



CHAPTER 2 POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS



2 Policy Recommendations

This mode-specific Pedestrian Master Plan provides the primary basis for citywide pedestrian planning, pedestrian projects prioritization, and pedestrian policy in addition to the transportation element of the 2006 Comprehensive Plan. When the 2006 Bellingham Comprehensive Plan is updated, this Plan will be fully incorporated and will replace all of the existing pedestrian projects and policies in the Transportation Element.

2.1 Recommended Policies

Existing federal, state, regional, and city policies, the vision for a walkable Bellingham, and best practices were considered in developing goals and policies for the Plan.

- Goals are broad visions of what the City and its residents hope to achieve over time.
- Policies are statements that translate into the language of local government and guide the way the public improvements are made, where resources are allocated, how programs are operated, how City priorities are determined, and how private development is designed.

The goals and policies were defined early in the planning process. The vision for a walkable Bellingham and the goals of the Pedestrian Master Plan were the basis for the robust package of pedestrian infrastructure and programs recommendations. The goals identified in Chapter 1 are restated below with corresponding policies. Implementation strategies for executing these policies are described in Chapter 6.

Goal 1: Safety

Improve pedestrian safety through well-designed facilities along and across roadways, and by promoting safe driving, walking, and bicycling behaviors.

Policy 1.1 Reduce the number and severity of vehicle-pedestrian collisions through education to promote safe driving, bicycling, and pedestrian behaviors.

Policy 1.2 Enforce traffic laws that affect pedestrian safety and personal security.

Policy 1.3 Improve the walking environment through enhanced design, engineering, and maintenance of pedestrian facilities.

Policy 1.4 Raise awareness on the part of all road users about pedestrian rights and laws.

Policy 1.5 Increase the number of Bellingham residents who walk, in order to realize the benefits of "safety in numbers."

Policy 1.6 Incorporate design best practices to improve pedestrian crossings.

Goal 2: Equity

Provide accessible pedestrian facilities for all through equity in public engagement, service delivery and capital investment.

Policy 2.1 Provide diverse opportunities for all residents to participate in making Bellingham a walkable community.

Policy 2.2 Ensure that walking facilities are provided for all residents of Bellingham, including people of different ages, races, ethnicities, incomes and those with variable or restricted mobility.

Policy 2.3 Ensure that the transportation system is accessible to people with disabilities, and that an ADA Transition Plan is completed to identify obstacles to access, develop a work plan to remove those obstacles, and identify responsible parties.

Policy 2.4 Increase community engagement opportunities among residents that rely on walking for daily needs.

Goal 3: Public and Environmental Health

Develop a pedestrian network that promotes active, healthy lifestyles and sustains a healthy environment.

Policy 3.1 Improve pedestrian access to transit, schools, healthy food choices, healthcare facilities, support services, and employment destinations throughout the city.

Policy 3.2 Improve air and water quality and reduce energy consumption by encouraging walking and other non-motorized trips.

Policy 3.3 Ensure that pedestrian facility design supports environmental objectives within the city.

Policy 3.4 Increase the availability and use of pedestrian infrastructure to improve the health of Bellingham residents.

“For most of us, a more walkable Bellingham would be “nice.” For those who don’t drive – primarily the poorer people, the elders, and people with disabilities, a walkable city means the difference between a full life and a restricted life. Citizens who rely on public transportation, or who get there on foot or in a wheelchair, really know what a difference this Pedestrian Plan will make in their lives.”

- Lesley Rigg, Steering Committee Member, Aging & Disability Resources, Northwest Regional Council

Goal 4: Economic Sustainability

Enhance economic vibrancy by creating a safe and aesthetically pleasing walking environment with easy connections to commercial centers and inviting public places for people to socialize.

Policy 4.1 Support walking access to community destinations for residents and visitors.

Policy 4.2 Increase pedestrian connectivity between existing residential neighborhoods and nearby commercial areas, parks, and schools.

Policy 4.3 Increase the provision of pedestrian amenities, including street trees, furniture, and pedestrian-scale lighting within the sidewalk where appropriate.

Policy 4.4 Promote the economic benefits of pedestrian-oriented development.

Policy 4.5 Incorporate design practices that achieve an aesthetically pleasing pedestrian environment whenever possible.

Goal 5: Connectivity

Provide a citywide network of accessible, efficient, and convenient pedestrian infrastructure that connects homes, jobs, shopping, schools, services, and recreation areas using sidewalks, crosswalks, shared-use paths, bridges, tunnels, and signage.

Policy 5.1 Provide a continuous sidewalk network along all city streets in the primary pedestrian network identified in the Bellingham Pedestrian Master Plan.

Policy 5.2 Design high-quality and context-appropriate pedestrian facilities on all new roadways, and retrofit older roadways to complete the pedestrian network, using routes and facility design guidance identified in this Plan.

Policy 5.3 Ensure that all schools within the city have complete infrastructure for safe walking routes.

"Implementing Bellingham's Pedestrian Plan will strengthen the interface between our Greenway trail system, on-street bike routes, and sidewalk network, further enhancing opportunities for recreation and transportation for our citizens."

- Leslie Bryson, Design Development Manager, Bellingham Parks and Recreation

Goal 6: Multi-modal Transportation

Develop high-quality pedestrian facilities that provide access to all other modes of transportation.

Policy 6.1 Promote a diverse transportation system that provides equitable mobility and complete connectivity for all modes.

Policy 6.2 Improve connections to transit for pedestrians.

Policy 6.3 Foster a community culture supportive of walking as an important mode of transportation and recreation.

Goal 7: Land Use and Site Design

Employ land use planning and site design requirements that are conducive to pedestrian travel and promote a mode shift away from automobile trips to walking trips.

Policy 7.1 Address safety issues associated with vehicle speeds and volumes; provide appropriate separation from motor vehicle traffic and design elements that reduce the speed differential between modes.

Policy 7.2 Ensure connection and completion of pedestrian facilities as part of SEPA review for new and redevelopment. Require the construction of sidewalks or walkways with multiple residential, commercial or industrial development, where pedestrian facilities are appropriate

Policy 7.3 Encourage walking for short trips.

Policy 7.4 Design Urban Village settings so that walking is the most attractive mode of transportation.

Policy 7.5 Pedestrian circulation plans shall be required for commercial and large multi-family projects. Pedestrian facilities shall connect commercial and multi-family buildings with the abutting street(s) to encourage pedestrian/transit use.

"A pedestrian friendly community is one that embraces multi-modal methods of transportation for all residents equitably, providing its residents access to vital resources, recreational activities, and community services in a safe, healthy, and pleasant manner. Ensuring a pedestrian-friendly environment serves as a catalyst for positive change toward both individual self-reliance and a sense of community among all the diverse residents."

- Ayesha Brookshier, Steering Committee Member, Opportunity Council
