

**DRAFT**



# **FAIRHAVEN NEIGHBORHOOD AND URBAN VILLAGE PLAN**

City of Bellingham

*Draft – March 20, 2012*

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**REFERENCE MATERIALS**

**City of Bellingham Documents:**

- Bellingham Comprehensive Plan
- Bellingham Comprehensive Water, Sewer and Stormwater Plans
- Shoreline Master Program

**Fairhaven Neighborhood and Urban Village Technical Studies:**

- Fairhaven Neighborhood and Urban Village Parking Plan – *Transpo Group*
- Historic Resource Survey and Inventory Report – *Artifacts Consulting, Inc.*
- Traffic Analysis – *City of Bellingham*
- Leadership in Energy Efficiency and Design for Neighborhood Development (LEED-ND) Report

## **INTRODUCTION**

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### **Purpose of the Plan**

Fairhaven is located at the south end of Bellingham and includes a thriving historic commercial district, pleasant residential areas, natural open spaces and a working waterfront. The 2012 Fairhaven Neighborhood and Urban Village Plan (FNUVP) represents the first major review and reconciliation of neighborhood priorities in Fairhaven since the 1980 neighborhood plan. The purpose of this plan is to identify goals and guiding policies that will help guide development in Fairhaven over the next 20 years.

This document provides a planning framework that supports the vision, goals and policies for Fairhaven. Because of the compact size and variety of uses in Fairhaven, this plan is different than other urban village plans as it encompasses an entire neighborhood and although it does not overlay any other adjacent neighborhoods, those residents consider Fairhaven to be their urban village as well. Rather than trying to create a new urban village where there wasn't one before, this plan seeks to maintain, clarify and improve Fairhaven as Bellingham's model urban village.

**VISION FOR THE FUTURE:** The Fairhaven Neighborhood seeks a balance of environmental stewardship, quality of life and economic well-being.



**Figure 1** Center of the Fairhaven Commercial District on 12<sup>th</sup> Street looking north.

The challenge of creating the FNUVP is to address the diverse expectations of the property owners, merchants, and those that call Fairhaven home. In the process to develop the plan, City staff sought out all these groups in order to identify goals and policies intended to preserve the neighborhood as a prosperous, livable area with a unique character, while providing ongoing stewardship of its natural resources. This plan strives for balanced economic development that will maximize value for all of Fairhaven's citizens, as well as the broader neighborhoods this iconic urban village serves. Compatibility of design, economic vitality, and connections within Fairhaven, and with surrounding areas, were of paramount importance in developing the plan.

Specific implementing design standards (BMC 20.25) and development regulations (BMC 20.37) work in tandem with this document to implement the policies and vision.

### **Definition of Terms and Key Planning Goals**

The following terms are used throughout this document and are defined as follows:

<b>Background</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Relevant history and general information.</li></ul>
<b>Goal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A desired outcome that is envisioned, planned for and committed to.</li></ul>
<b>Policy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Steps that could be taken to achieve the goals.</li></ul>

These following goals form the basis of the FNUVP, and help provide an overall structure for the additional policies and recommendations:



### Relationship to the Comprehensive Plan

All of Bellingham's Neighborhood and Urban Village Plans are part of the city-wide [Bellingham Comprehensive Plan](#). Neighborhood and urban village plans must be consistent with, and implement, the overall goal and policy framework set in the comprehensive plan. At the same time, neighborhood and urban village plans convey important information about unique values and character, including specific visions and goals for the future.

The *Bellingham Comprehensive Plan* identifies infill as the preferred method of accommodating anticipated population growth. It directs the creation of a series of urban centers as an important component of the infill strategy. An urban center (also known as an "urban village") is an area that:

- Contains a mix of commercial, residential, and service uses;
- Provides jobs, services and amenities within walking distance of area residents;
- Is designed for pedestrians, bikes and transit, as well as the automobile;
- Facilitates strong community connections and interaction by serving as a neighborhood focal point and providing active public spaces; and
- Promotes sustainability and quality design.

The *Comprehensive Plan* designates Fairhaven as a "District Urban Center", defined as an area designed and intended to serve the entire community while remaining accessible to those living or working nearby.



**Figure 2** Fairhaven streetscape looking west on Harris Avenue towards 10<sup>th</sup> Street.

In addition to Fairhaven, other examples of District Urban Centers include the Sunset Square and Barkley Village areas.

The *Comprehensive Plan* also identifies Fairhaven as a "Tier 1" urban village. This designation was intended to acknowledge that the area is already developed with a mix of commercial, residential and public uses typical of an urban village. The Tier 1 designation also recognizes that the regulatory framework is already in place to allow the village to continue to develop (i.e. appropriate zoning, design standards, and development regulations). This is in contrast to the lower tier villages in the comprehensive plan, where minor to extensive redevelopment, property assemblage and regulatory changes (rezones) are needed in order for a true, mixed use village to develop.

## **Development/Redevelopment Potential**

Unlike the City's other recent urban village plans that attempt to create opportunities for future development, such as Old Town, Fountain District and Samish Way, Fairhaven contains a long-established development pattern and limited vacant or underdeveloped land. It is a model of a functioning urban village, as is demonstrated by its Gold rating under the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Neighborhood Design (LEED-ND) standards (see page 16).



**Figure 3 Harris Square at Harris Avenue looking south at sunset.**

The development potential in Fairhaven was reviewed by City staff in 2012. The land capacity model completed for the Fairhaven Commercial Core assumed future development will not differ greatly in form or intensity from recent development patterns. To establish an estimate for future growth, the most-recent 500,000 square feet of mixed-use construction was analyzed. Included in this total are Fairhaven Gardens, the Waldron/Young block, Harris Square, and the 1440 McKenzie block. These projects averaged 64 housing units and 21,000 square feet of commercial space per acre of land.

The analysis identified 3.4 acres of vacant land, 0.6 acres of partially vacant land, and 2.6 acres of potentially re-developable land, and concluded the following:

- The vacant 3.4 acres of land could support 218 new housing units and 71,000 square feet of commercial space.
- Partially developed 0.6 acres of land are restricted due to parcel configuration and adjacent uses. These areas

could accommodate development at ½ the rate of vacant areas, or about 19 new housing units and 6,000 square feet of commercial space.

- Potentially re-developable land is characterized by converted single family homes, smaller single-story commercial buildings, and surface parking lots not dedicated to specific businesses. These potentially re-developable 2.6 acres could accommodate an additional 51 housing units, and 12,000 square feet of commercial space, assuming only about 1/3 of these parcels will develop in the planning period.
- The estimated redevelopment capacity for residential areas outside the core is 20 units.
- Adding the vacant, partially vacant, and potentially re-developable capacity together results in a total estimate of 308 new housing units (housing 529 people) and 89,000 square feet of commercial space within the planning period.
- Based on the existing average of 318 square feet per job, the 89,000 square feet of commercial space could accommodate up to 280 new jobs in the commercial core.
- The City's 2009 Employment Lands Report identified approximately 4 vacant acres in the industrial areas of Fairhaven. Assuming past development trends in industrial areas of the city continue, future development in these areas could be expected to include an additional 175 jobs over the 20-year planning period.

The Fairhaven Urban Village is a compact, diverse, neighborhood with outstanding multi-modal connectivity providing easy access to arterials, services, and established park and trail systems. The dynamic business in the commercial district, as well as the bustling waterfront, are framed and buffered by lush riparian corridors, green hillsides, and the sweeping edge of Bellingham Bay.

## **The Planning Process**

Many stakeholders contributed to the information gathering, analysis and writing that resulted in this 2012 update to the original 1980 Fairhaven Neighborhood Plan. They include residents and property owners, business owners, employers and employees, residents of adjacent neighborhoods, and many others who use and cherish Fairhaven.

## **Background – Proposals from Fairhaven Stakeholders**

Following the 2006 Bellingham Planning Academy for Neighbors, the Fairhaven Neighbors Neighborhood Association led a planning process to generate a full-scale update of their neighborhood plan. Using surveys, committees, and open public meetings, the neighbors created a plan update that was submitted to the City in December of 2007. A fundamental difference of opinion between the residential neighbors and the property and business owners regarding the future vision for the area was identified during this process. As a result of this difference of opinion, the City did not begin processing the neighborhood plan update proposal until City Council directed staff to move forward on the plan in mid-2010. The public was invited to attend two staff-led listening sessions in December of 2010.

Also in December of 2010, a group of property and business owners filed an application requesting the City conduct a full urban village planning process for Fairhaven in 2011. City Council directed staff to reorganize the project into one phase that included both a neighborhood plan update and an urban village planning process. The Council also reviewed a very specific scope of work and timeline for project. This scope was followed throughout the planning process.



**Figure 4: Public meeting November 16, 2011.**

Council's direction culminated in a City-led effort to bring the stakeholders together, find common ground, utilize professional expertise and technical studies, and formulate a complete package that included the Fairhaven Neighborhood and Urban Village Plan, and implementing development regulations and design standards.

## **Public Meeting Series**

Five public meetings were held in May and June of 2011 to lay the foundation for the planning process, focusing on the following:

- Meeting #1:** Introduction, Character & Boundaries
- Meeting #2:** Natural Environment, Parks & Recreation
- Meeting #3:** Fairhaven Design Review District and Historic Resources
- Meeting #4:** Public Realm - Transportation & Streetscapes
- Meeting #5:** Development Character - Height, Design, Views and Uses

Each session was well attended and included neighbors, business owners, property owners, developers, nonprofit organizations, elected officials and other interested parties. The sessions typically included staff presentations, assignments that required stakeholder involvement and input, and the coalescing of public input in open group discussion. All materials and feedback were posted on the project website at [www.cob.org/fairhaven](http://www.cob.org/fairhaven).

Some topics, as expected, garnered more input than others. A Public Input Report consolidated all the input and was distributed to every attendee and posted on the project website. The input was carefully analyzed by staff and provided to consultants working on Fairhaven-related technical studies.

The public input gleaned from the meetings helped staff clarify the key principles and values for Fairhaven stakeholders, and helped inform for the overall planning effort.

## **Fairhaven Key Planning Principles and Values**

*Strengths and opportunities to support and maintain:*

- Authentic, 100+ year history of commercial, residential and industrial uses
- Vibrant business core and regional visitor destination
- Multi-modal transportation center (bus, train, ferry, automobile, bike, foot)
- Historic character, buildings and design
- Waterfront location, views and natural environment
- Potential improved waterfront access and moorage



**Figure 5: Padden Creek.**

*Issues to address:*

- Current and future parking limitations
- Limited direct access to the waterfront
- Lack of building height limits in certain areas
- Increasing traffic and urban village "sprawl" into adjacent residential areas
- Unclear and confusing development rules and design guidance for new development
- Lack of historic preservation rules

## **Technical Studies and Data Collection**

Following the public meeting series, the City conducted several technical studies and hired experts to help collect data and formulate recommendations to inform the planning effort. These included the following, all of which were available on the City's website:

- Fairhaven Neighborhood and Urban Village Parking Plan, October 2011 – *Transpo Group*
- Historic Resource Survey and Inventory Report, October 2011 – *Artifacts Consulting, Inc.*
- Design Review Guidance, Summer/Fall 2011 – *Nore Winter, Winter & Co.*
- 3-D Height and View modeling, Spring-Fall 2011 - *City of Bellingham*
- Whatcom County Council of Governments Traffic Analysis and Multimodal Level-of-Service modeling, October 2011 – *City of Bellingham*
- Pedestrian and bicycle counts, September 2011 – *City of Bellingham*
- Leadership in Energy Efficiency and Design for Neighborhood Development (LEED-ND) Report - *City of Bellingham*

Data and recommendations gleaned from these studies helped direct and inform the content of this plan and the regulations to implement the plan.



## **Draft Plan Review Meetings**

On November 16, 2011, Staff and project consultants presented the results of the technical studies, data collection and draft plan proposals in a public meeting with 46 attendees. Staff answered questions and solicited feedback, and conducted follow up meetings on specific topics to gain further insight and factual background information. Staff used this input to complete and issue a preliminary draft of the Fairhaven Neighborhood and Urban Village Plan, development regulations and Fairhaven Neighborhood and Urban Village Design Standards on December 21, 2011.

Extensive public input was received on the draft documents, all of which was posted on the project website, and reviewed for inclusion in the plan by the project team.

The Historic Preservation Commission, the Transportation Commission and the Mayor's Neighborhood Advisory Commission all reviewed and provided input on the draft planning documents. A staff-led public input session was held on February 16, 2012 to provide additional opportunities for stakeholder input, and initial drafts of the plan, design standards and development regulations were released on March 20, 2012 to the Planning Commission, stakeholders and the public.

Planning Commission held a public hearing on April 19, 2012, and following a series of worksessions forwarded their recommendations to the City Council. City Council held a public hearing on <>, and adopted the Fairhaven Neighborhood and Urban Village Plan, Fairhaven design standards and development regulations on \_\_\_\_\_, 2012.

## **CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND, DEVELOPMENT CHARACTER AND DESIGN**

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### **Background - Natural and Historic Context**

The Neighborhood of Fairhaven started as Bellingham Bay's second city, a town in its own right separate from the first settlement at Whatcom and fiercely independent until consolidation into the City of Bellingham in 1903-04. From both a historical and physical perspective, Fairhaven reflects a "town within a city" character providing the City of Bellingham with a distinct sense of place for the South Side.

Fairhaven's origins and early attraction can be traced to the fresh running water of Padden Creek and a fishing camp at its mouth referred to by the Lummi people as Seeseelichem. The creek, which today cuts across Harris Avenue near 8th and empties into an estuary on Harris Bay, provided drinking water on a wind protected, deep water moorage for the first European sailors to visit Bellingham Bay in the 18th Century. West of the mouth of Padden Creek, the land rose to a small hill at the southernmost edge of Bellingham Bay once known as Poe's Point, and originally known as "Dead Man's Point."

The name Fairhaven was attached to the first street plan and plat filed on a donation land claim held by a colorful early settler, Daniel Jefferson Harris. The "Fairhaven on Harris Bay Plat" was filed on January 2, 1883 and it was laid out with a seaport function in mind. The basic grid street pattern ran the town's main street, modestly named Harris, parallel to the shoreline and then configured perpendicular numbered streets beginning at **Poe's Point** up from a series of docks along the waterfront. In time, the highland at Poe's Point, which had served as the county's cemetery since 1862, was leveled to create room for railroad tracks and to extend the shipyard.



Property of Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries

**Figure 6: The iconic Fairhaven Hotel, 1890. Source: Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries.**

A railroad era land boom began in the 1880's and continued through the early 1890's as the town began to take on a permanent architectural form morphing from wood frame structures to refined Victorian era brick commercial buildings. While overwater industries and shipping docks lined the small bay, the hillside intersection of 12th and Harris became the center of the commercial district. Near where the streetcars from Whatcom connected with the waterfront traffic from Fairhaven, a towering Queen Anne style hotel named for the town was completed in 1890. The **Fairhaven Hotel** seemed to crown the red brick town that rolled up the southwest shoulder of Sehome Hill from Harris Bay, announcing the preeminence of Fairhaven to passengers arriving by ship and by train.

The development of Fairhaven was directed in large part by the Fairhaven Land Company owned by Nelson Bennett, (who sold out to Charles X. Larrabee in 1891), an engineer and contractor closely connected with the transcontinental railroads that were reaching Puget Sound from the Great Lakes at the end of the 19th century. Like Tacoma, Port Townsend and the Pioneer Square area of Seattle, Fairhaven was envisioned as a future seaport metropolis where shipping trade, banking, and sophisticated travelers would be concentrated. A serious worldwide economic collapse in 1893 brought the hopes to an end and left behind a legacy of well constructed but overestimated buildings and infrastructure. The earliest authentic layer of Fairhaven's built environment dates to this period and comprises many of the contributing resources in the Fairhaven National Register Historic District (NR 1977).



**Figure 7 Looking North on 12th Street, early 1900's with Fairhaven Hotel in the background..**

Buildings from this period are constructed on city lots 100 feet deep with frontage divided into 25 foot units. The largest of the masonry buildings were constructed on 100 x 100 footprints. The exterior walls were based on granite or sandstone foundations with unreinforced brick walls reaching up to five or six stories. Due to the weight of the masonry and the need to widen the walls at the base as the height grows, few builders were willing to concede high rent ground floor area for hard to reach rooms five flights of stairs up. The height of buildings in Fairhaven's historic district is also attributable to the construction boom and the need for adjacent owners to agree on the engineering of party walls and window access to fresh air and the remarkable view to the bay. The interior structure of the buildings is uniformly Douglas Fir heavy timber post and beam with milled wood joists and floors. Lath and plaster were typically used for finished walls and ceilings. The radiator heat was from coal and wood fueled boilers and lights were gas.

Fairhaven's waterfront proved to be its most important asset during the first decades of the 20th Century as the Pacific American Fisheries Company (PAF) emerged as a giant in the canned salmon industry. Headquartered in Fairhaven, its builders Roland Onffroy and E. B. Deming built a sprawling salmon cannery on pilings just to the west of the Padden Creek estuary, perhaps the largest in the world at the time. Along with warehouses, office buildings, a China House for workers and mechanical shops, the complex consumed most of the waterfront and was later expanded to include a massive shipbuilding operation at Deadman's Point (Poe's Point). Box and can manufacturers ("Tin Can Rock" is a memorial), machinery maintenance shops and port facilities filled in the remainder of the shoreline repeating an architectural language that used low pitched gable roofs over timber framed structures with vertical planked siding and industrial scaled double hung windows.

Fairhaven and most of Bellingham's south side settled into a somewhat self-contained district with handmade, wood frame residential neighborhoods like Happy Valley and South Hill growing around the waterfront workplaces on Harris Bay. The commercial district west of the Fairhaven Hotel provided localized neighborhood goods and services while downtown Bellingham grew with new institutional buildings, financial and corporate offices, theaters, and entertainment. During the first half of the 20th century, Bellingham saw taller larger steel and concrete frame buildings rise in the downtown while Fairhaven continued to be identified by two, three and four story unreinforced masonry buildings dating from the 19th century. By the 1930's even the grand Fairhaven Hotel had been stripped of its lofty tower and conformed to a four story height.

As the automobile began to replace the streetcars and railroads, Pacific Highway (99) was improved along Chuckanut Drive in 1921 making Fairhaven a gateway into Bellingham from the south. Instead of serving as a dead end streetcar loop on the south side, 12th Street became a state highway and a windfall for the merchants in Fairhaven. Gas stations and tourist related businesses appeared among the

Victorian buildings and the main course of activity and traffic patterns shifted from east to west on Harris to north south on 11th and 12<sup>th</sup>, although most jobs remained on the waterfront. The density of historic commercial and industrial buildings in Fairhaven was notably diminished by the mid 1930's due to the neglect of wood frame structures, fires and replacement as PAF expanded and modernized their operations. The brick building at 4th and Harris marks this era, being built in 1935 to replace the PAF's main office building that was lost to fire.

Fairhaven's shipyards and industries were active during World War II but in the years that followed both the commercial and industrial areas began to decline. As jobs faded so too did the condition of the surrounding houses and residential areas.

Refrigeration and the depletion of salmon on Puget Sound led to the sale of PAF property to the Port of Bellingham as the company focused more on its Alaska operations. Many of the warehouses and industrial buildings between Harris Avenue and the shoreline were removed without replacement as the cannery complex disappeared along with its dependant enterprises.



**Figure 8 Fairhaven in the 1970s showing the Monahan, Dirty Dan's and Terminal buildings prior to restoration. Source: Whatcom Museum of History and Art Photo Archives.**

The loss of waterfront jobs and activity affected many storefront businesses and the age and obsolescence of the buildings eroded property values along with the civic perception of Fairhaven. In 1953 the Fairhaven Hotel was lost for good to a fire and plans began to reroute the interstate highway inland, bypassing Fairhaven entirely. Many of the remaining commercial buildings became vacant and the number of operating merchants fell to a new low with the only survivors being basic services like a pharmacy, grocery, newsstand, taverns, and a few shops.

In the late 1960's Fairhaven became a center for the counterculture during the Vietnam War era, with coffee shops, bars, and restaurants such as Toad Hall in the basement of Nelson Block, which was linked to the Underground Railroad for young men evading the military draft by slipping over the border into Canada. Artists and cooperatively-owned businesses joined bookstores, local restaurants, bars and art house theatres in reanimating Fairhaven.

In the early 1970's investor, developer and Fairhaven native, Kenneth Imus, began to purchase and improve several of the important historic buildings and empty lots in Fairhaven. Imus also collected architectural fragments, building details and salvaged building materials from other locals, which he incorporated into the rehabilitation and in some cases elaboration of his properties. In 1977 the Fairhaven Historic District was formally listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Over the next two decades Fairhaven enjoyed a rebirth as storefronts and upper floors became occupied, owners invested in structural and tenant improvements and the surrounding residential areas regained value.

Beginning in 1995 and through 2006, Fairhaven saw a period of new construction within and immediately outside the historic district. The new construction generally reflected the historic forms, scale and exterior materials that define the district. The density and compact character that Fairhaven's commercial center exhibited during its most active historic period is being revisited today.

## **The Area Today**

While Fairhaven is today one of Bellingham's smaller neighborhoods, it is also one of its most diverse. It is a complete, functioning urban village with a commercial core, mixed use residential development, nearby single-family residential, marine industrial waterfront, ferry, bus and train terminals, and intact historic buildings housing a thriving shopping and tourist district.

According to the 2010 Census, the Fairhaven Neighborhood had 577 housing units and a population of approximately 880. (For perspective, total city population in 2010 was 80,885. Total housing was 36,757 units) Census data also shows that there were about 1,800 jobs in the neighborhood in 2010. (Total citywide jobs was 47,616.) Clearly, the urban village relies greatly on the entire city (and region) for its success.

Fairhaven is endowed with a unique sense of place derived from its waterfront location offering spectacular views of and access to wooded areas and the shoreline of Bellingham Bay, and a built environment with a turn-of-the-20th century character, offering a warm texture and intimate scale.



**Figure 9 Outdoor cinema at the Village Green.**

Perhaps more than any other neighborhood in the City, it is a town within a city, with residential, commercial, and industrial properties in close proximity. A combination of traditional residential, more urban residential, commercial and industrial areas makes this a full-spectrum neighborhood. Carefully planned growth is essential to maintaining the quality of life in these varied areas.

## **Development Character and Design**

Design is a powerful tool that can enhance neighborhood character, create safe places for pedestrians, and draw people and activity to a place. The Fairhaven Neighborhood strongly supports building and site design that complements and enhances the surrounding neighborhood areas, especially in regard to building height, bulk, and appearance.

## **Design Review District Goals and Policies**

**Goal 1.1** Preserve and enhance Fairhaven's distinctive and historic character.

**Goal 1.2** Fulfill Fairhaven's role as a model vibrant, successful urban village.

**Policy 1.1** Use the Fairhaven Urban Village Design Standards to:

- provide a streamlined, predictable review and permitting process;
- create an attractive, pedestrian-friendly environment;
- promote historic preservation and compatible new development;
- protect the investment and achievements of current property owners;
- maintain the distinct, attractive character and appeal of the District; and
- encourage well-designed new construction that respects the scale of existing buildings.

**Policy 1.2** In order to maintain the pedestrian-friendly streetscape, parking should not be permitted between the building and the street.

**Policy 1.3** Key streets should be identified within the Commercial Core where commercial uses should be required at the street front to enhance the pedestrian orientation and activate the street. See the map in BMC 20.37 showing the designated commercial streets.

## Historic Resource Goals and Policies

**Goal 1.3:** The character of the neighborhood will be preserved and enhanced, and the historic integrity of contributing buildings in the Fairhaven Historic District area will be maintained, and in some cases, restored.



**Figure 10: Knights of Pythias Building & Masonic Hall, 1891.**

**Policy 1.4** Historically significant buildings should be preserved and restored.

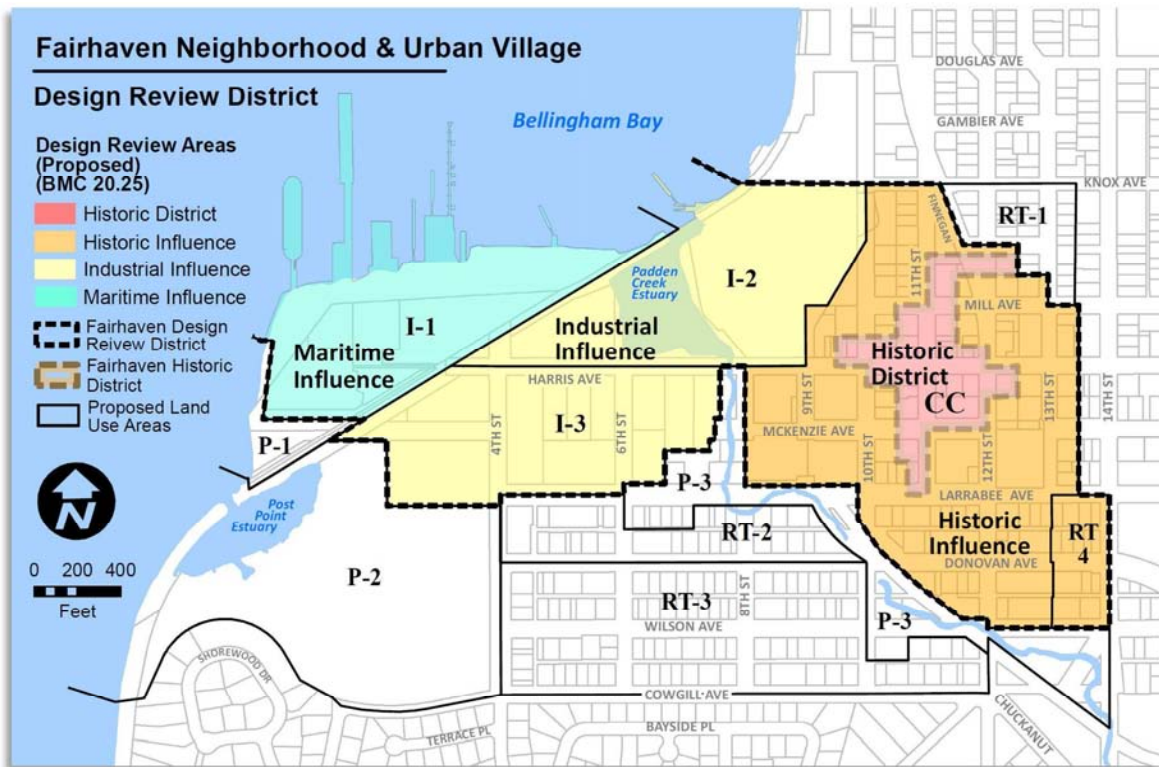
**Policy 3.5** Existing historic buildings should be registered with the Local, State and/or National Historic Registers, and a Local Historic District designation should be pursued in addition to the current National Historic District designation.

**Policy 1.6** If preservation is not feasible, historic buildings should be relocated rather than demolished.

**Policy 1.7** If demolition of any building or historic artifact cannot be avoided, documentation of the historic building or artifact should be undertaken by a professional preservationist.

New buildings are anticipated in Fairhaven as investment in the area continues. The standards and guidelines that are contained in the Fairhaven Design Standards are intended to help new development and alterations to existing buildings result in a compatible sense of scale and an enhanced pedestrian-oriented environment. In addition, the intent is that development draw upon the building traditions of Fairhaven as inspiration for new, creative design, while contributing to an overall sense of continuity throughout all four Design Review Areas.

The Fairhaven Design Review District includes four Design Review Areas (DRA). Specific policies exist for each area and are located in the Fairhaven Design Standards along with an official map of the Design Review District. Boundaries for each area were based on the underlying land use, zoning, and character of existing buildings. The intent of creating four separate DRAs is to give property owners, developers, and residents direction for designing new buildings that are compatible with neighboring buildings, which is referred to as "context". See the Fairhaven Design Standards (BMC 20.25) for complete information.



**BMC 20.25 Fairhaven Urban Village Design Standards (CLICK HERE to view)** contains the design standards applicable to new development and redevelopment.

**BMC 20.37. Fairhaven Urban Village Development Regulations (CLICK HERE to view)** outlines the allowed uses and other requirements for development.

The four Design Review Areas shown on Map 1 include:

- 1. *Historic District DRA***  
The Historic District DRA has many historic buildings that are valued by the community and should be preserved. The guidelines provide direction on how to preserve, restore, repair and reconstruct these buildings.
- 2. *Historic Influence DRA***  
This DRA has an eclectic collection of new, recently built, and potentially eligible historic buildings. The guidelines for this area provide guidance for designing compatible new construction and adaptively reusing existing buildings.
- 3. *Industrial Influence DRA***  
The Industrial Influence DRA includes a significant amount of industrial development and vacant/underdeveloped land west of Padden Creek. It is guided by standards that apply almost exclusively to non-industrial construction. The focus in this DRA is to provide a positive pedestrian experience along Harris Avenue.
- 4. *Maritime Influence DRA***  
The Maritime Influence DRA includes a significant amount of maritime-based industrial development and the Alaska Ferry Terminal. It is guided by standards that apply almost

exclusively to non-industrial construction. The primary focus in this DRA is on providing a positive pedestrian experience.

## **Energy Efficiency and Design (LEED-ND)**

Bellingham's Comprehensive Plan encourages "the use of [LEED-ND] or equivalent system, as a tool to measure the long term sustainability of proposed master plans." (Framework Land Use Policy FLU-18)

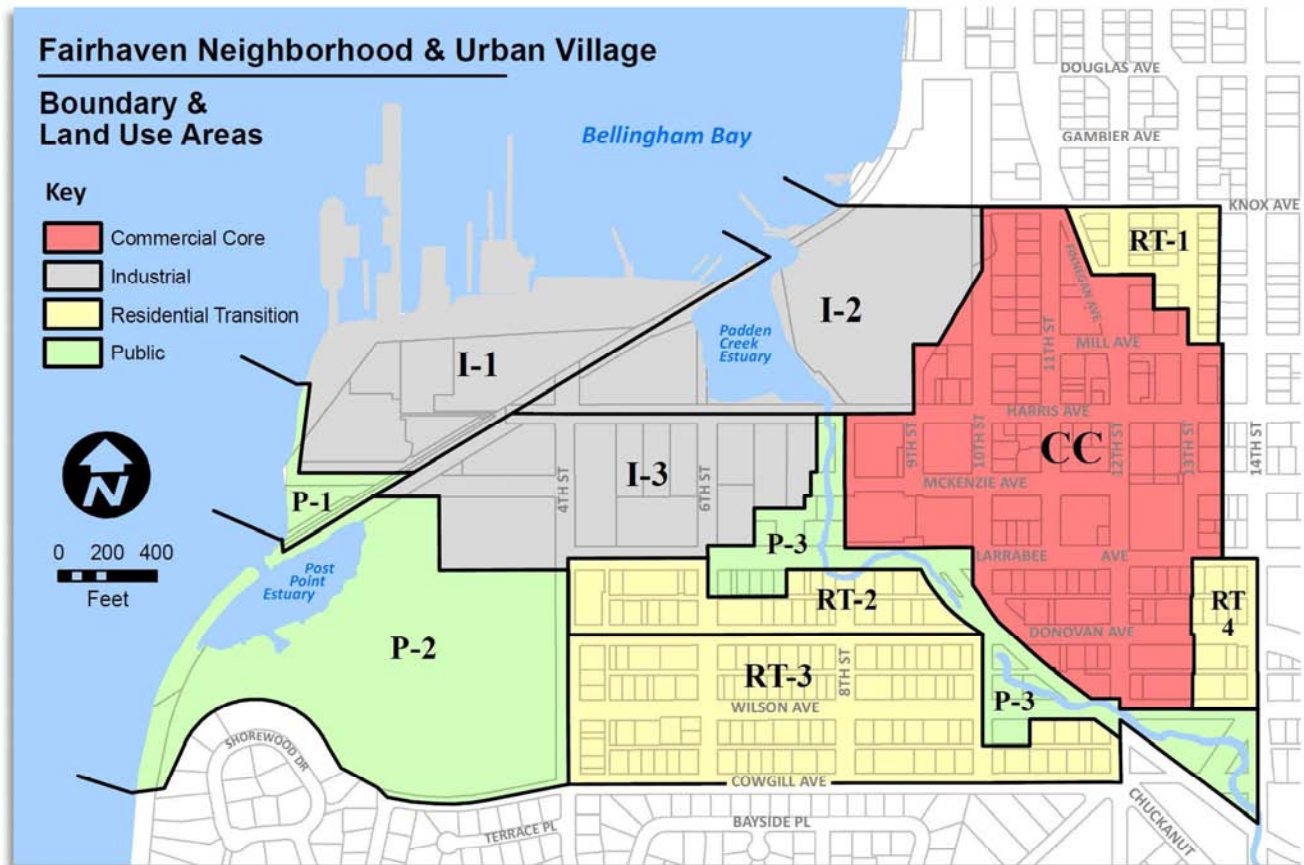
The Leadership in Energy Efficiency and Design for Neighborhood Development (LEED-ND) rating system was developed by the U.S. Green Building Council and its partners to integrate principles of efficient land use, multi-modal transportation options, creating places for people, and limiting environmental degradation. The resulting standard creates a tool by which to measure a project's level of sustainability. The Fairhaven Neighborhood and Urban Village is estimated to achieve a GOLD Level score (60 points) under the three focus areas of the LEED-ND framework:

1. **Smart Location and Linkage: 12 of 27 points** - The Fairhaven Commercial Core complies with all prerequisites for this category, and scores high due to the site being previously developed, having an existing mix of housing and jobs and established transit and bicycle infrastructure. More frequent transit service (especially on weekends) would improve the score, along with identifying possible opportunities for habitat restoration.
2. **Neighborhood Pattern and Design: 37 of 44 points** - The project receives high points for pedestrian-oriented design considerations, bicycle and other recreational infrastructure and a highly compact and well-connected grid of streets and trails. The existing mix of residential units (including a 100-unit affordable housing development) and wide variety of jobs and services also contribute to points in this category. A few additional points could be earned by increasing the residential and commercial densities.
3. **Green Infrastructure and Buildings: 11 of 29 points** - Many of the points in this section are achievable due to the existing WA state energy codes and city policies that encourage green building techniques. Additionally, the designated historic district and neighborhood character encourages and provides incentives for the reuse of existing buildings. More points could be scored in this section with the addition of green building incentives.



## **CHAPTER 2: SUBAREA DESCRIPTIONS AND LAND USE**

The **Fairhaven Neighborhood and Urban Village Map** (below) delineates the boundaries of each of the subareas described in this chapter. The new subareas include a Commercial Core (CC), four Residential Transition (RT) areas, three Public (P) areas, and three Industrial (I) areas.



The **Fairhaven Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map** ([CLICK HERE](#) to view).

The zoning for these areas is contained in the Land Use Development Ordinance (Title 20). Readers should refer to that code for allowed uses, development regulations such as building height limits, parking requirements, etc. Title 20 also has the architectural and site design standards applicable to the various areas in the Fairhaven Neighborhood and Urban Village.

## **The Commercial Core (CC)**

The "Commercial Core" is the center of the Fairhaven business district. It is identified in the *Bellingham Comprehensive Plan* as a "District Urban Village". These urban villages are intended to be developed to a size and scale that can serve the entire community while remaining accessible to those living or working nearby.

The Commercial Core includes the Historic District, the adjacent commercial areas, the Fairhaven Village Green, the Fairhaven Library, and Chuckanut Square (a public housing facility), as well as various other mixed-use buildings. The Historic District is the heart of the Commercial Core, and contains the greatest concentration of historically significant properties, as well as vibrant commercial businesses. Historic design standards and guidelines apply in the commercial core area.

The new housing constructed in recent years has created a strong residential component, with a focus on easy pedestrian and bicycle access to services and amenities, and a more urban, relaxed lifestyle.

Generally, design review approval is required before a new building can be built or significant changes made to an existing building. Refer to the Fairhaven Design Standards in BMC 20.25 for specific information on the Fairhaven design review process.

### **Commercial Core Goals and Policies**

**Goal 2.1** Fulfill Fairhaven's role as a model vibrant, successful urban village.

**Goal 2.2** Maintain a healthy balance between residential, industrial, commercial and retail sectors.

**Goal 2.3** Promote practical, predictable and equal application of this plan and the related design standards and development regulations to encourage the continued success of businesses in Fairhaven.

**Policy 2.1** Preserve existing jobs and promote development of new jobs by maintaining and expanding infrastructure (such as streets, utilities, parking and pedestrian and bicycle amenities), as needed and as financial resources allow.

**Policy 2.2** Employ mixed-use designs to infill vacant and/or underdeveloped parcels in the Commercial Core.

**Policy 2.3** Support the efforts of the Old Fairhaven Association to formulate and implement an ongoing, comprehensive marketing program for Fairhaven.

**Policy 2.4** Continue to support and attract unique, innovative businesses that complement the context, character and values of Fairhaven, while providing basic needs (such as employment, food, clothing, hardware, personal services, etc.).

**Policy 2.6** Encourage and support continuation of the farmer's market at the Fairhaven Village Green.

**Policy 2.7** Building height limits should reflect the "district urban village" designation, the natural topography (especially at the terminus of Finnegan Way), the scale of existing historic buildings, and the interface between the Commercial Core and adjacent residential areas.



**Figure 11: Development at the intersection of Mill Avenue and 11th Street.**

Although few developable lots remain in Fairhaven, there are several parcels at key locations within the Commercial Core. Future development on these lots will be guided by the design standards and development regulations (BMC 20.37) to ensure compatibility with the character of the Historic District and the Commercial Core.



**Figure 12 Fairhaven Village Green.**

The established Commercial Core development pattern may extend to the areas south of McKenzie Avenue to Padden Creek, where redevelopment and infill opportunities exist. Padden Creek will be protected under the Critical Areas Ordinance as redevelopment occurs. The creek also provides a natural buffer for the residential areas to the south. Maintaining and improving pedestrian access to and from the business district and nearby elementary and middle schools is important for Fairhaven as well as adjacent neighborhoods that use Fairhaven as their neighborhood center. See **Chapter 5** for more information on pedestrian amenities.

The Commercial Core is given an "urban village" land use designation, reflecting its current and future use.



**Figure 13 Pedestrian-oriented streetscape on 10<sup>th</sup> Street across from the Village Green.**

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#### **AREA CC LAND USE DESIGNATION: Urban Village**

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### **Fairhaven Industrial Areas**

Areas I-1 and I-2 are industrial-zoned properties situated around Fairhaven Harbor and the Padden Creek Estuary. They are owned and/or managed by the Port of Bellingham. In 2012, these areas have a wide variety of waterfront industries and form a significant employment component of Fairhaven. The Port has adopted a [Fairhaven Comprehensive Scheme of Harbor Improvements](#) that details future plans for these areas. Primary goals for the area are job retention, economic development, stormwater management, preservation of marine habitats, and public access to the waterfront.

Area I-3 is one of the few remaining large undeveloped areas in the Fairhaven Neighborhood.

In the 2012 update to the Fairhaven Neighborhood Plan, the four industrially designated areas were consolidated into three areas. Allowed uses remain largely the same as under the previous zoning.



**Figure 14 Community Boating Center.**

The following policy statements and the land use designations in these areas are consistent with the City's comprehensive plan goal to preserve the "working waterfront" areas of the community while also providing opportunities for public access to the waterfront.

## **Industrial Areas Policies**

**Policy 2.8** Preserve the "working waterfront" industrial areas of Fairhaven (especially in Area I-1).

**Policy 2.9** Allow some limited mixed use development in Area I-2.

**Policy 2.10** New development in Area I-3 should be compatible with the character of the surrounding industrial areas. Some mixed-use commercial and office uses that would be compatible with light industrial uses should be allowed.

**Policy 2.11** Encourage the Port of Bellingham to maintain and enhance suitable public moorage and boat launching access to Bellingham Bay.

**Policy 2.12** Pursue opportunities for habitat enhancements on the east side of Padden Creek Estuary in Area I-2.

**Policy 2.13** Improve pedestrian access to the waterfront by using the existing railroad crossing on the west side of Padden Creek Estuary that connects with the Community Boat Launch.

**Policy 2.14** The distinction between the uplands and the tideland areas should be maintained and enhanced to foster the experience of moving between the two levels and to maintain visual connection to and from the Bay. New construction should follow the slope of the land.

**Policy 2.15** Views along the Mill Avenue right-of-way extending from the Commercial Core to the water should be preserved.

**Policy 2.16** In the future, the additional Port-owned industrial property located to the north of Area I-2 in the South Hill Neighborhood should be considered for inclusion into Area I-2.

**Policy 2.17** The residential area to the south of Area I-3 should remain separated and protected by a landscaped buffer with pedestrian/bicycle circulation on the undeveloped Larrabee Avenue right-of-way. A Greenways Trail has been constructed in the Larrabee right-of-way between 4<sup>th</sup> Street and 8<sup>th</sup> Street. The Larrabee right-of-way should not be vacated or altered from its current state.

**Policy 2.18** New construction along Harris Avenue should integrate with and reflect the design elements of the Commercial Core, and incorporate pedestrian accessibility.

**Policy 2.19** Public views along the McKenzie Avenue right-of-way extended from the Commercial Core to the water should be preserved using height restrictions within the right-of-way.

**Policy 2.20** Provisions for improved pedestrian access to Area I-3, both within the site and along 4<sup>th</sup> Street, 6<sup>th</sup> Street, the extended McKenzie Avenue and Harris Avenue crossing the railroad tracks should be included in any redevelopment. Street standards for improvements to Harris Avenue should apply as detailed in Chapter 5, and steps to minimize the impacts of additional traffic in adjacent residential areas should be implemented.

### **AREA INDUSTRIAL-1 (Area I-1)**

This area, northwest of the Burlington Northern railroad tracks and fronting Bellingham Bay on the north and Marine Park on the south, consists of marine industrial uses including the Bellingham Cruise Terminal, the Fairhaven Shipyard, a dry dock, a Shipyard Fabrication Building, Arrowac Fisheries, and PO Warehouse #4, Bellingham Bay Community Boating Center, and a public boat launch. The area should remain reserved for marine-related industrial uses, taking advantage of the deep water port, with special regulations added to the zoning for the area to address pedestrian access and design review. All uses within the 200' shoreline jurisdiction are subject to the Shoreline Master Program. Retail uses and offices are allowed in this area, but only in support of water-related and water dependent uses as described in the development regulations (BMC 20.37).

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**AREA I-1 LAND USE DESIGNATION: Industrial**

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**AREA INDUSTRIAL-2 (Area I-2)**

The western portion of this area north of Harris Avenue includes Bellingham's multi-modal Transportation Center (Fairhaven Station), serviced by Amtrak train, Greyhound Bus Lines, and Whatcom Transportation Authority. Public boat launch parking is provided on the western side of the lagoon. Fairhaven Marine Industrial Park is located on the eastern side. Several commercial businesses are also located within this area. All uses within the 200' shoreline jurisdiction are subject to the Shoreline Master Program.



**Figure 15 Regional Multi-modal Transportation Center.**

The eastern portion of this area has an important role in the future improved connection between the uphill Fairhaven Commercial Core and the waterfront. However, in the near term the area is home to valuable industrial and manufacturing jobs, and is important to the larger community's economic development.

Some commercial development was allowed under the pre-2012 zoning for this area. Retail uses and offices are allowed in I-2, but only in support of water-related and water dependent uses as described in the development regulations (BMC 20.37).

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**AREA I-2 LAND USE DESIGNATION: Industrial**

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**AREA INDUSTRIAL-3 (Area I-3)**

This area is bound by Harris Avenue, the railroad, Post Point Wastewater Treatment Plant, Larrabee Avenue, and the Padden Creek Estuary. It is largely undeveloped. A Port-owned strip of land east of 4<sup>th</sup> Street provides long-term parking for the Bellingham Cruise Terminal and Fairhaven Station.

This is a transitional area between the residential area to the south, Fairhaven Station, and the industrial/waterfront areas to the north and west. Pedestrian facilities along Harris Avenue will provide a safe and attractive connection between Marine Park, Fairhaven Station, Padden Estuary, and the Commercial Core. This area has one of the few remaining large undeveloped areas in Fairhaven, therefore open space or other public amenities should be required with new development.

The expansion of Fairhaven as an urban village suggests some mixed use development is appropriate in this area, as recommended by the Waterfront Futures Group. At this time this area is not designated for residential development. However, a mix of light industrial, commercial, offices, retail and perhaps a limited amount of residences may be appropriate in a future development. Warehousing functions and assembly type manufacturing operations, which do not create a high risk of fire, explosion, noise, etc, and high-tech businesses are appropriate for this area.

The area West of 4<sup>th</sup> Street includes a mix of marine and light industrial uses. The existing buildings have a historical industrial flavor that balances the more commercial development in the uphill areas of Fairhaven. This location is ideal for redevelopment, as evidenced by the 2011 remodel and reuse of a large industrial building. The area south of McKenzie Avenue has been purchased by the City for future expansion of the Post Point Wastewater Treatment Plant.

The Critical Areas Ordinance will determine buffers and protection for Padden Creek south of McKenzie Avenue where at some point the tidal influence of the estuary ends. Stormwater issues will also be addressed by City codes with any new development. All uses within the 200' shoreline jurisdiction are subject to the Shoreline Master Program.

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**AREA I-3: LAND USE DESIGNATION:** Light Industrial and Commercial

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### Residential Areas and Housing Policies

The residential areas located in the southern and eastern portions of the neighborhood are well established. They include a mix of single and multifamily housing that reflects the pre-2012 zoning of the areas. There are four separate areas, designated "Residential Transition" or RT zones.

**Policy 2.17** Encourage a balanced mix of housing in the neighborhood that reflects a broad range of income levels and maintains a demographic base needed to support nearby neighborhood K-8 schools.

**Policy 2.18** Encourage innovative "Infill Toolkit" housing forms in the residential parts of the neighborhood.

**Policy 2.19** Participate in affordable housing projects to ensure the broadest spectrum of housing options in the neighborhood, e.g., Kulshan Community Land Trust projects.

**Policy 2.20** Encourage new residential development in the neighborhood to include an element of affordable housing.

**Policy 2.21** The undeveloped Larrabee Avenue right-of-way should not be developed for vehicular traffic and the trail and buffer should be maintained through Area RT-1.

**Policy 2.22** Area RT-3 should remain a single-family zoned area, maintaining the separation from commercial/industrial areas to the north.

**Policy 2.23** A mixture of residential and small-scale office use as well as select commercial uses are appropriate for Area RT-4, Adaptive reuse of historic homes is encouraged. Parking lots should be located adjacent to the alley and/or sides of properties and landscaped and/or buffered to protect and enhance the greenery of Old Fairhaven Parkway.



Figure 16: Existing Detached ADU on Donovan Street.

#### RESIDENTIAL TRANSITION 1 (Area RT-1)

This area is adjacent to the Commercial Core area. It is primarily developed as a single-family residential area that is zoned for multifamily development. Small lot sizes and high levels of owner-occupancy make it unlikely to redevelop with dense multi-family buildings in the near future.

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**AREA RT-1 LAND USE DESIGNATION:** Multifamily Residential, High Density

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#### RESIDENTIAL TRANSITION 2 (Area RT-2)

This area is bordered by Donovan and Larrabee Avenues on the north and south, and Padden Creek and 4<sup>th</sup> Street to the west and east. It is designated as for multifamily residential development and is a high density transition area between the more mixed development to the north and the single residential areas to the south.



Figure 17 Multi-family residences along Donovan Street.

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**AREA RT-2 LAND USE DESIGNATION:** Multifamily Residential, High density

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**RESIDENTIAL TRANSITION 3 (Area RT-3)**

RT-3, often referred to as "Old Fairhaven", is an eclectic single-family area located between Donovan and Cowgill Avenues and between 4<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Streets, with an extension in the southeast corner to 12<sup>th</sup> Street. This area is characterized by a quiet setting with natural landscaping, and a mix of housing styles that includes turn of the century housing, with various subsequent styles sprinkled throughout.

The architecture is varied both in age and style. This diversity is important in maintaining the tradition and neighborly character of the area. At the same time, some common elements should be supported: preservation of older homes; large, uniform setbacks; limited impermeable surfaces; open spaces around homes; and parking behind houses and along alleys. Gardens, green front yards, and narrow streets have created a friendly, semi-rural feel. Pedestrian use of streets and trails link neighbors to each other and to surrounding areas. Sidewalks are not warranted nor desired by current residents. The area has some open lots and opportunities for redevelopment. Accessory dwelling units and carriage houses are appropriate options for this area in accordance with adopted development and design regulations for each.



Figure 18: Gateway marker on Old Fairhaven Parkway.

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**AREA RT-3 LAND USE DESIGNATION: Single Family Residential, Medium Density**

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**RESIDENTIAL TRANSITION 4 (Area RT-4)**

This multi-residential area between Padden Creek and Larrabee Avenue is the gateway to Fairhaven from I-5 and is a likely area for increased infill and redevelopment. As a result, it is designated for multifamily residential development.

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**AREA RT-4 LAND USE DESIGNATION: Multifamily Residential, High Density**

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**Public Areas and Policies**

The areas of the Fairhaven Neighborhood designated "Public" include Marine Park, the City's Post Point wastewater treatment plant, and the area around Padden Creek and the Padden Creek Estuary.

**Policy 2.24** Improvements to the natural shoreline in Marine Park and the pavilion should be maintained. Safe public access to this area should be maintained and improved.

**Policy 2.25** Stormwater management and habitat restoration efforts should continue in Area P-2. The continued use as an off-leash dog park is subject to environmental stewardship of the Post Point Heron Colony and shoreline restoration efforts.

**Policy 2.26** The Post Point heron colony site should remain fenced off and be continually monitored to ensure the health of the rookery.

**Policy 2.27** Protection for Padden Creek should continue under the Critical Areas Ordinance. This environmentally sensitive area and salmon habitat should continue to be promoted and protected. Public access should be maintained where such access does not damage the health of the creek.

**Policy 2.28** Residents and city staff should continue to work closely to restore the Padden Creek shoreline in order to protect its fish and wildlife.



**Figure 19: Entrance to Marine Park at the foot of Harris Ave.**

**PUBLIC 1 (Area P-1)**

This 2.3-acre parcel at the foot of Harris Avenue known as Marine Park is owned and managed by the Port of Bellingham. The site is developed as a beachfront park with a picnic shelter and restroom building, paved trails, benches and picnic tables, landscaping, parking, and 750 lineal feet of shoreline along Bellingham Bay.

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**AREA P-1 LAND USE DESIGNATION:** Public

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**PUBLIC 2 (Area P-2)**

This area is west of the 4<sup>th</sup> Street bluff and south of the Burlington Northern Railroad tracks, bordering the Edgemoor Neighborhood to the south, and includes Bellingham's Post Point Wastewater Treatment Plant. The area is currently home to a heron rookery and an off-leash dog park.

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**AREA P-2 LAND USE DESIGNATION:** Public

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**PUBLIC 3 (P-3)**

This area is approximately 12.8 acres, and includes lower Padden Creek and the Padden Creek Estuary. The property in this area is entirely owned by the City of Bellingham and is adjacent to areas zoned for industrial, commercial, and residential uses. The area includes trails that connect to the South Bay and Interurban Trails. This area could be expanded across Harris Avenue around Padden Estuary to a size that matches the buffer set forth in the Shoreline Master Program, which governs all uses within the 200' shoreline of the estuary located from Harris Avenue to McKenzie Avenue at 8<sup>th</sup> Street. Upstream daylighting of Padden Creek will make this area an even more important salmon habitat in the future.



**Figure 20: Post Point Lagoon.**

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**AREA P-3 LAND USE DESIGNATION:** Public

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## CHAPTER 3: PARKING

### Background

The [Fairhaven Urban Village 2011 Parking Plan](#) was created as part of the urban village master planning process by Transpo Group. The complete plan is incorporated herein by reference.

Parking in dense, older commercial districts is challenging for many communities, and Fairhaven is no exception. Especially on small (25 - 50' wide by 100' deep) lots, it is difficult to provide both parking and commercial development. In 1994 the City approved the formation of the Fairhaven Parking District, helping to spur the most significant changes in Fairhaven since the railroad speculation of the 1880's. Within the District, the city waived parking requirements for new development except residential of greater than 2,500 square feet/unit density. Developers were also allowed to count on-street parking spaces to meet their on-site parking requirements. Since its inception, 32 new buildings have been constructed, there has been adaptive reuse of many of the historic buildings and the District paid for the construction of approximately 100 off-site parking spaces. A second Parking District was later approved for the SW corner of 10th and Harris. This small-scale District does not allow any use that would increase parking demand, which is very different than the larger Fairhaven Parking District.

The advantage of waiving parking requirements is that it facilitates construction on many small lots that could not realistically host both buildings and parking. That activity has spread; development pressure has increased leading to additional development outside of the Parking District.

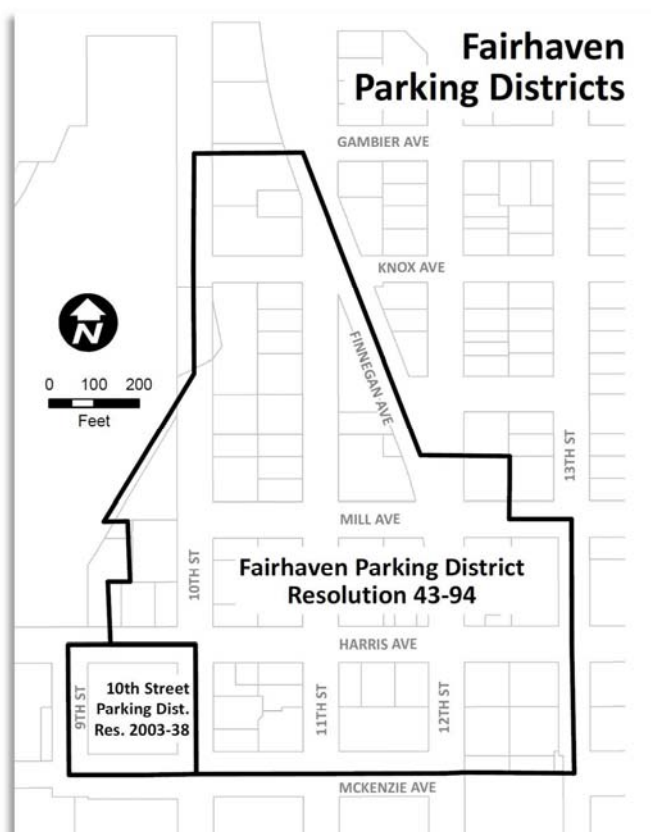
### Existing Parking Conditions

**Supply.** There are approximately 1,000 on-street parking spaces and approximately 730 off-street parking spaces within the study area. Additional private spaces exist in underground garages, and were not included in this study.

**Demand/Utilization.** Parking utilization in the study area is not at capacity as the utilization overall is less than 85 percent. However, the Commercial Core is at capacity with utilization consistently between 94 and 97 percent throughout the day. On-street parking two to three blocks from the core has excess capacity, utilized at 50 to 60 percent while off-street utilization is 30 to 50 percent.

**Parking Management.** There is currently no charge for on- or off-street parking. Time-limited parking requirements are also not used.

**Duration of Stay.** Most vehicles stay less than one to two hours in both on- and off-street parking.



## **Parking Goals and Policies**

**Goal 3.1** Address traffic, pedestrian safety and parking challenges.

The following policies, drawn from the Comprehensive Plan, apply to Fairhaven and other urban villages:

**Policy 3.1** Encourage development in Fairhaven by reducing parking requirements, thereby reducing the cost burden that parking places on new development.

**Policy 3.2** Consider reductions in required parking standards for purposes of:

- Achieving a compact urban form that is attractive, inviting and walkable.
- Furthering City infill and affordable housing goals and policies.
- Encouraging use of transit and other transportation alternatives.
- Reducing impacts on the environment.
- Encouraging the redesign of existing auto oriented strip commercial development.

**Policy 3.3** Consider counting on-street parking toward meeting commercial use parking requirements where appropriate.

**Policy 3.4** On-street parking should be primarily dedicated to serving the short term parking needs of street level retail and service customers. Peripheral lots and parking structures should be primarily dedicated to employee, resident, and other long term parking uses.

**Policy 3.5** Encourage the “unbundling” (separate pricing) of parking spaces associated with residential development in Urban Villages to promote reduction in ownership of multiple automobiles.

**Policy 3.6** Encourage the provision of car-sharing with new residential development to reduce the residential parking demand.

**Policy 3.7** Establish parking reduction allowances for residential units and within ¼ mile of the WTA Primary Transit Network that require each unit to receive WTA bus passes in perpetuity.

**Policy 3.8** Encourage the use of common parking facilities among compatible, adjacent land uses where feasible, i.e. shared parking.

## **Maintaining the Status Quo**

Currently the parking in Fairhaven works adequately although there are increasing reports of employees and/or residents occupying on-street spaces long-term, limiting access to on-street parking for customers.



**Figure 22: Parking along Mill Avenue.**

Though frequently discussed, time-limited parking is not currently an option. Monitoring time-limited parking is highly staff intensive and generates correspondingly high staff costs but no revenue to cover the expenditure of resources. Current parking conditions could be improved and the status quo extended if the following measures were adopted:

### **By the City:**

- Provide incentives for developers to create infrastructure supportive of alternatives by granting parking reductions *only* in exchange for alternative amenities, i.e., bus passes, secured bicycle parking, pedestrian improvements, etc.

- Create bicycle parking requirements for all new development. Require changing and locker facilities for larger, mixed use developments.
- Charge developers fees in-lieu-of creating required parking spaces. Reserve funds to improve alternative infrastructure or increase shared parking supply.
- Designate pedestrian zones and assign transit priorities to curb space throughout the neighborhood.
- Prioritize and improve bicycle infrastructure throughout the neighborhood including installing on-street bike “corrals” in close proximity to bike routes.\*
- Protect remaining on-street parking spaces. Evaluate development plans and reject those that limit or reduce existing on-street parking by installing driveways, fire hydrants or other items that reduce on-street parking.
- Adopt a “zero sum” approach that requires that the existing area parking inventory be maintained. If a new development would reduce the number of spaces available, those spaces must be replaced so the total number of spaces available is not further reduced by the development.
- Require developers to “unbundle” parking spaces from developments. Do not provide parking spaces in conjunction with any retail or residential unit so that users must pay directly for the parking spaces they use.
- Establish new residential parking permit zones to limit spillover into adjacent neighborhoods.\*



**Figure 23: Parking Improvements on McKenzie Avenue between 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Streets.**

**By the Association or Business owners:**

- Create a transit information hub in the neighborhood.
- Expand participation in the "Smart Trips" program.
- Prioritize and upgrade pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure so there is room for these alternatives to replace some vehicle trips.\*
- Require employers/property owners to subsidize provision of free transit passes for employees/residents.
- Consolidate area residents/employees and negotiate reduced rate bus passes through WTA.
- Provide a cash subsidy to area employees that choose not to drive.\*
- Provide late shuttle or taxi service to support off-shift employees.\*
- Identify and acquire fringe-area parking to support area employees and other long-term parkers.\*
- Identify opportunities for and create shared parking assets throughout the neighborhood.
- Create and maintain area-wide transportation and parking information, i.e. brochures, posters, and web information. Create corresponding directional signs.\*
- Establish car-share for area residents – require developers to subsidize membership.\*
- Work with the City to evaluate the feasibility of improving/increasing on-street parking, such as:
  - Add curb stops on Mill St. east of 12<sup>th</sup>
  - Create angled parking on 13<sup>th</sup> Street between Harris and McKenzie to angled
  - Create angled parking on Larrabee between 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>
  - Create angled parking on 11<sup>th</sup> south of McKenzie

Two things should be noted: First, no strategy will support the status quo indefinitely unless development ceases – an unlikely scenario. There are already discussions about development of the one of the last remaining surface parking areas in the neighborhood, the “pit.” As consumer confidence increases, more development will follow further reducing parking options. Full saturation will be reached and by that time,

all options will have been precluded as there will be neither available land or funding to address the situation.

Second, implementing several of the options listed above (shown with an asterisk \*) will require funding, funding that does not exist under current conditions and cannot equitably be redirected from downtown, where the City instituted parking management strategies decades ago. As parking in Fairhaven currently generates no revenue, and there is no other funding mechanism in place. Resources currently do not exist to monitor the parking situation as the neighborhood develops, or for capital improvement projects such as improving pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, or to purchase land and develop structured parking.

## **Parking Management**

Parking is an essential element of a transportation program; wherever a vehicle travels there must be storage for it on the other end. Thirty-five percent of American households have three or more vehicles and a typical vehicle is parked 23 hours of each day. Indeed, many of the aspects of the landscape that are largely reviled, such as shopping centers and strip malls, exist in part because of past parking policies - policies that we now realize are unsustainable.

“Parking management” simply means instituting policies and programs that result in more efficient use of parking resources. Especially where resources are scarce and demand exceeds supply, an effective parking management program can reduce parking demand by 20 – 40%. Parking management strategies can also help achieve a community’s transportation goals by providing motorists with economic incentives for choosing other options to single occupant vehicle (SOV) travel. At the same time, these strategies can provide funding to improve conditions such as pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and resources to expand parking capacity.

### **Parking Pricing**

Parking pricing means that motorists pay directly for the parking spaces they require. Parking pricing has been shown to be successful in other areas in achieving several goals:

- **Manage demand** – pricing parking reduces demand. Adjusting price levels, with the highest rates charged for the most convenient short-term parking, moves long-term parkers to other, less expensive areas or to less costly alternatives to driving.
- **Facilitate turnover** – assigning a cost to parking reduces and in many cases eliminates the problem of residents or employees occupying a parking space all day - spaces that might otherwise have hosted customers.



Figure 24 The 'Gravel Pit' at 11<sup>th</sup> Street and Mill Avenue.

- **Provide funding** – revenue from paid parking can be used to improve streetscapes, increase security, enhance pedestrian or bicycle infrastructure or resources can be banked to increase parking capacity (develop structured parking) in the future.

- **Facilitate enforcement** – paid parking provides resources for enforcement officers with the means to efficiently enforce area-wide parking restrictions using methods that are not easily subverted by motorists.

- **Provide occupancy data** – modern parking management equipment tracks and

reports occupancy data without the need to periodically launch expensive “studies” to gather information.

- **Provide consistent city-wide development guidelines** – parking policy is an integral part of a community-wide transportation policy and should not advantage one developer over another anymore than it should advantage one neighborhood over another. An effective transportation system does not change the rules when crossing imaginary neighborhood boundaries or census tracts. Supporting a system that provides confusion for both developers and motorists, unfairly advantages one area over another and can lead to conflict between neighborhoods.
- **Support equity** - providing parking comes at a cost that has historically been buried or “bundled” into construction costs or rents. Often governments subsidize the cost of parking so it is spread among all the members of the community – even those that do not drive.

There is already a need to implement parking management, including parking pricing, in Fairhaven. Indeed, demand studies already show activity levels far above those that exist in many areas downtown where management policies are already in place. Establishing paid parking would allow the City to maximize the use of existing parking spaces, fund increased enforcement, accurately gauge demand for market rate parking and generate funding for the range of management options listed above.

Effective parking management is an active strategy that reacts and adjusts to changing market conditions. Implementing management strategies may have ripple effects in the neighborhood that will require monitoring and evaluation to ensure that the proper balance has been achieved once conditions normalize. Additional development will also have impacts that will need to be monitored. Setting arbitrary thresholds or timelines does not provide the flexibility needed to customize the management approach to changing neighborhood conditions.

## **Future Parking Conditions**

**Demand.** Future parking demand is anticipated to be approximately 2,300 to 2,800 vehicles depending on the strategy for accommodating resident parking and without the implementation of parking management strategies.

**Escalating pressure.** Additional development will undoubtedly exacerbate pressure on the existing parking supply including:

- Loss of on-street parking due to future roadway improvements.
- Displacement of off-street parking with future development (e.g., development of “The Pit” on the NW corner of 11<sup>th</sup> and Mill and/or the old Fairhaven Hotel site at 12<sup>th</sup> and Harris).
- Occupancy of 85 percent or more means it becomes increasingly difficult to find a space, cruising increases and congestion often overflows into residential neighborhoods.
- Residents and employees occupy on-street spaces intended to serve customer needs.
- Potential modifications to existing Fairhaven and Tenth Street Parking Districts and/or additional development that does not require parking (e.g., historical buildings)

**Projected parking deficit.** The current supply is approximately 1,700 parking spaces, a deficit of up to 1,100 parking spaces and that figure may be understated. Without implementing parking management strategies in the near term, funding for additional parking will not be available and future parking demand will not be accommodated.

## **CHAPTER 4: NATURAL ENVIRONMENT, PARKS AND RECREATION**

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The Fairhaven neighborhood and Urban Village has a valued mixture of parks, natural areas, open spaces and shorelines, including maritime shorelines and enhanced natural estuaries.

### **Natural Environment, Parks and Recreation Goals and Policies**

**Goal 4.1** Protect, restore and preserve the existing natural areas in Fairhaven.

**Goal 4.2** Improve access to the waterfront.

**Policy 4.1** A dedicated riparian area along each side of the Padden Creek should be planted with native vegetation to create a protective and continuous wildlife corridor, filter stormwater, keep the water cool enough to salmon to survive, and protect foraging and nesting heron and other wildlife species.

**Policy 4.2** The City and the Port should move forward with Padden Creek Estuary projects identified in the Shoreline Master Program including removing development from the riparian area upon redevelopment, eliminating contaminated runoff from the boat yard, and establishing and enforcing the maintenance of native plant buffers. Great care needs be taken to limit access in order to protect sensitive wildlife habitat. A self-guided public education signage program should be created, along with carefully marked trails located to protect the estuary and wildlife habitat areas.

**Policy 4.3** The Fairhaven Community Garden should be preserved and maintained as community garden space.

**Policy 4.4** Encourage and support continuation of the farmer's market at the Fairhaven Village Green.

**Policy 4.5** Maintain the existing boat launch area for small, non-powered boats, and work with the Port of Bellingham to improve the facility for short-term visitor moorage.

**Policy 4.6** Improve pedestrian access between the boat launch facility and the Commercial Core along with west side of the Padden Creek Estuary.

**Policy 4.7** Maintain public access to the water with small boat rental and storage facilities.

**Policy 4.8** Encourage the City and the Port to work together to build the South Bay Trail Overlook in the right-of-way west of 10<sup>th</sup> Street, or other appropriate location.

**Policy 4.9** New development is encouraged to incorporate existing mature vegetation and additional trees and native vegetation.

**Policy 4.10** Preservation of open space corridors stretching from creeks to lakes is of paramount importance.

### **Natural Areas and Open Space**

As is well evidenced by the quality and quantity of parks within the City of Bellingham, the citizens take great pride in, and place a great importance on enjoying, retaining, and maintaining their parks and open space system.



**Figure 25: Post Point Lagoon.**

Goals in Bellingham's Comprehensive Plan specifically note the importance of retaining the community's unique natural features and public open spaces by creating greenbelts and preserving wooded areas in and around the City.

Surveys conducted by the Parks Department and the Fairhaven Neighbors Neighborhood Association indicate that most residents believe in the need to protect important environmental areas of the City, including additional sites along Bellingham Bay and Padden Creek. A large majority also want the City to acquire and develop more access sites along the shorelines, and develop an extended system of beach walks and over-water promenades and boardwalks along the waterfront. In Fairhaven, residents said they wanted improved and direct access from the Village Green to the bay, as recommended by Waterfront Futures Group.

#### A. PADDEN CREEK AND LOWER PADDEN CREEK TRAIL CORRIDOR

Padden Creek is one of five streams that flow through the City of Bellingham. Running for 2.7 miles, it drains from Lake Padden and travels west into Bellingham Bay. The area within Fairhaven is 15.5 acres and includes a popular stretch of the Interurban Trail connecting to Fairhaven Park, lower Padden Trail, Padden Creek marsh, and a natural buffer and trail corridor between 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Streets along the Larrabee Avenue right-of-way. The trail is a well-used and maintained pedestrian route connecting residents of lower Fairhaven to the larger Interurban and South Bay Trail system, as well as the Fairhaven commercial areas. The natural area is frequented by various wildlife, and the creek meanders through the ravine relatively undisturbed.

#### B. PADDEN CREEK RIPARIAN AREA



Figure 26: The East side of Padden Creek Estuary.

Wooded and vegetated riparian areas occur where creeks transition between saltwater and freshwater upland habitat zones. The habitat area and wildlife corridor along both sides of Padden Creek connects, with some intermittent breaks, the saltwater shoreline to the highest point in the watershed. The Critical Areas Ordinance regulates development within this area.

Hérons from the Post Point heron colony forage along the intertidal shoreline at Post Point, Post Point Lagoon, Padden Creek Estuary and other marine shoreline areas.

#### C. ESTUARINE HABITAT - PADDEN CREEK ESTUARY AND SHORELINE RIPARIAN AREA

Estuaries are bodies of water that are freely connected with the open sea and within which saltwater mixes with freshwater. Estuaries create transitions among marine, freshwater, and terrestrial environments that support rich and diverse variety of wildlife species. Estuaries are typically shallower with warmer water temperatures than marine habitat zones. Padden Creek Estuary is a semi-enclosed "pocket estuary" of the much larger Puget Sound Estuary.

The Padden Creek estuary, located north of Harris Avenue, between 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Streets, has on its west bank an overlook with interpretive signage, a park, and trails. It was identified by the 2005 Regional Near shore and Marine Aspects of Salmon Recovery in Puget Sound, as important to restoration of salmon and trout runs in Puget Sound and the Nooksack River. The area is part of the Pacific Flyway migration system. Heron from the nearby Post Point heron colony forage in the estuary.

According to the 1988 Agreement between Fairhaven Neighbors, Inc. and the City of Bellingham, the Padden Creek Estuary (below the high tide line) was deeded to the City from the Port with the promise to

be restored for wildlife, and for use as a park. In 1989 the City, Port, and Concerned Southside Citizens signed an agreement that identified protection of a 100' setback around the estuary, located north of Harris Avenue. Much work has been done both with public funds and volunteer efforts to restore the area along the west side of the estuary. Concern has been raised over a 27" stormwater outfall that discharges untreated stormwater from a large drainage basin directly into a sensitive site for salmonids. In 2000, the Bellingham Bay Demonstration Pilot EIS identified four Padden Creek Estuary project sites, and rated them as most important with a high priority for restoration.



Figure 27 Bellingham Bay from Marine Park.

Previous planning efforts and actions resulted in the closure of 8<sup>th</sup> Street to vehicular traffic and restoration to be provided within the riparian area of the estuary. In 2006 the Management Recommendations for City of Bellingham Pocket Estuaries stated: "Padden and Whatcom Creeks offer the most estuary area for improvement and or restoration, with Padden having more area. Due to existing conditions, Padden currently offers better habitat opportunities. Padden should receive priority for habitat restoration and overall preservation."

Studies have concluded that restoration, protection, and preservation of the Padden Creek Estuary is very important to the recovery of salmon and trout populations. The Shoreline Master Program regulates development within this area.

#### D. WILDLIFE HABITAT - BELLINGHAM BAY AND SHORELINE RIPARIAN AREA

The Shoreline Master Program has jurisdiction of 200-feet of uplands measured from the ordinary high water mark of Bellingham Bay. Marine habitats provide critical plant, fish, and wildlife habitat that can be greatly affected by land- and water-based activities. Surveys and questionnaires indicate the public is very supportive of increasing wildlife and conservation areas along the shoreline.

#### E. OPEN SPACE - POST POINT OPEN SPACE

The Post Point area includes the City's wastewater treatment plant and areas set aside for future expansion of the plant. This public area (P-2), includes open meadows, gravel trails, planted areas and an off-leash dog area. The Post Point heron colony is located on the property south of the off-leash dog area, and is fenced to minimize disturbance from dogs and people.

### Parks and Recreation Assets

#### A. MARINE PARK

This Port of Bellingham-owned park includes a viewpoint, grassy play area, picnic tables, picnic shelter, and restrooms located overlooking the entry into Bellingham Bay at the end of Harris Avenue. The park, with its public access to the shoreline, is a well-maintained asset in the Fairhaven Neighborhood and to Bellingham as a whole. The Port completed a restoration project in 2005 to enhance the shoreline with a recreated beach.



Figure 28: Fairhaven Village Green.

#### B. COMMUNITY GARDEN



A 1/3 acre City-owned pea-patch community garden is located off of 10<sup>th</sup> Street between Wilson and Donovan Avenues.

**C. FAIRHAVEN VILLAGE GREEN**

This 1/3 acre, City of Bellingham owned and managed park has a lawn area, summer movie program, and Wednesday afternoon seasonal Farmer’s Market. It includes restrooms below the green, glass-covered seating areas with plantings to create an arbor, paved walks, and a stage. This popular gathering spot is a successful village park space that is well utilized and appreciated by both the neighborhood and the city at large. Existing capacity may not be adequate for current and future growth in Fairhaven. Space can be rented for private events.



**D. BELLINGHAM CRUISE TERMINAL**

This terminal provides passenger and vehicle loading from a pier extending into the south end of Bellingham Bay. The east side of the pier loads the Alaska Ferry, the west side is used by passenger cruise ships. Public crabbing is allowed off the west side of the pier.

The terminal building houses a variety of commercial tenant activities and public spaces including a rear deck viewing area with sunlit solarium on the lower floor. The upper floor has a public sitting area overlooking Bellingham Bay and the ferry loading area, and areas available to rent for community events. The Cruise Terminal, owned by the Port of Bellingham, is a well-maintained and popular asset for Fairhaven, Bellingham and the region.

**E. PADDEN CREEK ESTUARY BOAT LAUNCH**

This area, owned by the Port of Bellingham, includes two boat launch ramps and a small float on the south end of Bellingham Bay with access across BNSF tracks from Harris Avenue. Mooring buoys are anchored offshore from May to October for transient boats. Launching access is subject to tides and is affected by continual siltation from Padden Creek. The Port is considering plans for improving the boat launch facilities and further development of the Fairhaven waterfront as part of their Comprehensive Scheme of Fairhaven Harbor Improvements.

A new boat launch facility could be located west of this boat launch if and when the US Coast Guard relocates its ships. Water depths are greater to the west, siltation is not a problem, and therefore larger boats could be launched in a more sustainable location without tidal restrictions. Mooring buoys are an important asset to the commercial areas of Fairhaven. A jitney along Harris Avenue from Marine Park to the Village Green could help support such access.

#### F. BELLINGHAM BAY COMMUNITY BOATING CENTER

This non-profit at 501 Harris Ave., is owned by the Port of Bellingham. It provides boat storage, boating education and supplies sea kayak, rowboat, and sailboat rentals on Bellingham Bay.

#### G. TRAILS

No through trails exist at or near the shoreline in the Fairhaven Neighborhood. The trail on the Taylor Avenue Dock comes inland prior to connecting to the Village Green. The Lower Padden Creek Trail is located well away from the shore of Bellingham Bay. The Port of Bellingham properties have no through connection for pedestrians or other trail users, mainly due to industrial uses and safety concerns. Trail connections within the neighborhood will probably be installed incrementally as uses change, and as public access is required through the implementation of the Shoreline Master Program. See **Chapter 5** for more information on improvements to the trail system.

#### H. SOUTH BAY TRAIL OVERLOOK

The City of Bellingham agreed to vacate Gambier Avenue between 10th Street and the BNSF Railroad right-of way. As a condition of the vacation, the Port of Bellingham committed to providing a viewpoint with landscaping and seating (Ord. # 8961). The trail segment has been installed by the City, but the overlook has yet to be constructed as of 2012.

Finally, the Fairhaven Neighborhood has indicated a desire to work with the City of Bellingham and the Port of Bellingham to:

- Monitor the natural areas in the neighborhood,
- Address the long term restoration of Padden Creek and its estuary for fish, wildlife and public education, as well as the restoration of beaches along Bellingham Bay,
- Assure permanent protection of the Post Point Great Blue Heron Colony,
- Encourage the purchase of additional land to increase the width of wildlife corridors along the existing riparian areas as density and infill occur, and
- Provide for increased trail connections and shoreline access.



**Figure 29 South Bay Trail.**

## **CHAPTER 5: MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION & CIRCULATION**

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The Fairhaven Neighborhood Urban Village is a regional tourism destination located close to parks, the waterfront, industry, walking trails, a branch library, elementary and secondary schools, and Western Washington University. Fairhaven has a compact, well-connected street grid system and is a unique walking and bicycling-oriented neighborhood, with heavy pedestrian use in and around the residential and commercial districts.

The *Comprehensive Plan's* Transportation Element includes a city-wide goal of reducing the overall percent of total trips made by single-occupancy vehicle to 75% by 2022. All transportation improvements that promote multi-modal transportation (pedestrian, bicycle, transit, automobile, and freight movement) should be encouraged. A multimodal transportation project improvement list for the Fairhaven Neighborhood is contained in the Transportation Element of the *Bellingham Comprehensive Plan*, and the City annually considers this project list in developing its 6-Year Transportation Improvement Program.

### **Fairhaven Transportation Goals and Policies**

**Goal 5.1** Enhance infrastructure in Fairhaven to encourage and support the pedestrian and bicycle-friendly atmosphere.

**Goal 5.2** Address traffic, pedestrian safety and parking challenges.

**Policy 5.1** Install identified pedestrian facility improvements (see page 38) with development, redevelopment and roadway upgrade projects.

**Policy 5.2** To further implement the infill land use strategy and multimodal transportation goals and policies of the *Bellingham Comprehensive Plan*, all new development and redevelopment within the boundaries of the Fairhaven Neighborhood and Urban Village is eligible for Vehicle Trip Reduction Credits listed in Exhibit A of the City's Transportation Impact Fee ordinance: "[Urban Village Vehicle Trip Reduction Credits](#)." Auto-oriented commercial and drive-through establishments are not eligible.

**Policy 5.3** Collaborate with the Port of Bellingham and BNSF Railway to add links to complete the Southside trail system. Existing trails should be preserved.

**Policy 5.4** Add bicycle lanes on arterial streets outside of the commercial core where physical space allows and add bicycle parking facilities throughout the Fairhaven Urban Village.

**Policy 5.5** Explore the feasibility of identifying, through signage, a bicycle bypass route using 14th Street. 14th Street parallels Fairhaven's eastern boundary and passes through South Hill, Happy Valley, and South neighborhoods, all adjacent to Fairhaven. This bypass route could be promoted by placing way-finding signs at 12th and Mill, 14th and Mill, 14th and Fairhaven Parkway, and Chuckanut Drive entrances.

**Policy 5.6** Encourage more walking and bicycling and slower vehicle speeds in Fairhaven's older residential area by adding 25 mph signage along Cowgill Avenue and 4<sup>th</sup> Street, keeping the streets narrow, and not improving them with curbs, gutters, or sidewalks.

**Policy 5.7** When vacant parcels along Harris Avenue between 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Streets redevelop, plans should be included to minimize traffic impacts on the adjacent residential areas.

**Policy 5.8** Improve street lighting of the Finnegan Way- 12th Street corridor, from Knox Avenue to Old Fairhaven Parkway.

**Policy 5.9** Study the feasibility of redesigning the intersection at 11<sup>th</sup> Street and Finnegan Way to improve pedestrian safety and traffic flow.

**Policy 5.10** Retain the character of Donovan Avenue/10<sup>th</sup> Street as additional development occurs.

**Policy 5.11** As development and redevelopment occurs along the western portion of Harris Street, pocket turn lanes should be installed at selected intersections west of 10th Street. Street standards should be according to the figures on page 41.

**Policy 5.12** 14<sup>th</sup> Street forms an established transition between the residential areas to the east and the Fairhaven Commercial Core. Special attention and/or conditions should be incorporated into future development in this area to ensure protection of this transition.

**Policy 5.13** Update informational signage for Fairhaven's transportation system.

**Policy 5.14** Encourage the Parks Department to install signs at trail intersections with neighborhood streets and arterials showing where the trails lead.

**Policy 5.15** The Fairhaven Neighborhood Association should post signs welcoming walkers, bikers, and motorists at neighborhood entry points. Design of signs should be appropriate for their function and location.

**Policy 5.16** Encourage WTA to coordinate seasonal frequent bus service between Fairhaven Station and the WWU campus during peak periods.

**Policy 5.17** Encourage WTA to work with the merchants and hotel industry to create a public/private partnership that provides shuttle service to the Fairhaven Historic District during peak tourism season.

**Policy 5.18** Encourage WTA to provide "Transit-to-Trail" signs at all WTA stops located near trailheads.

**Policy 5.19** Encourage the Port of Bellingham to expand outside sheltered passenger waiting at Fairhaven Station to accommodate peak demands.

**Policy 5.20** Identify ways to retain existing and encourage expansion of marine transportation opportunities including passenger ferries to and from Squalicum Harbor, the Bellingham Waterfront District, the San Juan Islands, Victoria, BC, and other Puget Sound destinations.

**Policy 5.21** Retain existing water transportation assets and cultivate new possibilities for expanded marine transit and boating facilities.

## **Pedestrian and Bicycle Amenities**

Due to its compact 200' block grid system and network of alleys and pedestrian corridors, Fairhaven is welcoming to pedestrians and has a high level of pedestrian and bicycle use compared to other locations in the city. Four-way stop intersections within most of the Commercial Core that result in slow vehicle speeds help to prioritize the pedestrian-friendly nature of the district. Within the 1,800 feet of 12<sup>th</sup> Street between Cowgill and Mill, there are 11 marked pedestrian crosswalks.

The following locations have been identified for additional pedestrian enhancements as growth and new development warrants:

1. Improve pedestrian and traffic safety at the intersection of 11<sup>th</sup> Street/Knox avenue/Finnegan Way.
2. Add a marked crosswalk at the north side of the Larrabee Avenue/10<sup>th</sup> Street intersection.
3. Improve trail crossing visibility on 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Streets.
4. Make pedestrian safety improvements such as signage and street surface markings at the intersection of 10<sup>th</sup> Street and Mill Avenue, connecting Fairhaven Village Green with the South Bay Trail.
5. Complete missing sidewalk sections throughout the Commercial Core.
6. Make improvements at 14<sup>th</sup> and Old Fairhaven Parkway (pending study).
7. Complete missing sidewalk segment on west side of Finnegan Way between Knox Avenue and Mill Avenue.
8. Complete missing sidewalk segment on west side of 11<sup>th</sup> Street between Knox Avenue and Mill Avenue.
9. Complete missing sidewalk segment on south side of Harris Avenue between the railroad tracks and 9<sup>th</sup> Street.

Missing trail system links may require private property acquisition, redevelopment, or rezoning of particular areas. These identified missing links include:

1. A beach/shore trail connection between the Taylor Avenue Dock and the South Bay Trail to Fairhaven;
2. An improved trail connection to the shoreline and Marine Park, with a branch along the west side of the Padden Estuary to meet the trail that runs along Padden Creek towards Post Point and the off-leash dog area; and
3. A trail more directly connecting the Fairhaven Village Green and the waterfront.

### **2011 City-wide 24-Hour Pedestrian and Bike Counts**

#### Highest Pedestrian use:

- 1<sup>st</sup> - Holly Street and Railroad Avenue (729)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> - 21<sup>st</sup> and Bill McDonald Pkwy (422)
- 3<sup>rd</sup> - 10<sup>th</sup> and Mill (391)

#### Highest Bicycle use:

- 1<sup>st</sup> - Holly Street and Railroad (224)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> - Dupont and F (147)
- 3<sup>rd</sup> - South Bay Trail and Wharf (121)
- 4<sup>th</sup> - 10<sup>th</sup> and Mill (109)



## Fairhaven Neighborhood and Arterial Street Network

### NEIGHBORHOOD STREETS:

#### Fairhaven Residential Streets (4<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, Donovan, Wilson, Cowgill)

South of the Larrabee Avenue forested right-of-way and north of the Edgemoor Neighborhood lies the oldest portion of Fairhaven residences. Streets here are narrow and lined with small lot houses. No streets have curbs, gutters, or sidewalks, which creates a semi-rural residential character and feel. The narrow width of these streets requires vehicles to travel at extremely slow speeds, which contributes to the pedestrian-friendly nature of the neighborhood.

### ARTERIAL STREETS:

Arterial streets form the backbone of the citywide multimodal transportation network and are classified as collector, secondary, or principal arterials based on purpose, function, volumes, and connectivity within the overall network. Where possible, sidewalks and marked bicycle lanes are provided on arterial streets. Whatcom Transportation Authority (WTA) buses rely on arterial streets to provide public transit service. See the Fairhaven Neighborhood Circulation Map for details.

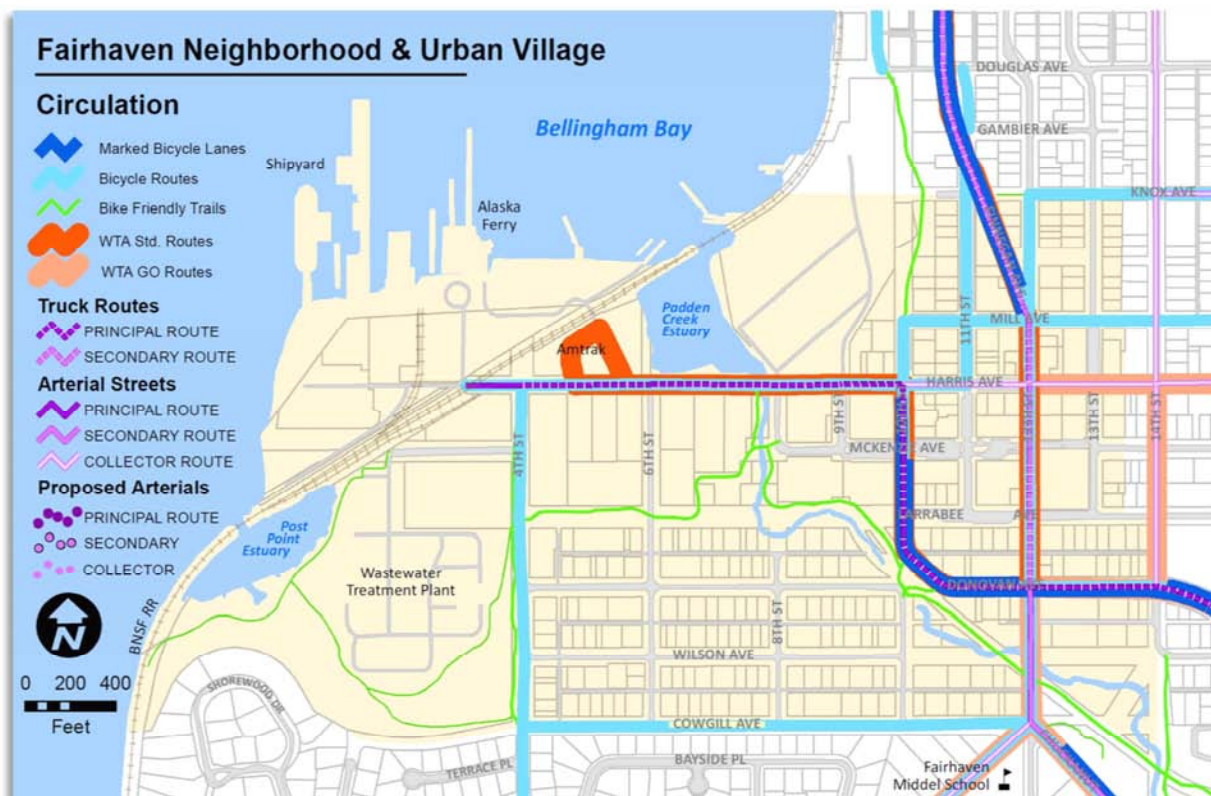
#### Old Fairhaven Parkway-State Route 11 (SR11) (Principal Arterial)

Old Fairhaven Parkway is the local name for the east-west portion of State Route 11 from Interstate 5 to 12<sup>th</sup> Street and it is the main entrance to the Fairhaven Neighborhood from the east and the south. State Route 11 turns south at 12<sup>th</sup> Street, crosses Padden Creek, passes Fairhaven Park and the Edgemoor Neighborhood, continues south to Larrabee State Park and Skagit County, and is locally known as Chuckanut Drive. Chuckanut Drive is the first highway in Washington to be built exclusively as a scenic drive, and is a regional tourism asset that guides people directly into Fairhaven.

Old Fairhaven Parkway is a full-standard 3-lane urban principal arterial with dedicated bicycle lanes and sidewalks on both sides of the street. Old Fairhaven Parkway is also a major truck route from Interstate 5 to the marine shipyards, Alaska Marine Highway system, Post Point Wastewater Treatment Plant, and other industrial uses in the Fairhaven waterfront area. Traffic volumes (2010) vary significantly along Old Fairhaven Parkway-SR 11, from 16,500 vehicles per day near the interchange with Interstate 5 to 13,500 vehicles per day near the entrance to Fairhaven at 12<sup>th</sup> Street. The City works with the State Department of Transportation on access management measures, such as turn restrictions, driveway consolidation and/or elimination to address traffic safety issues.

**12<sup>th</sup> Street (Secondary Arterial)**

12<sup>th</sup> Street is a north-south secondary arterial that serves as the main southern entrance to the Fairhaven Neighborhood from Chuckanut Drive, and as the main connection between Fairhaven and downtown



Bellingham. 12<sup>th</sup> Street through the Fairhaven commercial area is a two-lane arterial with sidewalks, pedestrian bulb-outs at intersection corners, one travel lane in each direction, on-street parking, concrete public transit bus pull-outs, and dedicated turn lanes at the signalized intersections of 12<sup>th</sup> Street/Old Fairhaven Parkway and 12<sup>th</sup> Street/Harris Avenue.

The City made significant improvements to 12<sup>th</sup> Street in 2010, but due to the presence of high-demand on-street parking, there was no physical space to add marked bicycle lanes. Instead, bicyclists and vehicle drivers share the travel lanes between the marked bicycle lanes on Finnegan Way and Old Fairhaven Parkway-Donovan. This is a common shared mode situation in busy, mixed use urban environments. The presence of small blocks, on-street parking, multiple vibrant business, as well as many crosswalks and traffic signals serve to slow vehicle speeds.

The arterial connection to downtown Bellingham follows 11<sup>th</sup> Street, then South State Street, to Boulevard, and into downtown Bellingham. On the south end of Fairhaven, 12<sup>th</sup> Street becomes SR 11, crosses the Padden Creek gorge to the intersection of Cowgill/Hawthorn/Parkridge and then on to the scenic highway, Chuckanut Drive, heading south to Skagit County.

Donovan Avenue/10<sup>th</sup> Street (Principal Arterial)

At the intersection of 12<sup>th</sup> Street and Old Fairhaven Parkway, the west leg of the intersection is Donovan

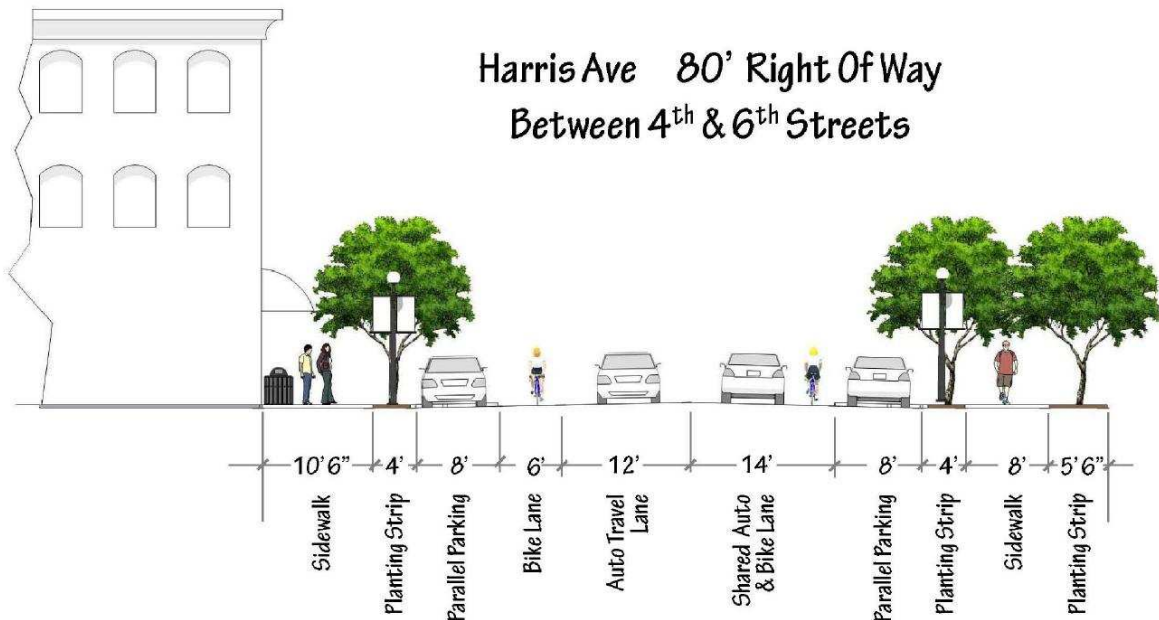


Avenue, which curves downhill and north and becomes 10<sup>th</sup> Street. This arterial section was constructed by the City in 2000 as a designated industrial truck by-pass to eliminate heavy truck traffic and WTA transit buses from using Harris Avenue through the heart of the busy Fairhaven Historic District. Donovan Ave./10<sup>th</sup> Street is a critical link in the arterial system and serves the industrial properties along Harris Avenue, the WTA Red GO Line, and the regional transportation center. Donovan Avenue/10<sup>th</sup> Street has one travel lane in each direction with setback sidewalks, street trees, and marked bicycle lanes extending from 12<sup>th</sup> Street to Harris Avenue.

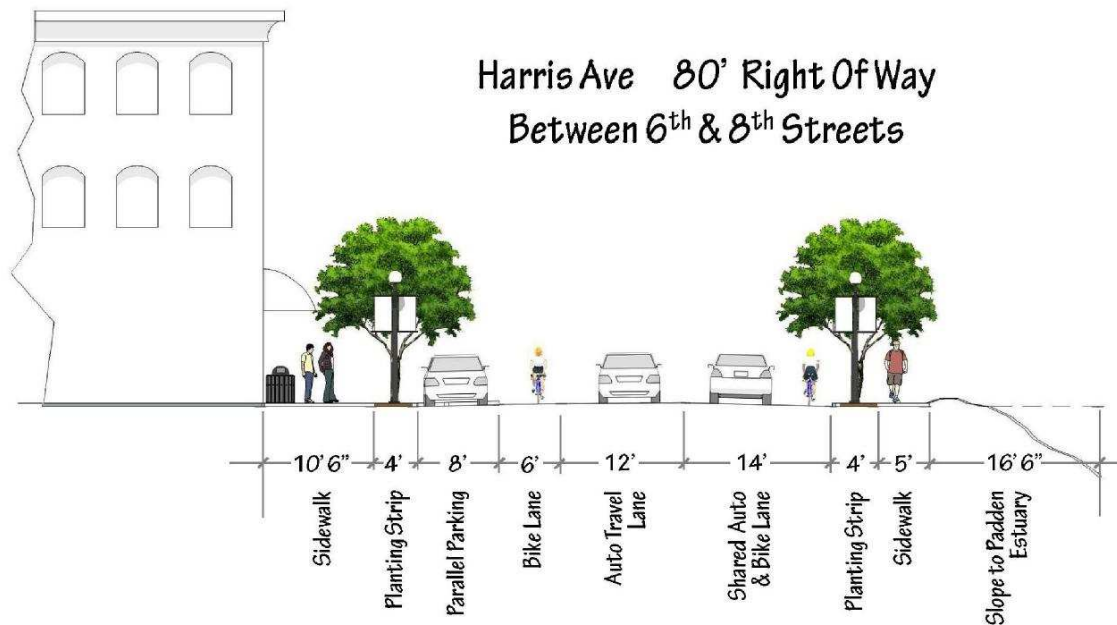
Figure 30 Donovan Avenue looking north up 10th Street.

West Harris Avenue (Principal Arterial - 10<sup>th</sup> Street to Burlington Northern Santa Fe railroad tracks)

This designated industrial truck route continues west on Harris Avenue from 10<sup>th</sup> Street to the Burlington Northern Santa Fe railroad tracks and industrial properties, such as the Fairhaven Shipyards, Port of Bellingham, Alaska Ferry Terminal, Amtrak Train Station, Greyhound Bus Station, and the Bellingham Wastewater Treatment Plant. West Harris Avenue has one travel lane in each direction, a setback sidewalk and street trees on the northern side. It is unfinished on the southern side west of 9<sup>th</sup> Street. Private development on all of the vacant properties between 9<sup>th</sup> Street and the railroad tracks will be responsible for completing the southern edge of the street with setback sidewalks, streets trees, curb, gutter, crosswalks, and stormwater improvements. See the following Harris Avenue Streetscape figures for details.







**East Harris Avenue (Collector Arterial - 10<sup>th</sup> Street to 21st Street)**

East of 10<sup>th</sup> Street, Harris Avenue is classified as a collector arterial rather than as a principal arterial, because it is not part of the designated truck route. Trucks and WTA buses cannot navigate this narrow urban street section with high-demand angled parking on each block. Setback sidewalks, street trees, pedestrian bulb-outs, and crosswalks exist between 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Streets and on the south side of the block between 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> Streets. In the 600 feet between 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Streets, there are six marked crosswalks plus one mid-block crossing to the Fairhaven Village Green. Each of the intersections is four-way stop controlled or signalized, and vehicles travel at extremely low speeds on this part of Harris Avenue. The section of Harris Avenue between 12<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> Streets is less urban, but redevelopment of underutilized properties could change the character of this part of Harris. Private developers should be required to construct curb, gutter, sidewalks and where possible install street trees and setback sidewalks.

**Non-arterial Commercial Shopping Streets** - There are several "commercial shopping" streets within the Fairhaven Commercial Core. Their primary function is to provide parking, circulation and pedestrian accessibility throughout the heart of the commercial district. Each intersection is four-way stop controlled with pedestrian bulb-outs and marked crosswalks. Most blocks have sidewalks, street trees, angled or parallel parking and very slow vehicle speeds. These streets include:

- 10<sup>th</sup> Street between Harris and Mill Avenues
- 11<sup>th</sup> Street from Finnegan Way to Larrabee Avenue
- McKenzie Avenue from 8<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> Street
- Larrabee Avenue from 10<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> Street
- Mill Avenue from 10<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> Street
- 13<sup>th</sup> Street from Mill Avenue to Larrabee Avenue



**Figure 31 Looking east at intersection of 11th Street and Harris Avenue.**

### 14<sup>th</sup> Street (Collector Arterial)

North of Old Fairhaven Parkway, 14<sup>th</sup> Street is classified as a collector arterial through the Fairhaven and South Hill Neighborhoods to Boulevard and North State Street. It includes setback sidewalks and street trees. 14<sup>th</sup> Street heading north from Old Fairhaven Parkway is an important entrance to the Commercial Core area, and is characterized by a large church and child care center.

### **Public Transit - Whatcom Transportation Authority (WTA)**



Figure 32: WTA bus on 12<sup>th</sup> Street just north of Harris Avenue..

Whatcom Transportation Authority (WTA) provides public transit services within Fairhaven. In 2004, WTA completed a long range strategic plan that included a significant service increase and the creation of a “Primary Transit Network”, which designated high frequency corridors with buses running four times per hour (15-minute headways) in both directions. Fairhaven is served by and connected to WTA’s downtown Bellingham Station via the high-frequency “Red GO Line”.

### **Rail Transportation - BNSF and Amtrak Passenger Train**

As was the case with many cities in the western United States, railroads played a significant role in Bellingham’s early development. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Fairhaven owes much of its existence to speculation about where railroad lines would terminate as break-bulk shipping points for goods and freight being transported up and down the west coast.

The Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Railroad operates freight trains serving Bellingham. Although the City of Bellingham has little control over the railroads within its boundaries, the railroads do have significant impacts on the community. Industrial land use patterns in and near Bellingham are interrelated with rail lines in the city, and rail service to the Port’s industrial areas is an essential link in the transportation system.

Amtrak operates passenger trains between Portland, Seattle, and Vancouver, B.C. The Amtrak station in south Bellingham is part of the Fairhaven Transportation Center and provides an important link with the Greyhound bus terminal, Amtrak Cascades rail service, the Alaska Marine Highway ferry service, privately operated commuter ferries to and from the San Juan Islands and WTA bus service. The location also provides easy access to state highways and Interstate 5.



Figure 33: Looking northeast along Burlington Northern Railroad tracks to Bellingham Station.

## **Regional Transportation Center - Port of Bellingham, Amtrak, Greyhound and Bellingham Cruise Terminal**

This multi-modal transportation facility, (known as "Fairhaven Station") serves passengers arriving and departing by Greyhound bus, Amtrak Cascades rail service, the Alaska Marine Highway ferry service from southeast Alaska, and privately operated commuter ferries to and from the San Juan Islands and local passenger charter vessel operations. WTA bus service and taxi service is also available at



**Figure 34: Bellingham Cruise Terminal ferry dock.**

Fairhaven Station. The location provides easy access to state highways, Interstate 5 and local medical and education services.

Opportunities for water transportation and recreation exist in Fairhaven, such as the public boat launch, the small boat center, and the Bellingham Cruise Terminal, as well as the potential for future small boat moorage facilities. See Chapter 4 **Natural Environment, Parks and Recreation** for more information.

## **Analysis of Future Traffic Congestion**

### **Arterial Street Network**

The Transportation Element of the *Bellingham Comprehensive Plan* identifies the long-range transportation planning needs for street improvements. Improvements are based on travel demand model forecasts of land supply, zoning, future development potential, employment sites, and vehicle trip generation. Existing and future levels of service (LOS) are examined to ensure that they are within the acceptable range of the LOS standards adopted in the Transportation Element, as required by the Growth Management Act.

The City's long-range transportation planning strategy is to create more opportunities and incentives for non-motorized and transit travel while de-emphasizing and creating disincentives for single occupancy automobile use, which is the primary cause of traffic congestion at intersections.

Additional policies state that transportation funding for widening of public roads at the edges of the City should be minimized and peak hour traffic congestion should be allowed to increase at entry and exit points to the City. This is one strategy intended to help discourage single occupancy vehicle work commutes from rural residential areas to urban employment centers.

According to the 2010-2011 travel demand model forecasts by the Whatcom Council of Governments (WCOG), there do not appear to be any LOS concerns on any arterial streets within, or surrounding, the Fairhaven Neighborhood and Urban Village over the next 20 years (2012-2032). As shown in Table 6.1 all of the arterial streets in and surrounding Fairhaven have available capacity to accommodate the additional traffic generated by the full commercial, industrial and residential build-out potential identified in the Development/Redevelopment Potential section of Chapter 1. Mixed use development in some of the industrial zones is unlikely to change this situation, even though mixed use development could produce more vehicle trips than industrial development.

The one exception is Old Fairhaven Parkway between 30<sup>th</sup> Street and Interstate 5, which is over a mile away from Fairhaven. This arterial segment is already functioning at LOS F and is expected to continue to function at a degraded LOS F over time. Consistent with Bellingham's Comprehensive Plan, neither the City of Bellingham nor the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) has any plans to add automobile capacity to this arterial segment in the future.

Arterial Street	Cross Street	2008 Peak LOS	2020 Peak LOS	2032 Peak LOS	Comments
W Harris - WB	6 <sup>th</sup> St	v/c 0.14 = A	v/c 0.21 = A	v/c 0.23 = A	Truck/WTA GO/Train Station Route
W Harris - EB	6 <sup>th</sup> St	v/c 0.10 = A	v/c 0.14 = A	v/c 0.18 = A	Truck/WTA GO/Train Station Route
10 <sup>th</sup> Street - WB	Curve	v/c 0.03 = A	v/c 0.03 = A	v/c 0.04 = A	Truck/WTA GO/Train Station Route
10 <sup>th</sup> Street - EB	Curve	v/c 0.06 = A	v/c 0.05 = A	v/c 0.05 = A	Truck/WTA GO/Train Station Route
Old Fairhaven Pkwy-WB	20 <sup>th</sup> St	v/c 0.42 = A	v/c 0.34 = A	v/c 0.30 = A	SR-11/Truck Route
Old Fairhaven Pkwy-EB	20 <sup>th</sup> St	v/c 0.49 = A	v/c 0.46 = A	v/c 0.39 = A	SR-11/Truck Route
Old Fairhaven Pkwy-WB	24 <sup>th</sup> St	v/c 0.57 = A	v/c 0.69 = B	v/c 0.70 = C	SR-11/Truck Route
Old Fairhaven Pkwy-EB	24 <sup>th</sup> St	v/c 0.59 = A	v/c 0.70 = C	v/c 0.69 = B	SR-11/Truck Route
Old Fairhaven Pkwy-WB	30 <sup>th</sup> St	v/c 0.74 = C	v/c 0.77 = C	v/c 0.73 = C	SR-11/Truck Route
Old Fairhaven Pkwy-EB	30 <sup>th</sup> St	v/c 0.77 = C	v/c 0.80 = D	v/c 0.83 = D	SR-11/Truck Route
Old Fairhaven Pkwy-WB	I-5 SB Off	v/c 1.14 = F	v/c 1.20 = F	v/c 1.19 = F	I-5 south gateway/SR-11/Truck Route
Old Fairhaven Pkwy-EB	I-5 SB On	v/c 1.26 = F	v/c 1.34 = F	v/c 1.36 = F	I-5 south gateway/SR-11/Truck Route
Old Fairhaven Pkwy-WB	I-5 NB Off	v/c 0.37 = A	v/c 0.46 = A	v/c .56 = A	I-5 south gateway/SR-11/Truck Route
Old Fairhaven Pkwy-EB	I-5 NB On	v/c 0.87 = D	v/c 0.86 = D	v/c .79 = C	I-5 south gateway/SR-11/Truck Route
11 <sup>th</sup> Street - NB	Taylor St	v/c 0.56 = A	v/c 0.62 = B	v/c 0.67 = B	Downtown connector/WTA GO Line
11 <sup>th</sup> Street - SB	Taylor St	v/c 0.56 = A	v/c 0.68 = B	v/c 0.70 = C	Downtown connector/WTA GO Line
12 <sup>th</sup> Street - NB	Harris St	v/c 0.56 = A	v/c 0.63 = B	v/c 0.67 = B	Downtown connector/WTA GO Line
12 <sup>th</sup> Street - SB	Harris St	v/c 0.57 = A	v/c 0.69 = B	v/c 0.71 = C	Downtown connector/WTA GO Line
12 <sup>th</sup> Street - NB	Chuckanut	v/c 0.24 = A	v/c 0.28 = A	v/c 0.27 = A	SR-11 south gateway
12 <sup>th</sup> Street - SB	Chuckanut	v/c 0.29 = A	v/c 0.34 = A	v/c 0.36 = A	SR-11 south gateway

Source: Whatcom Council of Governments (WCOG) Travel Demand Forecast Model 2011

### Multimodal Transportation Concurrency

The Bellingham City Council adopted BMC 13.70, the Transportation Concurrency Management Ordinance, in conjunction with the June 2006 Bellingham Comprehensive Plan and GMA requirements for “a transportation element that implements, and is consistent with, the land use element” (RCW 36.70A.70 (6)).

BMC 13.70 specifically established a program to monitor and maintain adequate transportation facilities in support of the City’s infill land use strategy as per GMA requirements that:

*“After adoption of the comprehensive plan by jurisdictions required to plan or who choose to plan under RCW 36.70A.040, local jurisdictions must adopt and enforce ordinances which prohibit development approval if the development causes the level of service on a locally owned transportation facility to decline below the standards adopted in the transportation element of the comprehensive plan, unless transportation improvements or strategies to accommodate the impacts of development are made concurrent with the development. These strategies may include increased public transportation service, ride sharing programs, demand management, and other transportation systems management strategies. For the purposes of this subsection (6) “concurrent with the development” shall mean that improvements or strategies are in place at the time of development, or that a financial commitment is in place to complete the improvements or strategies within \*six\* years” (RCW 36.70A.70 (6) (b)).*

*[\*Note\*: Bellingham requires financial commitment within 3 years consistent with requirements for fully funded project on 6-Year TIP]*

In 2007-2008, Public Works transportation planners and TranspoGroup, Inc. consultants transformed the auto-centric arterial segment-based concurrency system to an innovative multimodal concurrency system that integrates local land use context with pedestrian, bicycle, trail, transit, and automobile modes of transportation and adopted a new multimodal LOS in the Transportation Element of the Bellingham Comprehensive Plan.

### **Bellingham’s Comprehensive Plan Adopted LOS**

To further support the urban village and infill strategy of the *Bellingham Comprehensive Plan*, the City Council has adopted Peak Hour LOS E at p.m. peak hour, and where specific circumstances warrant, Alternative Peak Hour LOS F for transportation arterials where mitigation is difficult. The Council may, on a case-by-case basis, consider adopting Peak Hour LOS F, for other arterials as follows:

- 1.) On local arterials within designated Urban Villages;
- 2.) On local arterials that enter/exit the City; and
- 3.) On local arterials where mitigation is not feasible.

Bellingham’s adopted LOS standard is **“Person Trips Available by Concurrency Service Area”** based on arterial and transit capacity for motorized modes and on the degree of network completeness for pedestrian and bicycle modes, as listed below. The individual thresholds for each transportation mode available in each Concurrency Service Area are listed in Table 1 of BMC 13.70 Multimodal Transportation Concurrency requirements.

#### **Motorized Transportation Modes**

- **Arterial Streets:** Peak Hour LOS Person Trips Available (PTA) during weekday p.m. peak hour based on data collected at designated Concurrency Measurement Points for each Concurrency Service Area;
- **Transit:** Determine seated capacity, measure ridership, and equate to person trips available via public transit service during weekday p.m. peak hour based on data collected at designated Concurrency Measurement Points for each Concurrency Service Area;

#### **Non-motorized Transportation Modes**

- **Bicycle:** Credit person trips according to degree of bicycle network completeness for designated system facilities/routes for each Concurrency Service Area;
- **Pedestrian:** Credit person trips according to degree of pedestrian network completeness for designated system facilities/routes for each Concurrency Service Area; and
- **Trails:** Credit person trips according to degree of bicycle and pedestrian network completeness, where trails serve a clear transportation function for a Concurrency Service Area.

Bellingham is divided into 16 Concurrency Service Areas (CSA) classified into Types 1, 2, or 3 according to location, land use environment, and availability of multimodal transportation modes. **The Fairhaven Neighborhood is classified as a Type 1 Urban Village land use environment.**

Each year, the City publishes the Transportation Report on Annual concurrency (TRAC). This monitoring and reporting system provides information regarding which portions of the city are best suited for infill development based on adequate infrastructure and services. The TRAC reports how many "person trips available" there are to serve new development in the different CSAs. The 2011 TRAC report summary is listed below and annual updates are available on the City's website. As the table shows, the Fairhaven area has significant available capacity in the total transportation system.

CSA	Sidewalks		Multiuse Trail		Bicycle Lanes		WTA Transit PTA <sup>2</sup>	Auto Arterial PTA <sup>2</sup>	2011 Net PTA <sup>3</sup>
	% <sup>1</sup> Comp	Credit PTA	% <sup>1</sup> Comp	Credit PTA	% <sup>1</sup> Comp	Credit PTA			
1. Edgemoor-South	65%	240	44%	442	100%	800	53	975	2,007
2. Samish Hill	49%	0	27%	269	20%	0	21	2,367	2,158
3. Fairhaven Village	63%	260	61%	611	62%	220	201	1,276	2,068
4. South Hill-Happy Valley	79%	522	50%	502	86%	648	127	1,611	2,895
5. WWU-Sehome Arboretum	100%	1,000	13%	125	100%	1,000	748	307	2,679
6. Waterfront District	33%	0	39%	388	18%	0	0	880	562
7. Urban Village Core	94%	880	15%	148	77%	540	1,088	6,952	8,847
8. Puget-Whatcom Falls	93%	688	86%	856	54%	64	309	3,599	5,223
9. Birchwood-Columbia	77%	468	11%	113	63%	234	305	2,071	2,605
10. Comwall-Sunnyland-York	96%	828	14%	142	52%	36	375	3,257	4,017
11. Barkley Village	88%	760	14%	136	75%	500	329	3,565	2,952
12. Roosevelt-Chandler	96%	828	56%	564	78%	504	394	1,098	2,889
13. Alabama-Silver Beach	95%	720	88%	879	96%	736	74	2,551	4,452
14. Cordata-Guide Meridian	64%	224	3%	28	69%	304	820	7,294	7,251
15. King Mountain	43%	0	1%	6	14%	0	20	2,412	1,086
16. Irongate Industrial	4%	0	0%	0	45%	0	0	3,529	2,725
<b>Citywide</b>									<b>54,416</b>

**\*Notes:**

- 1.) "Percent complete" for sidewalk and bicycle lanes reflects the status of these facilities identified by the former Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) and adopted in the Comprehensive Plan, where construction is realistically feasible, rather than an absolute total of everywhere these facilities have been listed in the Comprehensive Plan.
- 2.) PTA for WTA transit and Auto arterials are derived from select transit and auto data collection measurement points throughout the City. Transit data is collected by WTA and auto data is collected by Public Works Operations staff.
- 3.) 2011 net PTA is derived from the compilation of all five variables (Sidewalk, Bike Lane, Multiuse Trails, WTA Transit, and arterial traffic counts) minus PTA used by development proposals minus a 500 PTA reserve in each CSA to avoid violating the City LOS standard.

## **CHAPTER 6: CAPITAL FACILITIES**

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One of the goals of the Growth Management Act is to ensure that public facilities and services necessary to support development are adequate to serve the development without decreasing current service levels below locally established minimum standards. These facilities and services can be things such as water, sewer, and stormwater facilities, police and fire protection facilities and services, and schools. A wide variety of public facilities and levels of service for the City of Bellingham are documented in the *Bellingham Comprehensive Plan Capital Facilities Element*.

### **Capital Facility Policies**

**Policy 7.1** The level of fire protection service should be adjusted as the population of Fairhaven increases, consistent with level-of-service standards adopted for the City in the *Bellingham Comprehensive Plan*.

**Policy 7.3** Ensure that the Fairhaven Branch Library evolves to reflect growth in Fairhaven.

**Policy 7.4** Preserve and restore the historic Fairhaven Branch Library building.

**Policy 7.5** Retain neighborhood public schools within walking distance of many residences to encourage walking and biking to school and to provide a focal point for neighborhoods.

**Policy 7.6** The Fairhaven Neighborhood should support ongoing efforts to remove the brick tunnel and “daylight” Padden Creek to improve habitat for local salmon and trout species.

**Policy 7.7** The City's 2007 [Stormwater Comprehensive Plan](#), as well as neighborhood-led efforts, should be used to restore the natural flow and water quality in Padden Creek.

**Policy 7.8** Innovative stormwater management proposals should be developed for Fairhaven that will collect and treat stormwater using natural treatment systems where appropriate and feasible, to accommodate growth and prevent flooding of streets and businesses in the commercial district.

**Policy 7.9** The Fairhaven Neighborhood should work with the Bellingham Police Department to develop an enforcement program to address the issue of overnight parking of non-resident vehicles and people residing in their vehicles on public streets in the Fairhaven Neighborhood.

**Policy 7.10** Encourage Puget Sound Energy (PSE) to upgrade electric power infrastructure as needed to accommodate the population/ building growth in Fairhaven.

**Policy 7.11** As new development occurs, encourage PSE to move power lines underground to enhance reliability, safety and the ambiance of Fairhaven.

### **Water, Wastewater and Stormwater**

The City's adopted [Water System Plan](#) identifies adequate storage of water for projected city-wide population growth. For Fairhaven, the plan identifies ample storage in two separate reservoirs that provide water to the neighborhood. The combined storage provides an adequate volume of water for anticipated growth in the Fairhaven Neighborhood and Urban Village. Individual water segments within the neighborhood are reviewed at a project level to determine fire flow requirements for individual properties. If improvements are found to be needed during the review process for a proposed project, the developer is responsible for making the improvements.

The City's Post Point Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF) is located at the foot of Harris Avenue. Built in 1974, the facility provides primary and secondary treatment of wastewater for all areas within Bellingham and the surrounding community that are connected to the 250 miles of sewer mains. The capacity of the WWTF has been increased to 55 mgd since the addition of the new secondary phase and clarifiers. The facility is 95% efficient at removing waste prior to discharge of effluent into the bay.

The City's adopted [Comprehensive Sewer Plan](#) identifies the need for additional wastewater treatment capacity at the WWTF. A planning process began in 2009 to expand the existing facility, and construction expected to be completed by 2014.

An additional system limitation is the capacity of the 60 inch main at high rain events. The Comprehensive Sewer plan identifies system improvements in other areas of the City that will assist in managing flows during peak flow events, including the construction of a peak wet weather facility. These improvements will ensure that the system has capacity to accommodate the projected growth in the Fairhaven Neighborhood and Urban Village. Individual sewer segments within the neighborhood are reviewed at a project level to determine adequacy for individual properties. If improvements are found to be needed during the review process for a proposed project, the developer is responsible for making the improvements. This is also true for the stormwater conveyance and treatment facilities in the neighborhood.

According to the City Utility Map, most existing public and private stormwater piping systems from the neighborhood, including Port of Bellingham properties, carry stormwater directly into Padden Creek or Bellingham Bay. In 1892, anticipating the terminus of the transcontinental railroad, the Town of Fairhaven constructed a 2,200-foot brick tunnel from 17<sup>th</sup> Street to just east of 22<sup>nd</sup> Street, as part of a flood control, swamp drainage and sanitary sewer project.

The Critical Areas Ordinance, BMC 16.55, protects Padden Creek and its buffer. Years of water quality monitoring indicate Padden Creek is a typical urban stream with water quality decreasing as it leaves the forested area at Lake Padden and picks up stormwater runoff in the downstream urban environment.

## **Fairhaven Library**

This 10,250 square foot Fairhaven Branch of the Bellingham Public Library, was built in 1904 and is located at 1117 12<sup>th</sup> Street. This three-story building includes approximately 3,300 square feet of library operations, including an auditorium with capacity for 200 people, limited kitchen facilities, and two small meeting rooms seating 30-45 people. The facilities can be rented. If resources become available, there may be an opportunity to acquire property adjoining the Fairhaven Branch Library for additional library access and/or parking, open space or a playground.

## **Schools**

Residents of Fairhaven place a high value on education and access to well-maintained neighborhood schools for Fairhaven children. Fairhaven students attend Lowell Elementary School, Fairhaven Middle School and Sehome High School. Nearby Western Washington University provides Fairhaven residents with access to higher education, and the students bring a special vibrancy and energy to the neighborhood



**Figure 35 Fairhaven Middle School at 12<sup>th</sup> Street and Hawthorn Road.**



## Public Safety

The City of Bellingham has adopted level of service standards for police, fire and emergency services. All of the adopted levels are met in Fairhaven and no additional capital facilities are expected to be needed based on the anticipated buildout of the area.



**Figure 36 Bellingham Station #2, 1590 Harris Avenue.**

With regard to fire facilities in the neighborhood, the *Bellingham Comprehensive Plan*, states:

"Bellingham Station 2: 1590 Harris Street. The Fairhaven Station was opened in 2001 and currently houses one engine, one reserve medic unit, and a workstation for the Bellingham Police Department.

Fire Station 2 serves as the first response fire and EMS facility for the south side of Bellingham. The Fairhaven facility is adequate to meet the anticipated demand during the 20-year planning period."

One problem that exists in Fairhaven, and in other industrial parts of the City, is where vehicles are parked, and people are observed living in vehicles, along public streets in the neighborhood. This vagrant parking on the public right-of-way and/or on private property is illegal and creates an unsafe, unsanitary, and unsightly environment for residents, children, and visitors to the area.

## APPENDIX

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### LIST OF REFERENCES AND RESOURCES FOR FAIRHAVEN

1. City of Bellingham Neighborhood Plan FAIRHAVEN, Adopted 1980
2. Padden Creek Estuary Area Planning Study, Habitat Restoration and Public Access, City of Bellingham, Parks and Recreation Department, June 1990
3. City of Bellingham: Watershed Master Plan Draft, Volume 2, Basin Detail, November 1993
4. City of Bellingham: Watershed Master Plan, Volume 1, September 1995
5. Bellingham Comprehensive Plan, 1995
6. City of Bellingham: Wildlife and Habitat Assessment, an inventory of existing conditions and background information, Ann Eissinger, December 1995
7. Bellingham Bay Demonstration Pilot, Final Habitat Restoration Documentation Report, February 1999.
8. Marine Resources of Whatcom County, May 2000
9. Post Point Great Blue Heron Colony Assessment, For: City of Bellingham Department of Public Works, May 10, 2000
10. Forest Cover, Impervious Surface Area and the Mitigation of Stormwater Impacts, 2002
11. Padden Creek Monitoring Project, Final Report, Institute for Watershed Studies, Huxley College of Environmental Studies, Western Washington University, June 5, 2002
12. City of Bellingham, Padden Creek Survey, for the Department of Public Works Plants Division, August 9, 2002
13. City of Bellingham, Wildlife Habitat Assessment, Ann Eissinger, March 2003
- 14-A. Waterfront Futures Group Initial Findings Report, September 2003
- 14-B. Final Workshop Report, Opportunities and Ideas for Habitat Restoration and Water Access on Urban Bellingham Bay, March 2004
- 14-C. Waterfront Vision and Framework Plan, Connecting Bellingham with the Bay, Waterfront Futures Group, Final Recommendations, December 2004
- 14-D. Waterfront Action Plan, Waterfront Futures Group, Final Recommendations, December 2004
15. Washington State Department of Ecology, Padden Creek Pesticide Study: Final Report, October 2003
16. City of Bellingham Department of Public Works, Connelly Creek Survey, 2003
17. The Importance of Non-Natal Pocket Estuaries in Skagit Bay to Wild Chinook Salmon: An Emerging Priority for Restoration. Skagit System Cooperative Research Department, May 2003
18. City of Bellingham Department of Public Works, Urban Streams Monitoring Program Report, 2004
19. Marine Riparian: An Assessment of Riparian Functions in Marine Ecosystems, by Jim Brennan and Hilary Culverwell, 2004
20. Inner Bellingham Bay Juvenile Chinook Study, Lummi Natural Resources Data Report, Lummi Natural Resources Department, May 3, 2005
21. Regional Nearshore and Marine Aspects of Salmon Recovery in Puget Sound, Compiled and Edited by Puget Sound Action Team, Contributions from NOAA Fisheries, June 28, 2005
22. Management Recommendations for City of Bellingham Pocket Estuaries, prepared for City of Bellingham Planning and Development Department, prepared by Northwest Ecological Services, LLC, February 2006 (Revised September 2006)
23. The Bellingham Comprehensive Plan, Chapter 7, Parks, Recreation and Open Space - (completed as a separate component of the 2005 Comp Plan)
24. Title 22, Bellingham Municipal Code, Shoreline Master Program, April 26, 2007 Draft (still in draft form) approved by City Council December 2009
25. State of Washington 'The Shoreline Management Act of 1971' RCW 90.58.010
26. Port of Bellingham, Comprehensive Scheme of Fairhaven Harbor Improvements, Draft 2006-7
27. Fairhaven Neighbors 2007 Questionnaire and Replies
28. Post Point Heron Colony, 2009 Monitoring Annual Report, Ann Eissinger, Nahkeeta Northwest Wildlife Services.
29. Urban Streams Monitoring Program Report, COB Public Works Lab. Sept. 2010.
30. BMC 16.55, COB Critical Areas Ordinance.
31. CITY OF BELLINGHAM RESOLUTION 17-94, 9 MAY 1994

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32. CITY OF BELLINGHAM AND FAIRHAVEN VILLAGE ASSOCIATION PARKING IMPROVEMENT AGREEMENT, 18 OCTOBER 1994