



# CITY OF BLAINE

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT

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Plain text = existing language with no changes

~~Strikethrough~~ = existing language to be deleted

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*Italics* = instructions to code reviser

### **New Vision Statement for Downtown Blaine (working draft)**

Downtown Blaine is a desirable place to call home, visit, and do business. The Central Business District borders Drayton Harbor to the west, a busy Canadian border crossing to the north, the Interstate to the east, and Salishan neighborhood to the south. A broad range of allowed uses reflect and implement the district's function as a high-density residential area; a center of business, retail, and entertainment; and a tourist destination.

The downtown supports a critical mass of retail uses and services in a pedestrian-friendly setting, attracting visitors as well as locals to stop and shop. The enhancement of the area for retail and service businesses is supported by substantial increases in the amount of housing, commercial and entertainment uses either within or adjacent to the downtown. Housing options are encouraged, providing housing for a range of income groups.

The Central Business District is welcoming and safe and hosts cultural and social events throughout the year. High quality lodging accommodations, including hotels and vacation rentals, street-side cafes, street art, and an abundance of live music and fresh-food eateries attract residents and visitors alike. The weekend Market by the Sea serves as a renowned gathering spot and hosts a wide range of family-friendly activities.

Downtown Blaine is forever connected with the sea and its working waterfront identified as the Wharf District. This connection is embodied by the City's downtown branding – Blaine-by-the-Sea. The City

[offers a wide variety of business incentives and development assistance that fosters a growing downtown transforming into a bustling, vibrant commercial center.](#)

## **Comprehensive Plan Goals and Policies Applicable to Downtown**

Note: It is recommended that these Goals and Policies be reviewed in detail during subsequent work sessions, based on the topic areas that have been established in the syllabus.

HOUSING ELEMENT - Goal 1: To encourage the development of a variety of housing types and prices, including an adequate supply of housing in a price range affordable to employees at available jobs in Blaine and housing which meets the needs of senior citizens.

ACTIONS: A. The City should ~~encourage the~~ development of multi-family dwellings above the first floor of businesses within the Central Business District. Where determined appropriate, buildings exclusively used for multi-family housing units should be permitted to mix within the Central Business District.

HOUSING ELEMENT - Goal 7: To encourage the development of affordable housing within the City without sacrificing public safety or the ability to provide needed public services and utilities.

POLICY: 7.1 The City should establish and maintain permit requirements, fees and standards which encourage the development of affordable housing.

ACTIONS: A. Where off-site road improvements are required to mitigate traffic impact of housing projects, the City should develop agreements which allow the construction of these improvements to be phased along with the development of the housing units.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – Goal 1: To encourage the development or expansion of businesses which will provide expanded employment opportunities for City residents; diversify the City economy; and generate a strong tax base to fund City services.

Policy 1.2 The City cooperates with business and property owners to develop or improve public facilities in commercial areas including roads, sidewalks, street lights, public parking areas, landscaping and sanitation facilities, with funding from traffic impact fees, general facility fees, developer contributions and available grant programs.

Policy 1.4 The City cooperates with the Chamber of Commerce and the Blaine Visitor Information Center to maintain an adequate volunteer staff to encourage and assist businesses in expanding or relocating within the City.

Policy 1.8 The City recognizes that an ever changing world creates economic opportunities that cannot be anticipated in plans and zoning code, and supports new and innovative uses when appropriately located and designed.

Policy 1.9 The City recognizes that its tax base is dependent upon a few significant employers and should diversify so that revenues are less volatile.

ACTION A. The City should encourage all efforts to improve the appearance of commercial areas by maintaining and upgrading buildings, signs, window displays, parking areas and landscaping.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – Goal 2: To encourage the development and expansion of pedestrian oriented retail shops, offices, services and tourism businesses in the Central Business zoning districts.

Policy 2.2 The City maintains current design standards for the downtown area that encourage development of a traditional urban streetscape.

Policy 2.3 The City continuously works to improve traffic and parking, street trees, murals, and directional signs in the downtown core.

Policy 2.4 The City supports creative and innovative downtown land uses which will support a vibrant activity level. This may include “pop up” uses and transitional uses that do not require significant investment to utilize a property.

Policy 2.5 The City interprets the Central Business District code liberally in regard to uses such that it encourages new businesses and expansion of existing businesses when not detrimental to the vitality of the urban, pedestrian oriented streetscape.

ACTION A. The City should fund a downtown street furniture replacement program for benches and trash receptacles.

ACTION B. The City should pursue funding for replacement of downtown street trees and repair of downtown sidewalks.

ACTION C. The City should work to ensure that, while making sidewalks and plazas available for commercial uses, the public space continues to include areas for unencumbered passage of pedestrians.

ACTION D. The City should work with downtown property owners and the Burlington Northern Sante Fe Railroad to develop a public parking area along the railroad between F and H Streets.

ACTION E. The City should encourage and support the development of programs to attract local residents and tourists, including sporting events/races, historical tours, decorative wall murals, festivals, a farmer's market and other promotional activities or events.

ACTION F. The City should explore development of a commercial incubator for downtown businesses and/or work with local property owners to create a graduated rent program to encourage start-up businesses.

ACTION G. The City should coordinate with local arts groups, the Chamber of Commerce, and local property owners to decorate and otherwise enliven vacant storefronts.

ACTION H. The City should encourage “placemaking” principles by facilitating new and maintaining existing events that take place on the street right-of-way and include ways to make the street more attractive to increase these types of uses.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – Goal 6: To develop retail uses, restaurants, and hotels in the downtown core, along the SR-543 corridor, and at Interstate-5 interchanges.

POLICY 6.1 The City supports land owners, realtors, and regional economic development organizations in their efforts to provide information about tourism and commercial opportunities in Blaine.

POLICY 6.2 The City supports reduced fees and incentives for development in the downtown core that do not undermine the City’s financial capacity to provide services to the citizens, business and land owners.

ACTION B. The City will explore and work to develop incentives for these target industries that do not undermine the City’s financial capacity to provide services to the citizens, business and land owners.