

Item 1.3 of “Adapting Woodstock” Charrette “Site Planning Topics & Reference Items”

A Pick-it-Apart Vision for Woodstock Farm

Draft 7/15/2008, Tim Wahl

Item numbers refer to materials posted on the Adapting Woodstock charrette website under “Site Planning Topics & Reference Items”. The facility and area names are based on Item 0.7 and its reference map.

Author’s note: This is based on discussions with many parties over several years. However, consider it a target for the lances of public process, subject to loss of limbs and creative restitching.

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A. A VISION FOR WOODSTOCK:

Woodstock should be a “low impact” learning, meeting and social events site in the greenway system. It should be adapted and programmed to reflect and interpret the wildlands and shores, the trail linkages and stories of NE Chuckanut Bay, Chuckanut Mountain, and the civic legacy, conservation and horticultural themes expressed by the Larrabee associates.

1. Definitions & Measures

- *“Low impact”?* How about less parking and less noise and more meadow and forest? How about programming to encourage activities that derive value from the quiet and wild aspects of the site and in turn contribute to enhancement of open space and wildlife habitat? How about medium to smaller scale group uses most of the time rather than larger ones? How about watching the forest understory and the planted lawns for signs of stress and acting to prevent damage?
- *Balance, scale, historical legacy and themes* may sound important but they are challenging notions to quantify and value.

Balance here means something for everyone, to some extent. The site belongs to everyone, to some extent. Programming must accommodate a variety of groups and activities. (People and activities are not cars!)

Scale refers to too much of what some might consider a good thing. Consider meetings for instance. Woodstock is NOT suited to serving as a large meeting center with a secured campus environment. There is some train and highway noise and the public desires and should be allowed to walk through much of the site in the manner of other public parks and greenways. Proximity to on-demand parking and urban amenities is often essential for larger meeting centers. Smaller retreats and meetings could be conducted privately in certain parts of Woodstock.

Legacy? Whose legacy and regarding what part of their experience on the planet? Is it a legacy that is large enough for all of us and applicable to where all of us want to go together? Is it a legacy that all of us can work with in our own way to make the world better and interesting for all of us? Part of the uniqueness of Woodstock is its ancient status as a special, useful and inhabited place. This is a story of plants, animals, climate change and people making their way, often quite differently. We are challenged to determine which imprints of the Larrabee associates honor and correspond with those of Woodstock’s prehistoric users and the contributions of their cultural heirs; this effort takes us off of the site in both directions, but it must be grounded there if it is to become a meaningful theme.

Themes must be visible, assessable and applicable to what actually goes on at the site. One of these is the wild, rugged place, the Farm itself and the larger bay and mountain landscapes it is uniquely positioned within. While a Woodstock operator will need to derive income from a variety of activities the indoor and rental activities it promotes should, as much as possible, relate to the outdoor physical environment of the place. Special events, and social events such concerts and weddings, are typically less related to the grounds and wildlands of the site; it will be important to manage the frequency and size of these in order to maintain overall themes of physical environment and landscape history (scale, balance and legacy again).

Adaptation and Programming. Gwyn Howat has spoken concisely of the necessary relationship between private and public operating interests at a place like Woodstock, noting that the public's resource must also be the vendor's resource. Dick Henrie, perhaps more than anyone I know, is acutely aware of the fact that things change in the world of recreation and leisure. In serving this changing public Dick is also painfully aware of how difficult it is to adapt available resources and physical spaces to reach a moving target.

The interests of the site operators (there are bound to be more than one) must be aligned where it counts and, since society and the global environment change, performance must be regularly revisited and assessed against both measures of known quantity and quality and apparent trajectories defined in themes, acts of adaptation and programmatic objectives. Operating themes and lesser tangibles ARE important and will have to be addressed in an interactive review process between the City as site owner and any and all operators.

1. Key Themes to Guide Operations & Programming (To be outlined and expanded in Item 8.2.)

1. Civic engagement and community building, as explored through the works of the Larrabee associates and the record and intent of local Salish people to reaffirm their identity through physical and social reassociation with traditional cultural property such as Woodstock special places of the present day and present landscape.

2. The people, landscape and ecosystems of the Chuckanut area, past, present and future, including its human residents, influences and landscapes. This is a rich and ongoing story building on the ecological diversity of the Farm and the international work and global questions posed by George Perkins Marsh of Woodstock, Vermont, our Farm's namesake. Change is an important element which links the past to the future, and back to civic engagement.

A number of site-related sub-themes derive from and can express these two main "historical" themes and carry them into the future based today's challenges and opportunities:

- The history of Bellingham’s park system and the creation of our state park system, beginning with Larrabee Park, its first site. This history does not stop; it proceeds with the expansion of the Larrabee and Chuckanut parklands and the birth of private open space movements expressed at Clark Point, Teddy Bear Park etc.
- Quiet integrity, personal commitment and the desire for privacy among community builders, as expressed by Cyrus Gates’ firm “Vermont” modesty and in Salish respect for the identity of Woodstock’s previous owners and tradition-keepers. Not talking for one’s neighbors, rather consulting with them and DOING something.
- The history of our first and persisting scenic highways and the supporting eco-tourism components of the day: Chuckanut Drive, The Leopold, numerous auto camps and inns, the Mt. Baker Highway and Lodge. (The Mt. Baker Development Company was a venture of Woodstock creator Gates and his brother-in-law Bert Huntoon.)
- The agricultural/horticultural demonstration efforts of the Larrabee associates and their efforts to expand the agricultural economy. (The bulb and orchard industries as expressed at Woodstock, the ephemeral sugar beet and flax industries etc. promoted by Gates.)
- The Arts and Crafts Movement and its coming with light rail and suburban expansion (a la the Interurban) and in reaction to industrial uniformity and workplace changes. The aesthetics of the landscape and residential design arising (ironically even) from and with the very industrial era literally grown by the Larrabee associates, and its evolution into the landscape related arts of today.

These themes would guide and shape formulation of site adaptation and operation plans and create an overall aesthetic and tenor for the Farm. Weddings, funerals, corporate business meetings, for instance, do happen, but not every day in succession, not too loud, not too big and not so as to displace or overshadow uses more in keeping with the established site themes and public use of the site as a pass-through and wayside site in the greenway trail system. Much is dependent on the will of the City and a site operator to maintain a certain set of standards here, as well to commit to the notion of guiding themes and to interact on a regular basis to ensure and test the application and merit of themes.

2. Some Comparable Sites, Mentally Mixed

Item 1.2 lists 47 publicly accessible sites that have aspects similar to Woodstock, in part at least. You can go the list and click on the hyperlinks to reach most of the site managers and obtain more information via the internet.

Using this list as a start my suggested use of the site involves careful melding of the missions and selected features of the Meeker Mansion (it's emphasis on history) the Sitka Center for Art and Ecology (at least that part of its mission emphasizing visual and literary arts involving nearby wildland and wildlife learning), the Belltown Cottages (particularly their demonstration gardens and historic structures), Camp Long (with its goals, at least, of providing environmental learning services while also preserving a historic Cascadian design heritage), Bullock's Permaculture Homestead (even if its hands-on permaculture and sustainability demonstrations are way too funky and extensive for Woodstock and sophisticated South Bellingham) and Whatcom County's Anderson Creek Lodge (or at least its aspirations of being a rural event and meeting center.)

My idealism involves a lot more too, especially a call for subjugating such a mixture of missions and approaches under a couple of unifying themes and a management authority who can actually make it all work.

3. A General Site Description, Mostly the Outdoors

Quieter & Passive. The overall character is passive and quiet, although less so during special events. Cultural, educational and social activities are favored and "metered" to complement a quieter, wilder site.

Daytime & Overnight. Limited overnight accommodations in rustic, small structures associated with programmed, outdoor site activities is envisioned here, in a corner of the site not associated with main public areas and peripheral to most of the historic improvements. Except for staff, overnight uses are would not be accommodated in or around the Gates-Lee House, with the idea that public access to the heart of the site should not be compromised by public accommodations, which might also trigger ADA adaptations for more building areas, and that activities which involve the outdoor Woodstock landscape should come first.

Historic Theme Building Compound. All the present buildings would be maintained within a central heritage reserve. Preservation objectives would be particularly high for the Gates-Lee House and for preserving the exterior appearance of the other structures as they are visible from the Gates-Lee House. All structures must be adapted for the uses such as those suggested below, but less so the Gates-Lee House main floor and exterior.

Historic Materials & Landscape Elements. Steel wire and Portland cement concrete were the innovative materials of 1910s Woodstock and their look and feel would be preserved and replicated, along with the unique construction details found throughout the site. Use of local glacial boulders would be expanded and retained and quarried rock discouraged.

Public Access by Foot/ADA Accessibility. Public access would be provided through central heritage reserve at all times, but individual rooms, structures and associated yard areas would be periodically closed to public for rentals. Location of walkways and activity areas would reflect and support the site's marketing plan and selective closure of some areas to public travel. Full, building code type ADA accessibility would be provide access the main floor of the Gates-Lee and Cook's Houses, the garage and the main floor of the barn, the basement of the Gates-Lee House and along a walkway an new viewing overlook on the Upper Bluff, located at the elevation of the main floor of the Gates-Lee House and accessible via a new walkway contouring around Rock Chopper Bank. Outdoor, recreational type ADA access standards would be used to improve accessible routes to other parts of the site, notably between the Gates-Lee House and barn/garage terrace to the Chicken House Studio and Tennis Court Terrace. (ADA standards would meet a steeper, recreational standard for more rustic, backcountry ways linking the Gates-Lee House and barn/garage terrace elevations with other parts of the Farm like the Upper Bluff, Chuckanut Creek Shore, West Point, Cooks House, Kopperdahl Overlook and Owl Woods etc.)

An exterior walkway system would provide access along the shore and Upper Bluff to accommodate significant walking trails linking Chuckanut Village and the North Chuckanut Mt. Trailhead with Teddy Bear Park and creating a loop in conjunction with the Interurban Trail above Chuckanut Drive via Inspiration Point. Another neighborhood-scale loop-walk element would be a trail below the highway and through the Orchard between the Inspiration Point Overlook and the Kopperdahl and California Street Trails. A dramatic ledge trail (think of a Whistler, BC caliber structure attached to the base of the bluff in some areas) would link Teddy Bear Cove with the Lower Bluff Pasture and the Gates-Lee House.

Embedded in a Larger Open Space & Trail System, Land & Water. It's not just an isolated site. Like the Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Park in Woodstock, Vermont (recalling two of the men influencing our Mr. Gates and dedicated to a land stewardship theme) there is a large mass of public land located above what would become our Chuckanut gateway facility, our Billings Farm equivalent. Woodstock is part of a 150-acre public lands assembly lying west of Chuckanut Drive. Not counting Gates' Arroyo Park there are 8,000 acres of public land on Chuckanut and Blanchard Mountains, 2,600 of which are part of Larrabee Park. The trail system on Chuckanut and extending north into the City greenway system is vast. The conserved marine headlands on Chuckanut, Samish and nearby south Bellingham Bay are known regionally and linked by a regionally significant water trail system. Not accounting for the potential programming, interpretation and trailhead functions that Woodstock could provide for this larger trail and open space system leads to a very different set of conclusions about its use than does plugging them in.

Demonstrating Sustainable Resource Landscape & Building Practices.

Horticulture, permaculture, agricultural and forestry themes, of and reflecting the Gates era and relating to the global themes of Woodstock, Vermont's GP Marsh would be visibly and aesthetically demonstrated around the site, particularly around and within the

interior building and pasture area. Around the building compound, yards and pastures landscape plantings and management would favor and interpret the old landscapes of the Chuckanut shore and adjacent islands, based on nearby reference sites and recalling the impacts of climate change and human actions. (See Items 6.8 and 7.1.) The West Point, Upper Bluff and Rock Chopper Bank could, for instance, feature strong Garry Oak meadow and shoreline ledge themes to provide an aesthetic landscape with historic enrichment and educational values.

Woodstock's sharply drained terrain, rain-shadow ecology and its proximity to fisheries and shellfish beds make it a good site for demonstrating conservation of rainwater, and management of groundwater and wetland waters. Health regulations paired with public use mandate development of an innovative wastewater system. All these aspects of the site can be utilized in demonstrating sustainable land use and building practices.

Flower & Kitchen Gardens. Also located among the main buildings would be kitchen and flower gardens supplying special event and modest scale on-site restaurant services and perhaps strategically related off-site sales and service points.

Fossil Garden. Author/researcher George Mustoe, say, would curate a Chuckanut sandstone fossil garden, interpretive but artistic: paleoecology to sit and reflect on, from the global warming episode of the Eocene.

Sculpture & Furniture. Ephemeral landscape art in the Andy Goldsworthy vein could be located around the site, as could mobile, Arts and Crafts style furniture placed in seasonally varied arrangements and locations. (The presence of caretakers and a more intensive monitoring regime associated with a private lease, for instance, means more fragile and mobile features can be provided than in a traditional park setting.)

Residences. 1 to 3 caretaker or specialists-in-residence dwelling units would be provided on the site. See suggested building uses below. A new series of small "micro cabins" would be provided for programmed visitors and specialist-in-residences north and northwest of the Cook's House.

Archeological Reserves. The two State-registered midden sites on the bay shore are best managed and "lightly interpreted" as quieter "old peoples places" managed using historic landscape themes. These areas will not have active recreation, although the Boathouse Midden will be the site of paddle and row-boat launching and the Creek Meadow would accommodate sitting and picnicking.

4. An Element by Element Site Description, Often the Buildings

Once an investor steps forward, say in response to a proposal is issued by the City, Woodstock might include the functions, uses, looks and features described below. This is model keeps all the buildings in place and seeks to retain the character, if not all the known functions, of the 1910-1925 estate.

a. HIGHWAY & DRIVEWAY ACCESS; FILLING AND FLATTENING AT SR 11, WIDENING FOR EMERGENCY ACCESS, BIKES & BEAUTY ON THE HIGHWAY

Driveway. The main driveway would be modified much as shown in Item 2A.1, unless we can find a way to build it narrower and less ponderously. The Item 2A.1 scheme includes a narrower, 1-way segment to preserve a rural drive character at Flag Pole Hill. Parking on site is carefully managed by the site operator, to the tune of about 30 spaces maximum. Transportation management for motor vehicles will favor prearranged parking for rideshare vehicles. Event and seasonal van drops will be provided for at Inspiration Point, the main gate, the Cook's House entry station and at the Gates-Lee House. Vehicle traffic below the Cook's House is severely calmed, with Item 2A.1 showing a narrowed one-way pavement, traffic signals and a distinct pavement treatment.

Highway Improvements. Highway modifications for bicycle access would include two spot widenings for uphill/southbound cyclists, who will mostly enter the site via the old road north of the main gate. Highway improvements for pedestrians and cyclists using the Interurban and Spokane St. would include flashing light crosswalks (pavement surface, user-activated) at Spokane Street and California Street. New foot trails will provide access to the Farm from the California St. crosswalk and the N. Chuckanut Trailhead parking lot and Chuckanut Village via the Chuckanut Creek/Bay shoreline. Eventually the speed limit might be reduced from 35 to 25 MPH, but such actions tend to follow use changes. (Sorry, get used to bikes on the road: For "real cyclists" there are no alternatives for easy, safer and more convenient bike access to the Farm other than road widening. A major gap in the Interurban Trail, between Lake Samish Road and the former south abutment of the California Street trestle, could be overcome, but at huge expense. Even then the Clark property above Woodstock would have to be purchased for a new trail alignment overcoming the Spokane Street corridor "barrier".)

Other Highway improvements will beautify the entrances to the Farm at the main driveway (recreating the old Farm lamp post) and at Inspiration Point, ideally linking the site with other historically and thematically related highway sites and the Cascadian design theme of the early 1900s. A first phase of improvements at Inspiration Point is funded.

b. THE ORCHARD & FLAG POLE HILL; SUSTAINABLE URBAN GARDENING & PERMACULTURE DEMONSTRATIONS

Sheep have been part of Woodstock for some 40 years. If the sheep are confirmed to be economical as part of a site management plan (they are aesthetically enjoyed by many) the sheep yard and shed might be relocated to this area to make way for septic or more active uses in lieu of the present sheep yard. Permeable overflow parking is possible along the driveway. A vineyard and other vine and berry crops could be added away from active pastures. The Orchard Basin could accommodate a vernal pool.

Tulips could restore an old Gates theme, per the site's historic photographic record and his role in the bulb industry. A foot trail along the upper part of the Orchard is shown on Item 2A.1 and would link the California St. Trail directly with Inspiration Point Overlook and provide views into the Farm and into its managed "sustainable garden" demonstration areas. Separate sheds should be built for fuel and possibly hay.

**c. THE COOK'S HOUSE VICINITY; WELCOME CENTER & OVERNIGHT
"MICRO CABINS"**

This building would be improved as a security station, welcome center and small office and staff living quarters on the first floor and as a staff apartment on the lower floor. Signage and furniture on the porch would invite visitors onto the site and into the present living room, which would be divided into an office and information area furnished in keeping with Arts and Crafts design motifs. Think of the visitor center component as part of a "slow highway" project where recreational drivers walk .4 miles from the trailhead at California Street to learn about Woodstock as part of the Gates-era Chuckanut Drive scenic highway development period. (This transportation and scenic byway theme may make the project eligible for tourism and transportation funding.) This use compliments the outdoor gathering areas shown on Item 2A.1, where shuttle vehicles would load and unload passengers. North and northwest of the Cook's house would be a series of small cabins designed to mirror aspects of the Mt. Baker Development Company's Shuksan Cabins on the Gates property now located in the Mt. Baker National Forest. These cabins would be quite small and rustic and tucked into the woods. They would house visiting artists- and interpreters-in-residence, programmed (theme-based) recreational overnights, and adult users typical of a rural Audubon Nature Center program providing wildland study opportunities to "engagement oriented" tourists (much like Elderhostel participants) seeking a combination of civic volunteer, recreation and enrichment experiences. This set of small cabins would have programmed use of the Kopperdahl Overlook and the Boathouse paddling and rowing craft. Overnight and conference type guests using these structures can walk to the Boathouse (via the old roadbed trail on the north bank of the creek) and the Kopperdahl Overlook without passing through areas of the site best reserved for informal public enjoyment.

**d. THE GATES-LEE HOUSE, CHICKEN HOUSE STUDIO & THEIR TWO
TERRACES; LINKED INDOOR & OUTDOOR MEETING/SOCIAL EVENT
SPACES**

A ca. 1910 structure doubled in size in 1924 by F. Stanley Piper. The main floor and basement levels would be adapted to be fully compliant with ADA building code requirements (the ramp to the basement would be outdoors) and improved as historically-inspired meeting and social event space. The upper storey would serve as offices and or a staff residence. The main floor kitchen would be renovated or possibly moved into the basement in part. The basement "observation room" and laundry room might be joined, even perhaps with the fireplace-equipped pool room, to form a large multipurpose space (strongly linked to a modified outdoor terrace) serviced by storage and food service amenities located in the Maid's apartment. The first floor would be

linked with a new viewpoint (a Cascadian style belvedere more or less) constructed on the adjacent bluff and featuring stunning views of Chuckanut Bay and the islands via a level walkway following the contours of Rock Chopper Bank. This walkway would be somewhat formal but would pass through an open, sunny Chuckanut ledge planting inspired by the historic meadow/forest mosaic plant community. The lower, basement level would be linked with a regarded terrace created in place of today's Gates-Lee House Lawn. The Chicken House Studio would become a "garden theme" food service building (possibly including a restroom and a seating area) servicing the Tennis Court Terrace and the regraded Gates-Lee House Lawn, which would include seating areas, lawn and formal flower beds in keeping with Woodstock's history. The Tennis Court Terrace with its striking views would be the scene of special group events involving features like a fire circle, seating, surface games like bocce etc. Train noise does affect the Tennis Court Terrace; quiet oratory and contemplation are significantly interrupted by freight trains, less so by AMTRAK. The remains of Gates' rock pile should stay in place as a cultural feature intended by the Farm's creator. A few Garry oak have been planted but views should be largely retained.

e. THE WEST POINT; A SECLUDED RESERVE, MANAGED AS AN INTERPRETIVE GARRY OAK MEADOW

The West Point would continue as a quiet, remoter place for sitting, privacy and passive observation. Excavation is precluded because the area is largely a culturally created shell midden. A farm style fence and gate would be employed to calm the Point and keep active plan and gathering off of the midden area and on the basic Tennis Court Terrace elevation. Using minimal disturbance means and methods the stunted Douglas-fir grove would be gradually replaced with oak and madrone and a few "missing" and attractive understory species of the old Chuckanut landscape. An informal path system would form or be promoted through meadow canopy management. Some of the Farm's most unique plants persist here just outside the pasture fences.

f. THE GARAGE-BARN HOF; THE SUNNY, "EASY ACCESS ACTIVITY CENTER"

The paved area between the garage and barn is one of the sunniest spots on the central grounds and would accommodate outdoor seating and social activities associated with both structures, which would be adapted for nonspecialized events, classes and gatherings. (See Item 4.0 for a discussion of the slab failure here.) Visitors naturally gravitate to the hof, more than any other area in the building compound. It has a view and it's easy and the barn is comfy feeling. The garage could be adapted as a multipurpose gathering and picnic shelter style eating area, retaining historic features and fully opening doors. Possibly add heating source to extended spring and fall use but manage for occasional, unheated uses in winter. The barn could be adapted for special events such as lectures, chamber music, small band performances, with its apartment kitchen supporting garage and paved area uses. Upstairs apartment bedroom could be office or small caretaker quarters. The barn basement would service site operations and provide storage for tools, equipment, shop features etc. A new, centrally located and

fully accessible restroom would be provided against the north garage wall, blended into the look of the hof buildings and serving this popular area.

g. THE COW MAN'S COTTAGE; CARETAKER RESIDENCE & SECURITY POST

A 1924 F. Stanley Piper design specifically for the animal keeper. Retained as, and carefully adapt as, a contemporary caretaker, docent or artist/interpreter-in-residence quarters. This structure occupies a strategic security position with respect to trail entrance from Chuckanut Village and monitoring the Boathouse Beach. The deck should be removed ASAP and replaced with a small private yard. The septic system is marginal but apparently not affecting the bay, creek or surface water.

h. THE BOATHOUSE & CREEK MEADOW; FARM-BASED PADDLING & ROWING EXCURSIONS TO CHUCKANUT BAY

The eroding shell midden face must be closed before the beach is opened as part of a water trail or for regular visitation from the Farm. A bank stabilization structure should be designed with a "rustic built look" to store vertically placed rowing craft in a visually pleasing manner, rather than making unlikely pretenses as an unbuilt feature. (The midden is also a built feature; imagine a crib structure faced with weathered wood slabs and cradles for small boats. Excavation is precluded because the area is largely a culturally created shell midden. Like the West Point, this is another intensive cultural resources management area and its uses would be limited to passive sitting, picnicking, wildlife observation and gatherings supporting the boat house and paddling and rowing activities.

Tide window suitability at the boathouse has not been graphed yet. (See items 4.2 and 4.3 for a discussion of shoaling and navigability constraints.) In general a sustained 5.5 to 6 foot tide is required for meaningful Farm-based boating. The boathouse and its beach would not be opened up for community use or public launching from shore. Rather the boathouse would be operated as a carefully managed amenity for class and retreat participants, for instance, and based on planned launch and return schedules to avoid grounding mishaps and to minimize impacts on wildlife. (A program-based boathouse operation reflecting the larger passive use, conservation and stewardship themes discussed above for Woodstock would incorporate built-in measures to mitigate disturbances to vulnerable species based on migration, roosting and nesting information, for instance.)

Just as Woodstock is located in a highly desirable terrestrial relationship with the vast Chuckanut Mt. trail and park system it has strong thematic and physical relationships with the wild coastal headlands and islets of Chuckanut, Samish and south Bellingham Bays. Sites like Clark Point (under a perpetual Whatcom Land Trust conservation easement), Chuckanut Rocks (BLM/WWU) and Chuckanut Island (the Nature Conservancy's Cyrus Gates Memorial) and Teddy Bear Cove (Whatcom Land Trust and Whatcom County) feature sea cliffs, littoral wildlands, tidelands and bedlands known regionally for their high biological diversity and wild character. The operator of the

Woodstock site would enter partnerships with these owners to link the Woodstock boating program with sites like Chuckanut Island and Clark Point's Peggy Cove and Coade Boat Basin.

As at the West Point, certain recent approaches to "educational" or "interpretive" information about the midden should be avoided in favor docent-led talks (tempered by good judgment in the matter of not speaking for one's neighbors or of their values or viewpoints) and web links to off-site sources or on-site downloads.

B. BACKGROUND

1. Constraints

Item 0.8 lists a set of known and potential constraints, limitations and transaction costs. These range from less arguable physical and regulatory givens, to civic performance criteria proposed by the author, to potential stake-holder interests.

2. Not Just a Site; A Part of a Greenway & Trail System

Without understanding its linkages with other public lands and trails (both existing and potential) and without anticipating a society where managed ridesharing, shuttle services, expanded public transit etc. are becoming more prevalent, many people consider Woodstock only an isolated park site or a compact, discrete facility. The Farm's walking, congregating and viewing environments can and do actually extend well beyond the boundaries of the 16-acre estate tract and the property was purchased because it formed part of an extensive greenway system. Several peripheral activities and sites can be enriched and supported from and at the core of the Farm itself. There are over 150 acres of public land along NE Chuckanut Bay and west of Chuckanut Drive and some 2000 acres of public land on Chuckanut Creek and Mt. south of Lake Samish Road, including a vast trail system. (See area map of City property, charrette Item 0.3.) Around Woodstock there is a significant set of conserved headlands (Chuckanut Island, Larrabee State Park, Clark Point) complimenting regionally known paddling and rowing waters. Like the national park lands on Woodstock, Vermont's Mt. Tom, we should consider our Woodstock as part of a system of lands and byways managed and operated as open space and wildland, by a variety of organizations.

3. The Farm Without the Gates Buildings?

Eliminating the Woodstock buildings is one way to go, although few people who know the place well seriously consider this desirable. (See Item 1.1 for some history on the City's purchase premise.) Without its buildings, or, say, with the only the barn and garage retained along with a new restroom, as wayside amenities and curiosities for trail system users, Woodstock could easily be one of the highlights of the City and Chuckanut Mt. trail systems and the Chuckanut Drive Scenic Byway. There are many other such public places in the greenway and park system, places too small and

precious to significantly “improve” for many of today’s low-occupancy car users. These same places can be popular, intricate and rich for walkers, bicyclists, car users who park a few blocks away, transit users and, increasingly, willing users of shared and managed-access private motor vehicles. Woodstock could also be part of a marine water trail as well. In summary, the place could be quite nice without its buildings and without much parking.

4. Not Just a Corridor; A Special Place with Themes Expressing Identity & History

Woodstock is also a site, a built human heritage site, a clear and distinct place with settlement features over 3,000 years old and with a set of buildings that could be adapted for contemporary community uses. With a commitment of resources these built features can be retained and used to express themes recalling human history and the origins of our community. Since they are old they can be presented to explore the relations of people with the greater, changing landscape.

Identity can be just as important as utility and recreational value. It is important to people related to the earliest users of Woodstock and for people economically and culturally benefiting from the legacy of the Farm’s builder and his “Larrabee associates”. (The many public works and cultural contributions of the Larrabee associates and other Woodstock themes will be addressed in Item 8.1.)

Built features like those at Woodstock will never be created again; they speak uniquely to our local and regional history and our origins. Given a choice, resources and awareness and of history few of us prefer a public place with arrangements, colors, pallets, materials, stories and logic drawn only from the contemporary national marketplace of “public placeware”—we often want things that are outside markets: features, activities and engagement experiences which speak to longer term notions of place-making, struggle, betterment, justice etc.

A viable theme for a public place will not be overstated and exclusive. While there should be multiple meanings, layers and subthemes a place like Woodstock cannot be everything and cannot mean everything and remain significant. Layering of story and meaning is critical if a theme is to be both vernacular and significant. Ideally a simple site name used in print, key ideas used in site-based curricula and visual elements, and the unrecorded stories told around a campfire or at special event all relate or at least inform one another.

Timelessness is a key attribute of a public theme. Let’s not cop out by “showcasing” (a really bad but useful word) or merely recalling what WAS. Life is not a museum; the past does matter in the future and evoking the past and future merely for pleasure and entertainment was not likely a value shared by the Farm’s creator or its past residents. “Civic engagement” can be a key idea here, as it was for the Farm’s creator/proprietor and as it is for those who are most related to the pre-contact owners of Woodstock, who

seek to have their history protected and carried forward here. (Item 8.2 will examine historical matters.)

5. Auto Parking at Woodstock & Comparable Sites

Let's face it, auto parking "eats" popular public sites like Bloedel Donovan, Boulevard, Fairhaven, Padden and Marine Parks, to name a few. The demand for drop-in private auto parking can never be met and virtually all amounts of paving, filling, and stormwater manipulation degrade the basic qualities that make Woodstock unique and desirable to most visitors. Woodstock is no different than many other public sites in this basic respect, but we have hindsight and some choices. Woodstock is different in that it is semi-rural in nature; its nearest formal offsite parking (perhaps 60 to 70 spaces) will be .4 mile away at California Street, an insignificant distance for today's typical trailhead motorists, but limiting for most door-to-door event or program participants travelling by motor vehicle. As we face rising energy costs a system-wide assessment of the relationships between parking and public leisure venues is needed in Bellingham, and should reveal some interesting patterns. The community has many notable recreation and meeting places with zero to very limited on-site parking (Big Rock Park, Maritime Park, Lairmont Manor, Fairhaven Village Green, Elizabeth Park etc.) and many others with regular parking capacity constraints (Boulevard, Fairhaven, Bloedel Donovan and Marine Parks etc.) These sites depend on street and off-site parking and also serve nonmotorized travelers. Item 2A.1 shows a conceptual parking scheme for Woodstock that provides 26 auto stalls above the Gates-Lee House. Even with creative overflow parking and some additional service vehicle stalls, all-hours drop-in parking at the Farm itself appears unsustainable and undesirable given models like Boulevard Park. Drop-in parking may also become a thing of the past at the nearby North Chuckanut Mt. Trailhead lot and similar high demand sites during certain event seasons. (Like Boulevard Park, Woodstock IS inherently a high demand parking destination for traditional recreational drivers, not that we must, or can, provide for unmanaged drop-in parking for low occupancy vehicles.)