

II-2 City of Bellingham

The first documented cooperative planning effort between WWU and the city was the 701 Study in 1964. The University and the city implemented many of the recommendations from this comprehensive land use and traffic circulation plan.

Western's 1974 Facilities Development Plan (FDP) was adopted by the city and provided the basis for campus development during the 1970's and 1980s. In 1980, the city adopted the Western Washington University Neighborhood Plan, referencing Western's 1974 FDP as the master planning document guiding campus development. The 1980 WWU Neighborhood Plan also recommended that the FDP be updated and submitted to the city for review. Although the Updated Facilities Development Plan was submitted in 1981, the city has not formally reviewed or adopted any of Western's plans subsequent to the 1974 FDP.

The update of the WWU Neighborhood Plan began in February, 1997. The Bellingham Planning Commission throughout the year held a series of eleven work sessions and hearings. Prior to and during this time staff from WWU also held a series of cottage meetings to inform interested citizens about the University's Campus Master Plan. In November 1997, the Planning Commission recommended a draft neighborhood plan for approval and the City Council began reviewing the Commission's recommendations early in 1998. The plan was approved by the City Council in September 1998. Subsequent to the adoption of this neighborhood plan, the City and the University initiated development of an Institutional Master Plan as specified under BMC 20.40. The joint Institutional Master Plan will guide city review of campus development over the next several years. See Section VII for more discussion of the institutional master planning process.

SECTION III. CITY/UNIVERSITY/NEIGHBORHOOD RELATIONSHIPS

III-1 Issues

The City of Bellingham and Western Washington University have enjoyed a cooperative relationship over the years. Like many cities with large state institutions, the city of Bellingham adopted a somewhat "hands-off" approach in dealing with campus development issues in the past. This is due in large part to the fact that state agencies in Washington have historically been exempt from local land use plans and regulations. In 1991, the Growth Management Act was amended to require that state agencies comply with local comprehensive plans and development regulations adopted pursuant to the Act. As a result, the city in 1998 repealed the section of the Land Use Development Ordinance that exempted state agencies from complying with local land use regulations.

The Western Washington University campus is located among the Happy Valley, Sehome and South Hill neighborhoods. Campus activities have an impact on surrounding neighborhoods while providing benefits to the entire community. Residents of the areas adjacent to the campus have easy access to educational programs and

cultural activities and other events offered by the University. These same residents are subject to increased traffic on local residential streets, parking on residential streets by WWU students, faculty and staff, a concentration of student housing and other situations typical of neighborhoods abutting a large college campus.

The 1995 Bellingham Comprehensive Plan recognizes the opportunities and contributions WWU provides to residents of the city. The plan also recognizes that the campus operates among three largely residential neighborhoods, and therefore has impacts (both positive and negative) on those neighborhoods. This situation is summed up in the following policy from the Executive Summary section of the comprehensive plan:

DP-11 BELLINGHAM MAXIMIZES THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY TO THE COMMUNITY. CITY COORDINATION WITH UNIVERSITY REPRESENTATIVES ENSURES THAT THE IMPACTS OF THE UNIVERSITY'S ONGOING PROGRAMS AND CAMPUS DEVELOPMENT ARE CONSISTENT WITH THE GOALS OF THE COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE.

Campus activities have positive and negative impacts on the surrounding neighborhoods. It is critical that residents of those neighborhoods have an opportunity to participate in planning for future campus activities.

Recommendation #1: The City and the University agree that a collaborative City-University process, including provision for continuous involvement and participation by citizens from surrounding neighborhoods, will precede the development of campus plans and projects with significant off-campus impact.

SECTION IV. CIRCULATION

IV-1. Arterial Streets

The WWU campus is served primarily by the Samish Interchange with Interstate 5 and by three secondary arterial streets: Bill McDonald Parkway from the east, 21st Street from the south to Bill McDonald Parkway, and the Lakeway Interchange with I-5, west on Holly Street to Garden Street from the north (see Figure 1).

Bill McDonald Parkway -

This is the main entrance to campus both from the community and from the freeway. This formal entrance was built as a parkway in the late 1960s. In the mid-1990s a planted median and tree lined boulevard treatment were added to beautify the parkway.

As of 1996, Bill McDonald Parkway carries approximately 13,600 vehicles per day (vpd). Traffic modeling indicates the parkway will operate at or above acceptable levels of service for the foreseeable future. However, Bellingham's 1995 Comprehensive Plan identifies the parkway between the Samish Interchange and 21st Street as one of 64 arterial street segments expected to operate below adopted LOS standards by 2014.