

**Chapter 1**

**FORWARD**

The Birch Bay Community Plan is a method of deciding between the available choices, and bringing about the sorts of changes Birch Bay area residents want. The plan rests on the belief that it is wise to look ahead, foresee change, and take charge of the future. It covers decisions regarding Birch Bay's growth that are best made in common. These decisions include the following planning concerns: the overall land use pattern, how to serve the area with adequate housing, community facilities, roads, and public utilities (sewer, and water), and how to protect natural resources, including critical areas and the shoreline. Within this overall guide, there is still much room for individual discretion.

This Community Plan is designed to satisfy the Washington Growth Management Act and to consider Whatcom County-Wide Planning Policies. It is the result and the product of local residents, having been forged over many public meetings, and is the expression of the popular will. The Community Plan is organized as follows:

- Summary - Birch Bay Community Plan
- Planning Process
- Community Profile
- Vision, Goals and Policies
- Shorelines and Shorelands
- Critical Areas
- Land Use
- Housing
- Utilities
- Transportation
- Parks and Recreation
- Economic Development
- Public Education
- Public Health and Safety
- Governance
- Capital Facilities
- Siting Essential Public Facilities

This Community Plan will guide zoning decisions, subdivision actions, capital improvements decisions, shoreline development and other legal actions that shape the physical community. These legal instruments are required to implement this plan.