

2. VISION

The Old Town area is envisioned as a community in which people can live, work, and play. It's designed to maintain important characteristics such as view corridors and vistas, natural features, historic resources, small businesses and yet provide for additional housing and business opportunities. Old Town is envisioned as an 'urban village' that nearby residents of downtown and Lettered Streets call their own.

Old Town is a place that preserves and respects its historic features. The Old City Hall (Whatcom Museum), Territorial Courthouse, Great Northern Passenger Station, Oakland Block, Lottie Roth Block, and Pickett House are area highlights. Some of the remaining historic buildings are situated so as to create terminal views – "views to the past" – thereby garnering the area's historic context a more significant presence.

Historically, development in Old Town has been marked by maritime, railroad, light industrial, downtown commercial, residential, and marine estuary influences. The area has experienced many changes over time that are reflected in the character and diversity of building and infrastructure. Residents and users have expressed a strong interest in preserving and enhancing the unique characteristics of this diverse area.



A diverse mix of uses will be encouraged to emphasize and build upon the eclectic nature that exists today. People envision live/work and artist studios, theatres, antique shops, cafes and restaurants, theatres, maritime uses, and a variety of housing opportunities.

What has always drawn people to this area is its connection to the water from Whatcom Creek to the Bay. Strong pedestrian connections to the waterway and waterfront redevelopment area draw people to enjoy the water. Whatcom Creek and Maritime Heritage Park, another area treasure, continues to serve as a respite and trail link to nearby neighborhoods.

Pre-automobile, Old Town was a busy, bustling place where people lived in or nearby and walked to work, shop, have a drink, or see a show. In honor of this tradition, design guidelines and public amenities will ensure new development will have strong pedestrian focus creating better connections within the area, and to downtown, the waterfront, and the Lettered Streets Neighborhood.

2.1. FRAMEWORK POLICIES

- Encourage a healthy mix of diverse and eclectic residential and commercial uses,
- Guide development to engage the pedestrian by providing active streetscape uses, and a safe, convenient, and interesting network of walkable streets,
- Ensure new development responds to view corridors, landmark buildings, and the natural environment,
- Provide a level of predictability for stakeholders within and outside Old Town, and
- Encourage redevelopment to occur in Old Town.

