

BELLINGHAM STATION VISIONING STUDY



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Prepared for:

Whatcom Transportation Authority (WTA)

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Introduction

The Whatcom Transportation Authority (WTA) plans to modify the existing Bellingham Station to adapt to new and evolving needs. The Bellingham Station is at capacity; to expand service for the community, WTA must expand the number of bus bays. WTA aims to incorporate improvements thoughtfully to improve transit operations, benefit the surrounding community, and establish the new Bellingham Station as a forward-thinking and adaptable transit hub.

Project Purpose

This project aims to develop a unified vision plan that addresses the operational needs of WTA at the Bellingham Station while examining critical opportunities in the surrounding area to integrate the station with the goals, needs, and energy of the neighborhood in which it resides.

Visioning Study Goals

The project approach was structured around meeting the following goals of the Bellingham Station Visioning Study:

- Develop a unified vision statement and set of goals to provide direction regarding the development and redevelopment of Bellingham Station and the surrounding area.
- Educate stakeholders on the importance of public transportation, WTA's need for the Bellingham Station expansion, and how expansion may catalyze potential site-specific and neighborhood improvements to meet community needs and vision goals.
- Explore opportunities for Transit Oriented Development (TOD) and related projects on or near the Bellingham Station site.
- Develop and examine programmatic plans and high-level design elements to support the vision and goals for a unified design concept for the Bellingham Station and the surrounding area.
- Receive feedback and support from stakeholders and the steering committee.
- Identify local people and organizations who may form a coalition of advocates for the future of this project.

Project Approach

This project was completed under four primary tasks consisting of the following:

- **Local Understanding**
This task aimed to understand the study area as it exists today and how it is envisioned for the future. This task included a review of relevant planning documents, operational data, and geodata.
- **Stakeholder Engagement**
The goal of this task was to understand individual stakeholders' vision and perspective of Bellingham Station and the surrounding area, understand how the station could support the future needs of the surrounding community, understand future opportunities, explore how stakeholders envision the area in the near and long term and establish local buy-in and support for the Bellingham Station vision. Stakeholder engagement was completed by holding a business owner and landowner workshop and conducting one-on-one interviews.
- **Workshops**
Two half-day workshops were held to define further the collective vision for Bellingham Station and the surrounding area, educate participants on the value of public transportation, communicate the project purpose and goals, and foster an environment for collaboration and knowledge transfer between neighboring stakeholders.
 - The first workshop aimed to identify and document stakeholders' shared values and goals, explore the station's programmatic elements, and develop a shared vision statement.
 - The goal of the second workshop was to refine the programmatic elements of the station further and explore programs, plans, and concepts that would aid in meeting the vision statement.

- **Conceptual BTS Visioning Plan**
This task aimed to develop a document that helps guide the development of Bellingham Station and the surrounding area based on feedback, input, and findings of the previous tasks. While included within this detailed Visioning Study report, the Vision Plan may be used as a standalone document and summarizes key outcomes of the visioning process, including the unified vision statement, supporting goals to achieve the vision, programmatic elements to be incorporated into the Bellingham Station site and surrounding sites, and high-level conceptual illustrations that help visualize the vision and goals.

This study was completed over 7 months between November 2022 and May 2023.

Report Organization

1. **Existing Context** Chapter 1 of this report summarizes the existing conditions of Bellingham Station and the surrounding community, including the transit operations at the station, what role the station plays within the neighborhood, the impetus for the visioning study, the overall context of the surrounding area, and a review of relevant planning studies in the area.
2. **Engagement** Chapter 2 of this report summarizes the stakeholder and community engagement efforts completed as part of the visioning study, including a description of the engagement activities, the purpose of each activity, who participated, and the outcomes.
3. **Key Issues & Opportunities** Chapter 3 of this report synthesizes the key issues and opportunities for Bellingham Station and the surrounding community as identified in the existing conditions review and the engagement efforts.
4. **Vision Plan** Chapter 4 of this report outlines the Bellingham Station vision plan, including the vision statement, goals, and principles for achieving the vision statement, descriptions of the envisioned Bellingham Station, neighborhood, and supportive uses, and conceptual renderings that depict the vision for the station and the surrounding area.
5. **Next Steps** Chapter 5 of this report outlines the next steps following the visioning study.

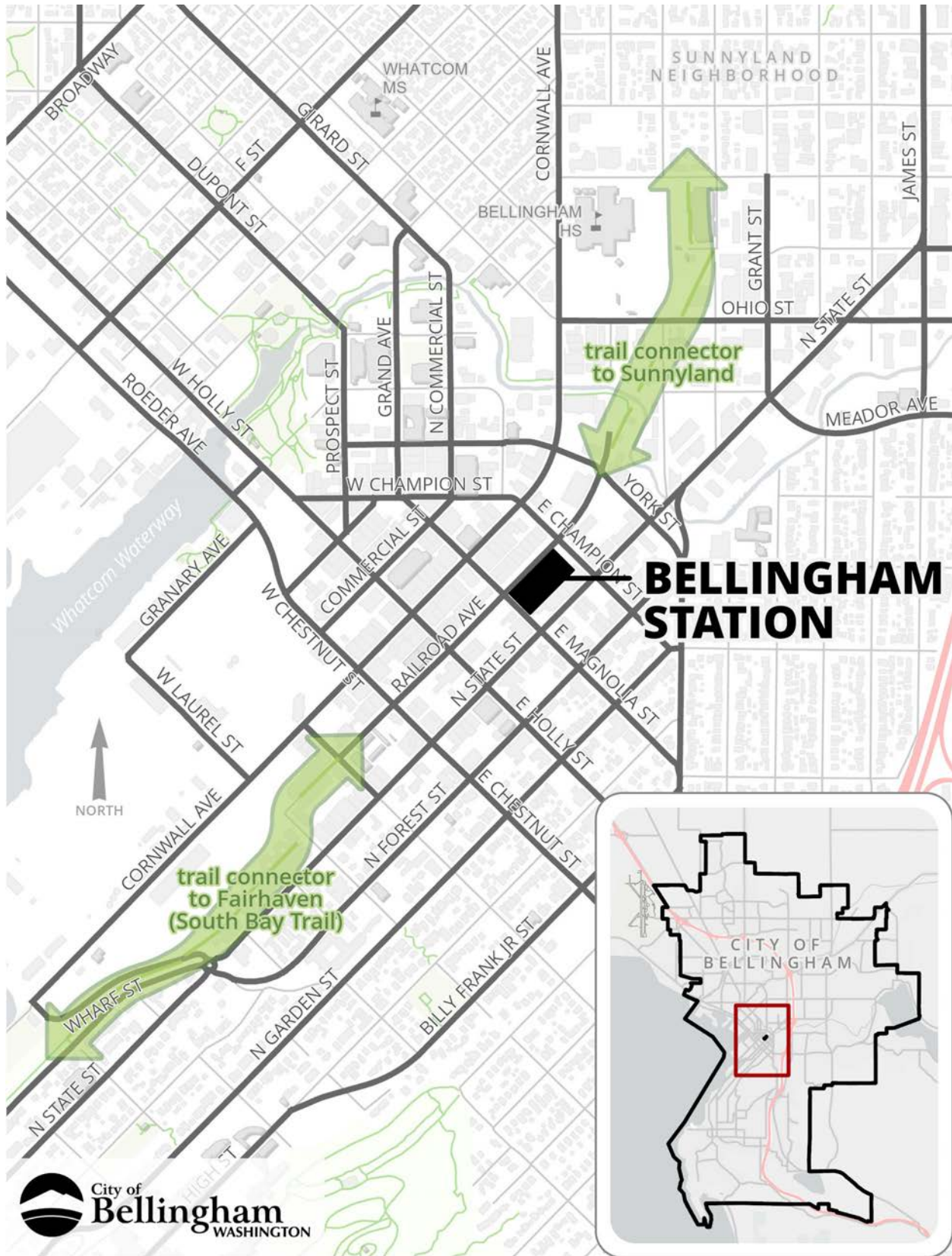


Figure 1: Station Location (source: City of Bellingham)

Chapter 1: Existing Context

This chapter summarizes the existing conditions of Bellingham Station and the surrounding community, including the transit operations at the station, what role the station plays within the neighborhood, the impetus for the visioning study, the overall context of the surrounding area, and a review of relevant planning studies in the area.

Project Need

The primary need for this visioning study is to address WTA's new and evolving transit needs at Bellingham Station. WTA's long range transit plan, WTA 2040, identifies service expansion that will allow transit services to grow alongside population growth and help make transit a more viable option. However, bus bay capacity at Bellingham Station is currently limited. Additionally, WTA is preparing to accommodate electric and potentially articulated buses for high-ridership routes. While there is capacity to add weekend service at the station, additional capacity is required to increase weekday service during peak hours, which is the primary need.

With the need to increase capacity at Bellingham Station comes the opportunity

to understand and evaluate how Bellingham Station can be more than a transit center. The visioning study examines opportunities to incorporate improvements thoughtfully that benefit the surrounding community and establish the new station as a forward-thinking and adaptable transit hub.

Bellingham Station History & Physical Infrastructure

The BTS is located in downtown Bellingham at 205 E Magnolia Street, as shown in Figure 1. The parcel in which the station is located is approximately one acre, with approximately 0.8 acres dedicated to ground-floor bus operations.

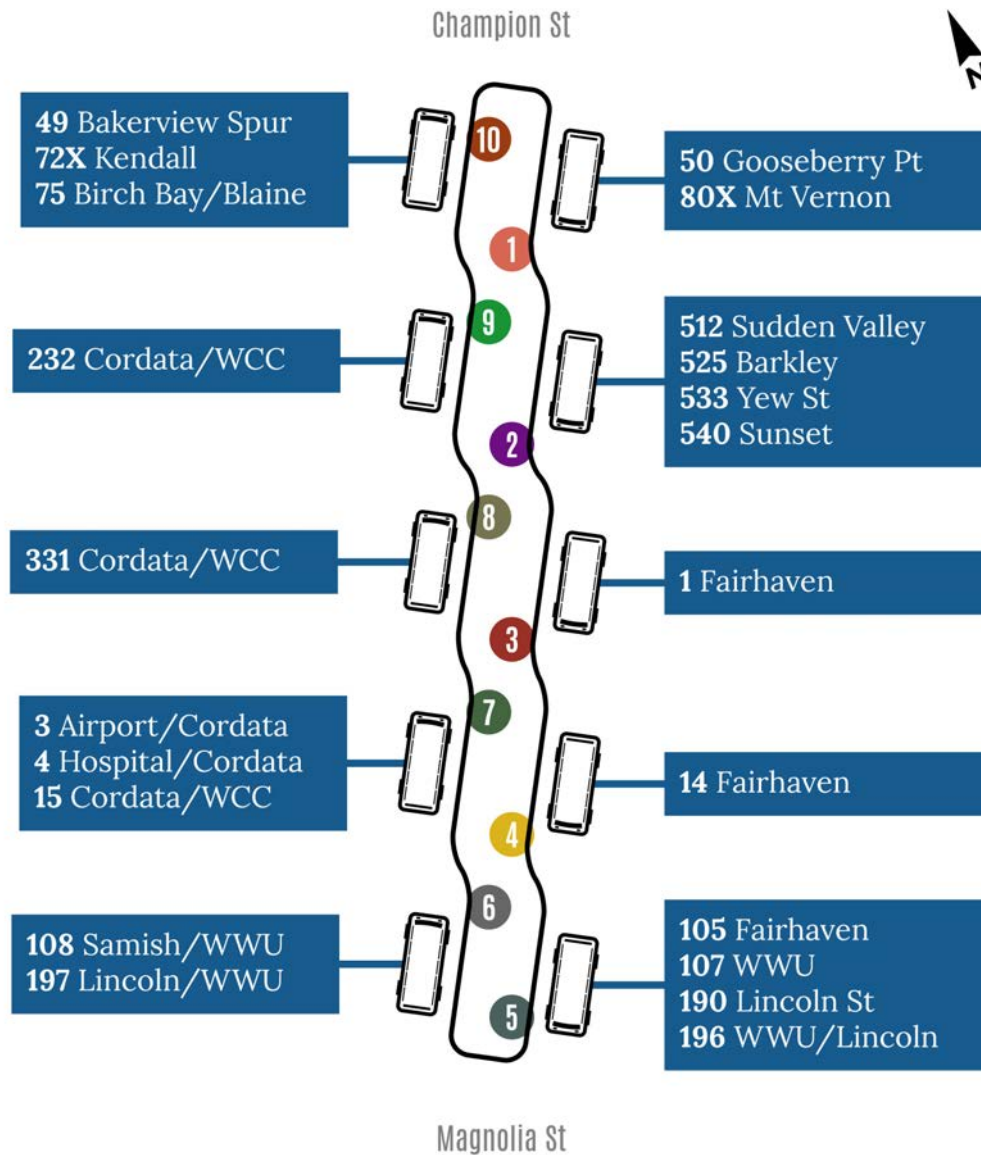


Figure 2: Gate Assignments (source: WTA)

Twenty-two WTA routes currently serve the station, with 427 trips departing and arriving (854 total trips) each weekday from 6 a.m. to 11 p.m. The primary component of Bellingham Station is a 10-bay covered concourse that provides boarding/alighting space for all 22 WTA routes that travel to and from the station (shown in Figure 2). Buses can access the bus bays from either Railroad Avenue or E Champion Street, providing bi-directional flow for buses. Passenger waiting areas are provided in the center of the concourse such that all bus bays are easily accessible to all passengers. Additionally, ample wayfinding signage and route maps are provided within the concourse.

From the concourse, passengers can access the station building, which contains an indoor waiting room, customer service offices, and passenger information. Additionally, this building provides administrative space for WTA staff and drivers. Finally, the building has public restrooms, which an attendant currently staffs.

Several amenities within the Bellingham Station's boundaries include bike parking, curb extensions at intersections with ADA-compliant crossings and curb ramps, vehicle parking along the Railroad Avenue frontage, and a pedestrian plaza with public art (shown in Figure 3). In addition to serving as a plaza, this area accommodates paratransit vehicle access.



Figure 3: Bellingham Station Concourse



Figure 4: Pedestrian Plaza with Public Art

Table 1: Existing Transit Service

Route	Area Served	Approximate Operating Hours	Peak Headways (minutes)
1	Fairhaven–Downtown	6:00 a.m. to 10:20 p.m.	15–20
3	Airport/Cordata–Airport/Downtown	6:40 a.m. to 7:15 p.m.	60
4	Hospital/Cordata–Hospital/Downtown	7:10 a.m. to 6:45 p.m.	60
14	Fairhaven–Downtown	6:40 a.m. to 10:15 p.m.	30
15	Cordata/WWC–Downtown	6:25 a.m. to 10:10 p.m.	30
49	Downtown–Bakerview Spur	6:55 a.m. to 6:05 p.m.	30–90
50	Gooseberry Pt.–Downtown	5:55 a.m.–8:00 p.m.	90
72X	Kendall–Bellingham	6:10 a.m.–7:45 p.m.	60
75	Blaine/Birch City–Bellingham	5:45 a.m.–7:00 p.m.	60
80X	Mt. Vernon–Bellingham	6:40 a.m.–7:00 p.m.	60
105	Fairhaven–Downtown	7:25 a.m.–10:45 p.m.	60
107	WWU/Samish	6:40 a.m.–6:05 p.m.	60
108	Samish/WWU	6:55 a.m.–5:20 p.m.	30
190	Lincoln St–Downtown	7:10 a.m.–11:00 p.m.	30
196	WWU/Lincoln	6:55 a.m.–6:30 p.m.	60
197	Lincoln/WWU	7:10 a.m.–6:50 p.m.	60
232	Cordata/WWC–Downtown	6:40 a.m.–10:30 p.m.	15
331	Cordata/WWC–Downtown	6:40 a.m.–10:40 p.m.	15
512	Sudden Valley–Downtown	6:40 a.m.–9:45 p.m.	60
525	Barkley–Downtown	7:25 a.m.–7:35 p.m.	60
533	Yew St–Downtown	7:10 a.m.–6:30 p.m.	60
540	Sunset–Downtown	6:55 a.m.–6:20 p.m.	60

Source: Whatcom Transit Authority, March 2023

Note: Operating Hours and headways are approximate

Routes Served and Daily Ridership Role in the Community

As noted, Bellingham Station is served by 22 WTA routes. Table 1 summarizes these routes, including the hours of operation and peak headways. In WTA's 2018 boarding and alighting survey, WTA counted 3,344 boardings and 2,826 alightings at the station on an average weekday.

Bellingham Station serves as one of WTA's primary transit facilities, providing access to numerous transit routes that provide service to much of the greater Bellingham area while also serving as the primary customer service location for passengers. Additionally, the station provides administrative space for WTA employees and drivers. While there is a public plaza with kinetic artwork at the station, the space could be used more effectively and in a way that encourages activation, better integrating the station into the community beyond simply providing transportation.



Figure 5: Bellingham Station Area Massing and Land Use

Neighborhood & Community

Existing Neighborhood Characteristics

Zoning and Land Use

The area in which Bellingham Station resides and the blocks directly surrounding the station are currently zoned as Urban Village. Urban Villages are envisioned within the city as vibrant mixed residential and commercial neighborhoods, boost economic development, and encourage a safe and attractive pedestrian experience.

The downtown land use areas are further defined, including the area around Bellingham Station, as Commercial Core. This area is intended to be densely developed with a high concentration of employment, services, entertainment, and housing. A wide range of land uses are allowed in this area, including retail, office, recreation, governmental facilities, parks, and open space.

As shown in Figure 4, most buildings surrounding the Bellingham Station site are commercial, with many of these buildings comprising retail and services. Additionally, there are several apartment buildings and mixed-use buildings that primarily consist of residential with ground-floor retail.

Massing

The building at Bellingham Station is two stories tall, with several one to three-story buildings adjacent to the site. Figure 4 depicts the existing massing surrounding the Bellingham Station site. The majority of buildings within this area are up to 35 feet tall. However, several mixed-use or residential buildings exceed 55 feet. Generally, development regulations within the area encourage taller buildings, and there are no regulatory height restrictions.



Figure 6: Median parking along Railroad Avenue

Transportation Facilities

Roadway Characteristics and Parking

Bellingham Station is bounded by E Magnolia Street to the south, Railroad Avenue to the west, E Champion Street to the north, and an alley to the east. E Magnolia Street and E Champion Street are one-way roadways with parking on both sides. In addition, E Magnolia Street provides an eastbound buffered bike lane, and E Champion Street provides a westbound buffered bike lane. Railroad Avenue is a two-way roadway with a 130-foot right-of-way between E Chestnut Street and E Champion Street. Along this section of Railroad Avenue is a 5-foot wide tree-lined central median and two rows of angled parking in each direction, totaling just over 100 spaces.

The downtown area surrounding the station contains city-owned and privately-owned parking lots. WTA staff who drive from the WTA base to start their shift on a route using the city-owned permitted parking lots. The closest parking garage to the station is at the Commercial Street garage, which is three blocks away and currently noted as having low utilization.

Non-Motorized Facilities

As stated, buffered bicycle lanes are located along E Magnolia Street and E Champion

Street. Additionally, while Railroad Avenue does not provide bicycle facilities, it provides access to the South Bay Trail to the south and the Whatcom Creek Trail to the north. This provides opportunities to better connect these two trail systems via Railroad Avenue.

In the direct vicinity of the site, all roadways provide sidewalks, with many intersections providing crosswalks along all crossings and ADA-compliant curb ramps. Additionally, some intersections have been retrofitted to provide curb extensions that decrease the crossing distance for pedestrians. That said, sidewalks along Railroad Avenue are narrow and include numerous fixed objects like parking meters and street trees, making pedestrian circulation difficult when foot traffic is at its highest (particularly on weekends).

Streetscape

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, several parklets and "streateries" have been added to the station area (Figure 6). This trend is expected to continue, but new policies and regulations may be added to better regulate and encourage such public uses in a mutually beneficial way to the City and the business owners. While these changes have generally benefited the feel of Railroad Avenue, the scale and allocation of space along Railroad Avenue still favor vehicle traffic. Nearby streets



Figure 7: Retail shops and “streateries” along Railroad Avenue

such as Cornwall Avenue could be used as a blueprint for increasing tree canopy and improving the pedestrian atmosphere.

Character

The downtown neighborhood has evolved over the past decades from a business-centric area to a robust multi-use neighborhood providing jobs, housing, entertainment, and services for a diverse and growing population of residents and visitors. As described by stakeholders involved in this visioning study, Bellingham Station and the surrounding area can be characterized as a “gateway” and the “core of Bellingham” and defined by its eclectic array of local businesses and services, pedestrian and bicycle friendly environment, gathering spaces, diverse population, variety of streetscape and building scale, ample street trees, restaurant scene, and community-centered nature.

Previous Planning Efforts

Several neighborhood planning and analysis efforts were reviewed related to the visioning study. The following summarizes the key takeaways from the document review. A more detailed review of these documents is included in Appendix A.

2018 Downtown Bellingham Parking Summary

The 2018 Downtown Bellingham Parking Summary measured the parking utilization and parking duration of vehicles in downtown Bellingham during a typical summer weekday and a typical fall weekday in 2018. In addition, this study determined how parking conditions changed since a previous study done in 2013 and developed short and long-term parking management strategies to address future parking needs. The study found that, in the Downtown area, between 2013 and 2018, there was a 19% increase in the number of vehicles parked in the study area during the summer and a 20% increase in the number of vehicles parked in the study area in the fall.

For on-street parking along the segments of Railroad Avenue adjacent to Bellingham Station, average daily parking utilization during the summer was between 25-50 percent on the east and 50-75 percent on the west. During the summer peak hour at 1 PM, both sides of the street were between 50-75 percent parking utilization. During the fall, both the average daily parking utilization and peak hour (1 PM) parking utilization was between 25-50 percent on both sides of Railroad Avenue.

Of note, this parking study was performed before the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, changes in office occupancy and other characteristics during the COVID-19 pandemic warrant an updated parking study to determine the current utilization in the area.

Bellingham Transit Station Expansion

In direct relation to this visioning study, the Bellingham Transit Station Expansion project proposes to improve overall operations and conditions at the Bellingham Station. This project was triggered when WTA expanded services in 2017, which put the station at 80-90% capacity during its four "pulse" times. Expansion of the station would allow WTA to avoid inefficient and confusing bus gate changes and continue to plan future services based on what is best for the community. Expansion of the station would also help WTA plan for future types of buses that may run through the station, such as electric buses and articulated buses, which still need to be added to WTA's transit fleet.

As proposed in this study, the station expansion would feature several amenities, including an electric bus charging station, expanded bike storage, additional solar panels on top of passenger shelters, and a new concourse to provide ADA-accessible loading. This plan also addressed community and business owner concerns, such as the availability of public parking, connections to State Street businesses and downtown, and additional options for public restrooms.

Downtown Bellingham Plan

Adopted by the City of Bellingham in 2014, the Downtown Bellingham Plan describes downtown Bellingham's ideal future in vision and goal statements. It identifies projects and strategies to achieve those goals for the downtown area.

As it relates specifically to Bellingham Station and the surrounding area, one of the goals outlined in the plan is to improve Railroad Avenue to safely accommodate all modes of transportation. Railroad Avenue is cited as a target site for enhancement due to having some of the highest foot traffic in the city, combined with being a primary trail connection between the South Bay Trail to the south and the Whatcom Creek Trail to the north. Railroad Avenue also houses key downtown

anchors including Bellingham Station on one end and the Depot Market Square, home to the Bellingham Farmers Market. In addition, goal 7.5 of the Downtown plan specifically cites wayfinding signage as one of the improvements that could be made to Railroad Avenue.

Furthermore, there are several other goals and policies from the Downtown Bellingham Plan that should be taken into consideration as part of the Bellingham Station Visioning Study, including the following:

- Activate public spaces through place-making, such as re-purposing traffic lanes, widening sidewalks, and incorporating artistic streetscape elements and artwork.
- Activate "Streets as Places" to promote a more balanced space-sharing between vehicles and people.
- Seek opportunities to connect existing trails to facilities for non-motorized transportation into and through downtown.
- Balance the need for freight access with the needs of other uses and streetscape improvements that narrow vehicular spaces.
- Work with Downtown businesses to promote pedestrian, bicycle, and transit use for their employees and customers.
- Encourage alternative uses of the public right-of-way to offer new opportunities for public space while balancing traffic flow and parking needs.
- Maximize the efficient use of the existing parking supply in on-street, off-street, and private parking facilities and areas.

Urban Transitions Studio (UTS) 2022 Railroad Corridor Plan

As part of a capstone project at Western Washington University (WWU) and in partnership with the City's Planning and Community Development Department, the WWU Planning Studio class evaluated development alternatives for improving the Railroad Avenue corridor between E Maple Street and York Street. As part of this project, a survey was conducted to understand community preferences for development along the corridor. This survey was released in digital and paper formats, with over 550 responses received over

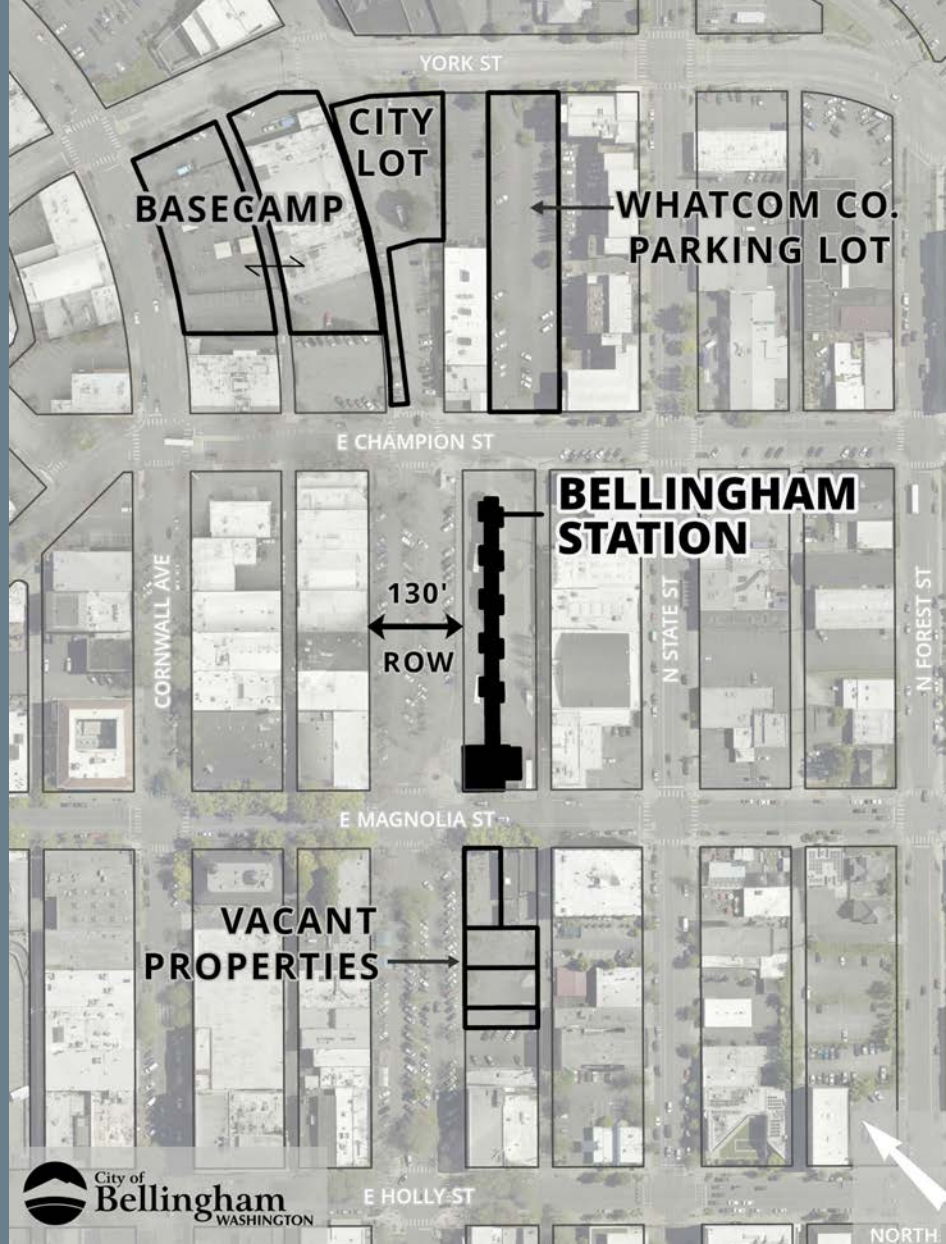


Figure 8: Opportunity Sites Surrounding Bellingham Station

ten days. From these responses, it was found that lack of safety and lack of public space along the corridor were the biggest concerns for survey respondents. In addition, the survey found that improved pedestrian spaces, green spaces, and affordable housing for working-class residents were the most preferred improvements along the corridor. From the responses, there is also an apparent divide between respondents who believe that Railroad Avenue is too car-centric and respondents who believe that Railroad Avenue doesn't do enough to support cars.

The UTS 2022 Railroad Corridor Plan features some proposed redesigns for the Bellingham Station. The proposal includes many new environmental amenities, including a rain garden, green roofs, and green wall frontage. For the terminal expansion, the UTS Plan

suggested constructing a 3-story parking garage above the transit station and accommodating the proposed WTA terminal expansion.

Opportunity Sites

There is varying public and private ownership of parcels in the area surrounding the BTS. Still, there may be some redevelopment opportunities in the future that could be coordinated with changes and improvements at Bellingham Station. Figure 7 highlights sites surrounding the existing Bellingham Station site that may be slated for redevelopment in the near to mid-term. Redevelopment of sites surrounding Bellingham Station may provide opportunities to implement the goals and priorities outlined within the Visioning Study that cannot be accommodated within the BTS redesign.

Chapter 2: Engagement

This chapter summarizes the stakeholder and community engagement efforts completed as part of the visioning study, including a description of the engagement activities performed, the purpose of each activity, who participated, and the outcomes.

Engagement Approach

Four primary outreach activities were facilitated to educate stakeholders, gather feedback, and garner support for potential future projects stemming from the visioning study. These activities included a business owner and landowner workshop, stakeholder interviews, and two workshops.

In line with the overall purpose and goals of the visioning study, the purpose and goals of the engagement activities were as follows:

- Understand stakeholders' vision and perspective on Bellingham Station and the surrounding area.
- Educate participants on the value of public transportation and its role in driving economic development, community resources, and future development.
- Foster an environment of collaboration and knowledge transfer between neighboring stakeholders.
- Understand how the Bellingham Station will play a role in supporting the future needs of the surrounding community as it relates to multi-modal transportation access and programmatic elements within the station and the surrounding area.
- Understand any planned stakeholder investments or investment opportunities in the future.

- Explore with stakeholders what they see as the future of the study area in the next 5 to 10 years and what that could mean in terms of land use and community offerings.
- Identify the individual and collective stakeholder vision for the station area and develop goals for achieving the vision.
- Establish local buy-in or support for the future vision and goals of the Bellingham Station and the surrounding area.

Additionally, a target steering committee comprised of representatives from the consultant team, WTA, the City of Bellingham, and the Downtown Bellingham Partnership met bi-weekly to ensure the project was completed in line with the overarching goals and to garner frequent and meaningful feedback.

Business Owner and Landowner Workshop

The purpose of the Business Owner and Landowner Workshop was to educate local stakeholders on the project and gain an understanding of existing issues and future opportunities at the Bellingham Station and in the surrounding area. Participants included representatives from WTA, the City of Bellingham, Whatcom Housing Alliance and Sustainable Connections, Downtown Bellingham Partnership, Whatcom Council on Aging, and several local business owners or landowners.

Stakeholders were invited to attend one of three information and feedback sessions on Thursday, December 1, 2022. A letter describing the project and inviting people to attend the workshop was mailed to all land-owners in approximately a two-block radius of the Bellingham Station and all business owners in the vicinity were invited via email. In total 178 business owners were contacted via email and 49 property owners were mailed a hard copy of the invitation.

Sessions were held at the Whatcom Council of Governments (WCOG) offices in Bellingham, Washington. In addition, all stakeholders were invited on a walking tour of the BTS site. Throughout the day, discussions centered around current strengths, areas of improvement at the BTS, and current and future priorities for the surrounding neighborhood.

The key findings from the Business Owner and Landowner Workshop include the following with detailed findings included in Appendix A:

- Current strengths of the Bellingham Station and surrounding neighborhood
 - Appeals to both residents and visitors.
 - The presence of transit passengers and WTA at the station makes the transit experience more welcoming and enjoyable.
 - Supports community events (i.e., the nearby Farmers Market)
- Opportunities for improvement
 - More public restrooms and facilities are needed.
 - Additional public services needed (security, Downtown Ambassadors, etc.)
 - Conflicts around parking: some stakeholders prefer more on-street parking to support transit activity, while others want non-motorized uses to be prioritized.

- Future desires for the Bellingham Station and the surrounding area
 - Increase appeal to non-motorized users.
 - Establish a vibrant, centralized location that maximizes usable public space.
 - Provide convenient public services.
 - Enhance connectivity between the transit center and the developing Waterfront Neighborhood.
 - Provide programmable and flexible community space at the station, such as classrooms or activity spaces.

Stakeholder Interviews

In addition to the Business Owner and Landowners Workshop, the project team contacted four additional local business owners and landowners who could not attend the workshop. Two of these four stakeholders responded to requests for an interview conducted in the first half of January 2023.

The purpose of these interviews was consistent with that of the Business Owner and Landowners Workshop: to educate stakeholders on the project and gain an understanding of existing issues and future opportunities.

Generally, the phone interviews highlighted similar issues, opportunities, and desires as were articulated at the workshop with additional feedback:

- The area currently benefits from an eclectic mix of local businesses, and it should be prioritized that local businesses are not priced out of the area.
- The area would benefit from high-quality anchor businesses and retailers to draw people into the area.



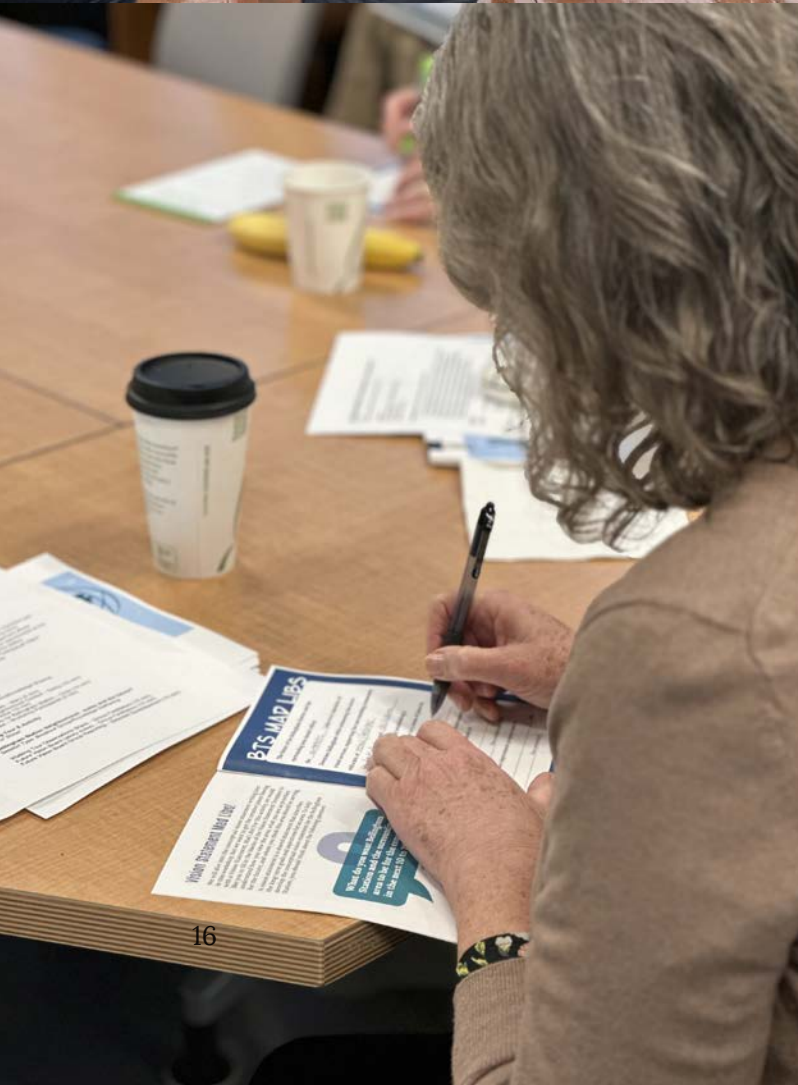
Stakeholder Workshop #1

Stakeholders were invited to attend the first of two planned workshops on Tuesday, February 7, 2023, from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The workshop was held at the Stateside Conference Room in Bellingham, Washington. The specific goals of Workshop #1 were as follows:

- Educate stakeholders on the purpose of the vision study, why it is an integral part of future Bellingham Station plans, what has been completed regarding future Bellingham Station plans to date, and findings of initial public engagement efforts.
- Gather information from stakeholders about issues and opportunities at the Bellingham Station and the community directly surrounding the station.
- Guide stakeholders through developing a Conceptual Vision Statement for Bellingham Station and the surrounding neighborhood.

Stakeholders invited to Workshop #1 included WTA staff, City of Bellingham staff, transit personnel and riders, local business owners, local property owners, and non-profit and community organization members. The project team first gave a presentation to the stakeholders that highlighted the purpose of the visioning study, the background and context of the station and surrounding area, transit hub case studies, and findings from the previous engagement activities. The stakeholders were then asked to participate in various interactive small-group activities to meet the previously outlined goals of Workshop #1.

The activities and their findings are summarized below, with the accompanying workbook provided to participants included in Appendix B.





Mad Libs Consolidated Vision Statement

The future of Bellingham Station and the surrounding area should reflect the diverse, vibrant, eclectic character of Downtown Bellingham while enhancing the area's transit services, supporting the surrounding community with a mix of residential/housing, retail, and community/public space, land uses, and establishing a vibrant, safe, comfortable sense of place by incorporating active transportation, outdoor spaces, and art into the built environment. In addition, the area should prioritize the needs of locals/residents, tourists/visitors, and business owners by ensuring future improvement projects lead to safe ped/bike connectivity, an activated place, and economic development.

Vision Statement Mad Libs

This activity helped attendees become familiar with the concept of a vision statement. By completing a "mad libs" style template, stakeholders created a conceptual vision statement to describe the long-term goals and aspirations of Bellingham Station and the surrounding community. To help develop this statement, stakeholders were asked, "What do you want the Bellingham Station and the surrounding area to be for the community in the next 10 to 20 years?". Based on this question, workshop attendees completed a vision statement template to craft a starting point for the visioning activities later in the workshop.

The Vision Statement Mad Libs activity revealed several key themes and overlapping ideas. The consolidated vision statement shown here combines the common themes highlighted by participants.

Bellingham Station Neighborhood: Today and the Future

Attendees were taken on a guided walking tour of Bellingham Station and the surrounding area. On the walking tour, participants were asked to reflect and take notes on the following questions:

- Who is this neighborhood currently serving?
- What businesses and services are available?
- What makes the area unique/special?
- Are there opportunities for improvement?
- How does the area make you feel?

Key findings from the walking tour included the following:

- Stakeholders felt that the station and surrounding area serve diverse people, including transit riders, residents, families, visitors, shoppers, students, businesses, and employees. Despite being a key transit hub site, many stakeholders felt that the area favors those who travel by car.
- Stakeholders noted that businesses and services are centered around retail and restaurants, with various services available and a focus on small businesses. Many stakeholders also noted the importance of the farmer's market.
- Stakeholders felt that the neighborhood is unique and special due to its diverse population, walk and bike-ability, inclusiveness, and community feel, proximity to transit and trails, eclectic businesses with local anchors, green space and tree canopy, the concentration of restaurants and food options, variety of streetscape and building styles, and its foothold as the central commercial core of Bellingham.

- Stakeholders noted that the area could be improved by providing wider sidewalks, more green spaces, community space, seating, public restrooms, and improved bicycle connections and amenities. Additionally, it was noted that the area would greatly benefit from infill development in vacant lots, new businesses or services in vacant buildings, and architectural continuity and oversight.
- Under existing conditions, stakeholders noted that the neighborhood evokes mixed feelings. People felt that the area felt safe and comfortable but needed to be better kept with much trash in public spaces; they felt the area has much energy with many things to do and see but could feel tight and claustrophobic. On the other hand, they also noted that the neighborhood evoked a sense of community, nostalgia, and hopefulness.

After completing the guided walking tour, stakeholders were split into small groups and asked to think about the future of Bellingham Station and the surrounding neighborhood. Based on their notes and observations from the walking tour, participants were asked to answer the above questions regarding the future of Bellingham Station and the surrounding area.

Each small group developed a Future Vision Board to help guide how stakeholders thought about the future of Bellingham Station and the surrounding neighborhood and provide direction for developing a conceptual vision statement. The key ideas and insights from this activity are summarized here.

What does the neighborhood need?

- Wider sidewalks
- More residential
- Green space
- Less parking
- Pedestrian focus
- Childcare
- More color
- Food trucks
- Public facilities

Whom is the future neighborhood serving?

- Residents
- Tourists
- Students
- Families
- Business owners
- Employees
- Transit riders
- Visitors
- Everyone

What is the character of the future neighborhood?

- Eclectic
- Vibrant
- Safe
- Fun (to be in)
- Welcoming
- Clean
- Colorful
- Inviting
- Family-Friendly

What would it look like if the neighborhood reached its full potential?

- Vibrant
- Diverse
- Busy 24/7/365
- Safe space
- Evolving
- No vacant retail
- Equitable (bike, ped, transit)
- A place people gravitate to
- Clean

What will the future neighborhood be known for?

- Being a destination
- A central hub
- Safety
- Food
- Identity of Bellingham
- Catalyst for future projects
- Gathering space for community
- Pedestrians are highest priority

Thinking Beyond the Bus

Bellingham Station is, first and foremost, a public transportation facility. Still, this activity aimed to develop ideas for how the future Bellingham Station could be programmed beyond transit operations to better serve the community.

For this activity, participants were first divided into four groups and given eight minutes to develop ideas for uses, services, businesses, etc., that could be incorporated into the future Bellingham Station. Each group presented several ideas, with Residential, Community Services, and Community Space determined to be the group's most important programmatic uses. In the context of the future Bellingham Station, these uses can be defined as follows:

- **Residential**
multi-family, apartment-style residential units
- **Community Services**
Active community services that are open to the public such as police services, social services, informational/safety kiosks, restrooms, etc.
- **Community Space**
Passive programmable space that can be utilized by the community, such as meeting space, studio space, or event space.

Diving deeper into these key uses, participants were split into three groups to understand the benefits, trade-offs, opportunities, and challenges of incorporating these programmatic uses into the future Bellingham Station. Each group was asked to answer a targeted set of questions, with results shown here.

Residential	
Who is it for and how does it help them?	Mixed income
	Mixed household types
	Subsidized at different income levels
What makes it different from what already exists?	More opportunities for downtown living
	More 2-bedrooms and 3-bedrooms
How do you move this forward?	Coordinate with affordable housing partnership
What are the possible hurdles to success?	Space
	Buildout
	WTA or developers
	Transit in center of town
How does this align with the neighborhood concept?	Safety for active modes & bus space
	Serves residents
	Family friendly
How would you explain it clearly in one sentence?	equitable
	The Bellingham Station should support diverse housing needs

Community Services

Who is it for and how does it help them?	All community (not just transit riders)
	Tourists (wayfinding to services/direction)
	Those new to the community (welcome center)
	Those who feel unsafe (safety ambassador)
	Those with specific needs (referrals to social services)
What makes it different from what already exists?	Does not exist today
	Currently the area does not provide resources for tourists
	Collaboration between tourism, downtown, and safety ambassador
How do you move this forward?	Collaboration with tourism
What are the possible hurdles to success?	Change-averse community
	Sustainability (If volunteer based)
	Funding (If paid employees)
	Will it be considered a "critical" service?
How does this align with the neighborhood concept?	Welcoming
	Safe
	Inclusive
	Clean
How would you explain it clearly in one sentence?	The Bellingham Station should provide information & connect people to resources and services

Community Space

Who is it for and how does it help them?	People with common interests
	Specific interests
	Members of the community
What makes it different from what already exists?	Has technology
	Is reservable
	Has a kitchen
	Key code entry
	Inviting atmosphere
	Downtown location
How do you move this forward?	Coordination with city and WTA
	Gathering information
What are the possible hurdles to success?	Could sit vacant (purpose may be limited)
	Accessibility (who can use it and when?)
	Awareness that it exists
	Security issues
	Space limitations
How does this align with the neighborhood concept?	Family friendly
	All inclusive
	Safe
	Gathering space for community
How would you explain it clearly in one sentence?	The Bellingham Station should have an easily accessible public gathering space

Conceptual Vision Statement Development

The final activity of Workshop #1 allowed participants to reflect on the day's insights to develop conceptual vision statements in small groups. While much of the workshop involved thinking big and exploring all possibilities, the purpose of this activity was to encourage participants to synthesize their priorities into a consolidated vision. As a result, each small group of stakeholders developed six conceptual vision statements used to develop the vision statement included in the Vision Plan.

Our vision is to have BTS provide a safe, reliable, efficient, and friendly transit hub. Being a hub, it will support multi-modal transportation. It will also incorporate community space and services that will support a welcoming and vibrant urban housing neighborhood for all (residents and visitors alike), both now and towards a fossil fuel free future.

Our vision is to create an efficient, safe, inclusive transportation center encompassing walking, biking, and rolling areas. It will strengthen the community and shape the character of downtown with mixed-income housing, vital community services, and functional spaces, all with an attractive, vibrant design.

Our vision is to create an efficient, safe, inclusive transportation center that includes walking, rolling, and bike access and strengthens the community, and shapes the character of downtown with mixed-income housing, vibrant design, vital community services, functional spaces, and building design.

Our vision for a mixed-use transit facility connecting people to opportunities and each other through safe, affordable, convenient, and welcoming services that embraces Bellingham's natural beauty and diverse community.

Our vision is to have the Bellingham Station provide a safe, reliable, efficient, and friendly transit hub. A community destination that supports a vibrant, welcoming neighborhood.

Our vision is to build an integrated hub that energizes, connects, and supports all local businesses, residents, and visitors by creating a safe, inclusive, accessible, and sustainable resource that connects *people to community and opportunity*.



Overall Findings

Throughout the workshop, similar themes arose for the desired future use of the Bellingham Transit Station and priorities for the surrounding area. Many expressed a desire for the station to become a multi-use hub, prioritizing pedestrians and bikes over vehicles centered around the local community. Acting as a local food and retail destination, the space would help support opportunities for residents, tourists, and everyone. It was envisioned as an active, open, lively, and safe place with various activities, from community events to nightlife. The new space would also be associated with developing a new urban housing neighborhood that supports the transit and local businesses in the area. For many of the stakeholders, the development of the Bellingham Transit Hub was about creating public spaces for people to enjoy.



Following up on Workshop #1, stakeholders were asked to join Workshop #2, which took place on March 10, 2023, from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Like Workshop #1, this workshop was held at the Stateside Conference Room in Bellingham, Washington. The specific goals of Workshop #2 were as follows:

- Consistent with Workshop #1, stakeholders invited to Workshop #2 included WTA staff, City of Bellingham staff, transit drivers and riders, local business owners, local property owners, and non-profit and community organization members. The project team presented an overview of Workshop #1 findings and shared the draft unified vision statement. The stakeholders were then asked to participate in various interactive small-group activities to meet the goals of Workshop #2.

The activities and their findings are summarized below, with the accompanying workbook provided to participants included in Appendix C.



Bellingham Blox

During this activity, participants were asked to adapt their vision for the future of Bellingham Station and the location and arrangement of the new transit operations and WTA administration facilities. To do this, participants were given colored blocks that correlated with different land use types to be combined to represent the various facets of the station redevelopment. Participants were split into three groups to complete the activity. Each group explored different ways to meet the needs of expanded transit operations while incorporating supportive uses, prompting them to think about questions of what they envision for the mix of land uses, massing, and public space at the Bellingham Station and surrounding area and how it plays a role within the local context.

This activity was completed under three scenarios, each with rules and constraints for using the blocks.

Scenario 1

Scenario 1, the "Sandbox," allowed participants to place blocks in a 4x7 grid to begin thinking about the land use and massing arrangements in a generic location. This allowed participants to think more generally about what they would like to see built to realize the vision for the new station.

Across all groups, there was a desire to mix community space, transit administrative, and office space directly above transit operations, with the upper floors holding residential space. Green space was also a desired element, but with space constraints, most groups added green space as a green roof. Additionally, there was a desire for community services to be accessible to people in the community. Therefore, the ground floor was primarily used for transit operations, bike parking, and community services rather than retail or other commercial uses.



Existing Buildings

These blocks represent existing buildings. Therefore, they are static and cannot be removed from the board.



Transit

These blocks represent transit operations and administration. Blocks marked with an "O" represent operations (i.e., bus bays, waiting areas, passenger information, and amenities). Blocks marked with an "A" represent administration (i.e., Space allocated for WTA employee/driver uses such as office space and lounges).



Commercial Space

These blocks represent commercial space such as an office or retail space.



Community Space

These blocks represent passive programmable space that can be utilized by the community, such as meeting space, studio space, or event space, and can be a combination of indoor and outdoor space.



Residential Space

These blocks represent multi-family, apartment-style residential and can be any mix of unit size or affordability.



Community Services

These blocks represent active community services open to the public, such as police services, social services, informational/safety kiosks, restrooms, etc., and can combine indoor and outdoor spaces.



Green Space

These blocks represent green space or other public park space. This can include active or passive spaces.



Bike Facilities

These blocks represent bike facilities such as bicycle parking, bike lockers, and other bicycle-related amenities such as fix-it stations.



Miscellaneous

These blocks can be used in areas you think would benefit from land use not already represented.

Scenario 2

Scenario 2, the "Bellingham Station" scenario, applied the same land use blocks as the Sandbox but constrained by the existing Bellingham Station site and adjacent Railroad Avenue. Again, the groups were given a playmat that included the existing surrounding buildings so participants could understand how their future vision for Bellingham Station would relate to the scale of the surrounding area and availability of space within the existing parcel and adjacent right-of-way.

Under this scenario, the groups continued similar themes from the first scenario, placing transit operations and bicycle parking on the first floor, community services and transit administration on the second floor, and residential above it. The participants also included rooftop green space due to the space constraints on the ground floor. Across all

groups, there was a desire to see the new station as a mixed-use space with transit operations, residential and community space within the building. However, some participants felt the space was too constricting to fit all their needs. Therefore, all groups used at least a portion of Railroad Avenue to accommodate transit operations or other ground-floor uses such as community services and green space.

Scenario 3

Scenario 3, the "Bellingham Station and Beyond" scenario, expanded the buildable space to consider the area surrounding the station. Groups were allowed to build in "opportunity sites," which could be redeveloped in the near-to mid-term. Similar design and operational constraints were applied to this scenario, but the existing Bellingham Station site did not constrain participants. Under this scenario, participants could more broadly apply their vision for Bellingham Station and the surrounding area and understand how different uses and massing interact with the local context and surroundings.

Most groups felt the best approach for the future of Bellingham Station was to extend it across the surrounding blocks to maximize transit operations and incorporate all the desired supportive elements. There were similar themes of incorporating a mix of uses at the future Bellingham Station in conjunction with transit operations, transit administration, and bicycle parking. With additional buildable areas, many groups experimented with varying land uses at the station, including residential, retail, community space, community services, parking, and green space. Along Railroad Avenue, all groups prioritized an improved bike and pedestrian connection via a Railroad Avenue greenway to improve connectivity to existing trails and promote a multi-modal environment surrounding the station. Additionally, this area was envisioned to incorporate more green space into the public realm.

With more space to work with, many groups expressed a desire for more active public gathering areas, such as a plaza for food trucks. Other participants expressed an interest in bridges across Railroad Avenue to improve pedestrian connections and uniquely use vertical space. The new sites also resulted in the ability to incorporate residential buildings with ground-floor retail that activates the street frontage.



The common takeaways from the final scenario included the following:

- Extending the station into an adjacent site or building the station at a new site would allow for the most flexibility in expanding transit operations while incorporating desired supportive uses that activate and engage the neighborhood.
- Bellingham Station should incorporate a mix of uses in addition to transit operations, transit administration, and bike parking, with residential and community space being priority uses.
- A greenway should be constructed along Railroad Avenue that shifts the modal priority from single-occupancy vehicles to pedestrian, bicycle, and transit and improves connectivity to nearby trails.
- The future Bellingham Station or surrounding area should include an activated public plaza that allows for flexible uses such as food trucks and incorporates community services such as public restrooms, information kiosks, and access to safety and community resources.
- A parking level could be incorporated into a multi-story building to offset on-street parking loss to serve new residential uses.
- Green roofs should be incorporated into new buildings where feasible, and opportunities for public green space beyond the ground floor should be explored.

Design Charette

Applying the findings related to station massing and function from the Bellingham Blox activity, a high-level sketch design was prepared to gauge reactions to building scales, design elements, and functional elements that could be incorporated into the future Bellingham Station and the immediate surrounding area. This activity was structured as an open discussion with the participants. Significant input was gathered around the height and relief of the station building, streetscape elements along Railroad Avenue, creative uses of vertical space, and the functionality of transit operations.





Picture It!

During this activity, participants were shown images representing potential design concepts for the future of Bellingham Station and the surrounding area. These covered four thematic groups: bus stations, bike parking, mixed-use buildings, and transit neighborhood. Participants were asked to rate and comment on each image individually to understand the look, feel, aesthetic qualities, and functionality that stakeholders desired. The outcomes of these rankings were used to develop the conceptual drawings included in the Vision Plan and helped refine how the future transit station would function and interact with the surroundings.

This activity offered participants the opportunity to provide feedback on potential design concepts for Bellingham Station and the surrounding area. This allowed for additional grounding related to the station's design aesthetics, functional elements, and supportive uses. In tandem with the Picture It! activity, sketches from the previous Design Charette activity were further refined with additional details and aesthetics based on real-time feedback from participants.

The following outlines key findings from each thematic group:

Bus Station

- Be open but protected from the elements.
- Have ample seating and waiting space.
- Incorporate more than just transit.
- Functional for operations but simple to use and navigate for passengers.
- Accommodating pedestrians and cyclists.
- Design cohesive with the surrounding area.
- Incorporate materials that feel “pacific northwest” – brick, timber, and metal.

Bike Parking

- Secure and protected from the elements, but visible and easy to navigate.
- Accommodate many types of bikes, such as cargo, e-bikes, and tandems.
- Easy to use for cyclists of all skill levels.
- Use space efficiently.

Mixed-Use Buildings

- Tall first floor to differentiate different uses.
- Green/tree-filled streetscape surrounding the building.
- Relief in the massing, not one giant box.
- Utilize rooftop.
- A mix of materials related to downtown Bellingham: brick, metal, and large windows.

Transit Neighborhood

- Welcoming plaza that incorporates art and community elements.
- Green space with which the public can engage and actively utilize.
- Covered public spaces, including tree coverage.
- Cohesion between passenger waiting areas and public spaces.
- Clean and open design with historical influences.

Chapter 3: Key Issues & Opportunities

This chapter synthesizes the key issues and opportunities for Bellingham Station and the surrounding community as identified in the existing conditions review and the engagement efforts. These insights were used to develop the Vision Plan.

Bellingham Station

As it relates to Bellingham Station, several existing strengths, weaknesses, future limitations, and opportunities were unveiled, as summarized below:

Strengths

- The openness of the existing station provides fresh air and a feeling of security when the station and surrounding streets are active.
- The station is well-utilized from a transit operations and transit ridership perspective.
- The station is well-signed and easy to use for passengers.
- The station provides a waiting area for passengers and access to customer service.
- The station provides administrative space for WTA employees and drivers.

Weaknesses

- The station is at capacity and cannot support additional transit activity needed for a growing population and increased transit demand.
- The openness of the existing station limits the usable ground floor space and needs to be more protected from the elements.
- Difficult to strike the correct balance between providing public amenities at the station and not encouraging loitering.
- Existing bicycle parking must be improved to serve the station or neighborhood and be well protected from the elements.
- The station currently serves as a transit hub and functions exclusively for transit services, offering limited ancillary benefits to the community.
- The station includes a plaza area but needs to be actively utilized.

Opportunities

- Right of way along Railroad Avenue currently provides enough parking for current demand, and there are opportunities to leverage right of way for multi-modal connectivity, such as transit, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities.
- In alignment with the priorities of the Downtown neighborhood and recent trends of increased building heights, the Bellingham Station site should leverage its footprint to maximize vertical building space.
- A new Bellingham Station could be constructed as a mixed-use, multi-level building with transit operations on the ground floor and other supportive uses above, such as residential, community space, community services, and active or passive green space.
- Providing a new station with community-centered ancillary uses could serve as a destination and gateway to the Downtown neighborhood.
- A new station could act as a catalyst for 24-hour activity within the community.
- Significant work has been completed before this effort, and the surrounding community has received positive feedback on conceptual station improvements.

Limitations

- The size and footprint of the current property limit the potential for expanded transit operations. As a result, expansion into the Railroad Avenue right-of-way would be necessary, or relocation to another property would be necessary, and additional public amenities on the ground level could be limited.
- If transit operations expanded beyond current expectations for growth, there would be limited, if any, opportunities for additional site expansion.

- While the potential addition of EVs and articulated buses is possible at the existing site, the scope of such improvements (such as accommodating on-site EV charging) would be limited. It could limit the expansion of capacity for passenger operations.
- Expansion into the right of way would change the existing street network and reduce vehicular parking, which was noted as important to local landowners and business owners.
- Using another site for the future Bellingham Station would require investment from WTA and coordination with local landowners.

Neighborhood & Community

As it relates to the neighborhood and surrounding community, several existing strengths, weaknesses, future limitations, and opportunities were unveiled, as summarized below:

Strengths

- There are multiple bicycle facilities in the surrounding area and ample pedestrian connectivity.
- There is ample on-street parking provided in the area.
- "Streeteries" have been implemented due to the Covid-19 pandemic and have successfully activated the streetscape.
- The sidewalks and public space incorporate significant tree cover.
- An electric array of local businesses, restaurants, and services makes the neighborhood feel community centered.
- There is a variety of streetscape and building styles.
- The area appeals to both residents and visitors.

Weaknesses

- There are currently several vacant lots and vacant buildings.
- There isn't a safe non-motorized connection between the South Bay Trail to the south and the Whatcom Creek Trail to the north.
- Parking is underutilized in the existing nearby parking garage, while on-street parking is highly utilized within public right-of-way that could benefit more from improved pedestrian, bicycle, and transit facilities.
- Sidewalks are narrow and more overcrowded during high pedestrian traffic, especially on weekends.
- There need to be more public restrooms.
- Some residents and business owners feel the area could be safer.
- Additional housing is needed for significantly larger family-sized units and affordable units.

Opportunities

- Near- to mid-term redevelopment sites in the direct vicinity of the existing Bellingham Station provide opportunities to implement the goals of the vision plan beyond the station itself.
- Construction of a new transit station nearby would allow operations to continue at the existing location or adjacent properties with limited disruption of services.
- There are no height restrictions, and taller buildings are encouraged in this area which could help increase the amount of housing while accommodating a variety of other ground-floor uses.
- Railroad Avenue is wide and has a generous right-of-way that could be reallocated to provide a more comfortable street-level environment for a wider variety of users and transportation modes.

Limitations

- WTA and the City have limited control over the type of redevelopment projects at nearby opportunity sites.
- The neighborhood maintains several private landowners and business owners whom WTA and the City will need to coordinate with on any future projects.

Chapter 4: Vision Plan

The Bellingham Station Vision Plan includes the unified vision statement, goals and principles for achieving the vision statement, descriptions of the envisioned Bellingham Station, neighborhood, and supportive uses, and conceptual renderings that depict the vision for Bellingham Station and the surrounding area.

Unified Vision Statement

Our vision for Bellingham Station is to provide a safe, reliable, and efficient transit hub that supports multi-modal transportation. The station will be complemented by robust community and mixed-use spaces that energize and strengthen local businesses, residents, and visitors. The Bellingham Station and surrounding area will help shape the character of downtown and connect people to opportunities and each other by providing a community destination that supports a diverse, vibrant, and friendly neighborhood.

Goals

The development of the Vision Plan is grounded in WTA's need to expand transit services at the Bellingham Station and the desire to integrate with the surrounding neighborhood to improve the quality of life for residents, business owners, and visitors. In support of the unified vision statement, the following goals were developed. The vision for Bellingham Station and the surrounding neighborhood aims to support these goals.

- Provide sufficient space to allow transit operations at Bellingham Station to expand and serve a growing population, including the necessary administrative space to support the increase in operations.
- Prioritize neighborhood-serving uses at the Bellingham Station site and surrounding area that provide resources to the immediate community while promoting the area as a destination.
- Consistent with the city's transportation modal hierarchy, prioritize pedestrian, bicycle, and public transit modes within the public right-of-way and the Bellingham Station site as applicable.
- Pursue a vibrant, walkable, and connected neighborhood by incorporating public open spaces, active ground floor uses, and non-motorized connectivity.

Neighborhood Description

Bellingham Station and the surrounding area is characterized by its diverse population, inclusivity, and a strong sense of community. It is home to local businesses providing various services, a tree canopy, a concentration of restaurants, and various streetscapes and building styles. Bellingham Station is a key transit hub in the city and serves as a gateway to downtown and beyond. The station is a critical component of a comprehensive multi-modal transportation system that provides safe, reliable, and efficient access throughout the site.

Building on the characteristics that exist today and creating a space that serves the area into the future, the neighborhood should prioritize the inclusion of mixed-income residential buildings, programmable community space, thoughtful community services, public gathering spaces, enhanced bicycle and pedestrian connectivity, and redevelopment to transform vacant spaces into businesses, services, or housing that benefits the community.

Bellingham Station and the surrounding area will play a crucial role in shaping the character of downtown and connecting people to opportunities and each other. As a community destination supporting a diverse, vibrant, and friendly neighborhood, Bellingham Station and the surrounding area will attract residents and visitors alike, drawn to its welcoming atmosphere, vibrant culture, and convenient transportation options. As a new Bellingham Station is introduced downtown, combined with the supportive uses desired by the community, the neighborhood will be strengthened as a dynamic, inclusive, and thriving community that reflects the values and aspirations of its residents.

Bellingham Station Description

Transit Operations

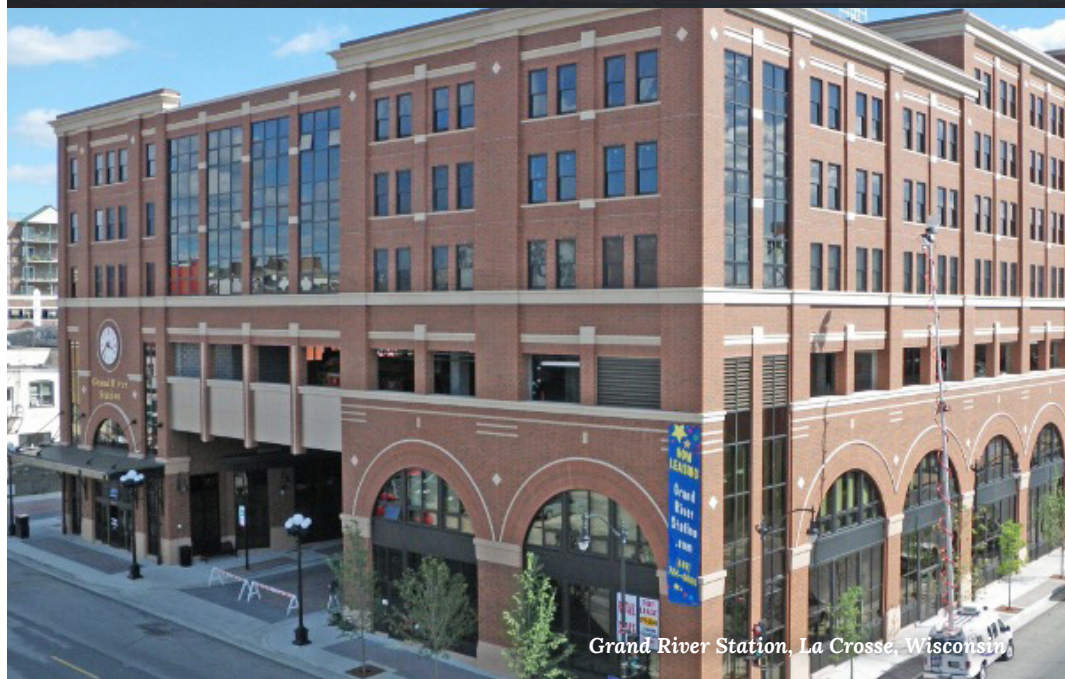
The future Bellingham Station should first and foremost address the need for expanded transit capacity. Changes to the existing station or a new station should have the ability to increase weekday peak period transit capacity by a minimum of 50 percent (i.e., a minimum of 15 bus bays) while also accommodating the future possibility of fleet changes to include articulated buses and zero-emission buses. Additionally, the future Bellingham Station should allow administrative space to double to support increased transit service at the station.

Transit operations should occur on the ground floor, with administrative space incorporated on the ground floor, if feasible, or on floors above. Other supportive uses should be included on the ground level and above the transit station to activate the neighborhood and provide necessary community services. It is essential that transit operations, including passenger waiting areas, are designed to feel safe, open, and welcoming while providing adequate protection from the elements.

While the existing Bellingham Station site may be sufficient to provide the necessary space for expansion, nearby opportunity sites, either a single site or a combination of sites, may provide a greater range of opportunities and should be explored as possible future locations for



Downtown Transit Station, Charlottesville, VA



Grand River Station, La Crosse, Wisconsin

Bellingham Station.. By expanding the footprint of Bellingham Station, WTA could adequately expand transit operations while providing additional space to accommodate supportive uses. However, the station should remain consolidated to ensure easy passenger transfers.

Supportive Uses

The future Bellingham Station should also provide all or some of the following supportive uses. While not all supportive uses may be accommodated within the station itself, they should be prioritized in the immediate neighborhood to align with transit-oriented development and enhance the community.



Atrium Building, Victoria, BC



Bike-n-Ride Shelter, Louisville, CO



1300 King Street, Alexandria, VA

Bicycle Amenities

The Bellingham Station should provide ample bicycle parking to support people who bike to Bellingham Station and the surrounding area. Bicycle parking should be secure, weather protected, ideally located within the station building or a standalone facility, and can serve multiple types of bikes, including tandem bikes, cargo bikes, and e-bikes. Additional amenities such as more fix-it stations or bicycle rentals should be considered.

Housing

The Bellingham Station and surrounding area should support residential uses in the form of a multi-story apartment building. Residential uses should be mixed-income and provide a range of unit types that accommodate anyone from single tenants to families. Given the proximity to transit, this type of housing should be targeted toward car-free or car-lite tenants to limit parking needs. In line with residential buildings in the immediate neighborhood, 4-to-6-story (total height) residential buildings should be considered to maximize the housing provided. This could include buildings that consist entirely of residential units or buildings that incorporate other uses on the ground floor.

Community Space

Community space is characterized as easily accessible, secure, programmable space that can be utilized by the community, such as meeting space, studio space, or event space, and could be a combination of indoor and outdoor space. Community space should be reservable by anyone in the community to be used as a gathering space for events, education, common or specific interests, etc. In addition, the community space should be technology-enabled with amenities such as restrooms and kitchen facilities to serve as many needs as possible and be well-advertised to the community.

Community Services

The Bellingham Station and the surrounding area should provide information and connect people to community resources and services. These services should be provided within active spaces that are open to the public. Community services should include permanently available resources, such as informational kiosks, safety kiosks, and restrooms. In addition, community services could include staffed resources such as safety ambassadors and social services that are available to the public regularly. Finally, community services could be provided through indoor and outdoor spaces, with services targeted to visitors and community members to help establish a welcoming, safe, inclusive, and clean neighborhood.

Open/Green Space

The Bellingham Station and surrounding area should incorporate open and green spaces to continue building on the tree-filled environment today and provide active gathering and play spaces for members of the community as well as visitors. These spaces may be incorporated as green roofs (passive, private spaces for building tenants or open to the public), raised green spaces that take advantage of vertical space, or ground-level parks or public plazas. Of course, not all green space should be required to be fully open to the public, such as in the case of green roofs atop residential buildings. Still, some publicly available green and open space should be provided as part of the future Bellingham Station and the surrounding area. Additionally, the area's streetscape directly surrounding the station should prioritize the inclusion of street trees and other landscaping.

Parking

The removal of some existing on-street parking along Railroad Avenue should be considered as a way to improve access for transit, pedestrians, and bicycles. While replacing removed parking could be accommodated as part of the future Bellingham Station or surrounding sites, parking for single-occupancy vehicles should not be considered a priority above high-occupancy and non-motorized modes of transportation.

Non-Motorized Facilities

Wider pedestrian thoroughfares should be provided where possible, and a designated non-motorized connection should be established between the South Bay Trail and the Whatcom Creek Trail along Railroad Avenue. In addition, the modal priority of Railroad Avenue should be reevaluated so that space for pedestrians, bicycles, and transit is prioritized over space for single-occupancy vehicles. Additional corridor study(s) will be needed to inform how this realignment could interface with the new Bellingham Station.

Role in Neighborhood

Building on its role as a transit hub, the future Bellingham Station should serve as a multi-modal hub that provides reliable transit services promotes and supports bicycle and pedestrian modes, and is a safe space for passengers and community members. In addition, the station should provide additional supportive uses such as residential space, community space, or community services.

The station should serve as a center point of the neighborhood both in its services and in how it enhances the look and feel of the neighborhood and serves as a driver of activity and business growth.



Bellingham Station Conceptual Renderings

Conceptual renderings of the vision plan elements were created to help illustrate the potential look and feel of the future Bellingham Station and the surrounding area. Bellingham Station is envisioned as a mixed-use destination within downtown Bellingham, serving first and foremost as a key transit hub for residents, workers, businesses, and visitors but also incorporating community-engaging uses, non-motorized connectivity, and residential space.

The current station is a small building on the block's southern end that houses passenger services and WTA administrative space, a covered concourse with ten bus stops, waiting

areas, and comprehensive wayfinding and informational services. The first floor of the proposed building would be primarily dedicated to bus operations with an open-air feel to improve protection from the elements while maintaining an open and inviting area for passengers. The first floor is expected to be fully open to the street by using a columned first floor around the building or incorporating glass walls along the street frontage. Furthermore, the current northbound travel lane and parking lane would be integrated with the transit station and first-floor bus operations to provide more space for bus bays. The building would have a cantilevered canopy along the Railroad Avenue frontage to protect waiting passengers from the elements. This canopy could be designed to mimic and pay homage to the current concourse canopy. Glass materials could be



used to the greatest extent possible to allow as much light into the station as possible.

By incorporating two concourses: one entirely internal to the building and one that straddles the building frontage serving buses internal to the building and along Railroad Avenue, bus operations are expected to increase by at least 50 percent (to include 15 bus bays) and as much as 100 percent (to include 20 bus bays) with this ground floor layout. This concourse would be wide enough to maintain a sufficient pedestrian pathway while providing passenger waiting areas to maintain public access. The Railroad Avenue bus bays would accommodate northbound buses, while the internal bus bays would accommodate southbound buses. The building's one-way orientation limits the size of the curb cuts and driveways required for bus access while eliminating potential conflict points between buses and passengers within the terminal area.

According to stakeholder workshop discussions, the Bellingham Station building should include space for WTA administration, community rooms, and residential units. To effectively incorporate these uses, the WTA administration space could be consolidated into the building's south "tower." This location is consistent with what is currently in place and would also serve as the main entrance for passenger services. Community space could be built into the north and south towers. The remaining space could be used to build residential units. However, residential uses are expected to be separated from bus operations by at least one floor. This floor could be used for a combination of community space, WTA offices, and parking. To compensate for the loss of on-street parking along Railroad Avenue, parking provided within the building could include a mix of reserved residential parking and public parking. To be



in line with existing Downtown height trends, this building could be six stories tall, with the first floor dedicated to transit operations, the second floor incorporating parking, community uses, and administrative space, and the remaining four stories incorporating primarily residential space with a mix of community uses and administrative space in the towers.

The structure should be designed to blend in with the Downtown neighborhood and may evoke "Pacific Northwest" design cues. This could be accomplished using materials such as brick, wood, metal, glass, and various angular roof slopes. Green roof elements could be used on the rooftop for sustainability and community gathering. To maximize community integration,

this space could be activated so that it is reservable by the public for community uses in addition to residents and WTA employees.

The median right-of-way along Railroad Avenue would be re-purposed. Currently, two rows of angled parking with a small tree-lined median in between could be transformed into a cycle track or shared-use path, with additional space dedicated to tree canopy or more active green spaces. This central median could also include a bike parking structure. A pedestrian crossing in the middle of the block could also be included to provide additional access to the station. This crossing could be extended through the station's ground floor to provide a continuous pedestrian connection through the terminal.

Chapter 4: Next Steps

This visioning study is the first of many steps that must be taken to develop the future of Bellingham Station. Following this study, the following steps are expected:

- **Feasibility Study**
Following the visioning study, a feasibility study would be required to develop a more in-depth understanding of site design constraints (at the existing and potential opportunity sites), and a final site will be chosen.
- **Railroad Avenue Parking Study**
Following the visioning study, a parking study should be conducted along Railroad Avenue and the neighborhood adjacent to Bellingham Station. A parking study would aim to analyze and evaluate the parking needs and requirements of the Railroad Avenue neighborhood.
- **Railroad Avenue Corridor Study**
Following the visioning study, a corridor study should be conducted along Railroad Avenue from York Street to East Laurel Street. A corridor study along this six-block stretch would assess existing traffic flow, safety, and accessibility issues and identify opportunities to optimize transportation systems, improve pedestrian and cyclist facilities, and plan for future growth and development along Railroad Avenue in a sustainable and efficient manner.
- **Project Design**
Following the completion of the feasibility study and finalization of the future Bellingham Station site location, the engineering design of the building will begin.
- **Construction**
The future Bellingham Station will begin construction once the engineering design is completed and signed off on. This is expected to happen in 2026 at the earliest.

While this is an aspirational vision plan that gathers all potential options for the station and surrounding area, an air of caution is always advised to ensure that a project gets completed and addresses the most basic function and highest needs associated with the project. The elements outlined in this vision plan should be considered as additional feasibility and design studies are conducted but should not be included solely because they are included in the vision plan if such elements would have a negative impact on the overall project's completion and sustainability.

Appendix A: Task 2

Technical Memorandum



MEMORANDUM

Date:	December 23, 2022	TG:	1.20307.00
To:	Mary Anderson, AICP, TDM-CP – WTA		
From:	Chris Titze, AICP/PP – Transpo Group		
Subject:	Bellingham Transit Station Visioning Study – Task 2 Tech Memo		

Introduction

The purpose of this memo is to understand the study area as it exists today and how the study area is currently envisioned for the future. This includes a summary of the study area based on an in-person site visit with the project team and a review of pertinent planning documents as provided by the Whatcom Transportation Authority (WTA) and City of Bellingham.

Existing Conditions

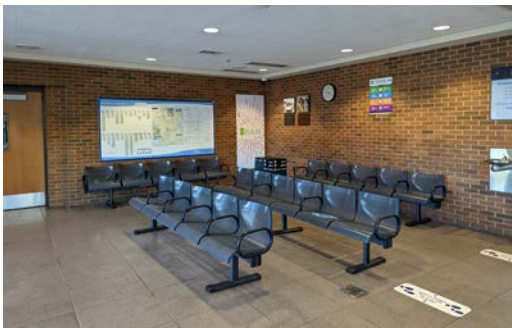


Figure 1: Indoor Seating at the Bellingham Transit Station

The station features a building, which contains an indoor waiting room (shown in Figure 1), customer service offices, a lunchroom for employees, and other shared and individual office facilities. The station also has public restrooms which are currently closed and may remain closed for the foreseeable future. Outside there is a concourse which includes 10 bus bays along with ample wayfinding signage and maps (shown in Figure 2).

There are several amenities directly surrounding the station including ample bike parking, curb extensions at intersections with ADA-compliant crossings and curb ramps, vehicle parking, and a pedestrian plaza with public art (shown in Figure 4). Previously the plaza included benches which have since been removed. WTA is evaluating opportunities to add outdoor seating

The Bellingham Transit Station is located in downtown Bellingham, between E Magnolia Street and E Champion Street. The station is currently served by 22 WTA routes with 427 trips both departing and arriving (854 total trips) each weekday from 6 a.m. to 11 p.m. The station is currently at capacity during weekdays which limits the ability to expand service commensurate with continued population growth.



Figure 2: BTS Concourse

back to the plaza while striking the right balance between providing public amenities and discouraging loitering. Additionally, WTA is cognizant of additional amenities requested by the public such as places to fill up water bottles and public restrooms.

For the area surrounding the BTS, the ownership of parcels is currently fractured, but there may be some redevelopment opportunities in the future that could be coordinated with changes and improvements at the BTS. Along Railroad Avenue specifically there is a significant amount of retail space, although retail is concentrated on the northwest side of the roadway. The sidewalks on Railroad Avenue are also narrow at certain points, which can be a detriment to foot traffic along the roadway, especially during the weekend. However, since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, several parklets and “street-eries” have been added in the area surrounding the station (Shown in Figure 3). This trend is expected to continue, but it is possible that new policies and regulations may need to be added in the future to better regulate and encourage such public uses in a way that is mutually beneficial to the City and the business owners. While these changes have been generally beneficial to the feel of Railroad Avenue, the scale and allocation of space along Railroad Avenue still favors vehicle traffic. The scale and multi-modal use of Railroad Avenue should be re-evaluated as part of the Visioning Plan. Nearby streets such as Cornwall Avenue could be used as a potential blueprint for increasing tree canopy and providing an improved pedestrian feel.



Figure 4: Public art in the BTS plaza



Figure 3: Retail shops and “street-eries” along Railroad Avenue

In the downtown area surrounding the station, there is a mix of both city-owned and privately-owned parking lots. The city-owned parking lots are often used by bus drivers who commute to the station from the WTA base. The on-street parking area closest to the station exists within the median of Railroad Avenue to the west of the station (shown in Figure 5). The prevalence of angled parking in the median of Railroad Avenue continues for two more blocks to E Chestnut Street. The closest off-street parking to the station is at the Commercial Street garage, which is currently underutilized and could be improved to better offset street parking. No downtown regulations on parking requirements currently exist. It has been suggested that the median parking along Railroad Avenue could be reduced or eliminated to make room for a more active street front. If this were to occur, Railroad Avenue would be better able to connect the Whatcom Creek Trail to the north to the South Bay Trail to the south.



Figure 5: Median parking along Railroad Avenue

Planning Document Review

2018 Downtown Bellingham Parking Summary

The 2018 Downtown Bellingham Parking Summary measured the parking utilization and parking duration of vehicles in downtown Bellingham during both a typical summer weekday and a typical fall weekday in 2018. This study determined how parking conditions changed since a previous study done in 2013 and developed short and long-term parking management strategies to address future parking needs. The study found that in the Downtown area, between 2013 and 2018 there was a 19% increase in the number of vehicles that parked in the study area during the summer,



and a 20% increase in the number of vehicles that parked in the study area in the fall. Most of the increase occurred in two neighborhoods: the York neighborhood, where the average parking occupancy rose 13% in the summer and 17% in the fall, and the Central Business District (where the BTS is located) where the average occupancy rose 10% in the summer and 12% in the fall. For parking duration, most vehicles parked in the downtown area were parked for less than an hour, although the number of vehicles parked for more than one (1) hour rose between 2013 and 2018. Ultimately, there were no significant changes in recommendations for parking management strategies between 2013 and 2018, outside of expanding paid parking to sections of Cornwall Avenue, N State Street, and E Laurel Street.



Figure 6: Excerpt from the 2018 Downtown Bellingham Parking Study

For on-street parking along the segments of Railroad Avenue adjacent to the BTS, average daily parking utilization during the summer was between 25-50% on the east side, and between 50-75% on the west side. During the summer peak hour at 1 PM, both sides of the street were between 50-75% parking utilization. During the fall, both the average daily parking utilization and peak hour (1 PM) parking utilization were between 25-50% on both sides of Railroad Avenue. Maps of the results of the 2018 Downtown Bellingham Parking Summary can be found in Attachment A.

Bellingham Transit Station Expansion

The Bellingham Transit Station Expansion is a project that has been proposed to improve overall operations and conditions at the Bellingham Transit Station. This project was triggered when WTA expanded services in 2017, which put the station at 80-90% capacity during its four “pulse” times. Expansion of the station would allow the WTA to avoid planning future services based on the



availability of bus gates and continue to plan future services based on what is best for the community. Expansion of the station can also help the WTA plan for future types of buses that may run through the station, such as electric buses and articulated buses, which are not currently in WTA's transit fleet.

The current iteration of design plans for the station were designed by Zervas Architects. The station expansion would feature several amenities, including an electric bus charging station, expanded bike storage, additional solar panels on top of passenger shelters, and a new concourse to provide ADA accessible loading. The new plan is working to maintain as much public parking as possible, as parking remains a top concern based on community feedback. Businesses in the surrounding area are particularly concerned about potentially losing parking for both customers and employees. Businesses have also asked for amenities to connect State Street businesses with downtown. Other priority needs from the community include adding a loading zone for customers, architecture that matches the existing station, and longer hours of service for public restrooms.



Figure 7: Preferred conceptual plans for the Bellingham Transit Station Expansion

Downtown Bellingham Plan

Adopted by the City of Bellingham in 2014, the Downtown Bellingham Plan describes downtown Bellingham's ideal future in vision and goal statements and identifies projects and strategies to achieve those goals for the downtown area. The plan notes an emergence of Downtown as an urban residential neighborhood, which provides the opportunity to create a stronger sense of community and provide support for Downtown businesses. New businesses have invested in Downtown, corporations have moved into existing buildings, and property owners have made improvements to their buildings and frontage. This has resulted in an increasingly distinct character in Downtown and has been coupled with greater pedestrian and bicycle activity. As a

subset of the Downtown neighborhood, the Bellingham Transit Station Visioning Study should be developed with the vision and goals of the Downtown Bellingham Plan in mind.

The plan developed 10 core visions that have emerged for Downtown Bellingham based on the trends outlined above and through significant community input:

1. Downtown is a place where people come to play, work, shop and live – a vibrant community gathering place.
2. Downtown is safe and friendly for people of all ages, income levels and cultures.
3. Downtown continues to serve as an economic engine for the City and region, promoting a diverse economic environment that supports both local entrepreneurial ventures, as well as larger businesses.
4. Downtown is a successful and desirable neighborhood with a variety of housing choices and mix of uses.
5. Downtown protects and restores natural resources and incorporates environmentally friendly elements into new projects.
6. Downtown's network of public parks, plazas, trails and open space is enhanced and interconnected.
7. Downtown values its historic buildings and encourages compatible, high-quality construction.
8. Downtown's streets safely accommodate many modes of travel: pedestrians, bicycles, automobiles, transit and freight.
9. Downtown has a thriving culture and arts community and its lively public spaces are local and regional destinations.
10. Downtown's streetscape is active and comfortable day and night, with pedestrian-scale lighting, street trees, landscaping, seating, and other coordinated amenities that establish a distinct identity.

As outlined in the Plan, commercial development in the Downtown neighborhood is anticipated to grow between 2013 and 2036 with an estimated increase in jobs from 2,565 to between 8,135 and 8,410. To achieve this anticipated economic growth, the Plan identifies the need to incentivize and promote continued development, business expansion, and redevelopment of vacant spaces; develop key public-private partnerships; provide clear regulations and remove barriers that disincentive development; and coordinate with property owners on street improvement projects to ensure that projects are completed in a way that is mutually beneficial to the business community. Housing is expected to grow at an even steeper rate than employment. Between 2013 and 2036 the number of residents in Downtown is projected to grow from 2,640 to between 4,720 and 5,240. This increase in residents requires a diversity of housing that is affordable to all income ranges.

For both commercial and residential development, the Plan prioritizes sustainable development that encourages a healthy and livable community, the preservation of historic buildings, and development that is safe and welcoming to all. Where possible, civic functions, cultural institutions and government services should continue to be located Downtown to provide central access to such uses.

In addition to commercial and residential development, the Commercial Core (where the BTS is located) is an area that should include a wide range of uses such as arts, culture and entertainment. The BTS itself is located in an area that is identified as the Entertainment District. This area should maintain a healthy mixed-use environment that respects the needs of both residents and late-night venues.

As it relates specifically to the BTS and the surrounding area, one of the goals outlined in the plan is to improve Railroad Avenue in order to safely accommodate all modes of transportation. Railroad Avenue is cited as a target site for enhancement due to having some of the highest foot



traffic in the city combined with being a major trail connection between the South Bay Trail to the south and the Whatcom Creek Trail to the north. Goal 7.5 of the Downtown plan specifically cites wayfinding signage as one of the improvements that could be made to Railroad Avenue.

Additionally, there are several other goals and policies from the Downtown Bellingham Plan that should be taken into consideration as part of the BTS Visioning Study including the following:

- Activate public spaces through placemaking such as repurposing traffic lanes, widening sidewalks, and incorporating artistic streetscape elements and artwork.
- Activate “Streets as Places” to promote a more balanced sharing of space between vehicles and people.
- Seek opportunities to connect existing trails to facilities non-motorized transportation into and through downtown.
- Balance the need for freight access with the needs of other uses and streetscape improvements that narrow vehicular spaces.
- Work with Downtown businesses to promote pedestrian, bicycle, and transit use for their employees and customers.
- Encourage alternative uses of the public right-of-way to offer new opportunities for public space, while balancing the needs for traffic flow and parking.
- Maximize the efficient use of the existing parking supply in on-street, off-street and private parking facilities and areas.

UTS 2022 Railroad Corridor Plan

As part of a capstone project at Western Washington University (WWU), the WWU Planning Studio class evaluated development alternatives for improving the Railroad Avenue corridor between E Maple Street and York Street. As part of this project, surveys were conducted to understand community preferences for development along the corridor. From these responses, it was found that lack of safety and lack of public space along the corridor were the biggest concerns for survey respondents. The survey found that improved spaces for pedestrians, more green spaces, and more housing affordable for working class residents were the most preferred improvements along the corridor. One finding from the survey worth highlighting is a divide among respondents on parking. When asked what they disliked the most about Railroad Avenue, the top five responses among the 550 respondents were found to be:

- Crime, houseless population, safety (107 respondents)
- Too much parking/car support (49 respondents)
- Inadequate parking (34 respondents)
- Poor walkability (20 respondents)
- Difficult to drive/traffic (17 respondents)

From these responses, there is an apparent divide between respondents who believe that Railroad Avenue is too car centric and respondents who believe that Railroad Avenue doesn't do enough to support cars.

The UTS 2022 Railroad Corridor Plan features some proposed redesigns for the Bellingham Transit Station. The proposal includes many new environmental amenities, including a raingarden, green roofs, and green wall frontage. For the terminal expansion, the UTS Plan suggested construction of a 3-story parking garage above the transit station, as well as accommodating for the proposed WTA terminal expansion. While these plans for the station are not official, they were drafted with guidance from community partners in the City of Bellingham Planning Department, the City of Bellingham Public Works Department, WTA, and the Downtown Bellingham Partnership.



Figure 8 and Figure 9 below show conceptual images of the Bellingham Transit Station's proposed design from the UTS 2022 Railroad Corridor Plan.



Figure 8: View of expanded bus station beneath a parking garage



Figure 9: View of conceptual BTS redesign looking northeast

Appendix B: Workshop #1 Workbook

Bellingham Station Visioning Workbook

**WWU Conference Room
at Stateside Apartments**

901 N State Street
Bellingham, WA 98225

Tuesday, February 7, 2023
8:30AM-12:30PM



WTA

*Presented by Whatcom Transit Authority
in partnership with TranspoGroup*

Meeting Agenda

8:30-8:45 Getting Started

8:45-9:30 Visioning Study Purpose
Presentation/Knowledge Sharing

9:30-10:00 Walking Tour & Activity (Rain or Shine!)

10:00-10:30 Bellingham Station Neighborhood...
Today and the Future?
Breakout Group/Knowledge Gathering

10:30-11:30 Thinking Beyond the Bus:
Crazy 8s & Idea Bus
Breakout Group/Knowledge Gathering

11:30-11:35 Break

11:35-12:25 Conceptual Vision Statement
Development
Breakout Group/Knowledge Gathering

12:25-12:30 Wrap-Up & Next Steps

Workshop Goals

- 1** Educate stakeholders on the purpose of this vision study, why it is an integral part of future Bellingham Station plans, what has been completed regarding future Bellingham Station plans to date and findings of initial public engagement efforts.
- 2** Gather information from stakeholders about key issues and opportunities at the Bellingham Station and in the community directly surrounding the station..
- 3** Guide stakeholders through developing a Conceptual Vision Statement for Bellingham Station and the surrounding neighborhood.

Current Situation

Bellingham Station has ten bus bays and serves 22 Routes; 427 trips depart and arrive (854 total trips) at Bellingham Station each weekday from 6:00 am until 11:00 pm.

In WTA's 2018 boarding and alighting survey, WTA counted 3,344 boardings and 2,826 alightings at the Bellingham Station on an average weekday. This is the most current boarding and alighting data maintained by WTA. On a randomly selected weekday in October, over 2,100 boardings were observed at Bellingham Station.

WTA 2040, our long-range plan, identifies service expansion that will allow us to grow transit service alongside population growth and help make transit a more viable option for more people. For example, Bellingham Station is currently at capacity during weekdays. While we can add weekend service, we need more capacity to increase weekday service during peak hours.

Definitions

Land Use Type

examples include: residential, office, retail, community space, entertainment, services, green space, etc.

Specific Area Feature

examples include: specific building or community space uses (small businesses, daycare, farmers market, public facilities, etc.), specific streetscape elements (more pedestrian space, streeteries, rain gardens, etc.), and/or specific transportation facilities (vehicle parking, bicycle lanes, bicycle parking)

Key Stakeholder

examples include: residents, business owners, business patrons, visitors, etc.

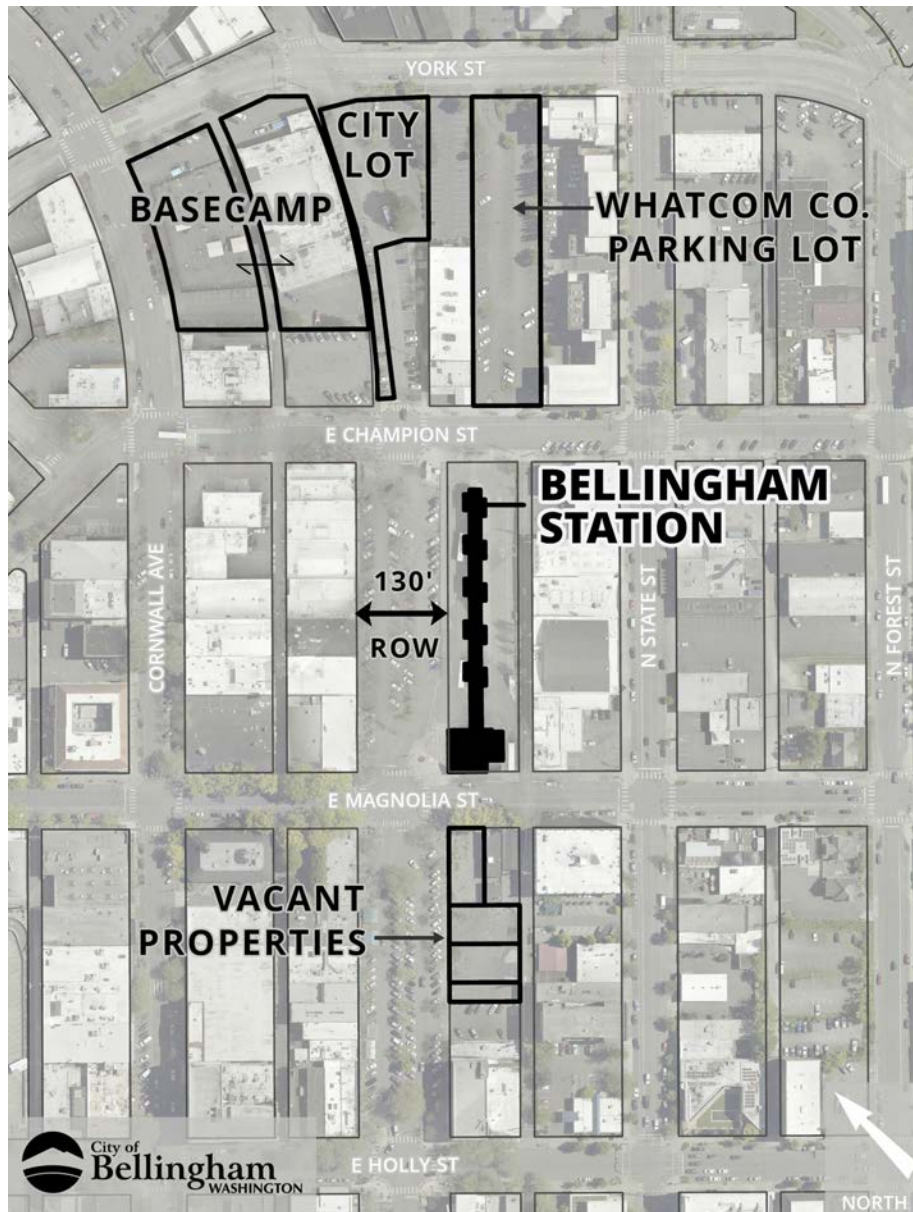
Key Priority

examples include: mix of quality housing choices, effective transportation, safe and healthy options for walking and biking, support for small and local businesses, public spaces that propose community engagement, etc.

Bellingham Station Vicinity



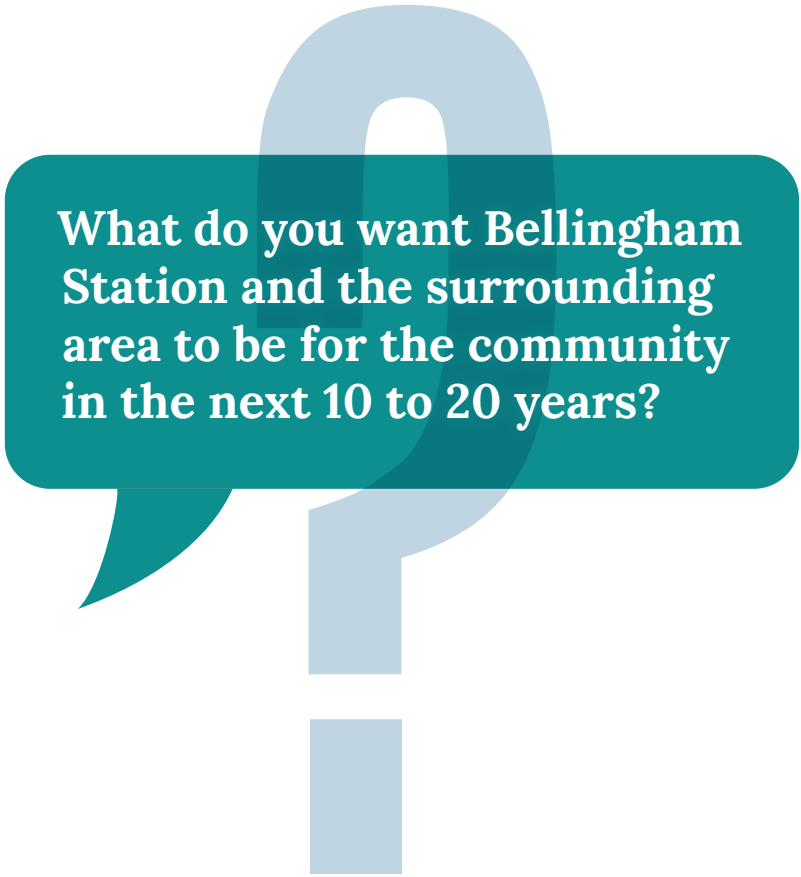
Opportunity Sites



Vision Statement Mad Libs!

We will dive into the conceptual vision statement writing later in this workshop, but we want to get the creative juices flowing with a Vision Statement, Mad Libs! For this activity, we would like you to fill in the blanks of the Vision Statement Template to understand how you view the area, what you see as priorities for the future, and whom you think this area should be serving.

A vision statement is a shared statement that describes the long-term goals and aspirations for an area. To help develop the conceptual vision statement for the Bellingham Station, you should think about the following question:



What do you want Bellingham Station and the surrounding area to be for the community in the next 10 to 20 years?

WTA MAP LIBS

The future of the Bellingham Station and the surrounding area should reflect the _____ *[adjective]* character of Downtown Bellingham while enhancing the area's transit services, supporting the surrounding community with a mix of _____ , _____ , and _____ land uses *[land use types]*, and establishing a _____ *[adjective]* sense of place by incorporating _____ , _____ , and _____ *[Specific Area Features]* into the built environment.

The area should prioritize the needs of _____ , _____ , and _____ *[key stakeholders]* by ensuring future improvement projects lead to _____ , _____ , and _____ *[key priorities]*.

Walking Tour Activity

(30 minutes)

While participating in the walking tour, we want you to document what you observe using all of your senses. Understanding the who, what, where, and why of Bellingham Station and the surrounding community as it exists today develops a baseline for examining the direction of the community in the future. Be prepared to share your observations with the group.

Who is this neighborhood currently serving?

What businesses and services are available?

What makes the area unique/special?

Are there opportunities for improvement?

How does the area make you feel?

Bellingham Station Neighborhood: Today and the Future?

(30 minutes)

(Part 1/2)

Now that you've explored Bellingham Station and the surrounding area, it's time to reflect upon the neighborhood today and where you see the neighborhood going.

First, please take 10 minutes to share your observations from the walking tour with your breakout group. Reflect upon:

- Who is the neighborhood currently serving?
- What businesses and services are available?
- What makes the area unique/special?
- Are there opportunities for improvement?
- How does the area make you feel?

Continue to part 2

Bellingham Station Neighborhood: Today and the Future?

(Part 2/2)

As a group, we want to explore the future of the Bellingham Station Neighborhood. Each group has been provided with different colored post-it notes. Each color has been assigned to a particular question. When directed, answer the stated question on the assigned colored post-it note. Make sure to answer the question on the assigned post-it note color. If you need more space or have more than one response per question, please feel free to use as many post-it notes as you need. Once you have finished answering, please add your post-it note(s) to the group's Future Vision Board.

- **Blue:** What does the neighborhood need?
- **Yellow:** Whom is the future neighborhood serving?
- **Pink:** What is the character of the future neighborhood?
- **Green:** What would it look like if the neighborhood reached its full potential?
- **Orange:** What will the future neighborhood be known for?

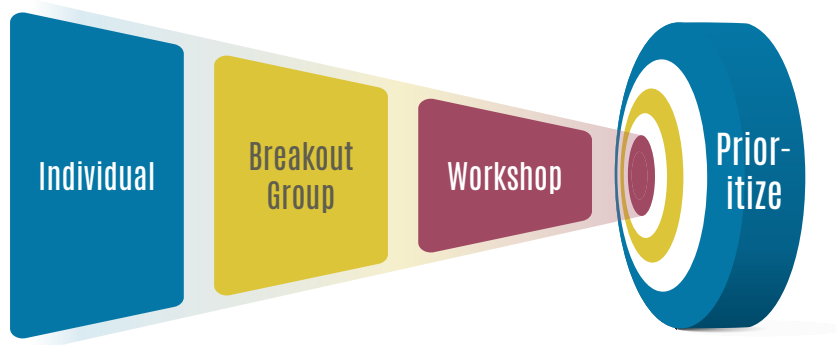
Now that we have reflected upon the neighborhood's current state and explored its potential future, each group will share their ideas with the working group. When directed, please select a group spokesperson and have them highlight your group's Future Vision Board findings.

Thinking Beyond the Bus

(60 minutes)

Bellingham Station is, first and foremost, a public transportation station. But what other community activities or services could be programmed on-site?

For this next activity, we want each group to “think beyond the bus” and generate a list of programmatic elements or uses Bellingham Station could house or support. When developing ideas, please keep in mind the outcomes of the Future Vision Board exercise.



The idea-generation and refinement process

Crazy 8s

(30 Minutes)

Use the grid on next page to complete this exercise

1. When directed, brainstorm a unique idea (one idea per box on the paper) for a use, service, business, etc. at Bellingham Station other than transit. Try to generate ideas “beyond the bus” for the Bellingham Station neighborhood. Anything goes!
2. When the timer begins, you have 30 seconds to brainstorm your first idea. Then, move to your next idea (box) as each group's moderator announces the passing time. The pace might feel uncomfortable, but that's the point!
3. At the end of time, each person will talk through the Crazy Eight ideas they came up with (no interruptions or comments, please).
4. After everyone has shared their individual Crazy Eight Ideas, the group will do the exercise again together to create a collaborative group of Crazy Eight Ideas (using the individual work for inspiration) on the provided easel pad.
5. Each group will designate a group speaker, and they will present the group's Crazy Eight Ideas for Bellingham Station to the entire workshop.

1	2
3	4
5	6
7	8

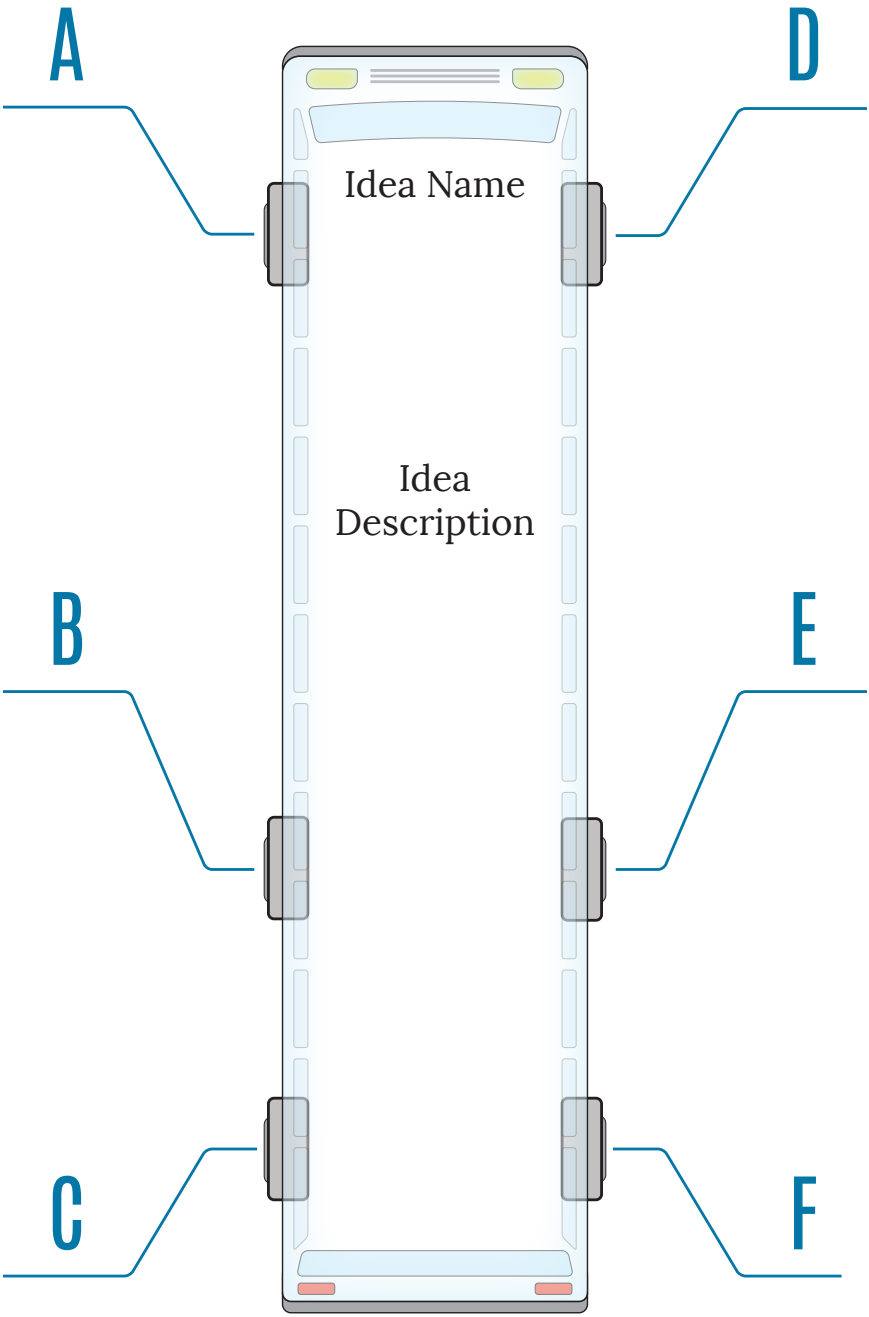
Idea Bus

(30 minutes)

Now that everyone's creative juices are flowing, it's time to evaluate if our Crazy Eight Ideas are strong and have "wheels" or if they need more thinking and refinement. You might think we have a set of really good ideas, but we can quickly test their robustness and validity by evaluating them against a set of questions.

Each breakout group has been assigned one of our top Crazy Eight Ideas for the Bellingham Station. Using the provided Idea Bus Board answer the following questions for your group's assigned Crazy Eight Idea:

- A. Who is it for, and how does it help them?
- B. What makes it different from what already exists?
- C. How do you move this forward?
- D. What are the possible hurdles to success?
- E. How does this align with the neighborhood concept?
- F. How would you explain it clearly in one sentence?
(The Bellingham Station should....)



Conceptual Vision Statement Development

(50 minutes)

A vision statement directs future decision-making and is a shared declaration of a community’s ultimate aims and aspirations. A vision statement normally consists of one or two sentences. It offers a clear image of what the community expects to achieve in the future and is meant to motivate and direct community organizations and individuals. It can also be seen as the community’s long-term vision for what it wants to become and how it wants to be seen by the outside world.

Activity Review

Let’s review the outcomes of our MadLibs exercise:

The future of the Bellingham Station and the surrounding area should reflect the _____ [adjective] character of Downtown Bellingham while enhancing the area’s transit services, supporting the surrounding community with a mix of _____ , _____ , and _____ land uses [land use types], and establishing a _____ [adjective] sense of place by incorporating _____ , _____ , and _____ [Specific Area Features] into the built environment. The area should prioritize the needs of _____ , _____ , and _____ [key stakeholders] by ensuring future improvement projects lead to _____ , _____ , and _____ [key priorities].

Group Exercise

We will now split up into groups once more and take some time to construct a conceptual vision statement for the advancement of Bellingham Station and its neighborhood. Please draw inspiration from the MadLibs activity and the Starting Point examples on the next page. The components listed below are typically included in community vision statements:

- A description of the community's desired future state: This should reflect the community's aspirations and values.
- A focus on key areas of concern: This could include economic development, sustainability, quality of life, and equity.
- A sense of community identity: This may reflect the community's unique history, culture, and character.
- A commitment to inclusive and equitable outcomes: This could include making sure that all residents have equal access to opportunities and resources.
- A call to action: This should motivate residents to collaborate to realize the vision.
- Language that is clear and concise: The vision statement should be simple and memorable.

(See next page for ideas on starting point examples)

Some ideas for starting point examples:

Our vision is to build a thriving, secure, and interconnected neighborhood that exploits the bus station's potential as a center for community participation and transit, fostering inclusiveness for all residents and tourists, sustainable living, and economic opportunity.

Our vision is to make our bus station a thriving transit hub that seamlessly incorporates complementing activities like retail, dining, and community events, fostering a feeling of community, convenience, and sustainability for all passengers, residents, and tourists.

Our vision for Bellingham Station is to build a modern, sustainable, and welcoming gateway to Bellingham, connecting people and communities through efficient and dependable transportation while also serving as a vibrant destination for local businesses, art, and culture.

Notes

Notes

Notes



Appendix C: Summary of Workshop #1 Outcomes



MEMORANDUM

Date:	February 24, 2023	TG:	1.21322.00
To:	Mary Anderson, AICP – Whatcom Transportation Authority (WTA)		
From:	Chris Titze, AICP/PP – Transpo Group Maris Fry, PE – Transpo Group Francesca Liburdy, PE – Transpo Group		
Subject:	Bellingham Station (BTS) Workshop #1 Outcomes		

The Bellingham Station (BTS) Visioning Study will identify a vision, engage the public, and prepare programmatic plans and design elements for the planned expansion of the Bellingham Station. As part of this effort, an in-person workshop was completed to hear from WTA staff, transit riders, local business owners, and local property owners on the importance of public transportation, WTA's need for Bellingham Station expansion, and vision of how the future of the Bellingham Station and neighborhood improvements can be shaped to meet community needs and goals. The key goals of the workshop included:

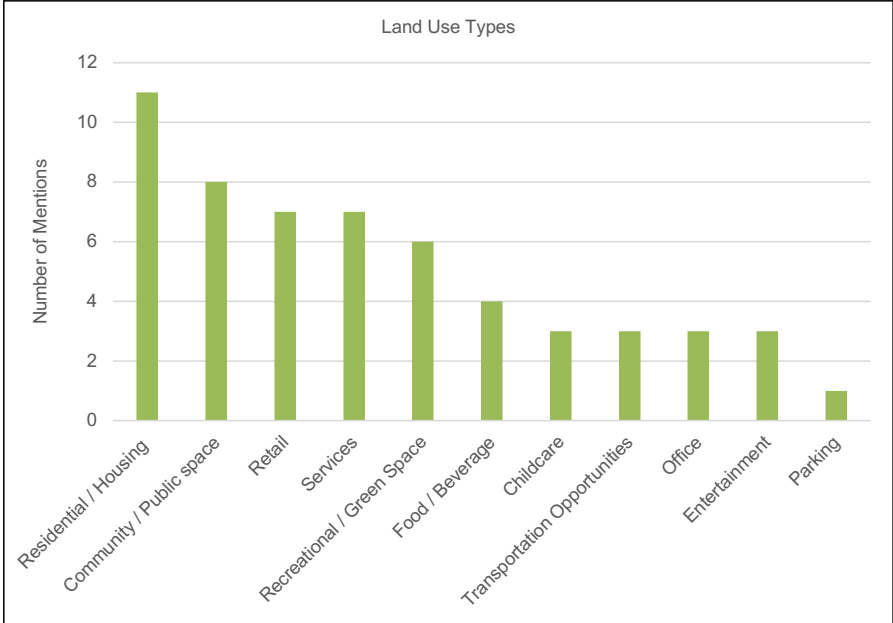
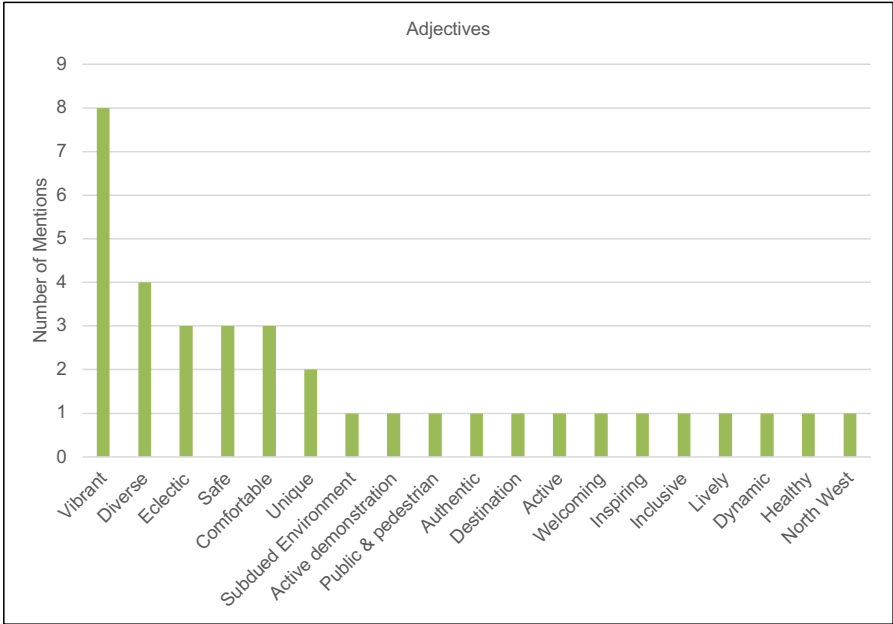
- To educate stakeholders on the purpose of this vision study, why it is an important part of future BTS plans, what has been completed regarding future BTS plans to date, and findings of initial public engagement efforts.
- To gather information from stakeholders related to key issues and opportunities at the BTS and in the community directly surrounding the BTS.
- To guide stakeholders through the process of developing a Vision Statement for the BTS.

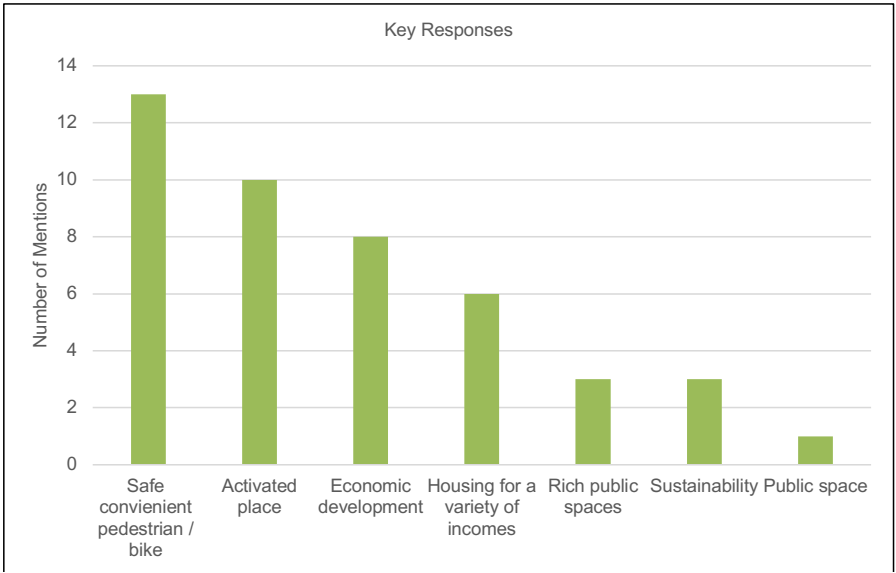
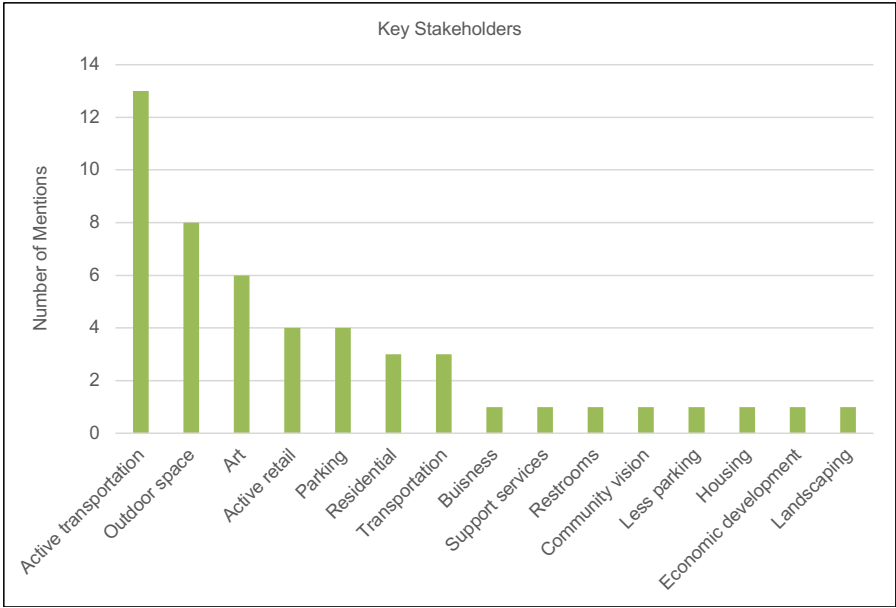
Stakeholders were invited to attend the first of two planned workshops on Tuesday, February 7, 2023, from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The workshop was held at the Stateside Conference Room in Bellingham, Washington. As part of the workshop activities, all stakeholders were also invited on a walking tour of the Bellingham Station site. Throughout the day, discussions and activities centered on current strengths and areas of improvement of Bellingham Station, as well as future ideas for the vision of the station's surrounding neighborhood as a whole. The following memorandum summarizes workshop activities and the key themes and ideas heard at the workshop.

Activity 1 – Vision Statement Mad Libs

This activity helped attendees become familiar with the concept of a vision statement. By completing a "Mad Libs" style template, stakeholders created a conceptual vision statement to describe the long-term goals and aspirations of the Bellingham Station community. In order to help develop this statement, stakeholders were asked "What do you want the Bellingham Station and the surrounding area to be for the community in the next 10 to 20 years?" Based on this question, workshop attendees completed a vision statement template to craft a starting point for the visioning activities later in the workshop.

When summarizing all draft vision statement templates from workshop attendees, several key themes and overlapping ideas appeared. The responses are summarized in the graphs below.





As shown, key themes and ideas were represented on many stakeholders' notes. The developed statement template that combines these common themes is as follows:

The future of Bellingham Station and the surrounding area should reflect the **diverse, vibrant, eclectic** character of Downtown Bellingham while enhancing the area's transit services, supporting the surrounding community with a mix of **residential / housing, retail, and community / public spaces** land uses, and establishing a **vibrant, safe, comfortable** sense of place by incorporating **active transportation, outdoor spaces, and art** into the built environment. The area should prioritize the needs of **locals / residents, tourists / visitors, and business owners** by ensuring future improvement projects lead to **safe ped/bike connectivity, an activated place, and economic development**.

This draft statement was revisited later in the workshop to further refine a conceptual vision statement for Bellingham Station. Following this activity, attendees were taken on a guided walking tour of Bellingham Station. On the walking tour, they were asked to reflect and take notes on the following questions:

- Who is this neighborhood currently serving?
- What businesses and services are available?
- What makes the area unique/special?
- Are there opportunities for improvement?
- How does the area make you feel?

Activity 2 – Future Vision Board

After completing the guided walking tour activity, stakeholders were asked to think about the future of the Bellingham Station neighborhood. Based on their notes from the walking tour, participants answered the questions shown below regarding the future of the Bellingham Station and surrounding area. The key outcomes of the Future Vision Board activity are shown below.

What does the neighborhood need?	Whom is the future neighborhood serving?	What is the character of the future neighborhood?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wider sidewalks • More residential • Green space • Less parking • Pedestrian focus • Childcare • More color • Food trucks • Public facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents • Tourists • Students • Families • Business owners • Employees • Transit riders • Visitors • Everyone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eclectic • Vibrant • Safe • Fun (to be in) • Welcoming • Clean • Colorful • Inviting • Family-Friendly

What would it look like if the neighborhood reached its full potential?	What will the future neighborhood be known for?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vibrant • Diverse • Busy 24/7/365 • Safe space • Evolving • No vacant retail • Equitable (bike, ped, transit) • A place people gravitate to • Clean 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being a destination • A central hub • Safety • Food • Identity of Bellingham • Catalyst for future projects • Gathering space for community • Pedestrians are highest priority



Activity 3 – Thinking Beyond the Bus: Crazy 8s

In this activity, participants were divided into four groups and were given eight minutes to develop eight ideas for the future of the Bellingham Transit Station. This activity gave participants the opportunity to develop unique ideas in a rapid manner.

Residential	Bikes
Childcare	Food
Community Space	Community Services / Public Restrooms
Retail (third place)	Green Space / Outdoor Space

Grab & Go Food	Bike Storage / Rental
Affordable Housing	Play plaza park space
Flex space (with programming, meeting, etc.)	Community services info center (history, wayfinding, tourism, social services, police kiosk)
Public Restrooms	Childcare

Residential	Bikes
Childcare	Food
Community Space	Community Services / Public Restrooms
Retail	Green Space / Outdoor Space

Residential housing (affordable)	Bike storage / facilities
Shopping destinations (retail / food / drink)	Childcare facility (affordable)
Tourist information / general resources	Outdoor space (family-friendly, accessible)
Office / business centered / community space	Multimodal uses / spaces

Activity 4 – Thinking Beyond the Bus: Idea Bus

This activity presented the participants with a “key idea” and a set of questions to answer around it. The process enables decisions to be made regarding specific areas to develop a more detailed analysis of the chosen subareas.

Community Services	
Who is it for and how does it help them?	All community (not just transit) Tourists New to community Resource for help if feel unsafe (safety ambassador) Wayfinding to services / directions Welcome center Referrals to social services
What makes it different from what already exists?	Does not exist today Currently is not for tourists Collaboration between tourism & downtown & safety ambassador
How do you move this forward?	Talk to tourism Collaboration with tourism



What are the possible hurdles to success?	Change averse community Sustainability? If volunteer based? Funding? Paid employees? Is it a "critical" service?
How does this align with the neighborhood concept?	Welcoming Safe Inclusive Clean
How would you explain it clearly in one sentence?	The Bellingham Station should provide information & connect people to resources and services

Community Space	
Who is it for and how does it help them?	People with common interests Specific interests Available to anyone
What makes it different from what already exists?	Has technology Is reservable Has a kitchen Key code entry Inviting atmosphere Downtown location
How do you move this forward?	Coordination with city and WTA Gathering information
What are the possible hurdles to success?	Could sit vacant Accessibility Awareness that it exists Security issues Space limitations What is the purpose? Who can use it and when?
How does this align with the neighborhood concept?	Family friendly All inclusive Safe
How would you explain it clearly in one sentence?	The Bellingham Station should have an easily accessible public gathering space

Residential	
Who is it for and how does it help them?	Mixed income Mixed household types Subsidized at different income levels
What makes it different from what already exists?	More opportunities for downtown living More 2B & 3B
How do you move this forward?	Affordable housing partnership
What are the possible hurdles to success?	Space Buildout WTA or developers Transit in center of town Safety for active modes & bus space Residential above retail
How does this align with the neighborhood concept?	N/A
How would you explain it clearly in one sentence?	The Bellingham Station should be a 24-hour space



Activity 5 – Conceptual Vision Statement Development

In this activity, participants synthesized the previous activities into single vision statements for the future of the Bellingham Transit Station. These statements are used to inform future decision making as they determine a goal for the stakeholders.

Stakeholders developed six total vision statements in breakout groups:

Our vision is to have BTS provide a safe, reliable, efficient, and friendly transit hub. Being a hub it will support multi-modal transportation. It will also incorporate community space and services that will support a welcoming and vibrant urban housing neighborhood for all (residents and visitors alike), both now and towards a fossil fuel free future.

Our vision is to create an efficient, safe, inclusive transportation center that encompasses areas for walking, biking, and rolling. It will strengthen the community and shape the character of downtown with mixed-income housing, robust community services, and active spaces, all with an inviting, vibrant design.

Our vision is to create an efficient, safe, inclusive transportation center that includes walking, rolling, and bike access and strengthens the community and shapes the character of downtown with mixed income housing, vibrant design, robust community services, active spaces, and building design.

Our vision for a mixed-use transit facility connecting people to opportunities and each other through safe, affordable, convenient, and welcoming services that embraces Bellingham's natural beauty and diverse community.

Our vision is to have the Bellingham Station provide a safe, reliable, efficient, and friendly transit hub. A community destination that supports a vibrant, welcoming neighborhood.

Our vision is to build an integrated hub that energizes, connects, and supports all local businesses, residents, and visitors, by creating a safe, inclusive, accessible, and sustainable resource that connects people to community and opportunity.

Conclusion and Next Steps

Through the workshop and stakeholder discussion there are similar themes that arise for the desired future use of the Bellingham Transit Station. Many want to see it become a multi-use hub, prioritizing pedestrians and bikes over cars, centered around the local community. Acting as a destination for local food and retail, the space creates opportunities for residents, tourists, and everyone in between. It is active, open, lively, and safe, year round with a wide range of activities from community events to nightlife. The new space is also associated with the development of a new urban housing neighborhood that supports both the transit and local businesses in the area. For many of the stakeholders, the development of the Bellingham Transit Hub is about creating public spaces for people to enjoy.

The next workshop will develop these ideas further and help to specify what forms the stakeholders would like see the BTS take, allowing community input on the aesthetics and design of the new space. This workshop will be held on Friday, March 10th, 2023.



Appendix D: Workshop #2 Workbook

Bellingham Station Visioning Workbook

**WWU Conference Room
at Stateside Apartments**

901 N State Street
Bellingham, WA 98225

Friday, March 10 2023
8:30AM-12:30PM

This book belongs to:



WTA

*Presented by Whatcom Transit Authority
in partnership with Transpo Group*

Meeting Agenda

8:30-8:40 Getting Started

8:40-9:15 What did we accomplish in February?
Presentation/Knowledge Sharing

9:15-10:45 Bellingham Blox
Breakout Group/Knowledge Gathering

10:45-11:00 Break

11:00-11:40 Design Charette Activity
Group Workshop/Knowledge Gathering

11:40-12:20 Picture It!
Breakout Group/Knowledge Gathering

12:20-12:30 Wrap-Up & Next Steps

Workshop #2 Goals

- 1** Refine and detail how the Bellingham Station will be programmed.
- 2** Gather input from stakeholders related to the look and feel of the future Bellingham Station and the surrounding area.
- 3** Gather input from stakeholders related to the overarching function of the Bellingham Station and the surrounding area in relation to the neighborhood as a whole.

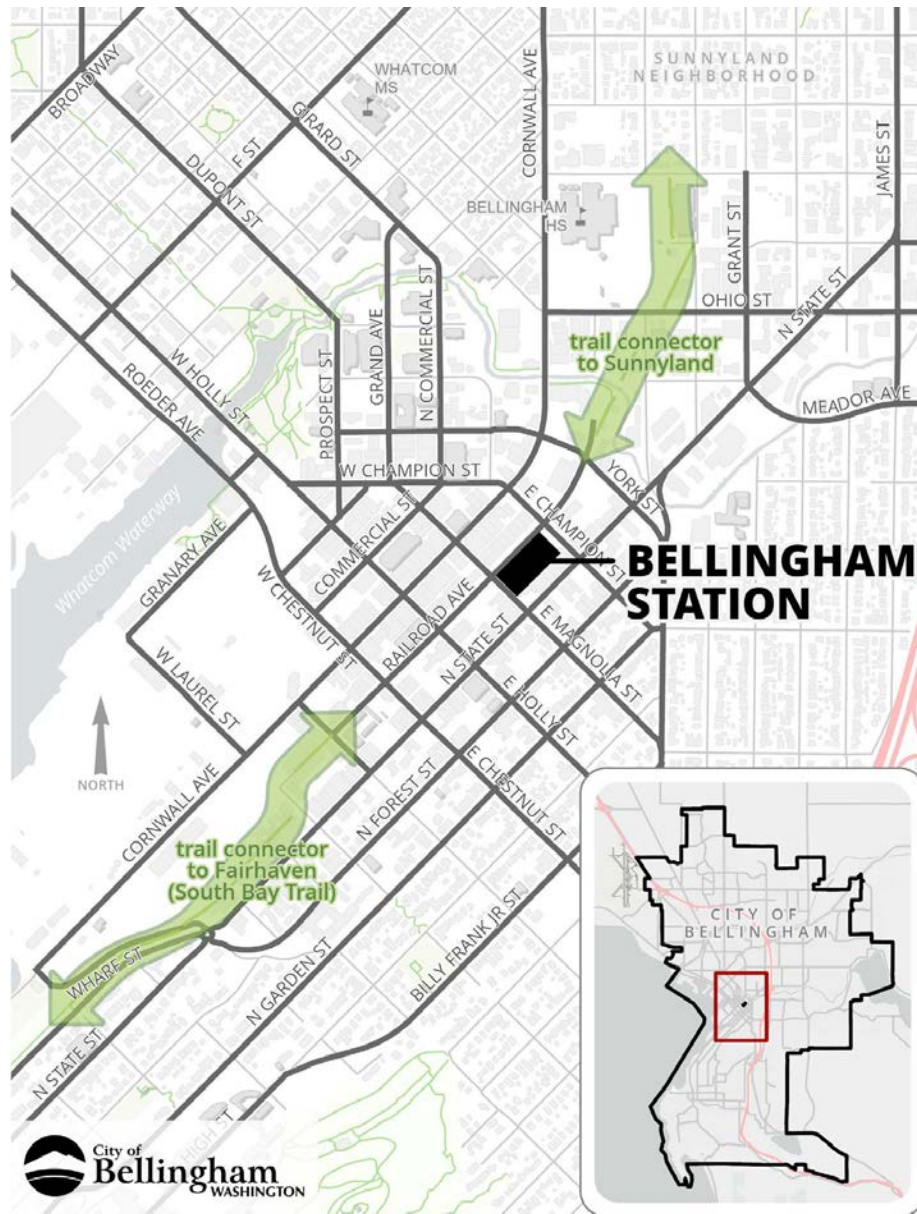
Current Situation

Bellingham Station has ten bus bays and serves 22 Routes; 427 trips depart and arrive (854 total trips) at Bellingham Station each weekday from 6:00 am until 11:00 pm.

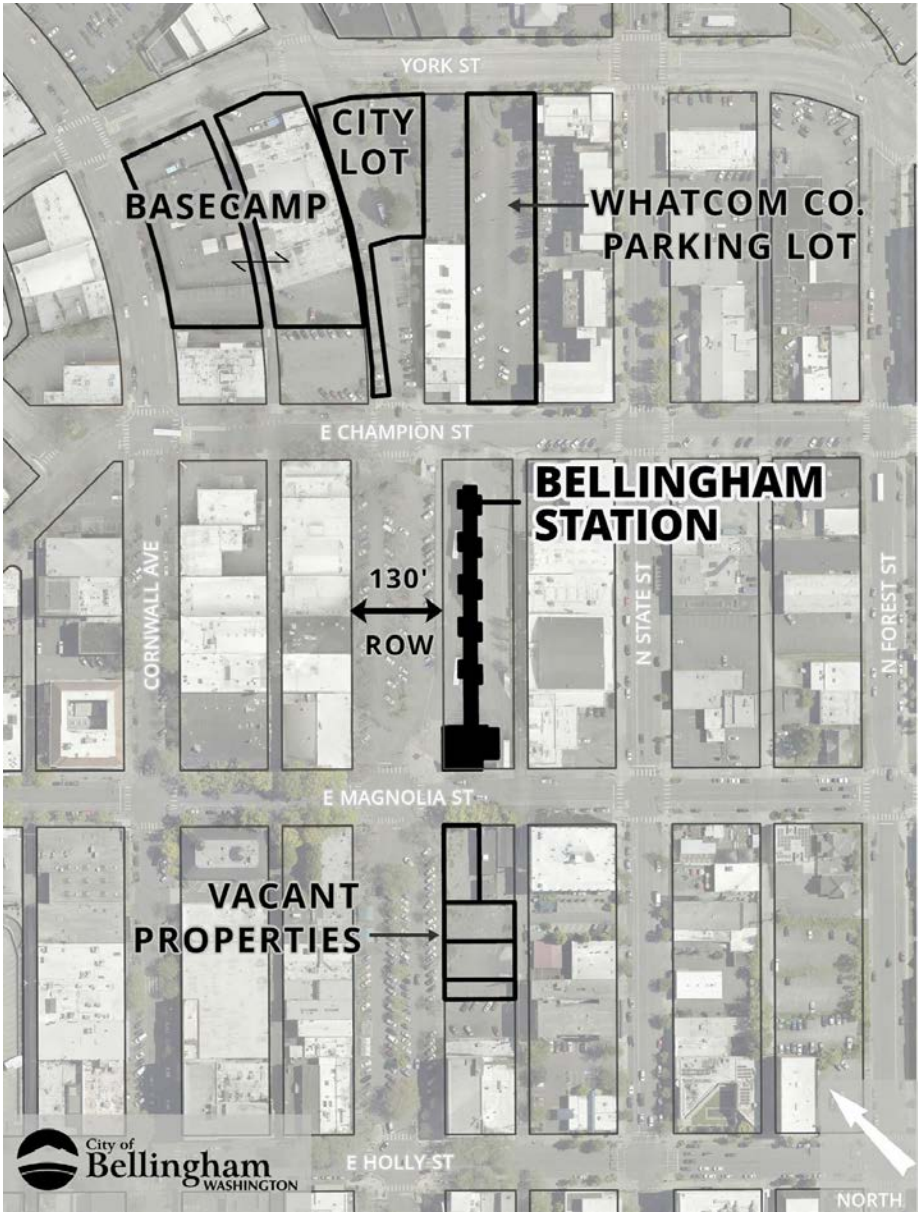
In WTA's 2018 boarding and alighting survey, WTA counted 3,344 boardings and 2,826 alightings at the Bellingham Station on an average weekday. This is the most current boarding and alighting data maintained by WTA. On a randomly selected weekday in October, over 2,100 boardings were observed at Bellingham Station.

WTA 2040, our long-range plan, identifies service expansion that will allow us to grow transit service alongside population growth and help make transit a more viable option for more people. For example, Bellingham Station is currently at capacity during weekdays. While we can add weekend service, we need more capacity to increase weekday service during peak hours.

Bellingham Station Vicinity



Opportunity Sites



What did we accomplish in Feb?

Workshop #1 – February 7, 2023, 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

- Discussions and activities focused on Bellingham Station's current strengths, areas for improvement, and future ideas for the station's surrounding neighborhood.
- Workshop participants completed a vision statement template to serve as a jumping-off point for visioning activities later in the workshop.
- Breakout groups reflected on the needs, character, and potential of the Bellingham Station and the surrounding neighborhood through Future Vision Board, Thinking Beyond the Bus, and Conceptual Vision Statement activities.
- Shared ideas included adding community services, community space, and residential uses at the Bellingham Station to complement transit access.

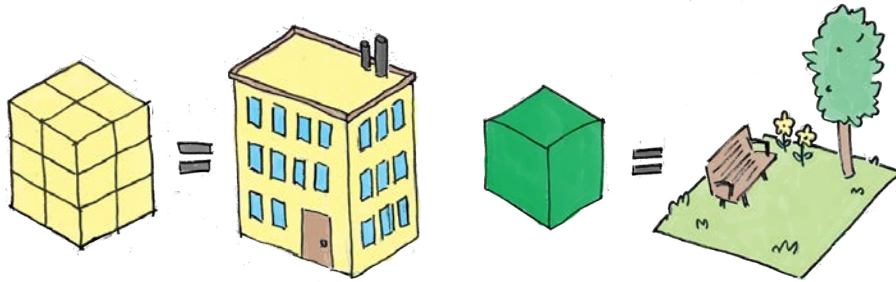
Based on the conceptual vision statements created by the breakout groups, an overall draft vision statement for the Bellingham Station was developed by Transpo Group.



Draft Vision Statement

Our vision for Bellingham Station is to provide a safe, reliable, and efficient transit hub that supports multimodal transportation. The Station will be complemented by robust community and mixed-use spaces that energize and strengthen local businesses, residents, and visitors. The Bellingham Station and surrounding area will help shape the character of downtown and connect people to opportunities and each other by providing a community destination that supports a diverse, vibrant, and friendly neighborhood.





Bellingham Blox

(90 minutes)

To improve and expand transit operations at the Bellingham Station, additional space is needed for transit operations and administration. This provides an opportunity to rethink the Bellingham Station neighborhood. What do you envision for the mix of land uses, massing, and public space around the Bellingham Station? What will fit within the context of the immediate neighborhood? Based on the discussions and ideas developed during Workshop #1, you will be tasked with creating your plan for the future.

You will be given blocks representing various land uses to complete this activity. The land use descriptions for each block type are provided on the following page. Each block is representative of an approximate 25' by 25' footprint and a single level of activity. For example, a single block on the ground floor could represent a small pocket park. In contrast, a multi-story residential building could be represented by a 2-block x 2-block footprint stacked three levels high (12 blocks total).

This exercise will be completed under three scenarios. The following pages provide specific guidelines for each scenario in more detail.

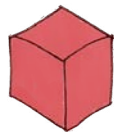
Block/Land Use Reference Sheet Info



Existing Buildings
These blocks represent existing buildings. Therefore, they are static and cannot be removed from the board.



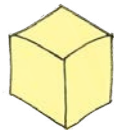
Transit
These blocks represent transit operations and administration. Blocks marked with an “O” represent operations (i.e., bus bays, waiting areas, passenger information, and amenities). Blocks marked with an “A” represent administration (i.e., Space allocated for WTA employee/driver uses such as office space and lounges).



Commercial Space
These blocks represent commercial space such as an office or retail space.



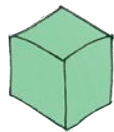
Community Space
These blocks represent passive programmable space that can be utilized by the community, such as meeting space, studio space, or event space, and can be a combination of indoor and outdoor space.



Residential Space
These blocks represent multi-family, apartment-style residential and can be any mix of unit size or affordability.



Community Services
These blocks represent active community services open to the public, such as police services, social services, informational/safety kiosks, restrooms, etc., and can combine indoor and outdoor spaces.



Green Space
These blocks represent green space or other public park space. This can include active or passive spaces.



Bike Facilities
These blocks represent bike facilities such as bicycle parking, bike lockers, and other bicycle-related amenities such as fix-it stations.



Miscellaneous
These blocks can be used in areas you think would benefit from land use not already represented.

Scenario 1 - The Sandbox

Under this scenario, you will be given a 4x7 grid to explore ways to configure your blocks with specific guidelines that provide operational, land use, and design constraints.

Scenario 1 Rules



PURPLE

Transit operations and administration are currently represented by 16 ground-floor purple blocks (14 blocks for bus operations and two blocks for bus administration). To meet future demand, you must use 22 blocks for bus operations and four blocks for bus administration. Bus operations blocks can only be located on the ground floor, but bus administration blocks can be above the ground floor.



RED

Commercial uses can be incorporated on the ground floor or developed as multi-floor buildings.



ORANGE

You can incorporate as much or as little community space as possible.



YELLOW

For residential to be financially feasible, the building must be at least four blocks tall with at least a two-block x one-block building footprint. Residential may be standalone or may be placed on top of other uses such as transit blocks, commercial blocks, or community space blocks.



BLUE

You can incorporate as much or as little community service as possible.



GREEN

Green space can be used on the ground floor or top of multi-story buildings.



NATURAL W/BIKE

At least one block must be used for bike facilities. This block must be located on the ground floor. If multiple blocks are used, they can be located next to each other or in different locations.



NATURAL W/M

These blocks can be used in areas you think would benefit from land use that still needs to be represented. You can use as many “M” blocks as you would like, but you should be prepared to explain their use(s).

Scenario 1 Notes

Don't turn the page!

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Scenario 2 - Bellingham Station

This scenario assumes that you have control over the Bellingham Station and the adjacent Railroad Avenue street section and have the same operational, land use, and design constraints as the Sandbox.

Scenario 2 Rules



PURPLE

Transit operations and administration are currently represented by 16 ground-floor purple blocks (14 blocks for bus operations and two blocks for bus administration). To meet future demand, you must use 22 blocks for bus operations and four blocks for bus administration. Bus operations blocks can only be located on the ground floor, but bus administration blocks can be above the ground floor.



RED

Commercial uses can be incorporated on the ground floor or developed as multi-floor buildings.



ORANGE

You can incorporate as much or as little community space as possible.



YELLOW

For residential to be financially feasible, the building must be at least four blocks tall with at least a two-block x one-block building footprint. Residential may be standalone or may be placed on top of other uses such as transit blocks, commercial blocks, or community space blocks.



BLUE

You can incorporate as much or as little community service as possible.



GREEN

Green space can be used on the ground floor or top of multi-story buildings.



NATURAL W/B

At least one block must be used for bike facilities. This block must be located on the ground floor. If multiple blocks are used, they can be located next to each other or in different locations.



NATURAL W/M

These blocks can be used in areas you think would benefit from land use not already represented. You can use as many “M” blocks as you would like, but you should be prepared to explain their use(s).

Scenario 2 - Notes

Don't turn the page!

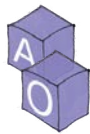
17

Scenario 3 - Bellingham Station and Beyond

This scenario allows you to tap into surrounding “opportunity sites” besides the Station but assumes similar operational/design constraints.

Scenario 3 Rules

For Scenario 3, rules are the same for all land uses except transit outlined below.



PURPLE

To meet future demand, you must use at least 22 blocks for bus operations and four blocks for bus administration but may use up to 28 blocks for bus operations and six blocks for bus administration. Bus operations blocks can only be located on the ground floor, but bus administration blocks can be above the ground floor.

Transit blocks can be (but do not need to be) placed at the Bellingham Station site. Instead, transit blocks can be relocated to another opportunity area or split between adjacent blocks. Still, transit operations and transit administration must be located adjacent to each other.

Scenario 3 - Notes

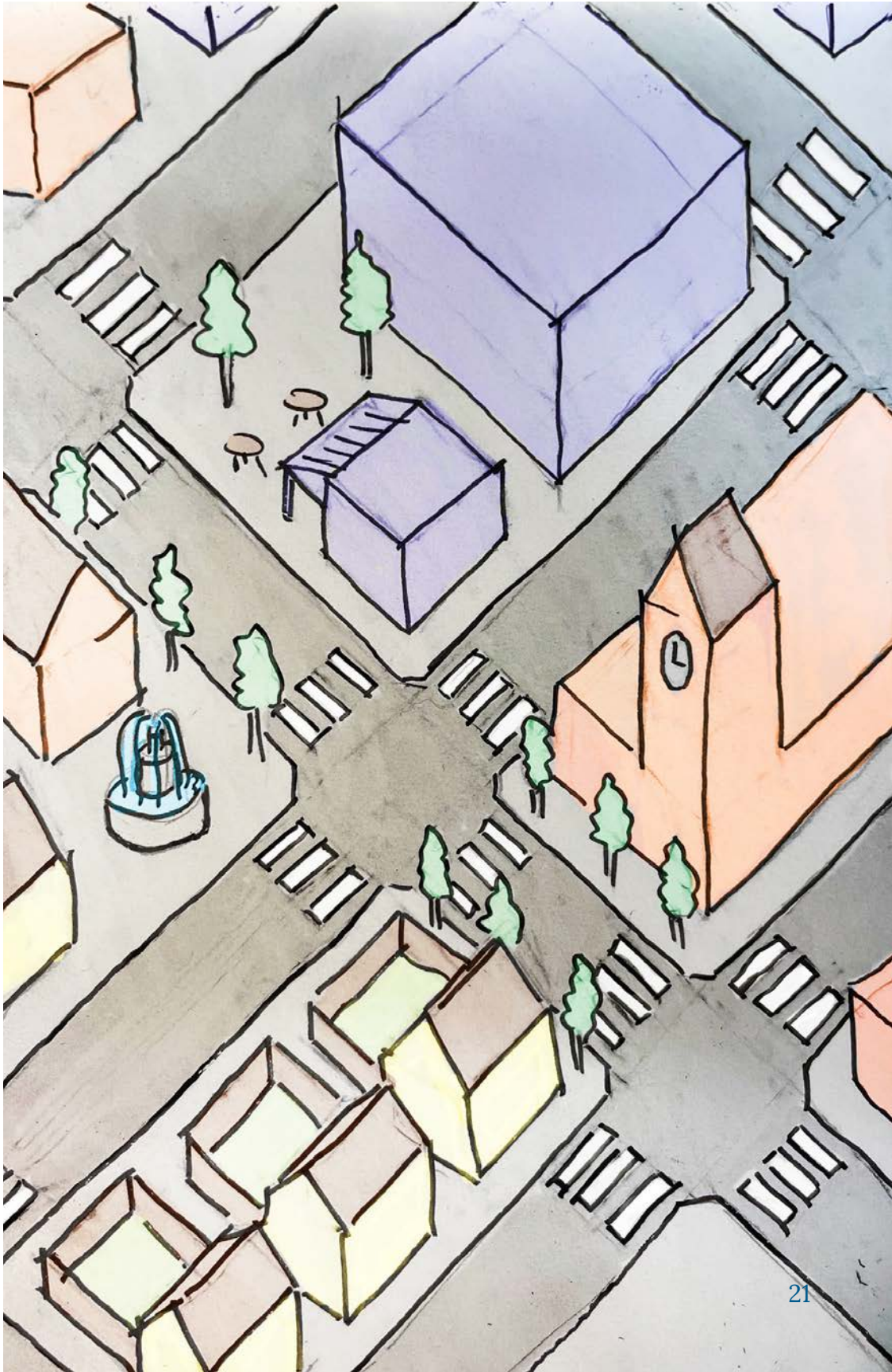
Design Charrette Activity

(40 minutes)

A design charrette is a collaborative process that allows stakeholders to generate ideas and explore potential solutions for a specific design problem or project, in this case, the conceptual layout of a future Bellingham Station and its surrounding neighborhood. Today's design charrette will build on the block exercise to establish high-level, conceptual design cues and offer a better understanding of the spatial relationship between transit operations, potential supportive uses, and the existing neighborhood.

Today's design charrette is a valuable tool for encouraging creativity and communicating your ideas about the spatial relationship and appropriate massing of future development concepts.

The Bellingham Blox activity prioritized land uses in the physical space and provided a sense of scale. Now let's take those ideas and apply them conceptually, visualizing the look and feel of the neighborhood.



Picture It!

(40 minutes)

What do you have in mind for the future design of Bellingham Station? What type of bike parking would be most effective? How do you envision mixed-use buildings blending into their surroundings? What do you envision for the Station's overall aesthetics, functionality, and supporting services?

We'll show you examples of images from four major thematic groups during this activity: Bus Station, Bike Parking, Mixed-Use Buildings, and Transit Neighborhood. These renderings depict potential design concepts for the future Bellingham Station and the surrounding area. We want to know how much you like or dislike each option, as this will help us create a framework for the Vision Plan's design components. You will be asked to rate each image, write down notes about aspects you like and/or dislike, and be prepared to share with the group.

Bus Stations



Bus Station A



Bus Station B

Bus Stations



Bus Station C



Bus Station D

Bus Stations



Bus Station E



Bus Station F

Bus Stations



Bus Station G



Bus Station H

Bike Parking



Bike Parking A



Bike Parking B

Bike Parking



Bike Parking C



Bike Parking D

Bike Parking



Bike Parking E



Bike Parking F

Bike Parking



Bike Parking G



Bike Parking H

Bike Parking



Bike Parking I



Bike Parking J

Mixed-Use



Mixed-Use A



Mixed-Use B

Mixed-Use



Mixed-Use C



Mixed-Use D

Mixed-Use



Mixed-Use E



Mixed-Use F

Transit Neighborhood



Transit Neighborhood A



Transit Neighborhood B

Transit Neighborhood



Transit Neighborhood C



Transit Neighborhood D

Transit Neighborhood



Transit Neighborhood E



Transit Neighborhood F

Transit Neighborhood



Transit Neighborhood G



Transit Neighborhood H

Transit Neighborhood



Transit Neighborhood I



Transit Neighborhood J

Notes

Notes



Appendix E: Summary of Workshop #2 Outcomes



MEMORANDUM

Date:	March 20, 2023	TG:	1.21322.00
To:	Mary Anderson, AICP – Whatcom Transportation Authority (WTA)		
From:	Chris Titze, AICP/PP – Transpo Group Maris Fry, PE – Transpo Group Francesca Liburdy, PE – Transpo Group		
Subject:	Bellingham Station (BTS) Workshop #1 Outcomes		

The Bellingham Station (BTS) Visioning Study will identify a vision, engage the public, and prepare programmatic plans and design elements for the planned expansion of the Bellingham Station. As part of this effort, two in-person workshops were completed to hear from WTA staff, transit riders, local business owners, and local property owners on the importance of public transportation, WTA's need for Bellingham Station expansion, and vision of how the future of the Bellingham Station and neighborhood improvements can be shaped to meet community needs and goals. The key goals of the second workshop included:

- Explore the relationship between Bellingham Station and its surroundings through the lenses of building scale and massing, land use mix, and monetizing programmatic elements.
- Refine, detail, and prioritize the Bellingham Station's programming and potential supporting services.
- Gather feedback from stakeholders on the overall look, feel, and aesthetics of a future Bellingham Station and the surrounding neighborhood.

Stakeholders were invited to attend the second of two planned workshops on Wednesday, March 10, 2023, from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The workshop was held at the Stateside Conference Room in Bellingham, Washington. Throughout the day, discussions and activities centered on desired improvements and the future aesthetics of Bellingham Station, as well as future ideas for the vision of the station's surrounding neighborhood. The following memorandum summarizes workshop activities and the key themes and ideas heard at the workshop.

Activity 1 – Bellingham Blox

In this activity participants were asked to plan out their vision for the future of Bellingham Station, and the location and arrangement of the new transit operations and WTA administration facilities. To do this, they were given colored blocks that correlated with different land use types. Each block represented a 60' x 60' footprint and allowed participants to expand visions both upwards and outwards through stacking and combining blocks. Participants were split up into three groups to complete the activity. Each group explored the different ways stakeholders imagined the area changing, prompting them to think about questions of what they envision for the mix of land uses, massing, and public space at the Bellingham Station and surrounding area, and how does it play into the local context?

Scenario 1 – The Sandbox

This activity was split up into three scenarios, where rules for placing blocks and their effect changed. The first – the sandbox – allowed participants to place blocks in a 4x7 grid to begin thinking about types of arrangement and desires land use types on an empty grid. This started people thinking about what they would like to see for the makeup of the new station.

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't sacrifice operations • 2nd floor admin / community flex space / office • Rooftop green space • Not too much retail (street level only) • Residential on higher levels (3-4) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ground floor operations + bike • Ground floor community service / admin • Prioritize residential + green space • Community services 2nd floor <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Community space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ground floor community services + operations • 2nd floor admin / office / community space • 3rd + 4th floor residential • Green space on roof <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mainly due to space constraints • Prioritize ROW for transit • 2nd floor office / community public space to 3rd floor (2-story area)

Individual Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficult to fit all bus operations on ground level without sacrificing bike/comm/ped space. • Must take some Railroad Ave/parking space for operations. • Green space - move some operations to adjacent locations.

Across the groups, there is a desire to mix community, admin, and office space along the lower floors with the upper floors holding residential space. Green space is also a desired element in the building, but with space constraints, is wanted as a green rooftop. As well, there was a desire for the services to be accessible for people in the community. There is more of a focus of using the space for operations and community than for retail.

Scenario 2 – Bellingham Station

The second scenario – Bellingham Station – applied the same land use constraints as the sandbox, but placed the location onto Bellingham Station and the adjacent Railroad Ave. This allowed participants to apply their ideas from the first scenario to a real-world context and see how the desired land use types and goals changed when applied local constraints.

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As much transit operations as possible • Extend building footprint – (curb lane) • Used <u>all</u> of RR – greenspace, transit only • Downtown plaza with community services • 2nd floor retail + community flex space • Upper residential • Roof green space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction of transit ops • Used all of RR – greenspace ped corridor / plaza • Housing / childcare • 2nd floor office / admin / community services • Roof garden + childcare center • 5 – story building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No RR remaining • Below grade parking or 2nd story above transit • Used all operations ground floor • Office / services / green space ground floor • 2nd floor office / community space • Residential 3-stories • 5-story building + green roof • Housing is needed, but how much actually? • Public space closer to ground level



Individual Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritize residential space upper levels with green roof etc. • Childcare upper (blue blocks) levels for the upper + tie into the roof/greenspace for the outdoor play area etc. • Clearly it is nearly impossible to accommodate WTA's + greater communities needs under these space constraints • In general it feels very important that there are places to be dry and warm without patronizing a business, with access to drinking water, bathrooms, and ideally charging outlets • Priorities based on my personal position of being a low-income transit rider, as well as someone who works under the Opportunity Council at WWU: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Affordable housing ○ Public spaces for gathering that are freely available most of the time ○ Public bathrooms + drinking water ○ Public green spaces ○ Biz + retail + food owned or operated by marginalized entrepreneurs (POC primarily) ○ Accessibility

The groups continued similar themes from the first scenario, placing community services and admin on the first two floors, and residential above it. As well, the participants desired a rooftop greenspace due to the space constraints. Group one used all their transit blocks to expand the number of transit options. Group two used the space for a plaza / greenspace, and group three also used all the space, dedicating the entire ground floor of the station for operations. Across the groups, there was a desire to see the new station as mixed-use space with operations and community services with green space present at the new station. Some of the individual comments felt the space itself was too constricting to fit all the needs, while others noted the desire for the community space to be used for childcare. There also was a desire for public facilities like bathrooms and drinking fountains for the public to use.

Scenario 3 – Bellingham Station and Beyond

The third scenario – Bellingham Station and Beyond – expands the context out to consider the area surrounding the station and their relationship to it. Groups were allowed to access “Opportunity sites” to expand into, which assume similar design / operational constraints as the previous scenarios but allow participants to think of the cite and area as a whole, applying local context and considerations to the surroundings.

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ground level operations • Admin on 2nd-3rd floor • Green roof • Parking access challenges • Grab n go food • RR greenspace bike/ped connections adjacent to retail/services • Bike/ped connections to existing trails • 6 stories total • Retail on RR; active uses • Parallel parking instead of angled • Space for food trucks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transit corridor along RR • Diffuse along 3 block corridor • Green / ped space with transit / above transit • Residential above / along sides of corridor • Public space above / public green space above transit • Skybridges connecting across RR • Private green space above residential 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green space along RR 3-block corridor • All transit @ Basecamp (used all ops. blocks) • Ground floor ops / 2nd floor admin • Bike parking + childcare with residential • Above transit center • Bus transfers are easier / more accessible when consolidated vs. spread out across multiple blocks



Individual comments

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buses at Basecamp site north of the current station • Pedestrian plaza area, includes outdoor seating and green space • Incorporates pedestrian-only space along all of Railroad Ave • Need place to drop off • Parking underground? • Green bike/walk path through to downtown south bay trail • Utilize base camp area if possible • Requires multiple blocks of Railroad Ave. • 130 feet of ped and bike with transit center in the middle • Both sides retail and residential with daycare • Childcare space shortage • All transit center brings residents from more rural areas to work in the Bellingham area, a centralized cc site could offer some resources to working families • Combine the greenway -> opposing through way with the other gps systems of a centralized/basecamp "WTA station" • Skybridges to connect other central artery of operation combined with greenspace -> connect the trails/biking access -> through Railroad Ave so convert to safer throughway for "things with wheels" • Residential down the corridor above comm/retail so the housing isn't [] but runs along the greenway / operations route • Hidden adjacent residential upper / retail lower on current basecamp site -> with more residential comes the need for resources (conveniences like rest. / food / pharmacy / etc.) for residents • Rails to trails ideas etc. • Green ribbon through the space to better connect North and South bike routes that aren't a basic road bike lane • It makes a lot of sense to "elongate" the station over adjacent blocks • A bay for transit for a food truck(s) for transit riders (and employees?) to patronize |
|---|

The groups felt the best course of action for the station was to extend it across the surrounding blocks in order to incorporate all the desired elements. There were similar themes of combining community and administrative space within the transit station with retail and greenspace on top. For the rest of Railroad Ave, participants saw it extending and creating a larger footprint for the area to include retail, food trucks, and greenspace for the site. Participants also desired a greater connection to existing bike and pedestrian trails as a way to better incorporate the station into the surrounding area. Others mentioned skybridges across Railroad Ave as a way to connect the site without disturbing traffic.

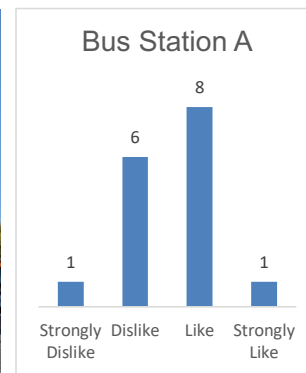
Individual responses went further in how exactly they envisioned the site. One participant drew out their desired street design which 130 feet dedicated to bike and ped with transit access in the middle. There were many desires to see the place turned into a pedestrian plaza, with a recommendation for parking underground, limiting the number of cars on the street. Also comments desired retail mixed with residential and placed on the ground floor. All of this came with the caveat that the station is extended to the adjacent blocks. There was also a desire for greenspace to be expanded and match the footprint of the new station, linking up with existing trails and biking paths.



Activity – Picture It!

In this activity participants were shown a series of images showing how the future of the Bellingham Transit Station could look. These covered four thematic groups: bus station, bike parking, mixed-use neighborhood, and transit neighborhood, and asked participants to rate and comment on each image individually. These rankings allowed participants to envision the aesthetic outcomes they desired for the area and help create a framework for the Vision Plan that matches community goals. Each image, their ratings, and selected responses are shown below.

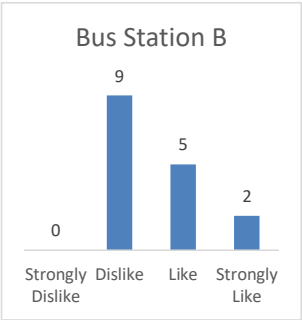
Bus Station A (Existing Station)



Individual comments
open is good easy access for riders it would be better if the roof extended further out to protect from the rain too open to elements need more seating need more bike storage like the openness lots of light too tight more space needed for extra buses structure looks overly basic offers nothing but transit too cold - not welcoming or comfortable simple sparce open stark one purpose

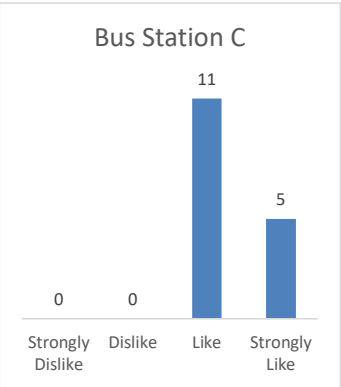


Bus Station B



Individual comments
like the light too small and simple like open-ness cover from shelter simplistic design looks very cool still only offers transit like lighting don't like all concrete too cold - brutalist concrete wonky odd funky lights seems unnecessarily complicated doesn't add functionality

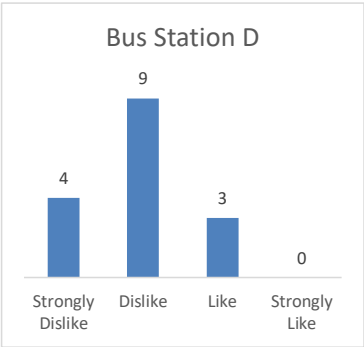
Bus Station C



Individual comments
light + space lots of space for waiting covered easy access looks open & efficient like overhangs / large awnings with detail bright white open ↑ cover↑ seating↑ downtown fit? well covered but still open cool design open to light but protected from the elements solar! yay! please! can't tell if it's enough seating lots of rain protection

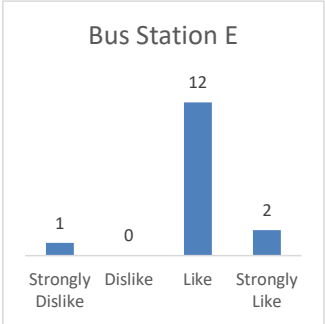


Bus Station D



Individual comments
uninspiring
information booth
clear line to stand behind
too small
more like a connectivity spot
dull
like incorporation of food kiosk and flashes of info colors
not enough people space
diversity of activity
feels like hodge-podge
library feels out of place
touristy
looks limited in scope and size
clearly not a full station
like mini library

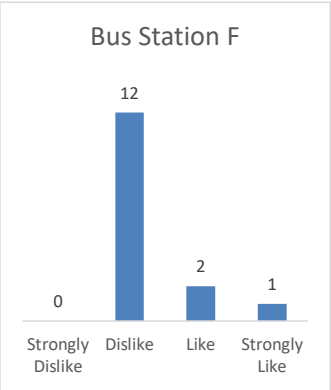
Bus Station E



Individual comments
like the functionality
central station area visually fits downtown
may be too dark in the middle
too urban for Bellingham
multi-use
love - can we just do this?
glass/brick
arches
hidden 2nd floor parking
brick↑
dark corridor ↓
integrated↑
good use of space
comprehensive
multi-use
parking
efficient
too big
like the inclusive build of operations with parking / residential and / or comm space
nervous there isn't enough free/public indoor and outdoor space
lack of greenery

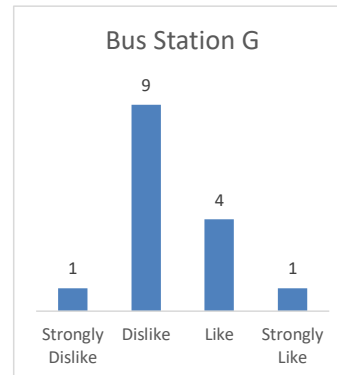


Bus Station F



Individual comments
doesn't fit Bellingham
open but too circular
integrations of different materials
yes, on info, no on small, enclosed space
too futuristic?
too busy ↓
open air↑
whimsical
human seated
roof covering is wonky
retro
still open to elements
looks small
diff design vs. pnw "look"
seems like less weather protection potentially?
hard to see
like lots of windows

Bus Station G

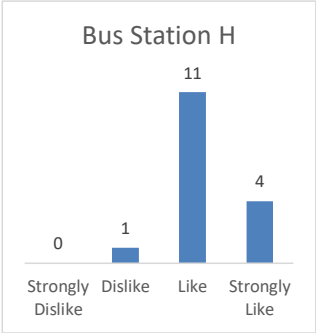


Individual comments

looks like the current station with an unnecessary fancy top
 no pedestrian front elements
 good flow of bus traffic vs peds
 open, airy
 like the archways
 ugly - trying too hard
 mixed messages
 feels like what we already have
 sparse
 electric! yes!
 looks like a cheaper upgrade to existing
 not attractive
 style doesn't seem to enhance function



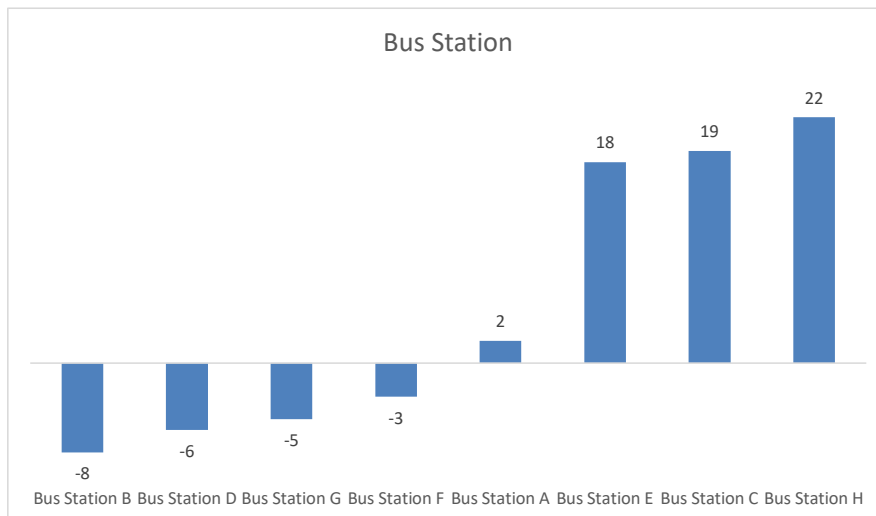
Bus Station H



Selected individual comments
<div>interesting</div> <div>looks like you want to go inside</div> <div>feels NW</div> <div>aesthetically pleasing</div> <div>seems a little small but without space above</div> <div>good example of building above a station</div> <div>love the materials</div> <div>large awnings</div> <div>multi-use</div> <div>good scale</div> <div>clean↑</div> <div>simple↑</div> <div>inside space↑</div> <div>brick / timber / metal↑</div> <div>too closed</div> <div>less activity on private street</div> <div>very cool design</div> <div>mixed use but small</div> <div>open</div> <div>inviting</div> <div>like the build of multi-layer but not blockish</div> <div>open, light</div> <div>not too tall/big</div> <div>attractive design</div> <div>rain protection</div> <div>is the whole building public?</div> <div>enjoy roof style</div> <div>beams, timber</div> <div>old fashion train station vibe</div>

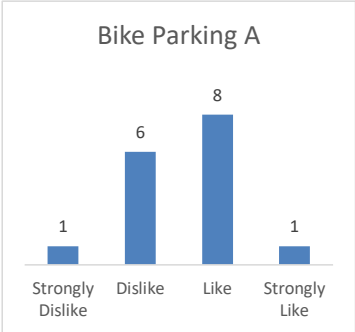
Weighted Analysis

As part of our analysis, Transpo Group conducted a weighted ranking system to compare the responses across the examples. Strongly Dislike was given a score of -3, dislike a score of -1, like a score of 1, and strongly like a score off three. Using this type of analysis, it is easy to rank and compare the responses to each station.



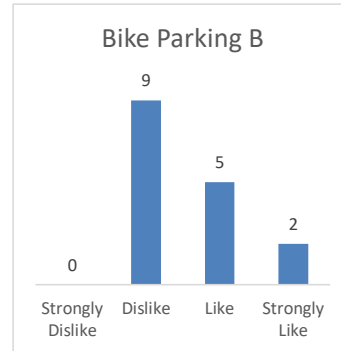
The most popular choices were bus stations E, C, and H, all with a weighted value above 15, while the rest had middling to negative responses. Some similar themes that show up across the three top choices are covered space, large awnings, open access, mixed use, and a feeling that it would fit in Bellingham.

Bike Parking A



Individual comments
like it
not sure of functionality for all sizes
good maximization of space
hopefully easy to access "second floor"
open and visible
hard to load
good use of space↑
covered↑
dislike upper level
seems hard to use
practical but is it awkward to use?
potentially dangerous
injury city
no way
too hard to park double, to lift up
looks dangerous - but could be intimidating to users b/c 2 level?
looks a bit complicated but would use if necessary
is it accessible?
like weather protection

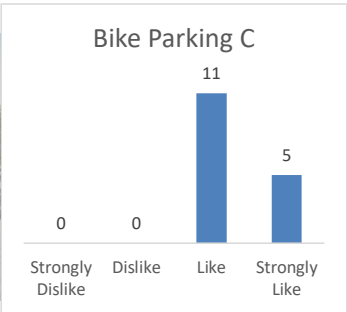
Bike Parking B



Individual comments

would need many of them to work
 too hidden, expensive
 seems the most safe
 takes up a lot of space
 not efficient space-wise
 too hidden
 ugly
 covered / secure
 too spacious (inefficient) ↓
 secure↑
 too big
 not efficient
 like the functionality but these are super ugly
 yes
 uses a lot of space but great as completely enclosed
 can people fit inside? how do you restrict human use?
 take up a lot of space
 might not be free?
 doesn't seem suitable for a quick visit
 would be great to have some for folks who need to leave bikes overnight

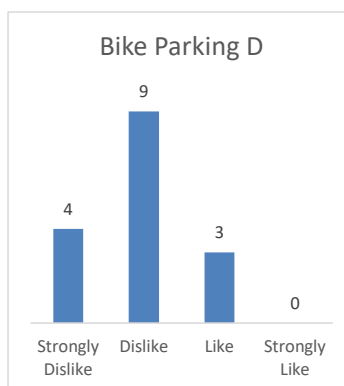
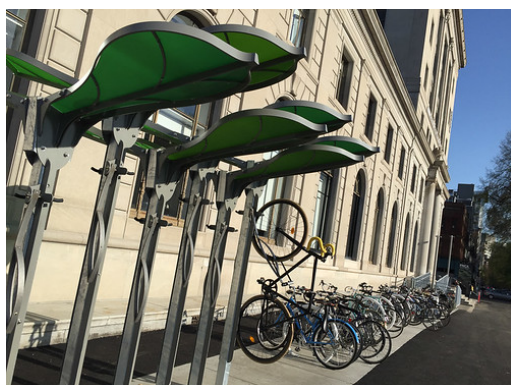
Bike Parking C



Individual comments
light
covered screen
obvious
enclosed and covered
fully enclosed
secure
safe from elements
secure
visibility
efficient
covered
secure ↑
covered ↑
not aesthetic ↓
efficient / compact
not bad
these could work in a lot of places here
covered but visible
yes for sure
secure entry
good use of space - so it seems
covered its good
weather protection
how does the key part work?



Bike Parking D



Individual comments

open to rain
 heavy to lift bikes to leaves
 no protection
 not user friendly
 not for all bike types
 not functional
 pointless
 like art / attractive
 don't like hanging to lift
 lifting ↓
 lack of cover ↓
 nice - fanciful
 open - easy
 doesn't seem secure
 not covered
 feels chaotic
 bikes are crammed
 too hard to lift bikes up
 complicated looking
 do they keep them dry?
 would it really conserve space?
 if you have stuff on your bike or in your basket it would be an issue



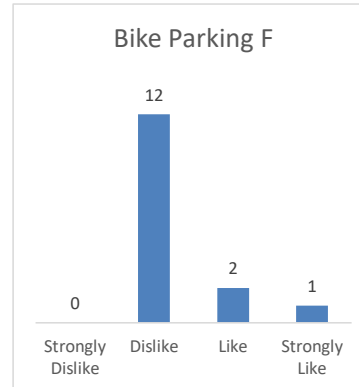
Bike Parking E



Individual comments
is it easy and accessible to use?
small locker space is good
covered is good
great if secure
I'm super neutral
best one - secure and visible
secure↑
covered ↑
meh...
minimum
covered but open
not secure
easy to use
enclosed space that's covered
like openness
covered



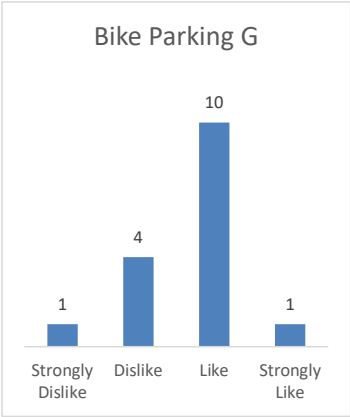
Bike Parking F



Individual comments

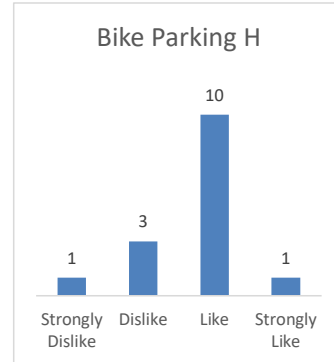
love it
user friendly
too open
eh
space and resource intensive
uncovered
nice - lots of bikes
this would be a good scenario for bike rentals
not covered
solar yes please on roof
no weather protection

Bike Parking G



Individual comments
looks dark and like a gym
racks too high?
a ton of space
bad racks
this seems practical
efficient and secure
good use of space↑
covered↑
not easy to use
unattractive
efficient
dull
covered
good use of space
organized
covered and enclosed
looks functional
open

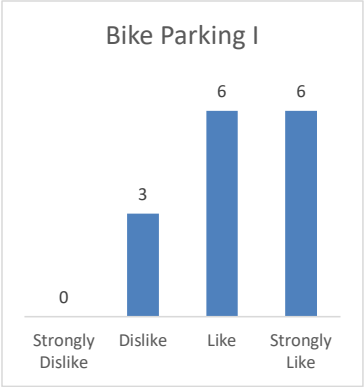
Bike Parking H



Individual comments

looks secure
 out of elements
 can fit a lot of bikes indoor
 different ways to store
 can fit a lot of bikes indoor
 different ways to store
 covered is good but not a good use of space
 maybe for office park
 indoors
 inefficient
 great for the office, not a public facility
 interior↑
 good options↑
 dark - too enclosed
 seems secure
 covered
 options wall / floor
 mixed use of types of parking indoor
 looks like a big use of space for use

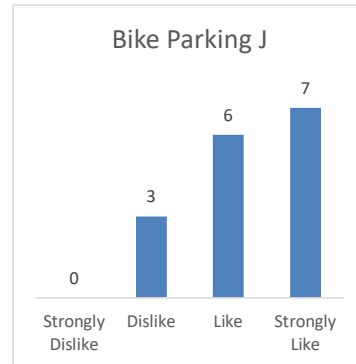
Bike Parking I



Individual comments
looks cozy! colorful
indoor / outdoor mix?
lockers
lots of options
large
compact
efficient
bright
looks modern
accessible
lockers
big/spacious/clean
lots of options↑
covered↑
different types of racks
bright & colorful
covered
giant
good for all bike types
covered
lots of spaces
bright
bright / colorful
lots of bike space indoor
covered
open
lots of room
warm
lots of space
lockers!



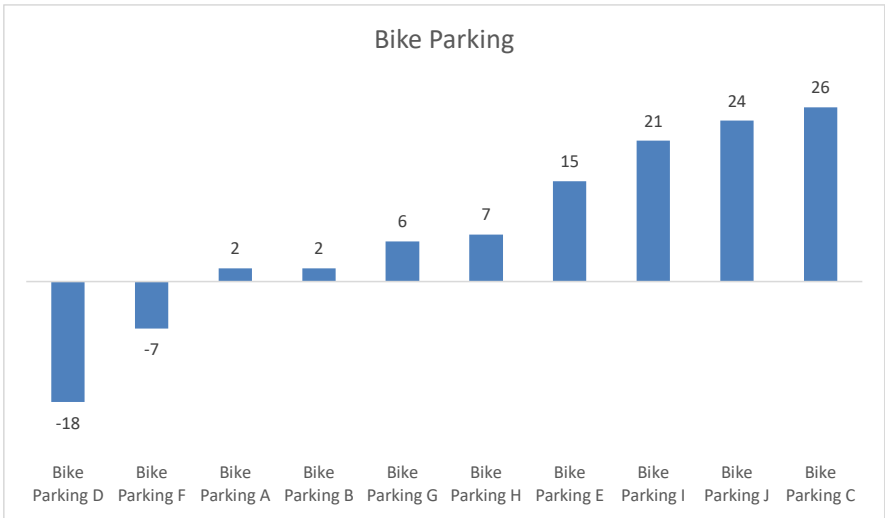
Bike Parking J



Individual comments

light accessibility
 obvious
 well designed
 covered
 well lit
 can be used for other types
 open signage
 attractive
 unless it's staffed i fear it will be misused
 beautiful and functional in a better world
 space intensive
 well-lit↑
 secure↑
 covered↑
 best - easily identifiable
 open / glass
 looks cool
 makes sense
 secure
 branded
 secure
 lighted
 looks like a public restroom
 is it a metro stop?
 looks secure

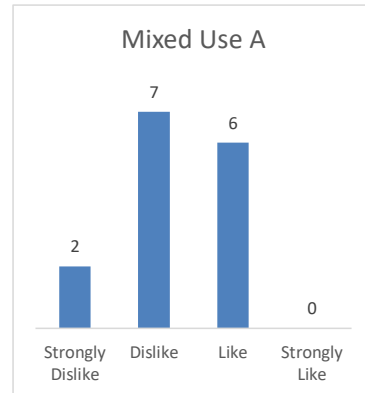
Weighted Analysis – Bike Parking



Overall most options received a positive response, and there were three options, bike parking I, J, and C, which received a score over 15. Some similar themes that show up across the three top choices are light, secure, .covered, and that it is easily identifiable.



Mixed Use A

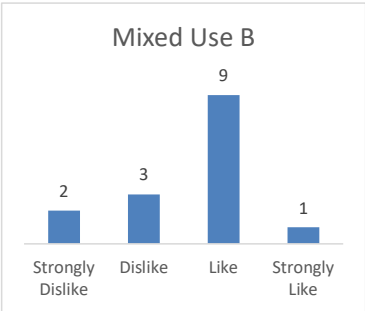


Individual comments

too heavy
 ugly
 too tall
 too modern
 boxy
 ugly - black shape is yuck
 dark
 its interesting
 more Fairhaven than Bellingham
 could look out of place
 commercial space
 drab
 units not unlove
 lower floor dark
 balconies↑
 wood / metal↑
 modern
 good scale
 decks
 bland streetscape
 clean, but too trendy
 open
 residential
 not just a big box
 doesn't look like Bellingham
 1st floor looks overpowered
 not exciting
 lower looks dull



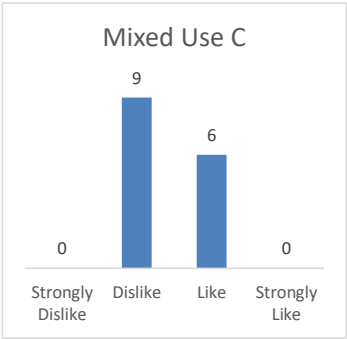
Mixed Use B



Individual comments
meh
larger
trees and plants all around
too industrial
not destination like
dull
like corner emphasis using materials
recessed decks, nice shape
bonus: meh
trees↑
nice - volumetry
it's a little drab and boring
no white
won't age well
brighter than some but
a bit boring materials but clean mixed use
deck is good
ugly
boxy
don't like 2 diff sidings
boring
too big
monolith
needs more green space



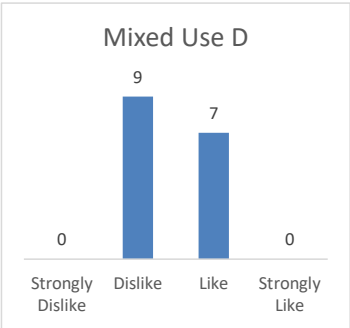
Mixed Use C



Individual comments
meh ok photo was different it was meh green spaces lots of glass good use of space meh



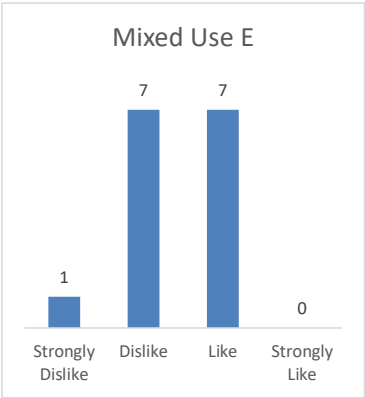
Mixed Use D



Individual comments
like the windows flat doesn't fit content recessed story idea sets back not downtown-like doesn't fit Bellingham glass setbacks variation of window sizes neighborhood fit ↓ sculptural lots of glass but out of context feels light but out of place rooftop looks cool step back cool doesn't fit downtown a lot of windows in here but frontage is flat like smaller 3 story building elegant, simple not too tall other buildings too big and square lots of windows (but expensive heating) therefore greater carbon impacts



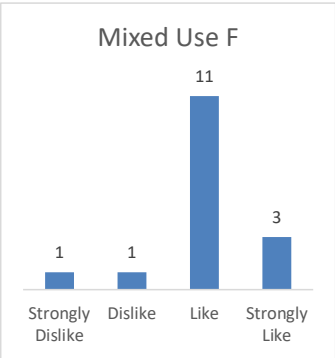
Mixed Use E



Individual comments
like randomness not enough greenspace most buildings too tall and boxy looks dated already but yet modern? no continuity of space complicated looking - what's what here also meh this is interesting compelling I would go here for sure whimsical - like active - grass feels more integrates stripes ↓ love the materials large awnings multi-use good scale architectural details - feels NW landscaping looks active very urban / moderate Barkley village appropriate active bottom level meh



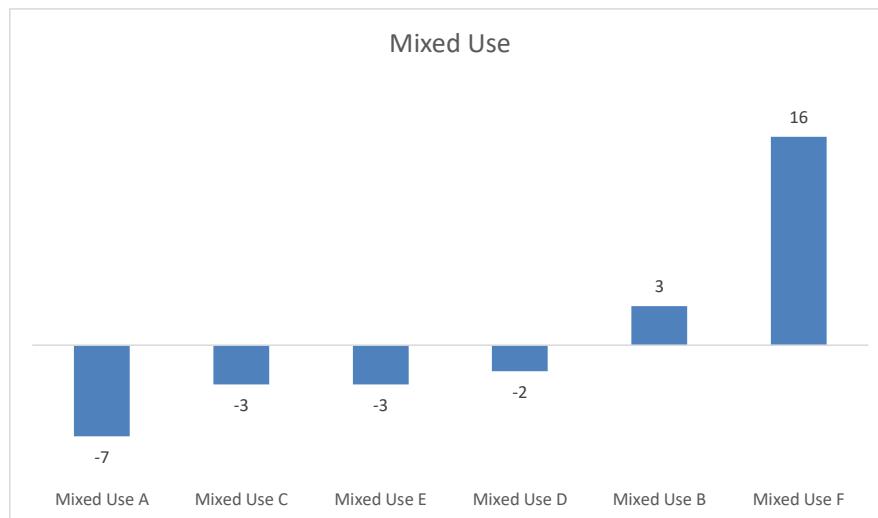
Mixed Use F



Individual comments
like retail balance big windows strong-barreled clear distinction of commercial and residential fits with downtown elements tall first floor decent tall bright ground floor strong base interesting windows / warehousy look classy tall first floor this looks like our town in many ways like this a lot love the way the commercial space looks different from the spaces above i like the brick good height boring but some mixed materials good ground level lighting & mixed use is clean awning serves as a deck above 1st living level? modern but inspired by old style meshes well with surrounding neighborhood nice windows nice colors reasonable height trees (though could use more green) warehouse windows are attractive



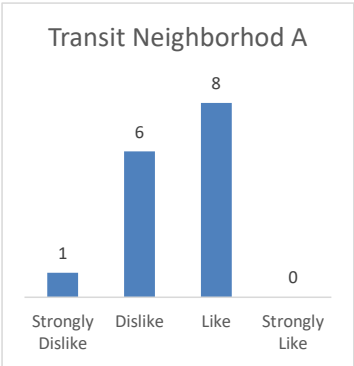
Weighted Analysis – Mixed Use



There were only two examples with a positive score, and only one with a score above 15. Mixed use F stood out to participants with a tall first floor, its good use of mixed space, fit with downtown Bellingham, and the overall design and use of bricks.

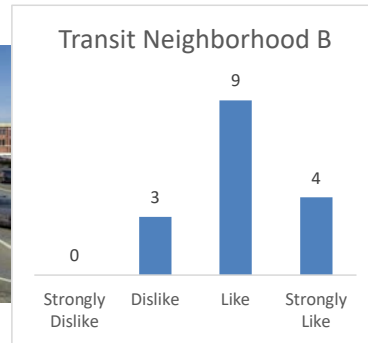


Transit Neighborhood A



Individual comments
<div>nope</div> <div>would look better with some grass</div> <div>pedestrian plaza</div> <div>elevated rail</div> <div>open</div> <div>open</div> <div>pretty</div> <div>limited in use</div> <div>like art / lighting / plants</div> <div>art</div> <div>open paths</div> <div>concrete↓</div> <div>love - multimodal</div> <div>looks funky</div> <div>I like the plaza ped zone plants, art</div> <div>concrete everywhere</div> <div>unclear what is ped and what is bus / car area</div> <div>love public art and colors</div> <div>not enough green space</div> <div>a lot of concrete (not needed)</div>

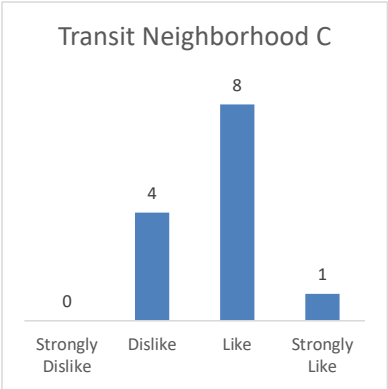
Transit Neighborhood B



Individual comments
love all the green space simple protected seating good green space + mix of landscape too open to elements though nice and open like the green space very gray / concrete feels outdoorsy but the greenspace is useful? overall like love - green greenery covered love the landscaping integrated with glass lots of activity and people poor use of space green oasis easy to get in and out for busses inviting not sure if all space is used

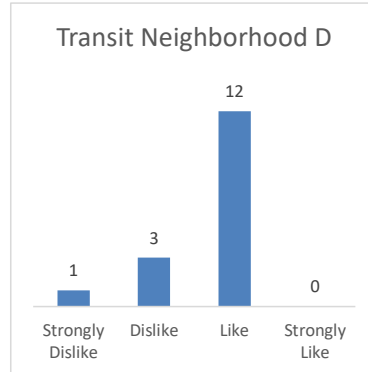


Transit Neighborhood C



Individual comments
<div>meh</div> <div>green oasis</div> <div>easy to get in and out for busses</div> <div>welcoming</div> <div>well integrated into surroundings</div> <div>love creation of plaza</div> <div>not enough cover ↓</div> <div>nice</div> <div>trees</div> <div>bike/ped zone</div> <div>good use of use / space but tunnel-ish though I am a fan of the long transit use</div> <div>looks nice</div> <div>not enough weather protection</div> <div>love trees</div> <div>is there a bathroom?</div>

Transit Neighborhood D

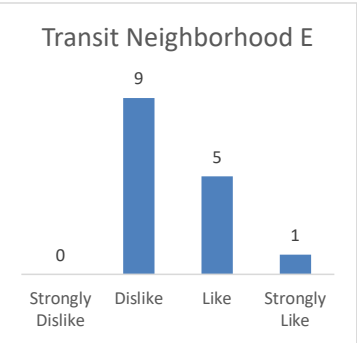


Individual comments

seems covered
 enjoy greatly, more pls
 can't see the waiting space well in the pic
 open but some covered area
 too little greenspace but could add
 needs more "waiting" space sitting
 not covered
 too open
 like the pavers
 its very uncovered
 like the materials used
 open space
 benches
 path design
 seating
 landscaping
 pavement detail
 no covered shelter
 very basic transit shelter
 open
 easy to access
 set in historical site
 seems too open
 not enough waiting space
 cohesive looking
 open



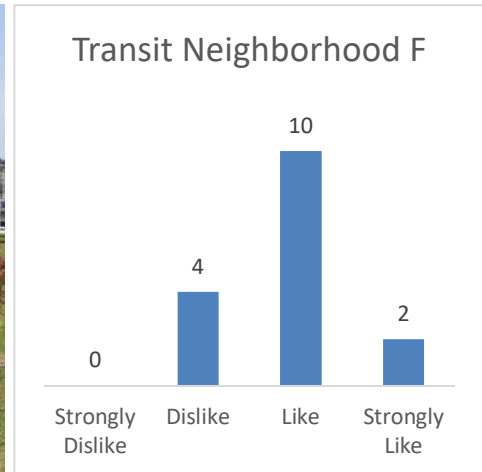
Transit Neighborhood E



Individual comments
feels odd
not cohesive
like green space but doesn't seem inviting / integrated
too stand-alone?
pretty
looks like transit is tacked on
green space
like green space
feels choppy and bizarre
that's a bathroom, nice
covered
has paths
green spaces
like the green but not grounded to anything - no anchor
park feel is good
waiting area too narrow
doesn't seem very protected
why is the lawn so cut up?



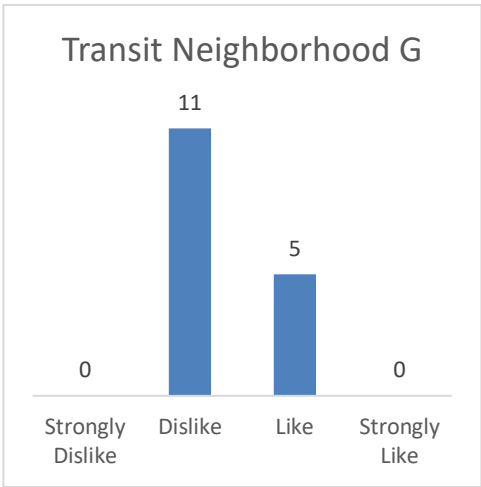
Transit Neighborhood F



Individual comments

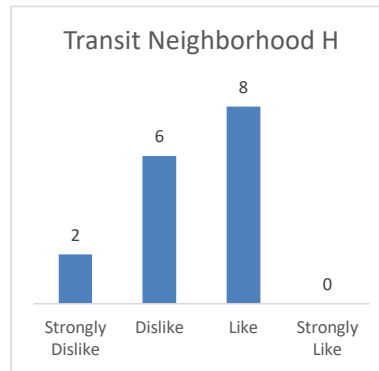
just fine
 rain protection
 greenery
 very similar to current station
 too much flat/transit/concrete but serving as the corridor
 covered
 this looks like a fancy upgrade of our current situation
 clean, open, charming
 clean - modern
 like wavy bus bay!
 glass/covered
 small scene center
 clearly defined transit area
 functional
 similar to what we have now
 clear transit area
 feels functional

Transit Neighborhood G



Individual comments
looks confusing
looks like there's waiting space inside
too disjointed
"help I'm surrounded by buses!"
ped / bus interface
covered
ped across roadway
congested :(
not clear organization
this feels like I'm gonna get run over
has a circus vibe (not in a good way)
interesting
looks dated but is it functional - safe for anchor spot?!
looks chaotic
not enough green space
not much cover
i like the central island but not the platforms

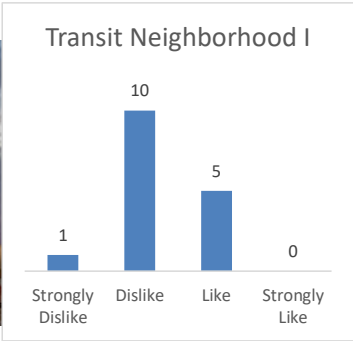
Transit Neighborhood H



Individual comments

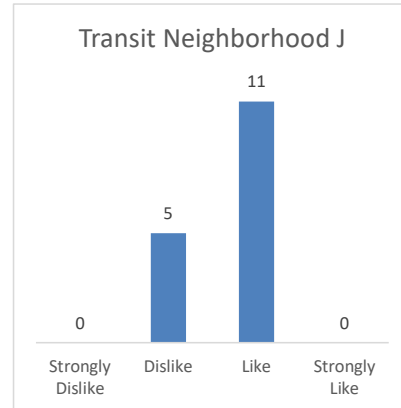
giant
 lots of capacity
 too hidden
 mix is nice and accommodates parking, residential, greenspace
 park space is too linear
 too modern
 too large
 green space is artificially shaped
 like green space
 too much parking
 multi-use
 don't like big swaths of grass with nothing going on
 too much parking ↓
 green
 colorless ↓
 nice - busses hidden
 park focus

Transit Neighborhood I



Individual comments
no green space
feels inorganic + sharp
too many platforms with concrete between them
feels similar to existing so not a lot of new use
covered is good but too open
not compelling
not enough shelter
not welcoming
lack of shelter ↓
all spiky shelter with nothing else going on
Blah
Very functional
Not enough shelter
Not "downtown like"
Not integrated to rest of neighborhood
Not enough covered area
Weird
Looks like drive-in eatery

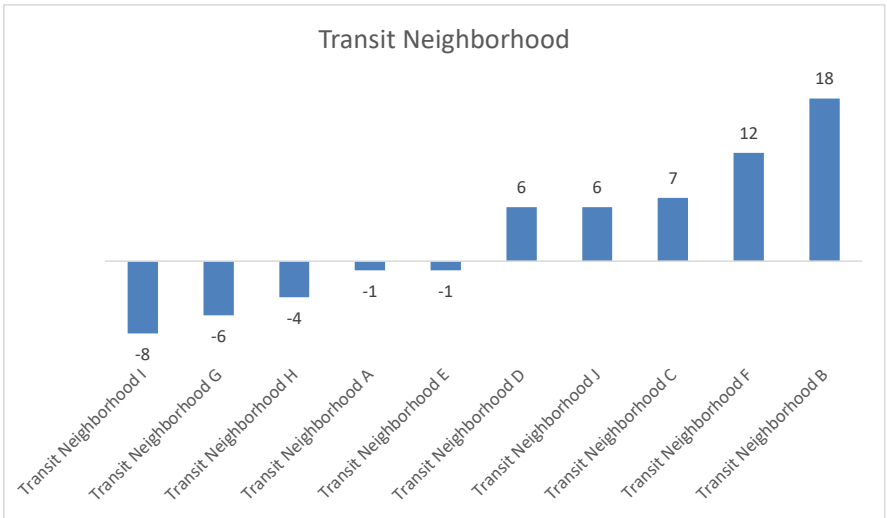
Transit Neighborhood J (Existing Station)



Individual comments
open, but just a bus station fits in with surroundings trees not appealing not doing anything to activate the street love the trees not enough shelter or public spaces not welcoming simple accessible open one dimensional "functional" but not inspiring use of the space better trees please! keep green space and shade/cover clearly a bus station clear cover gets gross green mold etc. more green please weather protection easy to navigate system conveniently locate



Weighted Analysis – Transit Neighborhood



The transit neighborhoods received a somewhat standard distribution of values, with the top two neighborhoods, F and B, scoring above a 10, with B at 16 points. For these two neighborhoods, they shared similar themes of good use of transit space, covering, and use of greenery.



Appendix F: Workshop Participant List

Bellingham Station Visioning Study – Workshop Attendee List

Name	Affiliation
Greg Robinson	Greg Robinson Architect
Rhys Faler	Transit Rider
James Detke	WWU Student and Sustainable Transportation Intern
Patty Boyce	United Way of Whatcom County
Cory Blackwood	Ritual Records, Transportation Commission
Chris Roselli	Western Washington University
Alice Clark	Downtown Bellingham Partnership E.D.
Darby Galligan	Senior Planner, City of Bellingham
Kevin Goldsberry	Terminal Expediter, WTA
Brian Richeson	Operations Supervisor, WTA
Mary Anderson	Senior Transit Planner and Project Manager, WTA
Tim Wilder	WTA Planning Director
Eric Frazier	WTA Operations Director
Kristi Birkeland	United Way of Whatcom County
Les Reardanz	WTA General Manager
Ashley Geleynse	Whatcom County Health Department
Andy Bower	WTA Fleet and Facilities Director
Zoe Fassett-Manuszewski	WWU Student

