Appendix B: Maps

Overall Concept Map

Legend

- Proposed Roads
- Commercial
- Public Open Space
- Mid-Density Housing
- Low-Density Housing
- Cottage Housing
Implementation Opportunities

Legend

- Tax Parcels
- Currently Available
- 5 Year
- 10 Year
- 20 Year

Created By: Kelly Slattery at Western Washington University, May 2006
Projection: NAD 1927 UTM Zone 10 North, Transverse Mercator
Data Sources: Whatcom County GIS, Western Washington University, USGS, & USDA
Birch Bay Wetlands

Legend

Wetland Quality

♀️ Good Quality  🐩 Quality Questionable

Created By: Kelly Slattery at Western Washington University, May 2006
Projection: NAD 1927 UTM Zone 10 North, Transverse Mercator
Data Sources: Whatcom County GIS,
Western Washington University, USGS, & USDA
Appendix C: Implementation Documents

I. Example of a Design Review Checklist

Source: National Governor’s Association: www.nga.org

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NGA Principle for Better Land Use</th>
<th>Criteria Questions</th>
<th>Project Consistency (yes or no)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Strengthen and encourage growth in existing communities** | 1. Is the location in an already-developed area?  
The key need is to see if public services and infrastructure have already been created for the location. | |
| **Include mixed land uses** | 2. Is there a mix of housing, office space with significant employment opportunities, schools, retail shopping, outdoor recreation areas, and civic/public spaces and buildings?  
For infill projects, it may be necessary to consider what is available in neighboring areas. | |
| **Create a range of housing opportunities and choices** | 3. Does the housing include different types of homes, such as single-family detached, multifamily apartment buildings, and condos for purchase or renting; and do they cover a range of prices to address a full spectrum of income levels, including affordable housing?  
For infill projects, it may be necessary to consider what is available in neighboring areas. Distributed affordable housing in the 10-percent to 15-percent range is feasible. | |
| **Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas** | 4. Does the project avoid converting working lands, such as farms and ranches, into development?  
Former working lands that are no longer being used and that are zoned for development are acceptable. | |
| | 5. Does the project avoid fragmenting existing green space, especially natural habitats and forests?  
The need is to understand the original environmental setting and whether development will cause harm by isolating green spaces and block the ability of species to remain healthy. | |
| | 6. Does the project design protect the local watershed?  
Water runoff and other factors should be examined to determine whether the development is harming the watershed. To minimize water runoff, the fraction of land paved over for streets and parking typically should not exceed 20 percent to 30 percent. | |
7. Does the project location avoid increasing the risk or negative impacts of natural disasters?

Consideration should be given to what kinds of periodic natural hazards exist for the site and whether even the best forms of NCD would be inappropriate for a specific location that is vulnerable, for example, to flooding, wildfires, mudslides, beach erosion, or high winds.

8. Does the project use compact design to minimize the amount of land per dwelling unit?

The average number of housing units per residential acre is the appropriate measure. The best greenfields NCD projects will have densities in the range of at least five units to 10 units per acre, and often much higher. Infill projects will usually have at least 20 units per residential acre. Much depends on the mix of housing; if only single-family detached homes are included, lower densities will prevail.

9. Does the project maintain or create green spaces throughout the new community for public and recreational uses, including continuous green pathways for biking and walking and pocket parks in neighborhoods?

The best greenfields NCD projects will have 20 percent to 50 percent of the total land area as diverse and well-dispersed green spaces. Infill projects may have as little as 5-percent green spaces.

10. Does the project use energy-efficient designs and green building methods to reduce offsite land use?

The goal is for construction materials and home design to be consistent with the highest energy efficiency standards, and not just for inside appliances.

11. Does the project provide convenient access to public transit? For larger projects, does transit operate within the community?

Any form of public transit is acceptable. Convenience means that residents can walk to public transit within about 10 minutes to 15 minutes. Housing densities above 15 units per residential acre aid use of transit. The difficulty in having transit options for greenfields NCD projects places even more importance on the mixed-use criterion, particularly with respect to employment opportunities.
<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12. <strong>Does the street layout or grid provide multiple access points to and from the surrounding areas as well as multiple paths for travel through the community by vehicles and bikes?</strong>&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;The measure is connectivity of streets and greenways throughout the community, so people can have convenient access to all parts of the community by walking, biking, or driving. Cul-de-sacs should not be part of the street design. Only one way into and out of the community is not desirable, because it will cause traffic congestion.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. <strong>Is teleworking facilitated by broad-band capabilities in homes?</strong>&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;Today, most telework opportunities require more than the use of the phone and mail. High-quality Internet connections are needed. Home designs now can include special attention to work areas. This complements the presence of employment opportunities and works toward the goal of minimizing dependence on cars.</td>
<td><strong>Foster walkable, close-knit neighborhoods</strong>&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;<strong>14. Do the design and layout of buildings and streets promote one or more real neighborhoods by facilitating interactions among residents, including diverse gathering places?</strong>&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;The best NCD projects take every conceivable opportunity to promote neighborhood interactions. Front porches and garages behind houses are hallmarks of NCD. Community centers, public spaces, benches on sidewalks in commercial areas and in green areas, pocket parks, and trails are key features.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. <strong>Have the streets been designed with sidewalks, appropriate lighting, and connectedness, to promote easy and safe walking?</strong>&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;Any design that lacks sidewalks on all streets is inconsistent with NCD. In the best NCD projects, landscaping along sidewalks makes them comfortable and attractive. Residential street widths are often in the 20-feet to 22-feet range (compared to conventional streets of 36 feet), and a 600-foot grid size is often preferred to reduce vehicles per day.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Take advantage of existing community assets | 16. Does the project blend in with the environmental setting and cultural features of surrounding areas?  
Good NCD design honors the original natural setting of the location and incorporates environmental assets into the design, in contrast to giving priority to using land for construction. From a visual and aesthetic perspective, the NCD place should blend harmoniously with the surrounding area, in both physical and cultural terms. Architectural features should be consistent with the surrounding community. |
| 17. Has the project considered the use of existing brownfields or grayfields sites for some or all of the needed land?  
The goal of more efficient land use requires that NCD projects give serious consideration to using land that is abandoned or greatly underused because of environmental or other reasons. For brownfields sites, this requires attention to any cleanup requirements for using the land for residential purposes, unless the contaminated area is small enough to accommodate some nonresidential component of the project. |
| Promote distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place, including the rehabilitation and use of historic buildings | 18. Do the design, layout, and mix of land uses provide a distinctive style and feel to the place, with all elements blending together harmoniously?  
This is a qualitative judgment. In the best NCD projects, the designers and planners have carefully considered all the mixed uses and how their layout and architectural features conform to a well-conceived style of the community. The chosen style is often linked to the history of the site and surrounding areas, or to the style of the surrounding community in the case of an infill project. This does not at all imply dull consistency among homes. In good design, there is diversity within a consistent style. |
| 19. Has the project committed to using older and historic buildings on the original site?  
For both infill and greenfields projects, the best NCD developers make creative and effective use of structures on the original site, especially ones with historic and architectural significance. |
| Encourage citizen and stakeholder participation in development decisions | 20. Have the developer and local government agencies used the best techniques to fully engage all categories of local stakeholders in meaningful activities to guide the design of the community? |
The best NCD developers do not bring a fully worked-out community design to the public or government officials. Today, the best practice is to use new and advanced forms of digital technology tools, visual preference surveys, and highly interactive meetings that solicit local input in a collaborative design process. Meaningful activities are ones that provide for true participation in the development of the community design, not merely an opportunity for people to react to a developer’s design.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Make development decisions predictable, fair, and cost-effective</strong></th>
<th><strong>21. Has the local government adopted zoning codes that give as much support for a mixed-use community as for a typical single-use project (e.g., a sprawl housing subdivision, strip mall, or office park)?</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Developers and others who are advancing an NCD project need to take some responsibility for improving local codes that do not support NCD. Many NCD developers have been successful in obtaining new parallel or overlay codes that remove the need for obtaining high-cost variances from codes that do not by right support NCD.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **22. Does the appropriate authorizing or regulatory agency have a process that prevents lengthy and unpredictable delays for developers?** |
| --- | --- |
| Here too, developers and others supportive of NCD can work for improvements in local ordinances and procedures, such as giving priority to NCD applications and guaranteeing decisions within a short time. |

| **23. Has the developer made clear how the project may be constructed in different phases over extensive time periods, yet be mixed-use, and is it clear how the original plan will be followed?** |
| --- | --- |
| The best NCD developers make clear exactly how a project will be executed over time and how market uncertainties will affect decisions to implement the original community design and plan. It is important to be concerned about significant periods when there may be no authentic mixed uses or diverse housing. |

| **24. Will impact fees or other measures reduce uncertainties about the ability or willingness of local government to pay for all needed public services and infrastructure?** |
| --- | --- |
| Careful attention should be given to whether the local government is empowered to levy some form of impact fee; whether any such imposed fees will cover all public services and infrastructure; and if those fees will match future costs. The major concern is that some public services and infrastructure, particularly schools, may not be provided for a new development, reducing the quality of life for residents and jeopardizing full build-out of all components of the original community design. |
II. Birch Bay Proposed Land Use Table

Source: WWU Planning Team, Spring 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use</th>
<th>R-1</th>
<th>R-2</th>
<th>R-3</th>
<th>C-1</th>
<th>C-2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Residential Uses</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Detached single family</td>
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<td>Attached Townhouse</td>
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<td>CU</td>
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<td>Mobile Home</td>
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<td>CU</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<td>Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU)</td>
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<td>Y</td>
<td>CU</td>
<td>CU</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cottage Housing</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<tr>
<td>Condominiums</td>
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<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>CU</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Commercial</strong></td>
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<td>Retail</td>
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<td>Office</td>
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<td>Cottage Industry</td>
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<td>CU</td>
<td>CU</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<td>Neighborhood Services (auto repair, gas station, self-storage, etc.)</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>CU</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Industry</strong></td>
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<td>Light Industry</td>
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<td><strong>Institutional Categories</strong></td>
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<td>Religious Institutions</td>
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<tr>
<td>R-1</td>
<td>Mid-Density Residential</td>
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<td>R-2</td>
<td>Rural Residential</td>
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<td>R-3</td>
<td>Cottage Residential</td>
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<td>C-1</td>
<td>Mixed Use Commercial</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-2</td>
<td>Commercial North</td>
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<td>Y</td>
<td>Permitted Use</td>
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<tr>
<td>CU</td>
<td>Conditional Use</td>
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<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>Not Permitted Use</td>
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</table>
III. Example of Flexible Zoning

Source: City of Fort Collins, CO: www.colocode.com

NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION, LOW DENSITY DISTRICT (N-C-L)

I. Purpose. The Neighborhood Conservation, Low Density District is intended to preserve the character of areas that have a predominance of developed single-family dwellings and have been given this designation in accordance with an adopted subarea plan.

II. Permitted Uses.

A) The following uses are permitted in the N-C-L District, subject to basic development review, provided that such uses are located on lots that are part of an approved site specific development plan:

1) Residential Uses:
   (i) Single-family detached dwellings, but not to include carriage houses.

2) Accessory/Miscellaneous Uses:
   (i) Accessory buildings, provided that they contain no habitable space.
   (ii) Accessory uses.

3) Any use authorized pursuant to a site specific development plan that was processed and approved either in compliance with the Zoning Code in effect on March 27, 1997, or in compliance with this Land Use Code (other than a final subdivision plat, or minor subdivision plat, approved pursuant to Section 29-643 or 29-644 of prior law, for any nonresidential development or any multi-family dwelling containing more than four [4] dwelling units), provided that such use shall be subject to all of the use and density requirements and conditions of said site specific development plan.

4) Any use which is not hereafter listed as a permitted use in this zone district but which was permitted for a specific parcel of property pursuant to the zone district regulations in effect for such parcel on March 27, 1997; and which physically existed upon such parcel on March 27, 1997; provided, however, that such existing use shall constitute a permitted use only on such parcel of property.

5) Institutional/Civic/Public Uses:
   (i) Neighborhood parks as defined by the Parks and Recreation Policy Plan.

B) The following uses shall be permitted in the N-C-L District, subject to administrative review:

1) Residential Uses:
   (i) Single-family detached dwellings when there is more than one (1) dwelling on the lot or when the lot has only alley frontage.

2) Institutional/Civic/Public Uses:
   (i) Parks, recreation and other open lands, except neighborhood parks as defined by the Parks and Recreation Policy Plan.

3) Accessory/Miscellaneous Uses:
   (i) Accessory buildings containing habitable space.

C) The following uses are permitted within the N-C-L District, subject to review by the Planning and Zoning Board:

1) Residential Uses:
   (i) Group homes.

2) Institutional/Civic/Public Uses:
   (i) Public and private schools for elementary, intermediate and high school education.
   (ii) Places of worship or assembly.
   (iii) Community facilities.

BIRCH BAY COMMUNITY PLAN AND URBAN DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS C-7
(iv) Public facilities.

3) Accessory/Miscellaneous Uses:
   (i) Wireless telecommunication equipment.

III. Prohibited Uses. All uses that are not (1) expressly allowed as permitted uses in this Section or (2) determined to be permitted by the Director pursuant to Section 1.3.4 of this Land Use Code shall be prohibited.

IV. Land Use Standards.
   A) Density. Minimum lot area shall be equivalent to at least three (3) times the total floor area of the building(s), but not less than six thousand (6,000) square feet. For the purposes of calculating density, "total floor area" shall mean the total gross floor area of all principal buildings as measured along the outside walls of such buildings and including each finished or unfinished floor level plus the total gross floor area of the ground floor of any accessory building larger than one hundred twenty (120) square feet, plus that portion of the floor area of any second story having a ceiling height of at least seven and one-half (7½) feet located within any such accessory building located on the lot. (Open balconies and basements shall not be counted as floor area for purposes of calculating density).

   B) Residential. Any new single-family dwelling that is proposed to be located behind a street-facing principal building shall contain a maximum of eight hundred (800) square feet of floor area unless such new single-family dwelling contains a two-car garage, in which case it shall contain a maximum of one thousand (1,000) square feet of floor area, including the garage. Floor area shall include all floor space within the basement and first floor plus that portion of the floor area of any second story having a ceiling height of at least seven and one-half (7½) feet. A new single-family dwelling may be located in any area of the rear portion of such lot, provided that it complies with the setback requirements of this District and there is at least a ten-foot separation between structures. The building footprint for such single-family dwelling shall not exceed six hundred (600) square feet.

   C) Floor Area Ratio (FAR). Lots are subject to a maximum FAR of twenty-five hundredths (0.25) on the rear fifty (50) percent of the lot as it existed on October 25, 1991. The lot area used as the basis for the FAR calculation shall be considered the minimum lot size within the zone district.

V. Dimensional Standards.
   A) Minimum lot width shall be forty (40) feet.
   B) Minimum front yard setback shall be fifteen (15) feet. Setbacks from garage doors to the backs of public walks shall not be less than twenty (20) feet.
   C) Minimum rear yard setback shall be five (5) feet from existing alleys and fifteen (15) feet in all other conditions.
   D) Minimum side yard width shall be five (5) feet for all interior side yards. Whenever any portion of a wall or building exceeds eighteen (18) feet in height, such portion of the wall or building shall be set back from the interior side lot line an additional one (1) foot, beyond the minimum required, for each two (2) feet or fraction thereof of wall or building height that exceeds eighteen (18) feet in height. Minimum side yard width shall be fifteen (15) feet on the street side of any corner lot. Notwithstanding the foregoing, minimum side yard width for schools and places of worship shall be twenty-five (25) feet (for both interior and street sides).
   E) Maximum building height shall be two (2) stories, except in the case of carriage houses, and accessory buildings containing habitable space, which shall be a maximum of one and one-half (1½) stories.

VI. Development Standards.
   A) Building Design.
1) All exterior walls of a building that are greater than six (6) feet in length shall be constructed parallel to or at right angles to the side lot lines of the lot whenever the lot is rectilinear in shape.

2) The primary entrance to a dwelling shall be located along the front wall of the building, unless otherwise required for handicap access. Such entrance shall include an architectural feature such as a porch, landing or portico.

3) Accessory buildings and attached garages shall have a front yard setback that is at least ten (10) feet greater than the front setback of the principal building that is located on the front portion of the lot.

4) A second floor shall not overhang the lower front or side exterior walls of a new or existing building.

5) Front porches shall be limited to one (1) story, and the front facades of all one- and two-family dwellings shall be no higher than two (2) stories, except in the case of carriage houses and accessory buildings containing habitable space, which shall be a maximum of one and one-half (1½) stories.

6) In the event that a new dwelling is proposed to be constructed on the rear portion of a lot which has frontage on two (2) streets and an alley, the front of such new dwelling shall face the street.

7) The minimum pitch of the roof of any building shall be 2:12 and the maximum pitch of the roof of any building shall be 12:12, except that new, detached accessory buildings and additions to existing dwelling units may be constructed with a pitch that matches any roof pitch of the existing dwelling unit. Additionally, the roof pitch of a dormer, turret or similar architectural feature may not exceed 24:12 and the roof pitch of a covered porch may be flat whenever the roof of such a porch is also considered to be the floor of a second-story deck.

B) Bulk and Massing.
   1) Building Height.
      (i) Maximum building height shall be two (2) stories, except in the case of carriage houses and accessory buildings containing habitable space, which shall be a maximum of one and one-half (1½) stories.
      (ii) The height of a detached dwelling unit at the rear of the lot or an accessory building containing habitable space shall not exceed twenty-four (24) feet.
      (iii) The height of an accessory building containing no habitable space shall not exceed twenty (20) feet.

C) Access. Whenever a lot has frontage along an alley, any new off-street parking area located on such lot must obtain access from such adjoining alley; provided, however, that such alley access shall not be required when a new detached garage is proposed to be accessed from an existing driveway that has a curbcut along a public street, or when alley access is determined by the City Engineer to be a hazard to persons or vehicles.

D) Site Design. Permanent open off-street parking areas for all permitted principal uses, other than single-family dwellings, shall not be located any closer to a public street right-of-way than the distance by which the principal building is set back from the street right-of-way. This provision shall not be construed to preclude temporary parking in driveways.
## Appendix D: Recommended Native Plants

**Waterfront**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scientific Name</th>
<th>Common Name</th>
<th>Habitat</th>
<th>Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elymus mollis</td>
<td>American dunegrass</td>
<td>Sand and gravel beaches</td>
<td>Grass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosa gymnocarpa</td>
<td>Baldhip rose</td>
<td>Variety of habitats</td>
<td>Shrub</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grindelia integrifolia</td>
<td>Coastal gumweed</td>
<td>Beaches, rocky shores</td>
<td>Flower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empetrum L.</td>
<td>Crowberry</td>
<td>Exposed coastal heathlands</td>
<td>Shrub</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pseudotsuga menziesii</td>
<td>Douglas fir</td>
<td>Dry, rocky</td>
<td>Tree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiraea douglasii</td>
<td>Hardhack</td>
<td>Moist, sunny areas</td>
<td>Shrub</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crataegus douglasii</td>
<td>Hawthorn, black</td>
<td>Coastal bluffs, shorelines</td>
<td>Tree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geum macrophyllum</td>
<td>Large-leaved avens</td>
<td>Variety of habitats</td>
<td>Shrub</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lathyrus japonicus</td>
<td>Maritime peavine</td>
<td>Sandy shores</td>
<td>Shrub</td>
</tr>
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<td>Philadelphus lewisii</td>
<td>Mock-orange</td>
<td>Rocky areas</td>
<td>Shrub</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosa nutkana</td>
<td>Nootka rose</td>
<td>Beachfront</td>
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<td>Sandy areas, mudflats, wetlands</td>
<td>Shrub</td>
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<td>Shrub</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carex sp.</td>
<td>Sedge</td>
<td>Well drained soil</td>
<td>Grass</td>
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<tr>
<td>?</td>
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<td>Highly adaptable</td>
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<td>Hooker fairy-bell</td>
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<td>Potentilla pacifica</td>
<td>Pacific silverweed</td>
<td>Sandy areas, mudflats, wetlands</td>
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<td>Paper birch</td>
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<td>Herb</td>
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<td>Herb</td>
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<td>Watson’s willow-herb</td>
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<td>dry to wet, low elevation</td>
<td>Tree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tolmia menziesii</td>
<td>Youth-on-age</td>
<td>Moist areas</td>
<td>Flower</td>
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</table>
BIRCH BAY TEAM A: Town Center Design Concept

Spring 2006, Huxley College of the Environment, Western Washington University
Lauren Balisky, Brian Howard, and Nick Smith

Birch Bay Design Team A was asked to create design concepts for a town center off of the county proposed east-west road and a natural design for the waterfront. The team used the ideas and concerns voiced at the April 25th community meeting to create concepts that address the community’s needs of showing the bay, stormwater management, safety, pedestrian and bicycle connectivity, and economic vitality.

Imagine driving on the new east-west road towards the town center. As you approach the town center, the road splits and in front of you is a clear view to the bay through a park-like boulevard lined with birch trees, full of gardens, pathways, plazas and pedestrian activity. Following the one-way road to the right, you see a building, whose design reminds you of old Birch Bay, but fulfills a different function. On the bottom floor, there are small businesses such as cafes, clothing and home decor shops, bookstores, locally owned jewelry stores, and an ice creamery. Above are tastefully designed condominiums or apartments, with patios opening towards the park. The wide, inviting sidewalks are lined with bitter cherry trees, period light posts, hanging baskets, benches, planters, and overheads to shelter pedestrians in rainy weather. Further down the road you see a post office and city hall, across the parkway is a library and a community center. You continue to drive down the street, noticing familiar faces strolling along the many crosswalks, walking in and out of shops, or enjoying their lunch at one of the many tables available in the plazas.

While parallel parking you notice how comfortable the area feels, as if it has always been here. You feel safe knowing there are people living above the shops, watching over the open space. Remembering some new information about rain gardens, you look across the street and are surprised to notice how green the area is, especially since it’s so late in the summer.

To bring this concept to reality the team designed using the following integrative functions: accessibility, environmental consciousness, mixed uses, and economic vitality.

Accessibility
One of the primary concerns voiced by the community was pedestrian and bicycle connectivity between points of interest, residential areas, traditional roadways, and vehicle dominated corridors. The design team took these concerns into consideration, and applied them to the town center. The two one-way roads will both have bike lanes lining the park to provide an extra measure of safety from moving vehicles. The crosswalks and vehicle connections between the two roads will be provided at regular intervals. Tree line pathways from the sidewalk to the back of the commercial buildings will provide access to parking and other residential neighborhoods. Bus stops will be integrated with the parallel parking for future Whatcom Transit Authority service. Numerous pathways will be lined through the central park connecting the plazas along with the rest of the town center. The town center provides the opportunity for area residents to decrease their dependence on the automobile, but will still provide enough access for those individuals who need to use their vehicle.

Environmental Considerations
Stormwater management is the second primary concern voiced by the community. To address this, the Birch Bay center design concept uses a three pronged approach, incorporating rain gardens, permeable surfaces, and the use of permeable matric. Water runoff from rooftops and other high impermeable surfaces is directed to rain gardens which are covered or vegetated areas that filter impurities through a series of layers. Rain gardens help reduce pollutants entering the stormdrain system and keep the water table at a consistent level. Water from the rain gardens can also be diverted and reused to irrigate the landscape and street trees. The overall approach, using plants that are native to the area, will help reduce the amount of water necessary during the summer and keep the area during heavy rains. In the last approach, the use of permeable materials, will be applied to sidewalks and parking areas and will help reduce the amount of water directly reaching the stormwater treatment systems.

Mixed Use
The Birch Bay community brought the safety in commercial areas as a third concern especially during night time hours. The design concept addresses this by creating a mix of uses with multiple uses. The area will contain residential, commercial and institutional buildings, ensuring that human activity can, and will, occur at all hours. With human activity occurring at all hours, the town center will be a strong destination to connect the area. Whiteplains Ridge and Birch Bay, although completely prevent criminal activity from occurring, having windows and patios facing the commercial area, will encourage design decisions that will minimize this problem by creating a sense of presence or a sense of eyes on the street.

Economic Vitality
Although economic vitality was not a concern directly voiced by the community the design team wanted to ensure that the area would be economically viable sustained. By providing many different kinds of shops and different functions in retail, visitors and nearby residents will be able to find what they need. 

In addition, the area will be attractive to pedestrians throughout all of Birch Bay and not just seasonal tourists residing in resorts. In the future, the area will provide more stability to local businesses adding to the unique character of Birch Bay.
BIRCH BAY TEAM A: Natural Waterfront Design Concept

Spring 2006, Huxley College of the Environment, Western Washington University
Lauren Balisky, Howard, and Nick Smith

Birch Bay Design Team A was asked to create design concepts for a town center off of the county proposed east-west road and a natural design for the waterfront. The team used the ideas and concerns voiced at the April 25th community meeting to create concepts that address the community’s needs of showcasing the bay, stormwater management, safety, pedestrian and bicycle connectivity, and economic vitality.

Birch Bay is the gem of the community, where residents stroll and make lasting memories. The goal of the design team was to provide safe access to the bay, and to reduce the amount of erosion occurring from storms.

“...After strolling through the town center for a few hours, you find yourself standing on the beach, soothed by the sound of the waves and a light sea breeze. You spot a nearby bench and head over to take a seat. On the way, you are struck by what is missing: the masses of concrete that used to line the beach are no longer there. The beach feels so pristine, so natural, as if you had stepped back a century in time. The groundcover is green and healthy, spilling over from the pathway to the rocks lining the beach. Tufts of sea grass and salt grass have sprouted between piles of driftwood, rustling softly as you pass by. Reaching the bench, you sit, content and feeling spoiled by the view. You are glad you came, and decide that next time you would like to share the experience with friends and family.”

Restoration

On the beach, the design team proposes that all concrete structures should be removed as a means of restoring the beach to its natural state, and from reducing aggressive erosion from occurring due to the concrete structures. The design concept calls for native landscaping between the beach and the walkway to help stabilize soil and prevent sheet erosion.

**Recommended Waterfront Plants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scientific Name</th>
<th>Common Name</th>
<th>Habitat</th>
<th>Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ammophila arenaria</td>
<td>Salt marsh rush</td>
<td>Sandy, windblown beaches</td>
<td>Shrub</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artemisia campestris</td>
<td>Silver sage</td>
<td>Sandy, windblown beaches</td>
<td>Shrub</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carex plantaginea</td>
<td>Sedgeweed</td>
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<td>Shrub</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carex viridula</td>
<td>Green sedge</td>
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<tr>
<td>Distichlis spicata</td>
<td>Beach sand verbena</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elymus mollis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Festuca glauca</td>
<td>Blue fescue</td>
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<td>Grass</td>
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<tr>
<td>Juncus gerardi</td>
<td>Broadleaf marsh grass</td>
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<td>Juncus roemerianus</td>
<td>Narrowleaf rush</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lycopus americanus</td>
<td>American skullcap</td>
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<td>Myrica pensylvanica</td>
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<td>Potentilla pacifica</td>
<td>Pacific seaside daisy</td>
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<td>Salix alba</td>
<td>White willow</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sporobolus cryptandrus</td>
<td>Driftgrass</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sporobolus virginicus</td>
<td>Sand dropseed</td>
<td>Windblown beaches</td>
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<tr>
<td>Typha domingensis</td>
<td>Cattail</td>
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<td>Sedge</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ulex europaeus</td>
<td>Black medlar</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ulex parviflorus</td>
<td>Medlar</td>
<td>Windblown beaches</td>
<td>Shrub</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Accessibility**

The design team proposes removing all of the parking around the bay and replacing it with a natural feeling pathway and a bicycle lane. Community members voiced a strong interest in making this pathway safe for vehicles. The pathway should eventually follow the entire length of the bay from Birch Point to Point Whitehorn. Parking should be provided away from the waterfront and off of Birch Bay Drive. The walkway should be landscaped using native plants that are relatively salt and drought tolerant.
BIRCH BAY COMMUNITY PLAN
AND URBAN DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS

Western Washington University
Huxley College
Spring 2006
ESTU 470
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Jeri Smith, Birch Bay Steering Committee
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Introduction

In 1772, Archibald Menzies, a naturalist on Captain Vancouver’s voyage through the Pacific Northwest, named Birch Bay for the predominance of birch trees along the shoreline and uplands. Birch Bay was originally inhabited by the Semiahmoo Tribe, who fished the bountiful waters north of Point Whitehorn until leaving in the late 1800s, primarily due to raids from tribes to the north and increasing white settlement. The abundance of natural resources in the area attracted many settlers. Growth continued with the gold rush and later as homesteaders sought out the area. In the early 1900s Birch Bay began making efforts to enhance its economy. Although the establishment of Blaine Air Force Base in 1951 and the industrial development at Cherry Point eventually brought economic stability to the area, Birch Bay focused most of its efforts on recreational residential development – a combination of summer homes and cottages. This seasonal use is what formed many residents’ and visitors’ sentimental attachment to Birch Bay.

The history, sentimental feelings, and value of the natural environment of Birch Bay area inspired this document. The Birch Bay region is growing quickly, absorbing approximately 30% of the growth in one of the most rapidly expanding counties in the country. This plan has been developed to guide and enhance development in central Birch Bay, the focus area of Birch Bay that has the feel of a small seaside village and gives Birch Bay its own distinctive identity. The recommendations and guidelines suggested in this document are based on discussions with the community and officials at Whatcom County, and are consistent with the goal of Birch Bay for interconnected scenic beauty and urban development.

The Birch Bay plan presents an opportunity to create a unique area with concepts for developing a town center and accessible waterfront along Birch Bay, an area with a clearly defined sense of place where pedestrians and other non-motorized transportation take priority over cars. The Birch Bay Community Plan and Design Recommendations are intended to provide the community with ideas on how this can be achieved, particularly along Birch Bay Drive, between Birch Bay-Lynden Road and Alderson Road, with a strong focus on protecting and enhancing the bay. The study area is centrally located and is routinely identified by the community as a corridor with high sentimental value and as a place to invest in for the future. The study area is bordered by Birch Bay-Lynden Road on the North, Blaine Road on the East, Alderson Road on the South, and Birch Bay Drive on the West.
Methodology

I. Initial Research

To begin this project the student team needed to get a sense of the current design of Birch Bay. Students first met with Western professors, Nicholas Zaferatos and Bob Andrew, as well as community advising representative, Alan Friedlob, to better understand the current situation. Census data and other information on demographics and the history of the area expanded their knowledge of the region’s problems and opportunities. Students also traveled to Birch Bay and conducted a transect study on current land uses and design standards.

II. Community Involvement

One of the most important aspects of this project proved to be community involvement from the residents of Birch Bay. Community participation is the foundation of this project and was essential for the development of a planning concept that reflected the views, personalities, and the overall feel of Birch Bay. Working together with professors and community members to establish initial community goals, a plan was developed from ideas and concerns voiced at the community meeting held on April 25th. At this meeting, two activities were used to gauge the community’s needs and design preferences: a Visual Preference Survey and an interactive mapping exercise.

III. Visual Preference Survey Analysis

A Visual Preference Survey (VPS) is a research method in which community members individually rate pictures in order to provide a quantitative portrait of what physical uses and designs they desire and accept. In this case, a presentation of 106 photos divided over the following four categories was shown: Residential, Transportation and Connectivity, Commercial and Town Centers and Public Spaces. These pictures were rated from A, the best, to E, the worst.

The individual ratings were compiled to give an overall rating for each picture (for a more detailed explanation, please see Appendix A). The resulting figures were analyzed on the basis of positive and negative aspects of each picture, and then correlated to pictures with similar design features. In doing so, the design preferences of the community could be abstracted and used in the formulation of the design guidelines.

IV. Interactive Mapping Exercise

The interactive mapping exercise was designed to elicit responses regarding current strengths and weaknesses of the community, input for town center designs, and desired features. In small groups the
topics of the VPS were discussed and visualized by use of maps and photos. The community members were able to discuss and explain their ideas on the future development of Birch Bay. The students facilitated these discussions and listened to the ideas and concerns of the participants.

The ideas provided formed the inspiration for the design concepts made by the students. From these results, the following goals were identified for Birch Bay:

*Transportation and Connectivity*
- Provide safe pedestrian and bicycle connectivity throughout the area
- Create transportation corridors emphasizing pedestrian, rather than motorized, uses

*Commercial and Town Centers*
- Keep commercial structures, other than restaurants and cafes, off of the waterfront
- Create a place in which one can shop and play simultaneously

*Public Spaces*
- Provide beach accessibility
- Create a place that attracts vacationers and tourists, but is also community oriented

*Residential*
- Ensure that the bay is visible and accessible from as many locations as possible
- Promote and maintain a diverse population

*Environmental*
- Preserve the bay and connected wetlands
- Use techniques and materials to mitigate stormwater runoff

V. Formulation of the Master Plan

The students then translated the perspective and ideas of the community into a Master Plan comprised of two sections: design concepts and design guidelines.

*Design Concepts*

The design concepts are the result of the interactive mapping exercise. Design concepts are an effective method for communicating ideas about spatial developments. They are interpretations of reality and give an abstract view of alternative development scenarios. As such, they do not have a direct spatial consequence, which means that the concepts do not outline zoning, legislation, or specific details regarding development per se, however, they provide a strong guidance and general direction for future development.
**Design guidelines**

The design guidelines are the result of the VPS survey and additional research done by the student team. Design guidelines provide specific details and visual cues to developers as to what kind of development the community will support. Design guidelines are not mandates, but rather a community-approved document outlining encouraged aesthetic forms and strongly discouraged aesthetic forms.
**Master Plan – Design Concepts**

The overall goal for the Birch Bay focus area is to provide well planned and well managed growth while meeting community objectives, the greatest of which is the preservation and enhancement of Birch Bay. The master plan envisions a distinct future for Birch Bay, offering walkable neighborhoods that connect lower density residential areas to the urban core of Birch Bay, diverse housing types, desirable commercial development, and attractive community spaces. The master plan focuses on transportation and connectivity, commercial and town center areas, residential areas, and public spaces between all of these individual areas. These components will provide a foundation for a healthy community with a strong sense of place and a superior quality of life.

**Overall Concept Map**

![Overall Concept Map](image)

**Legend**

- **Proposed Roads**
- **Parks**
- **Commercial** → **Low Density**
I. Transportation

A. Birch Bay-Lynden Road, Blaine Road, and Alderson Road

Birch Bay-Lynden Road, Blaine Road, and Alderson Road should be arterial roads intended to divert the majority of motorized traffic from the waterfront. Each of these three roads should make pedestrian, bicycle, and stormwater improvements along the sections connected to the Birch Bay focus area.

B. Birch Bay Drive

Birch Bay Drive should continue to be a functional road but will be reduced in speed to limit the amount of through traffic and promote pedestrian use over vehicle use. This will allow service vehicles, such as ambulances, to still access the area, but should help deter most vehicle traffic from using the roadway.

C. Proposed E-W Road

This new road as proposed by the county will begin at Blaine Road and end at the new proposed N-S road, following the property line between the land currently owned by Iksum, LLC (APN400130-405237) and the properties owned by Birch Bay Farms, LLC (APN 400130-404-176), and Goldstar Resorts (APN 400130-180191). For a map, please see page B-2. This road is intended to bring traffic to the new commercial center and to delineate the edges of the walkable area.

Between Blaine Road and the western end of the Birch Bay Farms property, the proposed road will be similar in design to the higher speed connecting arterials. It shall be constructed to include pedestrian, bicycle, and stormwater amenities and will be slow relative to the three main arterial roads. Between the western edge of the Birch Bay Farms property and the proposed N-S road, the proposed E-W road will split into two one way streets (one in each direction) with a 50-100 foot park in the middle to provide visual connectivity to the waterfront. Two options for the relationship of this road to the park and surrounding mixed use commercial are depicted on starting on page 13.

D. Proposed N-S Road

This new road should begin at Birch Bay-Lynden Road and end at Alderson Road, and should follow parcel lines as often as possible. For a map, please see page B-2. It will be a relatively slow road intended to divert motorized traffic from the waterfront and bring traffic to the new commercial center. This road should be constructed to include pedestrian, bicycle, and stormwater amenities.

E. Pedestrian and Bicycle Connectivity

Pedestrian and bicycle pathways should be provided throughout the focus area in addition to roadways. These pathways should be clearly distinguishable from roadways and will be inaccessible to motorized modes of transportation.
F. Other Considerations

Street furniture such as benches, trash receptacles, helpful signage, public phones and public restrooms should be appropriately placed in high-traffic pedestrian corridors. Bus stops should be provided at regular intervals to promote the use of alternative modes of transportation throughout the area.

II. Commercial

A. Mixed Use

The development in this area should capture the historic beach feel that defines Birch Bay and its heritage. It should have a central pedestrian park-like boulevard, creating a strong connection with Birch Bay waterfront. The area will provide attractive shopping and dining opportunities, as well as sidewalk cafes to create a seaside village feel. This area has potential to serve commercial, residential, and government/institutional uses.

B. Commercial Center

The aesthetic appeal of Birch Bay is one of the characteristics that make the Birch Bay community so unique. Every effort to maintain the charm and functionality of the bay should be made when considering any modifications. The commercial areas of Birch Bay should exude a sense of culture unique to Birch Bay and give the feel of being in a seaside village. These areas will be looked at as relaxing places where families and friends can play and shop simultaneously. These guidelines will allow the community to achieve this sense of culture and connection to the Bay, while preserving the ecology and beauty of the Bay itself.

III. Residential

A. Mid-Density Housing

Mid-density housing provides for a natural transition between commercial and residential areas. It allows for different housing types – single, multi family, etc. with focus on multi family to most efficiently use space. Pocket parks, connected by trails and a grid-system, will be encouraged to
provide green spaces throughout. There will be a focus on alternative transportation created by slow, pedestrian-friendly grid streets that serve families over cars. The grid system will seamlessly connect to core and to outer areas. As birch bay continues to grow the density of this area will allow a greater diversity of homes and homeowners.

B. **Low-Density Housing**

The low-density housing region should serve as a buffer between the wetlands and the more densely populated regions of Birch Bay. To accomplish this goal and to keep the rural feel of this region, wetlands characteristics should be incorporated into the residential landscape. The road system will be based on a simple grid system, focused on emphasizing pedestrian movement, over car traffic, and should attempt to keep car travel at a low speed. The grid system will also provide seamless connections between the inner commercial core and the outer regions of Birch Bay. Another feature of the region should be the common occurrence of pocket parks. These parks will be connected by trails, which move through the region, providing green spaces and alternative paths for pedestrian travel.

C. **Cottage Housing**

Cottage housing will create comfortable residences along the water, while protecting the bay as a primary resource in the community. These homes will not detract from the beauty of the bay, but help to enhance the relaxed feel of the community. These homes will be connected by small lanes and trails, which will promote a sense of safety with an emphasis on pedestrian travel. To reduce the dependence on motorized traffic, the trails and lanes will join the residential community with the central commercial core.

IV. **Public Spaces**

Regional parks are parks where the people of Birch Bay and the visitors can meet, play and where a range of activities can take place. The parks should have a central place in the community. They should link the city centers to the beach area to ensure that the greatest number of people are able to use the parks. Regional parks provide space for activities. It is proposed that there be two parks, Carousel Park and Archibald Menzies Park, each with its own identity and primary activities.
A. Carousel Park

Carousel Park should be park with cultural attractions that serves as that gateway to Birch Bay at Birch Bay-Lynden Road. The park is centered around a bandstand, which provides a location both for performances and community events. It should also have a bathhouse and areas for picnicking and barbequing.

B. Archibald Menzies Park

This park features beautiful views and open recreational space for the whole family. It should connect the bay and the downtown core and create space for people relax and recreate after walking around town or on the beach.

C. Preservation Areas

The preservation of wetlands and other ecosystems that are of value to the region should be a continuous goal of the community. Preservation of these areas will make Birch Bay more habitable and, through the inclusion of boardwalks, create valued public space. These parks will serve people wanting to walk, bike, or learn in a pristine environment.

D. Pocket Parks

Pocket parks provide recreational space on neighborhood level. They create places for children to play near their homes and where adults can go for a walk or gather with neighbors.
Design Team A

Birch Bay Design Team A was asked to create design concepts for a town center off of the county proposed east-west road and a natural design for the waterfront. The team used the ideas and concerns voiced at the April 25th community meeting to create concepts that address the community’s needs of showcasing the bay, stormwater management, safety, pedestrian and bicycle connectivity, and economic vitality.

A. Town Center

Imagine driving on the new east-west road towards the town center. As you approach the town center, the road splits and in front of you is a clear view to the bay through a park like boulevard lined with birch trees, full of gardens, pathways, plazas and pedestrian activity. Following the one-way road to the right, you see a building whose design reminds you of old Birch Bay, but fulfills a different function. On the bottom floor, there are small businesses such as cafés, clothing and home décor shops, bookstores, locally owned jewelry stores, and an ice creamery. Above are tastefully designed condominiums or apartments, with patios opening towards the park. The wide, inviting sidewalks are lined with bitter cherry trees, period light posts, hanging baskets, benches, planters, and awnings to shelter pedestrians in rainy weather. Further down the road you see a post office and city hall, across the parkway is a library and a community center. You continue to drive slowly down the street, noticing familiar faces strolling along the many crosswalks, walking in and out of shops, or enjoying their lunch at one of the many tables available in the plazas.

While parallel parking you notice how comfortable the area feels, as if it has always been here. You feel safe knowing there are people living above the shops, watching over the open space. Remembering some new information about rain gardens, you look across the streets and are surprised to notice how green the area is, especially since it is so late in the summer. You step out of your car and begin strolling through the new and improved Birch Bay.
To bring this concept to reality the team designed using the following integrative functions: accessibility, environmental consciousness, mixed uses, and economic vitality.

**Accessibility**

One of the primary concerns voiced by the community was pedestrian and bicycle connectivity between points of interest, residential areas, traditional roadways, and vehicle dominated corridors. The design team took these concerns into consideration, and applied them to the town center. The two one-way roads will both have bike lanes lining the park to provide an extra measure of safety from moving vehicles. The crosswalks and vehicle connections between the two roads will be provided at regular intervals. Tree line pathways from the sidewalk to the back of the commercial buildings will provide access to parking and other residential neighborhoods. Bus stops will be integrated with the parallel parking for future Whatcom Transit Authority service. Numerous pathways will be lined through the central park connecting the plazas along with the rest of the town center. The town center provides the opportunity for area residents to decrease their dependence on the automobile, but will still provide enough access for those individuals who need to use their vehicle.

**Environmental Consciousness**

Stormwater management is the second primary concern voiced by the community. To address this, the town center design concept uses a three pronged approach, incorporating rain gardens, native landscaping, and the use of permeable materials. Water runoff from rooftops and other flat, impermeable surfaces is directed to the rain gardens, which are lowered vegetated areas that filter impurities through a series of layers. Rain gardens help reduce pollutants entering the groundwater and keep the water table at a consistent level. Water from the rain gardens can also be diverted and reused to irrigate the landscaping and street trees. The second approach, using plants that are native to the area, will drastically reduce the amount of watering necessary during the summer and help stabilize the
area during heavy rains. The last approach, the use of permeable materials, will be applied to walkways and parking areas and will help reduce the amount of water directly reaching the stormwater treatment systems.

Mixed Use

The Birch Bay community brought up safety in commercial spaces as a third concern, especially during night time hours. The design concept addresses this by creating an area with multiple uses. The area will contain residential, commercial and municipal functions, ensuring that human activity can, and will, occur at all hours. With human activity occurring at all hours, the town center will be a strong deterrent to criminal activity. While design within of itself cannot completely prevent criminal activity from occurring, having windows and patios facing the commercial area and store fronts are design measures that will minimize this problem by creating a human presence or a sense of eyes on the street.

Economic Vitality

Although economic vitality was not a concern directly voiced by the community the design team wanted to ensure that the area would be economically viable year round. By providing many different kinds of shops and municipal functions, such as a library, post office and a city hall, the area becomes attractive to residents throughout all of Birch Bay, and not just seasonal tourists residing in resorts. In making the area attractive all year round, the town center by provide more stability to local businesses adding to the unique character of Birch Bay.

B. Natural Waterfront

Birch Bay is the gem of the community, where residents stroll and make lasting memories. The goal of the design team was to provide safe access to the bay, and to reduce the amount of erosion occurring from storms.

BIRCH BAY COMMUNITY PLAN AND URBAN DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS
After strolling through the town center for a few hours, you find yourself standing on the beach, soothed by the lap of the waves and a light sea breeze. You spot a nearby bench and head over to take a seat. On the way, you are struck by what is missing: the masses of concrete that used to line the beach are no longer there. The beach feels so pristine, so natural, as if you had stepped back a century in time. The groundcover is green and healthy, spilling over from the pathway to the rocks lining the beach. Tufts of sedge and salt grass have sprouted between piles of driftwood, rustling softly as you pass by. Reaching the bench, you sit, content and feeling spoiled by the view. You are glad you came, and decide that next time you would like to share the experience with friends and family.

Accessibility

The design team proposes removing all of the parking around the bay and replacing it with a natural feeling pathway and a bicycle lane. Community members voiced a strong interest in making this pathway safe from vehicles. The pathway should eventually follow the entire length of the bay from Birch Point to Point Whitethorn. Parking should be provided away from the waterfront and off of Birch Bay Drive. The walkway should be landscaped using native plants that are relatively salt and drought tolerant.

Restoration

On the beach, the design team proposes that all concrete structures should be removed as a means of restoring the beach to its natural state, and from reducing aggressive erosion from occurring due to the concrete structures. The design concept calls for native landscaping between the beach and the walkway to help stabilize soil and prevent sheet erosion.
C. Natural Waterfront

The preservation of Birch Bay is of utmost importance to the community, and there are many ways to reduce or mitigate the impact of a project on its environment and the surrounding area. The most beneficial ways to do this are project-specific and generally require a great deal of extra care; in Birch Bay, the largest impacts are generally to the surrounding wetlands and stormwater management.

This plan proposes the use of pervious and living materials wherever possible, allowing water to pass through the surface and be naturally filtered. Examples of these kinds of materials or uses are pervious pavement, ecostone, rain gardens, vegetated roofs, sand, or gravel. An excellent way to reduce the ecological footprint of new development in Birch Bay is to encourage the use of alternative building techniques. For example, rather than the standard wood frame building, developers could look towards steel framing, suspension components, or even laminated wood supports. Additionally, other materials used in construction could be specified to be made from alternative sources or use Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) Certified wood when necessary. Concretes and aggregates can be quarried locally and used in mixes with a lower amount of portland cement, or old concrete can be salvaged and reused. By implementing strategies such as these, Birch Bay can help meet both its goals of protecting the bay and directing its future growth.

These technologies can be a higher initial expense, but the direct and indirect benefits to the community outweigh the cost over time. This plan suggests that the application of sustainable design standards should be considered throughout the design and construction of buildings in the new town center.
Design Team B

Birch Bay is a beautiful historic area that currently lacks a community focal point. To improve the community of Birch Bay, there is a need for a community gathering place, one where people can meet with each other for recreation, shopping, and leisure. This town center will be located to the South of the golf course, directly behind the Sandcastle Resort and Ocean Breezes Condominiums on Birch Bay Drive. It will consist of a large park and recreational area, framed by mixed used buildings and situated between a civic building to the east and an improved waterfront area along the bay to the west. A community center will be included in the middle of the town center to unite the northern and southern portions of the region.

A. Town Center

A new road will run west from Blaine Road, connecting the community off the bay with the town center. When this road reaches the town center, it will part into two one-way streets, running along either side of the commercial and mixed use activities towards the bay. These one-way roads will each have one automobile lane, one bike lane and on street parking. The north-south road, which is currently along the west side of Leisure Park, will be extended and run though the town center, parallel to the bay. Providing this new road as an alternative to Birch Bay drive allows for the speed limit on Birch bay Drive to be significantly decreased, thereby improving safe access to the waterfront and to the new town center.

From the civic building, located on the eastside of the town center, the development will be mixed use commercial up until the new north-south road is reached. West of this point, development also be mixed use, but an emphasis will be placed on small residences and shops to keep large buildings off the bay. The open space area, running down the middle of the town center, will create continuity and focus in a region with many different activities taking place. It will also allow for easy access to all of the services within the town center. Generally, building heights will decrease toward the bay creating an open and inviting waterfront area.
The civic building will serve as a centrally located gathering space for community meetings. If Birch Bay incorporates into a city, this building could then serve as the city hall. The civic building will not only act to physically bring the community together, but will also provide the community with a sense of place. By creating a welcoming, predominant building, visitors will be greeted to the town center and the entire community. The building will be four to five stories high and consists of a rounded central area, which will connect the two wings of the building and form a v shape opening towards the bay. The rounded central area will highlight an art feature in the front of the building. The general shape of the civic building will provide occupants with daylight views of the outdoors, as called for in the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) indoor environmental quality credits.

Commercial Buildings

Between the civic building and the north-south road, all buildings in the town center will be designated as commercial. The buildings will be approximately 3-5 stories high and will be used for a variety of commercial uses, such as shops and office space. All commercial buildings will have dual frontage onto the central park area and the exterior roads. In both the commercial and mixed use building areas, commercial uses are encouraged to spill out into the park. For example a restaurant may have tables for customers to eat in the park or a boutique may place a few racks outside during the day.

Mixed Use

Residential/Commercial Buildings

The mixed-use commercial and residential buildings will be located west of the commercial and municipal buildings. Providing higher density housing above the retail shops will allow for more growth in the Birch Bay area. Like the commercial buildings, the mixed use buildings will be dual-fronted, and the retail centers will host a variety of shops and boutiques that will be beneficial to both summer tourists and year-long residents. The recommendation for height is approximately two to three stories with the first story reserved for retail. The remaining level(s)
of the building would be designated as residential units. These buildings could incorporate many of the LEED Certification System credits for green building, including using a green roof to reduce heat island effects, eliminating light trespass by directing all outward light downward and not past property, utilizing rapidly renewable materials in building, and using low emitting adhesives and sealants to reduce indoor air quality contaminants.

The Park and Green Spaces

The central feature of the town center will be the central park and additional green spaces. Once inside the town center, the central park, with numerous pathways and landscaped features, will stretch from the civic building all the way to the waterfront. In between the buildings west of the civic center and the mixed use region, there is space for another potential park. This space will include an outdoor stage and seating, lawn area, and a plaza. The public space will be developed using pervious pavers and the bioswales will be landscape using various native plants. The pervious pavers allow for storm water to drain through them, decreasing the amount of storm water runoff leaving the site. The bioswales collect water and use a natural filtering system to remove sediments and pollutants. Using native plants allows for less care, minimal irrigation, and provides habitat for local wildlife. Ample trash cans and recycling receptacles will be located throughout the town center in order to ensure that waste does not sully the site or the adjoining beach. In the middle of the parkway directly to the east of Birch Bay Drive, a fountain or art feature will be placed for visitors to gather around. On the waters side of Birch Bay Drive, a park will extend to a structural boardwalk running the length of the bay.

B. The Waterfront

This town center design includes a dramatic redesign of the waterfront area, improving pedestrian access and aesthetic appeal of the bay. The town centers central park will extend to a structural boardwalk that protrudes out into the bay in four places. In the places the boardwalk is not out in the bay, it will lye next to Birch Bay Drive and promote access to the waterfront. This boardwalk will be designed to focus attention on the bay, while maintaining a strong connection between the town and the bay. An urban feel will be achieved through the design of the boardwalk, however the design will also connect people to the natural...
amenities of this region. To provide a safe pedestrian environment and reducing the light pollution, the boardwalk will be well-lit with low angled lighting.

C. Surrounding Areas and Connectivity

The town center is intended to unite the Birch Bay Community. Connecting the town center with existing and potential development within the area is essential to achieving this goal. The surrounding residential areas will be maintained as mid-density housing and will seamlessly blend the mix-used town center with the single family residence bordering the town center. Multiple pathways landscaped with native plants and constructed with pervious pavers to will connect the downtown area with the surrounding residential areas. The pathways will create a pedestrian-friendly town center, where accessibility to the bay and retail services are within a short, safe walking distance from residential areas.

D. Green Concepts

This town center proposal will incorporate a number of sustainable building concepts in order to ensure the center will be able to serve the public with minimal impacts on the Birch Bay environment. The LEED ‘Green Building Rating System’ will be a primary focus for the design of the town center. A number of these criteria were incorporated into both the layout of the site and the design of other areas, such as green spaces and the waterfront.

The town center will be designed to encourage walking and cycling, while still accommodating automobiles. The one-way roads running along each side of the town center includes a single automobile lane, on-street parking, a bicycle lane, and sidewalks. Commercial buildings will have entrances on both sides, allowing for easy access by people traveling by car or by foot. Footpaths will run throughout the interior of the town center, connecting the municipal building with the waterfront boardwalk. As suggested by the LEED system, public transportation will be made available by adding bus stations along the one-way roads and parking lots will include carpool parking spaces.

Walkways, roads, and parking areas will be constructed using sustainable materials. A number of attractive pervious paving materials are currently available on the market that would enhance both the aesthetics and sustainability of the town center, as laid out in the LEED
Rating System. These paving materials allow stormwater to penetrate to the underlying soil, which decreases urban runoff. Limiting stormwater runoff, and its pollution, is particularly important in protecting the bay. The use of pervious materials also reduces heat islands which stabilizes microclimatic conditions on the site.

Using LEED guidelines, the landscape elements of the town center will be highly sustainable. A series of bioswales will run down the middle of the town center. In these bioswales native and some non-invasive exotic plants will be planted. These plants will be carefully selected to ensure that they thrive in the Birch Bay town center area. When it rains, any water that does not penetrate the pervious pedestrian walkways will flow down into these gardens, watering the plants within them and slowly percolating down into the soil. Rain gardens are not only an aesthetically pleasing form of landscaping but useful stormwater control features. During dry periods, the town center’s rain gardens and lawns will be irrigated with rainwater collected in wooden rain barrels attached to each of the buildings. The rain barrels collect rain water off of roofs and store the water in a container that can be used for future irrigation.
Master Plan – Design Guidelines

I. Transportation and Connectivity

The transportation and connectivity design guidelines are meant to convey the intent for and design of connector routes for all modes of transportation, as well as recommended dimensions and materials where appropriate. Transportation in Birch Bay should create functional corridors for all users, including the disabled, pedestrians, bicyclists, and automobile users of all ages. It should highlight the aesthetics of Birch Bay while promoting safety and sustainability.

A. Birch Bay-Lynden Road, Blaine Road, and Alderson Road

   Speed
   The speed should be approximately 35 MPH.

   Sidewalks
   Sidewalks will be a minimum of 7 feet in width with a 3 foot vegetated buffer and 6 inch high curb. Crosswalks will be provided at regular intervals or intersections, whichever is closer.

   Bicycle Lanes
   Bicycle lanes will be provided in each direction and be a minimum of 5 feet in width with a 6-inch paved buffer of a contrasting material between the bicycle lane and the vehicle lane.

   Vehicle Lanes
   The vehicles lanes will be a minimum of 8 feet and a maximum of 11 feet wide. In between the two vehicles lanes should be an 8-foot wide vegetated median with paved turn lanes.

   Materials
   Sidewalks, crosswalks, and the 6-inch bicycle lane buffer will be paved with permeable materials that provide stark visual and textural contrast to the material used for vehicle and bicycle lanes.

   Signs
   Signs will be consistent with standard models provided by the presiding transportation authority.

   Utilities
   Lighting should be provided for pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists. It is recommended that the light poles accommodations for community banners. Utilities will be placed discreetly and accessibly along the corridors.

   Landscaping
   All vegetated sections will be landscaped using native plants suited to Birch Bay’s environment. For a list of recommended plants, please see Appendix D.
B. Birch Bay Drive

*Speed*

The speed should be approximately 5 MPH.

*Sidewalks*

The sidewalk on the east side of the street will be a minimum of 7 feet in width with a 3-foot vegetated buffer and 6-inch high curb. A 10 foot wide walkway on the west side of the street will provide connections to the beach and regional parks, as well as function as a boardwalk.

*Bicycle Lanes*

Bicycle lanes will be provided in each direction and be a minimum of 5 feet in width with a 6-inch paved buffer of a contrasting material between the bicycle lane and the vehicle lane.

*Vehicle Lanes*

The vehicles lanes will be a minimum of 8 feet and a maximum of 11 feet wide.

*Materials*

Sidewalks, crosswalks, and the 6-inch bicycle lane buffer will be paved with permeable materials and provide a stark visual and textural contrast to the material used for vehicle and bicycle lanes.

*Signs*

Signs will be consistent with the standards provided by the presiding transportation authority.

*Utilities*

Lighting should be provided for pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists. It is recommended that the light poles accommodations for community banners. Utilities will be placed discreetly and accessibly along the corridors.

*Landscaping*

All vegetated sections will be landscaped using native plants suited to Birch Bay’s environment. For a list of recommended plants, please see Appendix D.

C. Proposed N-S Road

*Speed*

The speed of this road should be approximately 25 MPH.

*Sidewalks*

Sidewalks will be a minimum of 7 feet in width, contain a 3-foot vegetated buffer, and include a 6-inch high curb. Crosswalks will be provided at regular intervals or intersections, whichever is closer.
Bicycle Lanes

Bicycle lanes will be provided in each direction and be a minimum of 5 feet in width with a 6-inch paved buffer of a contrasting material between the bicycle lane and the vehicle lane.

Vehicle Lanes

The vehicles lanes will be a minimum of 8 feet and a maximum of 11 feet wide.

Materials

Sidewalks, crosswalks, and the 6-inch bicycle lane buffer will be paved with permeable materials that provide stark visual and textural contrast to the material used for vehicle and bicycle lanes.

Signs

Signs will be consistent with the standards provided by the presiding transportation authority.

Utilities

Lighting should be provided for pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists. It is recommended that the light poles accommodations for community banners. Utilities will be placed discreetly and accessibly along the corridors.

Landscaping

All vegetated sections will be landscaped using native plants suited to Birch Bay’s environment. For a list of recommended plants, please see Appendix D.

D. Proposed E-W Road

1. East Section

Speed

This road should be approximately 20-25 MPH.

Sidewalks

Sidewalks will be a minimum of 7 feet in width with a 3-foot vegetated buffer and 6-inch high curb.
**Vehicle Lanes**

The vehicles lanes will be a minimum of 8 feet and a maximum of 11 feet wide. In between the two vehicles lanes will be an 8-foot wide vegetated median with paved turn lanes.

2. **West Section**

   **Speed**
   
   This road should be approximately 15 MPH.

   **Sidewalks**
   
   Sidewalks will be 15 feet in width including a vegetated buffer and 6-inch high curb. Crosswalks will be provided at regular intervals.

3. **Both Sections**

   **Bicycle Lanes**
   
   Bicycle lanes will be provided in each direction and be a minimum of 5 feet in width with a 6-inch paved buffer of a contrasting material between the bicycle lane and the vehicle lane.

   **Vehicle Lanes**
   
   The vehicles lanes will be 10 feet wide, with an additional 10 feet provided for angled parking.

   **Materials**
   
   Sidewalks, crosswalks, and the 6-inch bicycle lane buffer will be paved with permeable materials, providing stark visual and textural contrast to the material used for vehicle and bicycle lanes.

   **Signs**
   
   Signs will be consistent with the standards provided by the presiding transportation authority.

   **Utilities**
   
   Lighting should be provided for pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists. It is recommended that the light poles accommodations for community banners. Utilities will be placed discreetly and accessibly along the corridors.

   **Landscaping**
   
   All vegetated sections will be landscaped using native plants suited to Birch Bay’s environment. For a list of recommended plants, please see Appendix D.

E. **Pedestrian and Bicycle Connectivity**
Pedestrian and bicycle pathways will be provided throughout the focus area in addition to roadways. These pathways shall be clearly distinguishable from roadways and will be inaccessible to motorized modes of transportation. The pathways and crosswalks will be paved with permeable materials that provide stark visual and textural contrast to the material used for roadways. Lighting types that limit light pollution will be encouraged, especially in residential areas. A minimum 3-foot vegetated buffer should be provided between the pathway and neighboring properties, and all vegetated sections will be landscaped using native plants suited to Birch Bay’s environment. For a list of recommended plants, please see Appendix D.

F. Other Considerations

Street furniture such as benches, trash receptacles, bicycle racks, helpful signage, public phones and public restrooms should be appropriately placed in high-traffic pedestrian corridors. Bus stops should be provided at regular intervals to promote the use of alternative modes of transportation throughout the area. On street parking should be parallel only in all areas. In residential areas, alley access should be provided to allow off street parking and services to be concentrated away from pedestrian and bicycle uses as often as possible.

II. Commercial and Town Centers

A. Mixed Use Town Center

Height

Building height should be no more then three stories to maintain the view of the bay and ensure natural lighting on walkways. Government buildings shall be a maximum of four stories as centerpieces of the commercial area, but should still ensure visibility to the bay and natural lighting to the street.

Width

Large buildings should be broken up into sections that relate easily to the human scale. All buildings should be compatible with buildings in the surrounding vicinity. Government buildings could have a maximum width of 120 feet, but all other commercial uses should be between 30-60 feet wide.
Setback

Buildings should encourage a maximum level of pedestrian traffic; therefore all buildings should be easily accessible from sidewalks, paths, and roads by having a zero foot setback.

Proportion of Openings

Openings facing the street, such as windows and doors, should be of similar design, inviting, and compliment the surrounding area. Avoid introducing new window patterns or door openings inconsistent with the town centers design and the surrounding areas.

Roof Form

Roofline, or top of structure, should be clearly distinguished from its façade walls. Flat top roofs may be acceptable if a parapet feature is included.

Materials

Commercial development should use materials and details appropriate to the Pacific Northwest and the history of Birch Bay. Building exteriors should be constructed of durable and maintainable materials that are attractive. A focus should be placed on finding materials that are textured or otherwise detailed such as wood siding, local stonework, or wood pillars. Metal roofs are discouraged. Siding and buildings made of stone or wood are encouraged.

Color

Colors should complement the Pacific Northwest coastal environment. To accomplish this goal, neutral warms or seascape cool patterns are encouraged. The color of the building should add to the aesthetic value of the community.

Sidewalk Coverings

Weather protection should be provided along building frontages. Awnings are preferred over other coverings. Height above should be no more than 15 feet for the awnings. Height should also be consistent throughout the entire street block to create uniformity.

Signs

Signs should be visually pleasing and complement the materials and colors used throughout the center. Signs should not be placed higher then ten feet off the ground and the ‘cluttering’ should be avoided. Historic signs and vintage advertising are encouraged when possible.
Parking

Parking should focus on on-street parallel or angled parking. Underground parking is encouraged when possible. Any aboveground parking structures should retain the first story as commercial to maintain visual conformity with the surrounding buildings.

B. Commercial Town Center

Height

Commercial buildings outside the mixed-use commercial area should limit their height to three stories. This will allow a large amount of natural light into the commercial region and prevent obstructions to the bay view.

Width

Large buildings should be separated into components relating easily to a human scale. The width of buildings within one to three blocks of each should be similar. Generally, commercial buildings should be 50-100 ft wide.

Setback

Commercial buildings should encourage maximum levels of pedestrian traffic. To accomplish this goal, a zero setback from the road/sidewalk is recommended.

Proportion of Openings

Windows and doors on sides of buildings which open to pedestrian traffic should create a welcoming, inviting feeling. Avoiding extremes, such as walls with no openings or walls primarily composed of windows, will help achieve a consistent feel.

Roof Form

The tops of commercial structures should be clearly distinguished from its walls. Flat top roofs may be acceptable if a parapet feature is included.

Materials

It is strongly suggested that building materials be fitting and representative of the Pacific Northwest. Metal roofs are discouraged. Siding and buildings made of stone or wood are encouraged. The visual appearance of building will help enhance the cultural appeal of the region.

Color

Colors should complement the Pacific Northwest coastal environment. To accomplish this goal, neutral warms or seascape cool patterns are encouraged. The color of the building should add to the aesthetic value of the community.
Signs

Signs used to advertise for a business should be fairly small, pleasing to the eye, and the materials and colors used on the signs should be similar to those used for building materials. Signs over one story off the ground are discouraged so as to avoid visual clutter.

III. Residential

A. Mid-Density Residential

Height

Height will vary depending on building type. Apartment buildings and condominiums shall have a three story maximum. Townhouses and single-family residential shall have a two story maximum. These building heights have the intention of recognizing the need to protect the amenities of adjoining properties, including, where appropriate:

a. Adequate direct sun to buildings and appurtenant open spaces;
b. Access to views of significance.

Width

The width of buildings in this area varies by building type. They shall be compatible with buildings in the surrounding vicinity and will maximize efficiency of land use.

Setback

The setback for all buildings shall be a minimum of zero feet and a maximum of fifteen feet. The side setbacks shall be a minimum of zero feet and a maximum of fifteen feet. Determination of setback will be based on proportion of building size and surrounding uses.

Roof Form

Roofline or top of structure should be clearly distinguished from its facade walls. On buildings where sloping roofs are the predominant roof type, each building shall have a variety of roof forms.

Materials

Residential development shall utilize timeless materials that are signatures of the natural environment. Materials and details that are fitting in the Pacific Northwest should be incorporated. Building exteriors should be constructed of durable and maintainable materials.
Materials that have texture, pattern, or a high quality of detailing are encouraged. These standards are intended to achieve the following purposes:

a. Provide a distinctive, quality, consistent, architectural character and style in new multi-family development that avoids monotonous and featureless building massing and design.

b. Ensure building design and architectural compatibility within a multi-family development.

Color

Colors of this area shall complement the Pacific Northwest coastal environment. Specifically, they shall be of neutral warms or seascape cool patterns. Colors will compliment surrounding structures and patterns.

B. Low-Density Housing

Height

In order to maximize the rural feel of this region, the height of homes should be limited to two stories.

Width

Due to the variety of homes in the region, the width of buildings will be dependent upon the context in which the building is found. Generally, building width should aid the rural image while maintaining individuality.

Setback

The set back of homes from the road to should provide enough space to maintain the rural feel of the region. Therefore, both the front and side setbacks should be between ten and twenty feet.

Roof Form

Roofline or top of structure should be clearly distinguished from its facade walls. Homes should have a variety of roof forms that are designed to improve the esthetic value of the region and fit into the cohesive community.

Materials

Residential development shall utilize timeless materials that are signatures of the
natural environment. Materials and details that are fitting in the Pacific Northwest should be incorporated. Building exteriors should be constructed of durable and maintainable materials. Materials that have texture, pattern, or a high quality of detailing are encouraged.

**Color**

Colors of this area shall complement the Pacific Northwest coastal environment. Specifically, they shall be of neutral warms or seascape cool patterns. Colors will compliment surrounding structures and patterns.

C. **Cottage Housing**

**Height**

To maintain views of the bay, cottage homes should be one to two stories. Two story homes should be situated to maintain the comfortable

**Width**

To encourage the typical style of cottage homes, each residence should be no wider then 30 feet.

**Setback**

Cottage homes are intended to be built on a small scale. Because of this, the distance between the road and the home should be between 5 and 15 feet in the front of the house and between 5 and 10 feet on the side of the house.

**Roof Form**

Roofline or top of structure should be clearly distinguished from its facade walls. Homes should have a variety of roof forms that are designed to improve the esthetic value of the region and fit into the cohesive community.

**Materials**

Residential development shall utilize timeless materials that are signatures of the natural environment. Materials and details that are fitting in the Pacific Northwest should be
incorporated. Building exteriors should be constructed of durable and maintainable materials. Materials that have texture, pattern, or a high quality of detailing are encouraged.

Color

Colors of this area shall complement the Pacific Northwest coastal environment. Specifically, they shall be of neutral warms or seascape cool patterns. Colors will compliment surrounding structures and patterns.

IV. Public Spaces

In a city, there is a need for places for the community to gather and to play. Therefore, a city is not complete without public spaces. The following recommendations are made to describe the need for public spaces articulated by the inhabitants of Birch Bay.

A. Regional Parks

Both regional parks shall be designed by a registered landscape architect. The design should provide accessibility to a safe, clean, environment. The style of the parks should be consistent with the surrounding area and have a more city-park feel than the existing open spaces. Through creative design, the park should invite people to visit and provide space for exercise and other activities. Pathways to the park should be accessible for all forms of non-motorized transportation and for people of all ages. To improve the aesthetics of the parks, there should be a focus on including shade trees and human scaled lighting.

Carousel Park

Connectivity

The connections and gateways to the bay are a primary function of the park. The pathways should be well maintained and easy accessible. It should provide places for visitors to sit and enjoy lunch or comfortably use the bathhouse.

Facilities

This park should provide place for cultural activities. Therefore, the design should focus on providing space for large groups of people to meet and creating areas where the activities can take place. A bandstand surrounded by open space with benches and trash bins develops a comfortable meeting space for various activities.

The open space should both facilitate pedestrians walking through the park and provide places for people to sit down and rest.
**Landscaping**

Native vegetation is a primary focus of this park. And the history of Birch Bay should be included in a variety of locations throughout the park, for instance through sculptures. Following these guidelines will give the park an authentic feel. Further, the design of the space should be of high quality and sustainable because of the large amounts of people that might visit the park at once.

**Archibald Menzies Park**

**Connectivity**

Roads and paths should be accessible for people of all ages and should connect the facilities and the city center and the bay. The connection between the bay and the city center should especially be strong and should invite people to go from one place to the other.

**Facilities**

This park provides space for families and comfortable community space where can be played. This shall be accomplished by including picnic areas and a children’s playground. Important is the safety for children of the facilities. Benches and other places to sit should be included within the park.

**Landscaping**

Trees that provide shade should be included in the design. But the landscaping should not block the view from the city center on the bay, so further vegetation should be relatively low. The low vegetation is also important to create a safer environment for children to play in.

**B. Preservation Areas**

**Connectivity**

Boardwalks are implemented to connect the preservation areas on the recreational network.

**Facilities**

Some elementary facilities might be implemented like a bench or trash bins.

**Landscaping**

Boardwalks should be implemented in such way that the natural feel will be maintained. The design of the boardwalks and the area (if designed) should focus on ecological values.
C. Pocket Parks

Connectivity

These spaces must have direct access to the street.

Facilities

These shall be safe, well designed spaces, which include seating, shade trees, human scaled lighting and trash receptacles.

Landscaping

These spaces must be easily visible and central to the area they are serve.
Implementation

Design concepts and guidelines are intended to be flexible recommendations to encourage or discourage urban design choices. In their implementation, they should maintain this flexibility, as repetitive, static development threatens the very community character that design guidelines are meant to protect and enhance. This section will address the regulatory opportunities to require compliance with design concepts and guidelines, as well as specific implementation opportunities and challenges in Birch Bay.

I. Enforcement and Regulatory Opportunities

Although it is possible to make design concepts and guidelines voluntary to developers, it is recommended that they be required, to ensure consistency throughout the community. Concepts and guidelines can be incorporated into law in a variety of ways. The following implementation methods are widely used and supported:

- Design Review Board and/or Checklist
- Incorporation into Zoning and Development Code

Additionally, several tools have become available to address specific land use issues. Included are implementation tools regarding affordable housing, stormwater management, and historic preservation.

A. Design Review Board and/or Checklist

Design Review Boards are often used to ensure compliance with design concepts and guidelines. Some boards are composed of community members and public officials, while others are created as an extension of Planning and Zoning Commissions. Provided that board members maintain a healthy connection with the original concerns and needs addressed by design guidelines, these groups can function relatively well in assessing impacts of developments.

Due to Review Boards tendency to regularly change membership, it may be useful to write a Design Review Checklist. The Checklist may be used by board members to systematically assess developments based on a number of criteria that address the guidelines and concepts originally approved by the community. While some checklists use a simple yes or no, check or no check format, it is recommended the checklist use a numerical or narrative rating system. This allows reviewers to weight the importance of certain aspects of design depending on the site and proposal. For example, the setback of a single family residence from the street may be less important than its color, whereas the importance may be reversed in a Main Street commercial building. The National Governors’ Association (NGA) developed a representative design checklist using the NGA Principles for Better Land Use. It is included in Appendix C, Section I for review.
B. Incorporation of Design Concepts into Zoning

To maintain the adaptability of design concepts and guidelines through incorporation, it is recommended to use flexible zoning. Flexible zoning is not as static as traditional zoning, because it uses market-based incentives and conditional use permits to achieve design concepts rather than strict prohibition and allowance of uses. This creates a more diverse set of opportunities for attainment of goals, and tends to work better than traditional zoning when cities are attempting to change and redefine the focus of development.

Flexible zoning often begins with a land use table that breaks down each regions allowable uses, conditional uses, and prohibited uses. Included in Appendix C, Section II is a sample land use table for Birch Bay using the design concepts created by the student team. Notice that the number of uses conditionally allowed is far greater than those prohibited or automatically permitted. The use of conditional permits gives planners a greater opportunity to determine the appropriateness of a specific development in a particular area. Additionally, conditional use permits offer planners the ability to bargain with developers to achieve desired outcomes, offering greater floor area in exchange for protection of a nearby wetland site, for example.

A second tool in flexible zoning is the written public document. It is more difficult to maintain flexibility in this document, but possible nonetheless. Oftentimes cities write overlay districts into their land use codes. These overlay districts begin with a statement of purpose, similar to the design concepts proposed above. Next, the document will address potential permitted uses. This is very similar to the land use table mentioned above. The city of Fort Collins, CO separates permitted uses into those that require basic development review, administrative review, and Planning and Zoning Board review based on their deviance from the overall design concept.

Finally, it is possible to set up basic land use standards, which are generally an adaptation of design guidelines. These can be a combination of recommendations (“should” language) and requirements (“shall” language) with requirements limited to those aspects which are absolutely necessary. It is very useful to also include pictures in the public document, as they will serve to better inform developers as to the goals of the concept. An example of flexible zoning from Fort Collins, CO is included in Appendix C, Section III.

C. Affordable Housing

There are several ways to promote affordability in housing through regulations, incentives, and collaboration with outside organizations. One method of regulating the provision of affordable housing is to require that every new development have a certain percentage of affordable units. Several cities use market-based incentives such as land banking, transfer of development rights,
increased floor area in exchange for inclusion of affordable housing, etc. Oftentimes incentive-based solutions work best because they offer the greatest range of opportunities and are generally better accepted by the community because they feel they are offered a choice rather than an obligation. However, incentives require several factors to be in place, including worthwhile benefits, a strong market, and consistent regulation across the market.

One issue not generally addressed by these policies is the long-term affordability of housing. A method that has worked well in the Bellingham region, has been cooperative efforts with the Kulshan Community Land Trust (KCLT). KCLT purchases and develops a piece of property, and then continues to work with homeowners to ensure that housing is continually resold at affordable prices. This allows people fiscally incapable of participating in the local housing market to own a home. Local municipalities can work with community land trusts by offering grants, land donations, etc.

D. Low Impact Development (LID)

There are two meanings for the acronym LID, one is Low Impact Development. Low Impact Development is a holistic approach to dealing with stormwater problems. LIDs goals are to stop runoff at its source and minimize costly end of pipe stormwater treatment centers. To do this LID mimics predevelopment hydrology by creating building designs and landscaping that filter stormwater at the lot level. By using Integrated Management Practices (IMPs), such as bioretention cells, permeable pavement blocks and soil amendments, stormwater can be managed and incorporated into aesthetically pleasing developed sites. Some sources for Low Impact Development are:

a. A National LID Design Manual can be obtained at either of the following sites:
   www.lowimpactdevelopment.org and www.epa.gov/owow/nps/urban.html
b. The Institute for Transportation and Development Policy has information on how to incorporate LID into transportation design: www.itdp.org

E. Local Improvement Districts (LIDs)

This is the second meaning for the acronym LID, Local Improvement Districts. LIDs are a way for concerned property owners to finance (according to state law) capital improvements within their communities. In this way improvements, such as implementing stormwater Low Impact Development techniques, can be paid for over a period of time through assessments on the benefiting properties. Local Improvement Districts are good because the community is involved in the improvement process. Community members are more likely to put up with traffic disruptions etc. when they have a stake in the improvements. To find out more about creating a LID for the Birch Bay community two good sources are:

BIRCH BAY COMMUNITY PLAN AND URBAN DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS
a. Washington State Local Improvement District Manual:
   www.mrsc.org/Publications/walidmanual03.pdf
b. The City of Longview is a local source that provides a list of LID links:
   www.ci.longview.wa.us/publicworks/EngLID.htm

F. Historic Preservation
   Historic Preservation was addressed in the community meeting, and is concerned with not only
   preserving and repairing historic places, but also with the replication of historic places. There are
   many ways for individuals and organizations to gain assistance in Historic Preservation in
   Washington State. Here is a list of sources that will give the Birch Bay community a start in reaching
   their Historic Preservation goals:
   a. The Department of Archeology and Historic Preservation is focused on preserving
      historic buildings in Washington State. They provide National Register forms, Reporting
      Standards and Guidelines: www.oahp.wa.gov/
   b. The Washington Trust for Historic Preservation provides information and financial
      assistance to individual owners, non-profit groups and government agencies engaging in
      Historic Preservation: www.wa-trust.org
   c. The National Trust for Historic Preservation provides funding for Historic Preservation
      Projects across the United States: www.nationaltrust.org

II. Birch Bay Specific Implementation Opportunities
   Design concepts and guidelines often seem fantastical because they may be so different from the
   truth on the ground. It is important to look at design concepts as taking place in longer time frame,
   which will allow for gradual compliance by the community. The WWU Planning Team has used a 20
   year timeframe to allow for the realization of these design concepts. Some land within the plan is already
   in compliance; some properties in need of redevelopment in the next 5-10 years may be phased in
   through redevelopment; and some properties that have been newly built may require a longer timeline to
   come into compliance. As this recommendation is molded into a final plan, it is critical to integrate the
   built environment into the design guidelines so that the gradual change occurs as smoothly as possible. A
   map of potential property timelines is included in Appendix B.

A. Currently Available or Compliant Lands
   The color pink on the Implementation Opportunities map denotes one of the following situations:
   land is currently in compliance with proposed plans; land is currently available for development; or
   land is open space that could be integrated into plan either through development or as public space.
There are two issues of significance in this category. One is the large number of wetlands it contains. It is very difficult and not recommended to develop wetlands. However, they offer a wonderful opportunity to provide trails that can connect the region east to west. Trails may be provided as stated in the public space design concept, using boardwalks similar to those seen at Tennant Lake in Ferndale, WA. The wetlands perform important ecosystem services by filtering water and aiding against flooding. Their incorporation as public open space allows the community to preserve the wetlands and the services they offer.

A second issue that bears immediate significance is a critical piece of land that recently became available. The property of interest is an 82-acre parcel that extends from the bay to Blaine Rd, and contains the Birch Bay golf course. This property could be crucial to the implementation of this plan, serving as the base for the mixed use town center. Greater wetlands research will need to be done on this property, but its size and central location make it an important piece of the puzzle regardless of its final use. Taking advantage of the opportunity to use this land now could have a great impact on the future of Birch Bay.

B. Lands available in next 5 years

The color purple on the Implementation Opportunities map represents areas that could potentially be redeveloped in the next five years. The parcels assigned to this category include land that is ripe for redevelopment, such as the old drive-in movie theater, or mobile homes that could be easily reconfigured to better fit within the proposed plan.

The mobile home/RV parks represent an interesting part of this category. Mobile homes and RV parks currently provide low income homes for residents and visitors. For their service to the long-term affordability of the region, they should not necessarily be discouraged as a land use, or prohibited. However, the current layout of mobile home parks is an ineffective and inefficient use of land. First, they are often separated by a large fence which disassociates and disconnects them from the rest of the community. This issue is augmented by their pattern of development which does not fit within a grid system of housing and transportation, even if the fence were removed. Second, the layout of mobile home parks often results in unnecessary, unusable open space. If the homes were laid out in a grid format the resulting land use could be far more efficient, and attention could still be paid to maintaining the feel of the community.

C. Lands available in next 10 years

The color blue on the Implementation Opportunities map represents areas that could potentially be redeveloped in the next ten years. This includes parcels with buildings that are relatively new or developments that may take longer to integrate to plan.

BIRCH BAY COMMUNITY PLAN AND URBAN DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS
A development of particular interest in this category is the Birch Bay Leisure Park. The Birch Bay Leisure Park is similar to the mobile home parks mentioned above in that its layout in concentric circles is an inefficient land use and, along with its large fence, separate it from the rest of the community. However, it is also one of the older developments in Birch Bay (1975), and is highly loved by its members. They love it because it is quiet and slow-paced, and has a strong sense of community. By those standards it should stand that the Leisure Park deserves respect as an important part of the greater community. However, the point still remains that it is an inefficient, disconnected land use.

These factors combine to create a difficult situation, but not an intractable one. It is possible to integrate the development into the proposed plan. This could be done by placing the units on a grid format with narrow streets, still maintained at the current 5mph. With plenty of trails, regular open spaces, and community centers, the sense of openness and community could certainly be maintained. A third aspect of the development is that it is gated. However this does not preclude it from being integrated into the community. The Birch Bay Leisure Park could take heed from the new Horizons development in Semiahmoo, WA. This is a development that will be gated to automobiles, but will be open to pedestrians and bicyclists. In this way, the sense of safety and quietness of a gated community can be preserved, but the development will be integrated nonetheless and will serve as a better neighbor in the community.

D. Lands available in the next 20 years

The color green represents lands that could be redeveloped and integrated into the plan in the next twenty years. This includes uses that although inconsistent, may not be required to move, and buildings that are new and will not have great potential for redevelopment in the near future. An example of an inconsistent use that may not be required to change is the fire district headquarters on Birch Bay-Lynden Road. Examples of new development that will most likely remain for a lengthy period of time are the proposed Brown & Cole store at the intersection of Birch Bay-Lynden Rd. and Blaine Rd., or the Sandcastle Resort that is just being finished on Birch Bay Road. If these lands become available they should certainly be integrated into the proposed plan, however this is not expected.

III. Birch Bay Specific Implementation Challenges

A. Wetlands

The current available data, as shown in Appendix B, shows large portions of our study area lie in potential wetlands. Although the land is gaining worth as residential lands, they also perform
ecosystem services essential to the environmental health of the region. It is recommended that they be integrated as recommended above in the section on currently available lands. It is undeniable though, that better wetlands data is needed before any final plan is created.

B. Community Involvement and Organization

The WWU Student group is preceded by a very active citizen group that advocates for land use planning in Birch Bay. Although these citizens have been critical to the work that has been done thus far, it is important that more members of the community be involved from this point forward. This is true for several reasons. First, involving a wide variety of community members ensures that a broad range of ideas and needs can be considered. This aids the planning process because a diversity of members and interests will produce more creative solutions. Second, when people are involved in the planning process they become educated about the long-term community goals and the ways of implementing those goals. Therefore when they witness on-the-ground implementation, they are less likely to oppose it, as they recognize its relationship to goals that they will have had a part in creating.

In Birch Bay, future community involvement actions should attempt to bring citizens from every background into the process. However, specific attention should be paid to bring to include key landowners, and the private communities that have not yet become involved. There are several people or groups that own significant amounts of land on the bay and/or inland that are currently uninvolved in growth planning. Their involvement is important because they are critical stakeholders in the longevity and success of the plan. It is also important that the private communities realize their importance in the overall plans of Birch Bay. As illustrated in the above section on lands available in the next ten years, developments such as the Leisure Park may be encouraged or required over the next several years to adapt to the plan. If they are not involved in its creation, the community risks losing voices that will be critical in its implementation.
Conclusion

Birch Bay is an incredibly unique community. Some of its visitors and residents love it for their memories of its past; some are enamored with the area because of its distinctiveness from modern life. The thread that binds all residents and visitors together though is a reverence for the beauty and individuality of the area. Although Birch Bay will certainly change over the next several years, it is unnecessary for that awe to dissipate. To maintain the feeling that first captured its residents, the Birch Bay community will need to develop strong goals and concepts for future development to ensure that it occurs in line with current sentiments. The future will not be without challenges, but the opportunities for implementation are encouraging.

It is the goal of this plan to provide images and ideas that reverberate with the tone of Birch Bay. Now it is up to the community to discuss these ideas, modify them if needed, and implement them with the help of Whatcom County. It will be up to the community to re-evaluate their plan every 9-12 months to be sure that guidelines and implementation practices are successfully meeting the goals of the plan. In doing so, the community will be able to offer that same awe at the beauty and uniqueness of Birch Bay to generations to come.
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- Transportation should create functional corridors for all users, including disabled, pedestrians, bicyclists, and automobile users of all ages.
- Roads should make pedestrian, bicycle, and stormwater improvements along the sections connected to the Birch Bay focus area.
- Transportation should highlight the aesthetics of Birch Bay while promoting safety and sustainability.
- Birch Bay Drive will continue to be a functional road but will be reduced in speed to limit the amount of through traffic and promote pedestrian use over vehicle use.
- Roads should follow parcel lines as often as possible.
- Motorized traffic should be diverted from the waterfront and bring traffic to commercial centers.

Public Space

- Public Spaces should provide accessibility to a safe, clean, environment.
- Parks should be consistent with surrounding areas.
- Parks should invite people to visit and provide space for exercise and other activities.
- Pathways to the parks should be accessible for all forms of non-motorized transportation and for people of all ages.
- There should be a focus on including shade trees and human scaled lighting.

The overall goal for the Birch Bay focus area is to provide well planned and well managed growth while meeting community objectives, the greatest of which is the preservation and enhancement of Birch Bay. The master plan envisions a distinct future for Birch Bay, offering walkable neighborhoods that connect lower density residential areas to the urban core of Birch Bay, diverse housing types, desirable commercial development, and attractive community spaces. The master plan focuses on transportation and connectivity, commercial and town center areas, residential areas, and the public spaces between. These components provide a foundation for a healthy community with a strong sense of place and a superior quality of life.