

City of Blaine  
Request for Council Action  
Meeting Date: April 10, 2023

Subject: Central Business District Project Charter

Department: City Manager

Prepared By: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Digital Signature)

Agenda Location:  Consent Agenda  Council Action  Unfinished Business

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Actin Needed:

Approve Resolution No. 1918-23, authoring modifications to ad hoc Downtown Advisory Committee Project Charter.

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Attachments:

1. Draft Resolution 1918-23
    - a. Project Charter with Redlines
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Background/Summary:

On April 25, 2022, the City Council adopted Resolution 1881-22 and 1882-22 docketing Comprehensive Plan Map and Text Amendments to consider amendments to the Central Business District design standards and building height regulations. On August 8, 2022, the City Council approved the project charter to facilitate the update process, and in October of 2022 appointed members to the ad hoc Downtown Advisory Committee ("the Committee" and "the DAC") to scope those updates.

The Committee has met on an approximately bi-weekly basis since January 2023, with the purpose as defined in the charter of identifying tools that will promote quality development on vacant and undeveloped lots and parcels in the City's Central Business District, resulting in a favorable environment for investment and redevelopment.

The City Manager proposes that the Project Charter be updated to facilitate the Committee in fulfilling the purpose of the charter. Attachment 1 includes redlines for Council's consideration to update the deliberation and decision-making process used by the Committee and modify the project schedule.

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Budget Implications:  Current Budget  New Budget Request  non-Budgetary

The modification of the project charter for Zoning Text Amendments and Comprehensive Plan Amendments is a non-budgetary action.

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Recommendation:

The City Manager respectfully requests that the City Council consider approving Resolution No. 1918-22, and modify the Project Charter for the 2022 Docketed Amendment to Update the Central Business District Development Standards and Related Shoreline Master Program Standards.

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Reviewed By:

City Manager \_\_\_\_\_ Finance Director \_\_\_\_\_ City Clerk \_\_\_\_\_  
(Digital Signature) (Digital Signature) (Digital Signature)

RESOLUTION NO. 1918-22

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BLAINE, MODIFYING THE PROJECT CHARTER FOR THE 2022 DOCKETED AMENDMENT TO UPDATE THE CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS AND RELATED SHORELINE MASTER PROGRAM STANDARDS

WHEREAS, on April 25, 2022, the City Council approved [Resolutions 1881-22 and 1882-22](#) docketing Comprehensive Plan Map and Text Amendments to consider amendments to the Central Business District design standards and building height regulations;

WHEREAS, on August 8, 2022, the City Council approved [Resolution 1897-22](#), creating the project charter (Exhibit A) for the Central Business District zoning updates;

WHEREAS, on October 24, 2022, the City Council [created the ad hoc Downtown Advisory Committee](#) (“the DAC” and “the Committee”) and appointed members to the Committee;

WHEREAS, the Committee has met on an approximately bi-weekly basis beginning in January of 2023;

WHEREAS, the purpose of the Committee as stated in the Project Charter is to identify tools that will promote quality development on vacant and undeveloped lots and parcels in the City's Central Business District, resulting in a favorable environment for investment and redevelopment; and

WHEREAS, the City Council finds that the Committee may better fulfill its purpose with updates to the Project Charter, including modifying the DACs decision-making process and amending its scope of work.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

1. The Committee will run the DAC meetings using parliamentary procedure and implement Robert's Rules of Order for facilitating discussions and making decisions on policy recommendations to forward to the City. The Committee will elect a Chair and Vice-Chair at their next meeting subsequent to approval of this Resolution.
- ~~2. The Committee will meet once a month until approximately the end of the second quarter of 2023 (Q2 – 2023: end of June/July 2023).~~
3. The Council of the City of Blaine authorizes this Resolution and adopts the changes to Project Charter included herein (Exhibit A).

ADOPTED AND APPROVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BLAINE, WASHINGTON on the 10<sup>th</sup> of April, and approved by the Mayor on the same day.

CITY OF BLAINE COUNCIL

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Mayor May Lou Steward

ATTEST/AUTHENTICATE:

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Samuel Crawford, City Clerk

DRAFT



# CITY OF BLAINE

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT

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# Text Amendment Charter: Planning Commission

## Updates to the Central Business District Zoning Designation

To: City of Blaine Council

From: Stacie Pratschner, AICP, RPA / Community Development Services Director

Date: August 5, 2022

Re: 2022 Docketed Text Amendment: Updates to Chapter 17.22 of the Blaine Municipal Code and Edits to the Shoreline Master Program to Achieve Consistency with Title 17

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### Summary

The Community Development Services Department (CDS or “the Department”) is providing this memorandum in advance of the City Council study session and meeting scheduled for August 8, 2022. The purpose of this memo is to present to the City Council a project charter for [docketed updates](#) to the Central Business District Zoning Designation.<sup>1</sup> An accompanying Resolution and Request for Council Action (RFCA) are included, if it’s the Council’s pleasure to approve this Charter.<sup>2</sup>

The purpose of requesting Council’s approval of the charter is to provide assurance to the public, the Planning Commission, and other participants in the update process that the Council concurs with the Department’s implementation of these legislative updates.

The project charter includes the background and the regulatory context for the proposed changes to Title 17 and the Shoreline Master Program; project objectives and goals; a detailed public participation plan; and the proposed preliminary schedule for review.

By the end of this meeting, the following action items are requested:

1. The City Council will deliberate and either approve, modify, or deny the project charter, and provide direction for needed changes; and
2. The City Council will select a Councilmember to serve as a liaison to the proposed advisory committee.

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<sup>1</sup> Resolution 1881-22

<sup>2</sup> Resolution 1889-22

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## List of Attachments

1. Resolutions 1881-22 and 1882-22
2. IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum

## Recommendations

1. Approve the project charter; and
2. Select a member to serve as a liaison to the advisory committee.

## Project History

### 2018: Central Business District updates adopted

The Central Business Zoning District, [Chapter 17.22 BMC](#), was last updated in 2018, under Ordinance 18-2912<sup>3</sup>. This update was the culmination of an approximately seven-year process to review and modify design requirements for the Central Business District. This effort was undertaken in support of direction in the City of Blaine Comprehensive Plan, which includes goals and policies to support the growth and revitalization of the Downtown core in ways that support community residents, businesses, property owners and visitors.<sup>4</sup>

The planning effort began in 2011 with a series of community engagement meetings exploring issues regarding downtown development and alternatives to address the challenges faced. The project eventually resulted in two distinct amendments:

- ✚ 2015 Zoning Map and Zoning Text Amendment: Rezoned the Central Business District into four district subzones and established a process for design review under Title 17<sup>5</sup>; and
- ✚ 2018 Amendment to Title 17: Established new development standards for the Central Business Districts, including design requirements for new development (ORD 18-2912).

This effort was informed by significant public engagement, including more than a dozen formal public meetings related to the proposal and several community meetings and open houses, as well as review by the Planning Commission.

Since adoption, the City has held several meetings with potential developers interested in pursuing development in downtown. Through these meetings, potential developers considering initiating projects in the Central Business District have expressed concern about current regulations and how these standards negatively impact anticipated return on investment, resulting in a less favorable environment for redevelopment in the downtown area.

### 2019: Shoreline Master Program adopted

The Shoreline Management Act of 1971 (SMA - RCW 90.58) has jurisdiction over shorelines of statewide significance, such as Blaine's shoreline. With adoption of the SMA, all jurisdictions were mandated to prepare and adopt a local Shoreline Master Program (SMP) that implemented the SMA. Blaine adopted its first SMP in 1975, with updates made several times throughout the years.

The City was mandated to update its SMP based on the new guidelines as well as the requirement for a periodic update established by the state in 2017 (WAC 173-26-090), which the City did in 2019<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.ci.blaine.wa.us/DocumentCenter/View/15033/RFCA-3-CBD-Ord-18-2912>.

<sup>4</sup> See the Economic Development Element of the 2016 Comprehensive Plan: pgs. 3-10 to 3-12.

<sup>5</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Approved by Ordinance 19-2930 on June 22, 2019 by City Council

In implementing the new SMP, CDS has identified several areas where SMP provisions conflict with the zoning regulations contained in Title 17. Since several properties in the downtown area are subject to review under both the SMP and Title 17, these conflicts create barriers to effective implementation. As a result, CDS is proposing a targeted update to the SMP to address areas of conflict between the SMP and Title 17 that impact the downtown area.

### Shoreline Master Program (SMP) Revisions

The Department of Ecology has final approval over local SMPs, so the review process is different than typical code and plan amendments and requires 1) coordination with Ecology in the review of the amendments, who will review the proposed amendments for consistency with RCW 90.58 and WAC 173.26, 2) additional requirements for public engagement (e.g., a longer comment period of 30 days); and 3) submittal of final amendments approved by City Council to the Department of Ecology for review and approval.

### 2022 Docketing

#### Resolutions 1881-22 and 1882-22

On April 25, 2022, the City Council approved Resolutions 1881-22 and 1882-22 (Attachment 1), authorizing CDS to begin work on updating the Central Business District designation.<sup>7</sup> If the height standards are ultimately modified through the proposed update process, the municipal code as well as the Comprehensive Plan land use map will need to be updated.

### Project Location

This effort will focus on the Central Business Zoning District, and four out of its five subdistricts: market (CB-M), town portal (CB-TP), waterview (CB-WV), and garden subdistricts (CB-G).

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.ci.blaine.wa.us/DocumentCenter/View/18189/RFCA-1-RES-1881-22--2022-Text-Amendments>



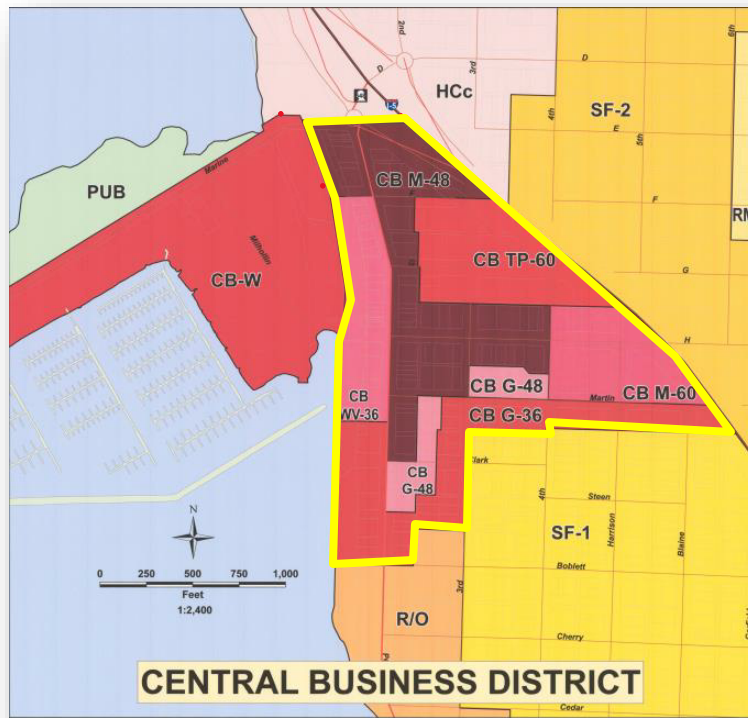


Figure 1: Central Business District – Area for amendments highlighted in Yellow

## Project Purpose, Goals, and Objectives

This charter has been developed pursuant to the following desired outcomes:

Purpose. Identify tools that will promote quality development on vacant and underdeveloped lots and parcels in the City's Central Business District, resulting in a favorable environment for investment and redevelopment.

### Objectives.

- Promote high quality and attractive architectural design and landscaping, that highlights Blaine's unique natural setting and waterfront views.
- Accommodate change within the downtown in a way that preserves Blaine's livability and beauty.
- Promote development that will contribute to a thriving mixed use activity center for Blaine, providing a desirable mixture of housing options, commercial businesses and tourism opportunities in an attractive, walkable urban environment.
- Facilitate the City's strategic goals for economic development and housing opportunity.

### Goals.

- Review today's development standards and tools to identify barriers to effective implementation and opportunities for improving the development climate in the downtown area.

- Develop recommendations to increase clarity and effectiveness of existing central business district development standards.
- Create opportunities to better promote and encourage investment and redevelopment in the downtown through changes in policies, code amendments, education and promotion strategies, and/or incentive programs.

## Project Elements

### Public Participation Plan

#### Introduction

This charter, like the update to the City's central business district regulations in 2018, proposes a robust public participation plan, and will be consistent with the State Growth Management Act provisions for public participation<sup>8</sup> and current best management practices for participant involvement<sup>9</sup>.

The purpose of the following Public Participation Plan is to describe how City of Blaine will encourage early and continuous public participation<sup>10</sup> throughout the process of reviewing and updating the CBD Development Standards and targeted sections of the Shoreline Master Program. The following subsections describe the steps that the City of Blaine will take to provide opportunities for public engagement and public comment. These are in addition to any other minimum requirements for public participation required by City of Blaine Municipal Code Chapter 17.04. This plan is a working document and will be adjusted as needed to provide for the greatest and broadest public participation.

#### 1.0 Public Participation Goals

- Engage in two-way communication with citizens, and create an environment for open decision-making, and responsiveness to citizen input.
- Provide interested parties with timely information, an understanding of the process, and multiple opportunities to review and comment on proposed amendments to the CBD Development Standards.
- Actively solicit information from citizens, property owners and stakeholders about their concerns, questions and priorities for the Zoning Text Amendment process.

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<sup>8</sup> RCW 36.70A.140 and WAC 365-196-600 require the establishment and broad dissemination of a public participation program identifying procedures providing for early and continuous public participation in the development and amendment of comprehensive land use plans and development regulations implementing such plans. The procedures shall provide for broad dissemination of proposals and alternatives, opportunity for written comments, public meetings after effective notice, provision for open discussion, communication programs, information services, and consideration of and response to public comments.

<sup>9</sup> The public participation plan has been developed under the framework established by the IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum, which is included in Attachment 2. IAP2 stands for International Association of Public Participation. It is a professional organization for public involvement specialists. More information is available here: <https://www.iap2.org/page/pillars>

<sup>10</sup> RCW 36.70A.140

- Encourage interested parties to informally review and comment on proposed changes to the CBD Development Standards throughout the process and provide those comments to decision makers.
- Provide forums for formal public input at project milestones prior to decision-making by local officials.

## 2.0 Public Participation Opportunities

The City of Blaine is committed to providing multiple opportunities for public participation throughout the process. The City will use a variety of communication tools to inform the public and encourage their participation, including the following:

### 2.1 Advisory Committee

The City Manager will convene an ad hoc advisory group comprised of different participants, including representatives of downtown property owners and business owners, developers and architects, finance and real estate, neighboring community groups, and representatives of downtown economic development organizations. The Advisory Committee will also have a Planning Commission liaison and City Council liaison that will act as a conduit for information exchange between the committee, the Planning Commission, and the City Council. The City Manager will propose advisory members to the Council, and appoint members based on authorization of the City Council.

The Advisory Committee will meet several times throughout the planning process and is intended to play a major role in the 1) scoping proposed changes in policies, code amendments, education and promotion strategies, and/or incentive programs; 2) advising the Planning Commission on proposed code amendments, and 3) making recommendations to the Department and elected officials on other related programs and initiatives.

[The Committee will run its meetings using parliamentary procedure, and implement Robert's Rules of Order for facilitating discussions and making decisions on policy recommendations to forward to the City.](#)

### 2.2 Outreach to Community Organizations

The Department will reach members of various organizations in the community to promote awareness of the project and opportunities to participate. Throughout the project, project staff will provide presentations as requested to community and professional organizations. Such organizations may include but not be limited to the Blaine Chamber of Commerce, Homebuilders, Realtors Association, neighborhood business associations, and neighborhood councils.

### 2.3 Informal Meetings

The City's Economic Development and Tourism Manager will conduct outreach to business owners and other participants about the project through a series of informal meetings.

### 2.4 Website and Social Media

The Department will create a Central Business District Development Standards Update webpage where interested parties can access status updates, draft documents, official notices, minutes and other project information. The webpage will be the primary repository of all information related to the Zoning Text and Shoreline Master Program Amendment process. The page will include who to contact for more information and an email link for questions and comments. It will include a link to sign up to become a subscriber to a list serv for the project to receive email announcements of upcoming public participation opportunities and other important project information. Social media channels, including Twitter and Facebook, will be integrated into the webpage to allow for easy sharing of articles and project updates.

#### 2.5 Postcards:

Postcards will be mailed to all property owners in the central business district, notifying them of the proposed amendments, providing a link to the project website where they may sign up to receive email updates about the project.

#### 2.6 Notice mailing list

An email list of interested parties will be created, advertised, and maintained by the City of Blaine. The list will be used to notify interested parties regarding amendment progress and participation opportunities. Interested parties will be added to the list by contacting the Department.

#### 2.7 Comment

Interested parties will be encouraged to provide comments to the City of Blaine by letter or email. All comments will be forwarded to the City Council and Planning Commission. The Department will track the type of correspondence and follow-up actions stemming from the comments. The webpage will be the central repository for information under consideration.

#### 2.8 News media

The local news media will be kept up-to-date on the Zoning Text and Shoreline Master Program Amendment process and receive copies of all official notices.

#### 2.9 Open House

The City of Blaine will hold an open house on the proposed amendments prior to the public hearing. Public comments received during the Open House will be posted on the webpage.

#### 2.10 Planning Commission

The Planning Commission will be responsible for detailed review and recommendations to the City Council. The Planning Commission will prepare a recommendation to the City Council. Interested parties are encouraged to attend and provide comments during the Planning Commission study sessions and joint public hearing. Official notices will be published as established in City of Blaine Zoning Code.

### 3.0 List of Participants

Throughout the process, the Department will engage with stakeholders, including downtown property owners and business owners and associated representatives, real estate and development

professionals, architects, and other design professionals, as well as representatives from adjoining neighborhoods.

#### 4.0 Public Participation Timeline

The Project Timeline noted below provides a broad overview, including key opportunities for public engagement.

#### 5.0 Public Comment Periods and Hearings

The Planning Commission will conduct a public comment period and public hearing to solicit input on the proposed amendments.

The City of Blaine will provide public notification of comment periods and hearings.

### SEPA and State Dept of Commerce

Environmental review is required at the planning stage for non-project actions such as legislative code amendments to analyze impacts and determine mitigation system-wide, rather than project by project.

Cities and counties must also notify the Department of Commerce, at least 60 days in advance, of their intent to adopt comprehensive plan and development regulation amendments. Cities and counties must also provide notice of adoption within ten days of final adoption for these changes.

### City Council

The Department will coordinate with the newly formed Planning and Community Development Advisory Committee throughout the amendment process.

Final amendments, as recommended by the Planning Commission, will be transmitted to the full Council for review and potential adoption.

### Department of Ecology

The Department will need to coordinate closely with the Department of Ecology to ensure that proposed revisions, if undertaken, are consistent with the SMA and Shoreline Guidelines.

## Related Efforts: Affordable Housing

Blaine's economic development potential is tied to our ability to provide affordable, quality housing choices to all economic segments of the population. In recognition of this, the City's Economic Development and Tourism Manager's job responsibilities include actions related to housing affordability.<sup>11</sup>

The City of Blaine has been awarded a grant by the Washington State Department of Commerce Housing Action Plan and Implementation (HAPI) Grant Program to prepare a Housing Action Plan. Work on this plan will be underway in 2022 through 2023.

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<sup>11</sup> See a detailed memo of the Economic Development Director's work program here: [https://www.ci.blaine.wa.us/DocumentCenter/View/18225/EcoDevo-report-to-Council\\_final](https://www.ci.blaine.wa.us/DocumentCenter/View/18225/EcoDevo-report-to-Council_final).

## Project Timeline

The following proposed timeline consists of the individual project elements that will result in the adoption of Zoning and SMP Amendments by [early 2024](#)~~Fall 2023~~.

202 <del>22</del> - 202 <del>22</del>	Qtr <del>4</del> 202 <del>22</del>	Qtr <del>1</del> -202 <del>22</del>	Qtr <del>2</del> 2023	Qtr <del>3</del> 2023	Qtr <del>4</del> 2023 <u>Qtr 1</u> 2024
Finalize Charter	<u>October</u> <del>Aug</del> <del>ust</del>				
Convene Advisory Group	<u>August</u> <del>Sept</del>	<u>January</u>			
Advisory Group Meetings		Meetings bi-monthly, supported by CDS			
Outreach to Community Organizations and Informal Meetings		Ongoing			
Publicize project - press release, website, property owner mailing, listserv, other		Ongoing			
Intro/Overview presentation to Chamber of Commerce, Neighborhood Associations, BTAC, etc.		<u>Nov</u> <del>Dec</del>	<u>June</u>		
Advisory Group scoping, redlines, and recommendation completed			<u>July</u> <del>Feb</del>		
SEPA Review			<u>Feb</u>	<u>July/August</u>	
Commerce Notification			<u>June</u> <del>Feb</del> <u>March</u>		
Ecology Coordination <sup>12</sup>		Ongoing			

<sup>12</sup> CDS will consult with the Department of Ecology about an optional joint process available through WAC 173-26-104 that would allow for combination of local and state public comment periods. This optional process would require close coordination with the Department of Ecology during drafting of amendments. This process would require submittal of a notice of intent to development an amendment under the optional joint review process.

Planning Commission Study Sessions			<a href="#">September/October</a>	<a href="#">November through early 2024</a>
Open House				April
Public Hearing <sup>13</sup>				May
City Council Study Session				May
City Council Adoption				June
Ecology Review and Approval of changes to SMP <sup>14</sup>				TBD

<sup>13</sup> Noticed in accordance with BMC 16.04 and 17.04

<sup>14</sup> For the standard review process under WAC 173-26-100, the Department of Ecology (Ecology) must provide its own comment period, which is a minimum of 30-days, unless the department determines that a lack of complexity or controversy surrounding the proposal supports a shorter period. Ecology may also hold its own public hearing. After the close of the public comment period, Ecology will provide a review letter to the City requesting a response to identified issues. The City will have a 45-day period to provide a response. Additional review and revisions may be necessary if Ecology recommends changes to the proposal.