



**Agenda Planning Commission
Gig Harbor Civic Center
Thursday, May 4, 2023 5:30 P.M.**

This meeting may also be accessed through Zoom at <https://zoom.us/j/95353411299> or by calling (253) 215- 8782 and entering Meeting ID 953 5341 1299. Please see the Public Comment & Decorum section at the end of this agenda for information on options to make public comment.

This meeting may also be viewed live in the Council Chambers at the Civic Center.

- I. Call to Order/Roll Call:**
- II. Approval of Minutes:** April 20, 2023
- III. Public Comment:**
- IV. Agenda Items:**
 - a. 2024 Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update – Community Design
- V. Other Business:** Next meeting Thursday, May 18, 2023
- VI. Adjournment:**

PUBLIC COMMENT & DECORUM

Commenters will be allotted 3 minutes per individual, unless revised by the Chair. In-person comments shall be made from the microphone, first giving the speaker's name and address. When there are 30 seconds remaining, staff will alert you to summarize your comments. At the end of your comments, staff will notify you it has come to the end of your comment period. Anyone making "out of order" comments may be subject to removal from the meeting.

Public comment may be made remotely via Zoom or by phone during designated portions of the meeting. To speak during the meeting, press the Raise Hand button near the bottom of your Zoom window or press *9 on your phone. Please refrain from raising your hand until the Chair has announced that the Commission has opened the public comment portion of the meeting. Your name or the last three digits of your phone number will be called out when it is your turn to speak. When using your phone to call in, you may need to press *6 to unmute yourself. All speakers will have up to three minutes to speak.

All remarks shall be addressed to the Commission as a body and not to any specific Commissioner. All speakers shall be courteous in their language and deportment and shall not engage in or discuss or comment on personalities or indulge in derogatory remarks or insinuations with regard to any Commissioner, the Chair, or any member of the staff or the public.

There will be no demonstrations during or at the conclusion of any public comment. These guidelines are intended to promote an orderly system of holding a public meeting, to give every person an opportunity to be heard and to ensure that no individuals are embarrassed by voicing their opinions.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES (ADA) ACCOMMODATIONS ADA accommodations can be provided upon request. Those requiring special accommodations should contact the City Clerk at cityclerk@gigharborwa.gov or (253) 853-7613 at least 24 hours prior to the meeting.



**Minutes for Gig Harbor Planning Commission
Gig Harbor Civic Center
Thursday, April 20, 2023 5:30 P.M.**

- I. **Call to Order/Roll Call:** Chair Krawczyk called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. Commissioners Bradbury, Brown, Burcar, Soltess (Virtually logged off at 6:57) and Jordan (Virtually) were present. Commissioner Snodgrass was excused.
City Staff: Principal Planner, Robin Bolster-Grant & Planning Technician, Michelle Thomas were present.
- II. **Approval of Minutes:** Move to approve minutes for April 6, 2023 (Bradbury/Brown) Unanimously approved
- III. **Public Comment:** No public comment
- IV. **Agenda Items:**
 - a. 2024 Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update – The Harbor Element: Presentation Staff Bolster-Grant & Commission Discussion
- V. **Other Business:** Next meeting Thursday, May 4, 2023 will be held in the Planning Conference room. Another element of the 2024 Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update will be discussed.
- VI. **Adjournment:** 8:07



TO: Gig Harbor Planning Commission

FROM: Robin Bolster-Grant, Principal Planner
Planning Division

DATE: April 26, 2023

RE: 2024 Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update – Community Design Element

Continuing the discussion started at the April 20, 2023 Planning Commission Meeting, on May 4, 2023, staff will present the Community Design Element for discussion. The objective, again, is to ensure commissioners are familiar with the goals and policies contained within the current element and to solicit input regarding possible updates as well as questions that may be presented to the community during future outreach opportunities.

Community Design is not a required element under the GMA, but is an important aspect of the expressed vision of Gig Harbor citizens in terms of how people experience their community and interact one another.

Attachments:

Exhibit A – Gig Harbor Comprehensive Plan, Chapter 4 – Community Design.

Chapter 4

COMMUNITY DESIGN

Introduction

The way in which people experience their community and interact with one another is determined, in large measure, by a community's design. Designs which emphasize "community" are those which invite human presence, arouse curiosity, peak interest, and allow for interaction of people. This aspect of "community development" has become notably absent over the past several years as development has become increasingly internalized and privatized and as communal elements of design have been replaced by a more austere form of architecture.

Where design is not a consideration, city planning is often reduced to a parcel-and-pod review process which fails to recognize the functional and visual links between developments. This oversight has resulted in the creation of towns without town squares, downtowns without shoppers, cities without identities, and communities without communion. The City of Gig Harbor is fortunate to have retained many features of a community and recognizes its opportunities to build upon its existing characteristics. However, it is also recognized that recent development trends have detracted from Gig Harbor's small town quality.

During the fall of 1992, the City of Gig Harbor conducted a visioning forum to ask citizens what characteristics of their community they like best and what changes they would like to see take place. While a limited number of design concepts were presented, the forum was not structured to provide solutions as much as to receive public input on existing characteristics of the community. It was evident from the forum survey that citizens liked Gig Harbor's small town scale, and that they most favored development which reflected the town's historic form of architecture and which preserved the harbor's natural beauty. The City has therefore adopted goals and policies to assure that future development respects and enhances Gig Harbor's built and natural environment.

The following goals and policies are quite specific and may appropriately be considered as general guidelines for development. However, as statements of goals, they are adopted as a Design Element of the City's Comprehensive Plan with the understanding that more specific guidelines must be developed and that zoning code revisions will be required to achieve these goals.

COMMUNITY DESIGN

GOAL 4.1: ASSURE THAT NEW COMMERCIAL AND RESIDENTIAL PROJECTS INCLUDE AN ACTIVE INTERFACE BETWEEN THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE REALMS.

4.1.1. Create outdoor "people" spaces

Require new commercial development to have outdoor "people" spaces incorporated into its design. Examples of appropriate people spaces include the following:

- (a) Plazas or common areas (described below).
- (b) Pocket parks.
- (c) Covered walkways and colonnades which incorporate seating areas.

4.1.2. Provide public orientation

Prohibit designs which provide no public (street) orientation.

- a) Require that commercial structures include shops, storefronts, plazas or common areas on all sides visible to the public right-of-way.
- b) Prohibit designs which line streets with privacy fences or blank walls.

4.1.3. Keep commercial structures in foreground of development.

Emphasize structures, landscaping, and common areas at the street face and encourage side or rear lot parking areas.

4.1.4. Encourage houses which engage the neighborhood.

House designs with clearly defined entrances are much more inviting than the intimidating appearance of the hidden entrance.

- a) Encourage front porches with well-defined entrances.
- b) Discourage designs which hide or obscure the front entry.
- c) Discourage designs which emphasize vehicular enclosure over human habitation. As much as possible, garages should appear as a secondary element in the design of structures.
- d) Encourage generous use of windows on house fronts. A solid/void ratio of 30 - 35% is ideal (e.g., 30% of wall surface in windows).

GOAL 4.2 PROVIDE FUNCTIONAL LINKS BETWEEN DEVELOPED AND DEVELOPING PARCELS.

4.2.1. Link development with connecting paths.

Require perimeter sidewalks and/or traversing paths, (depending on adjacent pedestrian links) on all commercial and multi-family housing projects. These should connect to all logical points of entry on adjacent parcels and/or be consistent with an approved master trails plan for the City.

4.2.2. Facilitate pedestrians access.

Provide pedestrian corridors and "gateways" through and/or between structures, perimeter fences, berms and buffers, together with necessary access easements.

4.2.3. Limit asphalt areas.

Allow and encourage shared parking between developments.

4.2.4. Develop user-friendly bus stops.

In Coordination with Pierce Transit, incorporate on-site bus stops as an amenity to the site and to riders. Bus stops should be inviting and must include more than a sign and a bench on the street edge. Ideally, bus stops should be incorporated into on-site public spaces.

4.2.5. Develop a master trails plan for the City.

A master trails plan will help to identify appropriate locations for paths and trails which link recreational, commercial, and residential areas. The trails plan should be used as a guide when reviewing all future development proposals and when considering property acquisition for recreational and public transportation improvements.

GOAL 4.3: CREATE COMMERCIAL CENTERS WHICH PROVIDE HIGH LEVELS OF PUBLIC AMENITIES IN AREAS DETERMINED APPROPRIATE FOR COMMERCIAL, HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL, OR MIXED USES

4.3.1. Develop common areas.

Functional and attractively designed common areas facilitate pedestrian activities, enhance the shopping experience, link adjacent business areas, serve as a transition point between commercial and residential areas, and provide a pleasing aesthetic element to commercial development. Common areas should be provided on site or in close proximity to all new commercial development.

- a) Develop minimum common area standards for both small and large scale commercial development.
- b) Encourage the provision of public restrooms, drinking fountains, telephones and seating areas in both sunny and shaded locations. These should be attractively landscaped and be designed to compliment the design of commercial structures

4.3.2. Encourage limited outdoor activities.

Some types of outdoor activities provide color, activity, and a sense of vibrancy to commercial areas. Allow limited numbers of the following types of outdoor vendors and uses in common areas*:

- (a) Single item food products or flowers sold from a portable handcart or vending cart.
- (b) Temporary displays of art including paintings, sketches, pottery sculptures, carvings, jewelry or similar crafts.
- (c) Permanent displays of public art.
- (d) Farmers markets
- (e) Outdoor dining
- (f) Other uses as may be approved through the site plan or conditional use process.

*Outdoor uses may be restricted to tenants leasing indoor space and may be limited to no more than three vendors per common area or one vendor per 5000 square feet, which ever is less.

GOAL 4.4: ENHANCE THE CITY'S SENSE OF PLACE BY PRESERVING PROMINENTLY VISIBLE PARCELS FOR AESTHETICALLY PLEASING DEVELOPMENT

4.4.1. Identify Significant Views.

Identify and map all significant vistas, view corridors, and view termination points. These may include corridors into the City, primary thoroughfares through the City, street ends, and panoramic views of the harbor.

4.4.2. Preserve Corner lots and view termination points.

Preserve the visual quality of corner lots and view terminuses by prohibiting parking lots, gas stations, convenience stores or other asphalt-intensive uses on these parcels. These areas were traditionally reserved for structures of a more stately appearance and play a crucial role in establishing an identity for the city.

4.4.3. Designate enhancement zones.

Designate visually sensitive areas for highly visible or prominent parcels including corners, entry corridors, highway and freeway corridors, view termination points, etc. Development of these parcels would require increased landscaping, a higher level of design review for structures, and prohibition (or increased screening) of visually distracting appurtenances such as gas pumps, satellite dishes, storage racks, mechanical equipment, etc.

4.4.4. Cluster green spaces.

Diluting green spaces down into several small areas lessens the visual impact of required landscape areas. Develop large areas of greenery which provide a visual impact as opposed to creating small areas of unusable "residue".

GOAL 4.5: MAINTAIN A SENSE OF ARRIVAL BY PRESERVING A WELL DEFINED CITY "EDGE" AND BY DEVELOPING GATEWAYS INTO THE CITY AND INTO DISTRICTS WITHIN THE CITY.

4.5.1. Limit freeway exposure.

Limit freeway exposure or visibility of development to select visual nodes.

4.5.2. Designate freeway enhancement zones (see above).

4.5.3. Develop City gateways.

Develop intersections near freeway off-ramps as City gateways with formal landscaping, information kiosks, public art or civic structures.

4.5.4. Identify and develop district gateways.

Areas which are visually, geographically, and functionally distinct should be denoted with well defined points of entrances. This may include the following:

- (a) Vegetative buffer between districts
- (b) Change in street and/or sidewalk paving materials, particularly at gateway intersections.
- (c) Retain and promote an architectural style for a given district.

BUILDING & STRUCTURE DESIGN

GOAL 4.6: ARTICULATE AN ARCHITECTURAL STYLE WHICH REFLECTS GIG HARBOR'S BUILT AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND WHICH APPEALS TO THE HUMAN SPIRIT.

4.6.1. Maintain a small town scale for structures.

New structures should not overpower existing structures or visually dominate Gig Harbor's small town city-scape, except as approved landmark structures.

4.6.2. Identify an appropriate form for structures.

New structures should be characterized by interesting forms and roof lines. Boxy, single- mass buildings should be discouraged except as may be appropriate in a downtown streetscape.

GOAL 4.7: ENCOURAGE BUILDING DESIGNS WHICH DEFINE AND RESPECT THE HUMAN SCALE.

The scale of the building in relation to the human form should be obvious, particularly at the sidewalk level.

4.7.1. Define floor levels.

Encourage building designs with a visual and functional distinction between the first floor and all subsequent floors so that in elevation view, the human scale can be easily defined in relation to the building height.

4.7.2. Encourage mixed-use structures.

Mixing uses within a structure enhances the ability to give interesting form and character to a building. For example, allowing residential units above retail shops encourages designs more common to a village or small town setting while providing another housing opportunity for local merchants or retirees with limited transportation.

GOAL 4.8: DEVELOP AN HIERARCHY IN BUILDING AND SITE DESIGN.

Visual interest in the urban-scape can be achieved through an hierarchical approach to design. For example, strategically located structures designed as focal points create a visual "draw" and suggest a point of activity. These serve also as a reference point for all subordinate structures.

4.8.1. Include primary structures as focal points.

Primary structures are those which serve as a visual draw to a site, streetscape or prominent urban setting. Site plans can be significantly enhanced by including primary structures as a focal point rather than a myriad of "carbon copy" buildings with no visual hub. Primary

structures may be emphasized by a combination of the following types of design attributes:

- (a) Increased building height*
- (b) Prominent roof form including large hips and intersecting gables, cascading down onto lower roof forms.
- (c) Colonnades
- (d) Plaza's incorporated into building niches and overhangs.
- (e) Towers, pinnacles, or similar design elements which provide a stately appearance.

* Parcels which serve as view termination points may be ideally situated for landmark-type structures and may appropriately be considered for increased building height during the site plan review process, provided such increase does not threaten significant natural view corridors.

4.8.2. Integrate secondary structures as support buildings.

Secondary structures may be much simpler in design and still provide interest to the site plan or streetscape. Architectural interest is of less importance with secondary structures if the primary structure adequately serves this purpose and if the secondary structures appear as an integral element in the overall site plan.

NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN

Gig Harbor is composed of many neighborhoods which, over time, have established their own design characteristics that should be maintained to preserve the character of the City.

GOAL 4.9: DEFINE NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN AREAS

4.9.1. Design standards should recognize existing neighborhood characteristics.

4.9.2 Design standards should enhance and be compatible with existing neighborhood characteristics.

4.9.3. Neighborhood Design Areas

Neighborhood design areas are identified to serve as a basis for establishing or accommodating detailed design standards. The Comprehensive Plan defines eight (8) neighborhood design areas, which are shown on the Neighborhood Design Areas map:

- a) View Basin
The view basin is the City's heritage. It was within the view basin that the Gig Harbor fishing village was born. Today the view basin is a vibrant mix of retail, restaurant, residential, maritime and community activities contained within the historic neighborhoods of the City. Pedestrian walkways link the historic areas of Finholm,

Waterfront Millville, Downtown and Borgen's Corner which serve as neighborhood centers for the surrounding mixture of contemporary and historic homes.

b) Soundview

The Soundview neighborhood design area includes the residential and commercial areas around Soundview Drive, Kimball Drive and Reid Drive. The neighborhood serves as a gateway to historic Gig Harbor, providing scenic views of the Narrows, Colvos Passage and Mt. Rainier. This mixed-use area sits above the Puget Sound with high bluffs dominating the shoreline. Multifamily/single-family homes and low-intensity commercial and community services characterize this neighborhood.

c) Gig Harbor North

The Gig Harbor North neighborhood design area serves as a regional service area. The neighborhood design area is characterized by contemporary architecture, pedestrian and bicycle connections and retention of large natural areas. The area has considerable lands available which will allow the area to expand its office, industrial, medical, retail and residential uses.

d) Peacock Hill

The Peacock Hill residential neighborhood design area includes the residential areas along Peacock Hill Avenue and Canterwood Boulevard. The neighborhood design area is characterized by suburban density developments of contemporary homes built around large trees and greenbelts.

e) Rosedale/Hunt

The Rosedale/Hunt neighborhood design area includes the commercial and residential areas west of SR 16 and along Rosedale Street, Skansie Avenue (46th Avenue) and Hunt Street. The area is characterized by lower intensity commercial and industrial uses and community and school facilities surrounded by suburban density housing developments.

f) Westside

The Westside neighborhood design area is located south of Hunt Street and west of SR 16. The business area in the vicinity of the Olympic Drive/Point Fosdick Drive interchange serves as the primary service area for the city. This area has a vibrant mix of destination retail, medical offices, neighborhood businesses, grocery stores, multiple-family housing and retirement communities. The area experiences heavy traffic and pedestrian connections have been limited. Having developed over time, the architecture of the businesses is varied. Many of the businesses have developed with a significant number of existing trees being retained.

The Westside residential areas are characterized by suburban density subdivisions of contemporary homes built around large trees. Many homes in this area have territorial views.

g) Bujacich Road / NW Industrial

The Bujacich Road / NW Industrial neighborhood design area includes the employment

districts and public/institutional districts along Bujacich Road. The area is intended to meet the long term employment needs of the community and provide areas for large-scale essential public facilities. Design standards should reflect the functional needs of these type of industrial and government uses.

h) Purdy

The Purdy neighborhood design area is characterized by residential uses, local services, retail businesses, public utilities and school facilities. As the gateway to the Key Peninsula, Purdy has enjoyed a unique identity in its relationship to Henderson Bay.

4.9.4. Each neighborhood design area has a common set of features which should be emphasized to varying degrees in order to affect the best possible course of new and renewal development.

These features include but are not limited to:

- a) Natural Vegetation and Topography
- b) Trails, Parks and Open Space
- c) Sidewalks and Circulation
- d) Parking and Building Orientation
- e) Historic Buildings and Uses
- f) Building to Building Relationships
- g) Housing Patterns
- h) Architectural Quality and Character
- i) Site Amenities

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT DESIGN

Residential development includes all subdivisions, short plats, single-family and duplex homes and multifamily projects.

GOAL 4.10: MAINTAIN AND INCORPORATE GIG HARBOR’S NATURAL CONDITIONS IN NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENTS.

4.10.1. Incorporate existing vegetation into new residential developments.

Roads, lot layout and building sites in new residential developments should be designed to preserve high quality existing vegetation by clustering open space and native trees in order to protect not only the trees, but the micro-climates which support them.

4.10.2. Preserve existing trees on single-family lots in lower-density residential developments. High quality native trees and understory should be retained where feasible.

4.10.3. Incorporate new native vegetation plantings in higher-density residential developments.

Ensure that the size of buffers and clustered open space are consistent with the scale of the development, especially where new higher-density developments are adjacent to existing lower-density developments.

4.10.4. Encourage property owners to preserve native forest communities and tree canopies.

4.10.5. Include landscape buffers between new residential development and perimeter roads.

Native nursery-stock and existing vegetation should be used to buffer residential development from perimeter roads. Buffers should be wide enough to effectively retain existing or support re-planting of native vegetation. The use of berms and swales along with landscaping can also adequately buffer residential developments from perimeter roads.

4.10.6. Maximize opportunities for creating usable, attractive, well-integrated open space in new residential developments.

Well organized outdoor open spaces can be created by the grouping and orientation of building sites. These open spaces provide buffering, preservation of natural areas and recreation opportunities. Open space which is integrated into residential projects can also provide for important hydrologic functions.

4.10.7. Respect existing topography and minimize visual impacts of site grading.

Existing topography should be maintained while still providing usable yards and open space. Retaining walls, when necessary, should be terraced and enhanced and/or screened to minimize their visual impact.

GOAL 4.11: ENSURE NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENTS PROVIDE AN INTERFACE BETWEEN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE ACTIVITIES.

4.11.1. Provide pedestrian and non-motorized vehicle connections.

Residential developments should provide pedestrian walkways and non-motorized vehicle trails which link all homes to adjacent properties and neighboring uses.

4.11.2 Provide vehicle connections between neighboring residential developments.

Provide vehicular connections between new residential developments and, where feasible, connections between new and existing residential developments.

4.11.3 Provide an appropriate number of visitor parking spaces in residential developments based on the intensity of the development.

4.11.4 Encourage alternatives to on-street parking.

Aesthetics, safety and visual impacts should be considered in placement and size of parking areas.

GOAL 4.12: HOMES AND RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENTS SHOULD BE DESIGNED TO ENHANCE EXISTING CHARACTERISTICS OF GIG HARBOR.

4.12.1. The size of new residences and residential remodels should maintain a reasonable proportion of building to lot size to reflect the characteristic of existing neighborhoods.

When residences cover more lot area than is normally seen in an existing area, they appear to be incompatible with the neighborhood.

4.12.2. With increased residential density, additional consideration should be given to lot orientation, building orientation and yard sizes.

Varied lot configurations and building orientation can reduce repetition of the built forms along the streetscape. Lot widths should be selected to allow the best architecture for the housing type proposed.

GOAL 4.13: PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENTS

4.13.1. Encourage sustainable land development and building practices in the construction of new residential development.

WATERFRONT DESIGN

Gig Harbor's waterfront is a vital aspect of the City's identity and possesses qualities which require special design consideration. While all other city-wide goals and policies for design should be applied to development of the harbor, additional and supporting criteria are necessary to preserve those qualities which are unique to the waterfront only.

GOAL 4.14: PRESERVE VISUAL POINTS OF INTEREST.

Some of the more memorable and characteristic components of Gig Harbor are those items associated with and around the waterfront.

4.14.1. Identify visual points of interest and their point of reference from prominent public places and from individual parcels.

4.14.2. Incorporate points of interest into building and landscape design

- a) Where possible, shift location of buildings to maintain points of interest from the street.
- b) Encourage designs which frame points of interest between architectural forms, e.g., archways, corridors, and building masses.
- c) Assure that landscaping complements points of interest without obscuring their view from prominent points of reference.

GOAL 4.15: IDENTIFY, PRESERVE, AND DEVELOP AN APPROPRIATE WATERFRONT ARCHITECTURE.

4.15.1. Respect established waterfront architecture.

Gig Harbor's waterfront architecture should reflect the following components of the waterfront area:

- a) Historic structures in the Millville and Donkey Creek areas.
- b) Traditional fishing industry structures such as net sheds and boat houses.

4.15.2. Allow modern interpretations of historic structure designs.

4.15.3. Limit mass and scale of new structures to historic forms and proportions.

4.15.4. Limit building materials to those characteristic of Gig Harbor's historic structures.

GOAL 4.16: DEVELOP THE WATERFRONT AS A PLACE OF OUTDOOR PEOPLE ACTIVITY.

4.16.1. Encourage limited types of outdoor activities along the commercial waterfront zones including:

- a) Outdoor dining
- b) Entertainment activities
- c) Play areas for children
- d) Civic events and gatherings

4.16.2. Develop the waterfront as a place for public art displays.

This may require adoption of a public arts program.

4.16.3. Provide for maximum comfort of outdoor space.

- a) Maximize sun exposure to avoid creating cold, unpleasant exterior areas.
- b) Provide covering from rain

4.16.4. Minimize asphalt coverage along waterfront.

Standard parking requirements have prompted removal of structures characteristic of Gig Harbor's historical development and have encouraged bleak expanses of asphalt along the waterfront. To counter this trend consideration should be given to:

- (a) Revised parking standards for waterfront districts.
- (b) Development of off-site parking areas, public and private.
- (c) Use of aesthetically pleasing paving materials including colored, textured or grass-block pavers.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT AND DESIGN

Gig Harbor is typically referred to as an historic fishing village which began in the mid 1800's when two Slavonian and one Portuguese fishermen rowed into the Harbor for shelter. Their arrival prompted others to follow and fishing became an important industry to the harbor area. Fishing continues to be an important aspect of the local culture. However, Gig Harbor's beginnings were based upon other industries as well, including boat building and saw milling.

These occurred almost simultaneously and resulted in the platting of two towns - the original townsite of Gig Harbor at the head of the bay and the Town of Millville in the area of Dorotich Street and Harborview Drive. As these areas developed structures were built to accommodate both the housing and social needs of the community. These included churches, hotels, and schools and also small cabins to shelter the influx of workers into the area.

Few structures built during this initial period stand today. However, many of the historic structures which remain around the bay can be traced to a relatively early period of Gig Harbor's development and serve to remind today's residents of the people and events responsible for shaping the Gig Harbor community.

While a number of historic structures in the harbor area retain their original form and appearance, many have been altered by recent renovations and additions. Moreover, structures which have not been individually modified have nonetheless been impacted by the incongruous development styles and forms of the past several decades. The impacts of these changes on Gig Harbor's historic areas have raised the concerns of many Gig Harbor area residents who are concerned that the "small village" atmosphere of Gig Harbor is being eroded by a myriad of architectural styles and forms now evident on almost every street in Gig Harbor's historic areas.

The effect of modern development on Gig Harbor's historic areas is significant and raises doubts as to whether or not there remains sufficient historic fabric to justify the designation of a historic district. Yet despite modern development's impact on the historic integrity of the area, there are still a number of structures which individually are of historical significance or which collectively contribute to the historic flavor of the area.

GOAL 4.17: TO PRESERVE THE INTEGRITY OF THOSE STRUCTURES WHICH INDIVIDUALLY POSSESS IMPORTANT HISTORICAL, ARCHITECTURAL, AND/OR CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE.

Some structures standing alone would have important historical value to the community and should be carefully preserved as close to their original form as possible.

4.17.1. Encourage retention and adaptive reuse of older buildings with the following types of incentives:

- (a) Zoning incentives, e.g., setback and height standards which allow for restoration/renovation or expansion of existing structures.
- (b) Financial incentives such as low interest loans, tax credits or grant monies which may become available to the City for historic preservation.
- (c) Design assistance including suggestions on how to expand living space without compromising the design of the original structure
- (d) Resource information including in-house library with historic preservation/restoration publications and information.

4.17.2. Recognize outstanding preservation efforts through an awards or plaque program.

GOAL 4.18: TO PRESERVE THE CHARACTER OF THOSE SITES OR DISTRICTS WHICH REFLECT THE STYLE OF GIG HARBOR'S HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT.

4.18.1. Identify and establish an Historic Conservation Area.

The purpose of the conservation area is to preserve the historic or "village-like" character of an area despite alterations which may have compromised the historic integrity of the area.

4.18.2. Develop guidelines which promote compatible development within designated areas.

Guidelines should specify building forms, styles, and motifs appropriate for Gig Harbor's historic areas.

4.18.3. Provide design assistance for restoration, renovation or expansion of historic structures.

Many owners of historic structures are anxious to maintain the integrity of their buildings but are often unsure how to bring the structure up to modern living standards without compromising the integrity of the structures original design.

4.18.4. Determine appropriate procedures for design review which may include one or a combination of the following:

- (a) Establishment of an Historic District Commission
- (b) City Staff review and/or recommendation
- (c) Mandatory review of commercial and multi-family housing projects and optional review of single family development.

4.18.5. Review impacts of all City projects on existing historical structures or neighborhoods.

Plans for street or infrastructure improvements can be at odds with the established character of historic areas. These should be reviewed carefully.

GOAL 4.19: TO ASSURE CONSISTENCY BETWEEN ZONING REGULATIONS AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION OBJECTIVES.

The historic areas of Gig Harbor are typified by small lots with modest sized houses built near the road. This pattern placed many front porches near the sidewalk, thus emphasizing the communal aspect of the neighborhood. Maintaining this pattern is possible only when zoning codes allow similar types of development.

4.19.1. Adopt setback standards which reflect historic development patterns.

E.g., allow reduced front yard setbacks when a front porch is incorporated into the design of the structure.

4.19.2. Review minimum lot size standards and impervious coverage requirements to allow housing clusters consistent with historic densities.

4.19.3. Consider standards which encourage building forms consistent with historic designs, e.g, massing, roof styles and scale.

GOAL 4.20: TO RETAIN VITALITY OF HISTORIC BUSINESS DISTRICTS

4.20.1. Define and retain "small town" characteristics of historic business districts.

Such characteristics may include setbacks, lot coverage, street orientation, pedestrian amenities, aesthetic qualities, etc.

4.20.2. Develop downtown parking standards.

Standards should address downtown parking needs while avoiding asphalt encroachment into historic business areas.

4.20.3. Explore benefits of facade improvement program.

- a) Develop design criteria which will guide facade renovations
- b) Provide financial incentives to comply with program objectives, e.g., low interest loans or grants.

4.20.4. Develop marketing plan for downtown areas.

Promote the downtown's historic qualities and encourage business and property owners to preserve and develop these qualities in order to maintain the economic vitality of the downtown.

LANDSCAPE DESIGN

One of the most prominent natural features in Gig Harbor is the harbor itself. However, the harbor setting is further enhanced by its lush array of trees, flowers and ground covers. These should be preserved and incorporated into urban-type development if Gig Harbor is to retain its natural beauty.

GOAL 4.21: PRESERVE THE NATURAL AMBIANCE OF THE HARBOR AREA.

4.21.1. Incorporate existing vegetation into site plan.

As much as possible, site plans should be designed to protect existing vegetation. Such efforts should include the following:

- (a) Cluster open space in order to protect not only trees, but the micro-climates which protect them. To be effective, a single cluster should be no less than 25% of the site area.
- (b) Identify areas of disturbance prior to site plan approval. Too many good intentions turn sour because of incorrect assumptions on the location of proposed

development in relation to property lines and existing tree stands. This can be avoided by surveying the property and locating areas proposed for clearing before a site plan or subdivision is approved.

- (c) Install protective barricades prior to clearing and grading. Even the best intentions by the land developer to preserve natural vegetation can be undermined by careless equipment operators who might indiscriminately clear an area intended to be preserved.
- (d) Increase restrictions on vegetation removal after construction.

GOAL 4.22: ENHANCE THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT WITH FORMAL LANDSCAPING AND CONSISTENT STREET FURNISHINGS.

Formal landscaping provides a pleasing transition between the natural setting and the built environment and between wall surfaces and pavements.

4.22.1. Maintain current standards which define landscape requirements for parking areas.

4.22.2. Define pedestrian spaces with planting areas and overhead tree canopies.

GOAL 4.23: CONTROL VEGETATION TO PRESERVE SIGNIFICANT VIEWS.

Vegetation should be retained as an important element in the harbor setting but efforts to retain vegetation should be balanced with the more general goal of preserving the entire harbor setting including views of the water and distant vistas.

4.23.1. Retain significant vegetation.

Identify vegetation that can be removed while retaining Gig Harbor's characteristic vegetation.

- a) Selectively thin larger tree stands which, over time, have closed off significant views. Limit thinning so as to maintain an appropriate balance of timber and a continuous canopy.
- b) Consider ways to trim up existing trees to preserve views while maintaining a healthy balance between the crown and trunk of the tree.
- c) Avoid topping or other trimming activities which alter the natural symmetry of a tree.
- d) Require that consideration be given to changes in micro-climates as one or more removed trees exposes retained nearby.

4.23.2. Allow trees to be a part of the view.

Panoramic views, when they occur, are not necessarily void of trees, even in the foreground.

- a) Limited numbers of trees should not be considered an obstruction to a view.

- b) Recognize that every tree impacts someone's view to one degree or another.
- c) Recognize that removal of trees to provide a view alters the view that everyone hopes to get.

GOAL 4.24: PRESERVE SIGNIFICANT VEGETATION WHILE MAINTAINING SIGNIFICANT VIEWS.

4.24.1. Differentiate between view lots and potential view lots.

It is not the policy of the City to encourage or facilitate tree removal to create view lots. Reasonable efforts should be given to maintaining existing views, recognizing that views may be impacted by the eventual growth of trees or by development activities. These are natural or normal occurrences and are to be expected.

4.24.2. Control clearing activities.

Develop standards for clearing large parcels which includes appropriate timing of clearing and the amount of clearing to be done at any one time.

SIGNAGE & ILLUMINATION

Signs have become one of the more visual components of modern urban landscapes and are of primary concern to business owners. Clear and effective signage is essential to the successful operation of businesses and can facilitate vehicular and pedestrian activities. However, signage can also be the greatest contributor to visual clutter and blight. Large, garish signs designed as "attention getters" are neither necessary nor desirable in Gig Harbor's small town setting. With care, signs can serve to both effectively identify businesses and also provide a positive contribution to the City's visual quality.

GOAL 4.25: POSITION SIGNS TO FIT WITHIN FEATURES OF THE FACADE

4.25.1. Avoid covering architectural details.

Signs should not cover or obscure important architectural details of the building; they should appear to be a secondary and complimentary feature of the building facade.

4.25.2. Incorporate sign space into building design.

Wall signs should be located within architectural sign bands or other blank spaces which visually frame the sign. Many historical buildings were designed to accommodate signage in the parapet. This should be a prime consideration when designing new commercial buildings also.

4.25.3. Consider projecting signs when there is limited wall space.

Projecting signs can provide an attractive alternative to wall signs where wall signs might hide or over-power architectural details. Projecting signs are particularly effective in pedestrian environments such as the downtown area.

GOAL 4.26: KEEP SIGNAGE AS A SUBORDINATE ELEMENT IN BUILDING DESIGNS.

4.26.1. Minimize sign area in facade design.

Avoid expansive blank walls oriented to the public's view. These take on the character of large billboards when used for signage.

4.26.2. Avoid using signage as a dominant architectural statement.

Building designs should not depend on signage for interest or completion of design. Signage should compliment the building's design without being overpowering. For example, many service station canopies, while functional for weather protection, have the visual appearance of a free standing sign; Many warehouse and "super store" structures would be little more than a concrete box without their signs. Consider the following two-fold test: (1) would the structure which supports the sign appear unfinished or void of architectural interest if the signs and logo panels were removed; and (2) will the proposed signage appreciably alter the character of the building it is applied to?

4.26.3. Encourage sign designs which reflect the building style or period.

Some types of signs are out of character with building styles or designs. For example, internally illuminated signs are often out of character with the older or historic structures in the downtown area. Wooden painted or sandblasted signs with an external light source may be more appropriate in this location.

- a) Provide incentives for use of sandblasted signs, e.g., increased sign area allowance.
- b) Consider dis-incentives for internally illuminated signs in the downtown area, e.g, decreased sign area allowance.
- c) Limit allowed materials for awnings in the downtown area to traditional fabrics and designs. Covers with a shiny look of plastic or vinyl should be avoided.

4.26.4. Include corporate or logo panels into signage area calculations.

Many businesses apply steel, lexan, or similar panels with corporate colors or logos onto their building as part of their business identification. Excessive use of these panels can make them a dominant architectural feature and should be avoided.

- a) Include the area of corporate or logo panels into signage area calculation.
- b) Prohibit illumination of corporate or logo panels except for the text or symbol within the panels.

GOAL 4.27: AVOID FLAMBOYANCY IN SIGNAGE DESIGN.

Signs needn't be excessively flashy or luminous to be effective, readable or visually appealing.

4.27.1. Keep internally illuminated signs subdued.

Illumination of signs should be limited to the text of the sign only. Individual pan-channel letters with a plastic face or individual cut-out letters (i.e., letters routed out of the face of an opaque sign face and cabinet) are preferred. Reversed pan-channel letters with an internal light source

reflecting off of the building face may also be used for "halo" or "silhouette" lighting.

4.27.2. Maintain traditional designs of awnings.

Awnings have become a popular sign alternative, but their use and design have gone far beyond an awning's traditional application, resulting in trendy designs applied haphazardly to buildings and sign posts.

- a) Limit the area of awnings to be used for signage to no more than 20% of the awning face.
- b) Prohibit use of back-lit awnings except for sign text. Allow back-lit translucent materials on sign letters only.
- c) Allow awnings in traditional locations only, e.g, above doors, windows, and walkways. Awnings should not obscure architectural details or be the dominant architectural feature.

GOAL 4.28: COORDINATE SIGN DESIGNS ON MULTI-TENANT BUILDINGS.

Variety in sign designs can be exciting and visually pleasing, but too many types and styles of signs in a single project can be a disruptive element in an otherwise unified site design.

4.28.1. Design signs to compliment the building's architecture.

Signs should be sensitive to the building's design, both in terms of color and style. This is particularly important on Gig Harbor's historic structures in the downtown area.

4.28.2. Develop master sign plans for multi-tenant buildings.

Buildings or commercial projects with more than one tenant should have a master sign plan which identifies the type and size of sign each tenant space is allowed. A sign plan can specify design elements common to each sign such as materials, background colors or letter styles, each of which will serve to unify the site design

4.28.3. Coordinate free standing signs with building design.

Free standing signs should be designed to complement the style of the building or project to which they apply, using similar materials, colors, etc.

GOAL 4.29: MINIMIZE SIGN AREA BY ENCOURAGING EFFECTIVE SIGNAGE AS OPPOSED TO LARGE SIGNS

4.29.1. Encourage use of descriptive names for businesses.

It is best for the nature of a business to be identified by at least the second or third word in a business name. For example, it is clear from the name Tide's Tavern what the nature of the business is, but it is not so clear what one might find in a store called Once Upon a Time. It may be children's books or it may be antiques.

4.29.2. Avoid excessive lines of sign text.

A single line of legible sign text can convey more information at a glance than several lines of multiple messages. Limit single signs to no more than three messages or business names.

GOAL 4.30: RESTRICT USE OF OFF-PREMISE SIGNAGE.

The uncontrolled proliferation of off-premise signs can result in a garish and cluttered cityscape. Off premise signs should be restricted to those businesses that cannot be adequately identified with on-premise signage.

4.30.1. Encourage use of directory signs to business areas.

Some business areas (e.g., the Head of the Bay area) are not readily found by visitors or newcomers to Gig Harbor and may require off-premise directory signage.

4.30.2. Avoid signs designed for distant viewing.

Business signs should be oriented to the street on which the business is located. Off-premise signs for specific businesses should be located on the street or intersection on which the business is located. Off-premise signs for business areas should be restricted to primary routes leading to the identified business area.