

# Point Wells Subarea Plan

## *Geographic and Historical Context*

Point Wells is an unincorporated island of approximately 50 acres in the southwesternmost corner of Snohomish County. It is bordered on the west by Puget Sound, on the east by the Town of Woodway, and on the south by the town of Woodway and the City of Shoreline (see Fig. 1). It is an “island” of unincorporated Snohomish County because this land is not contiguous with any other portion of unincorporated Snohomish County.



**Figure 1 – Point Wells unincorporated island**

The only vehicular access to Point Wells is via Richmond Beach Drive and Richmond Beach Road and the regional road network via the City of Shoreline. However, there is potential easterly access through the Town of Woodway connecting to 116<sup>th</sup> Avenue West.

## **Snohomish County's designation of Point Wells as an "Urban Village"**

Point Wells is not currently located within the municipal boundaries of the city. Therefore, Snohomish County is responsible for assigning a land use designation and implementing zoning for the area. In 2010, Snohomish County designated and zoned the area "Urban Center". In 2012, Snohomish County amended that designation to "Urban Village" and assigned predominantly Planned Community Business zoning to implement that designation. Thus, Snohomish County present vision for Point Wells is a neighborhood scale node with a mix of retail and office uses, public and community facilities, and high density residential dwelling units.

## **Designation of a Future Service and Annexation Area (FSAA) at Point Wells**

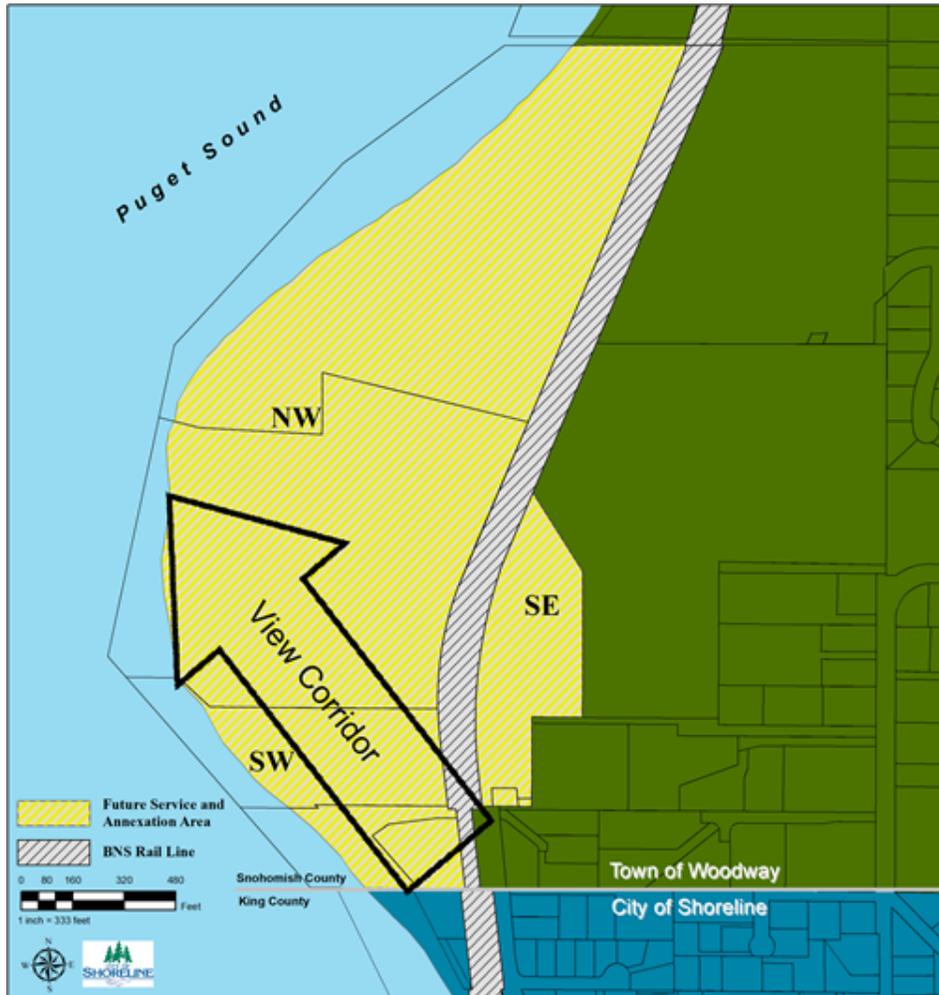
In 1998, the City identified Point Wells as a Potential Annexation Area, signifying its desire to annex Point Wells to the City. In 2012, the City amended this identifier to Future Service Annexation Area. The intent of the FSAA identification is not only to recognize Shoreline's intent that this area of unincorporated Snohomish County is appropriate for annexation to Shoreline at some point in the future but, that even if annexation did not occur, Shoreline would be the jurisdictional predominately provided public services to the area.

Although there is potential easterly access to Point Wells through the Town of Woodway connecting to 116<sup>th</sup> Avenue West, presently Point Wells is connected to the regional road network only via Richmond Beach Drive and Richmond Beach Road in the City of Shoreline. Therefore, services and infrastructure for future re-development of Point Wells would be most efficiently, effectively, and equitably provided by the City of Shoreline and its public safety partners, the Shoreline Fire Department and Shoreline Police Department.

At such future time that Point Wells annexes to the City of Shoreline, the urban services and facilities necessary to support mixed use urban development would be provided in an efficient and equitable manner. These would include police from the Shoreline police department and emergency medical services and fire protection from the Shoreline Fire Department. In addition, the City would be responsible for development permit processing, code enforcement, parks, recreation and cultural services, and public works roads maintenance.

Future residents of Point Wells would become a part of the Richmond Beach community by virtue of the shared parks, schools, libraries, shopping districts and road grid. As citizens of the City of Shoreline, they would be able to participate in the civic life of this "community of shared interests," including the City's Parks Board, Library Board, Planning Commission, or other advisory committees, and City Council.

*Policy PW-1 Point Wells, as shown on Figure 2, is designated as the City of Shoreline's proposed future service and annexation area (FSAA)*



**Fig. 2 – City of Shoreline Future Service and Annexation Area**

## **A Future Vision for Point Wells**

The Subarea Plan, intended to be a 20-year plan document, envisions a Point Wells development that could take longer than 20 years to become fully realized once permits are approved to develop the site. Because of the time horizon of the plan and future development, the City, in its decision-making, should consider the long-term costs of near-term actions and make choices that reflect a long-term perspective.

The City's vision for Point Wells is a world class environmentally sustainable community, both in site development and architecture. The redevelopment of the site should be predicated on remediation of the contaminated soil, and the restoration of streams and native plant regimes appropriate to the shoreline setting. New site design and improvements should incorporate low impact and climate friendly practices such as alternative energy sources, vegetated roofs, rainwater harvesting, rain gardens, bioswales, solar and wind technologies. Development at

Point Wells should exhibit the highest quality of sustainable architecture, striving for gold or platinum LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification.

*Policy PW-2 The Vision for Point Wells is an environmentally sustainable mixed-use community that is a model of environmental restoration, low-impact and climate-friendly sustainable development practices, and which provides extensive public access to the Puget Sound with a variety of trails, parks, public and semi-public spaces.*

Point Wells also represents a major opportunity to create a new subarea consistent with City objectives for economic development, housing choice, and waterfront public access and recreation. With almost 3,000 linear feet of waterfront, and sweeping 180 degree public views from Admiralty Inlet off Whidbey Island to Rolling Bay on Bainbridge Island, this site has unparalleled opportunity for public access, environmental restoration, education, and recreation oriented to Puget Sound.

The City's vision for Point Wells includes a mix of land uses, including residential, commercial, and recreational. The City recognizes that the site may be suited to a wide range of residential uses (e.g., market rate housing, senior housing, special needs housing, hotels, extended stay, etc.) as well as a range of commercial uses (e.g., office, retail, restaurant). Rather than proscribe the number or type of residential units, or the floor area of various types of commercial uses, the City prefers that flexibility be left to the developer to respond to market realities. However, whatever use mix is proposed must demonstrate that it conforms to adopted parking requirements, site design and building form policies cited below., and that any transportation Level of Service failures, in accordance with Shoreline Municipal Code, are mitigated by the developer to maintain the adopted standard.

There are at least three distinct sub-areas within the FSAA, identified on Fig. 2 with the notations NW, SW, and SE. Because of their proximity to the single family neighborhoods to the east and south, maximum building heights in the SW and SE areas should be lower than in the NW subarea. Because of the large difference in elevation between the NW subarea and lands east of the railroad tracks, much taller buildings could be placed in this area without significantly impairing public views. Building placement in this area should avoid obstruction of the public view corridor shown on Fig. 2. The appropriate number, placement and size of taller buildings in NW subarea should be determined through the development permit and environmental review process.

The portion of the Puget Sound shoreline in the SW subarea is the most environmentally sensitive area and a candidate for habitat restoration. This area has sandy substrate, supports some beach grass and other herbaceous vegetation, and contains a fair amount of driftwood. This area should be a priority for open space and restoration including elimination of invasive plants, re-establishing native riparian and backshore vegetation.

*Policy PW-3 Use and development of and near the Puget Sound shoreline and aquatic lands at Point Wells should be carefully designed and implemented to minimize impacts and achieve long-term sustainable systems. New bulkheads or over-water structures should not be permitted and the detrimental effects of existing bulkheads should be reduced through removal of bulkheads or alternative, more natural stabilization techniques.*

Any improvements in the westernmost 200 feet (within the jurisdiction of the Shoreline Management Act) of the NW and SW subareas should be limited to walkways and public use or park areas. Outside that shoreline area, buildings should be located and configured to maintain as much openness and public views across the site as possible, with taller structures limited to the NW subarea.

*Policy PW-4 A public access trail should be provided and appropriate signage installed along the entire Puget Sound shoreline of the NW and SW subareas and secured with an appropriate public access easement document.*

The relatively lowland area west of the tracks (between 10 and 20 feet above sea level) is abutted east of the tracks by a heavily forested slope. See Fig. 1. The slope rises steeply (15% to 25% grades) from the railroad tracks to the top of the slope, which is at approximately elevation 200. See Figure 2.

*Policy PW-5 New structures in the NW subarea should rise no higher than elevation 150 or be no taller than 75 feet, whichever is less.*

New buildings east of the railroad tracks would be much closer to existing single family homes in Woodway and Richmond Beach. To reflect this proximity, buildings of a smaller scale are appropriate.

*Policy PW-6 New structures in the SE Subarea should rise no higher than six stories.*

In order to promote maximum openness on the site and prevent bulky buildings, the City should consider innovative regulations such as design standards and guidelines, building floor plate maxima, requiring a minimum separation between taller structures and the protection of public view corridors. Public views from city rights-of-way in the Richmond Beach neighborhood are a major part of the area's character, and provide a sense of place, openness, beauty and orientation. A prominent public view corridor, shown in Fig. 2, affords a public view from Richmond Beach Drive northwest to Admiralty Inlet and Whidbey Island. Placement and size of structures at Point Wells should be located and configured so as not obstruct this important public view corridor.

*Policy PW-7 The public view from Richmond Beach Drive in Shoreline to Admiralty Inlet should be protected by a public view corridor across the SW subarea and the southwest portion of the NW subarea. New structures in the SE and SW subarea and the southwest portion of the NW subarea should rise no higher than six stories.*

*Policy PW-8 New structures in the NW subarea should be developed in a series of slender towers separated by public view corridors.*

## **Transportation Corridor Study and Mitigation**

A traffic and safety analysis performed by the City in the summer of 2009 evaluated the nature and magnitude of impacts likely to accrue from the development of Point Wells as an "Urban Center" under Snohomish County zoning, as well as development scenarios assuming lesser orders of magnitude. This background information provided a basis for the City to conclude that, prior to the approval of any specific development project at Point Wells, the applicant for

any development permit at Point Wells should fund, and the City oversee, the preparation of a detailed Transportation Corridor Study.

### **Corridor Study**

The Transportation Corridor Study and Implementation Plan should include an evaluation of projected impacts on vehicular flow and levels of service at every intersection and road segment in the corridor. If a potential alternative access scenario is identified, it should be added to the corridor study. The Study should also evaluate and identify expanded bicycle and pedestrian safety and mobility investments, and identify “context sensitive design” treatments as appropriate for intersections, road segments, block faces, crosswalks and walkways in the study area with emphasis on Richmond Beach Road and Richmond Beach Drive and other routes such as 20<sup>th</sup> Ave. NW, 23<sup>rd</sup> Place NW, NW 204<sup>th</sup> Street and other streets that may be impacted if a secondary road is opened through Woodway.

### **Implementation Plan**

The corridor study would be a step in the development of such a plan. The scope of the implementation plan should include a multimodal approach to mobility and accessibility to and from Point Wells, as well as detailed planning for investments and services to improve multimodal travel for adjacent communities between Point Wells and I-5. This could well include an integrated approach to accessing Point Wells, the Richmond Beach neighborhood, and Richmond Highlands with the Bus Rapid Transit system along Aurora Avenue, the I-5 corridor itself - focusing on the interchanges at N. 205<sup>th</sup> and N. 175<sup>th</sup> , as well as the Sound Transit light rail stations serving Shoreline.

While the analysis of vehicle flows is appropriate as part of the study, the solutions should provide alternatives to vehicle travel to and from Point Wells - as well as more transportation choices than those that currently exist today for the Richmond Beach neighborhood and adjacent communities.

*Policy PW-9 To enable appropriate traffic mitigation of future development at Point Wells, the developer should fund the preparation of a Transportation Corridor Study as the first phase of a Transportation Implementation Plan, under the direction of the City, with input and participation of Woodway, Edmonds, Snohomish County and WSDOT. The Study and Transportation Implementation Plan should identify, engineer, and provide schematic design and costs for intersection, roadway, walkway and other public investments needed to maintain or improve vehicular, transit, bicycle and pedestrian safety and flow on all road segments and intersections between SR 104, N 175<sup>th</sup> Street, and I-5 with particular attention focused on Richmond Beach Drive and Richmond Beach Road. Road segments that would be impacted by an alternate secondary access through Woodway should also be analyzed, which would include 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue NW, 23<sup>rd</sup> Place NW and NW 204<sup>th</sup> Street. The Study and Transportation Plan should identify needed investments and services, including design and financing, for multimodal solutions to improving mobility and accessibility within the Richmond Beach neighborhood and adjacent communities, including but not limited to investments on Richmond Beach Drive and Richmond Beach Road.*

*Policy PW-10 The needed mitigation improvements identified in the Transportation Corridor Study and Implementation Plan should be built and operational concurrent with the occupancy of the phases of development at Point Wells.*

Richmond Beach Road and Richmond Beach Drive provide the only vehicular access to Point Wells at this time. Therefore, it is critical that identified impacts be effectively mitigated as a condition of development approval. It is also vital that the traffic generated from Point Wells be limited to preserve safety and the quality of residential neighborhoods along this road corridor. In the event that secondary vehicular access is obtained through Woodway to the Point Wells site, the mitigation and improvements of the impacts to those additional road segments must also occur concurrent with the phased development.

Historically, mobility and accessibility in Richmond Beach and adjacent communities has been dominated by the single occupancy vehicle. Provision of bicycle and pedestrian facilities has been limited because retrofitting an existing road network with these facilities is an expensive undertaking. The Richmond Beach Road corridor is served by limited Metro bus service and is beyond a reasonable walking distance from potential development within Point Wells. Though rail service to a station in Richmond Beach was evaluated by Sound Transit, no service is envisioned in the transit agency's adopted 20 year plan. Improved transit, bicycle and pedestrian mobility is a long-term policy objective, but the majority of trips in the area will likely continue to be by automobiles utilizing the road network. The City's traffic study completed in 2009, assuming a 4-lane Richmond Beach Road, shows that if more than 8,250 vehicle trips a day enter the City's road network from Point Wells, it would result in a level of service "F" or worse at a number of City intersections. In 2018, the City rechannelized the Richmond Beach Road corridor from 24<sup>th</sup> Ave NW to Dayton Avenue N from four (4) lanes to three (3) lanes. This rechannelization further reduced existing capacity along the corridor. Any changes proposed to land use within the subarea should be carefully studied to ensure that the trips generated do not exceed the adopted volume-to-capacity (v/c) ratio standard of over .90. This would be an unacceptable impact.

*Policy PW-11 The City should address opportunities to improve mobility, accessibility, and multimodal east-west movement in the Richmond Beach Road Corridor between Puget Sound and I-5 as part of the update of the city-wide Transportation Management Plan. The City should also work with neighboring jurisdictions Woodway and Edmonds to improve north-south mobility. These opportunities should be pursued in a manner that reduces existing single occupancy vehicle trips in the corridor.*

*Policy PW-12 In view of the fact that Richmond Beach Drive between NW 199th St. and NW 205th St. is a local road with no opportunities for alternative access to dozens of homes in Shoreline and Woodway, the City designates this as a local street with a maximum capacity of 4,000 vehicle trips per day.*

## **Interjurisdictional Coordination**

The City should work with the Town of Woodway and Edmonds to identify ways in which potential future development of Point Wells could be configured or mitigated to reduce potential impacts on Woodway and Edmonds.

The Growth Management Act states that cities, rather than county governments, are the preferred providers of urban governmental services. Because urban governmental services and facilities in Shoreline are much closer to Point Wells than are similar services and facilities located in Snohomish County, it is most efficient for the City to provide those services.

Working with its public safety partners, Shoreline Fire Department and Shoreline Police Department, the City should invite Snohomish County to discuss an interlocal agreement to address the timing and methods to transition local governmental responsibilities for Point Wells from the County to the City. Included in these discussions should be responsibilities for permitting and inspection of future development at Point Wells, and possible sharing of permitting or other local government revenues to provide an orderly transition.

*Policy PW-13 The City should work with the Town of Woodway, City of Edmonds, Snohomish County, and all other service providers toward adoption of interlocal agreements to address the issues of land use, construction management of, urban service delivery to, and local governance of Point Wells. A joint SEPA lead-agency or other interlocal agreement with the County could assign to the City the responsibility for determining the scope, parameters, and technical review for the transportation component of the County's Environmental Impact Statement prepared for a future project at Point Wells. Under such agreement, this environmental analysis, funded by the permit applicant, could satisfy the policy objectives of the Transportation Corridor Study and Implementation Plan referenced at PW-10.*

*Policy PW-14 In the event that development permit applications are processed by Snohomish County, the City should use the policies in this Subarea Plan as guidance for identifying required mitigations through the SEPA process and for recommending changes or additional permit conditions to achieve greater consistency with the City's adopted policies.*