

Recommendations

Parks and Open Spaces Levy Committee

City of Blaine
June 2015



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Executive Summary

The City Council directed the Park and Cemetery Board to establish a Committee to study and formulate a recommendation on priority park, recreation and open space initiatives that would benefit Blaine and its residents. The Committee's findings and recommendations are contained within this report which is presented to the Parks and Cemetery Board for further review. Key recommendations include:

Initiate a Regular Levy for the November General Election in 2015

- Provide project funding through a \$1 million *Voted Regular Property Tax Levy* that would be collected over 4 years. The levy will generate \$250,000 each year which amounts to an \$80 annual tax for the average household (based on a \$250,000 assessed property value). The funding generated would be distributed to 3 primary areas:

Improvements to Existing Parks (\$125,000 per year or 50-percent of total):

- Develop Lincoln Park with a playground, multiuse fields and enhance the existing trails
- Construct a water spray park (possibly at Lincoln Park)
- Complete the next phase of the Marine Park Shoreline and Beach Improvements
- Build a restroom and covered picnic area at Salishan Park
- Further develop and improve the Peace Portal parklets to capitalize on the views

Pedestrian trails and bicycle facilities (\$100,000 per year or 40-percent of total):

- Continue the Peace Portal multimodal trail to the City Limits and coordinate with the Blaine-Birch Bay Park & Recreation District #2 to connect these communities
- Develop the 7th Street Greenway Trail and facilities connecting D St. to H. St and the school
- Begin Phase I of the Blaine Athletic Trail, connecting the school to Pipeline athletic fields.

Downtown Beautification (\$25,000 per year or 10-percent of total):

- Initiatives and matching funds for public right-of-way improvements downtown, such as street furniture, general cleanup of private properties, and explore providing assistance to renovate existing building facades and remove derelict buildings.

Other Recommendations

- This report also includes unfunded recommendations to Saving Downtown Water Views, implement the City's components of the Wharf District Master Plan, and expand or construct a new Library.

These many components all contribute to differentiating Blaine as a unique seaport town and accentuating its many relevant amenities to attract visitors and new residents. There is no single solution to bring prosperity to Blaine; it's a multi-faceted approach developing improvements over many years. One key reoccurring topic was to continue improving downtown by making the H Street Plaza into the central focal point of a revitalized downtown. The plaza then becomes a hub of activity that connects the downtown's services and restaurants with the Marina, Marine Park, Plover Park, the Plover ferry and the Resort Semiahmoo. The plaza also becomes a central hub of pathways and bicycle routes connecting White Rock, Birch Bay and Blaine bringing ecotourism to the center of our downtown.

Introduction

The Parks and Open Space Levy Committee was formed in early 2015 to pursue the following mandate:

To study and report on the potential for City of Blaine special levies to develop parks, community facilities, recreation improvements, and open space including view preservation, and the acquisition of land for those purposes. The mission includes establishing criteria, developing prioritized actions, and formulating a preliminary recommendation with alternatives

The Committee was formed at the direction of City Council after a presentation from the Salishan Neighborhood Association requesting to protect downtown water views through acquisition or other means. Several comments about forming a parks levy were also received during a series of community meetings that focused on rezoning downtown and also in 2012 during a series of “*Help Make Downtown Grow*” meetings, which focused on the future vision for downtown. This broad-based Committee of Blaine residents was formed and held ten meetings from December to June to pursue this mandate.

Convening a broad-based resident Committee from time to time to assess and reconfirm existing plans and provide input and new ideas is helpful to Blaine's development. The Committee thanks Council and the City for the opportunity to participate in Blaine's planning process.

Members of the Committee are:

Glen Pentland (Chair)
Neighborhood Association Member, Central Blaine Resident

Janet Pickard
Park & Cemetery Board, Neighborhood Association President, Central Blaine Resident

Garth Baldwin
Park & Cemetery Board, Central Blaine Resident

Calvin Armerding
Planning Commission, Central Blaine Resident

Richard May
Planning Commission,

Doug Dahl
Economic Development Committee, East Blaine Resident, Business Owner

Rachel Hrutfiord
East Blaine Resident

Dana Cohenour
West Blaine Resident

Laura Aosved
West Blaine Resident

Alex Wenger, AICP, Community Planner II
Planning Advisor, City of Blaine (Support and Advisory Role)

Planning for the Future

Blaine's remarkable geography as a seaside harbor is undeniably its greatest attribute. It is this geography that attracted the first settlers to this area in the mid 1800's and is today what makes Blaine special and unique. Thus protecting, developing and providing access to Blaine's shoreline and green spaces, either through development of existing parks or providing connectivity with new bicycle and pedestrian routes, should become a central focus of the City. Enhancing the existing park facilities and connecting them with new multimodal paths will lead to improved livability, promote healthy lifestyles and gain economic sustainability by attracting new residents, visitors and businesses.

Economic development is critical to Blaine's future. Blaine has weathered four decades of difficult economic times with the decline in the resource based industries which were the mainstay of the town's economy since the very beginning. This decline, to a large extent, has not been replaced with equivalent industries of growth and this is evident in the appearance of the downtown and Central Blaine neighborhoods. Changing social dynamics, retail trends, and technological changes have made many downtowns less vibrant than in the past. This has caused these older retail districts to shift focus to entertainment centers and to focus more on providing housing.

Quality of life for the people who live here is a key attribute used to make business location decisions. For example the *City of Blaine Feasibility Research for Potential Developers, Users, and Real Estate Brokers* (the Hebert Report) states that the number one factor in determining where to locate a new business is the quality of the schools. This is undeniably tied to quality of life which is also heavily influenced by the quality of parks and recreation opportunities. Providing a funding mechanism to develop the projects contained in this recommendation is a major step towards enriching the quality of life in Blaine and will go a long way in attractive economic development. Plus it benefits the people already here!

Many of the wonderful ideas and concepts in Blaine's numerous planning documents have yet to become a reality. The City doesn't need to reinvent the wheel; we just need to achieve the goals we already have, but the funding has just not been available. Blaine has a high number of existing park lands, but many of them are not improved and appear as vacant lots. As opposed to building new parks, the Committee feels the City should get the best out of on the resources we already have and improve our existing lands.

Blaine is a small town and it is challenging to invest in large facilities to attract new economic development. The Committee feels that the future opportunity described in Blaine's planning documents is to capitalize and leverage its greatest assets; its proximity to large populations and its unique geography as a harbor community with small town charm. The Committee believes that approving a modest levy to fund certain strategic projects is the most straight-forward path to realize Blaine's seemingly unbounded potential.

Emerging Trends

Analyzing future trends is helpful to developing a clearer vision for the future, and an important consideration for determining how best to position Blaine to capitalize on its unique attributes. Recessionary periods do eventually end, and while change will not happen overnight, Blaine is well positioned to achieve economic sustainability based on the following emerging trends:

Gateway Proximity to Growing Populations

- Over 2.7 million people live within 70 minutes of Blaine (Blaine is the only seaside town neighboring this growing population).
- BC's Lower Mainland is experiencing rapid growth and will grow by over 1 million people over the next 25 years.
- Surrey, which borders Blaine, now has over 500,000 people and is the fastest growing area in Canada and perhaps North America.

Cross-Border Trips

- Cross border trips in 2014 continued to outpace other economic contributors and this industry is expected to continue to grow over the next five years and into the foreseeable future.
- The Peace Arch and Pacific Border crossing account for over 13,000 trips daily, which has almost doubled over the last 10 years (up 93%).

Nexus Program

- The success of the Nexus has surpassed expectations with over 1 million cardholders in 2014. The Nexus "wait-times" are advertised hourly by most radio stations in the Lower Mainland, fueling desire to apply for this "quick access" program.

Day Trippers (Escaping the City)

- Families and friends escaping their city landscapes for short trips to visit and experience a new area is an emerging trend of urban areas. Often these trips are combined with outdoor recreational activities. The Lower Mainland market is regularly targeted by the advertising of communities and businesses from Whatcom County to experience new destinations and outdoor experiences.

Internet Shopping/Parcel Pickup

- Internet shopping is experiencing explosive, exponential growth. One just has to look at the half dozen mail houses that have recently opened in Blaine over the last couple of years as an example.

Health and Fitness

- This emerging national and global trend is very prevalent in the Lower Mainland and is gaining momentum across North America. People are realizing that exercise is important for maintaining good health in all stages of life and are leading more active lives. This is evidenced by the dramatic rise of fitness centers, youth participation in organized sports, local community

athletic events, home gym equipment, fitness videos and the popularity of hit TV shows such as Dr. Oz, The Doctors, and The Biggest Loser.

Outdoor Recreation

- Towns throughout the Northwest are recognizing these trends and that developing outdoor recreational amenities not only increases the quality of life for residents but can also increase economic benefits through attracting visitors. (See the recently published report, “*The Economic Contribution of Outdoor Recreation to Whatcom County*”)

Developing the Wow Factor

The City of Blaine, various supporting organizations, and hired experts have completed substantial planning analysis over the decade. In particular, the Park & Recreation Plan, the Non-Motorized Transportation Plan, the Wharf District Plan and the Marketing Plan are comprehensive, well thought-out documents that incorporate extensive community input. These documents are relevant and foundational and provide an understanding of the direction for the City and the opportunity that lies ahead.

2001 Blaine Tourism Marketing and Development Plan

- A comprehensive marketing plan for the City of Blaine, completed by an external marketing company and includes research and input from many residents and City staff
- <http://www.ci.blaine.wa.us/248/Blaine-Tourism-Advisory-Committee>

2007 Blaine Wharf District Master Plan

- A comprehensive plan for the Wharf District, developed by the Port of Bellingham with extensive input from City staff and others
- Explains the future vision and development guidelines for each of the 7 distinct areas comprising the Wharf District including Marine Park
- <http://www.ci.blaine.wa.us/158/Community-Vision-Plans>

2004 Parks and Recreation Plan

- A comprehensive plan to guide the acquisition, planning and development of parks, trails systems and recreation facilities in the City of Blaine
- <http://www.ci.blaine.wa.us/158/Community-Vision-Plans>

2009 Blaine Non-Motorized Transportation Plan

- A comprehensive trail and greenways plan for Blaine developed by a resident Committee working with a consultant specialized in the development of city greenway plans
- Includes articles on the importance and economic benefits of developing trails, greenways and open spaces

- <http://www.ci.blaine.wa.us/DocumentCenter/View/3221>

2015 City of Blaine Financial Budget

- Provides the City's vision, key goals, and a comprehensive review of the financial budget

All of these plans speak to Blaine's existing favorable attributes:

- It already has a high number of visitors every day (gas, parcel pickup and groceries)
- It has a historic downtown located on a harbor
- It has stunning ocean views showcased from the heart of its downtown
- Its seaside geography is unique (something no other nearby towns will ever have)
- It is the gateway community connecting large populations to the North and South
- Its marinas are ideally situated providing access to both the San Juan and the Gulf Islands
- It has remarkable outdoor recreational opportunities in various stages of development with unlimited potential (parks, greenways, open spaces, trails and shoreline)
- It has experienced, professional City staff with strong planning, development and implementation expertise (and the ability to maximize returns from limited budgets)

Developing the "wow factor" is essential to attracting visitors and having them stop, get out of their cars and experience downtown. Introducing people to the many amenities of Blaine is a key objective universally identified in the City's plans to revitalizing the downtown. Some key highlights of the City planning documents include:

Development of the Plazas

- H and G Street Plazas were built in 2006 to improve the downtown and provide access to the ocean views. Further improvements are planned, particularly at G Street with a covered pavilion.

The Boardwalk Theme

- The planned 450-plus foot elevated pedestrian boardwalk would connect G and H Street plazas on the west side of commercial buildings, providing pedestrian access to views of Drayton Harbor, shops, restaurants and street level commercial services. The City's zoning code requires downtown developers to build a boardwalk on the water side of the properties which are on the west side of Peace Portal to provide public access to the water views.

The Pedestrian Bridge

- Partnering with the Port of Bellingham and Burlington Northern Railroad, a pedestrian bridge over the railroad tracks would connect the downtown with the Wharf District and Marine Park. The pedestrian bridge would extend from the boardwalk near H Street Plaza to the boat launch area.

Plover Park

- Included in the Port of Bellingham's Wharf District plan is the development of Plover Park beside the boat launch area. This park would be connected to the downtown via the Pedestrian walkway and would also include a small beach area for launching smaller non-motorized boats.

New Plover Ferry Dock (with connectivity to H Street Plaza)

- The Plover Ferry Dock is relocated to Plover Park so it is easily accessible from the H Street plaza and provides a more direct connection between downtown Blaine and the Semiahmoo Resort.

Two-Mile Shoreline Loop Trail

- H Street Plaza becomes the trail head for this trail that circumnavigates the Wharf District connecting the proposed Pintail Marsh, Marine Park, Fishing Pier, the Marina and Plover Park.

Street- End Improvements

- The street ends (Martin, Clark, Boblett and Cherry) are city property and have been developed to varying degrees to provide a park-like setting for accessing and enjoying the water views. These should be further improved to maximize the scenic vistas and marine views.

Ecotourism

- The Park & Recreation Plan and Non-Motorized Transportation Plan help guide the acquisition, planning and development of parks, trails systems and recreation facilities. Blaine is well positioned to become a desirable recreation destination, attracting a wide cross-section of new residents and visitors interested in:
 - Sightseeing, wildlife viewing, photography
 - Walking, jogging, trail running
 - Water activities (paddling, boating, fishing)
 - Hiking, cycling, golf, field sports

City Beautification

- Beautification, especially downtown, is an important initiative discussed in Blaine's Marketing Plan. Many visitors have high expectations for a clean and well-kept community. Anything less can leave a negative experience. Responsibility for beautification rests not just with the City but with all property owners and businesses. It starts with residents taking pride in their own properties and neighborhoods, and extending this responsibility and care to beautifying the downtown area. The City should also continue to produce events downtown and foster a festive atmosphere making downtown an exciting and entertaining place to visit throughout the year.

Through the development of these facilities, Blaine becomes a popular place to live and to escape the city, to experience the outdoors, to go for a walk and witness amazing water views and world class sunsets. Momentum builds through good visitor experiences that generate repeat visits, the all-important word-of-mouth advertising, and new residents choosing to live in Blaine.

Project Evaluation

How do you evaluate so many different and wonderful projects? Well first off, it wasn't easy!

First the Committee reviewed the mission statement provided by the Park Board and then developed a process roadmap outlining the key activities of the Committee. The roadmap was designed to help them move towards projects evaluations and formulate a recommendation. See **Appendix A**.

The Committee then assembled a large list of potential park and recreation initiatives that was derived from existing city planning documents. See **Appendix G**. The large list was discussed in general, but to gather more information, the Committee requested presentations from key stakeholder groups. Several meetings were exclusively devoted to listening to presentations followed by questions and discussion with individuals in leadership roles relating to their particular subject.

Copies of the presentations are available as a separation Presentation Compendium.

Presentations heard by the Committee included:

- *Understanding Levies*, Jeff Lazenby, Finance Director, City of Blaine
- *Save Downtown Water Views*, Glen Pentland, Salishan Neighborhood Association
- *Wharf District Plan Update*, Sylvia Goodwin, Director of Planning and Development, Port of Bellingham
- *Park Improvements Ideas*, Michael Jones, Community Development Director
- *Marine Interpretive Center*, Jim Jorgensen, Blaine Resident
- *The Blaine Library*, Debbie Farmer (Library Manager) & Friends of the Library
- *Blaine Tourism Advisory Committee*, Debbie Harger, Community Development and Tourism Coordinator
- *Marine Park Shoreline Restoration*, Janet Pickard, Park Board and the Friends of Marine Park
- *Marine Park Shoreline Restoration Phase 2*, Paul Pittman, Element Solutions LLC, Principal
- *Trails and Bike Paths*, Garth Baldwin, Park Board
- *Connecting our Communities*, Blaine-Birch Bay Park & Recreation District #2, Ted Morris, Executive Director

Next the Committee developed detailed evaluation criteria and a comprehensive ranking chart to assess different projects and guide decision-making. A strong emphasis was placed on projects with an economic contribution factor in addition to improving the livability of the region. See **Appendix B**.

Various levy options were considered and discussed with the City's Finance Director including the financial impacts of a levy on the property owners. See **Appendix C and D**.

In addition, the availability of grant funding is an important requirement to prioritizing projects. The Committee has started a list of grant funding sources for future reference in **Appendix E**.

A member of the Committee also commissioned a representative telephone survey polling a cross-section of 74 residents from the Blaine district on five projects being considered for the levy. The survey results were interesting, but not statistically valid. Results of the survey are contained in **Appendix F**.

The Committee felt the vision of preserving views on Peace Portal is a good one and additional information is attached in **Appendix G**.

Levy Recommendation

The Committee spent considerable time discussing how a possible levy could work. There was discussion focusing on proposing a levy for one specific goal, but the majority of the Committee felt that including a range of goals and projects would appeal to a wider audience and would likely be more successful. There was also much discussion around the cost of a levy to the taxpayer and the funds it would generate. The Committee felt that it was important to generate enough funding to produce meaningful projects, but that it was also important to balance the cost with the benefit and with ability to pay. Committee members reached out to their friends, neighbors and acquaintances and a wide range of levy amounts were discussed. Eventually the discussion narrowed in on cost that would be “less than \$100” but still generate the funding necessary to build these high-end community projects. In recognition that the Blaine-Birch Bay Park & Recreation District #2 already collects a levy to fund similar facilities and recreational programs, the Committee reduced the recommended levy cost to \$80 for an average household (\$250k assessed value).

Key insights from the evaluation process included:

- While there was a strong desire to pursue some of the larger projects (library & community center) to expedite and support the downtown revitalization efforts, many of these projects simply are not affordable in the current economic climate.
- Upon evaluating projects and their costs and balancing this against a “reasonable” tax increase for residents, it was deemed prudent to pursue a few smaller initiatives versus one or two larger projects. It was also believed that pursuing a few diverse projects would appeal to a larger audience and improve the likelihood of passing the levy versus a single item that may have a greater risk of failing.
- A City of Blaine Parks & Recreation Regular Levy would be an excellent complement to the Blaine Birch-Bay Park and Recreation District #2 (Park District) Levy and expand the opportunity for fund matching. The Park District serves a much larger area and there simply are not enough resources available to develop all the planned improvements in both the City and Birch Bay. Having two entities with funding would allow the City to focus on extending the interurban trail into the southern half of the City and then on to the City limits at Dakota Creek while allowing the district to focus on bringing the interurban trail north to the City limits.

Recommendation

The Committee recommends a Voted Citywide Park and Recreation Regular Levy be considered for the November 2015 general election. The levy would generate \$1 million over 4 year. The majority of the funding would go towards park and trail improvements while 10-percent would be used for downtown revitalization projects.

\$1 Million Parks and Rec Levy Recommendation					
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
Park Improvement Projects	\$125,000	\$125,000	\$125,000	\$125,000	\$500,000
Trail Improvements Projects	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$400,000
Downtown Beautification Projects	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$100,000
Total	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$1,000,000

Considerations

The levy will require a 50% vote to pass, not a super majority. With the recent voting climate for parks and schools experiencing a high level of success, the Committee believes the 50% threshold is obtainable.

The levy amounts to an \$80 annual increase in taxes for the average property owner (\$250,000 assessed value) for the four years.

Proposing the levy during the November general election will ensure voter turnout and significantly reduce cost to the City.

The Committee recommends the Council consider commissioning a telephone survey to:

- Clearly assess resident desires for the proposed levy
- Determine their willingness and threshold to support the proposed tax increase

Based on the survey findings, the City may want to adjust the proposed levy amount.

It should be noted some members of the Committee are willing to assist with completing this survey.

Proposed Improvements

The following are the Committee’s recommendation for projects that would be the most likely supported by the voters through a levy.

Existing Park Improvements
<p>Lincoln Park</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop the one acre of flat land fronting H Street at the park entrance. Suggested Improvements for this area include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A forest themed playground nestled near the of the old growth trees with southern exposure and good visual access to the street. Estimated \$150,000 ○ Multi use play field with basketball court. Estimated \$50,000 ○ Park benches and covered picnic shelter Estimated \$35,000 ○ Parking improvements, entrance signage Estimated \$40,000 • Improve trails and add an off-road bike area in eastern section of the park – not funded
<p>Water Spray Park</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design and build a water spray park. The Park Board would need to determine a suitable site and additional information is needed to determine ongoing maintenance and operations costs. A number of locations were discussed by the Committee and Lincoln Park seemed like a suitable location. The Committee also reviewed preliminary information on standard and recycled water systems for spray parks and received many comments of support when discussing this idea. Estimated cost \$150,000 plus on-going costs.
<p>Marine Park Shoreline Improvement Project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phase II continuing eastward (behind the water treatment plant and new playground) to remove the concrete riprap, reconstruct and reinforce the eroding shore line and the walking trail. • Parks Board to evaluate the appropriate timing and funding amounts for the next phase of this project and seeking matching funds. Estimated \$100,000 plus matching funds.
<p>Salishan Park</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide public restrooms and a covered shelter area to bbq, prepare meals and host parties. Estimated \$80,000 for permanent facilities. Temporary restroom facilities would be much less expensive and could be enclosed in a walled structure. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The City should meet with the neighborhood to discuss specifics.
<p>Peace Portal Drive Parklets</p> <p><u>Martin Street Parklet</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reassess if this road end better serves the community as a green space or as a gravel access road ○ Landscape the road end as a city park with updated amenities (view area, picnic table, park benches) <p><u>Clark Street Parklet</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This parklet is in good shape and well maintained. Continue to keep the views open with

vegetation management. The public art is also a nice feature.

Boblett Street Parklet

- Better define the boundaries of this park with appropriate landscaping so it is identifiable and not perceived as the private property of the two neighboring houses.
- Provide appropriate amenities (benches, picnic table) so it can serve as a local park for the neighborhood and downtown visitors

General Clean-Up

- Remove trees that impact views and weeds growing above grade along Peace Portal Drive.
- Install identification signage and wayfinding signs that clearly communicate and invite people to these public spaces.

Trail Improvements

Peace Portal Community Trail

- Extend this soon-to-be- interurban trail down Peace Portal Drive, then south past the Pacific Building Center to the Dakota Creek Bridge. Continue to work with the Blaine-Birch Bay Park and Recreation District #2 to connect Blaine with Birch Bay. Estimated cost \$250,000 (within City). Note that this project is great candidate to receive matching funds.

7th Street Greenway Trail

- Develop a paved trail in the undeveloped 7th Street right-of-way. This four block long trail will be a safe route through a school greenway corridor from D St to H St and should include neighborhood park amenities along the way. See the 7th Street Greenway Plan. Estimated Cost \$120,000

School to Athletic Field Trail

- Design and build phase one that connects the school complex with Skallman Park through the Gateway property. Once fully completed, the trail will allow students to travel between the school campus and Pipeline Athletic Fields. Estimated Cost \$100,000 plus matching funds. The Committee also recommends that coordination with Whatcom County begin that focus on adding a separated path next to Pipeline Road.

Downtown Beautification

- Street furniture improvements, outdoor dining amenities and bicycle racks.
- Gateway entrance signage and the addition of signage at key locations promoting Blaine's amenities. Event and promotional banners.
- Smaller, more frequent events targeted at residents of the city and surrounding area, including targeting Surrey & White Rock.
- Create a façade renovation program to improve existing buildings.
- Removal of derelict buildings (seek participation of property owners or use enforcement)
- The Committee also urges the City to take strong enforcement measures with property owners to improve the beautification of Blaine and its downtown. This includes:
 - Enforcement of city bylaws to ensure owners take care of their commercial, residential and vacant properties with regards clean and restored building appearances, landscaping, weed control, unsightly commercial property For-Sale signs, and unlawful vehicles/trailers parked on city streets.

Communications Plan

Recommendation

Implement a comprehensive communications plan to support the levy vote

Passing a levy in our current economy is a difficult proposition. The following key steps required to gain public support have already been completed through the formation of the Committee and the public process that was followed:

- ✓ Start with a broad-based resident Committee to complete an assessment and provide preliminary recommendations
- ✓ Seek public input and complete a public survey
- ✓ Finalize specific recommendations that are:
 - Clearly understood,
 - Meaningful and impactful,
 - Aligned with resident desires, City needs and the City's strategic plan, and
 - Affordable.

The next steps recommended by the Committee include empowering volunteers to undertake public outreach and build support of the proposed levy.

- Implement a communications plan led by volunteers to gain public support (volunteers).
 - Encourage the formation of a communications committee with influential stakeholders. This will help get people organized and stay focused.
 - Develop the communications plan, key messaging, and presentation materials. The Parks Board and City Council should be considering commissioning renderings and concept plans for the key projects. The communications committee can then use these materials to build public support and excitement about these projects.
 - Provide presentations to stakeholder groups throughout the community.
 - Hold community input sessions.
 - Complete Northern Light advertising, articles and Letters to the Editor.
 - Use online tools and social media to support communications and promote the levy.

Some members of the Committee are willing to assist in this communications initiative.

Other Recommendations

The following recommendations are not included in the funded portion of the Committee's Recommendation but were key concepts the Committee felt strongly would contribute to the quality of life and long term economic vitality of Blaine.

Saving Downtown Water Views

Recommendations

- ***Pursue the acquisition of some properties on the west side of Peace Portal in the downtown to secure water views in perpetuity and provide a downtown green space. Include this initiative in the updates to the 2016 Comprehensive Plan and the 2016 Park and Recreation Plan.***

The scenic views over Drayton Harbor and the vista beyond are Blaine's greatest distinguishing attribute to attract future visitors and residents to the area, and saving some of these views would have significant strategic benefit to the City's plans for economic growth and revitalizing the downtown.

The Salishan Neighborhood Association presented a compelling vision to complement the City's revitalization plans for the downtown. Their vision is to acquire some properties on the west side of Peace Portal to save the water views and create a green space area in the downtown. One option presented was the three properties between H Street Plaza and the Chada Thai Restaurant (combined property tax assessment value of \$700,000). See the Appendix H and also the *Saving Water Views* Presentation in the compendium for details.

Key advantages of this vision include:

- Showcases Blaine's stunning water views (from the heart of its downtown)
- Provides a stronger enticement for visitors to stop and get out of their cars
- "Opens up" the downtown for a pleasant, festive and park-like environment
- Better connects the downtown with the Wharf district (by linking to H St Plaza and the proposed Pedestrian bridge to a larger green space)
- Creates an outdoor park in the downtown where people meet, mingle and take in the view (and a place to hold special events, gatherings, Farmers' Market, etc.)
- Facilitates future development of the downtown (adds to the livability of the area and by securing views may encourage development on the east side of Peace Portal which allows for more affordable building construction)

Similar to New York's Central Park or Vancouver's Stanley Park, the neighborhood group believes acquiring some of these properties has far greater strategic value to the City – to differentiate Blaine from other towns and attract visitors and new residents to help revitalize the downtown. This group stresses that the alternative for this particular location would likely be one large building butting

H Street Plaza and extending the entire block. This would largely eclipse the water views from the street and replicate the environment which many of Blaine's intended visitors are trying to escape.

The vision to acquire some properties on the west side of Peace Portal to save the water views and create a green space area in the downtown is a strong complement to the City's overall vision for downtown. More work is required on this initiative and it should be strongly considered and referenced in the 2016 Comprehensive Plan and the 2016 Park and Recreation Plan.

Important considerations recognized by the Committee were:

- Including this project in a levy at this time could jeopardize the passing of the levy. Greater public awareness, understanding and discussion of this proposal is needed. (For example, it may be difficult to convince some residents of the need to secure these properties when the properties have been vacant for so long.)
- There is a need to meet with some property owners to seek their input and identify their desired intentions for their properties. The Committee did not have time to do this.
- The City needs to further evaluate this proposal and explore creative means to acquire specific properties (alternatives such as trading other city owned land, using long-term mortgages versus levy funding, and/or longer term payment terms as partial contribution by owners to the benefit of the City).

Wharf District Master Plan

Recommendation

Renew efforts with the Port of Bellingham to commit to a plan and timeline to complete some of the important projects in the Wharf District Plan (and explore a wider network of partnering sponsors including the Port of Bellingham, the Burlington Railroad, corporate sponsors and possible grant opportunities.

This plan contains important initiatives to benefit the revitalize the downtown (pedestrian bridge, connecting boardwalk, two-mile wharf loop trail). The development of downtown is intrinsically linked with the Wharf District and it's in the City's best interest to maximize the partnership with the Port of Bellingham and see the concepts in the Wharf District Master Plan become a reality.

Blaine Library

Recommendation

Form a Committee to assess the current Library to define clear options and recommendations for Council with regards to (1) renovation/expansion, (2) relocation or (3) building a new library. Each of these options will require significant funding, capital improvement planning and clarifying resident priorities for such expenditures.

The Blaine Library appears to generate high interest from a sizeable segment of Blaine residents. Key concerns being expressed are that the library is nearing the point where it has out-grown its current

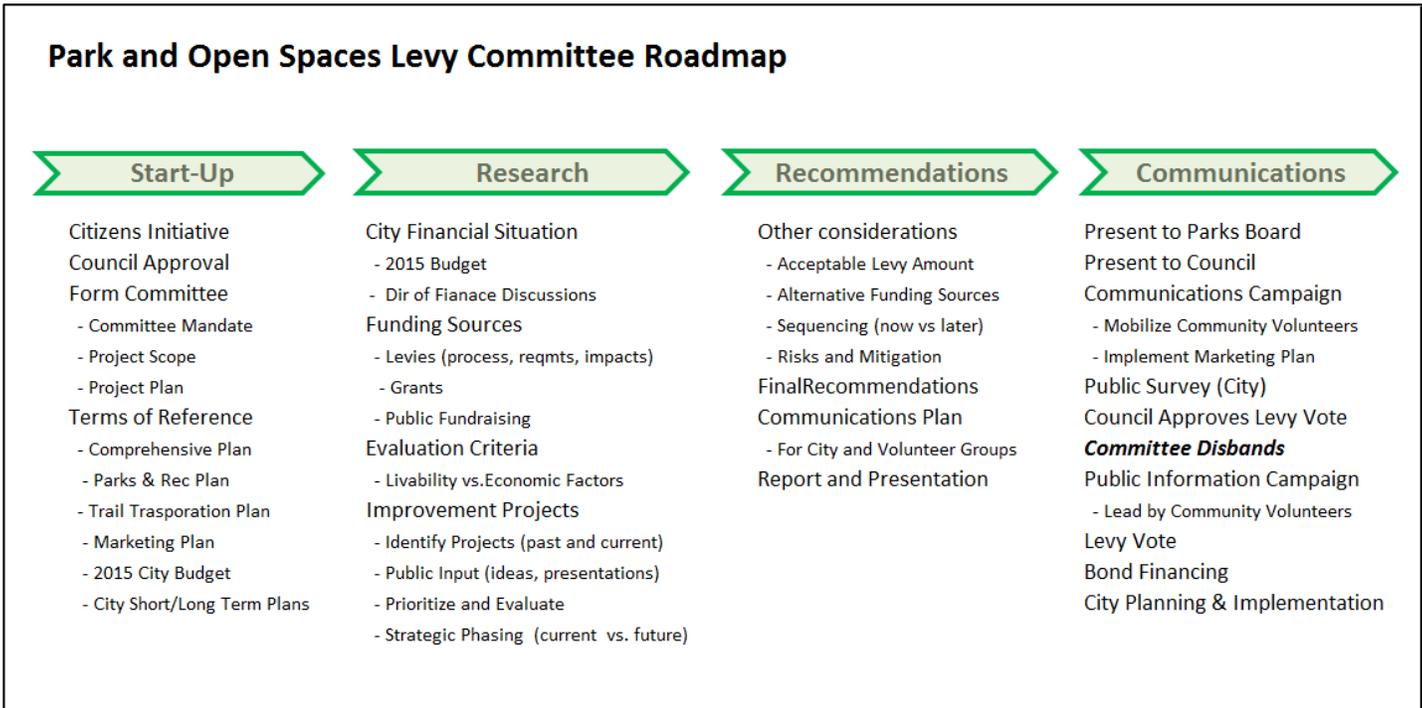
location, and is in need of a major renovation expansion or an entirely new location. The library's situation is not uncommon to smaller towns where libraries operate in less than adequate conditions for long periods until eventually being relocated or renovated or a new library is built. Keep in mind it was the continued focus and efforts of concerned citizens and the City of Ferndale that led to a million dollar donor for building their new Library.

The following examples provide some perspective to this situation.

Town	Library History	New Library
Ferndale <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population: 12,300 • 5 yr. Rev Growth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1981: leased space 2,800 sq ft • 1992: build new library 9,300 sq. ft • 2006: consultant recommends 26,000 sq ft facility (\$9.8M) • 2006: \$1M donation (anonymous donor) • 2009: City proposes 15,000 sq ft library (\$5.4M) • 2010: library relocated to 12,000 ft premises • 2009-2012: grants plus matching funding • 2013: plans scaled back to 12,000 sq ft 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2014 build new library • 12,000 sq. ft. • \$5 to \$6 million • 8 year process to fund • only on levy of \$550,000 (2013 with 61% support)
Salt Spring Island <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population: 12,000 • 5 Yr. Rev Growth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moved to present day location in 1964 • Expansion in 1970's (to increase size (doubled size to 4,500 sq. ft in 1970's (combine old house and shop) to 4,500 sq ft • operated for many years in cramped quarters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2012 build new library • 13,250 sq ft. (2 stories) • \$5.7 Million Cdn • Mostly staff by 170 volunteers
Lynden <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population: 12,900 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Built 2001 • 15,000 sq. ft. • \$2 million
Blaine <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population: 4,900 		

Appendix A: Committee Roadmap

The following roadmap was developed to help guide the activities of the Committee.



Appendix B: Project Evaluation Criteria

The criteria used by the Committee to evaluate projects is listed below.

Evaluation Criteria Defined

Asking residents to pay higher taxes during a protracted recessionary period requires thorough analysis and clear determination as to why the recommended initiative is required and why now versus later on. Key evaluation criteria include the following:

Time Sensitive:

- Urgent – if action is not taken the opportunity could be lost forever
- High – delay of initiative would have "high" negative impact on economic development and/or city livability
- Medium – delay of initiative would have "medium" negative impact on economic development and/or city livability
- Low – delay of initiative would have "low" negative impact on economic development and/or city livability

Economic Contribution – contributes positively to the economic development of Blaine (businesses wanting to locate in Blaine)

Tourism – contributes to promoting /increasing tourism for Blaine (people stop and enjoy the amenities)

Livability – contributes to the quality of life of living in Blaine (high usage by residents, enjoyment/pride of existing residents and attracts future residents)

City Plan – positive contribution to the City’s comprehensive plan and aligns with key recommendations/themes from the Parks and Recreation Plan, the Non-Motorized Transportation Plan and the Marketing Plan

Downtown Revitalization – contributes to revitalizing the downtown

Wow Factor – capitalizes on Blaine’s unique geography (helps Blaine compete with other towns for attracting visitors)

Long Term Benefit – will be regarded 100 years from now as: “great foresight”, “good planning”, and “doing the right thing”

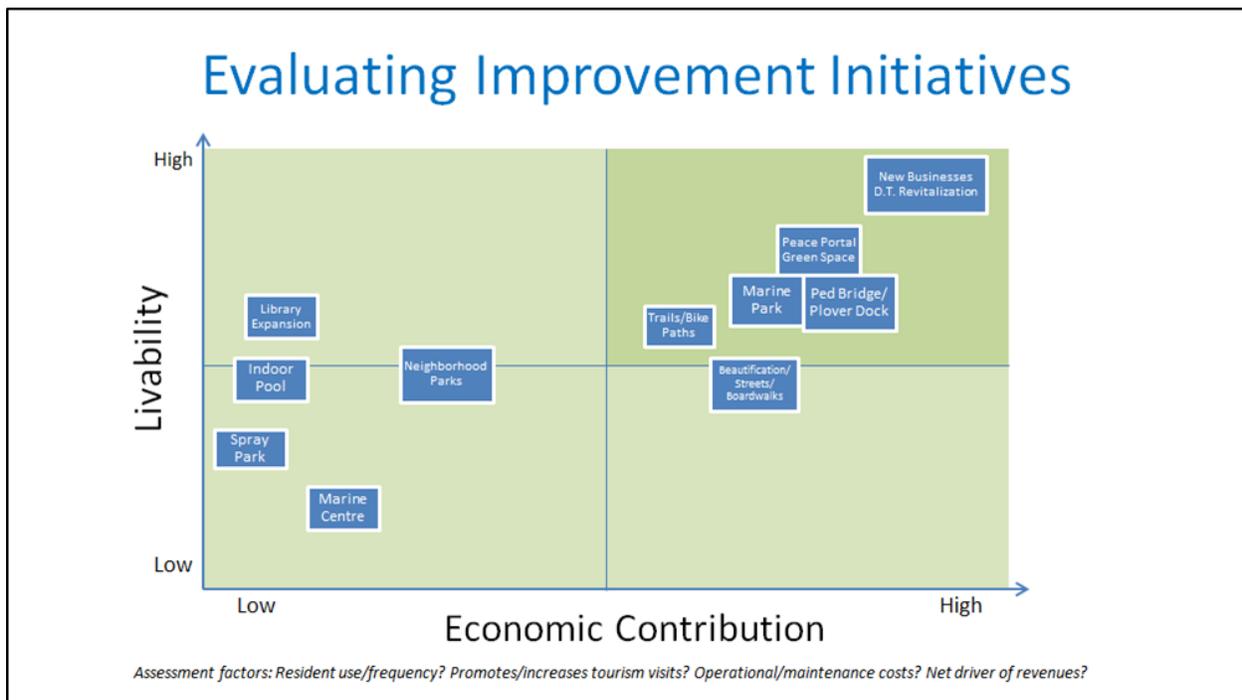
Affordability To Build – The amount of funding required to build/create this initiative is reasonably affordable to Blaine's residents

Affordability To Operate/Maintain – The amount of funding required to operate and maintain this initiative on an annual basis is reasonably affordable to Blaine's residents

Levy Vote Support – ability to gain public support to pass the levy (with a well-planned communications plan)

Livability versus Economic Sustainability

Maintaining economic sustainability is paramount of the City of Blaine during this prolonged recessionary period. While there is a strong desire to improve the “Livability” of the region for residents through improved facilities such as a new civic center or a public swimming pool, capital intensive projects such as these are simply not affordable in the current economic climate. Thus the challenge is finding a balance between projects that increase livability, promote economic stability (growth) and are affordable. The chart below, while subjective, helps outline the livability and economic factors when evaluating city projects.



The following page contains the *Evaluation and Project Ranking Form* used by the Committee.

Initiative	Input Preferred Dollar Allocated	*Evaluation Ranking Criteria: 1 = Low/Poor and 5 = High/Good													Total Ranking	
		Timing/Urgency	Economic Contribution	Increases Tourism	Improves Livability	Aligns with City Plans	Downtown Revitalization	Wow Factor	Long Term City Benefit	Affordability	Levy Vote Support	Total Score	Avg Score			
Save Downtown Views/Buy Properties	\$600,000	4	3	4	3	4	4	5	2	3	37	3.7				
Pedestrian Bridge (to Warf District)	50	2	5	5	3	3	4	4	5	2	35	3.5				
Warf Dist. Park Improvements	50	0	2	2	4	3	2	4	1	2	22	2.2				
Existing City Park Improvements	\$100,000	0	0	0	4	4	2	3	2	3	20	2				
New Parks (i.e. Semiahmoo, Cain Cr. etc)	\$100,000	0	2	0	4	4	2	3	2	3	22	2.2				
Develop Trails/Pathways	\$100,000	0	2	2	4	3	3	4	2	3	26	2.6				
Develop Bille Paths	50	0	2	2	4	3	3	4	2	2	24	2.4				
Build New Library	50	1	0	0	4	2	2	3	0	2	16	1.6				
Library Expansion	50	1	0	0	2	2	2	1	1	2	11	1.1				
New Swimming Pool	50	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0				
New Civic Center (Rec. Library, Pool)	50	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Marine Interpretive Center	50	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0				
New Camground/RV Park	50	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0				
(Add Initiative?)	50	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0				
(Add Initiative?)	50	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0				
(Add Initiative?)	50	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0				
(Add Initiative?)	50	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Total Levy Request	\$900,000															

Appendix C: Levy Funding Options

Two types of property tax levies were evaluated as potential sources of funding.

The Voted Regular Property Tax Levy is generally used for smaller projects and goes for a shorter term such as 4 years. This levy does not involve Bond financing and is simply the collection of property tax each year which goes toward the specific project. Thus a \$1 million Regular Levy would provide \$250,000 each year over four years and equates to a \$80 annual tax increase on the average home (\$250,000 assessed home value). The main advantage of the Regular Levy is that it requires a simple majority vote of 50% (versus the 60% super majority vote for the larger "excess" levies).

Voted Regular Property Tax Levy (Simple Majority 50% Vote)						
Parks & Rec Total Levy Amount	Levy Collected Per year	Term	Levy Rate Per \$1,000	Tax Impact \$250,000 Assessed Home Value		
				Annual	Per Day	Tax Increase*
\$306,000	\$76,500	4	\$0.10	\$25	\$0.07	0.9%
\$484,000	\$121,000	4	\$0.16	\$40	\$0.11	1.5%
\$800,000	\$200,000	4	\$0.26	\$65	\$0.18	2.4%
\$1,220,000	\$305,000	4	\$0.40	\$100	\$0.27	3.7%

* 2015 property tax for \$250,000 Assessed Home is \$2,678

The Voted Excess Property Tax Levy is used for larger capital projects and is paid back over longer terms (10 and 20 years). Once the levy is passed a bond is then secured so that the full amount of the funding is immediately available for the project. This type of financing requires a super majority 60% vote (i.e. the school levy).

Voted Excess Property Tax Levy (Super Majority 60% Vote)								
Bond Amount	Term (Yrs)	Tax Impact \$250,000 Assessed Home Value			Term (Yrs)	Tax Impact \$250,000 Assessed Home Value		
		Annual	Per Day	Tax Increase*		Annual	Per Day	Tax Increase*
\$1,000,000	10	\$42	\$0.12	1.6%	20	\$26	\$0.07	1.0%
\$2,000,000	10	\$84	\$0.23	3.1%	20	\$52	\$0.14	1.9%
\$3,000,000	10	\$127	\$0.35	4.7%	20	\$79	\$0.22	2.9%
\$5,000,000	10	\$212	\$0.58	7.9%	20	\$131	\$0.36	4.9%

* 2015 property tax for \$250,000 Assessed Home is \$2,678

Appendix D: Property Tax Considerations

The proposed \$ 1 million levy will increase property taxes about \$80 per year over four years for the average homeowner (property assessed value of \$250,000). This represents about a 3% property tax increase in the first year. The levy will appear on the Homeowner's Property Tax statement. For illustrative purposes, the following property tax statement is from a \$240,000 home in Blaine and shows the current distribution of the property tax.

Property ID		Property Type	Geo ID																																												
113822		Real	4001060283280000																																												
Owner		Tax Distribution																																													
Abbreviated Legal / Physical Address		<table border="0"> <tr><td>WA STATE GENERAL FUND</td><td>596.00</td></tr> <tr><td>COUNTY CURRENT EXPENSE</td><td>264.73</td></tr> <tr><td>COUNTY DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY</td><td>3.00</td></tr> <tr><td>COUNTY ELECTION RESERVE</td><td>3.55</td></tr> <tr><td>COUNTY MENTAL HEALTH</td><td>3.00</td></tr> <tr><td>COUNTY VETERANS RELIEF</td><td>2.70</td></tr> <tr><td>FLOOD CONTROL ZONE</td><td>33.02</td></tr> <tr><td>CONSERVATION FUTURES</td><td>10.26</td></tr> <tr><td>FIRE #21 2013 ANNEX DEBT</td><td>16.13</td></tr> <tr><td>FIRE #21 EXPENSE FUND</td><td>343.83</td></tr> <tr><td>RURAL LIBRARY</td><td>119.99</td></tr> <tr><td>BLAINE-BIRCH BAY PARK & REC CAP</td><td>2.46</td></tr> <tr><td>BLAINE-BIRCH BAY PARK & REC EXPE</td><td>13.35</td></tr> <tr><td>BLAINE-BIRCH BAY PARK & REC RESE</td><td>8.19</td></tr> <tr><td>PORT OF BELLINGHAM GENERAL FUND</td><td>55.82</td></tr> <tr><td>PORT OF BELLINGHAM GO BOND</td><td>13.17</td></tr> <tr><td>PORT OF BELLINGHAM RDA</td><td>.06</td></tr> <tr><td>BLAINE SCHOOL #503 BOND</td><td>260.74</td></tr> <tr><td>BLAINE SCHOOL #503 M&O</td><td>441.52</td></tr> <tr><td>CITY OF BLAINE 2002 BOND</td><td>41.30</td></tr> <tr><td>CITY OF BLAINE CURRENT EXPENSE</td><td>337.59</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td><u>2570.41</u></td></tr> </table>		WA STATE GENERAL FUND	596.00	COUNTY CURRENT EXPENSE	264.73	COUNTY DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY	3.00	COUNTY ELECTION RESERVE	3.55	COUNTY MENTAL HEALTH	3.00	COUNTY VETERANS RELIEF	2.70	FLOOD CONTROL ZONE	33.02	CONSERVATION FUTURES	10.26	FIRE #21 2013 ANNEX DEBT	16.13	FIRE #21 EXPENSE FUND	343.83	RURAL LIBRARY	119.99	BLAINE-BIRCH BAY PARK & REC CAP	2.46	BLAINE-BIRCH BAY PARK & REC EXPE	13.35	BLAINE-BIRCH BAY PARK & REC RESE	8.19	PORT OF BELLINGHAM GENERAL FUND	55.82	PORT OF BELLINGHAM GO BOND	13.17	PORT OF BELLINGHAM RDA	.06	BLAINE SCHOOL #503 BOND	260.74	BLAINE SCHOOL #503 M&O	441.52	CITY OF BLAINE 2002 BOND	41.30	CITY OF BLAINE CURRENT EXPENSE	337.59		<u>2570.41</u>
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Value Information		General Levy Rate per \$1000: 10.7113212085 Voted Levy Rate: 3.1985534063 Voted Levy Amount: 767.56																																													
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The City's current debt obligations are outlined in the chart below.

City of Blaine Debt Summary											
Debt Description	Revenue Source	Project	Year Originated	Call Date	Ordinance No.	Final Payment Date	Original Coupon Rate	Current or Next Coupon Rate	Original Amount Borrowed (Principal)	Balance End of 2015 (Principal + Interest)	Annual Payment (Principal + Interest)
General Obligation Debt											
UTGO Voted Bond*	Voted Property Tax Levy	Fire Station #3 Refunded	2002 (Refunded 2011)	Non-callable	02-2519; 11-2807	12/1/2021	4.55%	2.25%	1,600,000	759,134	125,943
Subtotal									1,600,000	759,134	125,943
LTGO Bond	General Fund Rev	Airport Land Acq.	2003	12/1/2013	03-2559	12/1/2018	4.65%		250,000	64,797	23,638
LTGO Bond	General & REET Rev	Purchase Banner Bank Build	2011	N/A	11-2807	12/21/2021	2.65%	3.85%	1,318,245	1,110,559	93,867
LTGO Bond (Qualified Energy Conversation Bond)	General, Utilities Rev, & Energy Savings	Energy Conservation (ESCO)	2013	10/15/2023	13-2838	10/15/2028	2.90%		1,670,000	2,160,273	137,466
LTGO & Refunding Bond	General & Utilities Rev	Street, Stormwater, Public Safety Annex, & Sewer Imp.	2007 (Refunded)	Non-callable	07-2690	12/1/2017	4.00%		5,970,000	1,275,000	809,925
County EDI Loan	General Fund Rev	Peace A. Boardwalk	2006	N/A		3/28/2026	1.50%		873,333	512,295	50,868
Community Econ. Revitalization Board Loan	General Fund Rev	Odell Rd.	1999	N/A		1/31/2019	1.00%		482,258	153,446	23,894
LOCAL** Lease to Purchase	General Fund Rev	Purchase Police Vehicle	2010	Non-callable		12/1/2015	2.10%		75,000	-	15,997
Subtotal									10,638,836	5,276,370	1,155,655
Utility Revenue Debt											
Electric Rev Refund Bond	Electric Revenue	Electric Improv	2004 (Refunded 2014)	No Pre-payment	04-2574; 14-2856	12/1/2019	2.00%	1.95%	4,435,000	1,486,103	493,810
Water Rev Refund Bond	Water Revenue	Water/Sewer Impro	2003 (Refunded)	Non-callable	03-2545	6/2/2015	2.00%	3.85%	1,670,000	-	10,855
Sewer Rev Refund Bond	Sewer Revenue	Water/Sewer Improv	2003 (Refunded)	Non-callable	03-2545	6/2/2015	2.00%	3.85%	1,670,000	-	10,855
Dept of Ecology Loan	Sewer Revenue	Sewer Treat. Plant	2009	N/A		***	1.80%		1,300,000	1,034,092	81,386
Public Works Trust Fund Loans	Sewer Revenue	Sewer Treat. Plant & Stormwater Project	2008	N/A		2028	1.00%		21,819,826	15,978,420	1,360,360
US Dept of Agriculture Rural Dev Rev Bonds	Sewer Revenue	Sewer Treat. Plant	2010	Prepayment Allowed	10-2774	10/28/2050	4.50%		6,500,600	6,274,701	346,009
Subtotal									37,395,426	24,773,316	2,303,274
Grand Total									49,634,262	30,808,820	3,584,872

*Voted bond levy

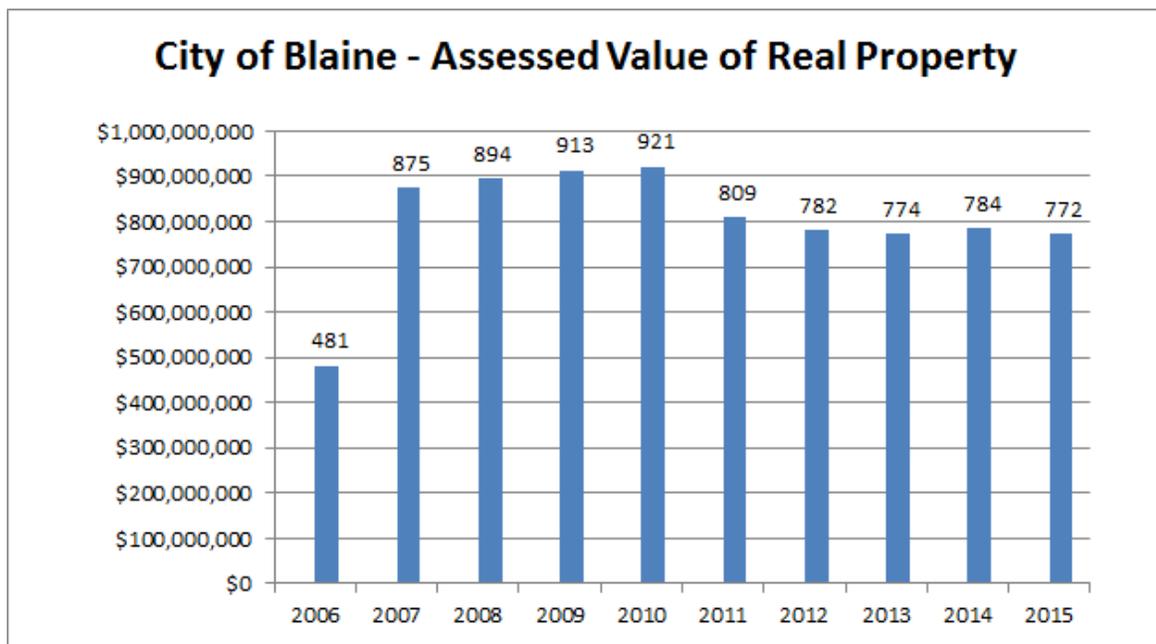
**Local Option Capital Asset Lending Program

*** DOE 2011 – Lighthouse Point Water Reclamation Facility (prin & int) final payment 7/2030

Date: February 2015

Financial Considerations

- There is concern that the declining trend in the assessed value of real property may require an increase in the property tax rate to meet the City's revenue requirements (see chart below).
- It would be beneficial to assess and compare the average property tax and utilities costs for living in Blaine, Ferndale, Lynden and Bellingham to ensure the costs to live in Blaine are competitive and not a barrier to attracting new residents.
- Desire to ensure the City's overall levy strategy holistically minimizes the property tax burden on residents (versus City departments and City Committees pursuing levy funding separately)



Appendix E: Grant Funding

The availability of grant funding can significantly increase the appeal and the priority of projects. It is recommended that the City maintain a current list of possible grant funding sources for future reference. The City may also want to seek a few volunteers to research funding options and become experts in this area.

Following is a starting list of some organizations providing grants:

- Funding sources under WSDOT Local Programs jurisdiction fund trails, include the ones described under Ped/Bike Funding: <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/bike/FundingSources.htm>
- The federal Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) allocates funds for projects like trails, which is administered through Whatcom Council of Governments (WCOG):https://www.google.com/?gws_rd=ssl#q=whatcom+council+of+govt
- These programs are also described in chapter 12 the LAG Manual: <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/LocalPrograms/LAG/>
- The Transportation Improvement Board (TIB) administers a number of funding programs: <http://www.tib.wa.gov/>
- Infrastructure Assistance Coordinating Council (IACC), an organization that keeps track of funding and loan opportunities in Washington state on a wide range of project types. They have a conference in Wenatchee the end of October each year, which features technical sessions, where agencies can present their project to a funding team to determine which funding programs are applicable and/or available: <http://www.infracfunding.wa.gov/>
- Dept. of Ecology, they provided the grant of \$50K of the Marine Park shoreline project: <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/sea/grants/cpf/moreinfo.html>

Appendix F: Comprehensive Project List

Parks, Recreation, Open Spaces – List of Improvement Projects

Compiled by the Parks and Open Spaces Levy Committee

Initiative	References - 2004 Park Plan - 2007 Wharf District Plan - 2010 Non Motorized Transportation Plan - 2001 Marketing Plan
Downtown and Wharf District	
Protect/Secure Downtown Water Views <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Buy properties west side of Peace (protect views for evermore) Future central downtown park, picnic area, bluff- top boardwalk Central hub of City's network of trails and pathways Connects down town, pedestrian bridge, marina (2 mile shoreline loop trail) Blaine's "Central Park" 	Park Plan NMT Plan Mkt Plan Neigh. Ass
Pedestrian Bridge to Wharf District/Marine Park <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connect downtown Blaine over RR tracks to Boat Launch Area (Plover Park) Connects downtown with Marine Park (2 mile shoreline loop trail) Relocate Plover terminal to Plover Park 	Park Plan NMT Plan WD Plan
Plover Park – Proposed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New park beside Boat Launch (includes pocket beach for small boat launch) Component of 2 mile shoreline loop trail 	WD Plan
Marina Boardwalk Expansion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extend along east side of Marina from Gate 1 Ramp to Boat Launch/Plover Park Component of 2 mile shoreline loop trail 	WD Plan
Pintail Marsh Wetland Improvement and Pathway <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Located between Boat Launch, Marine Drive and rail tracks Component of 2 mile shoreline loop train 	WD Plan
Marine Park - Festival Square Improvement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 acre city-owned parcel (east side of water treatment plant) Landscape and site plan required 	WD Plan

Marine Park – Pocket Beach Restoration Project	Park Plan
Marine Drive Boardwalk <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North side of Marine drive from Marine Park Playground to pier • Component of 2 mile shoreline loop trail • Restrict vehicle traffic to the Pier (?) 	WD Plan Mkt Plan
Downtown Boardwalk <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From G St Plaza to H St Plaza on west side of buildings (470 ft.) 	Park Plan WD Plan NMT Plan
Peace Portal Boardwalk <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bluff-top and/or behind buildings from H St to Boblett St 	Park Plan WD Plan NMT Plan
Peace Portal Street-End Parklet Improvements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Martin St, Clark St, Boblett St • Open-up, landscape, park benches, neighborhood park • Minimize obstructions to the view (removal of trees on the RR right of way) 	Park Plan NMT Plan
Drayton Harbor Boardwalk and Birding Pier <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shoreline boardwalk from H St to Cherry St with pier 	NMT Plan
Parks	
Lincoln Park – Improvements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selective clearing and tree removal • Improved entrance way, paved access, signage, picnic area (landscape architect) • Improve trails, add off-road bike area • Option: Allocate one acre of Lincoln Park as a neighborhood park, fronting H Street to be used for recreational purposes (play ground, playing field, picnic area) 	Park Plan NMT Plan
Skallman Park – Improvements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement plans • Part of the proposed Athletic Field Trail 	Park Plan NMT Plan
Salishan Park – Improvements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgrade playground equipment and park benches • Possible washroom/kitchen area additions 	Park Plan NMT Plan
Dakota Creek Shoreline – Proposed Park <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dakota Creek is a valuable asset to the Blaine and Whatcom County community • Propose park on north side of the creek. There are presently three parcels amounting to 5.5 acres located immediately south of the Front Avenue right of way on the northern banks of Dakota Creek between the old Haws Street and Odell Road (Parcel #: 400107-491302, 4100107-516301, and 400107-548302). The owners are the City of Blaine, Robert Bye, and Ron Freeman. These 	Park Plan NMT Plan

<p>properties are located near the mouth of Dakota Creek and have a view of both the Creek and Drayton Harbor. A cement dock connecting the shoreline to the City owned island is used by sport fishermen.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Together these properties and rights of way offer one of the best remaining public access opportunities for a shoreline park or a conservancy area 	
<p>Runge Avenue Right of Way – Proposed Dakota Creek Access</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Located on both the north and south of Runge Avenue between Bell Road and Drayton Harbor (Parcel #: 401073833950000) should be used to provide good access to the mouth of Dakota Creek 	Park Plan
<p>Steen Street Road End – Proposed Park (Cain Creek Neighborhood Park)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a neighborhood park facility • Cain Creek abuts the eastern boundary of the road end, and the City owns several pieces of land and the right of way adjacent to the road end 	Park Plan NMT Plan
<p>East Blaine Conservancy – Proposed Park</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large well preserved wetlands within city limits (under private ownership) 	Park Plan
<p>E Street/Jerome Street/Harvey Road Area – Proposed Neighborhood Parks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is important to plan for parks and recreational opportunities for these large areas before development takes place. When fully developed, this area will require two or more neighborhood parks. It is also important to plan recreational trails to allow pedestrian and bicycle access from these parks to Lincoln Park 	Park Plan
<p>Clyde Street Area – Proposed Neighborhood Park</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land would need to be purchased • Located beside the Eagle Nest Conservancy Land which is in the City's Right of Way 	Park Plan
<p>10th Street Right of Way – Proposed Neighborhood Park</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small right of way that could be converted in a neighborhood park • Located on 10th Street, between D Street and E Street 	Park Plan
<p>7th Street Right of Way – Proposed Greenway</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 block greenway area from D St to H St • Add 10 ft wide trail and fitness circuit 	Park Plan
Community Trail Corridors	
<p>The Drayton Harbor Trail Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Longest, continuous trail system contained in the NMT plan • Provides water access and critical pedestrian link between Semiahmoo and Central Blaine • Network of road, path and boardwalk linking Drayton Harbor shoreline, Montford Park, west side of Peace Portal in downtown, H St Pedestrian Overpass, Wharf Loop Trail, Marine Park and Millennium Trail to Canadian 	Park Plan NMT Plan

border	
Coast Millennium Trail – Blaine Trail Developments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Coast Millennium trail is a regional trail overlay that seeks to connect trails as far south as Skagit County all the way to the Canadian border • NMT plan identifies additional pieces of trail in Blaine that will compliment and complete the Coast Millennium Trail 	Park Plan NMT Plan
Semiahmoo Spit – Loop Trail Improvements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete trail improvements on north side of the peninsula loop trail 	Park Plan NMT Plan
12th Street Border Connection Trail <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides connectivity to the Pacific Highway Customs facility on State Route 543 • The trail begins on C Street where it connects into the Peace Arch Trail which continues south on 12 Street to H Street • To the north a sidewalk or separated path is need which will connect the existing border facility crosswalks and sidewalks. • Pedestrian connectivity should be encouraged north into Canada on 176th St 	NMT Plan
Blaine Athletic Fields – Proposed Trail <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Blaine School District athletic fields on Pipeline Road are just over a mile from the Blaine Schools Complex north of Boblett St. and there are no safe route for kids to bike or walk between the school and ball fields • A high- standard, paved multi-use trail system is recommended • Within the athletic field’s property, use trails to better connect to serve the various ball fields. Develop a walking/jogging path to extended around the perimeter of the site, and improve the existing forest into a loop. Improve public access including trailhead improvements at the west or east ends of the property 	Park Plan NMT Plan
Birch Point Trail – Proposed Trail <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides connectivity from Semiahmoo Parkway to Birch Point Road • Potential commuter and north/south connector between the City of Blaine and the Birch Bay community 	NMT Plan
Cain Creek – Proposed Trail <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connects Marine Drive to the Bell Road, Peace Portal Drive intersection by winding through Blaine’s downtown neighborhoods. The northern half of this trail • follows Cain creek and the south half crosses the Brickyard neighborhood • proposal highly regarded by the Trails Committee as it brings neighborhood residents into downtown and provides an alternative commuter route (offers a natural setting separate from vehicle traffic) • Steen Street future park is planned next to a section of this trail 	Park Plan NMT Plan
Cedar Grove – Proposed Trail <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Located at the south end of Semiahmoo, this medium standard trail wanders 	NMT Plan

<p>through a large stand of fully mature cedar trees while providing an east/west connection of Birch Point Trail and the Millennium Trail on Semiahmoo Parkway. A large portion of this trail already exists as an overgrown dirt path</p>	
<p>Dakota Creek – Proposed Trail</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dakota Creek empties into Drayton Harbor along the southern City limits boundary and this is where the trail head is proposed to begin, at the proposed Dakota Creek Shoreline Park. • This high standard trail connects with the Drayton Harbor Trail and heads east along the northern shore of Dakota Creek, under interstate 5 at the bridge and continues through the urban growth area and into the county. • This trail provides shoreline access and would provide an excellent opportunity for wildlife viewing 	<p>Park Plan NMT Plan</p>
<p>Dakota Creek Loop Trail UGA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The short loop trail in the east Blaine urban growth area starts on the edge of the City limits next to the Blaine Business Park. • The trail connects Sweet Road with Dakota Creek and the Dakota Creek Trail using the unopened Nevans right-of-way behind Nature’s Path manufacturing facility. The other portion of the loop trail follows a seasonal stream connecting Dakota Creek and Nevans right-of-way 	<p>NMT Plan</p>
<p>Montfort Park Community Trail</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporates a number of existing and proposed trails and includes on-street cycling elements including trails in and near Montfort Park. • To help complete this system in Blaine, a number of segments are proposed including improvements of the trails in the Montfort Park area 	<p>Park Plan NMT Plan</p>
<p>Grandis Pond and Drayton Reach – Proposed Trails</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Grandis Pond development is an exceptionally large proposal and if proceeds it is proposed the developer will include more than thirteen miles of trails • Trails of particular interest to the public will include those around the pond and wetlands (East Blaine Conservancy Park), as well as regional links to the south, and to the west along the proposed Mott’s Hill Parkway. The latter would become a major east-west corridor for the future and should be paved and enhanced with a variety of user amenities, including viewpoints and pocket parks. 	<p>NMT Plan</p>
<p>East Blaine Conservancy Park – Proposed Loop Trail</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This future trail will travel east from the high school, to the athletic fields, then further east to the Blaine Wellhead Protection Area. From the Wellhead Protection Area the trail will head east then north toward the East Blaine Conservancy Park. The trail should loop around the Category I wetland, one of the finest and most beautiful wetlands in all of Whatcom County 	<p>Park Plan</p>

<p>Lincoln Park Trails</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Currently, pedestrian and bicycle access to the park is inconvenient. A longer-term solution to this may be redevelopment of H Street and its sidewalk system to include a separated, high-standard path along the north or south sides of the road and extending west to SR 543 and the proposed 12th Street Trail. From there, a high-standard link could continue southward to the proposed Blaine Athletic Trail 	<p>Park Plan NMT Plan</p>
<p>Montfort Park and Pearl Street Trails</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Propose improvement to park trails and links to the neighborhood as well as beach access for pedestrian traffic and non-motorized small craft launch 	<p>Park Plan NMT Plan</p>
<p>Boblett Street Trail</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At the junction of Boblett St and Mitchell Avenue, an improved bicycle-pedestrian connection is needed to enhance safety and to make it easier for kids to walk or bike to school 	<p>NMT Plan</p>
<p>Priority Bikeways</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop extensive bikeways plan contained in Blaine's Non-Motorized Transportation Plan 	<p>NMT Plan</p>
<p>Recreational/Capital Facilities</p>	
<p>Library</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Option One – Expansion (additional rooms for meeting/kids groups) Option Two – Relocations Option Three – Build new library 	
<p>New Community Center (with meeting spaces)</p>	
<p>Community Indoor Swimming Pool</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note: 2004 Park Plan, <i>"Surveys have revealed a strong community preference for a swimming pool. The City does not have the necessary funding source for the construction and maintenance of a community swimming pool. The City should help facilitate the creation of a task force to research funding options necessary to locate, construct and maintain a community swimming pool."</i> 	<p>Park Plan</p>
<p>Children's Outdoor Splash & Spray Park</p>	
<p>Museum (including children's section)</p>	<p>Park Plan Mkt Plan</p>
<p>Indoor Public Market</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Similar to New West or Granville Island markets 	
<p>Marine Education Center</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As presented by Jim Jorgenson 	<p>Park Plan Mkt Plan WD Plan</p>

Train Station Restoration	Mkt Plan
Transform Old City Hall Area (Park and Community Facilities) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Convert the Old City Hall area into an outdoor plaza and park-like setting. 	
Other	
Beautification/Cleanup (Notes from the 2001 Marketing Plan) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blaine should be a showcase community for the U.S. and for Washington, “The Evergreen State.” While Peace Arch Park and downtown Blaine are beautiful, this effort needs to be expanded to include the exit areas, particularly Exit 276 northbound and the southbound exit at the border crossing. All exits into Blaine should be mowed year round, trash removed, and seasonal color planted. Attractive exits will portray Blaine as an inviting community, pulling people into the city. While beautification efforts may seem a waste by some people, we have found that the most successful communities – in terms of quality of life, tourism, and economic development – have strong beautification programs. We recommend that the city volunteer to take responsibility from the Washington Dept. of Transportation (DOT) and, working with volunteer groups, adopt the exits and maintain them as beautiful entrances to the City of Blaine. Nearly every visitor who passes through Blaine will judge the “book” by its cover and so this is an important project 	Mkt Plan
Plover Ferry <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addition of bike racks 	
Footbridge from Marine Pier to Semiahmoo <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enables Semiahmoo resort guests to visit downtown 	
Streetscape Improvements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue the development of a major pedestrian streetscape or sidewalk system with landscaping, street trees, street lights, benches, signage, artwork, and special city gateway features along Marine and Peace Portal Drives between the harbor, downtown, and City Hall 	Mkt Plan Park Plan
Campground and Trailer Park <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attracts campers and RVs to visit and stay in Blaine 	Park Plan

Appendix G: Resident Survey

Parks and Open Space Levy Poll

Raw Numbers: 245 calls made

Responses: 87 survey responses

Questions:

“Please choose a rating of strongly support, somewhat support, or do not support for each of these possible projects that could be included in the package :

The next phase of a trail system extending from Blaine to Birch Bay

73% Strongly Support

21% Somewhat Support

7% Do Not Support

Notes: None

A picnic shelter and working restroom at Salishan Park

67% Strongly Support

20% Somewhat Support

13% Do Not Support

Note: People who liked this idea, really liked this idea. Hard to quantify other than anecdotal enthusiasm but the “working restroom” is a big hit.

“The purchase of some harbor view properties on the west side of Peace Portal downtown, to preserve views instead of condos.”

31% Strongly Support

51% Somewhat Support

18% Do Not Support

Note: The only partisan divide of any statistical significance comes here. Liberals were very skeptical of this item, conservatives didn't view it any differently. Mostly, they wanted more details about the proposal.

“A water spray park”

58% Strongly Support

12% Somewhat Support

19% Do Not Support

Note: Again, enthusiasm. Older respondents often responded with excitement over a spray park.

“The Library expansion”

23% Strongly Support

44% Somewhat Support

24% Do Not Support

Notes: Several questions as to why a Parks levy is used for the Library. Not necessarily opposed, but confused.

“Is any of these a Dealbreaker?”

7% said yes (that's six people)

Appendix H: Saving Water Views

The Saving Water Views presentation by the Salishan Neighborhood Association is contained in the Committee's compendium. The following slides outline two possible options for consideration.

Option A comprises three properties between H Street Plaza and Chada Thai restaurant which have a property tax assessment value of \$700,000, and option B, two properties at the location of the old gas station, which have a property assessment value of \$660,000 (the market values of these properties is unknown).





Option A

Phase 1

Future Phase

Landscape Plan

- Add fill, soil and level
- Pathway, railing, grass
- Park benches and tables



Option B

Landscape Plan

- Remove blacktop
- Add fill, soil and level
- Pathway, railing, grass
- Park benches and tables

