

# Introduction

In a little over a century, Bothell has evolved from an isolated logging village housing a handful of hardy pioneers to a multi-faceted full-service city with a resident population of approximately 31,000 and an employee population of about 21,000 as of the end of 2004. Over that time the City has taken on several roles—way station, mill town, local farm supplies and services center, suburban bedroom community, and, within the last decade, regional employment center.

Growth has brought shopping, dining, educational, recreational and employment opportunities which have created a high quality of life in the community. But growth has also adversely affected Bothell – and the region – in a number of ways. Traffic congestion, air pollution, light and glare, and noise levels have all increased in the last several years. The natural open spaces which contribute so much to the character of the community have become fewer and smaller with continued development. Housing has become too expensive for many of those who are attracted to and would like to live in Bothell. And public facilities and services are stretched thin by ever-increasing demand.

Today, Bothell stands at a crossroads, facing the challenge of accommodating a fair share of the region's anticipated continuing growth while preserving—and if possible, enhancing—the high quality of life the community currently enjoys.

The Bothell Comprehensive Plan represents the efforts of Bothell citizens to meet that challenge. The Comprehensive Plan is an attempt by the community to shape the future, rather than allowing the future to shape the community. This Plan provides guidance for decisions affecting how Bothell grows and functions as a city. Prepared in compliance with Section 36.70A.070 of the Revised Code of Washington (also known as the Growth Management Act, or GMA), the Comprehensive Plan consists of goals, policies and proposed actions for various aspects of community life to ensure that the community's vision of its future is realized. The Plan was initially adopted in 1994: while there have been a number of amendments since then, this 2004 update constitutes the first complete review since the original approval.

This introductory section provides background on the Comprehensive Plan, detailing the purpose of the Plan, the statutory basis of and framework for the Plan, the organization of the document, citizen involvement in the updating of the Plan, and how the Plan Update will be implemented.

## Purpose of the Plan

The Bothell Comprehensive Plan serves a number of functions:

1. To articulate a vision of the community which is consistent with local values, while achieving regional and statewide goals;
2. To address evolving community needs;
3. To provide direction for future public decisions to ensure that the City moves toward realization of the community vision;
4. To implement the mandates of the Growth Management Act.

# Statutory framework for the Plan

The goals and requirements of the Act are detailed in the following section.

In 1990 the Washington State Legislature adopted the Growth Management Act (GMA), later codified in state law as RCW 36.70A.070. The GMA has been amended a number of times since then. The GMA requires counties which have experienced high growth, and the cities within those counties, to prepare or update comprehensive plans in accordance with the goals and requirements of the Act.

The GMA contains the following 13 goals:

1. **Urban Growth**  
Encourage development in urban areas where adequate public facilities and services exist or can be provided in an efficient manner.
2. **Reduce Sprawl**  
Reduce the inappropriate conversion of undeveloped land into sprawling, low-density development.
3. **Transportation**  
Encourage efficient multi-modal transportation systems that are based on regional priorities and coordinated with county and city comprehensive plans.
4. **Housing**  
Encourage the availability of affordable housing to all economic segments of the population of the state, promote a variety of residential densities and housing types, and encourage preservation of existing housing.
5. **Economic Development**  
Encourage economic development throughout the state that is consistent with adopted comprehensive plans; promote economic opportunity for all citizens of this state, especially for unemployed and disadvantaged persons; promote the retention and expansion of existing businesses and recruitment of new businesses; recognize regional differences impacting economic development opportunities; and encourage growth in areas experiencing insufficient economic growth; all within the capacities of the state's natural resources, public services and public facilities.
6. **Property Rights**  
Private property shall not be taken for public use without just compensation having been made. The property rights of landowners shall be protected from arbitrary and discriminatory actions.
7. **Permits**  
Applications for both state and local government permits should be processed in a timely and fair manner to ensure predictability.
8. **Natural Resource Industries**  
Maintain and enhance natural resource-based industries, including productive timber, agricultural and fisheries industries. Encourage the conservation of productive forest lands and productive agricultural lands, and discourage incompatible uses.

**9. Open Space and Recreation**

Retain open space, enhance recreational opportunities, conserve fish and wildlife habitat, increase access to natural resource lands and water, and develop parks and recreation facilities.

**10. Environment**

Protect the environment and enhance the state's high quality of life, including air and water quality, and the availability of water.

**11. Citizen Participation and Coordination**

Encourage the involvement of citizens in the planning process and ensure coordination between communities and jurisdictions to reconcile conflicts.

**12. Public Facilities and Services**

Ensure that those public facilities and services necessary to support development shall be adequate to serve the development at the time the development is available for occupancy and use without decreasing current service levels below locally established minimum standards.

**13. Historic Preservation**

Identify and encourage the preservation of lands, sites, and structures that have historical or archaeological significance.

The Comprehensive Plan is consistent with the above goals of the Growth Management Act. A matrix relating city goals, policies and actions to GMA goals is included in **Appendix A**.

In order to ensure consistency among neighboring cities' and counties' comprehensive plans, the GMA mandates the adoption of multi-county and countywide planning policies. These policies, according to state law, are written statements "used solely for establishing a county-wide (or multi-county) framework from which county and city plans are developed and adopted..." Multi-county policies and countywide planning policies are required by law to address the following:

1. Policies to implement urban growth areas (see below);
2. Policies for promotion of contiguous and orderly development and provision of urban services to such development;
3. Policies for siting public capital facilities of a countywide or statewide nature;
4. Policies for countywide transportation facilities and strategies;
5. Policies that consider the need for affordable housing;
6. Policies for joint county and city planning within urban growth areas;
7. Policies for countywide economic development and employment;
8. An analysis of the fiscal impact.

The Puget Sound Regional Council has adopted multi-county policies affecting King, Snohomish, Pierce and Kitsap Counties. In addition, both King and Snohomish Counties have adopted countywide planning policies. These documents, as well as matrices comparing this Plan and the countywide planning policies, may be found in **Appendix A**. The Plan is consistent with these policies, and contains references to specific countywide planning policies where appropriate.

The Growth Management Act requires counties, in collaboration with their cities, to designate urban growth areas (UGAs), within which urban growth is to be encouraged and outside of which growth may occur only if it is not urban in nature. UGAs are to be sized so as to accommodate the next 20 years' growth, as forecasted by the state Office of Financial Management. UGAs may contain more

than one city and may contain unincorporated territory if the territory is already characterized by urban growth or is adjacent to other territory characterized by urban growth.

As a city located partly in King County and partly in Snohomish County, Bothell is within an urban growth area in each county. In King County, Bothell is part of a large urban growth area that contains all but five King County municipalities. Bothell's city limits are coterminous with the boundary of this large UGA at the King / Snohomish County line. In Snohomish County, Bothell is contained within the Southwest Urban Growth Area (SWUGA), which comprises eight cities and one town, and the unincorporated area between and around those municipalities. Bothell's corporate boundaries are coterminous with those of the SWUGA at the King / Snohomish County line and along a small portion of the eastern boundary of the SWUGA. Most of the City's eastern boundary in Snohomish County is between 600 and 3,200 feet west of the SWUGA's eastern boundary: this area is entirely within the Bothell Planning Area.

The Act requires counties' and cities' comprehensive plans to include the following seven elements (an eighth, a Rural element, is not applicable to Bothell):

1. **Land Use**, designating land for housing, commerce, industry, recreation, open space, public facilities and other uses, and including densities, building intensities and estimates of future population growth. The land use element is required to address storm water runoff. Accordingly, the Bothell Comprehensive Storm Water Master Plan is incorporated in this Plan by reference. The costs of anticipated storm water management improvements over the next six years are included in the Capital Facilities Element.

In Bothell, the Land Use element has been developed on a subarea by subarea basis to maximize public involvement. The Planning Area has been divided into 13 subareas.

2. **Housing**, including an inventory and analysis of existing and projected needs; goals, policies and objectives for preserving, improving and developing housing; identification of sufficient land for housing; and provision for existing and projected needs of all economic segments of the community.
3. **Capital Facilities**, consisting of an inventory of existing capital facilities owned by public entities; a forecast of the future needs for such capital facilities; proposed locations and capacities of expanded or new facilities; at least a six-year plan to finance facilities; and a requirement to reassess the land use element if probable funding falls short of meeting needs. Under the law, development permits are to be withheld if water supply is inadequate to serve a proposed development.
4. **Utilities**, consisting of the general location, proposed location and capacity of existing and proposed utilities, including but not limited to electrical lines, telecommunication lines and natural gas lines. Bothell has elected to add a Conservation component to this element.
5. **Transportation**, including land use assumptions; an inventory of existing facilities; facility needs based on adopted level of service standards; specific actions to bring into compliance any facilities or services below the standards; traffic forecasts for at least 10 years; system expansion and management needs; a financing plan; and intergovernmental coordination. Under the law, the City is required to adopt level of service standards for arterials and transit routes, and to withhold development permits if the level of service drops below the adopted standard.

6. **Economic Development**, establishing local goals, policies, objectives and provisions for economic growth and vitality and a high quality of life.
7. **Parks and Recreation**, implementing and consistent with the capital facilities plan element as it relates to park and recreation facilities.

In addition to the above required elements, the City has elected to include six optional elements:

8. **Historic preservation**, consisting of a profile of Bothell's historic resources and goals, policies and actions to preserve for future generations examples of the community's heritage while promoting other community goals such as neighborhood stability, affordable housing and economic development.
9. **Urban design**, including goals, policies and actions to enhance the visual image of the City through the application of building, landscaping, site and district design techniques.
10. **Annexation**, identifying potential annexation areas and proposing goals, policies and actions for guiding the expansion of the City in a logical manner.
11. **Natural environment**, providing a policy basis for achieving a harmonious relationship between the built and natural environments while recognizing community-wide natural environment stewardship responsibilities.
12. **Shorelines**, establishing goals, policies and actions specifically relating to the land adjacent to the Sammamish River and North Creek (these were previously part of the Natural Environment Element).
13. **Community services**, consisting of an inventory of existing human services and goals, policies and actions to promote a healthy, stable and productive community.

The Growth Management Act requires counties and cities to adopt critical areas regulations to protect wetlands, frequently flooded areas, geologically hazardous areas, fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas, and aquifer recharge areas. An amendment to the GMA required jurisdictions to "include Best Available Science" in their critical areas regulations. This 2004 Plan Update will be followed immediately by a Code Update which will incorporate a complete overhaul of the City's critical areas regulations, based closely on a state model ordinance, with refinements reflecting local best available science.

Finally, the Growth Management Act authorizes counties and cities to establish impact fees to pay for a proportionate share of certain public improvements necessary to mitigate the impacts from new development. Impact fees may not be collected to correct existing deficiencies, and financing for new system improvements may not rely solely on impact fees. Any capital facilities proposed to be financed with impact fees must be included in the jurisdiction's capital facilities or transportation elements.

## Organization of the Plan

The Bothell Comprehensive Plan is divided into three main sections:

1. **The Bothell Vision Statement**, comprising a capsulization of community values and a distillation of how Bothell citizens desire their city to appear and function in the future;

2. **Bothell Planning Area-wide Elements**, defining the Planning Area, providing goals, policies and actions to direct future decisions relating to the 13 elements in the Plan, and containing detailed transportation and capital facilities inventories, needs projections, and a six-year finance plan consistent with the land use allocation;
3. **Subarea Plans**, consisting of refinements of the Planning Area-wide Elements for each of the 13 subareas.

## Citizen involvement in the Plan

The City has taken a multifaceted approach to encourage public participation in the 2004 update of the Comprehensive Plan. This approach has consisted of the following:

- **Notification** of all events relating to the Plan Update by way of the monthly *Imagine Bothell...* notice, a detailed (usually four to five pages) description of upcoming open houses, hearings and other meetings. The *Imagine Bothell...* notice is sent to over 600 individuals every month via U.S. mail and e-mail, as well as being posted in public locations throughout Bothell, published in the Eastside Journal, the City's official newspaper, and placed on the City's website. In addition, during the subarea plan update phase, postcards were sent to every resident and business within each subarea announcing upcoming open houses and hearings. Finally, towards the end of the process, when the Council began its hearings on the Planning Commission's recommended Plan and on draft critical areas regulations, postcards were sent to all residents and businesses in the City announcing the upcoming Council hearings. As the update progressed, Planning Area-wide elements and subarea plans were posted to the City website for any citizen to read.
- A **kickoff joint study session** to introduce the Update. The City Council, Planning Commission, and all other advisory boards with an interest in the Plan - the Shorelines Hearings Board, the Landmark Preservation Board, and the Parks and Recreation Board - participated in this meeting to identify issues and opportunities for the Update. Over 100 citizens attended and provided input.
- **Planning Area-wide element update hearings.** The Planning Commission held public hearings to review the 13 Planning Area-wide elements, take testimony, and recommend changes where warranted. The Commission met jointly with other boards where applicable: with the Shorelines Hearings Board, on the Shorelines and Natural Environment elements; with the Parks and Recreation Board, on the Parks and Recreation element; and with the Landmark Preservation Board, on the Historic Preservation element.
- **Open houses following the Planning Area-wide element update hearings.** City staff held two open houses to solicit public input on numerous issues identified as part of the Planning Commission and other boards' review of the Planning Area-wide element updates. Close to 200 people attended the open houses.
- **Subarea plan update open houses and public hearings.** For each subarea plan, a separate open house was held, announced beforehand by the *Imagine Bothell...* notice and a postcard mailed to every resident and business within the subarea. Aerial photos, maps and other graphics displayed existing environmental, land use and transportation conditions, as well as requested Plan amendments and other potential changes. Following the open house by approximately two weeks was a public hearing, at which the Planning Commission would consider testimony, deliberate, and recommend updates to the subarea plan.

- **Joint meetings between the Council and Planning Commission.** Over the course of the update, the Council and Planning Commission met several times to receive consultant reports concerning aspects of the update, share perspectives on key issues, and generally ensure that the two bodies were “on the same page”.
- **Environmental Impact Statement.** Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statements (DEIS and FEIS, respectively) were issued identifying anticipated adverse environmental impacts of potential Plan and Code changes and possible mitigating measures to alleviate those impacts. Citizens and agencies were invited to comment on the DEIS, and responses to those comments were provided in the FEIS. The FEIS is included in this Plan by reference as **Appendix B**.
- **Council hearings.** The Council held its own hearings on the Commission’s recommended Plan amendments, as well as on Code amendments the Council was considering directly, including minimum urban density amendments and an update of the critical areas regulations. These hearings were announced via the *Imagine Bothell...* monthly notice, as well as separate notice by the City Clerk’s office.

## Implementation of the Plan

The Comprehensive Plan proposes various actions to implement the Plan. Some can be put into place immediately, while others may require decades before they are fully realized. Following adoption of the original GMA plan in 1994, all but a relative handful of actions necessary to implement the Plan were completed within two to three years.

This 2004 update to the Plan contains a number of amendments, some of them concerning land use designations. Such amendments are implemented through rezoning of property, and in some cases through new regulatory language describing how the property may be used. The rezonings and other Code amendments to implement the 2004 Plan Update will take place early in 2005.

In accordance with the GMA, the next update is not due for seven years, or until December 1, 2011. However, a number of important planning issues have already been identified which could not be addressed in the 2004 update due to time constraints. Among these are; evaluating over 30 property-owner-initiated Plan amendment requests; developing a master plan for Bothell’s downtown; planning for more of the city’s Municipal Urban Growth Area (only a small portion was included in this update); crafting interlocal agreements with King and Snohomish counties regarding city / county responsibilities within unincorporated portions of the Bothell Planning Area; and exploring fiscal and other impacts of potential annexations to the City. These issues are expected to be addressed in 2005 and 2006.

In addition to the above issues, the Capital Facilities Element will need to be updated at least biennially, in accordance with the City’s budget cycle, so that the six-year capital facilities finance plan can be updated to stay current and synchronized with the budget.

Finally, as the community’s needs and desires continue to evolve, there will inevitably be other requests to revisit and amend portions of the Plan.

Given the above, it is likely that changes to the Plan and Code will continue to be entertained generally on an annual or biennial basis (under the GMA, comprehensive plans may not be amended more than once a year, except in the case of emergencies).