

BIRCH BAY TEAM A: Natural Waterfront Design Concept

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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 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.



Recommended Waterfront Plants

Scientific Name	Common Name	Habitat	Type	Scientific Name	Common Name	Habitat	Type
Elymus mollis	American dunegrass	Sand and gravel beaches	Grass	Salicornia virginica	Pickleweed	Salty areas	Shrub
Rosa gymnocarpa	Baldhip rose	Variety of habitats	Shrub	Gaultheria shallon	Salal	Rocky shoreline	Shrub
Grindelia integrifolia	Coastal gumweed	Beaches, rocky shores	Flower	Amelanchier alnifolia	Saskatoon	Rocky shoreline	Shrub
Empetrum L.	Crowberry	Exposed coastal heathlands	Shrub	Distichlis spicata	Seashore salt grass	Salty areas	Grass
Pseudotsuga menziesii	Douglas fir	Dry, rocky	Tree	Plantago maritima	Seaside plantain	Seashore	Flower
Spiraea douglasii	Hardhack	Moist, sunny areas	Shrub	Carex sp.	Sedge	Well drained soil	Grass
Crataegus douglasii	Hawthorn, black	Coastal bluffs, shorelines	Tree	?	Shore pine	Highly adaptable	Tree
Geum macrophyllum	Large-leaved avens	Variety of habitats	Shrub	Ambrosia chamissonis	Silver beachweed	Sandy areas	Flower
Lathyrus japonicus	Maritime peavine	Sandy shores	Shrub	Carex obtusata	Slough sedge	Shorelines, wetlands	Grass
Philadelphus lewisii	Mock-orange	Rocky areas	Shrub	Atriplex patula	Spur saltbush	Salty areas	Shrub
Rosa nutkana	Nootka rose	Beachfront	Shrub	Artemisia salsidorffii	Suksdorf's sagewort	Rocky or sandy beaches	Herb
Holodiscus discolor	Ocean spray	Open, coastal bluffs	Shrub	Linnaea borealis	Twinflower	Rocky shoreline	Shrub
Arbutus menziesii	Pacific madrone	Dry, sunny, rocky sites	Tree	Tsuga heterophylla	Western hemlock	Dry to wet, low elevation	Tree
Potentilla pacifica	Pacific silverweed	Sandy areas, mudflats, wetlands	Shrub	Aster pansus	Wreath aster	Salty areas	Flower

