

## 6. Transportation Element

Pursuant to the Growth Management Act, the transportation element of each comprehensive plan must include the following elements:

1. Inventory of all transportation facilities and services (land, air and water including transit alignments);
2. Land-use assumptions used in estimating travel forecasts;
3. Identification of system expansion needs and transportation system management needs to meet current and future demands;
4. Level of service standards for all arterial and transit routes;
5. Specific actions and requirements for bringing into compliance any facilities or services that are below the established level of service;
6. Traffic forecasts (based on an adopted land-use plan) to provide information on the location, timing, and capacity needs of the future;
7. Finance, including a multi-year financing plan and identification of additional funding sources if there is a funding shortfall;
8. Intergovernmental coordination; and
9. Demand management strategies.

This chapter will first establish Sumas's transportation-related goals and policies. It next will demonstrate how the transportation element meets the requirements listed above. Finally, it will contain sections describing Existing Conditions and Future Conditions.

### Goals and Policies

In consideration of the needs and issues identified within this chapter, the City of Sumas adopts the following goals and policies:

**Goal:** Provide transportation systems that provide convenient and safe access to employment, educational and recreational opportunities for citizens and visitors, and that provide for the movement of goods and services.

**Policy:** Control access to arterials and connectors in order to minimize disruption of traffic.

**Policy:** Front new subdivisions on connectors and arterials rather than state routes.

**Policy:** Establish connectivity between new subdivisions, benefiting pedestrians, automobiles, utilities, and emergency services.

**Policy:** Keep industrial / commercial truck traffic off residential and local streets.

**Policy:** Within the city's financial ability to do so, bring poor roads up to standard.

**Policy:** Consider Intelligent Transportation Systems, when cost effective, to increase the capacity and safety of the transportation system.

- Goal:** Coordinate transportation planning and construction with neighboring jurisdictions and with the state.
- Policy:** Set LOS "D" (V/C ratio of 0.8 during p.m. peak hours) for non-HSS state routes within city limits.
- Policy:** Set LOS "D" for city-designated principal arterial streets.
- Policy:** Participate in the regional planning processes coordinated by WCCOG, including the IMTC process.
- Policy:** Coordinate with the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) with regard to state routes.
- Policy:** Coordinate with Whatcom County with regard to county arterials and collectors.
- Policy:** Coordinate with WTA with regard to transit.
- Policy:** Coordinate closely with Whatcom County during annexations and work toward solutions providing long-term benefit to citizens of both the city and the region.
- Policy:** Incorporate all Intelligent Transportation Systems initiatives and project with the Whatcom Regional ITS Architecture.

**Goal:** Build and operate facilities as efficiently as possible.

- Policy:** Maintain and preserve the existing system.
- Policy:** Aggressively pursue low-cost funds such as grants and subsidized loans.
- Policy:** Undertake effective planning and build only what is planned.
- Policy:** Coordinate road projects with utility projects.
- Policy:** Adopt road design standards that are sensible and that do not needlessly impose cost.

**Goal:** Allocate costs fairly among those that benefit.

- Policy:** Use SEPA to mitigate off-site impacts associated with new development and redevelopment.
- Policy:** Use "no-protest" agreements, when appropriate, as a means of allowing approval of individual small-scale projects, while still providing for eventual construction of necessary improvements through formation of LIDs.
- Policy:** Facilities providing benefit to both newcomers and existing residents should be paid for by both groups, with each group paying a share proportional to their corresponding benefit.

**Goal:** Encourage energy conservation and minimize impacts to the environment.

- Policy:** Develop park-and-ride facilities when feasible.
- Policy:** Control stormwater run-off in order to reduce impacts to ground and surface waters.

**Policy:** Consider Intelligent Transportation Systems that will reduce the need for construction, decrease emissions through reduced delays and idling times, and enhance the transportation network in a way that minimizes noise, environmental impacts, and preserves open space.

## **GMA Requirements**

This chapter meets GMA requirements as shown below:

### **1. Inventory of Transportation Facilities**

The Existing Conditions report in this chapter includes an inventory and assessment of transportation facilities in the City of Sumas.

### **2. Land Use Assumptions**

The Land Use element of this comprehensive plan (Ch. 3) gives a detailed description of the land use assumptions for the twenty-year planning period. Map 6 in the Land Use element shows the expected pattern of development on which this transportation plan is based.

### **3. Identification of Needs**

Citizen input is a key to identifying the needs of the community. A public workshop, survey and results of a 1992 survey were used to identify transportation needs of the Sumas community.

#### *1992 Community Survey*

The Planning Commission distributed 400 surveys to the community asking about likes, dislikes, issues, needs and how to fund future actions. The survey was not a transportation survey, and transportation issues were only minimally addressed. The results of a question on "the most critical issues or problems facing Sumas" were ranked in numerical order. Transportation issues followed items such as defining land use classifications, promoting business growth, protecting environmental quality, containing and directing growth, protecting private property rights, defining the edge between rural and urban and providing affordable housing. Improving transportation services and facilities ranked ninth. Many comments were directed toward the perceived problems caused by the border crossing.

#### *Public Transportation Workshop*

A public transportation workshop was held in Sumas on September 9, 1993. An opinion survey was distributed, focused on identifying transportation issues and needs in the community. Eighteen people attended the workshop.

### *Public Opinion Survey*

Twelve opinion surveys were completed and returned. The survey asked respondents to identify how much they agree or disagree with statements about problems, needed improvements and methods of paying for changes. For each statement, the respondent rated their level of agreement or disagreement on a one to five scale, with 1 being "disagree," 5 being "agree" and 3 as "neutral."

In the problem identification section, the statements "tourist traffic is the main reason why we have traffic problems" and "making left turns across traffic is difficult" are generally agreed with (4.83 and 4.82 out of 5, respectively). Other high scores (all above 4.50) are for: "traffic has gotten worse in the last five years" and "senior citizens need alternate types of transportation."

In the section identifying needs, all statements are ranked above 3.7, indicating general agreement with all of the statements. The highest scores are for: sidewalks along routes used by school children (4.90), public bus service (4.30), sidewalks in residential areas (4.20), and intersection safety improvements (4.18).

Regarding the section titled "How to Pay for Changes," there is little agreement as to how to pay for improvements. An exception is obtaining state and federal funds, which ranked 4.9.

Many individual comments identified the problems with the border traffic or the need for public transit to connect with Lynden.

### *Road Issues Identification*

The second part of the survey asked respondents to mark on a city map the locations of dangerous intersections, areas of traffic, where sidewalks and bicycle paths should be located, and where the street was in bad shape. Most respondents concentrated on identifying unsafe intersections (results reported below). Many did not use the secondary code that identifies the extent of the problem.

Respondents identified the following intersections as unsafe: Front/Cherry (9 responses), Garfield/Cherry (8), Second/Cherry (7), Third/Cherry (6), and First/Cherry (4). Other intersections mentioned include: Harrison/Cherry, Cleveland/Cherry, Vancouver/Cherry, Mitchell/Cherry, Morton/Cherry and Hovel/Front.

Other responses indicated the need for bicycle lanes on Halverstick, Front and Rock; the presence of excessive traffic on Front and Cherry; and the need for sidewalks on Gough Street.

### *Identified Issues and Needs*

Summarized below are the issues and needs identified by the Sumas community:

#### Issues

1. Canadian border traffic.
2. Dangerous intersections on Cherry Street, especially at Garfield Street and Front Street.
3. Difficulty making left turn movements on major streets.

#### Needs

1. For actions to reduce the level of border traffic.
2. To investigate public transit to connect Sumas with Lynden.
3. Sidewalks in residential areas, especially where school age children travel.
4. Intersection improvements.

#### **4. Level of Service Standards**

The Growth Management Act requires that the transportation chapter of the county and city comprehensive plans set regionally coordinated level of service (LOS) standards on all principal arterial and transit routes. The definition of level of service is left to the discretion of the local jurisdiction. HB1487 clarifies that WSDOT is responsible for establishment of LOS on Highways of Statewide Significance (HSS). The portions of SR9 within Sumas are HSS.

Level of service is a road-use standard used to judge how well a road operates. Typically, LOS is based on the amount of time delay experienced by a motorist at a traffic signal or along a road segment. For roadways, LOS A means that the roadway is free-flowing and is free from congestion. LOS F means that the route is so heavily congested that traffic no longer flows in a steady stream—the number of cars exceeds the road's capacity. Although levels of service are normally defined qualitatively, a standard set of engineering calculations assigns LOS rankings to roads, intersections, or other facilities. Comparing traffic volume with the capacity of a given route segment defines existing levels of service. That same comparison, using projected future traffic volume, yields insight on future levels of service.

#### *Volume to Capacity Ratio*

Sumas levels of service will be defined in terms of the peak hour volume-to-capacity ratio (V/C ratio). The V/C ratio is calculated by dividing existing or projected volume of a particular road segment by its capacity in trips per day or per peak hour. If the result ranges from zero (0) to one (1), the section is operating within capacity. As the result nears one (1) and exceeds it, the section will begin to operate less efficiently and safely. Increasing volume-to-capacity ratios imply that as growth occurs, road improvements may have to be made to maintain levels of service.

Level of Service	V/C Ratio Range	Typical Flow Conditions
A	0.0 to 0.5	Free flow; individual users virtually unaffected by presence of others in traffic stream
B	0.5 to 0.7	Within range of stable flow, but presence of others in traffic stream begins to affect individual behavior and freedom to maneuver within traffic stream
C	0.7 to 0.8	Within range of stable flow; individual users significant affected by presence of others
D	0.8 to 0.9	High density, but stable flow; speed and freedom to maneuver are severely restricted; ability to maneuver within traffic stream becomes difficult
E	0.9 to 1.0	Operating conditions are at or near capacity level; all speeds reduced to low, uniform value; freedom to maneuver within traffic stream extremely difficult
F	Greater than 1.0	Forced or breakdown flow; amount of traffic approaching a point exceeds the amount that can transverse point and queue forms; operations within queue characterized by extremely unstable stop-and-go waves

While a relationship between V/C ratio and level of service is not strictly defined, the relationship shown in Table 6-1 is typically regarded as a standard and is considered as such in defining the level of service classifications for the City of Sumas.

#### *Sumas Level of Service*

The busiest roads in Sumas are SR 9 (Halverstick Road and Cherry Street) and SR 547 (Rock Road). Recent transportation impact studies conducted in conjunction with proposed industries showed that SR 9 currently operates at LOS A. We therefore conclude that all of Sumas's transportation network is now operating at LOS A. The severe congestion sometimes seen on Cherry Street is not so much a function of roadway LOS as of border-station LOS.

WSDOT has adopted, as an element of its State Highway System Plan, LOS C for state highways in rural areas and LOS D for state highways in urban areas, including SR9 and SR547 in Sumas. For HSS segments within Sumas, WSDOT's LOS value is binding. Whatcom County is proposing LOS D for county roads within county UGAs, and levels of service matching the affected cities' LOS in city UGAs. As seen in the policies above, Sumas has adopted LOS D for city-designated principal arterial streets, and LOS D for non-HSS state routes within city limits. WSDOT, Whatcom County, and Sumas therefore have consistent LOS policies within Sumas and its UGA.

## 5. Action Needed to Correct Existing Deficiencies

There are no facilities in the City of Sumas that are currently operating below the established LOS standard.

## 6. Traffic Forecasts

The Future Conditions section below contains forecasts of traffic volumes.

## 7. Finance

### *Multi-Year Financing Plan*

The City of Sumas annually adopts a Six Year Transportation Program as required by the State of Washington. The adoption of the Six Year Program qualifies the city to receive either Urban Arterial Trust Account (UATA) or Transportation Improvement Account (TIA) funds. The city's Six Year Transportation Program, shown below, displays all major roadway improvements scheduled during the planning period.

### *Funding Sources*

The TIP reveals a reliance upon three sources of funds. First is revenue from the local option gas tax. Second is FHWA funds that are anticipated to be procured through the auspices of the IMTC, in association with expansion of the port of entry facility in 2008. Third is state TIB funds, which are likewise anticipated to be received when the border-related work is undertaken

<u>Project</u>	<u>Work Description</u>	<u>Non-Local Funds</u>	<u>Local Funds</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Year</u>
Bob Mitchell Avenue Overlay	Asphalt Overlay	0	95,000 Gas tax	95,000	2005
Cherry/Garfield Signalization	Signalization	180,000 FHWA	20,000 Gas tax	200,000	2008
Auto-queuing Area	Construct auto queuing area at border	2,673,000 FHWA/TIB	27,000 Gas tax	2,700,000	2008
Totals 2004-2009		2,853,000	142,000	2,995,000	

## **8. Intergovernmental Coordination**

Sumas's policies supporting intergovernmental coordination are in the Goals and Policies section above.

## **9. Demand Management Strategies**

Sumas's policies supporting demand management strategies, including development of non-motorized transportation and park-and-ride facilities, are in the Goals and Policies section above.

## Existing Conditions

### *Basic Transportation System*

State Route 9, State Route 547 (Rock Road), and the Burlington Northern Railroad form the regionally significant elements of the city's transportation system. SR9 is part of the Federal Highway System and is a designated Highway of Statewide Significance. SR 9 provides access to the international border crossing with Canada. The operations of the international border crossing facilities by U.S. and Canadian Customs cause the single most significant impact affecting the general performance of the city's transportation system. Other significant roads providing access to Sumas include Jones Road, Halverstick Road, Easterbrook Road, and Hovel Road.

### *Roadway Classifications*

There is a direct relationship between roadway functional classification and roadway design standards. Federal, State, and local agencies adopt roadway design standards to carry vehicular traffic volume at specific speeds. The American Association of State Highway Traffic Officials (AASHTO) has adopted standards that are the bench marks for most road design standards. The city has adopted by ordinance, AASHTO standards for new roads as part of the city's subdivision development standards. These standards are not applicable to existing city roads.

R.C.W. 35.78.10 and R.C.W. 47.26.180 require local jurisdictions to adopt a street classification system consistent with state and federal requirements. R.C.W. 35.78.010 identifies the classification system and definitions by which cities are to classify the street system. R.C.W. 47.26.180 has a provision that allows cities outside Census designated urban areas to develop one category of arterial streets. SMC 9.08.010 sets the arterial roadway classifications within the city. Cherry Street and Front Street are classified by the city as arterial.

### *Access Control Classification*

R.C.W. 47.50.010 required that all state routes be designated by WSDOT with an access control classification. Highway access classifications identify the number of, and the distance between, entrances on a particular roadway segment. Because turning movements disturb the traffic flow, roads with fewer access points may accommodate higher speeds. In 1993, WSDOT established highway access classifications for all state routes. In Sumas, SR 9 from Barbo Road to the Canadian Border is classified as a Class 5 facility, and SR 547 (Front Street) from the Sumas east city limits to SR 9 (Cherry Street) is categorized as a Class 4 facility. Class 4 highways typically post speed limits between 35 and 45 mph, with intersections spaced a minimum 0.5 miles apart. Driveways are generally required to be at least 250 feet apart. Both classes allow a high level of vehicle access and typically have fairly low speed limits.

## *Traffic Volumes*

Traffic volumes represent the number of vehicles that pass a point on a road during a specified time. Because volumes vary hourly, daily and seasonally, roads are normally designed to meet the highest volume (peak). Congestion occurs when the traffic volume equals and exceeds the road's capacity. As the population of a region grows, traffic increases proportionally causing congestion on roadways.

Using lines of varying widths, Figure 6-1 shows the evening peak traffic volumes recorded by WCCOG along local roadways in the City of Sumas. WCCOG's traffic counts were conducted between October 1 and December 31, 1993. Figure 6-2 shows where each of WCCOG's traffic counts was taken on the local streets for this study. Figure 6-1 also displays handwritten ADT values measured by WSDOT in 1997.

The roads with the heaviest traffic volumes are generally SR 9 (Halverstick Road) and Cherry Street to the Canadian border. This is due to the concentration of retail and commercial activities along Cherry Street and the proximity to the Canadian border. As shown in Figure 6-1, most traffic in the city is on the street system north of Front Street. The local streets with the heaviest traffic volumes are Sumas Ave and the east-west streets north of the Sumas River that connect Railroad Street, Cherry Street and Sumas Ave. It is apparent that motorists are using the city's street network to bypass traffic on Cherry Street to reach the international border as quickly as possible.

The lack of a sufficient auto queuing area at the border results in large queues that form down the length of Cherry Street, and occasionally onto Halverstick Road. Adding to the queue delays are the numerous turns resulting from the curb cuts for local business along both sides of Cherry Street from Front Street to the Canadian border.

## *Pavement Conditions*

Most Sumas arterials are in excellent or good condition, as shown on Figure 6-3. This information was collected during a "windshield" survey and does not reflect an engineering analysis of pavement conditions. The range of pavement conditions used was: Excellent, Very-Good; Good; Fair-Poor; and Unknown. Excellent and Very-Good are pavements that are new with no cracks, deflections, or utility cut repair patches. Good pavements are somewhat older in age with a relatively few amount of cracks, utility cut repair patches, or deflections. Pavements rated in Good condition had some cracks, utility cut repair patches, pavement may be raveling, and street edges may be beginning to break up. Fair-Poor street pavements had a large number of cracks, or utility cut repair patches. Fair-Poor pavements also had a large amount of the surface breaking up from the edges to centerline. Streets needing repair based on Fair-Poor include:

- Gough Street from Vancouver Street to the street end.
- Lawson Street between Second and Third Streets.
- Morton Street from Lawson Street to the street end.
- Third Street between Sumas Avenue and Lawson Street.

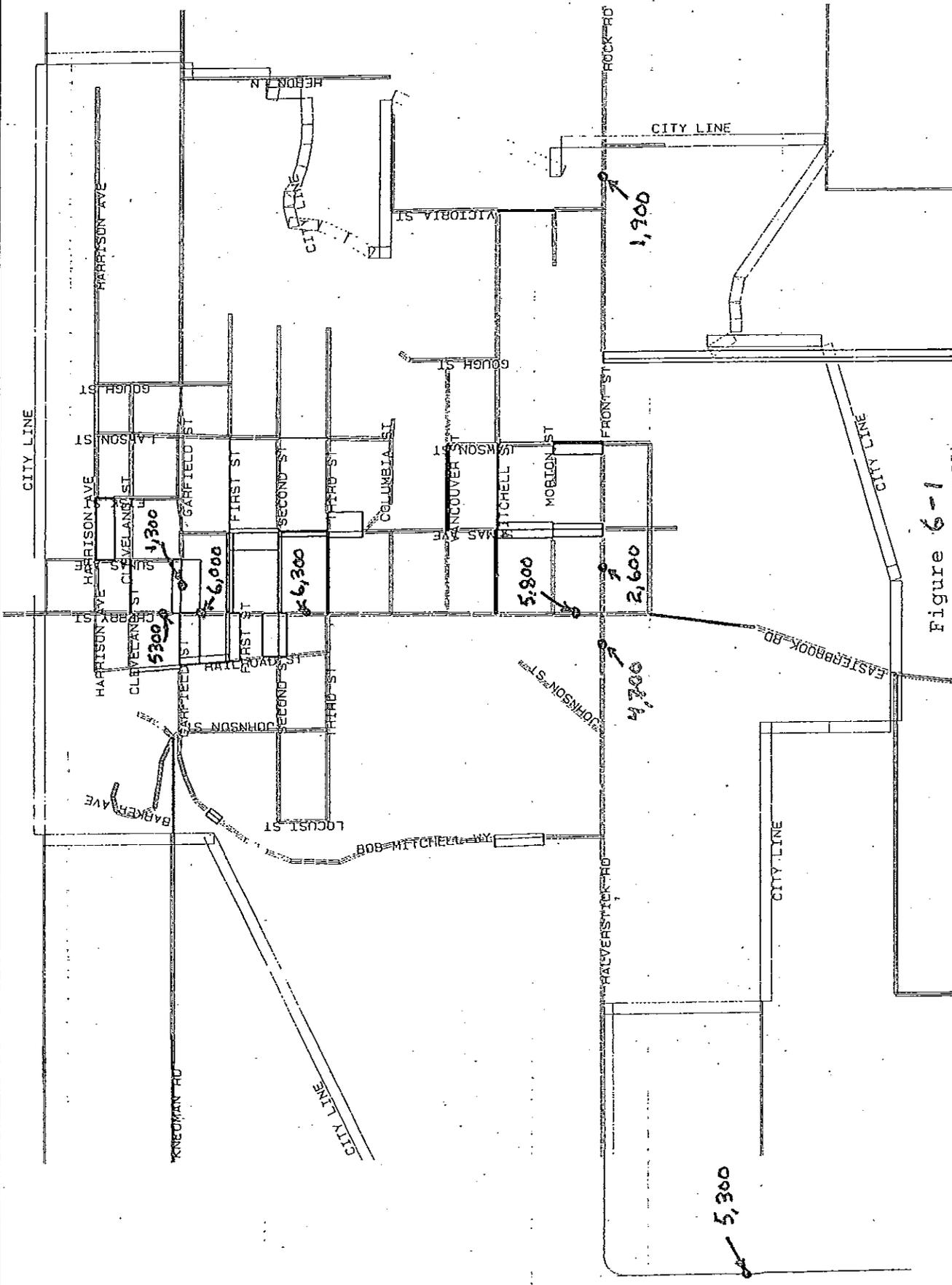
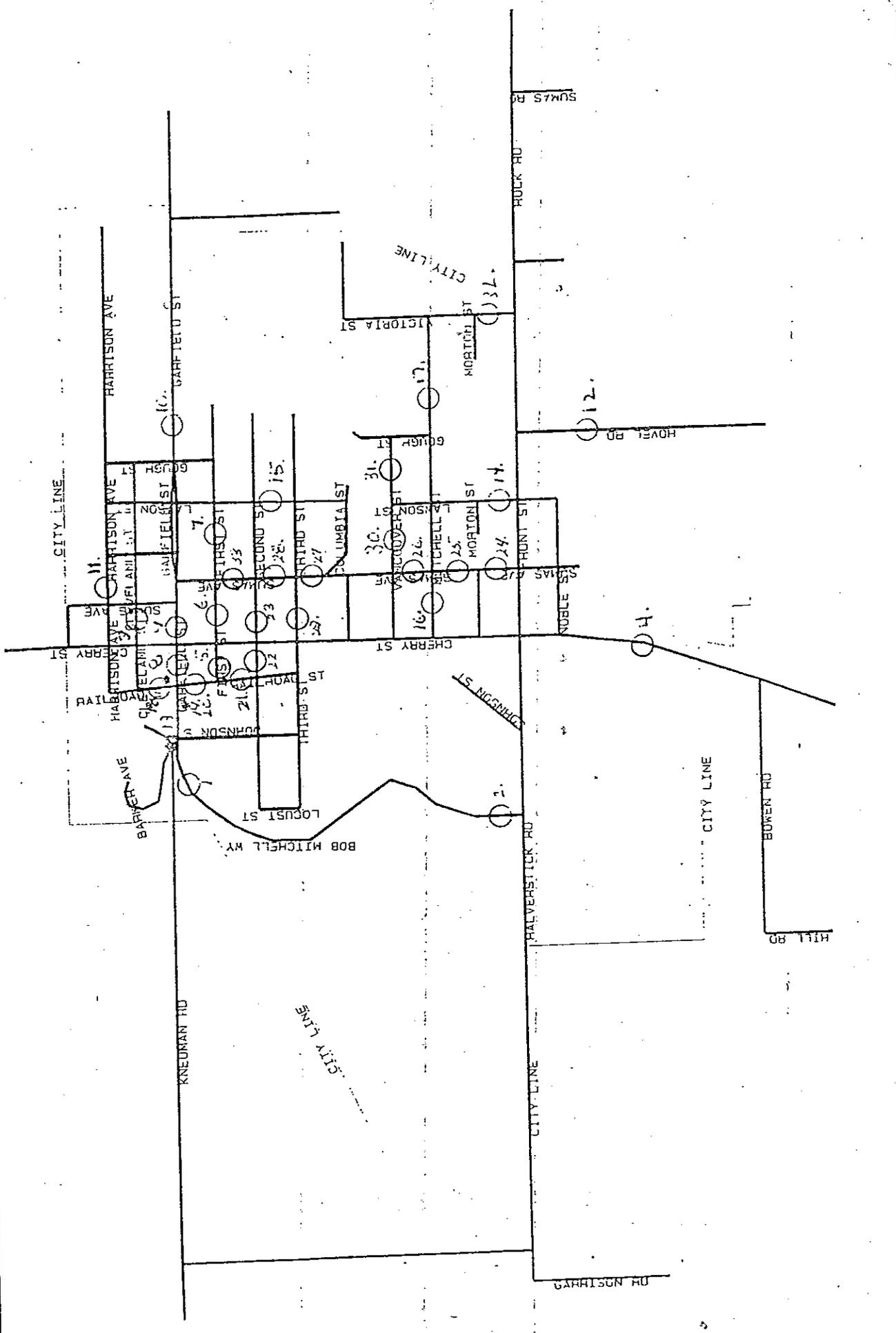


Figure 6-1

Directional P.M. Peak Volumes  
 Range of P.M. Peak Volumes is 10 to 135 Vehicles

Hand-lettered values are ADTs measured by WSDOT in 1977

TMODEL™ 2



SUMAS LINK 2  
 SUMAS, 3-100  
 11-23-1001

Traffic Counter Locations - Sumas  
 Prepared By Whatcom County Council of Governments

THODEL™ 2

Figure 6-2



Table 6-1. Accidents by Type		
Type	1991	1992
Entering at an angle	13	11
Entering Driveway	4	0
Rear end	3	4
Turn	2	1
Sideswipe	3	0
Head on	0	1
Other	4	2
Total	29	19

Table 6-2. Accidents by Location		
Location	1991	1992
Cherry Street	23	11
Cleveland Street	0	1
Columbia Street	1	0
Halverstick Road/Front Street	2	6
Mitchell Street	2	0
Railroad Ave	1	0
Bob Mitchell Way	0	1
	29	19

The streets in Fair-Poor condition experience relatively small amounts of traffic, so it is not critical to make immediate reconstruction repairs to these facilities.

### *Accidents and Safety*

Analysis of 1991 and 1992 accident records provided trends and locational information. A total of 48 reported accidents occurred in the two-year period, as shown on Table 6-1 and Table 6-2. Thirty-six of the accidents occurred along Cherry Street (State Route 9). This triples the number of accidents (12) reported in the Sumas Border Study by Kittleson & Associates, Inc. for the proceeding three years (1987-1990). The increase in the number of collisions reflects the increase in border traffic, growth of retail trade in the area and overall general worsening of traffic conditions along the Cherry Street corridor. As seen in Figure 6-6, most accidents occur north of Third Street on Cherry Street.

### *U.S. Canadian Border Crossing*

The international border crossing at Sumas is the single most important source of traffic in Sumas, and also the primary source of traffic congestion. The border crossing in Sumas is one of two 24-hour commercial and passenger vehicle crossings located in Whatcom County. The crossing is located approximately 25 miles from Interstate 5 and one mile from the Trans-Canada Highway. Total crossings in Sumas are approximately one-fourth of the combined number of crossings at the two ports of entry in Blaine. For those traveling to and from Bellingham, one route is through Sumas along SR 9, connecting then with SR 546 (Badger Road), SR 544 (Pole Road), or SR 542 (Mt. Baker Highway).

Total vehicle crossings today are down substantially from a decade ago. In the early 1990s, a number of studies evaluated the destinations of those crossing the border. One study showed that more than two-thirds of the border crossings at Sumas did not have destinations beyond city limits. Things have changed profoundly since then. The declining Canadian dollar led to a drastic reduction in the number of Canadians choosing to shop in Sumas. The actual count of southbound vehicles by U.S. Customs in calendar year 2000 was 941,959 (123,420 trucks and 818,539 cars). The two-way AADT on SR9 (Garrison Road) as measured by WSDOT in 2000 was 5,000, which corresponds to an annual one-way southbound traffic volume of about 912,000. This is only slightly less than the southbound traffic measured at the border. It seems clear that of those crossing the border, the vast majority are now passing through Sumas to other destinations.

The latest count of southbound traffic at U.S. Customs (131,455 trucks and 599,730 cars in 2003) shows a continued decline in automobile traffic and a small increase in truck traffic. Truck traffic has steadily increased over the past decade, in contrast to the pattern of automobile traffic.

### *State Route 9 Alternate Route Analysis*

In 2001, a TEA-21 grant was received by the IMTC project to undertake a traffic management study within the Sumas city limits. In that study, Sumas established preferred short- and long-term solutions to the problem of how best to move international traffic through town. Solutions identified through the process are as follows:

- Create auto-queuing area at north end of Cherry Street
- Create truck-queuing area at north end of Sumas Avenue
- Create truck bypass route along Johnson Street, leading to a new truck crossing plaza to be located on the west side of the rail main line

### *Overland Freight*

Transportation of goods by trucks often affects a transportation system. Trucks accelerate slower, are less maneuverable and have longer stopping distances. Vehicle weight also affects local road conditions by decreasing the durability of the road surface.

In 1992 a study of Whatcom County international truck crossings, was conducted by WCCOG and a WSU graduate student. According to the study, truck crossings at the Sumas International border crossing represent approximately 22 percent of heavy vehicle traffic crossing the border in mainland Whatcom County. Most traffic enters the county from the Peace Arch and Pacific Highway crossings in Blaine. In Sumas, Cherry Street (SR 9) serves as the commercial vehicle route for through-vehicles meeting U.S. weight restrictions, to and from the international border.

The 1992 study also provided information regarding travel patterns that trucks take in the western county area. As seen in Figure 6-7, only 11.1 percent of total observed truck trips chose the SR 9 route through the City of Nooksack. Only 2.2 percent of trucks traveling to or beyond Bellingham use SR 9. Most trucks crossing the Sumas border use Badger Road (SR 546) to the Guide Meridian (SR 539) to Interstate 5.

No information is available that identifies locally generated truck trips or travel behavior patterns.

As part of the development of the Sumas Cargo Terminal facility, the Port of Bellingham, received a grant from the U.S. Economic Development Administration to construct a truck overload road from the International Port of entry to the Cargo facility. Due to the lower U.S. weight standards the U.S. road system cannot support the Canadian trucks. The construction of Bob Mitchell Way was necessary because of these weight standard differences. Bob Mitchell Way was constructed to allow commercial vehicles that meet Canadian weight restrictions entry to the U.S. and access to the Sumas Cargo Terminal. In the terminal, cargoes are trans-shipped to rail or other vehicles that meet U.S. weight restrictions. The heavy-load haul road was extended an additional 1,700 feet in 1997, and is now present as a frontage road parallel to Halverstick Road (SR9) that services the west end of the Sumas industrial zone.

### *Rail Systems*

The Burlington Northern Railroad operates a north-south rail line that runs west of Cherry Street. The line connects Sumas to Sedro Woolley and continues southwest to Burlington where it connects to the primary north-south rail corridor (see Figure 6-8). The route has moderate freight volumes between three and five million gross ton-miles per mile and will continue to be an active part of the Burlington Northern freight operations. A spur line also runs west to the City of Lynden. Freight trains use this spur approximately once a week.

As of March 1995, passenger rail service in Whatcom County was reinstated. West Coast Amtrak provides twice-daily service along the coast from Seattle to Vancouver, B.C., with stops in Everett, Mt. Vernon, and Bellingham.

The U.S. Congress formally designated the Portland, Oregon to Vancouver, British Columbia rail corridor as a high-speed passenger rail corridor. The designation has provided the impetus for the Washington State Legislature to enact Chapter 231, Laws of 1991 (SHB 1452), directing that a comprehensive feasibility assessment be conducted for developing a high-speed ground transportation system in Washington State. A preliminary long range high-speed rail plan was completed by the High Speed Ground Transportation Steering Committee in October 1992. The high-speed rail service would operate at speeds in excess of 150 miles per hour, as compared to the existing 80 miles per hour speeds.

One preliminary proposal for the location of the system identifies the use of the same SR 9 corridor used by the present Burlington Northern Railroad. A proposed station at Nugents Corner (15 miles south of Sumas) would provide residents access to the system. The system would provide access to Vancouver, B.C., Skagit County, Seattle, Sea-Tac Airport, Olympia, Vancouver, WA and Portland, Oregon. Construction of the high-speed rail system may also provide city residents supplemental benefits, such as connecting bus or shuttle service. The actual location of the route and station may change as the planning process continues. Two major obstacles to completion of the high-speed rail are financing and negotiation of rights-of-way.

### *Air Transportation*

The nearest air facility is the municipal airport of the City of Abbotsford, B.C. The Abbotsford airport is a surplus military facility taken over by Abbotsford in 1996. As population grows in the Fraser Valley, and as the Vancouver airport becomes busier, the Abbotsford airport becomes increasingly important. Flights are now available to inland Canadian cities (Regina, Calgary) and to resort destinations in the U.S. (e.g., Reno). In Whatcom County, the nearest airport is the Lynden Municipal Airport, primarily used by private aircraft and charters. The Bellingham International Airport, operated by the Port of Bellingham, provides commercial air carrier and charter services.

### *Scenic and Recreational Highways Program*

The 1991 Transportation Budget (ESHB 1231) directed a review of all state routes for inclusion in the Scenic and Recreation Highway System. The goal of the program is to identify those highways that have significant natural, cultural or recreational characteristics and to work with local governments to protect the resources from undesirable or inappropriate development. Front Street (SR547) was included in 1969 and the entire length of SR 9 (including both W. Front and Cherry St.) was included as part of a 1991 system expansion study. Although no mandatory regulations exist, the city should consider development actions consistent with the intent of the legislation.

### *Commute Patterns*

The 1990 census provides a variety of information on the commute patterns and behavior of the employed Sumas residents as shown in Tables 6-3, 6-4 and 6-5. Table 6-3 shows that of the 397 employed city residents, 76 percent drove alone, 10 percent carpoled, 7 percent walked, 5 percent commuted by some other means, and 3 percent worked at home.

Table 6-4 shows that 11 percent of the work force begin their commute before 6:00 a.m. Table 6-5 shows that approximately 70 percent of the employed residents worked within twenty minutes from their place of residence. Approximately 6 percent spent more than one hour commuting to work. Over fourteen percent of the employed work force commute between 20 and 44 minutes.

### *Demand Management Strategies and Commute Assistance*

Currently, WTA offers Monday through Saturday demand response services to the general public. Users of the service phone WTA and ask for service at a particular time and pick-up point. WTA then transports the person to Lynden, where fixed-route service is available to Bellingham and other points within Whatcom County. WTA also offers van-pool service in Sumas.

### *Public Transit*

There is no fixed route public transit service in the City of Sumas. WTA provides this service to Bellingham, Lynden, Ferndale, Blaine, and other areas inside the Public Transportation Benefit Area (PTBA). Although Sumas is in the PTBA, WTA has no plans to extend fixed route service to Sumas, because of low rider volumes. As mentioned above, WTA operates a dial-a-ride program connecting Sumas to Lynden.

### *Private Taxi Service*

There are no taxi services based in Sumas. However, several taxi companies provide county-wide service, which would include service to Sumas and the surrounding community. There are only a few companies that own vehicles that are wheelchair accessible. Table 6-6 lists the taxi and shuttle bus companies who provide county-wide service as compiled by the Whatcom County Council of Governments in 1993.

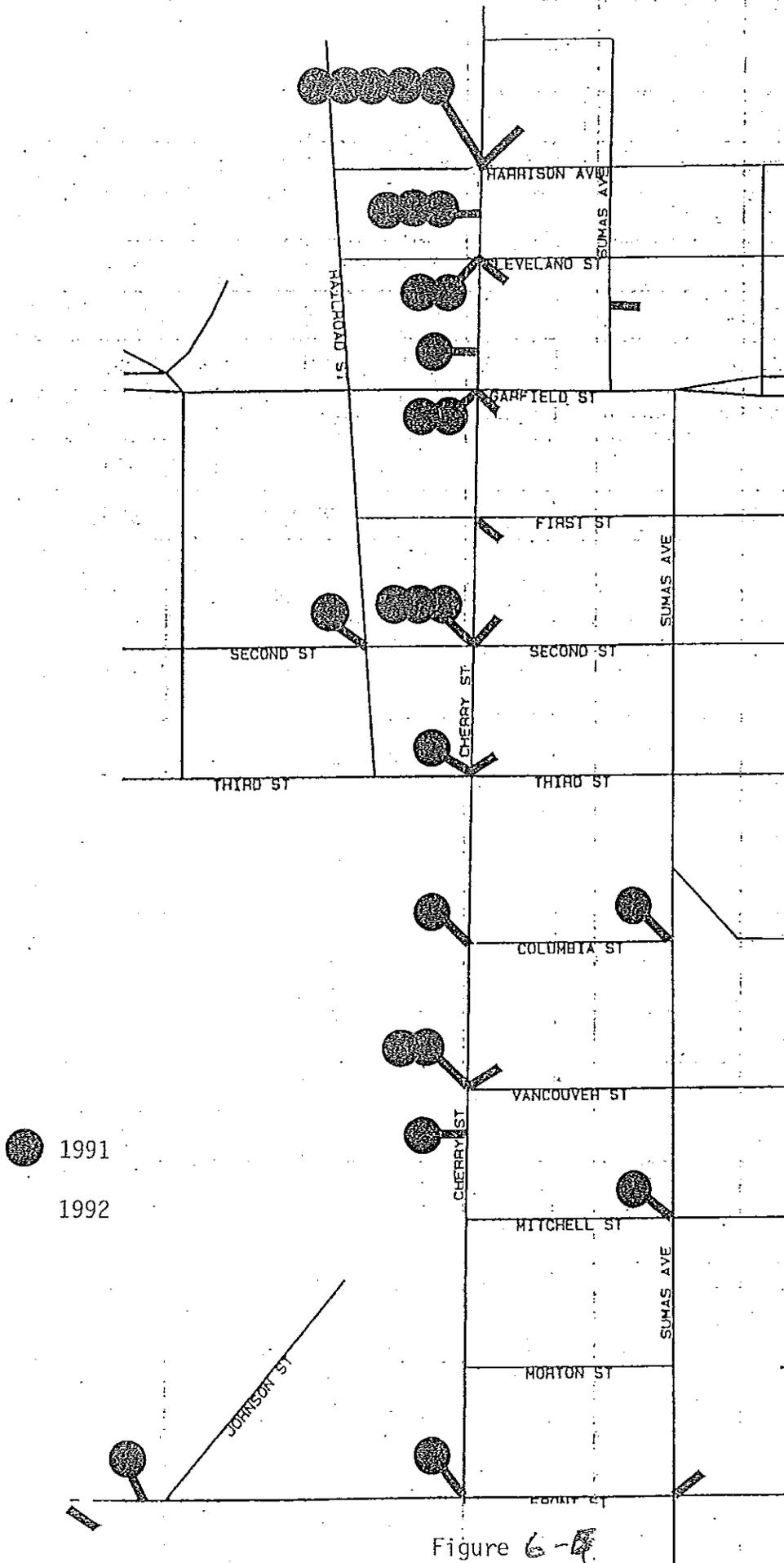


Figure 6-4

SUMAS.LNX

TMODEL™ 2

Sumas SR 9 Accident Summary  
 Prepared By Whatcom County Council of Governments  
 WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENT, BELLINGHAM, WA

Table 6-3. Mode of Transportation Used to Commute

Mode	Number	Percentage
Drive Alone	254	73.4%
Carpool	16	4.6%
Motorcycle	3	0.9%
Bicycle	9	2.6%
Walk	53	15.3%
Other	0	0.0%
Work at Home	11	3.2%
Total	346	100.0%

Table 6-4. Hour Leaving Home for Work

Time	People	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
12:00 a.m. to 4:59 a.m.	12	3.5%	3.5%
5:00 a.m. to 5:59 a.m.	26	7.5%	11.0%
6:00 a.m. to 6:59 a.m.	58	16.8%	27.7%
7:00 a.m. to 7:59 a.m.	80	23.1%	50.9%
8:00 a.m. to 8:59 a.m.	38	11.0%	61.8%
9:00 a.m. to 9:59 a.m.	16	4.6%	66.5%
10:00 a.m. to 10:59 a.m.	28	8.1%	74.6%
11:00 a.m. to 11:59 a.m.	77	22.3%	96.8%
Worked at Home	11	3.2%	100.0%
Total	346	100.0%	100.0%

Table 6-5. Home to Work Travel Times

Commute Time	People	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
<10 min.	186	53.8%	53.8%
10-19 min.	67	19.4%	73.1%
20-29 min.	35	10.1%	83.2%
30-44 min.	16	4.6%	87.9%
45-59 min.	21	6.1%	93.9%
60+ min.	21	6.1%	100.0%
Total	346	100.0%	100.0%

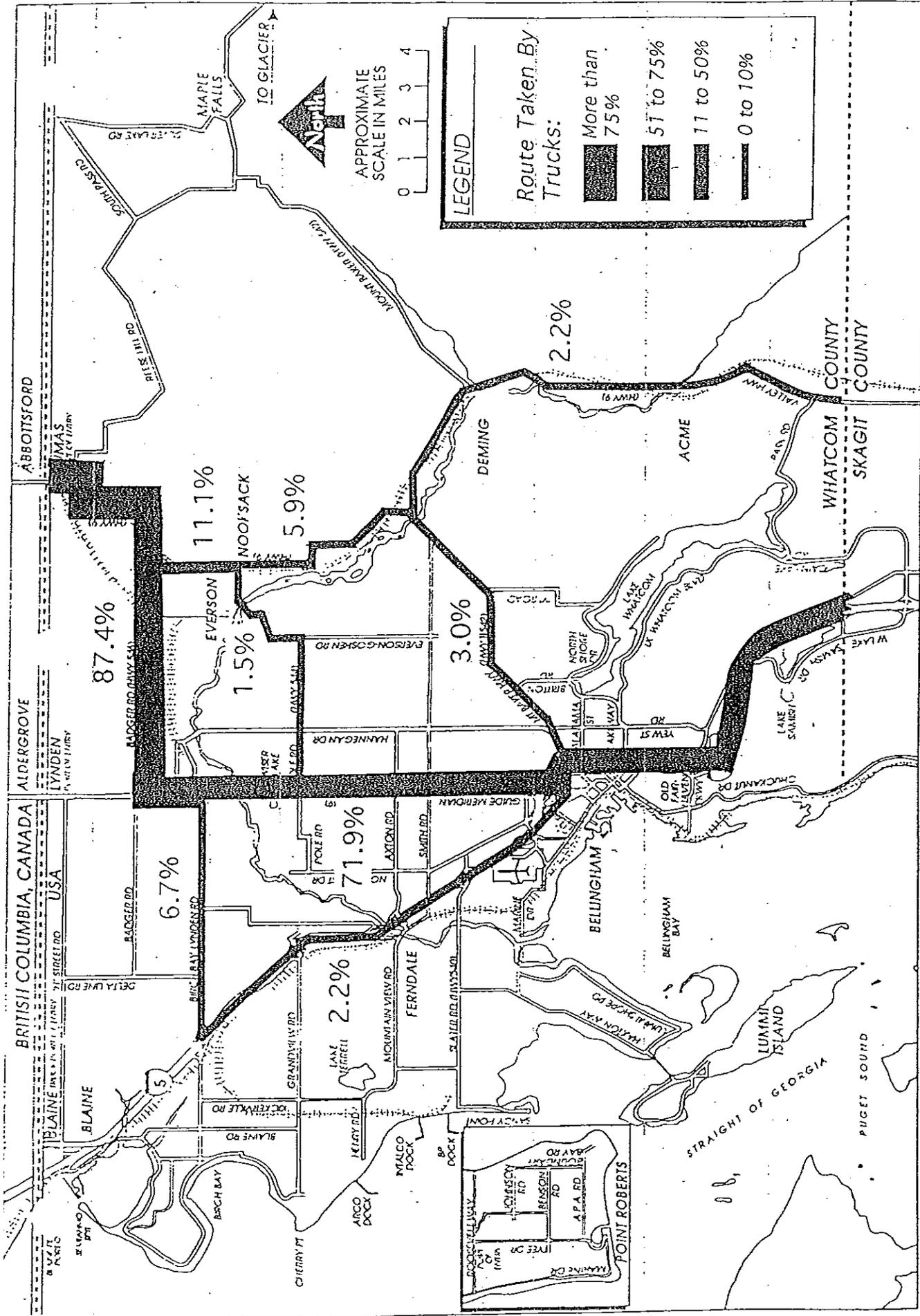


Figure 6-7

# Route Taken by Trucks with Whatcom County Destinations. Sumas Crossing, 24 hour period.

Source: Truck Commodity Data Collection: A Case Study of Canada/United States Border Traffic in Whatcom County. Masters Thesis by Kathleen Casey Blank, Washington State University, 1992.

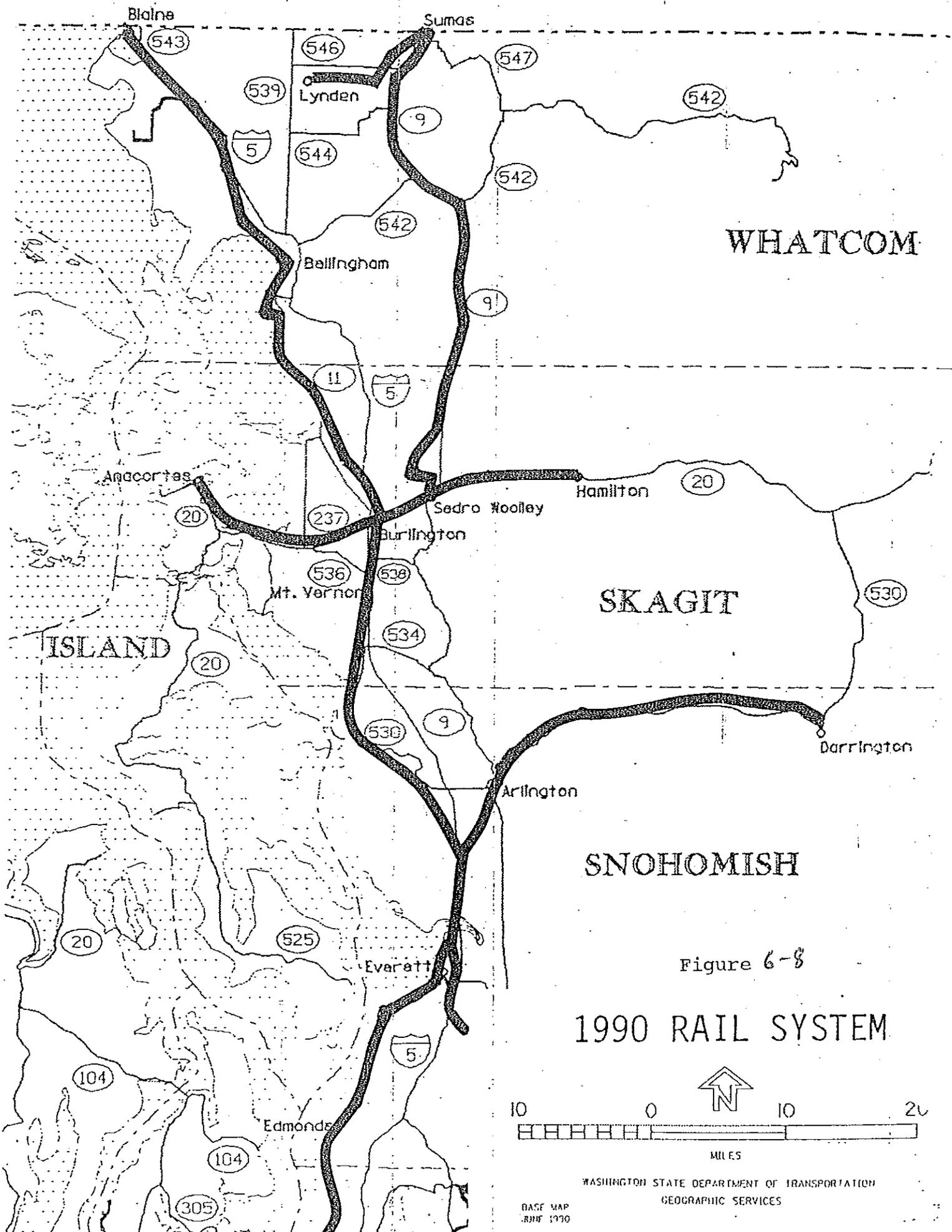
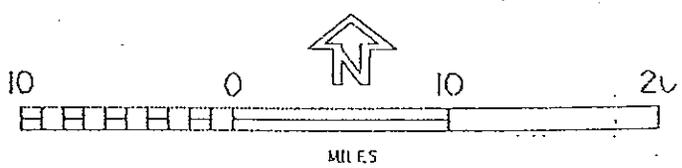
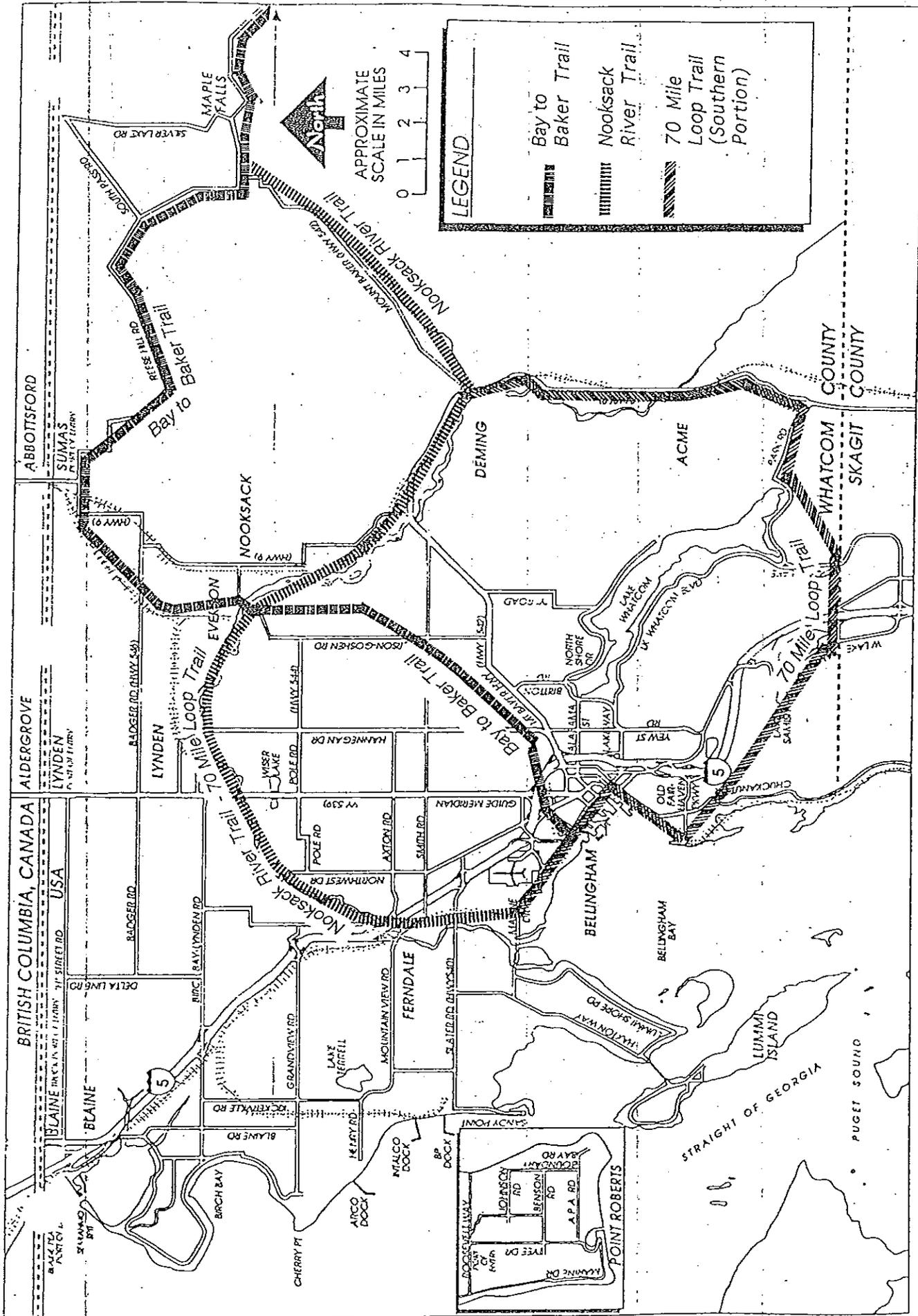


Figure 6-8  
 1990 RAIL SYSTEM



WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
 GEOGRAPHIC SERVICES  
 BASE MAP  
 RNF 1970



Approximate Routes of Proposed Trails Figure 6-11

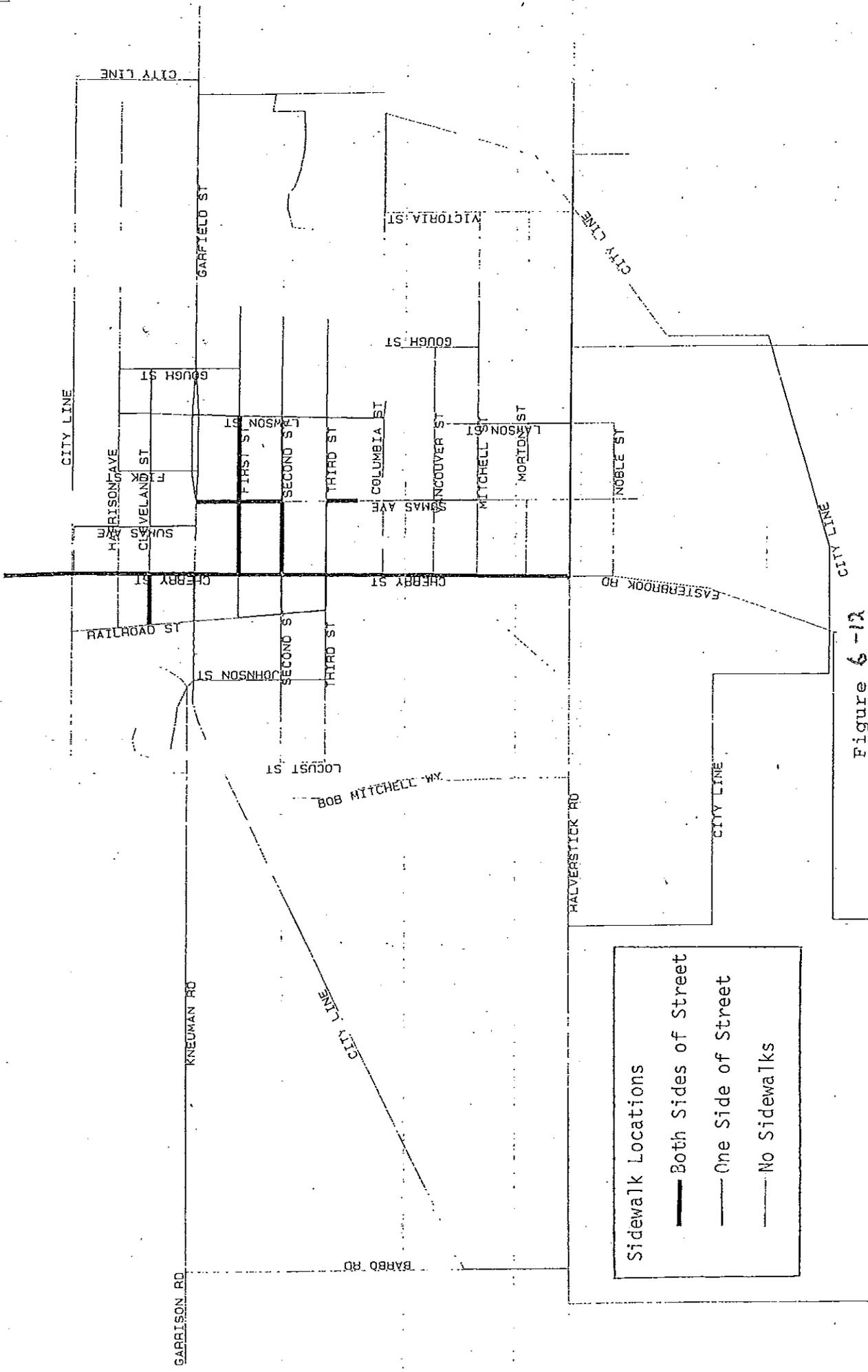


Figure 6-12

SUMAS DOT LHX  
 SUMAS, WASH. STATE  
 LL: 255/319  
 UR: 3551/3192  
 02-03-1974

Sumas Sidewalk Locations  
 Prepared By Whatcom County Council of Governments

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENT, BELLINGHAM, WA

TMODEL™ 2

### *Bicycle Facilities*

Bicycles serve many purposes in a community. They provide a source of low cost transportation and mobility to youths and residents who do not drive. In addition, many residents use bicycling for recreation. There are no designated bicycle facilities in the city. The local street system with the low speed limits and volumes has served as the bicycle network.

The proposed Bay-to-Baker Trail would connect Sumas with Bellingham to the southwest and Mt. Baker to the east, shown in Figure 6-11. The trail proposes using abandoned rail right-of-way for most of its 74-mile project. The segment of the Trail near Sumas would run along the abandoned C.M.S.T.P.&P. Rail line at the south of town. The Bay-to-Baker Committee does not have title to this facility. The city will continue to be active in reviewing plans for routing within the city limits.

### *Pedestrian Facilities*

Access sidewalks may provide a convenient and safe route for pedestrians to use that is separate from the road ways. Sidewalks are most important in the areas of high traffic and higher residential densities. A complete sidewalk network in high density areas will provide an alternative means route for transportation.

Figure 6-12 shows that sidewalks are mainly found in commercial areas of the city. The City gradually building a network of sidewalks throughout the older residential core area.

## **Future Conditions**

Future roadway conditions will be influenced by both *regional* and *local* factors, each of which is analyzed briefly below.

### *Regional factors*

- Cross-border truck traffic. Cross-border truck traffic is expected to grow at an annual rate of at least 4.6 percent over the coming twenty years. Applying that rate to existing southbound truck crossings at Sumas, about 323,150 trucks per year (885 per day) can be expected to cross southbound at Sumas. This is a 245 percent increase over today's volumes. A similar number of northbound trips can be assumed. Accommodation of this large volume of truck traffic will not be feasible with today's pattern of roadways within town. An IMTC-sponsored traffic planning process took place in 2001 and involved collaboration with WSDOT, BC MOTH, and Abbotsford to develop a plan for accommodation of anticipated truck traffic. The most feasible solution involved acquisition of property near the border to build a queuing area. As of 2004, this recommendation has been tabled pending completion of a port expansion study underway by U.S. Customs. Any change to the truck queuing area has to dovetail with changes in the actual port facilities.

- Growth in lower mainland. The Fraser Valley region of the lower mainland is experiencing rapid growth at this time and the trend is expected to continue over the planning period. The increasingly large population in the Abbotsford area will lead to increasing use of the Sumas crossing point over time. The 2001 IMTC planning process produced a recommendation for construction of additional auto queuing lane capacity in the area immediately south of the port of entry. As of 2004, this recommendation has been tabled pending completion of a port expansion study underway by U.S. Customs. Any change to the automobile queuing area has to dovetail with changes in the actual port facilities.
- Cross-county corridor. The 1996 GSA border business plan put forward the notion of an east-west connection from Sumas to I-5. The connection would acknowledge the population growth referred to above, and would also facilitate shifting of traffic from one crossing point to another, depending upon queue lengths experienced at a given time. The Gateway Pacific shipping terminal project contemplates a similar east-west connection in order to facilitate movement of cargo from Cherry Point into the continental interior via the Trans-Canada Highway alignment. The City of Sumas supports the cross-county corridor concept and also supports an alignment that has an eastern terminus at Sumas.
- SR9 realignment. WSDOT owns an undeveloped right-of-way extending due south adjacent to the B-N rail line from the south end of Cherry Street (SR9) to the Badger Road. WSDOT intends to reconstruct SR9 on this alignment. The new alignment will have better access management than the existing highway, so it is expected that the new alignment will have higher capacity and will attract regional traffic to the Sumas border crossing. The realignment has been considered by the City when establishing zoning in the south end of town.

The predicted effect of these regional factors is revealed by modeling that has been performed by WCOG. Figures 6-13 and 6-14 are designed to show the model results. Figure 6-13 shows the status quo as of the year 2000, calibrated to traffic counts collected from WSDOT, Whatcom County, and other jurisdictions. Figure 6-14 shows traffic anticipated in the year 2022, assuming no population growth occurs in Sumas. By comparing the differences in traffic counts between the two figures, it is possible to identify the impacts of regional factors. For instance, the sum of the traffic on the three roads that converge at the south end of town is 7,338 in 2000 (i.e., 1,345 on Rock Road, 5,938 on Halverstick Road, and 55 on Easterbrook Road). By 2022, that value is expected to grow to 10,248 (i.e., 3,446 on Rock Road, 300 on Halverstick Road, and 6,502 on Easterbrook Road). The figures reveal about a 40 percent increase in traffic due to regional factors.

#### *Local factors*

- Local growth. As described in the Land-use and Housing elements, a total of 268 new housing units are anticipated in Sumas in the coming 20 years. Figure 6-15 is designed to help understand the impact of this growth. It shows the same regional scenario as in Figure 6-14, but also includes the new housing in Sumas. The impact of Sumas's growth can therefore be deduced by comparing Figures 6-14 and 6-15. Referring again to the three roads that converge at the south end of town, a total count of 11,487 is revealed (i.e., 4,205 on Rock Road, 354 on Halverstick Road, and 6,928 on Easterbrook Road), which is 1,239 more trips than shown in Figure 6-14. The effect of Sumas's growth therefore amounts to a 17 percent increase over the 2000 baseline condition (i.e., 1,239 trips compared to a baseline of 7,338).





CANADA  
UNITED STATES

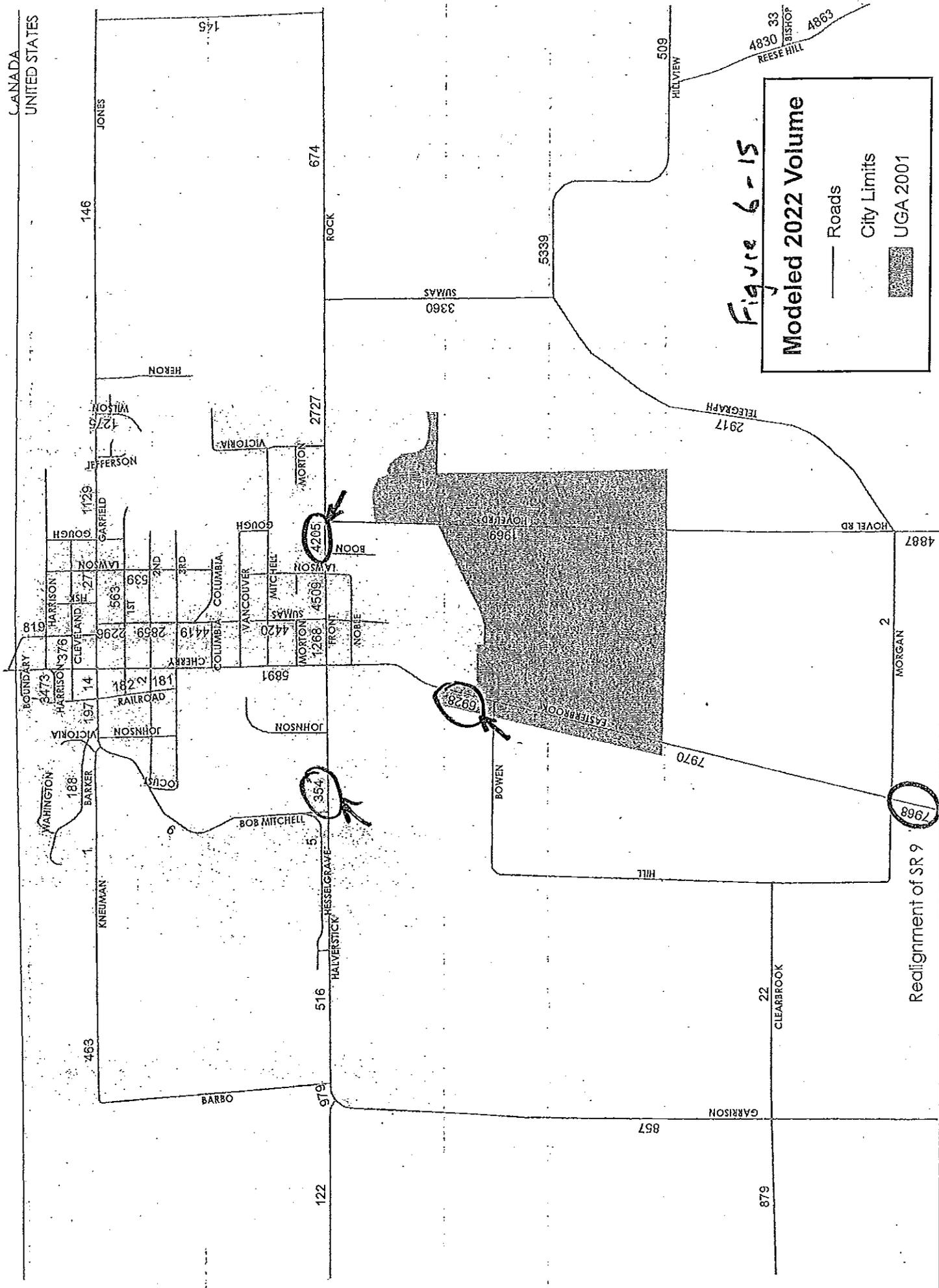


Figure 6-15

**Modeled 2022 Volume**

- Roads
- City Limits
- UGA 2001

Realignment of SR 9

Company	Location
Airporter Yellow Cab	Bellingham
Bellingham Taxi	Bellingham
Bellingham Sea-Tac Airporter	Bellingham
City Cab	Bellingham
City Cab	Lynden
Courtesy Cabs	Blaine
Diamond Yellow Cab	Bellingham
Superior Cab	Bellingham

Source: *Directory of Demand Responsive Transportation Providers in Whatcom County*, Whatcom County COG, January 1993.

Type of Facility	Level of Service				
	<u>A</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>E</u>
Undivided Arterial, 2 lane	470	790	1180	1420	1570
Undivided Arterial, 4 lane	820	1360	2040	2450	2720
Collector, 2 lane undivided	390	650	970	1170	1290
Collector, 2 lane divided	510	850	1270	1520	1690
Bridge/Causeway, 2 lane	660	1090	1640	2050	2460
Rural Highway, 2 lane	800	1330	1990	2390	2650

Regional factors appear to be the dominant factors affecting traffic growth near Sumas. The table below shows the p.m. peak hour capacity of various types of roads at various levels of service. Sumas and WSDOT have adopted LOS D for arterials in the city. The table shows that a 2-lane arterial has a peak hour capacity of about 1,420 trips at LOS D. Local growth will obviously consume a relatively small portion of the capacity of local roadways. Regional factors will outweigh local growth.

## 7. Utilities Element

This chapter is a required element of a comprehensive plan developed to meet the provisions of the GMA. In overview, this chapter presents the general location and capacity of all existing and proposed utilities for the city of Sumas and the surrounding UGA.

The GMA defines electricity, natural gas, and telecommunications as "utilities," and this chapter contains a discussion of each, as well as a discussion of cable television. Water, sanitary sewer, and storm sewer systems are defined as "public facilities" and are addressed in the Capital Facilities Element (Chapter 4). Sumas is unusual in that it owns and operates its own electric utility. The discussion of this utility is therefore more extensive than that of the privately owned utilities.

### **Natural Gas**

#### Existing conditions

Natural gas is provided by the Cascade Natural Gas Corporation. Cascade serves its Whatcom county customers from a Northwest Pipeline Corporation transmission line that originates in Canada, crosses into the U.S. just east of Sumas, and runs south to the Columbia River. A second major line, the ARCO lateral, runs west from the Northwest Pipeline Corporation line across the county to the ARCO refinery, passing just to the south of town.

East of the city, a two-inch service pipeline branches off the Northwest Pipeline Corporation line and runs along Jones Road into Sumas. To the south, another two-inch branch line originating from the ARCO lateral enters the city on Hill Road. These trunk lines are shown on Map 12. Smaller service lines extend from these trunk lines.

The number of customers receiving natural gas fluctuates slightly every month, due to economics, development and weather. In the month of March, 1994, Cascade served 247 customers in Sumas (193 residential and 54 commercial). With current facilities, approximately 500 additional residential units could be accommodated within Sumas and the surrounding UGA.

#### Future conditions

Future expansion is based on economic feasibility. Cascade Natural Gas's growth includes new residences, commercial uses, and industrial uses, as well as existing buildings converting to natural gas from other forms of power. Factors influencing growth include the relative costs of gas and electricity, regional power planning priorities, and trends in growth and economic development. Because of Sumas's proximity to the Northwest Pipeline Corporation line, there are no physical limits to future natural gas capacity.

## Electricity

Sumas is unusual in that it owns and operates an electric utility that provides service within city limits. The following information about the electric system was provided by the public works director and the city crew.

### Existing conditions

Source and transmission. Sumas purchases power from the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA), a federally owned electric utility, under a contract that expires on 1 October 2001. A contract extension covering the 2002 – 2006 period has been executed. BPA generates most of its power at hydroelectric facilities located on the Columbia River. Power from those facilities reaches Sumas through transmission lines operated by BPA and by Puget Sound Energy (Puget). Power is transmitted from the Columbia River to BPA's Custer substation through high-voltage lines owned by BPA. Power is transmitted from Custer to Puget's Schuett's Corner substation (2 miles south of Sumas) through high-voltage lines owned by Puget. At Schuett's Corner, the voltage is stepped down to 13 thousand volts (kV) and transmitted to Sumas along two routes. One route is along Garrison Road and Halverstick Road, and the other is along Telegraph Road, Hovel Road, and Front Street. Both routes arrive at Sumas's South substation, which is located on Front Street near the railroad lines. Power is metered at this substation before distribution within the city. Map 13 shows the two routes, as well as the location of other major electric facilities in town.

Distribution system. Sumas's distribution system is divided into three basic service areas. These areas are fed from lines originating at either of two substations. The South substation mentioned earlier provides power to two service areas. The first area is the industrial region west of the railroad lines. The city delivers power to large industrial customers at 13 kV (the same voltage as the incoming power) so that the power need not be routed through the city's step-down transformers. This preserves capacity in the substation transformers for other uses. The second area fed by the South substation is the southern half of the main commercial and residential core. Power is stepped down to 2.4 kV at the substation and then distributed throughout the area on overhead lines. Transformers located on power poles are used to step down the power a final time for delivery to customers at 120/240 volts.

A 13 kV feeder line runs from the South substation to the North substation along the Johnson Street right-of-way west of the tracks. The North substation serves the third service area, which is the north half of the commercial and residential area. Again, the substation steps power down to 2.4 kV for distribution through the neighborhoods.

The two residential/commercial service areas are connected by the 13 kV feeder mentioned earlier, and also by a major distribution line running along Sumas Avenue. A switch located on this line separates the two areas. This line provides redundancy in the system: should one substation be taken off line, power can be routed to the affected service area by opening the switch. The two substations each now operate at about 60 to 70 percent capacity during peak demand.

Conservation program. Sumas operates a program designed to reduce demand for electricity. The program encourages the use of energy-efficient lighting, reduced-flow shower heads, efficient appliances, etc.

Private facilities. Significant privately-owned electric facilities are located in and around Sumas:

- A 123 megawatt gas-fired co-generation facility owned by Sumas Energy, Inc., (SEI) is located on the south side of Front Street, near the west city limits. The power generated at the SEI facility is sold to Puget.
- Puget Power owns major facilities located in Sumas and is the provider of electrical service to the unincorporated area surrounding town. Puget's Sumas substation is located adjacent to the SEI co-generation facility, and two of Puget's 115 kV transmission lines pass through town along Front Street: the Sumas - Bellingham line, and the Sumas - Lynden line.

Puget has a public service obligation to furnish electrical service where and when demanded. Its service levels are regulated by the WUTC. Some of Puget's existing and proposed facilities are shown on Map 13, and its facilities are described in detail in the company's "Whatcom County Draft GMA Electrical Facilities Plan," dated September 1992.

### Future conditions

As energy demand increases at a given service voltage, the capacity of a given conductor is eventually exceeded. One way to prolong the service life of a conductor is to distribute energy at a higher voltage, thereby allowing the conductor to support new services. The city intends to use this strategy throughout the residential/commercial distribution system. All new transformers installed by the city are dual voltage, working both with the 2.4 kV distribution voltage now in place, and with 7.2 kV. An ongoing project is to replace old transformers with dual-voltage units, allowing the eventual conversion of the entire distribution grid to 7.2 kV. This project will span several years, with final switch-over to the new voltage not anticipated before 2003.

Expansion of the electric service area will require construction of new distribution facilities. The details of minor service expansion projects are insignificant to this analysis. The only currently-planned distribution system project involves completion of a 13 kV loop through the industrial zone. There are existing dead-end underground lines running west on Kneuman Road and on Halverstick Road. The two lines should be connected via a new underground 13 kV line along Barbo. Puget has an existing overhead line along Barbo, but no customers are served from the line. The city should negotiate with Puget for removal of the line and should then install the desired underground line. The project can be accomplished by the city crew at a cost of \$50,000.

Private facilities. Puget plans to construct another 115 kV transmission connecting their Sumas substation to Nugent's Corner. The exact route of the line is not yet known, but it will probably follow either SR 9, the B-N railroad tracks, or WSDOT's undeveloped right-of-way (originally intended as the new alignment for SR9). The proposed 115 kV line will be used to serve a future substation to be located near Nooksack and Everson, known as the Denson substation.

## **Telecommunications**

### Existing conditions

Telecommunication service is provided by Verizon. The main switching office for Sumas is located downtown at 233 Garfield Street. All calls from the city and the surrounding area are transmitted through this main office. A fiber optic backbone was brought to the Sumas switch in 1995, thereby eliminating line capacity problems that were present in the area earlier in the decade. DSL service became available in Sumas in the spring of 2001.

Verizon also added a remote switching device east of the city on Reese Hill Road. This remote switching device will handles in southeast Sumas, as well as calls from the surrounding area. Long-distance calls are then transferred from the Reese Hill remote switching device to the Sumas main office.

### Future conditions

No telecommunications service constraints currently exist in and near Sumas, so no specific plans for upgrade are in place. As telecommunications services expand to include video services, line capacity will be increased to accommodate the proportionately larger line capacity required by video services.

## Appendix I: Glossary

**Agricultural Land:** means land primarily devoted to the commercial production of horticultural, viticultural, floricultural, dairy, apiary, vegetable, or animal products or of berries, grain, hay, straw, turf, seed, Christmas trees, not subject to the excise tax imposed by RCW 84.33.100 through 84.33.140, or livestock and that has long-term commercial significance for agricultural production.

**Arterial [Minor]:** a roadway providing movement along significant corridors of traffic flow. Traffic volumes, speeds and trip lengths are high, although usually not as great as those associated with principal arterials.

**Arterial [Principal]:** a roadway providing movement along major corridors of traffic flow. Traffic volumes, speeds and trip lengths are high, usually greater than those associated with minor arterials.

**Available Capital Facilities:** means that facilities or services are in place or that a financial commitment is in place to provide the facilities or services within a specified time. In the case of transportation, the specified time is six years from the time of development.

**Capacity:** the measure of the ability to provide a level of service on a public facility.

**Capital Facility:** means a physical structure owned or operated by a government entity which provides or supports a public service.

**Capital Improvement:** means physical assets constructed or purchased to provide, improve or replace a public facility and which are large scale and high in cost. The cost of a capital improvement is generally non-recurring and may require multi-year financing.

**Collector:** a roadway providing service which is of relative moderate traffic volume, moderate trip length and moderate operating speed. Collector roads collect and distribute traffic between local roads or arterial roads.

**Commercial Uses:** activities within land areas which are predominantly connected with the sale, rental and distribution of products, or performance of services.

**Comprehensive Plan:** means a generalized coordinated land use policy statement of the governing body of a county or city that is adopted pursuant to this chapter.

**Concurrency:** means that adequate capital facilities are available when the impacts of development occur. This definition includes the two concepts of "adequate capital facilities" and of "available capital facilities" as defined above.

**Consistency:** means that no feature of a plan or regulation is incompatible with any other feature

of a plan or regulation. Consistency is indicative of a capacity for orderly integration or operation with other elements in a system.

**Contiguous Development:** means development of areas immediately adjacent to one another.

**Critical Areas:** include the following areas and ecosystems: (a) Wetlands; (b) areas with a critical recharging effect on aquifers used for potable water; (c) fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas; (d) frequently flooded areas; and (e) geologically hazardous areas.

**Density:** a measure of the intensity of development, generally expressed in terms of dwelling units per acre. Can also be expressed in terms of population density [i.e., people per acre]. Useful for establishing a balance between potential local service use and service capacities.

**Domestic Water System:** means any system providing a supply of potable water for the intended use of a development which is deemed adequate pursuant to RCW 19.27.097.

**Financial Commitment:** means that sources of public or private funds or combinations thereof have been identified which will be sufficient to finance capital facilities necessary to support development and that there is assurance that such funds will be timely put to that end.

**Forest Land:** means land primarily useful for growing trees, including Christmas trees subject to the excise tax imposed under RCW 84.33.100 through 84.33.140, for commercial purposes, and that has long-term commercial significance for growing trees commercially.

**Geologically Hazardous Areas:** means areas that because of their susceptibility to erosion, sliding, earthquake, or other geological events, are not suited to the siting of commercial, residential, or industrial development consistent with public health or safety concerns.

**Growth Management:** a method to guide development in order to minimize adverse environmental and fiscal impacts and maximize the health, safety, and welfare benefits to the residents of the community.

**Household:** a household includes all the persons who occupy a group of rooms or a single room which constitutes a housing unit.

**Impact Fee:** a fee levied by a local government on new development so that the new development pays its proportionate share of the cost of new or expanded facilities required to service that development.

**Industrial Uses:** the activities predominantly connected with manufacturing, assembly, processing, or storage of products.

**Infrastructure:** means those man-made structures which serve the common needs of the population, such as: sewage disposal systems, potable water wells serving a system, solid waste disposal sites or retention areas, stormwater systems, utilities, bridges and roadways.

**Intensity:** a measure of land uses activity based on density, use, mass, size and impact.

**Land Development Regulations:** means any controls placed on development or land use activities by a county or city, including, but not limited to, zoning ordinances, subdivision ordinances, rezoning, building construction, sign regulations, binding site plan ordinances or any other regulations controlling the development of land.

**Level of Service [LOS]:** an indicator of the extent or degree of service provided by, or proposed to be provided by, a facility based on and related to the operational characteristics of the facility. LOS means an established minimum capacity of capital facilities or services provided by capital facilities that must be provided per unit of demand or other appropriate measure of need.

**Long-term Commercial Significance:** includes the growing capacity, productivity, and soil composition of the land for long-term commercial production, in consideration with the land's proximity to population areas, and the possibility of more intense uses of the land.

**Local Road:** a roadway providing service which is of relatively low traffic volume, short average trip length or minimal through traffic movements, and high volume land access for abutting property.

**Manufactured Housing:** conventional housing utilizing premanufactured components.

**Minerals:** include gravel, sand, and valuable metallic substances.

**Mobile Home:** a single portable manufactured housing unit, or a combination of two or more such units connected on-site, that is:

- a. designed to be used for living, sleeping, sanitation, cooking, and eating purposes by one family only and containing independent kitchen, sanitary, and sleeping facilities;
- b. designed so that each housing unit can be transported on its own chassis;
- c. placed on a temporary or semi-permanent foundation; and
- d. is over thirty-two feet in length and over eight feet in width.

**Multi-Family Housing:** as used in this plan, multi-family housing is all housing which is designed to accommodate two or more households.

**Owner:** any person or entity, including a cooperative or a public housing authority [PHA], having the legal rights to sell, lease, or sublease any form of real property.

**Planning Period:** means the 20 year period following the adoption of a comprehensive plan or such longer period as may have been selected as the initial planning horizon by the planning jurisdiction.

**Public Facilities:** include streets, roads, highways, sidewalks, street and road lighting systems,

traffic signals, domestic water systems, storm and sanitary sewer systems, parks and recreational facilities, and schools.

**Public Services:** include fire protection and suppression, law enforcement, public health, education, recreation, environmental protection, and other governmental services.

**Regional Transportation Plan:** means the transportation plan for the regionally designated transportation system which is produced by the Regional Transportation Planning Organization.

**Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO):** means the voluntary organization conforming to RCW 47.80.020, consisting of local governments within a region containing one or more counties which have common transportation interests.

**Resident Population:** means inhabitants counted in the same manner utilized by the US Bureau of the Census, in the category of total population. Resident population does not include seasonal population.

**Right-of-way:** land in which the state, a county, or a municipality owns the fee simple title or has an easement dedicated or required for a transportation or utility use.

**Rural Lands:** means all lands which are not within an urban growth area and are not designated as natural resource lands having long term commercial significance for production of agricultural products, timber, or the extraction of minerals.

**Sanitary Sewer Systems:** means all facilities, including approved on-site disposal facilities, used in the collection, transmission, storage, treatment or discharge of any waterborne waste, whether domestic in origin or a combination of domestic, commercial or industrial waste.

**Shall:** means a directive or requirement.

**Should:** means an expectation.

**Single-Family Housing:** as used in this plan, a single-family unit is a detached housing unit designed for occupancy by not more than one household. This definition does not include mobile homes, which are treated as a separate category.

**Solid Waste Handling Facility:** means any facility for the transfer or ultimate disposal of solid waste, including land fills and municipal incinerators.

**Transportation Facilities:** includes capital facilities related to air, water or land transportation.

**Transportation Level of Service Standards:** mean a measure which describes the operational condition of the travel stream, usually in terms of speed and travel time, freedom to maneuver, traffic interruptions, comfort, convenience and safety.

**Transportation System Management (TSM):** means low capital expenditures to increase the capacity of the transportation network. TSM strategies include but are not limited to signalization, channelization, and bus turn-outs.

**Transportation Demand Management Strategies (TDM):** means strategies aimed at changing travel behavior rather than at expanding the transportation network to meet travel demand. Such strategies can include the promotion of work hour changes, ride-sharing options, parking policies, telecommuting.

**Urban Growth:** refers to growth that makes intensive use of land for the location of buildings, structures, and impermeable surfaces to such a degree as to be incompatible with the primary use of such land for the production of food, other agricultural products, or fiber, or the extraction of mineral resources. When allowed to spread over wide areas, urban growth typically requires urban governmental services. "Characterized by urban growth" refers to land having urban growth located on it, or to land located in relationship to an area with urban growth on it as to be appropriate for urban growth.

**Urban Growth Area:** means those areas designated by a county pursuant to RCW 36.70A.110.

**Utilities:** means facilities serving the public by means of a network of wires or pipes, and structures ancillary thereto. Included are systems for the delivery of natural gas, electricity, telecommunications services, and water and for the disposal of sewage.

**Visioning:** means a process of citizen involvement to determine values and ideals for the future of a community and to transform those values and ideals into manageable and feasible community goals.

**Wetland:** means areas that are inundated or saturated by surface water or ground water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bogs and similar areas. Wetlands do not include those artificial wetlands intentionally created from non-wetland sites, including, but not limited to, irrigation and drainage ditches, grass-lined swales, canals, detention facilities, wastewater treatment facilities, farm ponds, and landscape amenities. However, wetlands may include those artificial wetlands intentionally created from non-wetland areas created to mitigate conversion of wetlands, if permitted by the county or city.

**Zoning:** the demarcation of an area by ordinance [text and map] into zones and the establishment of regulations to govern the uses within those zones [commercial, industrial, residential] and the location, bulk, height, shape, and coverage of structures within each zone.

## Appendix II: Acronyms

AASHTO	American Association of State Highway Traffic Officials
ADT	Average Daily Traffic
BBBLENS	Birch Bay-Blaine-Lynden-Everson-Nooksack-Sumas
CAO	Critical Areas Ordinance
DEA	David Evans & Associates, Inc.
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
GMA	Growth Management Act
HUD	(United States Department of) Housing and Urban Development
LENS	Lynden-Everson-Nooksack-Sumas
LOS	Level of Service
NWI	National Wetlands Inventory
OFM	Washington State Office of Financial Management
PTBA	Public Transportation Benefit Area
RCW	Revised Code of Washington
SCS	United States Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service
SEPA	State Environmental Policy Act
SMP	Shoreline Management Program
TIB	Transportation Improvement Board
UATA	Urban Arterial Trust Account
UGA	Urban Growth Area
USGS	United States Geological Survey
WAC	Washington Administrative Code
WCCOG	Whatcom County Council of Governments
WSDOT	Washington State Department of Transportation
WTA	Whatcom Transportation Authority

## Appendix III: Community Survey

You, the citizens of Sumas, are invited to tell the Sumas Planning Commission what you think. In order for the new Sumas Comprehensive Plan to reflect citizen values and a collective citizen vision, the Planning Commission needs to know your priorities and aspirations for the future course of the City. Please take a few minutes to respond to the following questions. Then, detach the questionnaire, fold it in half and staple it, and mail it back. Or, bring it into City Hall. Please return the completed questionnaire by July 6. Your input is needed and valued!

1. What features or characteristics do you like most about Sumas today? (Please score at least six items and rank as 1, 2, 3, etc., with "1" being the most favorable.)

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><u>2</u> Open spaces/natural beauty</p> <p><u>8</u> Recreational facilities</p> <p><u>11</u> Greenway corridor</p> <p><u>12</u> Road system</p> <p><u>10</u> Historic features</p> <p><u>3</u> Air Quality</p> <p><u>1</u> Sewer and Water services</p> <p><u>7</u> Housing/living choices</p> | <p><u>14</u> Cultural opportunities</p> <p><u>9</u> Job opportunities</p> <p><u>1</u> Character of Sumas</p> <p><u>6</u> Commercial services</p> <p><u>5</u> School system</p> <p><u>4</u> Police and fire services</p> <p><u>7</u> Fish and wildlife</p> <p><u>13</u> Shoreline environments</p> |
|---|---|

Other (Please fill in) \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

2. What do you think are the most critical issues or problems facing Sumas? (Please rank as 1, 2, 3, etc., with "1" being the most critical.)

- 2 Promoting job/business growth
- 3 Protecting and enhancing environmental quality
- 4 Containing and directing growth
- 6 Defining and edge between future urban and rural land
- 1 Defining suitable residential, commercial, and industrial land use classifications
- 8 Providing affordable housing choices
- 9 Improving transportation services and facilities
- 11 Improving other public services and facilities
- 10 Paying for the public facilities to service growth
- 12 Where to put major public facilities (schools, etc.)
- 2 Striking the balance between property restrictions and private property rights
- 7 Striking a balance between good government services and tax levels
- 5 Protect private property rights
- 13 Minimize cost to government
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

3. Sit back and be a visionary for a moment. What new or expanded actions should City government undertake in the next 10 years to improve or maintain the quality of life in Sumas? What's YOUR vision? (Select five of the following which are most important to your vision.)

- 9 Contain urban growth within defined boundaries
- 13 Minimize cost to government
- 7 Add more parks and recreation
- (tie) 9 Extend sewer and water
- 12 Assist school systems
- 10 Require stricter zoning after plan
- 4 Assist job and business growth
- 15 Acquire public open space
- 0 Ensure access to mineral access
- 1 Improve flood control
- 9 Enhance shorelines and water quality
- 2 Protect water supply
- 3 Improve and add roads
- 8 Assist housing affordability
- 12 Increase historic preservation efforts
- 5 Limit commercial strip pattern
- 9 Control commercial area design
- 9 Protect fish, wildlife habitat
- (tie) 14 Improve cultural opportunities
- 6 Maximize property rights
- 14 Encourage service consolidations
- 0 None of these

Other \_\_\_\_\_

4. The state Growth Management Act requires cities and towns to define urban growth areas into which new growth must be channeled. Adequate public facilities must first be in place or provided in a timely way by the developer or local government. Application for development can be denied or postponed until adequate public facilities become available. What do you think is the best way to pay for these public facilities to support urban growth?

- 1 Property taxes 3 Bond issues 4 Impact Fees 2 User Fees
- 3 Not Sure 0 None of these 1 Some combination

In which direction should the City of Sumas grow?  
3 East 2 West 1 South

5. Tell us about yourself.

44 Reside in Sumas 6 Reside in County 33 Owner 7 Renter

6. Comments \_\_\_\_\_

Unedited text of comments made by respondents:

Get rid of the service stations and bars and stop catering to the needs of business only.

I think the city is more concerned with the Canadian business owners than with its own citizens.

I preferred the old character of Sumas, businesses closed on Sunday and not all Canadian owned businesses -- I feel the average resident is worse off now than 15 years ago, with traffic pollution, and noise.

Fewer gas stations.

City revenue dollars -- long-term businesses create better paying jobs which in turn offer the opportunity for local youth to stay and work and prosper in their own hometown. Right now you have to look outside Sumas for good job opportunities.

Serious considerations towards a mall complex of some sort with a variety of shops, etc., so tax dollars can stay in Sumas and not head to Everson or Lynden.

Start a new commercial area so residents do not have to fight border traffic.

It's big enough now -- any more growth there will be no trees - or farmlands left. The animals won't have any homes -- our air would be ruined. Also cut down on Canadian traffic.

Don't let grocery stores and gas stations go beyond Cherry Street.

Try to think of Sumas and its residents, not just money and Canadians.

Most of the favorable features or characteristics are gone -- sold to the highest bidder.

Sumas has been taken over by a foreign country and no longer exists as a small town. Small town services, businesses, etc., are gone. It no longer is a desirable place to live and raise a family. Pride in home maintenance is gone as more and more homes have absentee landlords. The Canadian dollar has not improved the average resident's life -- it has made it worse -- only the businessman profits! Zoning means nothing! HUD housing brings in more non-contributing residents.

Let's not miss the opportunity for growth. We have many commercial opportunities we should take advantage of, and then allow residential growth to follow. We should take advantage of people passing through to better our community further.

Keep the natural beauty, but please allow some space for commercial development. I feel that the city is not actively interested in a strong, broad tax base and future.

Most characteristics of Sumas have been lost years ago.

As far as I see it, Sumas is right now nothing more than a gate. We have this huge fenced back yard with nothing in it to play with. If the city continues to restrict business growth, you may as well start making out a rent check to Lynden. There must be thousands of lost dollars going through

Sumas to Lynden, Everson and Bellingham every day. Until this city decides to get off its hand and make a positive step towards business growth it will remain nothing more than a passageway to other points that can offer people what they need.

Would like to see a wider variety of businesses. I would rather spend money in my own community and support it rather than supporting another which I must do more than 50 percent of the time I need something.

When are we going to quit being just a border strip and develop Sumas as a place we can be proud of? New business, better parks and schools.

If we can create a community where there is a balance of jobs and activity opportunities then we can keep our kids from growing up and leaving town. Let's not fear change, but welcome it.

I'd like to see Sumas as a self-supporting city where people wouldn't have to leave town to find services and commodities in other places outside Sumas.

Let's plan for a positive future for Sumas, i.e., allowing some urban growth so that city doesn't wither away, but so it can become a place to come, not a place just to pass through. At the same time keeping the quality of life good.

Where is Sumas going? Will there ever be opportunities in town (outside of farming, gas stations) for young people to stay in their hometown?

Seek middle of the road attitude between growth and quality of life.

Do something about the Canadian back up.

Get the Canadian traffic off Cherry Street.

Some way to take traffic around the town.

Control Canadian traffic jams better.

Route Canadians off Cherry Street onto Port side of town. Put all new businesses on that side of town, not Front Street area.

Control of Nooksack River with adequate help from county, state, federal govt.

What about the flood threat and the problems it causes? Where can Sumas grow if the flooding isn't controlled?

I walk a great many times and sidewalks need improving in many places.

I like the new sidewalks on Cherry Street and would like to see more on the other streets in town.

Need more low-income housing! Bus service would be welcome.

Should have places for people to live before there is big commercial places put in -- also should keep what housing there is.

We especially appreciate our clean, pure water.

Determining a comprehensive plan that will accommodate every public interest instead of allowing one group of people their exclusive wishes.

Sumas used to be a nice town to live in, but it is run without regard to the people who live here.

City doesn't take into consideration the well-being of the resident enough.

Why are you asking? You do what you want anyway...

We built our home in Sumas for the quality it had to offer, beauty, community living, church, schools, neighbors -- quiet -- breath of fresh air. Out of all these questions are we able to maintain a simple way of life?

I appreciate Sumas. I hope we all, public and private, try to put in as much as we take out of our community. Most important, that we attempt to find a balance between proper growth and private rights.

I love this town.

## Appendix IV: SEPA Documents

**CITY OF SUMAS**

P.O. BOX 9  
SUMAS, WASHINGTON 98295  
PHONE (360) 988-5711  
FAX (360) 988-8855  
EMAIL [sumas@gte.net](mailto:sumas@gte.net)

MAYOR – ROBERT “BOB” BROMLEY

CLERK-TREASURER – KATHRYN HARVEY

**DETERMINATION OF NONSIGNIFICANCE**

**Description of proposal:**

Adoption of a revision of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan

**Proponent:**

City of Sumas, Washington

**Location of proposal:**

The proposal applies to land in and around the city of Sumas, Washington. Sections 33, 34, and 35, T41N, R4E and sections 2 and 3, T40N, R4E.

**Lead agency:**

City of Sumas, Washington

The lead agency for this proposal has determined that it does not have a probable significant adverse impact on the environment. An environmental impact statement (EIS) is not required under RCW 43.21C.030(2)(c). This decision was made after review of a completed environmental checklist and other information on file with the lead agency. This information is available to the public on request.

X This DNS is issued under WAC 197-11-340(2); the lead agency will not act on this proposal for 14 days from the date below. Comments must be submitted by November 8, 2004.

**Responsible official:** Robert Bromley

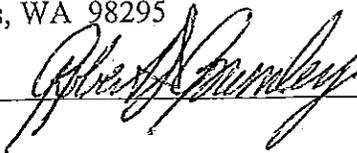
**Position/title:** Mayor

**Phone:** (360)988-5711

**Address:** Sumas City Hall, PO Box 9, Sumas, WA 98295

**Dated:** October 25, 2004

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_



# Environmental Checklist

## A. Background

1. Name of proposed project:  
Adoption of Comprehensive Land-use Plan revisions.
2. Name of applicant:  
City of Sumas
3. Address and phone number of applicant and contact person:  
City of Sumas (360)988-5711  
PO Box 9  
Sumas, WA 98295  
  
Contact: David L. Davidson, (360)988-2057
4. Date checklist prepared:  
October 19, 2004
5. Agency requesting checklist:  
City of Sumas
6. Proposed timing or schedule:  
Adoption of plan scheduled for November, 2004. The 60-day review period for this plan revision occurred from July 1, 2004, through September 3, 2004.
7. Plans for future additions, expansion, or further activity related to or connected with this proposal:  
The Comp. Plan provides the framework for making land use and other planning decisions in the coming years. The Comp. Plan is regularly updated, with the next update probably occurring in 2007.
8. Environmental information that has been prepared or will be prepared related to this proposal:  
EIS for City of Sumas Floodplain Management Plan, 1997.  
*Fish Habitat Reconnaissance Assessment for City of Sumas*, David Evans & Associates, 1998.  
*Wetlands Inventory for the City of Sumas*, David Evans & Associates, 1992.
9. Pending applications for governmental approvals of other proposals directly affecting the property covered by this proposal:  
None.
10. Government approvals or permits that will be needed for this proposal:  
Adoption of Comp. Plan by Sumas City Council.

11. Brief description of the proposal and project name:

Adoption of the City of Sumas Comprehensive Plan. The Comp. Plan proposes land uses, goals, policies, and actions that will guide future development within Sumas' city limits and urban growth area.

12. Project location:

The proposal applies to land in and around the city of Sumas, Washington. Sections 33, 34, and 35, T41N, R4E and sections 2 and 3, T40N, R4E.

B. Environmental Elements

1. Earth

a. General description of the site:

Predominantly flat with a hill and ridge in the NW corner of town.

b. What is the steepest slope on the site (approximate percent of slope)?

About 30 percent, associated with the hill.

c. What general types of soils are found on the site?

Predominantly silt loams in the floodplains of Johnson Creek and Sumas River (Briscot silt loam; Puget silt loam; Sumas silt loam; Urban land-Whatcom-Labounty complex). A large amount of the land surrounding Sumas is classified as 'prime farmland'. Most of the soil is classified as Category III, 'prime when protected from flooding'.

d. Are there surface indicators or history of unstable soils in the immediate vicinity?

Low strength, mucky soils exist in the west end of town. Buildings in certain areas have subsided. Road cuts on the slope of the hill have also been subject to slides.

e. Describe the purpose, type, and approximate quantities of any filling or grading proposed. Indicate source of fill.

Not applicable.

f. Could erosion occur as a result of clearing, construction, or use? If so, generally describe.

Not as a direct result of this proposal. Erosion may be associated with urban development encouraged by the Comp. Plan. Construction of roads, utilities, and buildings creates associated clearing and grading, which can result in erosion.

g. About what percent of the site will be covered with impervious surfaces after project construction?

Areas actually developed for residential/commercial purposes can be expected to ultimately have between 20 and 70 percent coverage with impervious surface.

h. Proposed measures to reduce or control erosion or other impacts to the earth, if any:

Sumas has adopted stormwater guidelines applicable to the construction and operation phases of development. These guidelines mitigate the impact of erosion. Concentration of development in a compact urban area is expected to minimize the overall extent of erosion experience in rural Whatcom County as a whole.

## 2. Air

a. What types of emissions to the air would result from the proposal (i.e., dust, automobile, odors, industrial wood smoke) during construction and when the project is completed? If any, describe generally and give approximate quantities if known.

None as a direct result of this proposal. However, emissions are generally expected to increase as population and development increase.

b. Are there any off-site sources of emissions or odor that may affect your proposal? If so, generally describe.

The site is subject to odors associated with surrounding agricultural activities. Air quality is also affected by emissions generated in the more densely populated areas to the northwest, in British Columbia.

c. Proposed measures to reduce or control emissions or other impacts to air, if any:

None specifically mentioned in plan. Site is within jurisdiction of Northwest Air Pollution Authority, and major individual projects would be subject to review.

## 3. Water

### a. Surface

(1) Is there any surface water body on or in the immediate vicinity of the site (including year-round and seasonal streams, saltwater, lakes, ponds, wetlands)? If yes, describe type and provide names. If appropriate, state what stream or river it flows into.

Sumas Creek and Bone Creek flow from the west and southwest to meet Johnson Creek in the western part of the city. Johnson Creek flows directly through the city into the Sumas River. The Sumas River is located to the east of current city limits and flows north, over the border, and empties into the Fraser River in Canada. There are numerous wetlands in the planning area, most of which are associated with the streams or are within the 100-year floodplain. See Map 3 in the Comp. Plan.

(2) Will the project require any work over, in, or adjacent to (within 200 feet) of the described waters? If yes, please describe and attach available plans.

Not as a direct result of this proposal. It is expected that some development allowed pursuant to this plan will occur within 200 feet of streams and wetlands.

- (3) Estimate the amount of fill and dredge material that would be placed in or removed from surface water or wetlands and indicate the area of the site that would be affected. Indicate the source of fill material.

Not applicable

- (4) Will the proposal require surface water withdrawals or diversions? Give general description, purpose, and approximate quantities if known.

No.

- (5) Does the proposal lie within a 100-year flood plain? If so, note location on the site plan.

Most of the Sumas area is either within the 100-year or 500-year floodplain. See Map 4 in the Comp. Plan. While flooding is a problem in some of the proposed growth area, in many cases flooding is a greater problem inside the current city limits.

- (6) Does the proposal involve any discharges of waste materials to surface waters? If so, describe the type of waste and anticipated volume of discharge.

Not applicable.

b. Ground

- (1) Will ground water be withdrawn, or will water be discharged to ground water? Give general description, purpose, and approximate quantities if known.

Growth occurring pursuant to the Comp. Plan will result in greater withdrawals of groundwater. Withdrawals may reach 3,700 acre-feet per year, in accordance with the city's water rights.

- (2) Describe waste material that will be discharged into the ground from septic tanks or other sources, if any (for example: domestic sewage; industrial, containing the following chemicals.; agricultural; etc.). Describe the general size of the system, the number of such systems, the number of houses to be served (if applicable), or the number of animals or humans the system(s) are expected to serve.

Septic tanks are now used in the UGA and in certain parts of the city. Use of septic tanks in the area can be expected to decline as the city sewer system is extended over time.

c. Water Runoff (including stormwater)

- (1) Describe the source of runoff (including stormwater) and method of collection and disposal, if any (include quantities, if known). Where will this water flow? Will this water flow into other waters? If so, describe.

Growth occurring pursuant to this plan can be expected to result in larger areas of impervious surfaces (roads, parking lots, buildings). Because of the predominant clay soils and the high water table, infiltration is generally not extensive. Associated runoff will therefore reach the local surface waters (Johnson Creek, Sumas River, Sumas Creek, Bone Creek, miscellaneous ditches). Various collection methods might be used, such as storm drains, ditches, swales, and constructed wetlands.

- (2) Could waste materials enter ground or surface waters? If so, describe generally.

Yes, urban pollutants picked up by stormwater (fertilizers, pesticides, petrochemicals) might enter ground or surface waters.

- d. Proposed measures to reduce or control surface, ground, and runoff water impacts, if any:

Implementation of a stormwater program in compliance with the 1992 Dept. of Ecology technical guidelines. Stream and wetland buffers protected and enhanced pursuant to the SMP can be expected to reduce some stormwater impacts.

4. Plants

- a. Check or circle the types of vegetation found on the site

X Deciduous tree: alder, maple, aspen, other  
X Evergreen tree: fir, cedar, pine, other  
X Shrubs  
X Grass  
X Pasture  
X Crop or grain  
X Wet soil plants  
X Water plants  
X Other types of vegetation

- b. What kind and amount of vegetation will be removed or altered?

Growth occurring pursuant to the Comp. Plan can be expected to result in removal or alteration of vegetation at development sites.

- c. List threatened or endangered species known to be on or near the site.

None.

- d. Proposed landscaping, use of native plants, or other measures to preserve or enhance vegetation on the site, if any:

Not applicable.

5. Animals

- a. Check or circle any birds and animals which have been observed on or near the site or are known to be on or near the site:

Birds:	Mammals:	Fish:
X hawk	X deer	- bass
X heron	- bear	X salmon
X eagle	- elk	X trout
X songbirds	X beaver	- shellfish
X other	- other: coyotes	- other

- b. List any threatened or endangered species known to be on or near the site.

The Puget Sound chinook listing does NOT apply within the Sumas River basin. The Sumas River basin is included within the listing area of the bull trout.

- c. Is the site part of a migration route? If so, explain.

Migration route for great blue heron, wintering area for eagle.

- d. Proposed measures to preserve or enhance wildlife, if any:

Concentrating future development within the urban growth area will preserve wildlife habitat in areas outside the urban growth area. Stream and wetland buffers protected as Natural System Protection Areas (designated within Comp. Plan) are designed to serve as habitat. The Shoreline Master Program also protects stream and wetland buffers, thereby preserving habitat.

6. Energy and Natural Resources

- a. What kinds of energy (electric, natural gas, oil, wood stove, solar) will be used to meet the completed project's energy needs? Describe whether it will be used for heating, manufacturing, etc.

None as a direct result of this proposal. Future population increase is expected to result in an increased demand for electricity and natural gas.

- b. Would your project affect the potential use of solar energy by adjacent properties? If so, describe generally.

Not applicable.

- c. What kinds of energy conservation features are included in the plans of this proposal? List other proposed measures to reduce or control energy impacts, if any.

The capital facilities element of this plan includes a proposed project to complete the cut-over of the electric distribution system from 2400 Volt to 7200 Volt. This project will result in reduced electric line loss.

## 7. Environmental Health

- a. Are there any environmental health hazards, including exposure to toxic chemicals, risk of fire and explosion, spill, or hazardous waste, that could occur as a result of this proposal? If so, describe generally.

Not as a direct result of this proposal.

- (1) Describe special emergency services that might be required.
- (2) Proposed measures to reduce or control environmental health hazards, if any:

### b. Noise

- (1) What types of noise exist in the area which may affect your project (for example: traffic, equipment operation, other)?

Noise from vehicular, air, and rail traffic, occasional construction noise, typical urban-residential noise (music, air conditioners), and industrial noise (e.g., a gas-fired turbine at a cogeneration facility, a rock crusher):

- (2) What types and levels of noise would be created by or associated with the project on a short-term or long-term basis (for example: traffic, construction, operation, other)? Indicate what hours noise would come from the site.

None as a direct result of this proposal. Increased population is expected to increase traffic-, construction-, and population-related noise. Construction-related noise would occur on a short-term basis during construction projects. Specific hours are unknown.

- (3) Proposed measures to reduce or control noise impacts, if any:

Local and state regulations govern the levels of allowable environmental noise and are enforced by Sumas. Noise in rural areas is expected to remain at current low levels as a result of concentrating future development within the urban growth area.

## 8. Land and Shoreline Use

- a. What is the current use of the site and adjacent properties?

Land within Sumas' current city limits is generally residential, commercial, industrial, and agricultural. Land in Sumas' proposed urban growth area is primarily agricultural, including crop production, dairy farms, and pasture lands. There are a few residential units scattered throughout the growth area and a mobile home park east of the city.

- b. Has the site been used for agriculture? If so, describe.

Yes. Land in and around Sumas has historically been used for pasture and for corn. Most land near Sumas is classified as Category III, 'prime when protected from flooding'.

- c. Describe any structures on the site.

Many structures are located in and near Sumas, including: single- and multi-family homes and accessory buildings, single- and two-story public and commercial buildings, heavy industrial facilities, roads, railroads, parking lots, signs, buried and above-ground utilities, barns, milking sheds.

- d. Will any structures be demolished?

Not as a direct result of this proposal. Conversion of old residential areas to commercial and industrial use will eventually result in demolition of some homes.

- e. What is the current zoning classification of the site?

Within Sumas there is a mix of zoning designations including residential (at various densities), commercial, industrial, agricultural, and public use. Lands outside the city limits (but within the proposed urban growth area) are zoned agricultural by Whatcom County.

- f. What is the current comprehensive plan designation of the site?

Similar to zoning designations listed above in response (e). The proposed Comp. Plan revisions include several zone changes, including:

- from industrial to commercial at three spots immediately east of Railroad Avenue.
- from high- to low-density residential at the base of Moe Hill near the intersection of Barbo and Kneuman Roads.
- from commercial to residential for 2 lots between 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Streets, east of Cherry Street
- from residential to agricultural in an area north of Garfield St. and east of Gough St
- from industrial to agricultural in two areas at the south edge of town, west of the rail lines
- from traffic-oriented commercial to general commercial in an area north of Front and east of Cherry.

- g. If applicable, what is the current Shoreline Master Program designation of the site?

Within the city's SMP, Johnson Creek and the Sumas River are designated a mix of urban and conservancy along their various reaches. Outside city limits, both streams are designated rural in Whatcom County's SMP. The SMP also designates wetlands within the city as either urban or conservancy.

- h. Has any part of the site been classified an "environmentally sensitive" area? If so, specify.

Much of Sumas and the surrounding growth area is within the 100-year flood plain. There are also scattered wetlands in the city and growth area, as mentioned above.

- i. Approximately how many people would reside or work in the completed project?

The 2004 population of Sumas is 1,079. By 2024, the population is expected to increase to 1,675.

- j. Approximately how many people would the completed project displace?

See "Housing" paragraph (b) below.

- k. Proposed measures to avoid or reduce displacement impacts, if any?

See "Housing" paragraph (c) below.

1. Proposed measures to ensure the proposal is compatible with existing and projected land uses and plans, if any:

Not applicable. This proposal will establish projected land-use plans.

#### 9. Housing

- a. Approximately how many units would be provided, if any? Indicate whether high-, middle-, or low-income housing.

Approximately 280 new housing units will be needed to accommodate planned growth. The housing will be a mix of high-, middle-, and low-income units.

- b. Approximately how many units, if any, would be eliminated? Indicate whether high-, middle- or low-income housing.

Conversion of an existing residential area to commercial use is expected to result in the elimination of about 6 housing units. Implementation of flood buy-out corridors is expected to result in the elimination of about 51 housing units

- c. Proposed measures to reduce or control housing impacts, if any:

Provision of adequate residential-zoned land to accommodate both displaced homes and new growth.

#### 10. Aesthetics

- a. What is the tallest height of any proposed structures, not including antennas; what is the principal exterior building material proposed?

Not applicable

- b. What views in the immediate vicinity would be altered or obstructed?

The appearance of Sumas will be altered as growth occurs. Industrial development to the west of town can be expected to alter the view south from Moe's Hill.

- c. Proposed measures to reduce or control aesthetic impacts, if any:

None.

#### 11. Light and Glare

- a. What type of light or glare will the proposal produce? What time of day would it mainly occur?

None directly as a result of this proposal. The typical light sources found in an urban area (street lights, flood lights, vehicle lights, interior lighting) will grow as a result of development that occurs pursuant to this plan.

- b. Could light or glare from the finished project be a safety hazard or interfere with views?

Not applicable

- c. What existing off-site sources of light or glare may affect your proposal?

None

- d. Proposed measures to reduce or control light and glare impacts, if any:

None

## 12. Recreation

- a. What designated and informal recreational opportunities are in the immediate vicinity?

Three city park facilities, one school playground and field, sidewalks and trails. Local streams.

- b. Would the proposed project displace any existing recreational uses? If so, describe.

No displacement is planned.

- c. Proposed measures to reduce or control impacts on recreation, including recreation opportunities to be provided by the project or applicant, if any:

The Plan includes a parks and recreation section that contemplates new facilities and programs, including trails, a summer recreation program, a ballfield complex, and a fishing pond.

## 13. Historic and Cultural Preservation

- a. Are there any places or objects listed on, or proposed for, national, state, or local preservation registers known to be on or next to the site? If so, generally describe.

Old customs building.

- b. Generally describe any landmarks or evidence of archaeological, scientific, or cultural importance known to be on or next to the site.

Native-American village site at east end of town, adjacent to Sumas River.

- c. Proposed measures to reduce or control impacts, if any:

None.

## 14. Transportation

- a. Identify public streets and highways serving the site, and describe proposed access to the existing street system. Show on the site plans, if any.

Sumas and its proposed urban growth area are served by SR 9 and SR 547. The area is also served by some county collectors, including Halverstick Road and Rock Road. Other main routes into town are Hovel Road, Easterbrook Road.

- b. Is the site currently served by public transit? If not, what is the approximate distance to the nearest transportation stop?

The area is served by a fixed-route service operated by the Whatcom Transit Authority.

- c. How many parking spaces would the completed project have? How many would the project eliminate?

Not applicable.

- d. Will the proposal require any new roads or streets, or improvements to existing roads or streets, not including driveways? If so, generally describe. (indicate whether public or private).

Many new streets and improvements to existing streets are anticipated within the area in order to accommodate expected development. The streets will mostly be local public streets.

- e. Will the project use (or occur in the immediate vicinity of) water, rail, or air transportation? If so, generally describe.

Sumas is a major border crossing location, with Burlington Northern rail lines traversing town. Some industrial development makes use of the rail facilities. Sumas is also close to the Abbotsford, B.C., airport, which operates a growing number of flights.

- f. How many vehicular trips per day would be generated by the completed project? If known, indicate when peak volumes would occur.

The transportation element identifies a 24-hour two-way traffic volume of about 11,500 trips as a result of build-out of an outdated very large urban growth area. This overstates actual expected traffic, because the new plan does not contemplate such a large UGA. A more realistic volume would be about 4,000 to 5,000 trips per day. The PM peak hour is expected to be worst.

- g. Proposed measures to reduce or control transportation impacts, if any:

Improvements to major intersections on Front Street (such as Hovel Road, Cherry Street).  
Improvements to Hovel Road, Easterbrook Road, Kneuman Road.

#### 15. Public Services

- a. Would the project result in an increased need for public services (i.e., fire protection, police protection, health care, schools, other)? If so, generally describe.

As population increases, the total need for public services is expected to increase.

- b. Proposed measures to reduce or control direct impacts on public services, if any.

None at this time.

16. Utilities

a. Circle or check utilities currently available at the site:

x electricity            x natural gas        x water  
X refuse service        x telephone         X sanitary sewer  
X septic system

b. Describe the utilities that are proposed for the project, the utility providing the service, and the general construction activities on the site or in the immediate vicinity which might be needed.

Sumas will provide water, sewer, electric, storm sewer, and cable television service within city limits. Cascade Natural Gas will provide natural gas service. Verizon will provide phone service.

## Supplemental Sheet for Nonproject Actions

1. How would the proposal be likely to increase discharge to water, emissions to air, production, storage, or release of toxic or hazardous substances; or production of noise?

Within the city limits and the proposed urban growth area, discharges to water, emissions to air and production of noise would be expected to increase as a result of new urban development anticipated by the Comp. Plan.

Proposed measures to avoid or reduce such increases are:

At the county-wide level, the proposed plan would be expected to minimize the overall extent of impacts by concentrating development in urban areas, thereby protecting surrounding rural areas. Sumas is within the jurisdiction of the Northwest Air Pollution Authority, and development would be subject to applicable air regulations. State and local environmental noise regulations would apply to new development. Stormwater facilities would be installed in order to mitigate the effects of discharges to water.

2. How would the proposal be likely to affect plants, animals, fish, or marine life?

Flora and fauna within the urban growth area would be adversely impacted by development. However, little of the plan area is in an undisturbed state at this time -- existing agricultural uses pose their own disruptions to flora and fauna.

Proposed measures to protect or conserve plants, animals, fish, or marine life are:

The proposal would concentrate development within the city limits and the urban growth area, which would protect existing habitat outside the city limits. The Natural System Protection Areas designated within this plan are intended primarily to preserve and enhance riparian zones as well as certain wetlands that serve as wildlife habitat.

3. How would the proposal be likely to deplete energy or natural resources?

Increasing population will result in an increased demand for energy and natural resources. However, population will increase within this county whether or not this plan is adopted. Development of compact urban areas is likely to result in less resource and energy depletion than sprawling development. The adoption of the plan will not directly deplete energy or natural resources.

Proposed measures to protect or conserve energy and natural resources are:

Concentration of growth within small urban areas allows preservation of natural resources (farm lands, mineral lands, forest lands) outside the developed areas.

4. How would the proposal be likely to use or affect environmentally sensitive areas or areas designated (or eligible or under study) for governmental protection such as parks, wilderness, wild and scenic rivers, threatened or endangered species habitat, historic or cultural sites, wetlands, flood plains, or prime farmlands?

The plan contemplates extensive development within the 100-year flood plain, fill of some low-value wetlands, and conversion of 190 acres of prime farmland into urban use.

Proposed measures to protect such resources or to avoid or reduce impacts are:

Concentration of growth within a small urban area allows preservation of farmlands outside the developed area. The city's Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance will minimize impacts associated with flooding. Development within low-value wetlands will be accompanied by simultaneous enhancement of high-value wetlands adjacent to local streams, leading to a net environmental benefit.

5. How would the proposal be likely to affect land and shoreline use, including whether it would allow or encourage land or shoreline uses incompatible with existing plans?

The proposal will generally result in increased development along shorelines within Sumas and its UGA, as well as conversion of agricultural land to urban uses. These effects are compatible with city, county, state, and federal plans and regulations.

Proposed measures to avoid or reduce shoreline and land use impacts are:

Impacts to low-value wetlands would be accompanied by simultaneous enhancement of high-value wetlands adjacent to local streams, leading to a net environmental benefit

6. How would the proposal be likely to increase demands on transportation or public services and utilities?

Whether or not the plans are adopted, demands on transportation, public services, and utilities will increase due to increasing population.

Proposed measures to reduce or respond to such demands are:

Concentration of growth will result in more efficient provision of utilities and public services. Pre-planning of utility infrastructure, as accomplished in the capital facilities element, will likewise lead to greater efficiency.

7. Identify, if possible, whether the proposal may conflict with local, state, or federal laws or requirements for the protection of the environment.

No conflicts have been identified.

SIGNATURE

The above answers are true and complete to the best of my knowledge. I understand that the lead agency is relying on them to make its decisions.

Date Submitted: October 19, 2004

Signature: David L. Davidson  
David L. Davidson, City Administrator

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**COUNTY-WIDE PLANNING POLICIES**  
**As proposed for collective adoption in November, 2004**

**A. CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT**

1. The county and the cities shall cooperate to provide public education on the requirements of the Growth Management Act.
2. The county and the cities shall provide opportunities for citizens to become involved in the growth management planning process through various mechanisms, such as surveys, public workshops, meetings, hearings, and advisory committees. The method of citizen involvement may vary based on the needs and constituents in various communities and shall include representation of both rural and urban interests on those issues that affect both urban and rural areas.
3. Citizens shall be notified in a timely manner of opportunities to have input and key decision points in the planning process. This should include actions such as use of telephone hotlines, notification to interest groups, pre-development meetings, early incorporation of public comments and broader notification of property owners and residents during a planning process as well as working more extensively with community and neighborhood groups. The cities shall also develop a public participation process to solicit and incorporate comments from residents outside city limits but within proposed Urban Growth Areas.
4. Citizen comments and viewpoints shall be incorporated into the decision-making process in development of draft plans and regulations. Consideration of citizen comments shall be evident in the decision-making process.
5. The county and the cities shall establish a system for subarea, community and neighborhood liaison to foster communication between the respective government and its neighborhoods. This system would also provide a point of contact for issues that may affect subareas, the community, or neighborhoods.
6. Various planning techniques, such as overlay maps and Geographic Information Systems, shall be utilized to allow citizens and public officials the ability to make accurate comparison of issues so appropriate trade-offs can be consciously made.

**B. URBAN VERSUS RURAL DISTINCTIONS\***

1. Whatcom County shall primarily become a government of rural areas in land use matters directed towards agriculture, forestry and other natural resources and natural resource based industries. The county shall work with citizens to define a variety of types of rural areas based on the characteristics and needs of different areas. This Section shall not preclude county governance of large urban industrial areas outside of the city UGA's (see Cherry Point below), developed urban areas within urban growth areas not yet annexed, and developed rural areas where the "urban" designation is inappropriate.
2. The county shall discourage urban level development outside Urban Growth Areas and

outside of areas currently characterized by a development threshold greater than a rural development density.

3. Whatcom County shall promote appropriate land uses and allow for infill within rural settlements characterized by existing commercial, industrial and intensive residential development greater than a rural development density. These areas should be clearly delineated, and not expanded beyond logical outer boundaries in accordance with RCW 36.70.070(5). Impacts on rural character, critical areas and other economic considerations as well as the availability of capital facilities and rural levels of service must be considered before allowing infill in these areas.
4. In the next 20 years, Whatcom County should discourage "new fully contained communities" (as defined and authorized by RCW 36.70A.350) outside designated Urban Growth Areas.
5. Whatcom County should undertake a public process to define rural areas and rural growth as distinct from urban areas and urban growth.

**C. URBAN GROWTH AREAS**

1. Urban growth needs shall be met by a combination of in-fill within cities and by growth within designated municipal and non-municipal Urban Growth Areas.
2. The size and location of Urban Growth Areas shall be consistent with adopted local policies and with the capital facilities plans.
- 3a. The most current, accurate population projections based on a range provided for Whatcom County by the Office of Financial Management shall be used as the basis for determining that Urban Growth Areas shall include sufficient area to permit the urban growth that is projected to occur in the county for the succeeding twenty-year period.
- 3b. The County and Cities shall develop a consistent approach to calculating the land supply needed within an urban growth area. This approach shall consider limitations imposed by critical area regulations, infrastructure needs, open space, existing uses, local market factors and the ability of the jurisdiction to provide services. It is recognized that the above limitations may vary by jurisdiction, but the method of applying them shall be consistent. Urban growth areas shall permit a range of densities and uses; however, in recognition of community character, these uses and densities may vary among jurisdictions.
4. Urban Growth Areas shall be evaluated at least every ten years to determine if they contain sufficient area to accommodate the urban growth that is projected for the succeeding twenty-year period. The market factor for each Urban Growth Area shall also be evaluated to determine whether the land supply is adequate to meet the needs of the community or whether the land supply is excessive and contributing to sprawl.
5. Urban Growth areas should be established in a way that preserves agricultural land, forestry, mineral resources, water resources, and critical areas. Urban growth shall maintain proper buffers from natural resource areas to minimize conflicts with natural

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resources and industries based on them.

**D. CITY URBAN GROWTH AREAS**

1. The Urban Growth Areas for the small cities shall be of an adequate size to allow them to become viable economic centers with a balance of jobs and housing. The small cities shall do appropriate planning to ensure adequate distribution of land uses and services at a range of urban densities and zoning classifications.
2. Urban Growth Areas for cities shall include those areas contiguous to cities and with urban characteristics as defined by the Act. The Geneva area in Bellingham's UGA is characterized by urban development, but is also identified by the city and county as a Water Resource Protection UGA because of its location in the Lake Whatcom Watershed. Lake Whatcom is the drinking water source for much of the Bellingham urban area., Geneva is appropriate to include in an urban growth area, but is not an area where additional urban development is desirable.
3. Cities shall develop a plan to provide urban level water and sewer services within their Urban Growth Areas. This plan should be developed in cooperation with existing water purveyors and other municipal corporations providing water or sewer services within each city's Urban Area, and should be implemented through interlocal agreements. Short term and long term boundaries may be used to facilitate provision of urban levels of service and to not preclude future urban densities as defined within the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan.
4. Existing cities should absorb additional population at a range of densities appropriately responsive to the city's community vision before extending city Urban Growth Areas into areas where growth would adversely impact critical areas and resource lands. In those small cities entirely surrounded by flood plains, critical area and resource lands or within Shellfish Protection Districts, the county and the city shall seek to negotiate a balance between protection of resources and the allocation of adequate land area to meet the growth needs of the city and to maintain the desired character of the community.
5. All cities should grow in an efficient manner while maintaining their character and, where reasonable, shall provide for adequate open space between cities to prevent strip development.
6. Cities should be encouraged to provide positive incentives for in-fill.

**E. NON-CITY URBAN GROWTH AREAS**

1. Urban Growth Areas may also be established in areas that are not contiguous to existing cities, and are already characterized by urban growth where adequate facilities and services can be provided and which are intended to meet needs not met by cities and their Urban Growth Areas.
2. Non-city urban growth areas, for already urbanized unincorporated residential areas shall be encouraged to infill in a way that will facilitate efficient provision of facilities and services consistent with the scale of development.

3. Cherry Point shall be designated as an unincorporated industrial urban growth area in recognition of existing large scale industrial land uses. Additional large scale development shall be encouraged consistent with the ability to provide needed services and consistent with protecting critical areas along with other environmental protection considerations. The Cherry Point industrial area is an important and appropriate area for industry due to its access to deep water shipping, rail, all-weather roads, its location near the Canadian border, and its contribution to the County's goal of providing family wage jobs.
4. The County shall assure that there are plans to provide appropriate levels of urban facilities and services within non-city Urban Growth Areas. These plans should be developed by special purpose districts, water associations and private service providers within each of these Areas, and should be implemented, where appropriate, through interlocal agreements. Short term and long term boundaries may be used to facilitate provision of urban levels of service.
5. The Sudden Valley Provisional UGA is characterized by urban development, but is also identified as a Water Resource Protection area because of its location in the Lake Whatcom Watershed. Because Lake Whatcom is the drinking water source for much of the Bellingham urban area, Sudden Valley is appropriate for infill development on existing platted lots, but is not an area where expansion or increased density is desirable.

**F. CONTIGUOUS, ORDERLY DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING IN URBAN GROWTH AREAS\***

1. Cities, the county and special districts shall execute interlocal agreements to coordinate plans for and manage growth in Urban Growth Areas prior to annexations. Interlocal agreements shall acknowledge and implement the County-wide Planning Policies.
2. Interlocal agreements shall incorporate clear and reasonable criteria for orderly annexation. The county and the cities shall establish a process to incorporate representative citizen input into interlocal agreement and encourage appropriate districts to participate. If adequate procedures are developed to replace it, the Boundary Review Board may be replaced.
3. All urbanized areas currently within urban growth boundaries associated with cities should be encouraged to annex to cities. Orderly annexations with logical boundaries shall be encouraged. Interlocal agreements shall specify guidelines on size, timing of annexations and urban levels of development, and tax revenue sharing when appropriate.
4. Within Urban Growth Areas, cities shall not extend water and sewer utilities without an adopted program for annexation and an adopted Capital Facilities Plan. Exceptions may be made in cases where human health is threatened as determined by the County Health Department. If water extensions are made, they shall be consistent with the service area boundaries and other provisions within the adopted Coordinated Water System Plan.
5. In the areas where utilities presently extend beyond city limits, but are within Urban Growth Areas, the city, county, and the existing water purveyors for the area should jointly plan with

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the county. The County shall adopt zoning which reflects this joint planning.

6. Unless specifically provided for by state statutes, Cities, other municipal corporations, and other public and private utilities shall not extend urban levels of water service to serve urban uses outside Urban Growth Areas. If legally allowed water extensions are made outside of Urban Growth Areas, the maximum number of connections shall not exceed the density allowed under the associated zoning. The number of connections shall be specified in a legally binding document at the time the extension is approved. Property contiguous to extension of utilities necessary to solve existing water deficiencies, but which cannot benefit from them because of zoning constraints, shall not be assessed for those improvements.
7. The availability of pipeline capacity required to meet local needs and/or supply shall not be used to justify development counter to the county-wide land development pattern and shall not be considered in conversions of agricultural land, forestry, and rural areas.
8. The cities, other municipal corporations, public utilities, and the county shall cooperate to identify and balance the needs of each jurisdiction and entity when planning for transition of services and annexation within Urban Growth Areas. This intergovernmental cooperation and coordination should be reflected in revenue agreements, work programs for joint projects, and regional solutions adopted by the affected parties.
9. Major transportation, utility and greenway corridors shall be planned within Urban Growth Areas. Development shall be consistent with these corridors. The county shall ensure conformance through the permit process and incentive programs.
10. Interlocal agreements shall include provisions for agreed upon development standards within Urban Growth Areas. Unless a different standard is negotiated, the more rigorous of the standards shall be enforced by the county.
11. The county and the City of Bellingham shall establish through the Urban Fringe Subarea Plan update, the policies, zoning and criteria to comply with current state Growth Management law.
12. To encourage contiguous, orderly development and annexation in Urban Growth Areas around cities, the county shall designate Urban Residential zones limiting density to a maximum of one dwelling unit per five acres in undeveloped areas until urban level utilities are provided. Developed or partially developed areas presently zoned Residential-Rural shall retain that zoning. In the Bellingham Urban Growth Area, substantial development and subdivisions already have occurred without annexation. The revised Urban Fringe Subarea Plan and a new Interlocal Agreement between the City of Bellingham and the county will address sequence and timing for annexations, subdivisions, and urban levels of development.
13. In Urban Growth Areas where development is occurring based on the presence of utilities, urban development shall meet common urban standards including fire flow requirements and supply. The county and the cities will work together to develop reasonable standards over time.

14. The County and the cities shall coordinate drainage, stormwater management and flood control in Urban Growth Areas and work toward the development of common standards.

**G. AFFORDABLE HOUSING\***

1. The county and the cities shall take actions to ensure a balance of housing and economic growth consistent with each jurisdictions' employment base and diverse income levels and to reduce commuting times and traffic congestion.
2. The county and the cities shall plan for a range of housing types and costs commensurate with their affordable housing needs.
3. Affordable housing should be convenient to major employment centers and public services or be designed to accommodate public transportation..
4. The county and the cities shall promote innovative techniques and develop strategies to provide for affordable housing with design, density, lot sizes and development standards that provide for a variety of housing types.
5. The county and the cities shall review existing regulations and policies that exclude or discourage affordable housing in their communities and shall not adopt regulations and policies which do so. Mobile, modular, and manufactured homes on individual lots, mobile home parks, accessory units, inclusionary zoning, mixed use, and increased densities shall be reviewed as affordable housing alternatives.
6. The county and the cities should work with the private sector, other public and non-profit agencies, citizen groups, and trade representatives to assure that there is an adequate supply of sites available for affordable housing and to encourage housing design that is compatible with the surrounding neighborhoods.
7. Low income housing shall not be concentrated in only a few communities or neighborhoods.
8. The county and the cities shall consider reducing impact and/or mitigation fees for affordable housing provided in a proposed development.
9. Each jurisdiction should explore options for providing shelter for the homeless.

**H. OPEN SPACE/GREENBELT CORRIDORS**

1. Adequate open space is vital to the quality of life and sense of place in Whatcom County. The county, cities, Port of Bellingham, and other appropriate jurisdictions should coordinate protection of linked greenbelts, within and between Urban Growth Areas, parks, and open space to protect wildlife corridors and to enhance recreational opportunities, public access and trail development.
2. The county and the cities shall plan for greenbelts and open space in their Comprehensive

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Planning processes and coordinate with each other. Open space systems should include lands which contain natural areas, habitat lands, natural drainage features, and/or other environmental, cultural and scenic resources. With increased residential densities, jurisdictions also should ensure provision of adequate neighborhood parks and play areas within safe bicycling and walking distance for children,

3. The county and the cities shall encourage, to the extent it is feasible, separation of Urban Growth Areas through planning, zoning, development regulations, open space purchase, conservation easements and other mechanisms which may be appropriate. Also, an array of incentives such as density bonuses, design flexibility and transferable development rights shall be offered to affected land owners.
4. The County and Cities should work cooperatively to protect and restore anadromous stream corridors within Urban Growth Areas.

#### **I. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYMENT\***

1. Whatcom County recognizes that a healthy economy, which provides opportunity for diverse segments of the community, is important to the quality of life in the area. The Greater Whatcom Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) "is intended to put forth economic development alternatives for Whatcom County that will support jobs creation, with an emphasis on higher wage jobs and diversification"
2. New business development and expansion of existing businesses are key factors in providing "family wage" jobs and a strong tax base. Economic development that pays family wage rates should be encouraged. Industrial land designations must be sufficient to permit the concentration of industry in appropriate locations beyond 20 years. In order to attract new industry and provide for expansion of existing industries, the county and the cities will designate land supply of sufficient size and diversity to provide a range of suitable locations for industrial development. The designation of this land shall be established in a way that preserves natural resource natural resource based industries and critical areas.
3. To provide sufficient land supply for industrial growth and development, industrial designations must not only include lands suitable for development, but also lands suitably zoned to provide adequate buffers. It is also important that these lands and buffers be conserved with appropriate land use and zoning provisions to ensure that they will be available for future use
4. Encourage business location, retention, and expansion according to city and county comprehensive plans in order to meet current and future demand for diverse business and industry. Work with funding agencies and the private sector to facilitate extension of adequate sewer, water, telecommunications and road access to existing commercial and industrial-zoned properties, creating shovel-ready sites. Cities and county may utilize the "Quick Sites" economic development program through OTED, which links strategic

elements of planning, zoning, environmental review, and permitting with the business-siting effort.

5. The county and the cities should include an economic development element in their Comprehensive Plans. Economic development elements should be consistent with the CEDS. Economic development shall be coordinated with environmental concerns to protect the quality of life. Planning efforts should address economic sustainability. As part of the comprehensive planning process and through implementation of the comprehensive plan, the County shall develop and adopt goals, policies and regulations that protect resource land industries and support and encourage resource-based industries.
6. The county and the cities should continue to cooperate through the Partnership for a Sustainable Economy to maintain the CEDS for infrastructure funding. Other appropriate organizations, businesses, and individuals should be involved in the process.
7. Economic vitality and job development shall be encouraged in all the cities and in designated areas of the county consistent with community growth policies, particularly addressing adequacy of transportation corridors, public transportation, impacts on the environment, and the ability of the area to provide urban services.
8. Economic development should be encouraged that: a) does not adversely impact the environment; b) is consistent with community values stated in local comprehensive plans; and c) encourages development that provides jobs to county residents d) addresses unemployment problems in the county and seeks innovative techniques to attract different industries for a more diversified economic base; e) promotes reinvestment in the local economy, and f) supports retention and expansion of existing businesses.
9. The County and the cities recognize the need for the protection and utilization of natural resources and resource lands including agricultural, mineral, forestry and fishing. As part of a broad based economy, productive timber, agriculture and fisheries industries should be supported in a sustainable manner.
10. The cities and county agree to set policies for approving proposals to authorize siting of Major Industrial Developments for large or resource-based industries outside of Urban Growth Areas (as per RCW 36.70A.365). The master planning process for specific manufacturing, industrial, or commercial businesses shall address infrastructure, buffers, environmental protection, sprawl, resource lands, critical areas, and land supply.
11. Whatcom County encourages siting of industrial uses in proximity to and to further utilization of our access to deep water and port facilities for shipping, rail, airports, roadways, utility corridors and the international border.

**J. COUNTY-WIDE TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES AND STRATEGIES\***

1. A Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO) has been established in Whatcom

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County to conduct regional, cooperative transportation planning. The RTPO has completed a Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) including County-wide transportation policies. The RTP has been approved by a regional transportation Policy Board consisting of elected representatives of most area jurisdictions. The Transportation Chapter of the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan and the Comprehensive Plans for each of the City's must be consistent with the RTP as it is amended. The county and the cities will continue to support the RTPO on an on-going basis to coordinate transportation planning across Whatcom County.

2. Whatcom County jurisdictions shall encourage alternative modes of transportation to the single occupancy vehicle. Each jurisdiction shall encourage: 1) use of public transportation; 2) Development of linked on-street bicycle routes and pedestrian and bicycle trail corridors; 3) Adequate pedestrian facilities; 4) Connections between different modes of transportation; and 5) Intermodal connection of freight transportation. Public transportation includes fixed route transit, car pools, van pools, and other demand responsive modes.
3. To encourage use of single occupant vehicle alternatives and development of pedestrian scale neighborhoods, high density residential development shall be encouraged in urban growth areas with particular attention to those locations within cities and in close proximity to arterials and main transit routes.
4. Cities are particularly encouraged to support transit and pedestrian friendly mixed use developments within their UGAs to help achieve the goals supported in these policies.
5. Where the roadway level of service (LOS) adopted in local comprehensive plans cannot be maintained as a result of proposed new development, that development shall be denied, unless the proponents agree to pay a proportionate share of the cost of maintaining the LOS.
6. Strategies for maintaining established levels of service may include transportation demand management techniques, project impact mitigation fees, enhanced access to public transportation service, and/or other steps to reduce or limit traffic congestion.
7. Priorities shall be established and expenditures coordinated for county-wide bicycle and trail corridors. Bicycle and pedestrian-specific trails and other facilities shall be included during project planning and review. Coordinated corridors and cost sharing should be explored among all responsible and interested parties.
8. Whatcom County should work cooperatively with the Whatcom County Council of Governments, Cities, Whatcom Transit Authority and other agencies with jurisdiction to plan for inter-county and international transportation links, such as airports, border crossings, passenger rail, freight rail, transit, ferries, and other transportation facilities.

**K. SITING OF PUBLIC FACILITIES\***

1. As part of the comprehensive planning process, the county and the cities shall identify appropriate land for public facilities which meets the needs of the community, such as schools, recreation, transportation and utility corridors, human service facilities, and airport and other port facilities. In order to reduce land use conflicts, policies related to a design component shall be incorporated in the comprehensive plans.
2. The county and the cities will implement a cooperative and structured process, which includes early and continuous public involvement, to consider siting of essential public facilities of a regional and statewide nature. State facilities shall conform to local siting procedures.
3. Public facilities that generate substantial travel demand should be sited along or near major transportation and public transit corridors, where available.
4. The county and the cities shall work with their respective school district to encourage siting of schools in conjunction with areas where substantial development exists or is projected and near public transportation corridors.
5. Sharing of corridors for major utilities, trails and other transportation rights-of-way is encouraged when not in conflict with goals to protect wildlife, public health and safety.

**L. IMPACT FEES**

1. The county and the cities are encouraged to adopt fair and reasonable impact and/or mitigation fee ordinances to ensure that new growth pays its fair share of the cost of capital facilities, such as transportation improvements, parks, and schools.
2. The county and cities shall work with their school districts to develop impact fee formulas as appropriate to the district's capital needs.

**M. INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION**

1. To adequately plan for growth and implement the policies of the Growth Management Act, the governmental jurisdictions in Whatcom County, including the Lummi Nation and Nooksack Tribe, and the Port of Bellingham shall work together to establish on-going mechanisms to improve communication, information sharing and coordinated approaches to common problems.
2. Whatcom County governments should communicate with neighboring counties and governments in British Columbia and work cooperatively on growth management issues that cross county and national borders.

**N. WATER QUALITY AND QUANTITY**

1. The cities and county in cooperation with other municipal corporations, tribal governments, federal and state agencies, and public and private utilities shall cooperate in

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the protection of water resources and in drawing upon said water to support growth.

2. The cities and the county in cooperation with other municipal corporations and tribal governments, shall adopt zoning regulations and development standards to protect water resources. Where there are potential conflicts with designations required by the Growth Management Act, such as natural resource lands and critical areas, water resource protection shall generally have priority.
3. Jurisdictions shall cooperate to protect and restore water resources and fish habitat within UGA's and across jurisdictional boundaries to maintain quality of life and economic health in Whatcom County.
4. Jurisdictions involved in the development of ground and/or surface water management plans shall pursue the adoption and implementation of the plans, as well as coordination and integration of the plans into local comprehensive plans as appropriate. Examples of such plans include the Lake Whatcom Management Plan, WRIA 1 Watershed Management Plan, Shellfish Protection District Plans and drinking water source protection plans.
5. All jurisdictions should participate in the process to establish a county-wide water resource management body in accordance with the Watershed Management Act and other applicable federal, state and local regulations to inform GMA planning efforts.
6. All jurisdictions shall maximize reduction of water pollutants from stormwater runoff and combined sewer overflows.

**O. FISCAL IMPACT\***

1. It is recognized that if the Growth Management Act and these policies are implemented to their maximum extent, county government may eventually lose the tax base needed to operate essential services, including the criminal justice function and the Offices of Treasurer, Assessor, and Auditor, which serve all jurisdictions in the area. Revenue-sharing shall be addressed in inter-local agreements between Cities and the County.

**P. PRIVATE PROPERTY RIGHTS**

1. As required in the Growth Management Act, private property shall not be taken for public use without just compensation having been made. It is not the purpose of this paragraph to expand or reduce the scope of private property already provided in local, state and federal law.
2. The county as required by Whatcom County Home Rule Charter Section 1.11, and cities should establish a pro-active process to anticipate potential takings and other private property issues and resolve them out of court.

## GLOSSARY

**Affordable Housing:** In this document the definition of "affordable housing" is to be developed by each community as part of the Comprehensive Planning process.

**Capital Facilities Plan:** A required element of the Comprehensive Plan designed to form a better match between development and provision of services. It must include an inventory of existing facilities, forecast of future needs and a six-year financing plan.

**Critical Areas:** As defined by each jurisdiction, including at least the following areas and ecosystems: (a) wetlands; (b) areas with a critical recharging effect on aquifers used for potable water; (c) fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas; (d) frequently flooded areas; and (e) geologically hazardous areas.

**Greenbelts/Greenways:** These are undeveloped open space, natural areas, including agricultural lands, golf courses and other recreational uses, wildlife corridors and similar uses.

**Impact/Mitigation Fees:** A payment of money imposed upon new development as a condition of approval as defined and provided by RCW 82.02 and/or 43.21c. This fee must be used exclusively to finance improvements in capital facilities that are necessitated by the development.

**Inclusionary Zoning:** Zoning that requires developers to provide a portion of housing units in a specific project or area to meet the needs of low and moderate income people.

**In-fill:** The practice of using developable land that lies within a city, UGA, or developed area outside resource lands, where services are available rather than passing over such parcels in favor of land farther out or farther from available services.

**Interlocal Agreements:** An agreement intended to apply within designated Urban Growth Areas to set clear and reasonable criteria for orderly annexations including guidelines on size and timing of annexations and urban levels of development, appropriate development standards and tax revenue sharing provisions. Participants in the agreement could include the county, any adjacent city, affected fire districts (if applicable) and any other utility provider.

**Level of Service (LOS):** An established minimum capacity of public facilities or services that must be provided per unit of demand or other appropriate measure of need. Level of Service for transportation is usually expressed as a proportion derived by comparing a roadway's current volume to it's capacity.

**Low Income Housing:** The federal government defines low income housing as housing provided for individuals earning 50% or less of the average family wage of the local jurisdiction.

**Natural Resource Lands:** Natural Resource Lands include agricultural, forestry, and mineral resource lands that are not already characterized by urban growth and that have long-term significance for the commercial production of food or other agricultural products, for the

commercial production of timber, and that have long-term significance for the extraction of minerals.

**Private Utilities:** Water and/or sewer service owned and operated by an entity other than a political subdivision of the federal, state or tribal governments.

**Public Utilities:** Water and/or sewer services owned and operated by a political subdivision of federal, state or tribal governments (includes water and sewer districts and public utility districts).

**Regional Transportation Planning Organization:** An organization created by the Growth Management Act to coordinate regional transportation efforts and to foster cooperation among state and local jurisdictions. The Whatcom Council of Governments has been designated as the Regional Transportation Planning Organization for Whatcom County.

**Resource Based Industry:** A business or industry that has a direct relationship to natural resources such as agriculture, minerals, forestry and fishing. This type of industry is generally located in close proximity to the resource or resource land.

**Short-Term/Long Term Boundaries:** Short Term boundaries are used as a tool for facilitating provision of urban levels of services and preventing sprawl. The Long Term boundary includes the short term boundary as well as areas that have unresolved issues within the identified 20 year Urban Growth Boundary.

**Urban Fringe Subarea Plan:** A plan pertaining to the Bellingham Urban Growth Area and a portion of Whatcom County immediately north of Bellingham and containing most of Bellingham's suburban growth. It is a plan designating the interface between urban and rural land uses. Some part of the Urban Fringe Area will be included in an Urban Growth Area. Some of the area already lies within Bellingham's Urban Service Area.

**Urban growth:** growth that makes intensive use of land for the location of buildings, structures, and impermeable surfaces to such a degree as to be incompatible with the primary use of land for the production of food, other agricultural products, or fiber, or the extraction of mineral resources, rural uses, rural development, and natural resource lands designated pursuant to RCW 36.70A.170.

**Urban Growth Area:** An area designated within which urban growth will be encouraged and outside of which growth can occur only if it is not urban in nature.

**Urban Level of Service:** The minimum level of urban facilities and services, including sanitary sewer, water service, police protection, fire protection and emergency medical services, parks and recreation programs, solid waste management, electric service, land use controls, communication facilities and public schools, to support urban levels of development. A full range of services would add urban public transit, natural gas, storm drainage facilities, street lighting, libraries, local parks, local recreation facilities and services, and health services.

## **GROWTH MANAGEMENT ACT PLANNING GOALS (RCW 36.70A.020)**

The following goals are adopted to guide the development and adoption of comprehensive plans and development regulations of those counties and cities that are required or choose to plan under RCW 36.70A.040. The following goals are not listed in order of priority and shall be used exclusively for the purpose of guiding the development of comprehensive plans and development regulations

- (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 multimodal 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 this state, promote a variety of residential densities and housing types, and encourage preservation of existing housing stock.
- (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 for 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.** Encourage the retention of open space and development of recreational opportunities, conserve fish and wildlife habitat, increase access to natural resource lands and water, and develop parks
- (10) **Environment.** Protect the environment and enhance the state's high quality of life, including air and water quality, and the availability of water.

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**(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.

**(14) Shoreline Management.** Per RCW 36.70A.480 Shorelines of the State, the goals and policies of the Shoreline Management Act, as set forth in RCW 90.58.020, are added as one of the goals of the Growth Management Act.