in coordination with redevelopment activities in the Downtown Waterfront area.
7. Build public promenades along the waterfront with viewing platforms and overlooks to provide users with recreational opportunities and vistas of key estuary and habitat areas in coordination with upland redevelopment activities.

*Figure 3-3: Coordinating Site Redevelopment with Cleanup Requirements*



8. Enhance the Whatcom Creek estuary adjacent to the Roeder Avenue Bridge.
9. After completion of environmental remediation, the ASB lagoon may be opened to marine waters and restored as a Clean Ocean Marina with fish habitat and public access around the rim of the existing breakwater, or another water-dependent use. In the event that a marina is built, it should include fish passage corridors through the north and south sides of the breakwater which are located so as to protect existing eelgrass beds from construction impacts.
10. Enhance the shoreline next to the C Street stormwater outfall in coordination with cleanup and redevelopment activities in the Marine Trades Area. This beach shoreline area should not be designated as a public beach due to proximity to the stormwater outfall.
11. Enhance the beach on the north side of the ASB lagoon to improve public access and habitat function in coordination with cleanup and redevelopment activities in the Marine Trades Area.

12. Enhance beach at the head of the I&J Waterway with beach nourishment to support public access and forage fish spawning habitat in coordination with cleanup and redevelopment activities in the Marine Trades Area.
13. Remove creosote-treated pilings and unnecessary overwater structures or replace with non-creosote alternatives.
14. Use sustainable design as part of environmental cleanup where feasible (i.e. design impermeable, rainwater-harvesting structures that act as subsurface “caps” for deeper contaminated materials but allow for near-surface water movement and infiltration for collection).
15. Continue to work with State and Federal and local agencies, organizations, institutions, including the Lummi Nation and Nooksack Tribe to be good stewards of the environment. Identify opportunities for cooperative projects and joint funding for shoreline restoration, habitat enhancement, environmental remediation and public access improvements.
16. Development within shoreline jurisdiction shall comply with the shoreline buffers, setbacks and height limits for the Waterfront District, established in the current City of Bellingham Shoreline management Plan.
17. Restrict off-leash dogs and boat anchoring from sensitive near-shore habitat areas.
18. Develop an interpretive signage program to educate the public about sensitive habitat areas and access restrictions.





### 4.0 Development Character

The Waterfront District redevelopment is intended to implement the community vision for the Central Waterfront by converting a large under-utilized Brownfields industrial site into a vibrant mixed-use neighborhood where people can live, work, shop, study and spend their leisure time, without relying on vehicular transportation. The project will reflect the commitment of Bellingham citizens to environmental stewardship by remediating historic contamination and restoring degraded shorelines to provide habitat for fish, birds and small wildlife species, as well as, opportunities for public access to the water. A network of interconnected waterfront parks, trails and public open space will provide outdoor recreation opportunities and community gathering places to serve the entire Whatcom County community and attract new residents, businesses and visitors to the region.

The mix of uses and phasing of development and infrastructure within the Waterfront District is intended to complement and enhance businesses in the City Center and adjacent neighborhoods. Development should include a healthy balance between the creation of new jobs and housing opportunities, supported by goods and services. Public ownership of the majority of the land, during the planning phase, will allow some of the land to be leased or sold for development over time.

Interim uses are proposed to make use of vacant properties until the development market and infrastructure investment can support more intensive uses. These interim uses include but are not limited to: marine-related light industrial and transportation, construction staging, environmental remediation, alternative energy research and production, food production and surface parking.

The policies and implementation strategies in this chapter, and the associated development regulations, are intended to guide the redevelopment of the site as a compact urban village with sufficient density to support transit and pedestrian-oriented development. Development standards relating to building height, setbacks, and design are proposed to preserve key view corridors to and from adjacent neighborhoods, limit building mass adjacent to parks and rights-of-way, and encourage sustainable design features and amenities to support pedestrian-oriented commercial activity and public gathering space at ground level.

The Waterfront District Downtown Area achieved a Stage 1 Certification under the US Green Building Council's LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) for Neighborhood Development pilot program. This program integrates the principles of smart growth, new urbanism and green building and benefits communities by reducing urban sprawl, increasing transportation choices, decreasing automobile dependence, encouraging healthy living, and protecting threatened species. These development strategies are reflected in policies and implementation strategies throughout this Sub-Area Plan.

The Waterfront District, Old Town and a portion of the City Center were also selected by the Portland Sustainability Institute to participate in the EcoDistrict Program. There is considerable overlap between LEED ND program concepts and EcoDistrict concepts. Where feasible, these concepts were integrated into the Sub-area Plan and Development Regulations.

## Waterfront District Guiding Principles and Implementation Strategies

The Waterfront Advisory Group sponsored a public involvement process during 2005 and 2006, which led to City and Port adoption of the Guiding Principles and Implementation Strategies” in 2006. The following New Whatcom (Waterfront District) Implementation Strategies provide guidance related to Development Character:

- Redevelop the New Whatcom site with a mix of uses including jobs, housing, retail development, services, educational and cultural facilities and water-dependent industrial uses.
- Divide the New Whatcom redevelopment area into a number of districts with distinct character and function, developed in phases to correspond with market demand.
- Encourage a mix of uses which complement, rather than duplicate, businesses in the Central Business District and provide family-wage jobs, including offices, research and development, business incubators, live-work studios, and water-related industries.
- Maintain a balance between jobs, housing, retail development and services developed on the New Whatcom site. Develop a phasing plan which establishes a ratio between retail, services, offices or institutional uses, and residential development on the site.
- Encourage the development of businesses which provide goods and services to residents of the site and surrounding neighborhoods, local businesses and employees, and visitors to attractions on the site. Develop size and design criteria which discourage “big box” stores which draw the majority of their customers from other areas of the City.
- Work with non-profit organizations and private developers to provide incentives for development of a mix of housing types affordable to the employees of the businesses provided on the site.
- Include sites for water-related industry and services to support commercial fishing, recreational boating and maritime industries, including boat building and repair to preserve the nautical history of our community.
- Develop appropriate design features and transitional areas to buffer uses which produce noise, glare or odors from incompatible uses where needed.
- Capitalize on the synergistic relationship between New Whatcom and adjacent commercial districts by enhancing rather than competing with adjacent areas especially the Central Business District. This can be achieved by an early emphasis on jobs, residential units and other activities which support businesses in the adjacent areas.
- Work with universities, agencies, organizations and business groups involved in education, art and culture to attract educational and cultural facilities to the waterfront.
- Work with non-profit organizations and provide a combination of incentives, mandates, and subsidies for private developers to develop a mix of housing types affordable to employees of the jobs provided nearby.
- Implement land uses that acknowledge Bellingham’s deep maritime and cultural history.
- Design a building scale and business atmosphere which encourages unique, locally owned businesses.
- Utilize appropriate site design standards, such as Whatcom County Building Industry of Washington “Green Community” program or Leadership in Environmental Education and Design (LEED)™ Neighborhood Development standards and encourage new or remodeled buildings to be BuiltGreen™ or LEED™ certified.
- Establish unique urban waterfront design guidelines to encourage contemporary architecture and leading green building techniques that blend with the historic industrial buildings on the GP site and highlight the maritime flavor and cultural heritage of the Bellingham waterfront.
- Work with Lummi and Nooksack leaders to facilitate their development of cultural and educational facilities which feature Native American culture and history.

## 4.1 Development Character Policies

### *Policies Land Use Policies:*

1. Encourage a compatible mix of urban density commercial, residential, recreational, institutional, and light industrial uses.
2. Maintain a balance between job creation, housing, and building space for goods and services within the Waterfront District. Allow the market to influence uses within individual development projects.
3. Cluster compatible land uses and adopt appropriate development regulations to establish areas of unique character within different sub-zones of the Waterfront District.
4. Develop a network of waterfront access points, parks, public gathering places and areas for public use and enjoyment throughout the Waterfront District. Integrate parks and open space into development areas to add value to adjacent properties.
5. Encourage pedestrian-oriented development at street level and require the ground floor of buildings fronting on Granary Avenue and Laurel Street to be designed for commercial, retail, services or public facility use. Allow these spaces to be occupied by offices or other interim uses until such time as the market supports conversion to commercial use.
6. Preserve sufficient land for marine cargo and marine-related commercial, recreational and industrial uses in areas with access to navigable waters, and adopt appropriate development standards for these areas which recognize the potential for noise, glare and the need for water access, open yard space and buildings big enough to store and repair large vessels and equipment.
7. Identify a site with sufficient size and expansion space for a campus of higher education or other institutional or business campus and adopt flexible design standards to allow a unique character to be established for this campus area.
8. Allow for opportunities to accommodate a grocery store, elementary school, day care center, recreation facilities and similar services for families with children and encourage construction of such facilities when there is sufficient demand.
9. Establish transitional areas to be used for light industrial use, construction staging, environmental clean-up uses, including temporary storage or treatment of dredge materials, alternative energy research or production, local food production, surface parking and similar interim uses until such time as the market and infrastructure is available for these areas to be developed into more intensive uses.
10. Enable the development of inclusive affordable housing for low and moderate income persons. A variety of housing types and price ranges should be available, including housing for elderly and disabled persons, families with children, students and employees of local businesses.
11. Encourage the development of public services, art and cultural facilities which reflect the history of the site and region to serve area residents and attract visitors to the District.
12. Provide for sufficient density to allow public entities to recover investments into land, clean-up costs, parks and infrastructure, through land sales and future tax revenues.
13. Phase development to meet market demand and installation of infrastructure.





14. Encourage land uses in the Waterfront District that complement and help to diversify and expand the City Center and take advantage of the unique urban waterfront location.
15. Encourage industrial land uses that provide jobs for light manufacturing and assembly, high technology, research and development and industrial uses which depend upon or relate to the waterfront.

*Sustainable Development Policies:*

16. Promote sustainable design strategies and development practices generally consistent with LEED for Neighborhood Design and other sustainable development programs.
17. Ensure that environmental remediation of soil, groundwater and marine shoreline areas occurs prior to or in conjunction with redevelopment.
18. Restore marine shorelines by removing creosote pilings and dilapidated industrial structures and replace with shoreline materials and contours which support ecosystem recovery goals and public access, where appropriate.
19. Encourage re-use and recycling of materials on-site.
20. Re-use the existing Aerated Stabilization Basin breakwater materials for environmental capping, shoreline restoration and fill for parks and roadways to lower the carbon footprint of the project and reduce impacts on local sand and gravel quarries.
21. Encourage building and site designs which conserve energy and potable water, capture and treat storm water on-site, and utilize alternative energy, recycled wastewater, sustainable building materials and innovative construction techniques.
22. Create a framework for personal wellness and environmental stewardship by providing habitat restoration, outdoor recreation opportunities, convenient recycling and compost facilities, roof top and patio gardens, sites for local food production and facilities to support pedestrians, and alternative modes of transportation such as bicycles, motorcycles, transit and ride-share programs.

**LEED ND  
Credit Opportunities**

Note: LEED ND, developed by the US Green Building Council, is one of many different voluntary rating systems to address and achieve sustainability goals. The following plan features provide potential credit toward LEED ND certification:

- The project includes a balance of housing units and jobs. At least 25% of the total building square footage is designed for residential use, and the project is located within a ½ mile walking distance of 4,900 existing jobs.
- Half of the housing units are within walking distance of the proposed Western Washington University campus site.
- Site design policies and development standards encourage walkable streets, with buildings located close to the sidewalk, commercial uses at ground level, doors and windows facing the sidewalk, and pedestrian amenities such as weather protection, benches, lighting and art work at street level.



23. Incorporate bio-swales and other low-impact stormwater management techniques into landscape medians, street plantings and stormwater systems where possible to provide an aesthetic amenity and reduce the impacts of stormwater runoff.
24. Utilize natural vegetation and low-water use plants in landscape design to avoid the need to use potable water for irrigation.
25. Design circulation systems and parking facilities which encourage non-motorized transportation, transit and ride-share programs, reduce paved driving surfaces, and protect water quality.
26. Encourage the adaptive reuse of existing buildings if an assessment of structural, economic, market and land use factors show positive benefits of keeping the building. New buildings should be built utilizing methods that will allow easy adaptive reuse in the future if the building use changes over time.
27. Development should utilize district specific utilities, such as district heating and cooling, and non-potable water systems if available and implemented through a Waterfront Utilities Master Plan.

*Site Design Policies:*

28. Within mixed-use commercial and residential areas, define pedestrian-scale blocks and building pads by developing a network of interior roads, bicycle routes and pedestrian connections with a block size similar to or smaller than the existing City of Bellingham Central Business District and Fairhaven. Where buildings or blocks exceed 240 feet, require pedestrian through-block routes and pedestrian access through buildings during business hours.
29. Encourage pedestrian-oriented development in mixed-use commercial areas by locating buildings adjacent to the sidewalk on arterial streets, except when set back to accommodate public plazas, outdoor seating, dining, landscaping or artwork.
30. Minimize the visual impact of surface parking by reducing parking space requirements, locating surface parking along interior streets or alleys, behind or within the interior of buildings, or below street grade where feasible, and requiring landscaping or screening of surface parking lots. (See related parking policies in Chapter 5 entitled Multi-modal Circulation & Parking.)
31. Establish view corridors and design standards to preserve water views from public streets and designated view points within adjacent neighborhoods and establish visual connection with the Central Business District.
32. Encourage public and private open space at ground level through design regulations and incentives for dedication of public open space.

*Building Design Policies:*

33. Establish design regulations and a predictable design review process to ensure that building designs are consistent with the intended character of the various development areas.
34. Encourage pedestrian-oriented uses on the ground floor of buildings fronting arterial streets within Commercial Mixed- Use areas, and provide street-level amenities,



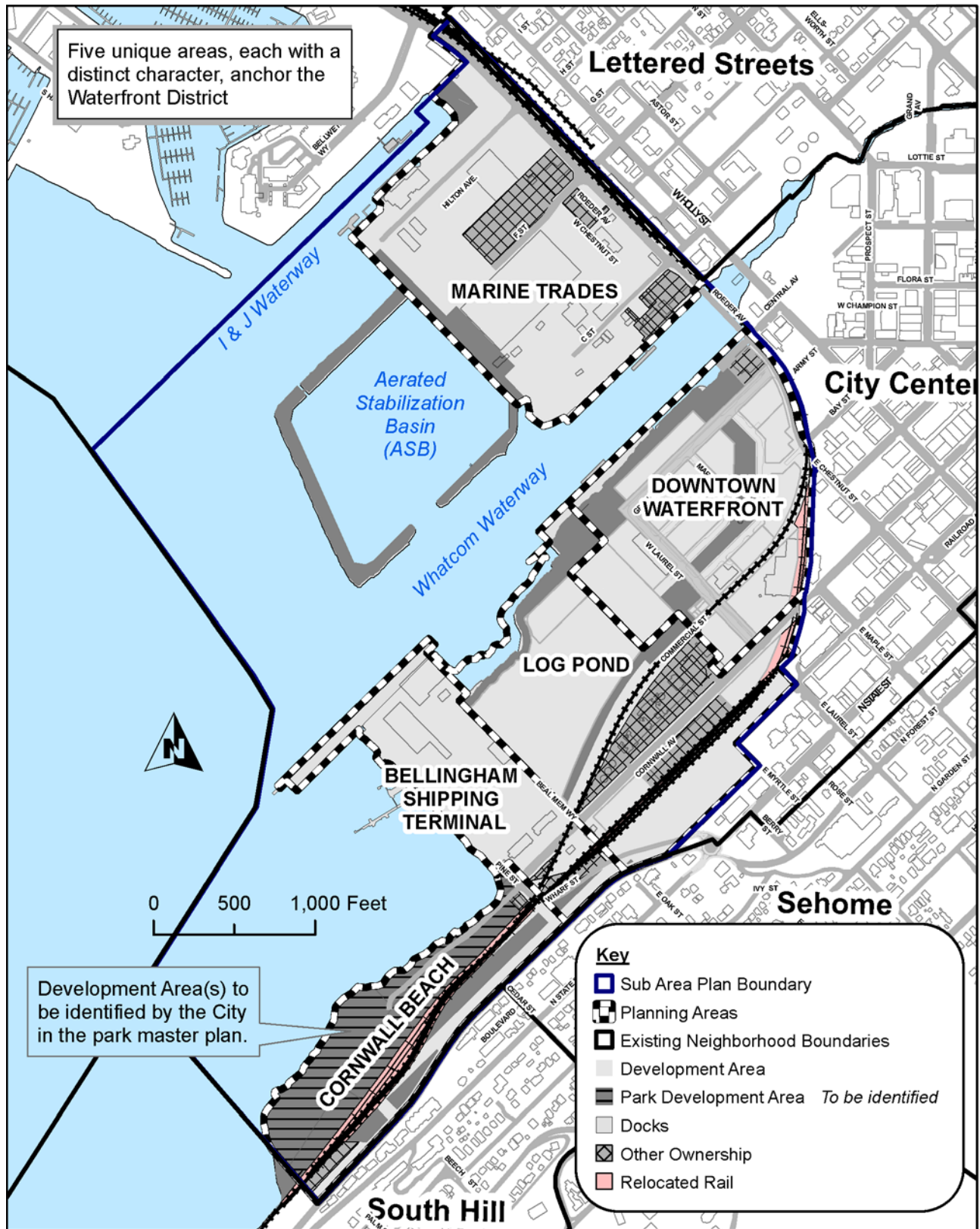
- such as awnings, benches, lighting and landscaping to support pedestrian and transit use.
35. Establish building heights, density, and design standards relating to building bulk and scale to encourage building forms which are inviting to pedestrians at street level, preserve views to and from adjacent neighborhoods, and have sufficient density to support use of public transit and attract private investment.
  36. Recognize the need for larger industrial buildings and less stringent design standards to accommodate marine industrial uses, upland boat storage and other light industrial uses within Industrial Mixed-use areas. Provide lighting standards, setbacks, screening or landscaping to reduce impacts and separate Industrial Mixed-use areas from other mixed-use development areas.
  37. Encourage appropriately scaled signs and kiosks integrated with building design and street furniture to identify businesses and direct the public to parks, trails, transit facilities, parking and other locations of interest.
  38. Design building roof tops and mechanical equipment with consideration for appearance from the adjacent bluff. Encourage screening, vegetation and use of materials to minimize glare.



*When residential development is located at street level, the ground floor should be elevated above street level or set back from the sidewalk with landscaping along the street frontage.*



Figure 4-1: Waterfront District Development Areas



## Areas of Unique Character

The Waterfront District is divided into five areas of unique character where the mix of land uses, density, building types and the layout and design of streets, trails, parks and open spaces will define the character and function of the proposed development:



### Marine Trades Area

This 58-acre area is characterized by a working waterfront that will support a new Clean Ocean Marina or other water-dependent use which adaptively reuses the ASB wastewater treatment lagoon. The main focus of development in this area is to accommodate jobs revolving around marine trades such as fishing, boat building, boat repair, marine haul out facilities, marine product manufacturing and supplies, research and development.

### Shipping Terminal Area

The existing deep water port in this 25-acre area will be maintained for shipping, port and industrial related opportunities. Industrial uses characterize this area with the potential for use of its peripheral areas to accommodate transitions between related office, transportation, and light industrial uses.

### The Downtown Waterfront Area



The character of this 44-acre area is similar to the commercial portion of the City Center or Fairhaven. Uses that provide goods and services will mainly serve the population of the area and are not intended to compete with those in the City Center. A mix of housing, office and institutional uses are proposed to be accommodated in a high-density configuration centered around a central park. A site for a higher-education or other institutional or business campus is identified along the southern edge. Medium density development will be encouraged to

establish an urban environment that will become the heart of the Waterfront District. This area's waterfront development will have an urban character with pedestrian-oriented uses encouraged along the waterfront promenade.

### Log Pond Area



This 52-acre area is identified as an Industrial Mixed-use area to be utilized for transportation, construction or light industrial uses through the end of the planning period for the Waterfront District Sub-Area Plan. Preferred land uses in the area also include light manufacturing and assembly, high technology, and research and development. Materials which are manufactured, processed or stored in this area may be imported or exported by truck or by vessel through the Bellingham Shipping Terminal or over the remaining portion of the GP Wharf. The shoreline and beach along the Log Pond will be restored for habitat and public enjoyment, accessible via a waterfront pedestrian and bicycle trail and by non-

motorized vessels. An additional public trail corridor is located along the easterly edge of the Log Pond area to provide a more direct pedestrian and bicycle connection between the Downtown Waterfront Area and Cornwall Beach. Public access through this area may need to be interrupted during periods when recreational use would conflict with industrial or cargo activities.

### Cornwall Beach Area



A mix of residential and office uses, with a small amount of goods and service uses are proposed in this 29-acre area. The goods and service uses will mainly serve residents of the Waterfront District and the users of the Cornwall Beach Park, which is a major component of this area, with connections to Boulevard Park via an over-water walkway. Medium density development will be encouraged to relate to the park environment. The Cornwall Beach area includes the bluff located east of the railroad tracks along Boulevard and State Street. The

majority of this bluff is in public ownership and is not developable due to steep slopes and limited access. The Environmental Impact Statement for the Waterfront District did not contemplate any development along this bluff. If the private property along the bluff develops in the future, additional planning and SEPA review will be required.



Figure 4-2: Waterfront District Urban Village View Corridors





### *Floor Area Ratio (FAR)*

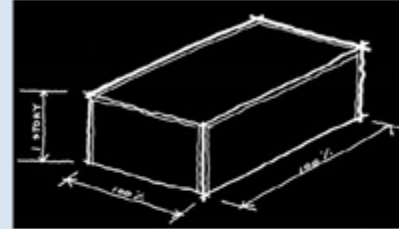
During initial planning discussions, the Port and City planning team identified the Fairhaven historic district as a starting point for evaluating density options. The density of building in Fairhaven, if applied to the Downtown Waterfront portion of the Waterfront District would result in approximately 2.8 million square feet of building floor space in the Downtown Waterfront area.

Lower density development is proposed in the Marine Trades, Bellingham Shipping Terminal and Log Pond areas and urban density development is concentrated in the Downtown Waterfront area and a potential development pad within the Cornwall Beach area.

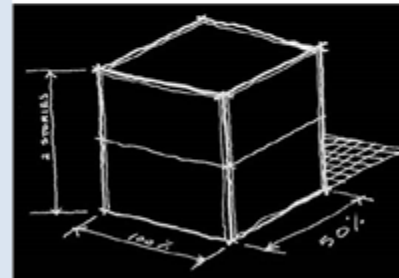
Base and Maximum FAR for the various Waterfront District planning areas are included in the Waterfront District Development Regulations.

### **What is Floor Area Ratio(FAR)?**

FAR is the gross square footage of a building, excluding structured parking, divided by the square footage of the site.



**Two different forms of a 1.0 FAR building**



For example: In both examples above, the building is 10,000 square feet, and is built on a 10,00 square foot lot. This is an FAR of 1.0.

If you know the FAR and you want to calculate how much gross floor area you could build, multiply the FAR by the site area.

*Historic and Cultural Resource Policies:*

39. Utilize the assumptions, methodology and recommendations from the Waterfront District Adaptive Re-Use Assessment dated 2009, prepared by Johnson Architecture to evaluate any proposals to demolish any of the structures identified on Figure 4-3. An updated assessment of market conditions and/or developer interest in adaptive reuse should be completed for the Board Mill Building or the Alcohol Plant if either of these buildings are demolished.
40. Temporarily hold certain structures for further market consideration and demolish certain unsafe structures and structures with limited potential for reuse, and salvage or reuse of materials and equipment within buildings and open spaces.
41. Document and preserve the rich industrial and Native American histories of the site through photographs and interpretive displays, signage, display of old industrial equipment and tanks, and reuse materials salvaged from demolished structures.
42. Ensure the preservation of culturally significant features through adherence to defined protocols and procedures for site cleanup and redevelopment.
43. Encourage the adaptive reuse of existing buildings if an assessment of structural, economic, market and land use factors show positive benefits of keeping the building. New buildings should be built utilizing methods that will allow easy adaptive reuse in the future if the building use changes over time.

**Old Granary Building**



Built: 1928  
Dimensions: 121'x110' with  
81'x39' office  
Footprint Area: 16,469 sf.

**Resource:** Structure under construction for adaptive reuse.

**Digester Building Tanks**



Built: Ca 1938  
Dimensions: 235'x44'  
Footprint Area: 10,340 sf.

**Resource:** Possible display of tanks as a park feature.

**Ceramic Tile Tanks**



Built: 1930  
Dimensions: 31' x 120  
Footprint Area: 1,607 sf.

**Resource:** Possible adaptive reuse as park feature, augmented with relocation of other historic equipment and materials.

**Board Mill Building**



Built: Ca 1946  
Dimensions: 303'x72'  
Footprint Area: 21,816 sf.

**Resource:** Possible adaptive reuse of structure, or relocate and reuse materials.

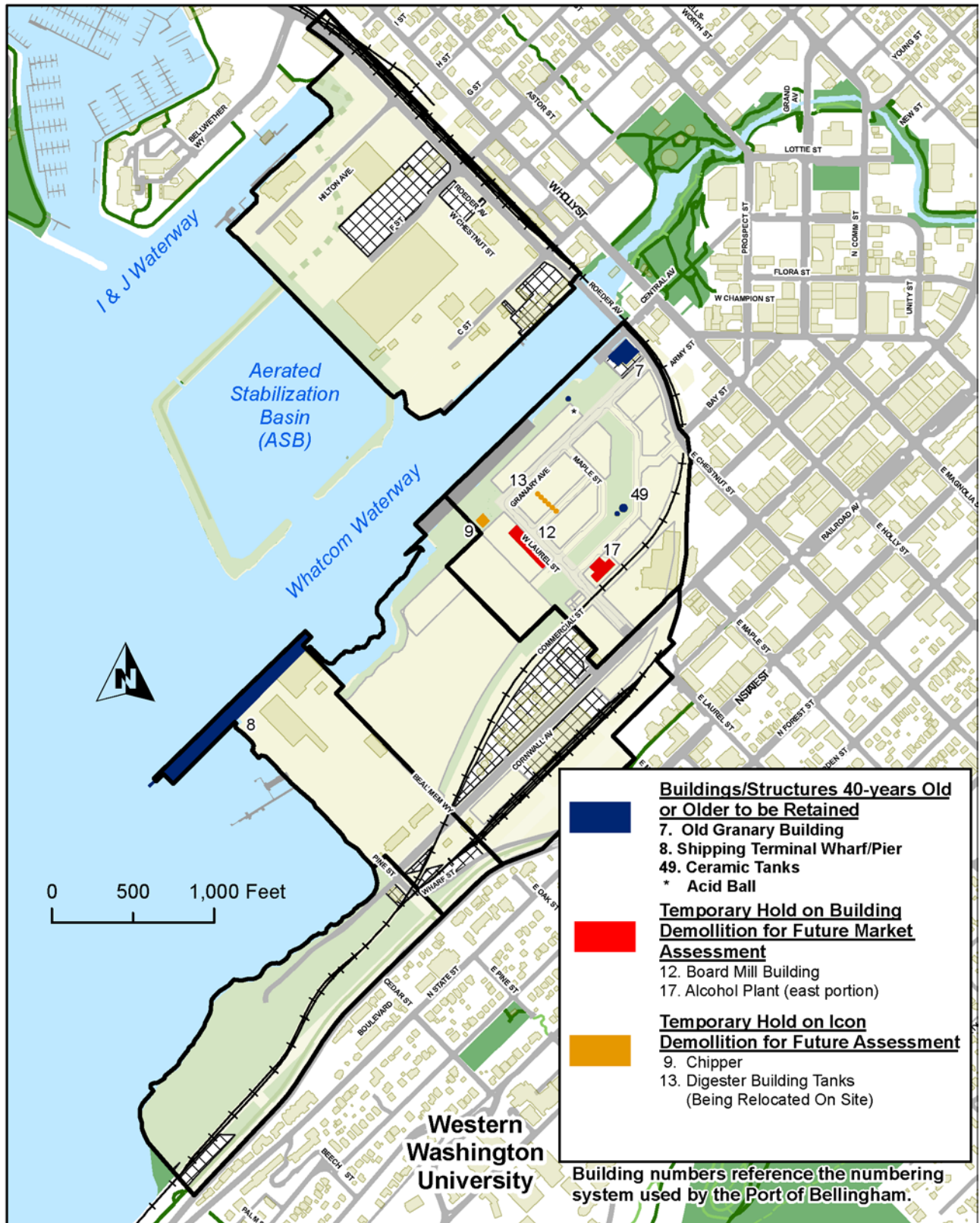
**Alcohol Plant**



Built: Ca 1937-1946  
Dimensions: 141.5' x 50'  
Footprint Area: 15,575 sf.

**Resource:** Possible adaptive reuse of structure, or relocate and reuse materials.

Figure 4-3: Structures Which May Be Retained/Re-Used





## 4.2 Implementation Strategies

1. Establish areas of unique character and several different Waterfront Mixed-Use zones to encourage clustering of compatible uses and variation in density and development standards by area.
2. Adopt development regulations, design standards and a predictable and efficient development approval process to implement the community vision established in the Waterfront District Sub-Area Plan.
3. Establish building height regulations and a Floor Area Ratio (FAR) system to encourage urban density development with sufficient critical mass to support transit and pedestrian-oriented mixed-use development.
4. Provide density bonuses to encourage provision of public open space, affordable housing, LEED Silver (or equivalent) buildings, or acquisition of density credits from the Lake Whatcom watershed.
5. Establish view corridors and design regulations to preserve public views along waterways and to and from street ends, public places and viewpoints within adjacent neighborhoods.
6. Establish a phasing plan to phase building square footage by area to coincide with market demand and the availability of infrastructure, with flexibility to respond to changes in the economy or market and the availability of grant funding or private investment.
7. Establish the character of the early phase development by providing parks, trails, bicycle & transit facilities and pedestrian amenities in conjunction with early development.
8. Implement the Waterfront District Adaptive Re-Use recommendations by actively marketing buildings with adaptive reuse potential, retaining certain industrial icons within public spaces, completing mitigation for removal of structures and demolishing unsafe and/or unusable structures.



*The Boardmill Building is one of the remaining historic buildings which may be considered for adaptive reuse.*

9. Work with the Bellingham/Whatcom Housing Authority, Kulshan Community Land Trust and other public and private housing developers to construct affordable housing units within residential or mixed-use development projects. When evaluating alternative development proposals, give priority to proposals which include programs to maintain at least 10% the housing units at levels affordable for purchase or rent by households which earn up to 80% of the City of Bellingham area median income.

10. When subdividing the property include a range of parcel sizes so as not to exclude any potential developers the opportunity to lease or purchase land in the Waterfront District.
11. Evaluate alternative development scenarios utilizing evaluation criteria to balance environmental impacts, economic impacts and community benefit.
12. Provide additional flexibility in the application of development standards in the Land Use Code to facilitate the development of buildings attempting to meet the Living Building Challenge (LBC) or equivalent. Such flexibility could be in the form of incentives such as added height and floor area ratio, or less stringent adherence to certain development and design standards. The LBC is a green building certification program created by the International Living Future Institute to recognize buildings meeting the most advanced sustainable standard. Information on the challenge is available at [www.ilbc.org/lbc](http://www.ilbc.org/lbc).
13. A more detailed development plan should be prepared for the three large blocks east of Granary Ave before any of these blocks are developed. This plan should consider the proposed ground floor uses and how they relate to the adjacent streets, parks and public spaces, and define pedestrian routes through these large blocks. Retail or service uses are encouraged at ground level along the Granary Ave frontage, but residential or offices may be appropriate at ground level along the local roads behind and beside these blocks. If below-grade parking is proposed, the elevation of ground floor uses, street level experience, the location of parking garage entrances and services, and the management of excavated soil should be considered. Buildings should be located to preserve some views of the Bay and San Juan Islands from the public plaza at Bay Street.





14. The Port should complete an adaptive reuse assessment of the Alcohol Plant prior to design of the adjacent local roads and park. This plan should consider whether it is cost effective to develop the entire building or a portion of the building, whether the building should be expanded, the need for and location of parking, pedestrian and vehicle access to the building, and how the ground floor uses will relate to the adjacent park. If an appropriate use is identified for the west half of this building, the park and road design along this face may be modified to accommodate reuse of this building.
15. The Phase 3 and 4 development parcels along the bluff may be used for construction staging and interim parking through Phase 1 and 2. The Port, City and developer should jointly develop a design and funding strategy for the parking garage, Bay Street steps and Bay Street intersection improvements. This plan should consider pedestrian and vehicle circulation, including ADA access, to and through the garage, the appearance and use of the building space along the exterior face of the parking garage, the elevation and use of the ground floor building space, and how the proposed uses will relate to the adjacent local roads and park.
16. The Port and Western Washington University, or an alternate developer, should jointly develop a University Development Plan for the Institutional Mixed-Use area, which considers proposed uses, programs and cultural facilities to attract visitors and create jobs or job training. This plan should describe the proposed building density and placement, parking demand and location, vehicle and pedestrian access and circulation, view protection strategies and the interface with adjacent parks, trails and industrial uses.







# CHAPTER FIVE

## MULTI-MODAL CIRCULATION & PARKING

### 5.0 Multi-modal Circulation & Parking

The circulation network for the Waterfront District includes a system of multi-modal pedestrian-friendly streets with wide sidewalks and separated bike paths, which will reconnect the City of Bellingham to the waterfront. Future transit buses will serve the Waterfront District as development and ridership demand grow over time.

The street network is one of the most important components for defining the character in each of the five different planning areas within the Waterfront District. In some places, the street design will accommodate commercial and light industrial activities associated with marine trades. In other areas, the streets will be designed as arterials within a more compact urban environment. Throughout the Waterfront District, the circulation system will encourage people to access and enjoy new community parks, walkways, open space and restored shorelines along Bellingham Bay. The circulation design, policies and implementation strategies in this chapter are intended to provide convenient access for people of all ages and physical abilities, while maintaining a walkable character.



The Waterfront District has unique opportunities and challenges presented by its location. The street network must integrate a number of functions, if it is to support the successful transition of this area into a new urban neighborhood. Some of the most important functions of the street network include:

- **Connectivity** – Waterfront streets will establish new connections between the waterfront and adjacent neighborhoods by extending the existing street grid, establishing new view corridors, and developing new vehicle and pedestrian access points over the bluff and the active BNSF railroad tracks. The proposed 2018 amendment to the Sub-Area Plan includes a pedestrian plaza with a stairway at the extension of Bay Street to provide a direct pedestrian connection between the City Center and the Waterfront District. This connection may include a future parking garage entrance at Bay Street to allow vehicles to access the site from the top of the bluff, and park in a new parking garage located along the bluff, reducing vehicle traffic on Waterfront District streets.
- **Local traffic** – Streets within the waterfront will be designed to serve mostly local traffic and include a number of traffic calming features, such as narrow lanes, paving and sidewalk textures and landscaping to ensure that vehicles move at slow speeds, in keeping with the character of the area.
- **Pedestrian environment** – A variety of pedestrian features will create a walkable environment, with design adjustments to accommodate a comfortable blend of opportunities for people moving on foot, and using bikes, transit, commercial and personal vehicles, including pedestrian connections to the City Center.
- **Phased implementation** – The street network will be constructed gradually over time in planned phases. A biennial monitoring program will provide information on frequency of use and available capacity for each section of the network to assist the City and Port in programming needed infrastructure improvements and maintaining concurrency with adopted levels of service.



The design objective, whether in the Marine Trades, Downtown Waterfront, or Cornwall Beach area is for a slow-moving experience that encourages safe and comfortable interactions among people using various modes of transportation, in pursuit of diverse business and pleasure activities.

The parking strategy provided in this chapter is intended to promote a pedestrian-friendly waterfront environment and encourage transit ridership, while providing sufficient parking to accommodate public access, support future businesses and attract private developer investment. Reduced surface parking is a key strategy in creating pedestrian-oriented development. Reduced surface parking will also decrease the total amount of impervious surfaces in the Waterfront District and lessen the impacts of stormwater runoff. Parking



policies and design standards support reduced minimum parking space requirements, shared parking, commute trip reduction, and require off-street parking in commercial mixed-use areas to be located behind, beside or under buildings, or within parking structures. These provisions are needed to accommodate the projected density without creating a waterfront dominated by surface parking.



Parking will be accommodated through a balanced mix of on-street, surface, integrated structured parking and freestanding garages to support the future development capacity. Initially, on-street parking and low-cost interim surface parking lots will provide much of the parking capacity. As density increases, the interim surface parking will transition to structured parking integrated into the development. The long-term strategy to redevelop surface parking lots as infill sites allows maximum flexibility to encourage initial development without sacrificing the long-term vision of the Waterfront District as a dense urban environment with limited, but sufficient

off-street surface parking. Permitting for development will include clear time lines for closure of interim surface lots and provisions for alternate parking facilities upon loss of interim surface parking.

The Waterfront District is split in two sections by the Whatcom Waterway. Properties north of the Whatcom Waterway are accessed by C Street, F Street and Hilton Avenue, which connect to Roeder Avenue. These streets have historically provided automobile and truck access to businesses on the site. In the future, F Street will be upgraded to be the primary access to the Marine Trades area and businesses, and will include sidewalks and dedicated bicycle lanes. Hilton Avenue and C Street will become local streets designed to accommodate truck traffic, forklifts, large and heavy freight and boats on travel lifts.

Properties south of the Whatcom Waterway are accessed primarily via Cornwall Avenue. Central Avenue historically provided access to the GP mill site via Roeder Avenue. This site entrance has been closed to vehicle traffic, other than service vehicles and bicycles. Granary Avenue and Laurel Street are arterial



streets with wide sidewalks and a cycle-track to form the transportation backbone through the Downtown Waterfront area. Wharf Street also provides limited vehicle access to the south end of the site. A network of private streets which historically provided access within the GP paper mill is currently closed to the public. These streets will be replaced by a network of new streets as the Waterfront District redevelops.

Currently, bus service is available within a few blocks of the site on Holly Street and State Street. This service will need to be extended through the site as it develops. The Port will work with WTA to develop a transit plan for the Waterfront District during the second phase of development. A network of pedestrian, bicycle and transit routes serve the surrounding City Center and neighborhoods. Sidewalks along Cornwall Avenue, Chestnut Street and Roeder Avenue currently provide pedestrian access to the site, which will be extended along the new roads constructed within the development areas. Bicycles currently share traffic lanes with automobiles on Cornwall Avenue, but marked bike lanes will be installed in the near future. Marked bike lanes exist on the Chestnut-Roeder corridor from Bay Street to Squalicum Parkway. The South Bay trail provides pedestrian and bicycle access to Fairhaven along the top of the bluff at the southern end of the site.

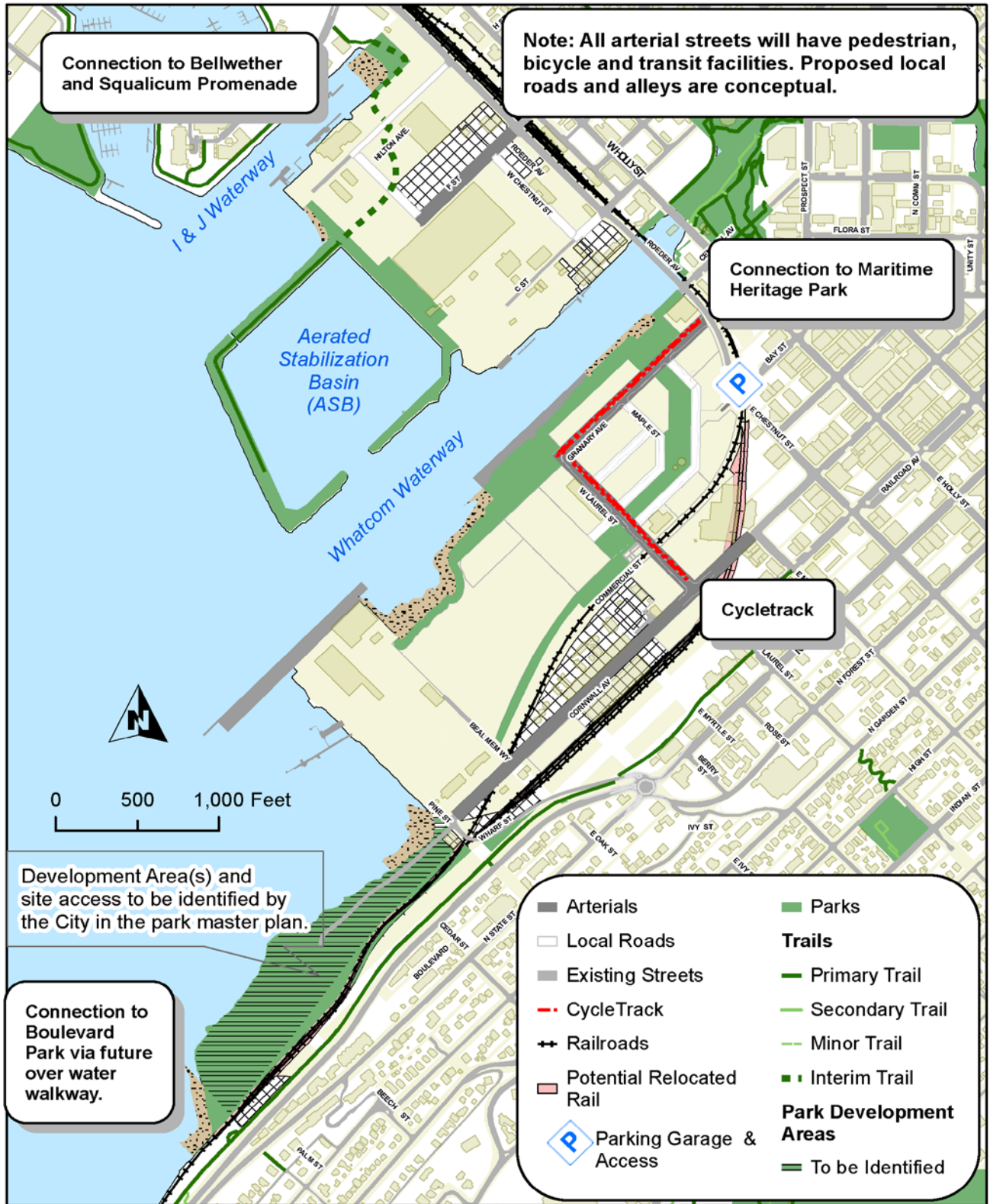
The main line of the Burlington Northern Railroad passes through the site, with active rail crossings at Cornwall Avenue, Wharf Street and Laurel Street. Passenger trains pass through the site and stop at the Fairhaven Station, approximately 4 miles south of the site. Future relocation of the railroad to a corridor along the base of the bluff is proposed to allow development of an efficient road grid within the site and avoid at-grade rail crossings. A portion of the old rail way could be retained as a side spur to serve the Bellingham Shipping Terminal.

The Waterfront District is also accessible by water. The Bellingham Shipping Terminal provides deep-water access to ocean-going ships. Navigable waters in the Whatcom and I&J Waterways provide water access, loading and off-loading, and haul-out facilities for commercial fishing boats, barges and recreational boats. Pocket beaches at the head of the I&J Waterway, north of the ASB lagoon, the Log Pond, Cornwall Cove, and south of the Cornwall Avenue Landfill could be upgraded for hand carry boats.

The Waterfront District has unique opportunities provided by its location, but also has limitations due to the topography, soils, historic contamination, the railroad, water bodies, view corridors, historic resources, the location and elevation of existing facilities, future tenant requirements, constructability and cost. The Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) evaluation of the site provided insight into many of these issues and provided analysis of a number of circulation options, designs and construction sequences. Specific on-site and off-site mitigation measures are identified in the Final EIS and 2018 EIS Addendum for each phase of development.

A phased network of transportation system improvements is proposed to accommodate the needs of automobiles, pedestrians, cyclists and transit. At full build-out, the network will consist of a fine grid of interconnected multi-modal streets, trails, dedicated bike lanes and transit routes to integrate the Waterfront District with surrounding neighborhoods. However, redevelopment is expected to occur over a relatively long time frame. Phased construction of the circulation network will focus development in specific areas so that a cohesive feeling for the Waterfront District is maintained over time as growth occurs. Interim roads and trails will provide connectivity in some areas until permanent infrastructure can be constructed.

Figure 5-1: Multi-Modal Circulation Framework



An Infrastructure Phasing Plan is included in the Development Agreement, Planned Action Ordinance and Facilities Agreement, which were adopted concurrently with the Waterfront District Sub-area Plan. Amendments to the Development Agreement, Planned Action Ordinance and Facilities Agreement will be proposed concurrently with the 2018 Sub-Area Plan adoption. The phased installation of a multi-modal system of streets, walkways, bike paths, trails and transit routes in the Waterfront District will be monitored and managed over time, in order to encourage preferred patterns of development, but also to take advantage of unplanned opportunities that may arise. Redevelopment of the waterfront is taking place during a time when traditional patterns of land use and transportation are being adjusted. Climate change, for example, is placing demands on local communities to explore and encourage shifts in how people get from one place to another. As outlined in Figure 5.2, the goal for mode shift in the Waterfront District represents a 15.6% increase from census data collected in 2010. This is possible because the Waterfront District redevelopment project will include mixed-use urban-density development and provides the opportunity to build a more modern system of multi-modal transportation from the beginning, rather than retrofitting existing infrastructure. While this goal is not a regulatory requirement, it is an important feature of the multi modal circulation system to avoid traffic congestion and encourage non-motorized access.

Management of the transportation system will be data driven. A biennial traffic monitoring program will be established for the waterfront. Data collection under the program will be conducted during the evening peak traffic hour and include the following components:

- Traffic Counts. Daily and peak hour traffic counts at all site access locations.
- Vehicle Classification Counts. Daily and peak hour vehicle classification counts at the site access locations, including trucks, cars and transit.
- Pedestrian and Bicycle Counts. Peak hour pedestrian and bicycle counts at each site access location.

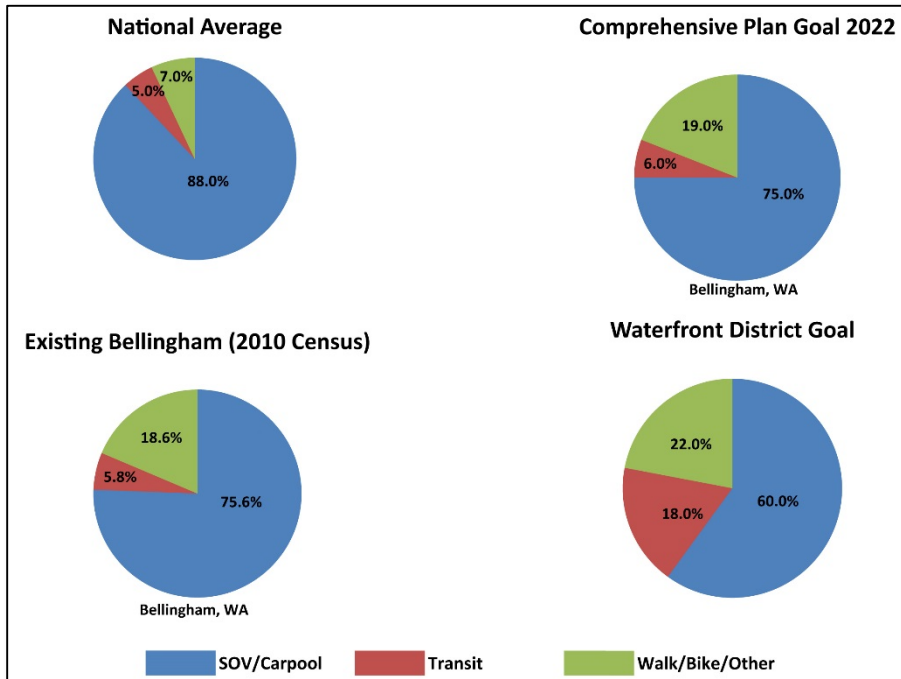
The ability to achieve certain mode shifts is influenced by the land use within each planning area. Separate monitoring will be required in each of the five planning areas, and mode shift expectations may be different for each area. The Marine Trades Area, for example will typically have a higher auto use due to the type of activity in that area.

The data collected for each planning area will be used to confirm when street infrastructure improvements are required and will be used to make adjustments to concurrency determinations for planned redevelopment. In addition, the data will be used to assist in understanding whether mode share targets are being achieved. The ability to meet or exceed mode share targets may reduce the level of infrastructure improvements required to serve the site. Conversely, the inability to meet targets may require a reduction in the overall level of development accommodated during any given phase of development.

The response to mode shift data may take many different forms, including such things as behavioral adjustments, operational and/or engineering solutions, or policy determinations or some combination thereof. Behavioral adjustments by people accessing the waterfront may come in the form of people choosing to shift from cars to walking, biking or transit because of congestion or parking cost. Operational solutions may take the form of having curb-side parking be limited during peak hours in order to provide an additional lane for vehicle traffic (e.g., cars, carpools, or dedicated transit lanes). Engineering solutions may include modifying existing roads, or construction of the next segment of street infrastructure before additional development occurs. A policy determination may be made that the public is satisfied with clogged intersections for an hour a day in order to keep the walkable character of the area.



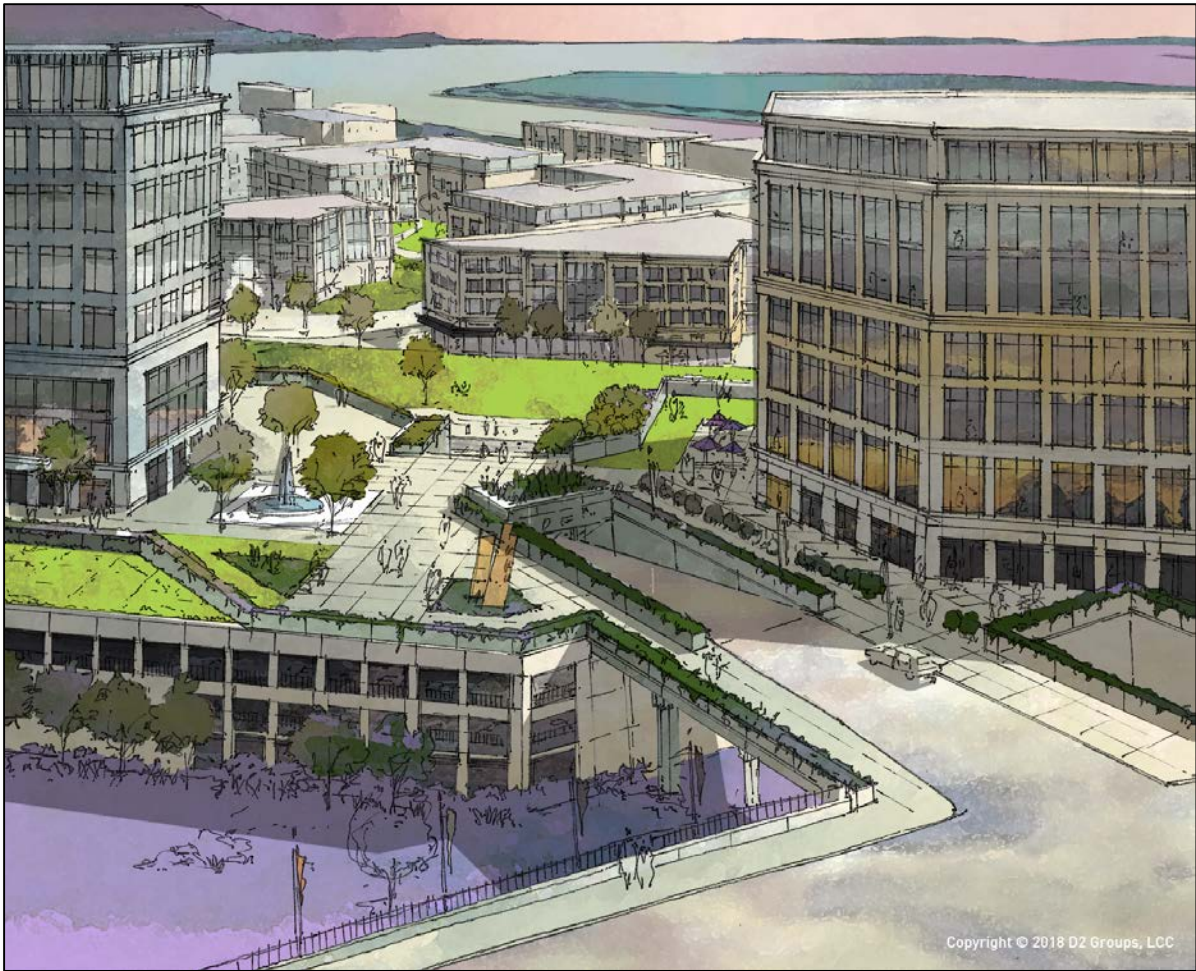
Figure 5-2: Mode Share Assumptions



To reduce the demand for transportation infrastructure and parking, the Waterfront District is designed to increase the percentage of travelers using pedestrian, bicycle, transit and other non-automobile modes to 40% of total trips over time.

Early phases of infrastructure are under construction to activate the northern portion of the Downtown Waterfront Area, providing strong connections between downtown and the waterfront. The installation of park and trail connections will also occur in incremental phases in conjunction with installation of streets and utilities. The combination of transportation and public access features in early phases will create strong physical and visual connections between downtown and the waterfront and establish signature parks and public access features along the south side of the Whatcom Waterway. The Log Pond Area will continue to be used for light industrial activities without any significant public investment in roads or utilities.

As the Downtown Waterfront Area gradually develops into an urban village, infrastructure will be expanded as necessary to serve proposed development and increase public access to the waterfront. Additional infrastructure will also be installed in the Marine Trades Area and the Cornwall Beach Area in later planning phases. Installation of the transportation network, public parks and trails will be managed over time in response to development trends and opportunities, funding availability, community priorities, and the schedule for railroad relocation.



*A parking garage with an entrance at the intersection of Chestnut and Bay Street will include a pedestrian plaza overlooking the site, a grand staircase leading to a new central Waterfront District park and elevators to provide accessible pedestrian access to the Waterfront District.*

### **Guidance from the New Whatcom Strategic Guidelines and Implementation Strategies (now known as the Waterfront District)**

The Waterfront Advisory Group sponsored a public involvement process during 2005 and 2006, which led to the adoption of “New Whatcom Guiding Principles and Implementation Strategies” by the Port and City in 2006. The following Implementation Strategies provide guidance related to Circulation:

- Develop a network of interconnected pedestrian, bicycle and transit facilities within the site with connections to adjacent neighborhoods and parks.
- Design the living, working and shopping areas with a pedestrian scale, which is not dominated by vehicles.
- Dissolve the barriers that separate the waterfront from the Bellingham Central Business District, connecting the City with the Bay.
- Develop strong vehicular and pedestrian connections between New Whatcom, E. Holly Street, Roeder Street and State Street, while acknowledging and creatively working the obstacles of topography and the railroad. If there is a WWU presence on the New Whatcom site, develop a connection to the WWU campus.
- Encourage non-motorized transportation by creating a “park once” environment that makes it safe and attractive for pedestrians or bicycles to connect to amenities, goods and services, jobs and housing. Provide covered transit stops, pedestrian facilities and bicycle parking areas to support non-motorized travel.
- Encourage frequent, convenient and well designed transit service as well as sufficient density to support it.
- Connect the New Whatcom open space and trail network to Boulevard Park with an over water trail from the south end of the Cornwall Landfill to Boulevard Park.
- Parking should be thought of as infrastructure and must be convenient, ample, efficient and affordable, and facilitated or managed by a local jurisdiction.
- Generally, parking should be located under buildings and in parking structures located away from the shoreline, unless associated with a water-oriented use.
- Subject to the Sub-Area Plan design and phasing, surface parking may be developed as an interim use on areas planned for future redevelopment, enabling its evolution over time into a denser environment.



## 5.1 Multi-Modal Circulation and Parking Policies

### *Circulation Policies*

1. The Waterfront District should be designed to increase pedestrian, bicycle and transit usage through the installation of appropriate infrastructure, land-use mixture and density, site design, parking policies, and education. Develop a transportation system which enables the movement of more people in proportionately fewer automobiles.
2. Spatially connect the City to the waterfront through a network of new interconnected roads and trails designed to accommodate pedestrians, bicycles, automobiles, trucks and transit.
3. Integrate and connect new waterfront streets and trails to the existing network of streets, bike routes and trails within the City Center and surrounding neighborhoods.
4. Block size within commercial mixed-use areas should be similar to or smaller than blocks in the existing CBD and Fairhaven. Blocks exceeding 240 feet in length or depth should include an alley or pedestrian access through the block. Large buildings on oversize blocks should include pedestrian access through the building during business hours.
5. Blocks within the Shipping Terminal, Marine Trade Area and Log Pond Area may be larger to accommodate marine transportation and industrial uses.
6. All streets and sidewalks should be open to the public and available for general public use, with the exception of streets within the Bellingham Shipping Terminal and portions of the site where active environmental clean-up, construction or industrial activities require site security or could pose a hazard to the public.
7. Cul-de-sacs should be avoided unless temporary in nature or required to access areas constrained by water bodies, the railroad or bluff. If new cul-de-sacs are created, pedestrian or bicycle through-connections shall be provided to adjacent blocks, where feasible.
8. All streets should be limited to a maximum speed of 25 miles per hour.
9. Sidewalks or foot paths should be provided on both sides of all arterial and local streets within mixed-use areas. Pedestrian access to uses within Marine Industrial areas may be separated from traffic routes for safety.
10. Sidewalks, crosswalks and walkways shall be designed in compliance with the accessible design provisions of the American Disabilities Act (ADA).
11. Physically separated or protected bike lanes should be located within or parallel to arterial streets, in dedicated parts of the right-of-way, so that all residences, businesses and public facilities have easy access to a dedicated bicycle route. When possible, these protected bike routes should be connected with shared pathways that are part of parks and open space areas, to create an integrated system for non-motorized transportation. Local streets may include two-way bicycle tracks or bicycle lanes shared with automobiles.



12. Businesses, public facilities and residential developments should provide bicycle parking spaces or storage.
13. Safe and comfortable transit facilities should be located at major trip generators to encourage transit use and reduce driving. Where feasible, transit stops should be located adjacent to buildings with weather protection or include shelters and benches, partially enclosed to buffer wind and rain, with lighting, route information and schedules.
14. A variety of boat and barge docking, moorage and launching facilities and services should be developed to provide water access for boats of all sizes, support water transportation and make the Waterfront District welcoming to visiting boaters.
15. Per City policy, the Port has been provided with a transportation impact fee (TIF) credit for the number of PM peak hour vehicle trips (1,077) generated by the former Georgia Pacific Mill and other recent industrial uses within the Waterfront District. TIF for new development will be imposed unless the Port requests in writing that new development have access to the TIF credit in whole or in part. Once the TIF credit is exhausted, TIF will be assessed at the full annual TIF rate in effect at the time of development
16. The goal of the Waterfront District is to increase the percentage of travelers using pedestrian, bicycle, and transit modes to at least 40% of total trips to and from the site over time.

#### *Streetscape Policies*

17. Encourage building design which supports pedestrian-oriented commercial activity and provides opportunities for visual or interactive links between businesses and pedestrians within commercial or mixed-use areas.
18. In commercial and mixed-use residential areas, street furniture, artwork and shielded lighting should be provided along streets and within open spaces adjacent to streets to create comfortable outdoor gathering places for residents and visitors. The specific design of the street furniture and lighting should be reviewed at the time each phase of development is proposed to ensure a compatible design which contributes to the cohesiveness of the area, but allows for variation between the unique development areas.
19. Within commercial and institutional mixed-use areas, street trees should be planted between the vehicle travel way and the sidewalk on arterial streets at intervals no greater than 50 feet. Within view corridors, tree species should be selected to minimize view impacts.
20. Street trees should not be required along interior streets in Industrial areas where they could conflict with industrial traffic, but should be provided along F Street and Roeder Avenue. The exterior boundaries of industrial areas and boat yards should be landscaped where they abut commercial mixed-use areas, parks or public roads.
21. Landscaping should feature native or drought tolerant plants which do not require permanent irrigation systems. Where feasible, streets should be designed with bioswales, tree wells or other natural stormwater treatment facilities to treat stormwater run-off from roads and double as landscaping.
22. Parking lots, garages, and waste disposal facilities should be screened from public streets and trails.
23. Transit stops, transit pull-outs and shelters should be located along all arterial streets at convenient intervals and should have priority over on-street parking and landscaping.

24. Well designed signage and way-finding should be located at frequent intervals to direct visitors to business districts, parking, transit stops, bicycle and pedestrian routes and public places throughout the Waterfront District and provide public information about site history and natural features.

*Parking Policies*

25. Parking should be provided through a combination of on-street, surface and structured or below-grade parking facilities, with on-street parking spaces managed for short-term visitors and customers to promote turn-over and availability of short-term parking.
26. Minimum parking requirements should be reduced to a standard which is appropriate for a mixed-use urban setting in the future, assuming fewer cars, smaller cars, shared parking facilities and mode-shift to non-auto modes. Regulations should include provision for further reduction to parking space requirements for uses which provide shared parking facilities and programs to reduce automobile dependence.
27. At full build-out, no more than one-third of the total automobile parking spaces in Commercial or Institutional mixed-use areas should be provided in off-street surface parking lots.
28. Within commercial mixed-use areas, surface parking lots and the entrances to parking garages should be located at the side or rear of buildings, and off-street parking lots should not be located between the building and the street.
29. Within shoreline jurisdiction, parking should be located under buildings, or within parking structures located away from the shoreline, unless associated with a water-oriented use. Parking should not be located between the building and the shoreline.
30. Surface parking may be developed as an interim use on areas planned for future redevelopment, enabling its evolution over time into a denser environment. Where interim surface parking is permitted, a clear strategy and time line for development of permanent parking spaces and redevelopment of interim surface lots should be established in development permit conditions.

*Figure 5-3: Parking Strategies*

Various parking types respond to the character of each development area within the Waterfront District.

**Surface**



Surface parking will be used to accommodate early action development. As density increases over time, surface parking will be minimal.

**Structure (Integrated)**



Structure (integrated) parking is accommodated below buildings or integrated into the center of a block to support multiple uses. This is the most typical parking type.

**Free-Standing Garage**



Free-standing garages are utilized to support office, institutional and community parking requirements.

**On-Street**



On-Street parking (essential to a vibrant urban neighborhood) will carry approximately 10% of the parking demand at full development build-out.

**Marina**



Surface parking will be utilized at the marina to accommodate interim marina parking and truck/trailer parking for the Clean Ocean Marina.



31. In areas where development sites abut the bluff, streets should be designed to provide space for parking within buildings below street grade, with building entrances at street level.
32. Parking lots should be designed to reduce heat island impacts by limiting the size of surface parking lots, providing landscaping to shade parking lots and encouraging covered or structured parking.
33. Parking lots and structured parking should be designed to include pedestrian walkways connecting the parking facility to the buildings or uses which they serve, and should be landscaped or screened from adjacent streets and walkways.
34. If a structured parking facility is located at street level, the street frontage along any arterial street should be occupied by a retail, service or public use, or the facility should include landscaping, art work or outdoor seating along the street frontage, subject to design review.
35. Bike parking or covered storage areas should be located near the entrances to all public and private buildings, facilities or clusters of uses. Central bicycle facilities may be provided for institutional campuses or business parks with internal pedestrian routes.
36. Parking throughout the Downtown Waterfront Area should primarily be located under buildings or within parking structures located on the upland side of the development.

**LEED ND**  
**Credit Opportunities**

Note: LEED ND, developed by the US Green Building Council, is one of many different voluntary rating systems to address and achieve sustainability goals. The following plan features provide potential credit toward LEED ND certification:

Walkable streets include on-street parking, street trees, sidewalks, bike lanes and pedestrian oriented development at street level.

Project will encourage transit use and reduce driving by providing safe and comfortable transit facilities.

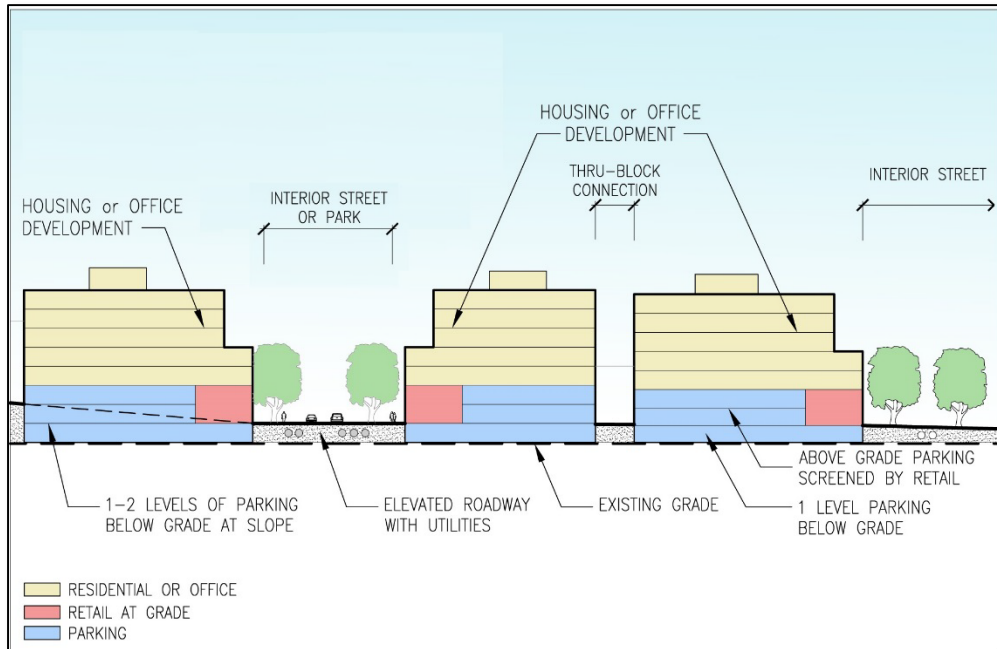
Parking is designed to increase pedestrian orientation and minimize the adverse effects of parking facilities by limiting the size and location of surface parking lots and providing bicycle and car-pool parking.

### *Integrated Slopes Approach*

The existing site grade in the Downtown Waterfront Area is approximately 30 feet below the level of the existing downtown at Commercial, Cornwall and Bay Streets. Site conditions pertaining to water tables, potential sea level rise and soils make it difficult and expensive to excavate below the existing grade for underground parking. Raising the street level in the eastern portion of the Downtown Waterfront area could provide the opportunity to install below-grade parking with pedestrian scale uses at street level. This approach could also allow placement of utilities and stormwater systems under streets with minimum excavation.

In order to provide the possibility for below-grade parking and reduce the grade difference between the downtown and the Waterfront District, an “Integrated Slope Approach” is envisioned to raise the elevation of the streets and parks in the eastern portion of the Downtown Waterfront area approximately 10 feet. Street grade could slope upward from Granary Ave. and Laurel Street toward the bluff, providing the potential for below grade parking under buildings in the eastern half of the Downtown Waterfront area, and up to three levels of structured parking along the bluff adjacent to Roeder Avenue and Chestnut Street. This approach for parking will also create a noise buffer between the relocated BN/Santa Fe railroad tracks and the Waterfront District development. This configuration could provide the opportunity for parking garages within the Waterfront District to be accessed from existing downtown streets, reducing the amount of automobile traffic traveling on Waterfront District streets.

Figure 5-4: Integrated Slopes



## 5.2 Implementation Strategies

1. Design a network of arterial streets and trails to serve as the primary vehicle, bicycle and pedestrian access routes to development sites and public amenities within the Waterfront District.
2. Phase the development of arterial streets, trails and infrastructure to coincide with environmental clean-up, the development of adjacent properties, funding availability, and the schedule for railroad relocation.
3. Design and construct local streets, alleys, bike and pedestrian routes to provide access to individual buildings and parking areas at the time development is proposed.
4. Where feasible, install streets and utilities on clean fill placed above the current ground level to minimize excavation in areas with contaminated soils and elevate streets above potential flood levels which could result from the impacts of global warming, sea level rise or storm surge events.
5. Adopt design standards which encourage an appealing and comfortable pedestrian street environment within commercial and residential mixed-use areas with buildings located contiguous to sidewalks, building



entrances facing public streets, transparent glass on businesses at ground level, weather protection, landscaping, artwork, lighting and outdoor seating areas. Allow alternate design standards to be established for institutional campuses or business campuses with internal pedestrian access.

6. Work with the Whatcom Transportation Authority (WTA) to ensure adequate funding for an efficient, convenient transit system with stops located in close proximity to the majority of residences and businesses, prior to occupancy of the first 1 million square feet of building space.
7. Obtain input from WTA regarding street design to ensure bus maneuverability around the site, allowing convenient connections to Downtown, Fairhaven and Western Washington University.
8. Provide transit with signal priority access to the site, if needed.
9. Work with Burlington Northern Railroad and seek grant funding to relocate the main line of railroad to a new route along the bluff, while maintaining a rail spur to serve the Bellingham Shipping Terminal and Log Pond transitional use area.
10. Work with the Port of Bellingham and BNSF Railroad to install a railroad quiet zone with supplemental safety measures at all track crossings in the Waterfront District.
11. Encourage landscaping, park design, and stormwater biotreatment facilities, such as bioswales, and use of native and/or drought tolerant plants which will not require permanent irrigation systems and support clean stormwater goals.
12. Maintain the Bellingham Shipping Terminal as a deep water moorage and cargo facility, with adequate upland laydown area to support this use.
13. Develop a Clean Ocean Marina by adaptively re-using the ASB to serve the need for moorage.
14. Develop launching facilities and services for hand carry boats in one or more of the following areas: at the head of the I&J Waterway, north of the ASB lagoon, the south side of the Whatcom Waterway, Cornwall Cove, and/or south of the Cornwall Avenue Landfill.
15. Develop visitor moorage facilities along the Whatcom Waterway and encourage the development of services to attract visiting boaters to the Waterfront District.
16. Maintain and upgrade piers, moorage facilities and boat lifts along the north side of the Whatcom Waterway and south side of the I&J Waterway, and develop additional commercial boat haul-out facilities if needed to improve marine industrial water access.
17. Work with private carriers and pursue grant funding to assist in developing a network of water-taxis or a small ferry system to connect the Waterfront District to other transportation links.
18. Encourage landscaping with native or drought tolerant plants which do not require permanent irrigation systems.
19. Develop parking regulations, management strategies and design regulations to prevent parked cars from dominating the landscape by reducing minimum parking requirements below existing city code requirements, encourage shared parking and commute trip reduction, and requiring surface parking lots to be located behind buildings and screened from public roads and trails.





20. Develop and implement a biennial traffic monitoring program to collect data and use results to encourage mode shift from cars to alternate forms of transportation such as walking, biking and transit, consistent with mode shift goals.
21. Take steps designed to encourage early development within each planning area in order to obtain the type of anchor tenants that will help define the character of development consistent with the Sub-Area Plan.



*A large parking garage along the Roeder Avenue bluff is proposed when there is sufficient parking demand to justify structured parking. A pedestrian plaza, staircase and ground floor commercial or office uses are proposed along the interface with the park.*

Figure 5-5: Street Types

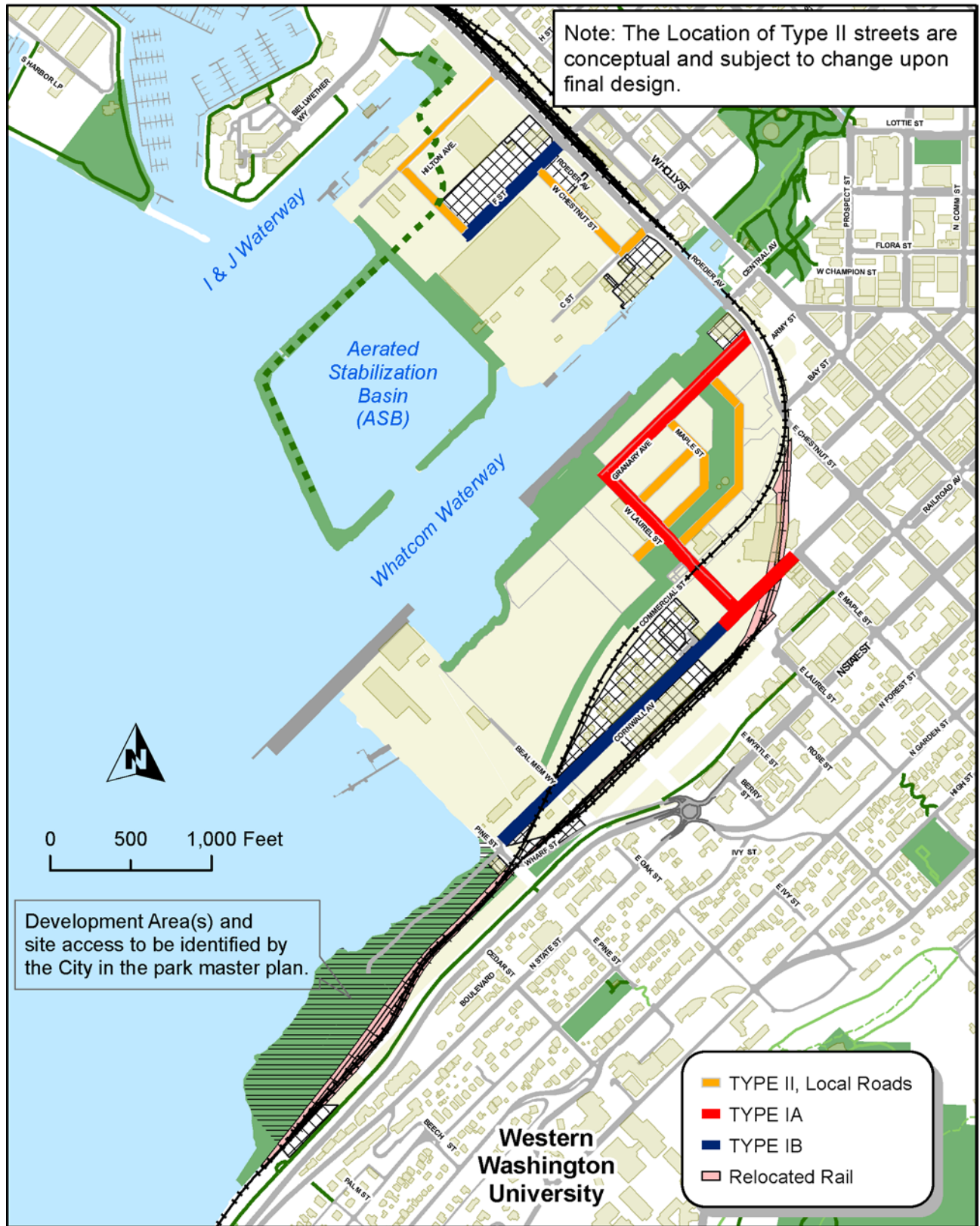
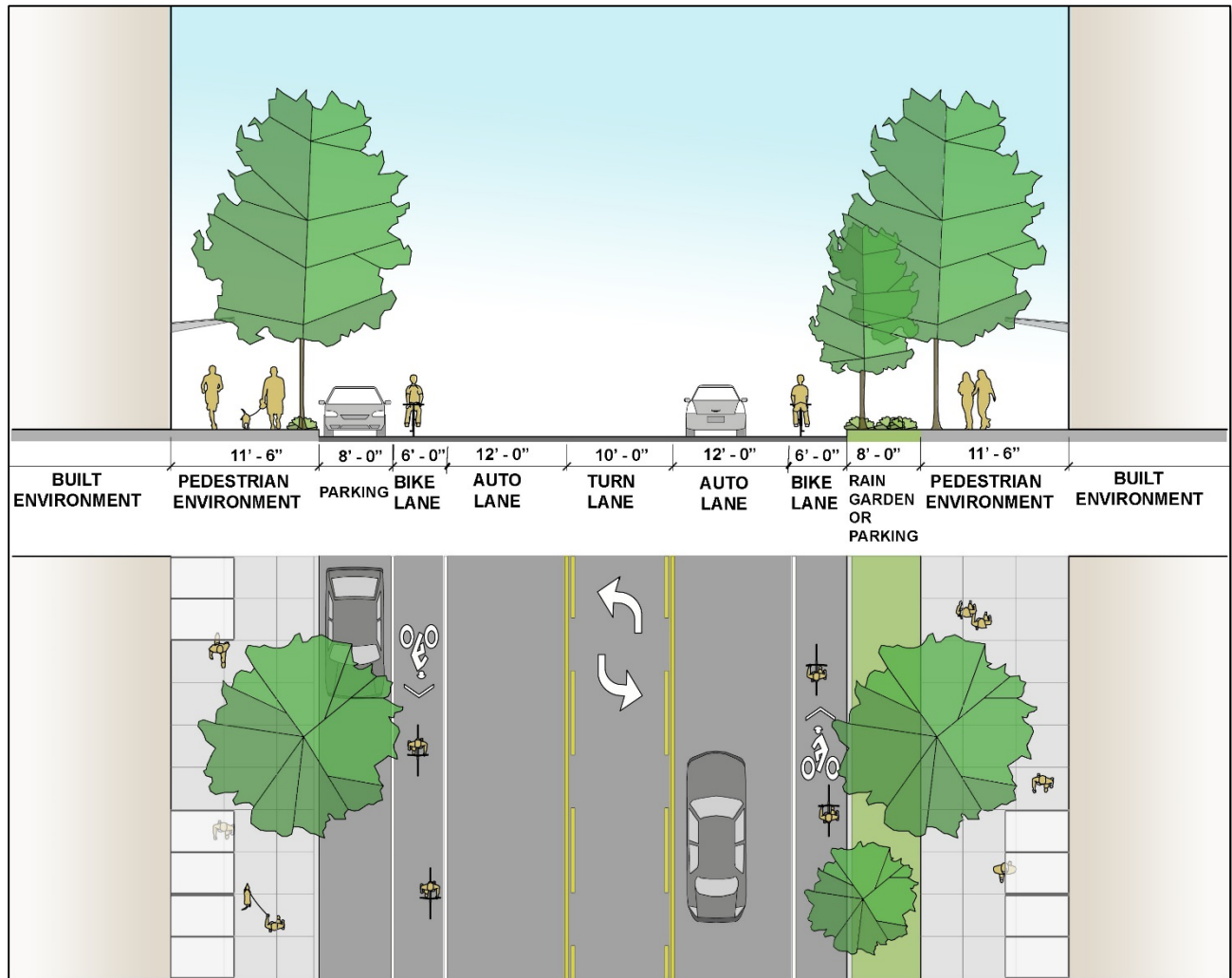


Figure 5-6: Waterfront District Street Designs

*The following street designs are conceptual. Alternate standards may be approved by the Public Works Director provided they are consistent with, and will further, the policies and implementation strategies in this chapter.*



**Type IA - Arterial Streets**

ROW: 85 ft. (2-way Street) with one turn lane at intersection or optional center landscaping.

Bikes: Two dedicated bike lanes or a cycletrack

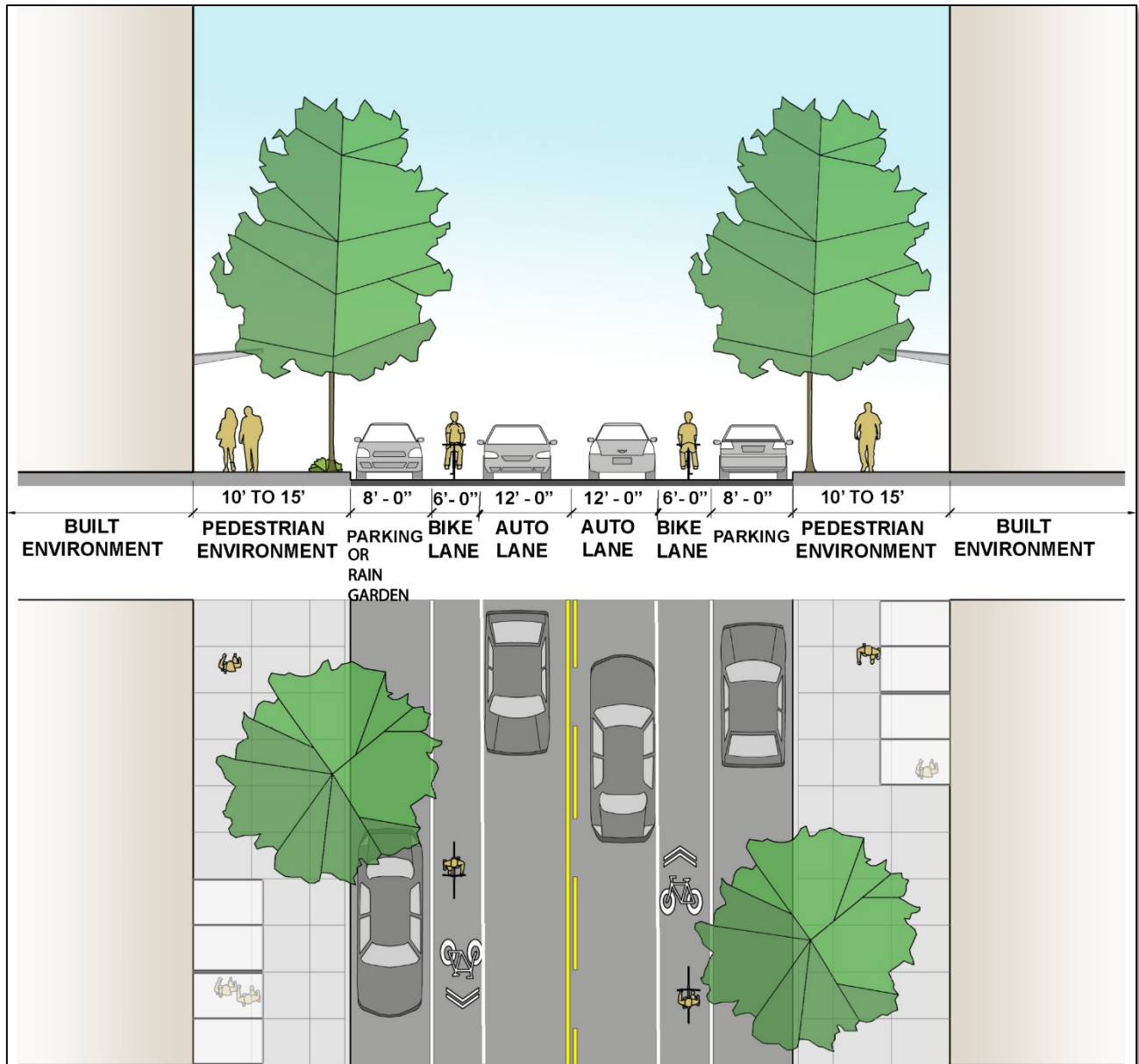
Parking: Parallel parking on one or both sides of street

Landscaping: Street trees, highlighted landscape areas at wide sidewalk, natural biofiltration option in lieu of on street parking on one side of street.

Pedestrian Environment: Sidewalks on both sides of the street along with ground floor retail and commercial uses encourage pedestrian-oriented activity.



*The following street designs are conceptual. Alternate standards may be approved by the Public Works Director provided they are consistent with, and will further, the policies and implementation strategies in this chapter.*



### **Type IB - Arterial Streets**

ROW: 72 to 82 ft. (2-way Street)

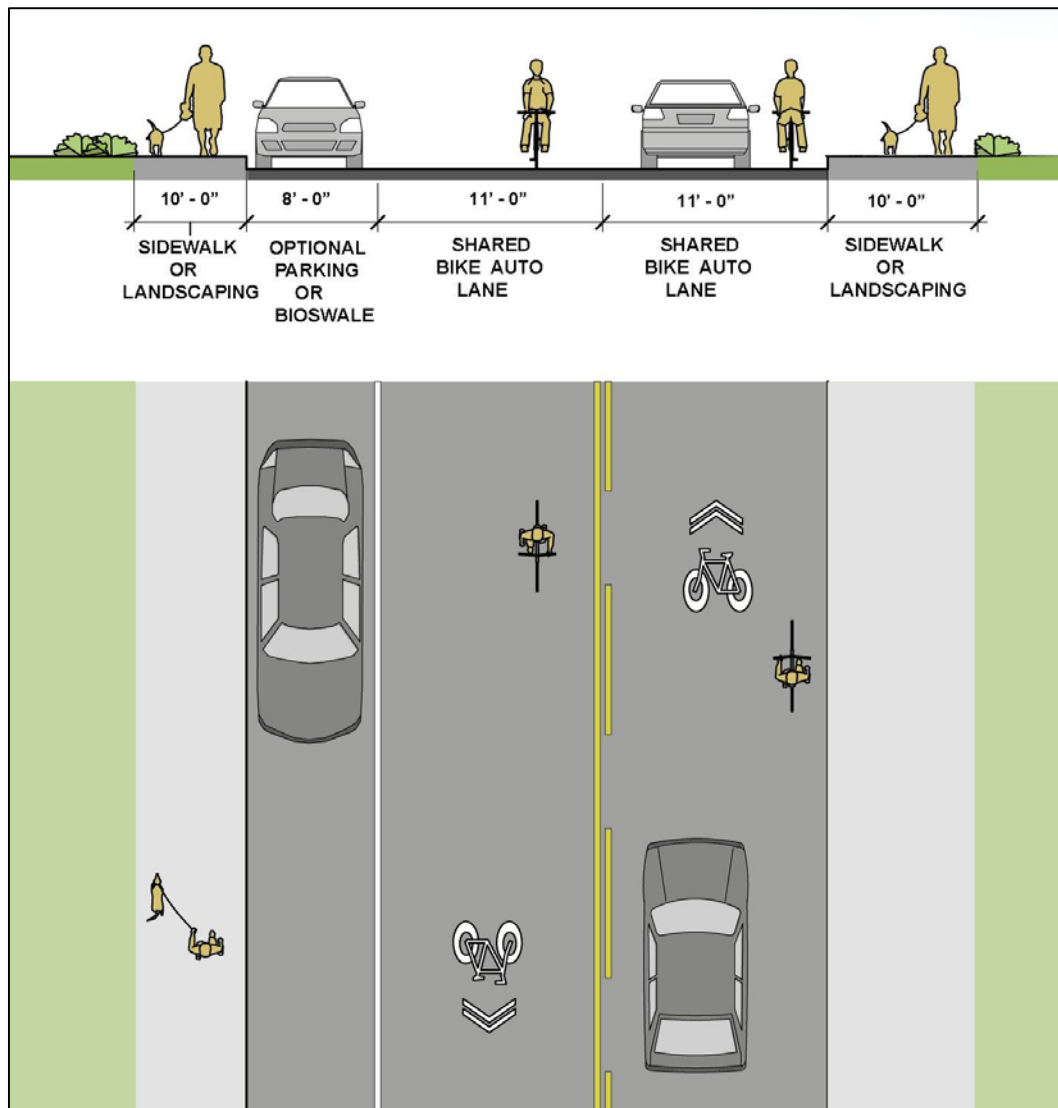
Bikes: Two dedicated bike lanes

Parking: Parallel parking on one or both sides of street.

Landscaping: Street trees, natural biofiltration option in lieu of on street parking on one side of Street.

Pedestrian Environment: Sidewalks on both sides of the street encourage pedestrian oriented activity.

*The following street designs are conceptual. Alternate standards may be approved by the Public Works Director provided they are consistent with, and will further, the policies and implementation strategies in this chapter.*



## **Type II - Local Streets**

ROW: 36 to 56 ft. (2-way Street)

Bikes: Auto lane shared with bikes (Innovative design which favors pedestrian and bicycles).

Parking: Optional parallel parking or bioswale on one side of street.

Landscaping: Street trees, low scale shrubs and ornamentals over utility vaults. Landscaping requirement may be waived within industrial areas.

Pedestrian Environment: Sidewalks on both sides, or optional sidewalk on one side and other side landscaped when located adjacent to park or trail with equivalent pedestrian facilities. Within industrial areas, separated pedestrian route may be provided.



*Southerly view of Granary Avenue and Laurel Street under construction, March, 2018. Wide sidewalks and a cycle track along Granary Ave. and Laurel Street will connect to the network of recently completed trails in Waypoint Park.*



### 6.0 Utility Systems

The Waterfront District requires an expansion of utility services to support the anticipated levels of development. Public and private utility suppliers have the capacity to service the full amount of planned development and system upgrades will be made in coordination with the site development schedule. Traditional conveyance lines for water, sewer and stormwater will be included in City rights-of-way. A non-potable, treated raw water conveyance system may also be located in City rights-of-way for irrigation use. These new utility corridors will be pre-excavated and backfilled with clean materials during the initial phase of utility and roadway installation, consistent with site cleanup activities. A utilities master plan, evaluating existing systems and envisioned improvements, has been prepared by the City's Public Works Department to provide a framework for the short-term and long-term improvements. Innovative systems to treat or recycle wastewater or stormwater run-off within buildings or sites will be privately developed and maintained.

#### *Water*

The City provides water service to customers in and around the Waterfront District. The City's Capital Facilities Plan, updated in 2006, affirms that improvements to the existing water system can service the full amount of planned development. Potable water mains surround the Waterfront District and extend into the site at a number of locations (Beal Memorial Way in the vicinity of the Oak Street right of way, Pine Street, Laurel Street, C Street, F Street, Hilton Avenue). Additional water system infrastructure will be placed within the site's new roadway network contingent on site development needs and in coordination with other utility system improvements.



#### *Sanitary Sewer*

The City provides sanitary sewer utility service to customers in and around the Waterfront District. The City's Capital Facilities Plan, updated in 2006, affirms that improvements to the existing sanitary system can service the full amount of planned development. Sewer pipes surround the Waterfront District and extend into the site at a number of locations (Beal Memorial Way, Pine Street, Laurel Street, C Street, Hilton Avenue). The majority of the site's



existing gravity sewer system, especially in the area south of the Whatcom Waterway, will be reconstructed and relocated within the site's new roadway network contingent on-site development needs and in coordination with other utility system improvements. New on site pump stations will be required to help transport collected wastewater to the Post Point Pollution Control Plant.

### *Electricity*

Puget Sound Energy (PSE) provides electricity to customers in and around the Waterfront District. PSE is expanding its electrical substation system to meet the area's long-term energy demands and will accommodate the planned levels of development in the Waterfront District contingent upon energy demands and site development needs. Most of the site's existing electrical lines will be removed or replaced with below-grade lines within the site's new roadway network in coordination with other utility system improvements.

### *Natural Gas*

Cascade Natural Gas provides natural gas service to customers in and around the Waterfront District. Cascade Natural Gas has sufficient capacity to service the full amount of planned development in the Waterfront District. A 16-inch high-pressure natural gas distribution line traverses the perimeter of the site along Roeder Avenue, Chestnut Street and Cornwall Avenue and gas lines extend into the site at a number of locations. Most gas lines will be removed or replaced within the site's new roadway network contingent on site development needs and in coordination with other utility system improvements.

### *Stormwater Management*

The careful management of stormwater is a high priority for waterfront communities throughout the Puget Sound. Federal, state and local regulatory requirements for stormwater management have become increasingly stringent in an ongoing effort to protect adjacent marine resources. Stormwater is generally managed within the Waterfront District by both the Port of Bellingham and the City of Bellingham under Phase II Municipal Stormwater permits issued by the Department of Ecology. Stormwater management associated with other specific operations, such as construction activity, boatyards and the Aerated Stabilization Basin (ASB), is also regulated by Ecology. Currently most of the stormwater generated in the Downtown Waterfront, Log Pond and Marine Trades areas is routed to the ASB. Stormwater treatment within the ASB will be discontinued prior to cleanup and redevelopment of that facility, requiring the design and permitting of new conveyance and treatment facilities throughout the Waterfront District.





New conveyance and treatment facilities for stormwater typically will be installed in coordination with the phased construction of streets and other infrastructure. The new stormwater systems will be designed in accordance with Ecology stormwater requirements, low-impact development strategies, and MTCA requirements for protecting soil, groundwater, and marine resources. In many locations, the infiltration of stormwater will be avoided in order to prevent contact with contaminated subsoils.

However, low-impact development strategies, such as the use of green roofs, pervious surfaces, rain gardens, and bio-swales may be incorporated throughout the site as long as they are designed to be compatible with MTCA site cleanup requirements and meet applicable storm water regulations. Where appropriate and consistent with park goals and plans, these sustainable stormwater features may also be integrated into the new system of waterfront parks, creating a visual and attractive theme of natural water connections between upland areas and newly restored shorelines. New stormwater outfalls will be designed and permitted to ensure that clean stormwater is discharged to Bellingham Bay in locations compatible with comprehensive shoreline restoration projects.



### *Communication*

The Waterfront District is served by telephone, wireless telephone service and cable television. Cable television is available through Comcast Corporation by franchise agreement with the City. Standard telephone service is available through Qwest and wireless telephone service is offered by a number of providers. Communication lines will be extended into the site contingent on site development needs and in coordination with other utility system improvements.



### *Sustainability*

The installation of utility systems provides a unique opportunity to integrate sustainable design principles and functions within the planned infrastructure to help minimize the environmental impacts of development and implement water-neutral and carbon-neutral resource strategies. Utility corridors could include additional piping and infrastructure to support the long-term development of district heating and cooling, on-site energy generation





and wastewater reuse. The vast network of parks and open space could incorporate low- impact development stormwater solutions with significant environmental and economic benefits. As the waterfront develops into an urban village, a coordinated set of sustainable utility system strategies will help improve habitat, minimize the reliance on imported water and demand for water treatment and reduce the demand for nonrenewable energy resources. Innovative district-scale systems that leverage existing waterfront assets – such as district energy, district water, and district stormwater –have tremendous potential to reduce resource consumption and carbon emissions while generating economic benefit to waterfront development partners.

District energy systems save energy and money by using underground pipes to distribute hot water, chilled water or steam from a single source to a network of buildings which do not need boilers, furnaces, or cooling systems. The Port is installing district heating and cooling pipes under the roads to allow for the heating and cooling of buildings from a centralized source. District energy is more efficient with less carbon emissions than localized boilers, and supports a wide range of sustainable strategies such as the recapture and reuse of waste heat from Puget Sound Energy’s Encogen Station.

On-site power generation is an energy efficiency strategy which reduces transmission losses from regional power stations and responds directly to the site’s energy needs. These systems can be large or small and surplus power can be fed back into the regional power grid. Potential on-site renewable sources of power include solar, wind, tidal, or hydropower. Hydropower could be generated from a surplus industrial pipeline extending from Lake Whatcom to the site which has a hydraulic capacity of 50 million gallons of water per day and historically supplied process water to GP.



District water systems utilize district-scale infrastructure to provide non-potable water to multiple buildings thereby reducing the amount of potable water use consumed by the district. Non-potable water could be supplied from Lake Whatcom via existing industrial water conduits that were previously used to serve the GP facility. Wastewater reuse systems significantly reduce water usage by using advanced treatment to recycle water to support landscape features, toilet flushing, and other building operations. On-site wastewater treatment could be phased with development and might be a cost-effective opportunity to expand treatment capacity and reduce loading to the Post Point Pollution Control Plant.

The Waterfront District presents a unique opportunity to implement a district stormwater system that meets regulatory requirements while maximizing ecological value in a cost effective manner. Relatively clean water from roofs and open spaces could be conveyed in a naturalized creek and pond system which would also serve as an aesthetically pleasing, signature “green” infrastructure resource. Polluted stormwater from traffic areas could be treated in properly designed oil separators and underground settling



tanks. Special consideration is needed for implementing low- impact development stormwater solutions in areas where contaminated soils may be isolated and capped or blended with clean soils to meet state standards for public health and safety. Engineering solutions might include impermeable, rainwater-harvesting structures which act as subsurface “caps” for deeper contaminated materials but allow for near-surface water movement and infiltration for collection.

A proactive approach towards sustainable utility systems and infrastructure will help minimize the long-term

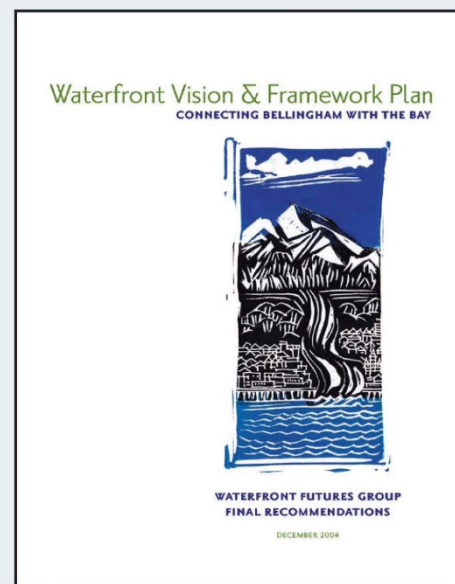
demand for water and energy, improve habitat, provide aesthetic and recreational value, and reduce long-term capital and maintenance costs.

### 6.1 Utility System Policies

1. Provide utility facilities that are sufficient to support the planned levels of development.
2. Wherever practicable, place utility distribution lines underground in corridors that are pre-excavated and backfilled with clean materials during the initial phase of utility and roadway installation.
3. Where above ground utility infrastructure and facilities are installed, all efforts should be made to minimize environmental, visual, and aesthetic impacts. Street lights should be shielded to avoid off-site light impacts.
4. Locate transmission lines, pipelines, and other utilities in the same infrastructure corridors whenever possible.
5. Encourage energy conservation, on-site energy generation and the use of on-site renewable energy sources.
6. Reduce the unnecessary or wasteful consumption of water.
7. Encourage low-impact development practices for stormwater management which are compatible with MTCA site cleanup requirements, stormwater regulations, and demonstrate the integration of natural system connections between shoreline restoration projects and appropriate waterfront park designs.

### ***Waterfront District Guiding Principles and Implementation Strategies***

The Waterfront Advisory Group sponsored a public involvement process during 2005 and 2006, which led to City and Port adoption of “Guiding Principles and Implementation Strategies” in 2006. The following Implementation Strategies provide guidance related to Utility Systems:



- *Where feasible, use bioswales, rain gardens and other appropriate low-impact development techniques to treat stormwater.*

## 6.2 Utility Systems Implementation Strategies

1. Coordinate new road construction and the maintenance of existing roads with utility trenching activities.
2. Wherever practicable, install utility infrastructure that supports the long-term implementation of district heating and cooling, wastewater reuse and on-site energy generation.
3. Extend utility services to the site in accordance with the requirements of the utility companies.
4. Coordinate with utility providers for consistency between the comprehensive plans of each utility and development plans in the Waterfront District.
5. Provide timely notice of new construction, maintenance, and repair of existing roads to utility providers.
6. Encourage the use of water conserving design and techniques in required landscaping.
7. Whenever practicable, install utility infrastructure which is compatible with or allows the future conversion to on-site energy production.
8. Wherever practicable, manage and treat stormwater with low impact development techniques that support natural hydrology and ecosystem functions while meeting MTCA site cleanup requirements for protective confinement of contaminated subsoils.
9. Where appropriate, incorporate clean stormwater as an integral resource in the design and construction of parks, open space, landscaping, and shoreline restoration projects in a way that encourages public interaction and awareness of the natural system connections between uplands, shorelines and Bellingham Bay.

### **LEED ND Credit Opportunities**

Note: LEED ND, developed by the US Green Building Council, is one of many different voluntary rating systems to address and achieve sustainability goals. The above plan features provide potential credit toward LEED ND certification.

Design or purchase traffic lights, street lights, water, wastewater pumps and treatment systems that achieve a 15% annual energy reduction beyond an estimated baseline energy use for this infrastructure.

Incorporate the use of shared on-site, non-polluting renewable energy generation technologies such as solar, wind geothermal, small scale/micro hydro electric and biomass with peak generating capacity at least 5% of the total electrical service load.



# CHAPTER SEVEN

## PARKS, OPEN SPACE & TRAILS

### 7.0 Parks, Open Space and Trails

One of the most significant elements of this redevelopment project is that it will provide people with numerous new waterfront access opportunities through the creation of approximately 33 acres of new upland parks and trails, and 6.5 acres of restored public beach. These signature parks and trails will link downtown Bellingham and adjacent neighborhoods to the waterfront and will feature outstanding areas to walk, play and experience the waterfront. Parks and open spaces within the Waterfront District will be interconnected by a network of pedestrian and bicycle trails, with connections to the Coast Millennium Trail system and other local parks and trail systems.

Approximately 18% of the Waterfront District land area is proposed for use as public park, trails and habitat, equaling approximately 33 acres of new upland parks, plus 4 acres of existing public land located east of the railroad tracks along the South Bay Trail, State Street and Boulevard Street. In addition, 6.5 acres of public beaches will be restored for habitat and public use. The Waterfront District will serve as an important linkage in developing a regional system of waterfront parks and trails. The

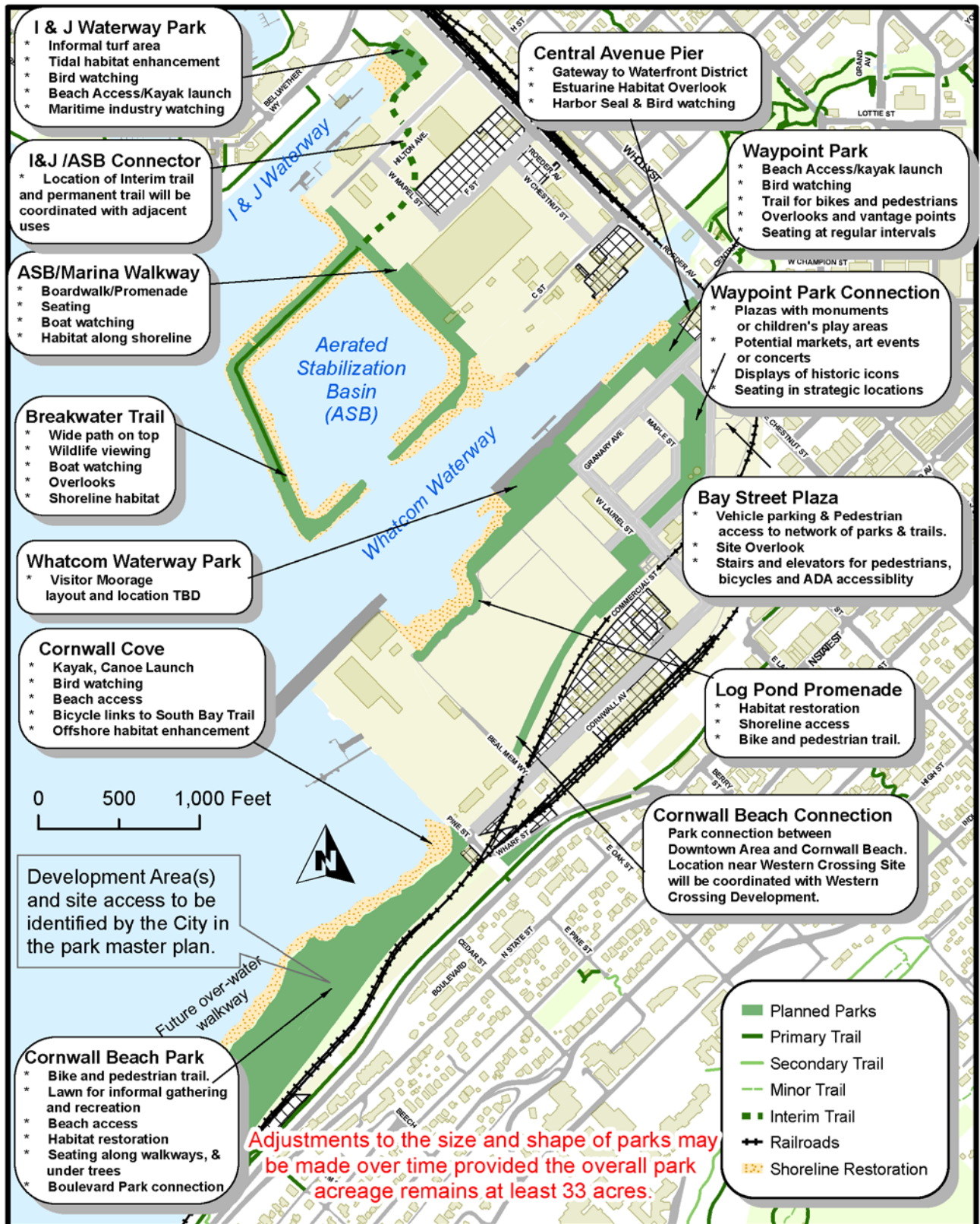


majority of the shoreline within the Waterfront District will be dedicated for public access and improved for public recreation, water access and habitat. This will benefit the entire community as well as the future businesses and residential development located within the Waterfront District. The precise design and layout of the parks, trails and habitat within each development area will be determined through future planning processes integrated with the design of future building footprints and streets. The Waterfront District Sub-Area Plan suggests the general location, size and key elements of various park developments, but recognizes that community discussion under the direction of Bellingham Parks and Recreation Department will further guide the details of the parks, open spaces and trails in the Waterfront District.

Similar to the transportation system, the parks, open space and trails will be phased as the site develops. Each phase of development will be accompanied by the creation of new public recreation, open space and habitat areas.

The public parks and open spaces described on the following pages will allow a variety of passive and active uses. Once development occurs within the Waterfront District, there may also be private open spaces within development parcels, such as courtyards, plazas and rooftop gardens. It will be important for designers to pay close attention to the transition between public and private open spaces.

Figure 7-1: Parks, Open Space & Trails





## *Park and Open Space Descriptions and Acreage by Planning Sub-Area*

**NOTE:** *Park acreage may be reallocated between Planning Areas during the City Sub-Area Plan review process, provided the overall park acreage remains at least 33 acres.*

### **Marine Trades Area**

*(9-acres of upland park plus one acre of restored public beach)*

The parks and open spaces within this area will create a dramatic new public access trail along the top of the Aerated Stabilization Basin (ASB) breakwater. An interim trail has been constructed from Bellwether to a point half way around the lagoon. In the future, a public trail with pockets of natural vegetation and seating will extend along the length of this breakwater. People who walk to the outer end of the breakwater will experience an unencumbered feeling and unique views of Bellingham Bay, the city center, Western Washington University and Sehome Hill. The new breakwater trail will connect to a wide promenade or boardwalk with landscaping, public gathering areas and amenities fronting the future Marina. A multi-use trail or wide sidewalk along Hilton or F Street will connect the marina boardwalk and trail system to an existing trail at the head of the I&J Waterway and a network of parks and trails at Squalicum Harbor and Bellwether on the Bay. A new beach park will be created at the north eastern end of the I&J Waterway for passive uses associated with hand-carry boat launching, exploring the beach or contemplating nature. Shoreline habitat will be enhanced at this park and along portions of the Whatcom and I&J Waterways in areas where existing bulkheads are removed.



### **Downtown Waterfront Area** *(5-acres plus .5 acres public beach)*

Maritime Heritage Park will link to the waterfront when the new park and trail areas take shape in the Downtown Waterfront Area. Much of the water frontage along the southern side of the Whatcom Waterway will become a public trail and park. The Central Avenue Pier was recently upgraded for non-motorized pedestrian and bicycle access, with light penetrating grating to preserve habitat under the extended portions of the pier. The shoreline south of Central Avenue has been restored by removing the concrete Clarifier, a treated timber and steel bulkhead, dozens of treated timber piles and dolphins and tons of concrete debris. Waypoint Park with a restored public beach was constructed during 2018.



Additional sections of the waterfront edge will be softened over time by removal of historic bulkheads, pilings, and over-water shading to provide a more natural shoreline along the Whatcom Waterway. Several sections of the existing GP wharf may be retained to support public access, environmental remediation activities and water-dependent uses through the first three phases of development.



A shoreline trail will extend south through the Downtown Area of the Waterfront District along the southern edge of the Whatcom Waterway. This trail may continue through the Log Pond Area if compatible with industrial uses. A network of trails and sidewalks will eventually lead to Boulevard Park via an over-water walkway from the Cornwall Beach Area. The shoreline trail may be designed as a wide esplanade with benches, a railing and ornamental lighting along the GP Wharf or top of the restored shoreline bank, with a few shoreline overlooks or viewing platforms. Lighting along the trail will be appropriately directed and shielded to provide adequate light for park and trail users, and avoid unnecessary glare on adjacent habitat and residential areas. This esplanade will merge with wide walks in front of waterfront mixed-use buildings, which will encourage cafes and restaurants to incorporate outdoor seating along the walk. The park space in this area will feature landscaped pockets, seating and spaces for passive recreation on lawn or turf between the shoreline trail and adjoining development. Areas between the trail and the water's edge will likely feature habitat restoration with designated public water access points at docks, overlooks and beaches formed where the bulkheads are removed and the banks are softened.

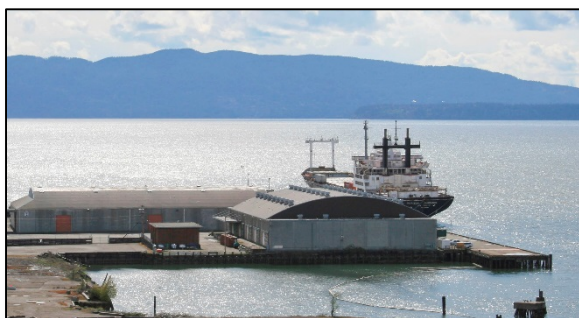
In areas where sections of the GP wharf remain, the shoreline trail will be constructed along the upland edge of the wharf.

**Log Pond Area** *(5-acres of upland park and 2 acres of restored shoreline)*

The shoreline trail described within the Downtown Waterfront Area will continue along the Log Pond shoreline to provide public access to the restored Log Pond shoreline. Fronting onto the restored Log Pond, this park will offer a mixture of naturalized shoreline habitat, public overlooks and some water access. The existing Log Pond shoreline may be reconfigured for more optimal habitat creation.



To the extent it is compatible with future industrial use, the Log Pond shoreline trail may continue through the Log Pond area to connect to the Cornwall Beach park and the overwater boardwalk. An additional public trail is proposed along the southern edge of the Log Pond area adjacent to the BNSF railway. This route will provide a direct bicycle and pedestrian connection between the Downtown Waterfront and Cornwall Beach area. The location of the trail along the Western Crossing site will be coordinated with Western Crossing.



**Shipping Terminal Area** *(No new park acreage)*

The boundary of the Shipping Terminal was previously modified to add additional land along Wharf Street and exclude the Cornwall Cove pocket beach, which is part of the Cornwall Beach area. A parcel of City land with a short section of the existing South Bay Trail runs through the eastern Shipping Terminal boundary at the top of the bluff.

## Cornwall Beach Area

*(14-acres new upland park, 3-acres restored natural beach)*

The Cornwall Beach Area will provide the largest park in the Waterfront District, similar in size and experience to Boulevard Park, including a long natural beach for diverse recreational experiences.



This park, once a landfill, may include space for active and passive recreation use. A Master Plan for the Park has been adopted by the City with proposed shoreline restoration, and the creation of a new beach along the southern shoreline. This entire area is a landfill, so shoreline reshaping will be required in some areas to cap and restore the shoreline. The park may include longer stretches of publicly accessible and walkable beach. This park will enable the realization of long term goals of connecting Cornwall Beach with the proposed over-water trail to Boulevard Park and the Taylor Avenue Dock to the south. A through trail will intersect with a looping system of pedestrian trails or walks weaving through the park. This park could also be accessed in the future via a pedestrian bridge over the railway tracks from the South Bay Trail.

The Waterfront District boundary includes approximately four acres of City and County land along the bluff above the Cornwall Beach planning area, which is currently used for public open space. The South Bay trail crosses through a portion of this public land. The trail could be extended along the Railroad Ave. right-of-way north of Wharf Street, or along the base of the bluff on BNSF land if an agreement can be reached with BNSF to allow a trail to be constructed. This proposed trail would connect to Depot Market Square and the surrounding businesses and residences. The Cornwall Beach area also includes a small pocket beach adjacent to the Port Maintenance Shop, which has been discovered by the community as the perfect place to launch a kayak, enjoy a picnic or watch a sunset over Lummi Island. A small lawn area will provide gathering space and a location for boaters to prepare for launching, while areas adjacent to the beach will be restored to natural conditions to provide wildlife habitat. The size of this park is currently constrained by the location of the existing Port Maintenance Shop and parking lot and the existing location of Cornwall Avenue. If the Maintenance Shop site redevelops in the future, the size of this park, amenities and associated parking may be expanded.



## Waterfront District Guiding Principles and Implementation Strategies

The Waterfront Advisory Group sponsored a public involvement process during 2005 and 2006, which led to City and Port adoption of “Guiding Principles and Implementation Strategies” in 2006. The following Implementation Strategies provide guidance related to Parks, Open Space and Trails:

- Establish signature design elements, a memorable park system, interconnected pedestrian and bicycle routes, and public amenities which set the New Whatcom area apart from other urban waterfront areas.
- Work with Lummi and Nooksack leaders to facilitate their development of cultural and educational facilities which feature Native American culture and history.
- Identify and preserve artifacts on the Georgia Pacific site, including equipment and storage tanks which have historic or aesthetic value, and utilize them as displays or art at community gathering points in the redevelopment project. Develop interpretive signs and information about the historical uses of the site.
- Develop an interconnected system of waterfront access and viewpoints, public parks, open spaces, pedestrian walkways and bicycle routes which will be the backbone of the New Whatcom redevelopment project.
- Make the majority of water’s edge accessible via non-motorized means of transportation, including pedestrian walkways, bicycle trails, motorized and non-motorized boat access, and transient moorage, connected to a network of parks, trails and transit connections. Restrict or control public access to areas used for water-dependent industry, sensitive habitat or government agency uses where public access would conflict with public health or safety, habitat protection or national security.
- Develop the Whatcom Waterway and its adjacent waterfront access as a community amenity, extending the Maritime Heritage Park to the Bay.
- Connect the New Whatcom open space and trail network to Boulevard Park with an over water trail from the south end of the Cornwall Landfill to Boulevard Park.





## 7.1 Park, Open Space and Trail Policies

### *Park Policies*

1. An interconnected system of waterfront access and viewpoints, public parks, open spaces, pedestrian walkways and bicycle routes should be designed and constructed to form the backbone of the Waterfront District.
2. Each park should be designed with a distinct character to provide a variety of park sizes, amenities and experiences for passive and active recreation for people of all ages, including water access and natural areas for wildlife habitat and viewing.
3. The detailed design, funding and construction of parks, open space and trail improvements should coincide with environmental clean-up, habitat restoration and the installation of streets and utilities for each phase of development.
4. Where appropriate and compatible with park plans, parks and open spaces should include some areas with natural or low-water use vegetation, utilize reclaimed wastewater for irrigation, or include water features which double as stormwater treatment or detention facilities.
5. Shoreline parks should include restored shoreline buffers and incorporate habitat enhancement projects consistent with the Bellingham Shoreline Master Program and Restoration Plan. Shoreline buffers may include trails and designated water access points, where no net loss of shoreline ecological function occurs to critical saltwater habitat. (See related policies in Chapter 3.)
6. Appropriate locations for off-leash dog areas should be identified within parks, with attention to conflicts with habitat areas. Off-leash dog use should be restricted in areas with eel grass or sensitive off-shore habitat, such as the Log Pond and pocket beach adjacent to the ASB.
7. Patios and private open spaces should include space for community gardens to allow residents to grow produce and flowers.
8. Reduce opportunities for crime and inappropriate activities by designing parks and trails with adequate lighting and visibility from adjacent roads, businesses and residents. Avoid isolated blind spots.



### *Open Space Policies*

9. Within areas identified for development, buildings and landscaping should be designed to include public and private open spaces, plazas and roof top gardens for the use and enjoyment of residents, visitors and the general public. These spaces may be dedicated as public parks or managed by property developers, but are not counted as part of the 33 acres of new public park land described in this plan.
10. Public open space within development areas should be designed to be welcoming to the general public,



with clearly defined access points to and from adjacent parks, sidewalks and pedestrian ways.

- Private open spaces should be designed to accessible by residents, employees or business patrons.

*Trail Policies*

- Public parks and open spaces should be connected by a network of pedestrian and bicycle trails to establish a continuous corridor of non-motorized trails from Squalicum Harbor to the over-water walkway to Fairhaven.



- Recreational trail systems within parks should include clear directional signage and convenient connections to sidewalks and on-street bicycle routes.

- Bicycle and pedestrian trails should be designed to comply with the accessible design provisions of the American Disabilities Act (ADA). Multi-modal trails should be at least 10 feet wide.

**7.2 Implementation Strategies**

- At full build-out, include at least 33 acres of new public parks and 6.5 acres of restored public beach, divided between the various development areas as follows. Park acreage may be reallocated between Planning Areas during the City Sub-Area Plan review process, provided the overall park acreage remains at least 33 acres.

- Construct early access park and trail features with Phase 1 and 2 development and infrastructure improvements to provide public access along the Downtown Waterfront Area and Cornwall Beach Area.

Development Area	Upland Park	Public Beach
Marine Trades Area	9 acres	1 acre
Downtown Waterfront Area	5 acres	.5 acres
Log Pond Area	5 acres	2 acres
Shipping Terminal Area	0 acres	
Cornwall Beach Area	14 acres	3 acres
Total	33 acres	6.5 acres

- Work with Lummi Nation and Nooksack Indian tribal leaders to identify appropriate locations and facilitate the development of art work, displays and cultural facilities which feature Native American

culture and history. These may include projects developed and operated for public use such as museums, heritage centers, etc. or facilities owned and/or operated by tribal partners such as offices and commercial space.

- Where feasible and desirable, identify and preserve artifacts on the Georgia Pacific site that have historic or aesthetic value, including salvaged building materials, equipment and storage tanks, and utilize them as displays or art at community gathering points. Develop interpretive signs and information about the historical uses of the site.
- Locate and design parks to serve as view corridors where appropriate. In those parks which are designated as view corridors, design landscaping and buildings to avoid obstructing views and limit

the height of any structures to no more than 35'. Limit building height to 25' within shoreline parks designated as "Recreational Shorelines" in the Shoreline Master Program.

6. Restore natural shorelines and provide public access to the water's edge at the head of the I&J Waterway, the pocket beach northwest of the ASB lagoon, the restored shoreline within Log Pond Park, the pocket beach at the end of Cornwall Ave., referred to in this plan as Cornwall Cove, and the beach at the southern end of the Cornwall Ave. landfill.
7. Include hand carry boat launch areas and facilities for boaters within parks where topography and water depth support water access, with attention to potential impacts on near-shore habitat.
8. Restore shoreline buffers and natural systems within parks and set them aside as habitat, with landscaping, fencing or topography barriers to protect natural areas from more active recreation uses.
9. Restrict off-leash dogs and boat moorage within sensitive near-shore areas, including the Log Pond and pocket beach north of the ASB, and develop a signage program to inform visitors about the location and importance of habitat areas.
10. Develop the south side Whatcom Waterway and its adjacent waterfront as a community amenity, extending the Maritime Heritage Park along the Whatcom Waterway. Design a variable width system of parks and trails to be constructed over time as adjacent properties are developed. Develop interim access routes through or around areas where environmental cleanup or interim uses are not compatible with early public access.
11. Connect the Waterfront District park and trail network to existing parks and trails within adjacent neighborhoods. Connect to Bellwether on the Bay and the Squalicum Promenade through a new park at the head of the I&J Waterway. Provide access to Maritime Heritage Park with a pedestrian and bicycle connection at Central Avenue. Access the South Bay Trail with connections at Cornwall Ave. and Wharf Street, and construct a link to Boulevard Park with an over-water trail connecting to the large new park at the south end of the Cornwall Landfill.
12. Work with BNSF, the City Public Works and Park Department to develop additional pedestrian connections over the railroad from the Cornwall Beach area to the South Bay Trail at Laurel Street and connecting Broadway to Bellwether Way, over time as funding is available.
13. Develop a park and trail along the frontage of the Aerated Stabilization Basin, with a public trail, natural vegetation and seating areas extending around the ASB breakwater.
14. Establish development regulations and incentives which encourage the development of public open space within areas proposed for development. Provide floor area bonuses for





projects that provide public open space or plazas for public use.

15. Explore options for increased parking adjacent to the Cornwall Cove pocket beach, including on-street parking along Cornwall Ave.
16. Provide a density bonus or impact fee credit to developers who fund the construction of public parks or open space.
17. Park plans for the first phase of the Whatcom Waterway Waterfront Park should identify a location for a small visitor float, pier or beach area for access and temporary storage of kayaks, dinghies and other small vessels.
18. Develop a permanent off-road trail connection between Bellwether Way and the Breakwater trail. The specific location of the future permanent trail will be coordinated with future industrial uses to avoid unnecessary conflict with Port and/or Port-tenant operations.
19. Develop a continuous waterfront trail along the south side of the Whatcom Waterway and Log Pond shoreline from Roeder Ave. to the Northeasterly edge of the Shipping Terminal. This trail should be extended through the Log Pond planning area to connect to Cornwall Ave. if compatible with industrial and/or cargo uses in the Log Pond area. Public access along the Log Pond trail may be suspended for public safety or site security purposes during periods when upland uses conflict with trail use. Construct an additional pedestrian and bicycle trail along the south side of the Shipping Terminal to provide a direct connection between the Downtown Waterfront area and Cornwall Beach area.
20. The breakwater trail around the Aerated Stabilization Basin should include a flat surface to accommodate a variable width public trail with a minimum width of 12-15-feet, several public gathering areas and gently sloping public beaches suitable for public use.
21. Develop launching facilities and services for hand carry boats in one or more of the following areas: at the head of the I&J Waterway, north of the ASB lagoon, the South side of the Whatcom Waterway, Cornwall Cove, and/or south of the Cornwall Avenue Landfill.
22. Newly developed public boat launches or visitor moorage should comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act.



### LEED ND Credit Opportunities

Note: LEED ND, developed by the US Green Building Council, is one of many different voluntary rating systems to address and achieve sustainability goals. The following plan features provide potential credit toward LEED ND certification:

At least 50% of dwelling units and building entrances will be located within 1/4 mile walk distance of a multi-use trail at least 3 miles in length.

Recreation facilities and trails will be designed according to the accessible design provisions of the ADA.

At least 90% of the dwelling units and business entrances within the Waterfront District will be located within 1/6 mile of a park, green plaza or square at least 1/6 acre in area and average park size is greater than one half acre.

**8.0 Capital Facilities**

The Waterfront District is a long-range project which will develop over several decades. The City and Port have worked jointly to develop an infrastructure phasing plan for the Waterfront District to ensure that transportation systems, utilities and parks within the Waterfront District will be adequate to serve each phase of development. The City and Port have also established a process to regularly evaluate and update the infrastructure phasing and associated capital projects over time.

Table 8-1 describes roads, bridges, utilities, parks, trails, cleanup and marine infrastructure projected to serve the first three phases of development. These projects correspond with Phase 1 through 3 in the infrastructure phasing plan, included in the Waterfront District Planned Action Ordinance and Facilities Agreement. Upon completion of these projects, the transportation infrastructure could support 2.7 million square feet of development south of the Whatcom Waterway and 0.6 million square feet of development north of the Whatcom Waterway.

These projects will be included in the respective City and Port Transportation Improvement Plans and Capital Improvement Plans. Projects will be scheduled and budgeted over time as development occurs and when additional infrastructure capacity will be needed.

**Table 8-1 Phase 1-3 Infrastructure and Cleanup Projects**

<b>Phase 1-3 Roads, Bridges &amp; Utilities</b>	Estimated Cost by Project*	Subtotals and Total Phase 1-3
Interim Central Avenue	<b>Intentionally left blank</b>	
Granary Avenue/ Laurel Street to Cornwall		
Wharf Street Roundabout		
Sewer Lift Station		
Bay Street Intersection Improvements and Parking Garage		
<b>Subtotal</b>		

\* Cost estimates are based on preliminary designs, and are subject to change based on final design and construction timing.

*(An updated project list and cost estimates will be jointly developed by City/Port prior to adoption.)*

<b>Phase 1-3 Parks &amp; Trails</b>	Estimated Cost by Project*	Subtotals and Total Phase 1-3
Central Avenue Park		
Waypoint Park and Beach		
Whatcom Waterway Park (to edge of Downtown Planning Area)		
GP Wharf Restoration and Visitor Moorage		
Cornwall Beach Park ( excluding cleanup)		
ASB Breakwater Trail		
Waypoint Park Connection		
<b>Subtotal</b>		
<b>Phase 1-3 Cleanup &amp; Site Preparation</b>	<b>Intentionally left blank</b>	
GP West		
Cornwall Landfill		
Whatcom Waterway Phase 1		
Central Waterfront		
I&J Waterway		
RG Haley		
Demolition/ Site Preparation		
<b>Subtotal</b>		
<b>Total Phase 1-3 Infrastructure &amp; Cleanup</b>		

\* Cost estimates are based on preliminary designs, and are subject to change based on final design and construction timing.

(An updated project list and *cost estimates will be jointly developed by City/Port prior to adoption.*)



Table 8-2 shows future projects projected to serve Phase 4 and 5 of development. The timing and cost of these projects may be modified over time to reflect more specific design, future demand and funding opportunities.

**Table 8-2 Phase 4-5 Infrastructure and Cleanup**

<b>Phase 4-5 Roads, Bridges &amp; Utilities</b>	Estimated Cost by Project *	Subtotals and Total Phase 4-5
Upgrade Hilton Avenue, C and F Street		
Construct Maple and Chestnut Street		
Cornwall Ave Bridge and Cornwall Avenue		
Railroad Relocation		
<b>Subtotal</b>		
<b>Phase 4-5 Parks &amp; Trails</b>		
Marina Park and Complete Breakwater Trail	<b>Intentionally left blank</b>	
I&J Waterway Park		
Log Pond Shoreline Trail		
Boardmill Park and Trail through Log Pond along BNSF Line		
<b>Subtotal</b>		
<b>Phase 4-5 Cleanup &amp; Site Preparation</b>		
Whatcom Waterway Phase 2		
Demolish Portions of GP Wharf		
Demolish Portions of GP Wharf		
<b>Subtotal</b>		
<b>Phase 4-5 Marine Infrastructure</b>		
Clean Ocean Marina		
<b>Subtotal</b>		
<b>Total Phase 4-5 Infrastructure &amp; Cleanup</b>		

The projects listed in Table 8-1 and 8-2 are proposed to be funded through a combination of state and federal grants, Real Estate Excise Tax (REET), Local Infrastructure Financing Tool (LIFT) funds, impact fees and other developer contributions. Projects described in the Infrastructure Phasing Plan and included in the City TIP may be funded out of sequence to respond to grant funding opportunities or the needs of early phase development projects.

The results of the biennial traffic monitoring program described in Chapter 5 will be used in conjunction with regular strategic budget discussions between the Port and City to ensure that infrastructure funding priorities are managed in alignment with development phasing.

### 9.0 Conclusions

The Waterfront District Sub-Area Plan describes a long-term redevelopment project which will convert an under-utilized Brownfields industrial site on the Bellingham waterfront to a vibrant mixed-use neighborhood, and restore three miles of shoreline for habitat and public access. The Waterfront Futures Group charted the course when they completed the Vision and Framework Plan for the Central Waterfront in 2004. The City and Port have been working together over the past fourteen years to complete the detailed planning, environmental review, development regulations and implementation strategies to allow this vision to move forward.



The initial Waterfront District Sub-Area Plan, Development Regulations, Development Agreement, Planned Action Area Ordinance and Interlocal Agreement for Facilities was adopted in December, 2013. This set of documents established five planning areas, a network of roads, trails and parks, development regulations and design standards to guide development, and agreements between the Port and City to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the Port and City to implement the plan. The Port of Bellingham entered into a Master Development Agreement with Harcourt Bellingham LLC. to develop a portion of the Downtown Waterfront area, and Harcourt Bellingham is making progress to redevelop the historic Granary Building. Several additional development projects are proposed. The Port has completed cleanup and bank restoration projects in the Downtown Waterfront to prepare this area for redevelopment, and the City is under construction to install the roads, utilities and parks to serve the first phase of development.

The proposed 2018 amendment to the Sub-Area Plan, Development Regulations and agreements was jointly developed by the Port of Bellingham and Harcourt Bellingham, LLC, with input from City staff and the public. These amendments would modify the location and alignment of several roads, parks and view corridors to improve access to and through the site and better support proposed development projects.

The following additional actions will to allow the next phases of development to begin, and will set the stage for a long term cooperative relationship between the City and Port as the site fully develops:

#### 9.1 Implementation Strategies

1. Adopt the 2018 Waterfront District Sub-Area Plan Amendment as an amendment to the City of Bellingham Comprehensive Plan and the Port of Bellingham Comprehensive Scheme of Harbor Improvements.
2. Amend the Waterfront District Planned Action Ordinance with an updated table of required mitigation measures, consistent with those identified in the Final Environmental Impact Statement and 2018 Addendum to the EIS, to assist potential developers and agency regulators in the processing of permit applications for projects within the Waterfront District.



3. Continue to implement the established process which requires mitigation measures identified in the Final Environmental Impact Statement for anticipated impacts associated with specific types of actions to be implemented either before or concurrent with the specific action.
4. Continue the established partnership structure, with representatives from both the Port of Bellingham and City of Bellingham, working together for long-term cooperation in the phased installation of public infrastructure and mitigation implementation.
5. Updated the Development Agreement and associated Development Regulations to establish clear, predictable standards and review procedures for development.
6. Amend the Facilities Agreement to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the City and Port to implement the Waterfront District Sub-Area Plan.
7. Update the Waterfront District Permit Handbook, which describes the efficient permitting process, predictable time lines and determinations, for both prospective developers and the local community, for review and approval of Waterfront District development projects that are consistent with the Sub-Area Plan.
8. Prepare more detailed park and infrastructure plans, with additional opportunities for public input, as specific parks and public spaces are designed and funded.
9. Periodically review the Waterfront District Sub-Area Plan and prepare amendments to the plan and development regulations, at least every ten years, to respond to development trends or changes in technology.

