

# COLLEGE OF THE ENVIRONMENT



**Internship Title:**

**Organization Worked For:**

**Student Name:**

**Internship Dates:**

**Faculty Advisor Name**

**Department**

I grant to Western Washington University the non-exclusive royalty-free right to archive, reproduce, distribute, and display this Report document in any and all forms, including electronic format, via any digital library mechanisms maintained by WWU.

I represent and warrant this is original work, and does not infringe or violate any rights of others. I warrant that I have obtained written permissions from the owner of any third party copyrighted material included in this document.

I acknowledge that I retain ownership rights to the copyright of this work, including but not limited to the right to use all or part of this work in future works, such as articles or books. Library users are granted permission for individual, research and non-commercial reproduction of this work for educational purposes only. Any further digital posting of this document requires specific permission from the author.

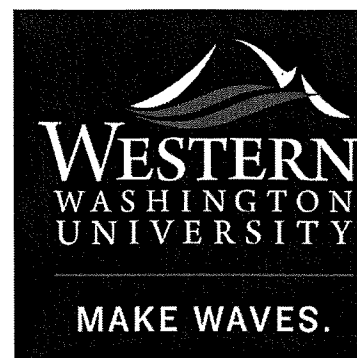
Any copying or publication of this document for commercial purposes, or for financial gain, is not allowed without my written permission.

**STUDENT SIGNATURE** \_\_\_\_\_

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jim', is written over a horizontal line.

**DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

# COLLEGE OF THE ENVIRONMENT



| Section 1 – Student Identification |                         |                |                 |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Last Name, First Name:             | Zimmerman, Justin (Jay) | Western ID:    | W01555803       |
| Email Address                      | zimmer6@wwu.edu         | Major/PreMajor | ENVS: geography |

| Section 2 – Registration Information   |                         |                      |               |
|--|-------------------------|----------------------|---------------|
| Total Credits:   | 6: 3 winter<br>3 spring | Faculty Advisor:     | R. Paci-Green |
| Internship Start Date:   | 12/02/2022              | Internship End Date: | mid June 2023 |
| Number Credits Per Quarter (F/W/S/Sum)   | 3 winter / 3 spring     |                      |               |
| <i>Note: You must be registered for credits during quarters you perform <b>any part</b> of the internship work (including Summer Session) to include writing of reports...this can be spread over multiple quarters. You are expected to register an appropriate number of credits based on anticipated hours worked BY Quarter (Example: Working 120 hours during Summer = 4 Credits Summer Enrollment)</i> |                         |                      |               |

| Section 3 – Organization for Internship  |   |
|--|---|
| Organization Name:   | WCOG (Whatcom Council of Governments)     |
| Intern Supervisor Name:  | Hugh Conroy                               |
| Mailing Address:   | 314 E. Champion St., Bellingham, WA 98225 |
| Email Address:   | Hugh@wco.org                              |
| Phone Number:  | 360-303-2308                              |
| Description of Duties (Or Attach Job Description):<br>(internship announcement attached) |   |

### Section 4 – Learning Objectives

What do I intend to learn from this experience:

- increased knowledge of transportation systems + planning
- transportation data research + analysis
- Coordination of issues + initiatives among various entities + levels of government (Regional, NGOs, state + federal agencies)
- Some land use assessment
- Various data visualizations + GIS mapping
- Some public engagement + synthesis of public comments
- Report writing
- Posting of planning products online
- Relationships between transportation + regional economic development strategies

outlined by Sup. Hugh Conway

How does this experience contribute to my educational goals:

With an aim for a career at a state or municipal agency (Seattle City Light, WADOT, Dep. of Parks + Rec.) this local opportunity would give me first hand experience in understanding + applying state + federal regulations, balancing stakeholder interests, working within a budget + specified time frame to complete a project, and increase my capabilities using technology pertinent to office + agency work.

If Faculty require any additional Learning Objectives, they should be listed here:

### Section 5 - Deadlines, Evaluation, and Assessment (Completed by faculty advisor)

|   | Yes                              | No                               |
|---|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Meet with Advisor: <u>once per quarter</u>              | <input type="radio"/>            | <input checked="" type="radio"/> |
| First Draft Due: <u>June 1st</u>                        | <input type="radio"/>            | <input checked="" type="radio"/> |
| Final Draft Due: <u>June 10th</u>                       | <input checked="" type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>            |
| Additional Learning Objectives (as assigned by faculty) | <input type="radio"/>            | <input checked="" type="radio"/> |
| Oral Presentation Required                              | <input type="radio"/>            | <input checked="" type="radio"/> |
| Daily/Weekly Log Require                                | <input checked="" type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>            |



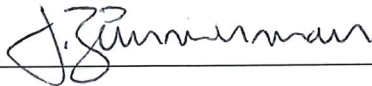
### Section 6 – Students Certification

I certify that I have read the University Policy on Risk Management Considerations for Student Internships and I will report any injuries suffered while performing internship promptly to WWU.  
[http://www.wvu.edu/bfa/Risk\\_Mgmt/documents/Internship%20Considerations%20\(14\).pdf](http://www.wvu.edu/bfa/Risk_Mgmt/documents/Internship%20Considerations%20(14).pdf)

I will endeavor to represent myself and my college well and will abide by the relevant policies, procedures and ethical standards of the university and the internship organization.

I understand that **30-hours of work per credit earned is expected** for an internship. I understand that I am expected to enroll in a number of credits commensurate with hours worked each quarter.

Student's  
Signature/Date




### Section 7 – Internship Site Supervisor Certification

I have reviewed the student's indicated learning objectives and on behalf of my organization agree:

- To enrich the Student's knowledge by orienting him/her to the occupation, the work setting, and the responsibilities relating to the assignment
- To regularly evaluate/provide feedback to student on progress, projects and areas of growth
- At or near the completion of the assignment to provide an evaluation of the student's performance
- To review and approve the Student's Learning Plan and communicate with the college if areas are not going to be met.
- To supply the student with, and abide by the organization's policy against discrimination and/or harassment in the workplace
- To contact the instructor or the College of the Environment Internship Coordinator (360) 650-3646, [ed.weber@wvu.edu](mailto:ed.weber@wvu.edu) should any problems arise

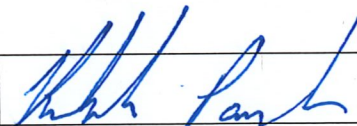
Internship Site  
Supervisor  
Signature/Date

 12/2/22

### Section 8 – Faculty Advisor Certification

I certify that the student intern and I have reached agreement on the learning objectives and academic expectations for this experience. These objectives are challenging and enriching to the student's academic and/or career goals. I will award grades after satisfactory completion of all learning objectives/tasks/reports assigned.

Faculty Advisor's  
Signature/Date

 12/5/22

### Section 9 – College of the Environment Internship Coordinator

Actions:

1. Review Agreement
2. Update Course Override
3. File Agreement in Student Records
4. Communicate with Employers as necessary during internship

# Planning Internship Opportunity Whatcom Council of Governments



whatcom council of governments

## Introduction

The Whatcom Council of Governments (WCOG) is a regional planning organization established by the local governments of Whatcom County. As the region's federally designated metropolitan planning organization (MPO) and state designated regional transportation planning organization (RTPO), its activities are primarily focused on coordination and planning of transportation strategies and investments.

## Upcoming Internships

### Background

In 1995, the U.S. Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) published guidance for the National Scenic Byways (NSB) program – established by Congress to create a system of byways selected for their scenic, historic, recreational, cultural, archeological, and/or natural intrinsic qualities. To be considered for such designation, candidate roadways must have a **corridor management plan (CMP)**.

In 1997, WCOG completed a CMP for Washington State Route 542 (Mt. Baker Highway). A second CMP was completed for WA SR 11 (Chuckanut Drive) in 2001. While the CMPs were submitted to the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) and have been used as the basis for complementary enhancement strategies and investments, neither corridor community wished to seek federal NSB designation.

### Project Scope

Two decades later, the SR 542 and SR 11 CMPs need to be updated. WCOG has partnered with Bellingham Whatcom County Tourism (BWCT) to advance these CMP updates.

### Work Activities

Under the supervision of the WCOG planning director, interns will:

- Learn about the NSB program and status and objectives of scenic byways initiatives at WSDOT, Washington State Tourism, and BWCT.
- Evaluate the existing SR 11 and 542 CMPs and, with the planning director, determine the elements that are out of date and need to be updated.
- Conduct needed research, data compilation, community interviews, summary statistics, technical writing, and graphics (e.g., charts, maps, pictures).
- Preparation of drafts, completion of edits, and completion of final CMP updates.

### Position Details

- Two internship positions available
- Work can begin as early as mid-November 2022 and at the latest by mid-January 2023. The project should be completed by mid-June 2023.
- 10 to 15 hours per week (flexible scheduling)
- Supervised by WCOG director of planning
- Interns will be paid (\$18.50/hr.)
- Work can be performed remotely or at WCOG offices (in Bellingham) but 4 hours of in-office time per week is required (details to be determined).

### To Apply

To apply, please email a cover letter and resume (one page max), by close of business November 1, 2022, to [hugh@wcog.org](mailto:hugh@wcog.org).

# WWU College of the Environment Internship Report

## Jay Zimmerman

### Whatcom Council of Governments Planning Intern: Winter & Spring quarters 2023 *Corridor Management Plan (update) for Scenic Byway: Chuckanut Drive*

#### Introduction

In October of 2022 the Whatcom Council of Governments (WCOG) was contracted by Bellingham Whatcom County Tourism (BWCT) to update the Corridor Management Plans (CMP) for the scenic byways of Mt. Baker Highway and Chuckanut Drive. To aid in this project the latter agency provided funds for two internships, one of which I applied for and was subsequently awarded.

Scenic byways are roadways that because of their intrinsic qualities (scenic, historic, recreational, cultural, archeological, natural) are destinations in and of themselves. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has published guidelines outlining the requirements for comprehensive CMPs, and state agencies or local governments may use these in the application process for a roadway's recognition as a National Scenic Byway. Original CMPs for both corridors were completed in 1997 (Mt. Baker Hwy.) and 2003 (Chuckanut Dr.) respectively. While earlier community outreach has indicated local opposition for application to national recognition, the previously mentioned local agencies sought an update to these regional plans so that future funding opportunities requiring these documents would be available and coordinated planning for improvements and maintenance would be outlined comprehensively.

I was assigned the Chuckanut Drive CMP update. Over the subsequent months my duties involved exhaustively reviewing the original document, creating a stakeholder list (with current contact information), updating information on roadway maintenance and crash data, identifying and mapping intrinsic qualities along the route, and collaborating with the Mt. Baker Hwy. intern to produce coherent and similarly structured plans. Reviewing the comprehensive plans of the many jurisdictions that are located along the route was necessary to identify varying and complimentary priorities.

During the 2023 winter quarter I worked between 8 and 10 hours per week (registered for 3 credits), and during the spring quarter between 6 and 8 hours per week (registered for 2 credits. As of 05/23/2023, my timesheets have recorded 160 hours of work.

#### Description of Duties and Responsibilities

I began my internship with a in depth review of the original CMPs, noticing the lack of coherence in structure between the two. While the Mt. Baker plan was concise and practical in its 40 pages, the Chuckanut Drive plan stretched for 120 pages and included copious amounts of historical and anecdotal information not required by the FHWA guidelines. Early meetings with Hugh Conroy (Planning Director for WCOG and my supervisor) and Pierce Bock (intern) also identified these discrepancies and set the goal of creating complimentary updated CMPs that would outline only the necessary information. The updates would also be formatted for a more online experience, rather than a traditional printed format, which would allow for links to additional sources, rather than including superfluous information in the document itself.

WCOG, as an organization, decided to use this project as a testing ground for Google Workspace, before switching the entire office over to this collaborative file sharing system. Both I and Pierce had little experience with the many applications that we would be using under the Workspace umbrella, so much of my work in the first few weeks involved online tutorials, including: Sheets, My Maps, Calendar, file sharing, Google Drive, and shared Doc editing.

Another early task was identifying and updating a stakeholder list. While the original CMP had extensively outlined the various agencies and people who had a vested interest in Chuckanut Drive, much of the information was no longer relevant. Some groups no longer existed, leadership had changed, and email or website contact information was not included. Applying my newly acquired skills, I formatted a spreadsheet that outlined the various agencies and groups, their main point of contact, telephone numbers, and email addresses. Under Hugh's guidance, I arranged them in tiers of relevance, depending on their importance to the roadway and its development.

Before reaching out to stakeholders, a few projects needed to be completed. Foremost, we wanted to have a webpage running on WCOG.org, which outlined the scope of the Scenic Byways Update Project, its purpose, goals, and a place to submit feedback as we moved forward. I began with some online tutorials on how to use WordPress and met with Melissa Fanucci, our organization's website "guru" to begin crafting a page. Under her tutelage I formatted a webpage (following templates), created links to pertinent documents (which I also learned how to add to WCOG's WordPress library), and downloaded pictures into the archive to include on the page. A necessary element in all public planning projects is community feedback and/or commentary. To this end, I crafted a Google Form, with questions outlined by Hugh, that I also linked to the webpage. With a functional webpage up and running, the previously created list was used to contact "Tier 1 Stakeholders" and inform them of the CMP update project, inviting their input as we progressed. Unfortunately, only a handful of the several dozen recipients replied. It was noted, however, that regardless of their participation, reaching out was a necessary element of the public planning process. To date, only one response to the Google Form has been received.

A new priority for the update was the creation of an online map that highlighted the locations of IQs along the two scenic byways. Staying within the parameters of Google Workspace, I learned to use My Maps. Again, online tutorials were useful in getting started, but the office's GIS expert, Jaymes McClain was essential in helping me navigate questions and roadblocks as I proceeded. One of my biggest successes during this part of the project was learning how to link a Sheets table directly to the map I was creating and then subsequently having that linked to the webpage. As needed, I was able to adjust elements in the Sheet (which outlined IQs, their mileposts, and lat/long position) and have those changes manifest themselves across the linked media. Later, I tutored Pierce, who was assigned to the Mt. Baker Highway update, in how to create a similar map. Both interactive maps are now active on the WCOG website.

At the start of the project, Hugh had created a basic framework for the completed updates, outlining the sections or chapters that would need to be completed/filled in as the months progressed. These sections were informed by FHWA guidelines.

History of completed roadwork and crash data, while absent from the original plan, involved a request for information from WSDOT. While the data that agency provided was huge in scope, Hugh was able to truncate it into some manageable spreadsheets. Pierce and I went about analyzing and quantifying this information, creating tables in Sheets to show locations and prevalence of crashes along our respective routes. We compared our findings to recommendations in the original plans and saw where improvements were needed, adding that information to the appropriate section of the update. We noted where roadwork

recommended in the original plans had been completed and what was still unfinished. There were also unexpected projects completed by WSDOT that needed to be included in our writeups.

To inform the update's recommendations for how to maintain, improve, and promote the IQs of Chuckanut Drive I researched the Comprehensive Plans of the many jurisdictions governing the roadway, adding these priorities to the plan. Examples include: Larrabee State Park's goal of completing a trail connection from Lost Lake Parking Lot to the town of Blanchard in Skagit County, the shared priority of the DNR and Bellingham Parks to integrate signage along their respectively managed trails to create a uniform experience for visitors, and the City of Bellingham's objective to make all major transit corridors safer for multi-modal use (bicycles, pedestrians).

The final weeks of the project focused on filling in missing portions of the draft's outline. We recognized that FHWA guidelines are somewhat redundant or repetitive and their proposed order was not necessarily intuitive, so some creative license was taken. Each section was informed by content contained in the original plan. While some of the original narrative was completely removed, others were edited to reflect a change in priorities or the altered status of IQs along the corridor. Much of the draft's narration is my own work, crafted around extensive online and first-person research. Reaching out to appropriate agency representatives was occasionally necessary for information I was unable to obtain on my own or through WCOG. Hugh was instrumental in his suggestions and his extensive editing ensured the plan's language fit accepted professional standards.

## **Outcomes**

The initial goal of the project was to have completed updates for the Chuckanut Drive and Mt. Baker Highway corridors finished by mid-June. This would include appropriate maps and a polished online product, accessible by stakeholders and the general public for information, funding opportunities, and act as a decision-making resource. However, obstacles presented themselves and the project manager realized that this would not be possible in the timeframe of our internships. Lax response time from important agencies involved in providing us with information was one issue, as was senior turnover among key stakeholder groups involved in the process. Our partner, Bellingham Whatcom County Tourism, received a new director in February, whose need to acclimate to the new position put the updates on his back burner. That group was responsible for putting together a "town hall" meeting with local businesses to provide input on the project, which never materialized. At WCOG, the senior director retired, leaving several junior managers (including Hugh) responsible for much of his work, also inhibiting some of our progress. To this end, our internship goals were altered, finishing a refined draft by the end of May would be sufficient. With this product available, Hugh and other permanent staff would continue to seek input from relevant stakeholders and agencies before posting completed updates to the CMPs.

The Appendices of this report contain a copy of the draft for the Chuckanut Drive 2023 Corridor Management Plan for which I was the primary writer. The numbered sections are mirrored in the Mt. Baker Hwy. draft, which was completed by the other intern, Pierce. Chuckanut Drive's 22 miles pass through three unique regions, the Samish Farmlands, Chuckanut Mountain, and Historic Fairhaven, because of this each is addressed individually throughout the update. The plan introduces the scenic byway to readers and the intentions of the project. Links to maps (including the one created by me in My Maps) orient the reader and provide further information unnecessary in the plan itself. A tabled assessment of key "intrinsic qualities" follows. Further sections provide a more detailed review of these qualities and recommendations for their maintenance and enhancement opportunities to improve the visitor experience. An extensive review of safety along the corridor is included, with recommendations on



what work could be done to decrease crashes. Because no one jurisdiction is involved in maintaining, improving, and/or promoting the corridor, a section including the priorities of relevant governing bodies (gleaned from their respective comprehensive plans) is incorporated, and suggested implementors for improvements is outlined in another section. Accommodating existing and future commercial opportunities is essential for the communities along the corridor and provide a key element of interest for visitors (farms in Skagit County, restaurants and galleries along the coastal portions, and business in Fairhaven). An assessment of these businesses and how to appropriately accommodate them is addressed in its own section. Throughout the draft I made links to key documents and websites available, offering readers easy access to more detailed information. A few sections of the document are unfinished, which will require the assistance of other agencies or further outreach (e.g., the Marketing Plan and BWCT).

As my time with WCOG nears completion, Hugh will use the draft I spearheaded as a basis for the finished update. Contact lists I completed earlier in the project will be used to solicit feedback and because all my efforts used Google Workspace applications, Hugh and other WCOG employees already have access to everything I've completed.

It must be noted that while I was primarily responsible for compiling and organizing the information found in the draft, as well as writing the initial narrative, much of it was subsequently edited by Hugh. As an update, portions of the document are also taken directly from the original, although modified to reflect current conditions.

## **Assessment**

I believe the success of the Scenic Byways CMP updates can be looked at in two ways. While our team did not accomplish its original goal of completing the updates for official publication, our manager refined his expectations and we were able to complete a strong framework, which will be used in the coming months to finish the project. Unfortunately, I believe the timeframe established for the internships (Winter and Spring quarters), did not consider how slow moving the bureaucratic response time is from many of the agencies on which we relied for information and participation. Additionally, the requirement for public participation and comment is also a lengthy process that we did not begin early enough.

Originally, the internships were advertised as 10-15 hours of work per week. In reality, it was a struggle to find 8-10 hours of tasks to complete. As stated above, my supervisor had to take on several additional responsibilities over the course of the internship, beyond his already hefty workload. While I don't believe he put our project on the backburner, it was just one of many simultaneous priorities. Often, I struggled with finding productive work to do, because assignments were either vague or easily accomplished. I spent a lot of time learning the various Google Workspace applications and many hours reviewing comprehensive plans of the many jurisdictions that manage land along Chuckanut Drive. Both tasks provided me with new skills and knowledge but did little to advance the project.

Over the course of the pandemic, the WCOG staff has moved almost entirely to remote working. Pierce and I were encouraged to use the office space 4 hours a week, exposing us to a hybrid environment, but in practice we only came in when we had weekly meetings to review our progress. The meetings themselves were difficult in scheduling, as Pierce and I had conflicting classes and Hugh was out of the town several times do to family emergencies. Unfortunately, we did not set aside a specific time to meet, instead messaging back and forth each week.

Personally, I took advantage of the staff's expertise and scheduled several unassigned meetings. One-on-one interactions with Jaymes and Mellissa were extremely informative, developing my map making and web design skills, respectively. In addition, we had some fantastic discussions on personal professional development and the general responsibilities and difficulties that come with working for a public planning agency.

Hugh's experience and knowledge were invaluable, providing us insight into the planning process and exposing us to the complications inherent in navigating diverse stakeholder concerns and overlapping jurisdictional interests. While often his stories were tangential tales, diverging from our original discussion, accumulated they have provided an introductory course in the inner workings of the Washington State bureaucracy. Hugh's extensive editing of my contributions to the plan, while very disheartening at first, exposed me to the realities involved in a collaborative process. The finished plan will not be the product of one or two authors, but rather a professional document produced by the staff of WCOG with contributions from relevant partner agencies.

I am extremely proud of the CMP draft that I put so many hours towards. While there were many times, I asked myself, "am I accomplishing anything," after thoroughly reading through the plan in preparation for this report, I realized how much work and insight I have provided. I was able to step back and see the many puzzle pieces finally come together and represent a larger picture.

## Reflection

- In what ways did this internship or project support your professional and personal goals beyond simply being a graduation requirement? What skills did you gain? What skills did you improve? What insights about workplace life did you glean?

Looking over my notes from the last five months, I realize how much disillusionment I have felt with the planning process. For example, it was noted that the WCOG website is only accessed by ~500 outside users a year, extrapolating, the page I designed might only be seen by a few dozen people. In addition, after fully immersing myself with the original CMP, I know that very few of its recommendations and plans for future collaboration were ever acted on. Many times, I wondered what was the purpose of all this work, the hours and money it involved? However, it has been brought to my attention, from divergent sources, that these types of documents (management plans, comprehensive plans, system plans, and master plans) are essential requirements for funding and decisions on the prioritization of future projects. While the entirety of a plan's goals may never be realized, any single element that is acted upon can be counted on as a win. Having worked as a restaurant server for most of my adult life, I am accustomed to concrete successes in my activities, guests provided their meals, side work accomplished, tips and wages received. However, in the environment of a planning agency, these end goals are not always so tangible and might take several months or years to come to fruition. I have come to appreciate the importance of patience that is needed in this type of work.

This internship has also helped me realize the importance I place on personal interaction with others. While the staff of WCOG was always happy to set up in-person meetings, almost all my work was solitary and on my laptop at home. I now know that I prefer a workplace setting that is primarily on site, interacting with customers (or stakeholders) in person and collaborating with colleagues face-to-face.

Developing the CMP for Chuckanut Drive continued to hone my research and writing abilities. And, as mentioned earlier, I am now more familiar with a collaborative process, where my preferences in style or wording are easily overridden by a superior, much like corporate mandates I have faced in previous jobs.

In the coming months I will begin a new chapter of my professional work life as a manager in-training at Enterprise LLC. There I hope to synthesize my customer service experience with the office and computer skills (Google Workspace) I've gleaned from my WCOG internship. Professional emails, weekly reports, and data analyzation will all be important talents for continued development, which I began over the last several months. I don't know if my new abilities at map making or web design will ever be directly applied, but I am now better equipped to overcome technical challenges. With both tasks I faced roadblocks that I needed to overcome with online research and reaching out to colleagues for advice and assistance.

After my time at WCOG working on a long-term management plan, I am certain that my future will not lie in the public planning. However, it would be erroneous for me to believe that was my only takeaway. Numerous secondary and tertiary skills mentioned above will be essential to my future success and I have learned more about my personal preferences in a work environment.

- Fifteen years from now, when you are a professional and supervising interns such as yourself, how might you improve the internship experience for students? Is there anything you would do similarly or differently?

While I believe that my internship with WCOG provided me with some unique and valuable experiences, there are some elements that could be improved and would be implemented if I oversaw a future program. While the focus of our work was the CMP updates, I think there were other learning opportunities that were overlooked. For example, we were dissuaded from attending general staff meetings. These may have been boring or procedural but would have provided insight into how a planning agency runs, what processes are required by law and how budgets and priorities are decided. Extending on this theme, I would have enjoyed shadowing various members of staff to see what their daily workloads looked like (even if outside the project itself), allowing an intern a glimpse of the many different positions and skills that make up a well-rounded team. I personally scheduled meetings with two other WCOG employees to aid in my tasks but would have liked to see more of their daily assignments. Knowing that future employment will not be confined to one project, I believe exposing interns to the many activities of an agency would aid in their professional development.

One of the issues with our project was the late start in contacting and engaging with essential outside stakeholders. Identifying these groups early on and setting up meetings (which can take weeks) should be prioritized in the first few weeks. Our project would have progressed further had we fostered these relationships from the start.

As stated earlier, most of my work was remote and in-person meetings sporadic. If running an internship, I would ensure that a weekly meeting time was designated. In addition, rather than using that time to only present progress on the project and receive future assignments, I would build in a weekly lesson. Our supervisor was a font of knowledge on many zoning and transportation issues, but I believe his anecdotes could have been more focused.

It was important that as interns we were expected to create our own schedules and develop our self-motivation. However, I noticed the other intern struggling with the lack of deadlines. Providing some additional structure and accountability might help transition a student from their classroom experiences to a position with more agency.

Finally, I would hope to emulate my supervisor's approachability and punctual communication. Hugh always responded quickly to my inquiries and made himself available for office meetings when requested. While sometimes eliciting a concrete answer to my questions was difficult, he continually showed patience during times of frustration and provided solutions to my problems. As the director of planning for WCOG, Hugh oversaw several other projects beyond the CMP updates. Ideally, an internship supervisor would have less on their plate, but I realize budgetary realities make this an unlikely scenario.

## **Appendices**

**Appendix I:** Letter of satisfactory completion of internship from Hugh Conroy, Director of Planning for Whatcom Council of Governments.

**Appendix II:** Draft of 2023 Chuckanut Drive Corridor Management Plan



whatcom council of governments

314 East Champion Street  
Bellingham, Washington 98225

t: 360.676.6974

f: 360.738.6232

w: [wcog.org](http://wcog.org)

May 22, 2023

Internship Coordinator  
College of the Environment  
Western Washington University

To whom it may concern,

Jay Zimmerman has completed their internship at the Whatcom Council of Governments (WCOG). Since January, Jay has worked over 150 hours updating the State Route 11 Scenic Byways Corridor Management Plan. Jay has done excellent work consisting of research on stakeholder-agency plans and policies, data acquisition and analysis, plan narrative writing, map making, and dialog with stakeholders. Jay met WCOG's expectations for this position with energy, curiosity, and professionalism. I would highly recommend Jay to future employers or graduate school admissions offices.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Hugh Conroy".

Hugh Conroy  
Director of Planning



# Chuckanut Drive (SR 11) Corridor Management Plan 2023 Update

## Table of Contents

### Introduction

Chuckanut Drive begins its 22 mile course on the northern outskirts of Burlington at Exit 231 of Interstate 5. The corridor meanders through farmlands, forested mountains, and the urban area of Bellingham's Historic Fairhaven district before rejoining I-5 (Exit 250) and provides a scenic alternative for travelers wishing to experience the beauty of Washington State's northwest corner. Throughout its history it has been a destination for cyclists, hikers, and automobile daytrippers, providing opportunities for residents and visitors to take advantage of its sweeping views, gateways to wilderness activities, and local restaurants and businesses.

The byway was named after Chuckanut Bay, a sheltered cove offering rich shellfish harvests shared by the region's several tribes over an estimated 8,000 year history. The native word "Chuckanut" means "beach on a bay with a small entrance." Chuckanut Bay eventually lent its name to forested Chuckanut Mountain rising from its shore and extending south to the rich tidal flats of Colony Creek on Samish Bay. An ancient foot-trail along the mountain cliffs created the beginning path for Chuckanut Drive.

Over the years, under the initiative of early business leaders Charles Larrabee (namesake for Washington's first state park) and Cyrus Gates, Chuckanut Drive developed from a dirt logging route to a paved connection between the Fairhaven and Blanchard communities. In 1993 the corridor's intrinsic qualities were officially recognized with its designation as a State Scenic and Recreational Highway.

This update to the 2003 Corridor Management Plan (CMP) follows guidelines outlined by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in its National Scenic Byways Program (1995), which defines intrinsic qualities as "scenic, historic, recreational, cultural, archeological, and/or natural features that are considered unique, irreplaceable, or distinctly characteristic of an area," and make a roadway a destination in and of itself. While agreeing with previous stakeholder

input not to seek national recognition, this update adheres to the standards provided by the FHWA. This comprehensive document can offer the many jurisdictions along the corridor a unifying vision for the continued development and enhancement of Chuckanut Drive.

The following sections will highlight the intrinsic qualities of Chuckanut Drive, providing recommendations for their improvement and maintenance. The corridor passes through three distinct areas, the Samish Farmlands, Chuckanut Mountain, and Historic Fairhaven, representing different populations, natural environments, and unique features. These regions are discussed individually throughout the updated plan.

## **THE CHUCKANUT VISION**

The vision statement for the corridor reflects the values of the corridor as a whole as well as the inherent qualities which differ from community to community:

### THE CHUCKANUT CORRIDOR VISION:

*Chuckanut Drive is a scenic byway of unparalleled natural beauty providing leisurely enjoyment of this historic area including coastal island views, forest recreation areas and open-space habitat, safely shared by people walking, bicycling and driving. The byway's three geographic communities -- Historic Fairhaven Parkway, The Chuckanut Mountainside, and Samish Farmlands -- welcome visitors and work to preserve Chuckanut Drive's eminent history and rich natural heritage.*

**Samish Farmlands** community balances commercial and farm transportation with recreational and natural splendor. The community works to increase awareness, support, and appreciation for contributions of the farm community and preserve and enhance natural habitats for migratory birds, salmon and estuarine species.

**Chuckanut Mountainside** retains the scenic quality of a narrow, winding historic road providing access to natural forest lands and scenic water views. Protecting fragile mountain ecosystems is the community's top priority as nature provides the essential foundation for the by-way's stellar scenery and the safety of visitors and residents alike.

**Historic Fairhaven Parkway** provides residents and visitors with a landscaped greenway whose historic parks, natural habitats, and attractive residences enhance a walkable neighborhood community

*and create an inviting gateway to the Fairhaven historic and commercial district.*

# 1. Maps

[Intrinsic qualities map](#) available on WCOG website, on “Scenic Byways” page  
 Scenic Washington [Chuckanut Drive map](#) and route information  
 Visit Bellingham [Chuckanut Drive brochure](#)

# 2. Assessment of Intrinsic Qualities

The following table lists previously identified and updated (2023) intrinsic qualities (IQs) along the Chuckanut Drive Scenic byway. Most IQs can be associated with specific locations, others entail segments of the corridor that make the byway a unique destination, especially its natural and cultural significance. Brief recommendations on how these IQs could be improved to enhance the visitor experience are expanded on in Section 9. And, of course, this list represents the most commonly cited IQs and is not exhaustive.

| SR 11 Intrinsic Qualities                        | Sub-Area         | Primary IQ Type | Additional IQ Type | Mile post | Status/ Current Recommendations |
|--|------------------|-----------------|--------------------|-----------|---------------------------------|
| Chuckanut Park & Ride (Burlington)               | Samish Farmlands |                 |                    | 0         | signage                         |
| Farmland/Historic Barns/Open Space/Bird Watching | Samish Farmlands | Scenic          | Natural            | 0-9.5     | signage                         |
| Farm Stands                                      | Samish Farmlands | Cultural        | Recreation         | 0-9.5     | <good>                          |
| Skagit Valley Festivals                          | Samish Farmlands | Cultural        | Recreation         | 0-9.5     | promotion                       |
| Allen Shingle Mill                               | Samish Farmlands | Historic        | Cultural           | 2         | interpretive sign               |
| Allen Playfields                                 | Samish Farmlands | Scenic          | Recreation         | 2.6       | upgrades                        |
| Samish River Restoration                         | Samish Farmlands | Natural         | Recreation         | 3         | <good>                          |

|  |                        |            |            |      |                            |
|--|------------------------|------------|------------|------|----------------------------|
| Edison River/Slough Restoration                | Samish Farmlands       | Natural    | Recreation | 6-7  | <good>                     |
| Historic Downtown Edison                       | Samish Farmlands       | Historic   | Cultural   | 6.9  | directions/promotion       |
| Eagle Tree                                     | Samish Farmlands       | Natural    | Scenic     | 6.9  | signage                    |
| Edward R. Murrow childhood home (Edison)       | Samish Farmlands       | Historic   | Cultural   | 7    | <good>                     |
| Bow "Rural Village"                            | Samish Farmlands       | Cultural   | Historic   | 7    | <good>                     |
| Equality Colony (at Blanchard)                 | Samish Farmlands       | Historic   | Cultural   | 9    | interpretive sign          |
| Blanchard Mountain Landing Zone (hang gliding) | Samish Farmlands       | Recreation | Scenic     | 9    | <good>                     |
| Colony Creek Bridge & Estuary                  | Samish Farmlands       | Natural    | Scenic     | 9    | interpretive sign          |
| Chuckanut Manor Seafood & Grill                | Chuckanut Mountainside | Cultural   | Scenic     | 9.5  | <good>                     |
| Oyster Dome Trailhead                          | Chuckanut Mountainside | Recreation | Natural    | 10   | parking/pedestrian signage |
| The Oyster Bar                                 | Chuckanut Mountainside | Cultural   | Scenic     | 10.2 | parking/pedestrian signage |
| Taylor Shellfish                               | Chuckanut Mountainside | Cultural   | Scenic     | 10.3 | parking/pedestrian signage |
| View Point Bow WA/Pullout                      | Chuckanut Mountainside | Scenic     | Historic   | 11.5 | interpretive sign/garbage  |
| Dogfish Point Pullout                          | Chuckanut Mountainside | Scenic     | Historic   | 12.5 | interpretive sign/garbage  |
| Clayton Beach Trailhead                        | Chuckanut Mountainside | Recreation | Natural    | 14   | extension of trail         |
| Lost Lake Trailhead and Parking                | Chuckanut Mountainside | Recreation | Natural    | 14.3 | extension of trail         |
| Larrabee State Park Main Entrance              | Chuckanut Mountainside | Recreation | Natural    | 15   | <good>                     |
| Fragrance Lake Trailhead                       | Chuckanut Mountainside | Recreation | Natural    | 15   | parking options            |
| Governors Point                                | Chuckanut Mountainside | Scenic     | Natural    | 16   | <good>                     |

|  |                        |               |            |      |                             |
|--|------------------------|---------------|------------|------|-----------------------------|
| Larrabee State Park Boat Launch                        | Chuckanut Mountainside | Recreation    | Scenic     | 16   | expansion for diverse users |
| Cyrus Gates Overlook (access by Hiline & Cleator Road) | Chuckanut Mountainside | Scenic        | Natural    | 17   | road improvements           |
| Chuckanut Island (view)                                | Chuckanut Mountainside | Archeological | Scenic     | 17   | interpretive sign           |
| Teddy Bear Cove Trailhead and Bioluminescence          | Chuckanut Mountainside | Recreation    | Scenic     | 17.8 | parking options             |
| Chuckanut Creek crossing                               | Chuckanut Mountainside | Natural       | Scenic     | 18   | <good>                      |
| Clarks Point   | Chuckanut Mountainside | Scenic        | Natural    | 18   | <good>                      |
| Woodstock Farm   | Chuckanut Mountainside | Historic      | Cultural   | 18   | promotion                   |
| Arroyo Park  | Chuckanut Mountainside | Recreation    | Natural    | 18.6 | <good>                      |
| Chuckanut Bay Gallery & Sculpture Garden               | Historic Fairhaven     | Cultural      | Recreation | 18.7 | <good>                      |
| North Chuckanut Mountain Trailhead                     | Chuckanut Mountainside | Recreation    | Natural    | 19   | <good>                      |
| Pine and Cedar Lakes Trailhead                         | Chuckanut Mountainside | Recreation    | Natural    | 19   | <good>                      |
| Fairhaven Park   | Historic Fairhaven     | Recreation    | Natural    | 19.6 | promotion                   |
| 100 Acre Wood  | Historic Fairhaven     | Natural       | Recreation | 19.6 | promotion                   |
| Chuckanut Center and Gardens                           | Historic Fairhaven     | Cultural      | Natural    | 19.8 | promotion                   |
| Chuckanut Pocket Estuary                               | Historic Fairhaven     | Natural       | Scenic     | 19.8 | <good>                      |
| Fairhaven Visitors Information Center                  | Historic Fairhaven     | Cultural      | Historic   | 20   | signage                     |
| Historic Fairhaven Village (Fairhaven Association)     | Historic Fairhaven     | Cultural      | Historic   | 20   | signage                     |
| BPL Fairhaven Branch (Carnegie Library)                | Historic Fairhaven     | Historic      | Cultural   | 20   | <good>                      |
| Fairhaven Amtrak Station/Cruise & Ferry Terminal       | Historic Fairhaven     | Recreation    |            | 20   | <good>                      |
| Fairhaven Historic District                            | Historic               | Historic      |            | 20   | signage                     |



|  |                    |            |         |      |        |
|--|--------------------|------------|---------|------|--------|
|  | Fairhaven          |            |         |      |        |
| Interurban Trail Rotary Trailhead/Padden Creek Restoration | Historic Fairhaven | Recreation | Natural | 20.3 | <good> |

### 3. Strategy for Maintaining and Enhancing Intrinsic Qualities

The Chuckanut Drive Corridor traverses multiple jurisdictions and state-agency managed lands, many of which are subjects of continuous long-range and capital investment plans. For example, the following list of documents each include recommendations and directives for development applicable to sections of the Chuckanut Drive Corridor:

- [Skagit County Comprehensive Plan](#) (2016)
- [City of Bellingham Comprehensive Plan](#) (2016)
- [Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan](#) (2016)
- WSDOT Highway System Plan (update expected in 2023)
- [Larrabee State Park Management Plan](#) (2014)
- [Chuckanut Mountain Trails Master Plan](#) (1996)

City and county plans recognize that Chuckanut Drive, as a state highway, is managed by WSDOT and defer to its long-range Highway System Plan for improvements, which currently does not have any projects planned for the road and is in the process of being updated. However, the City of Bellingham acknowledges the importance of the corridor as an arterial street and “encourages WSDOT to improve bicycle and pedestrian facility safety in all state highway projects,” especially with the regular management of debris.”

In the Land Use Chapter of the Bellingham Comprehensive Plan, preservation of natural vistas is prioritized, including Chuckanut Bay and the San Juan Islands, which fall along the Chuckanut corridor. The Recreation and Open Space chapter identifies the need for improved trailheads, signage, and facilities at Woodstock Farms, Fairhaven Park, Chuckanut Community Forest, and North Chuckanut Trailhead.

Pertaining to the southern section of Chuckanut Drive, Skagit County’s Comprehensive Plan includes a Scenic Roads Program with the priority to “ensure the preservation of scenic resources along designated highways,” with an emphasis on the development of interpretive sites for the enjoyment of non-motorized users. These projects would, “integrate scenic resource preservation with the enhancement of access to historic, archaeological, and cultural resources.”

In the Recreation section of Whatcom County's Comprehensive Plan, multimodal access to resources along Chuckanut Drive are emphasized, particularly the development of trails that would minimize conflict between motorists and cyclists. Continued improvement of facilities and trash collection is also highlighted, along with the integration of trail systems with those of other jurisdictions. As mentioned in the county's plan, expanded shoreline access and interpretive sites in those areas could improve diverse use of these important assets.

In addition, there are long term management plans for forested sections of the corridor along Blanchard Mountain owned and managed by the Department of Natural Resources.

Because each of the jurisdictions responsible for planning in the corridor area participated in the development of the original Corridor Management Plan (2003), their current priorities have been requested and integrated into this update. Recommendations made in this update should be considered for incorporation into future city, county, and state-agency plans.

## **Chuckanut Mountain Trails**

State owned lands along the byway include Department of Natural Resources and state park lands in the Chuckanut mountain section. Visitor amenities and services, as well as recommendations and priorities for improvements are detailed in Washington State Parks' [Chuckanut Mountain Trails Master Plan](#) (CMTMP). This CMP supports and affirms the priorities and recommendations of that plan.

The CMTMP also recommends the development of durable and aesthetically pleasing visitor facilities that will complement rather than detract from the natural, scenic, and historic quality of the byway. The lack of facilities at turnouts south of Larrabee State Park has resulted in littering and unsanitary disposal of waste - perhaps worthy of immediate attention.

## **Larrabee State Park**

In Section 5 of the Larrabee State Park Master Plan: Park Issues and Management Approaches of the, many goals are outlined to improve the intrinsic qualities and their accessibility in the Chuckanut Corridor that this plan fully supports. These include, but are not limited to:

- Development of an invasive species and pest management plan with the incorporation of community volunteers
- Expansion of park boundaries to include Pine and Cedar Lakes
- Partner with higher education institutions and tribal governments to identify archaeological sites

- Inclusion of the Larrabee cultural landscape (bandshell, Depression era buildings) on the National Register of Historic Places
- Develop live interpretative and cultural programs that use the park's historic bandshell
- Link park trails with adjacent systems, including a Chuckanut-to-Blanchard connection and a long distance loop trail
- Improve road conditions along Cleator Road for easier access to Cyrus Gates overlook
- Investigate opportunities for expanded access for kayaks at Wildcat Cove boat launch
- Secure funding for a [pedestrian crossing](#) over BNSF railway on the Clayton Beach trail, including on site restroom facilities (under construction as of April 2023)
- Coordinate with WSDOT to address parking and pull out issues along Chuckanut Drive
- Improve pedestrian crossings, particularly at the Lost Lake Trailhead parking lot
- Consider private concessions including kayak and bike rental, a camp store providing amenities and sundries, and guiding services
- Coordinate signage at trailheads to be consistent with adjacent land management agencies

As a means to prioritize and institute these goals, the park hopes to create a "Friends Group," which would be integral in future Corridor Management activities and updates.

## Habitat restoration

The update to this plan supports continued efforts to preserve, restore, and enhance the ecological communities along Chuckanut Drive. The corridor traverses multiple unique habitats, all of which draw visitors and contribute significantly to its intrinsic value, making it a destination in and of itself. While the Samish Farmlands support a thriving agricultural industry, they are also home to expansive wetlands, supporting multiple migratory bird species. Continued preservation of extant estuaries and sloughs should be a priority. Along the Chuckanut Mountain section, Larrabee State Park and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) continue to repair damage from previous logging, control erosion of the cliffs, manage the proliferation of invasive species, and address the problems associated with toxic shellfish. Ideally all of these programs should be fully funded. Expanding the state park's boundaries to include adjacent lands on Chuckanut Mountain is supported, allowing park administration to manage the lands as a whole. Historic Fairhaven has recently witnessed the daylighting of Chuckanut Creek, proceeding on this momentum, this plan supports the efforts to restore Chuckanut Village Marsh, which would continue efforts to restore salmon populations. Community vigilance combating invasive species, particularly English ivy and

Himalayan blackberry should be recognized and supported by the city. Newer additions to the park system, including The 100 Acre Wood and Woodstock Farm, should be managed with goals of supporting and growing the historic ecological communities within.

## 4. Accommodation of Existing and New Development with Intrinsic Qualities

Public outreach conducted during the development of the original CMP revealed a general consensus against future regulations or restrictions related to Chuckanut Drive's status as a scenic byway. Accordingly, this plan does not seek to change any existing zoning or land use laws. However, we recommend that future development opportunities do not threaten and take into consideration the value of the corridor's existing intrinsic qualities.

Because the scenic quality of Chuckanut Drive in the Samish Farmlands is highly dependent on maintenance of a farming based community, development of structures within the rural villages should remain within an aesthetic standard compatible with the older style of the village.

Most of the Chuckanut Mountain section is managed by Larrabee State Park and the DNR and we support their comprehensive plans in further developing these areas for recreation and ecological preservation. Residential opportunities that exist along the coast and mountainside should continue to follow existing codes and requirements, ensuring the preservation of the landscape and safety for travelers along the roadway.

In the urban environs of Historic Fairhaven and the city of Bellingham proper, this plan supports continued efforts to restore and maintain undeveloped areas. Projects like the public acquisition of land that would become the 100 Acre Wood are an example of the community's priority for continued enhancement of natural IQs in their neighborhoods. Maintaining the historic aesthetic of downtown Fairhaven should remain a goal for local businesses and homeowners alike.

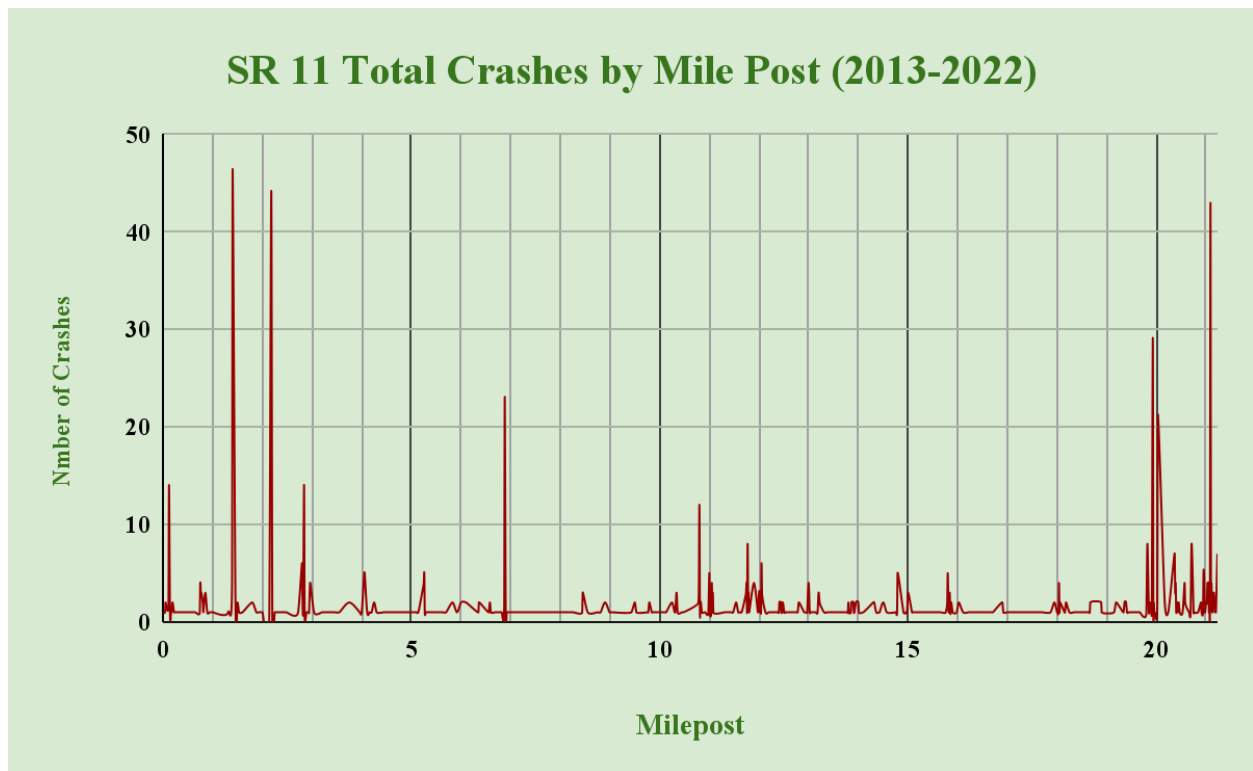
## 5. Public Participation

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

## 6. Safety & Roadway Review

### Review of WSDOT Crash Data (2013-2022)

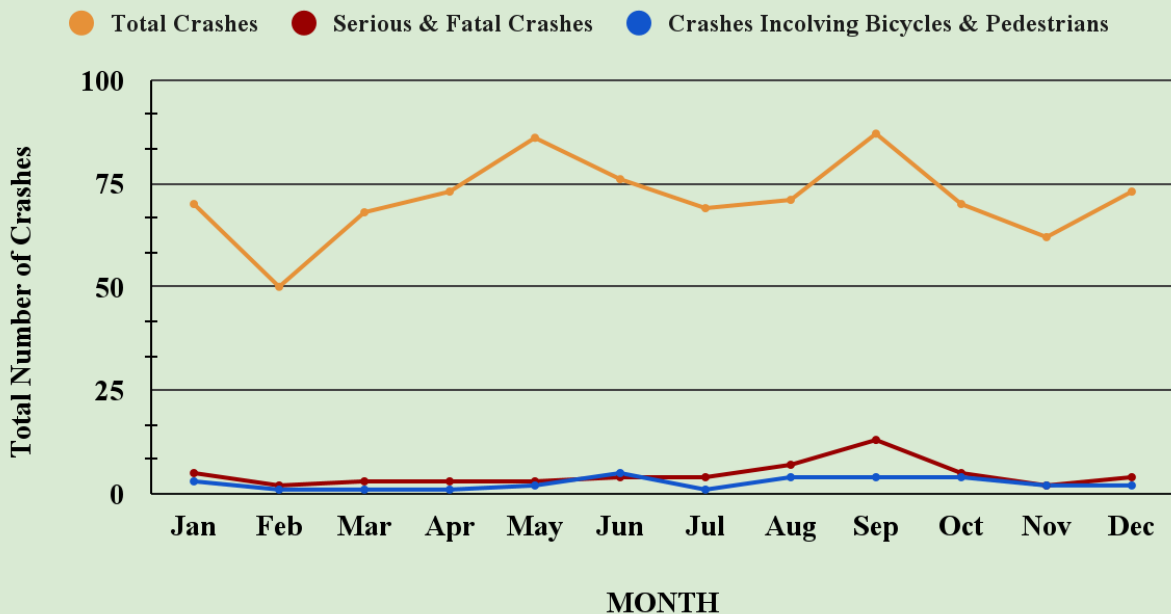
While the original Chuckanut Drive CMP did not review previous years' crash data, it did outline areas of concern due to the nature of the road and its various uses throughout the 22 mile stretch. Washington State Department of Transportation crash data for the years 2013-2022 enables an update of where problems may exist and whether earlier concerns match observed crash patterns.



The data show that crashes are most frequent during the spring and summer months with peaks in May and September. A higher volume of vehicles from both recreational visitors and agricultural transportation most likely contribute to this pattern, beginning with Skagit Valley Tulip Festival events in April. Possible explanations for the peak in September include the volume of returning students to Western Washington University and the Oyster Motorcycle Run (“largest motorcycle run in the Pacific Northwest”), converging in Anacortes, but impacting the entire region.



## Total Crashes on SR 11 by Month (2013-2022)



Dividing the highway into its three main sections (Skagit Farmlands, Chuckanut Mountainside, and Historic Fairhaven), total crash volume decreases moving north, although roughly a third of all crashes occur in each section of the highway.

In the Samish Farmlands, almost all observed crashes occurred at intersections with major county roads: Pulver Road, Allen West & Sam Bell Roads, Bow Hill Road, and the juncture with I-5 at Josh Wilson Road. With the exception of some reductions at the new roundabouts, speed limits in this area have not changed in the 20 years since completion of the 2003 SR-11 CMP. The crashes involving bicycles and pedestrians through this flat and wide roadway section were also near intersections.

Locations of crashes along the Chuckanut Mountainside section are more distributed. Additionally, while many characteristics of this corridor section are widely considered to present more safety concerns (the narrow lanes and tight curves, numerous unofficial turnouts, and pedestrian cross-traffic at trailheads and viewpoints), crashes are no more common here than the other two areas. However, as noted below, traffic volume is a factor to consider as well. The hairpin turns, where the road crosses Oyster Creek, and the blind turn at the north end of the mountainside (near Spokane Street) have slightly higher crash counts. In both locations advisory speed reductions are posted. Past crashes occurred throughout these turns. The narrow road shoulders and hairpin

turns (where cyclists typically use more of the road lane) throughout this area don't appear to correlate with a greater concentration of crashes involving bicycles. There were no recorded crashes involving pedestrians near trailheads.

In the Historic Fairhaven area, Chuckanut Drive enters a more urban environment. In this section, crashes are again concentrated at intersections, particularly at 12th Street, where SR 11 follows Old Fairhaven Parkway, and from 22nd Street east to the junction with I-5. This is the only corridor section with signal-controlled intersections. Over half of crashes involving bicycles occur in the last three miles, peaking near the highway interchange.

## **Evaluation of Traffic Volumes**

Recent vehicle traffic count data show that most of the SR 11 in Whatcom County is under 60 percent capacity. For the last quarter mile of the route before meeting I-5 in Bellingham, peak volumes are over 80 percent of capacity. Growth forecasts estimate that these traffic volumes will extend west along Old Fairhaven Parkway. Higher traffic volumes correlate with the higher incidents of crashes. Traffic counts taken along three locations of the highway show the picture in another way. In July of 2017 the intersections at 30th and 12th Streets measured approximately 15,000 and 3,300 (respectively) vehicles moving in both directions, showing the concentration of traffic nearest to the interstate and its corresponding crash volume. Further south, near Larrabee State Park, the traffic count showed about 1,700 vehicles in April of 2018. While this number is a fraction of the count in the urban area, roughly the same portion of crashes occur spread out over the winding Chuckanut Mountainside portion of the road as do in the urban section. Perhaps this is an indication that more caution and crash prevention measures are needed along the mountain hugging stretches where the crash to car ratio is much higher.

## **Summary of WSDOT Projects and Road Work along SR 11 (2003-2023)**

Since the initial Corridor Management Plan (CMP) for Chuckanut Drive was completed in 2003, significant roadwork has been done to maintain the quality of the byway. Asphalt concrete overlays (ACP) were conducted along most of the roadway, extending the life of previously laid concrete pavements (CRCP). Culvert, barrier replacements, and retaining wall replacements between Estes Road and Iris Lane were finished in the summer of 2005, fulfilling recommendations in the original CMP for upgrades at Blanchard Bridge (MP 9.5), Oyster Creek Bridge (MP 10.5) and Inspiration Point (MP 16). These improvements will continue to enhance driving safety along the winding, cliff hugging road. In conjunction with regular emergency rockslide repair, scaling of the abutting mountainside cliff was undertaken in 2017 in the vicinity of MP 13, a

precautionary measure, mitigating future rockfall and the disturbances those create. Removal of a potentially hazardous rock was previously done in 2005 near MP 13.25, accomplishing a parallel goal. In the Samish Farmlands, culvert replacement along the Edison Slough at MP 6.85 in 2004 will mitigate the road's impact on the surrounding wetlands.

In October of 2010, WSDOT rebuilt the interchange between Interstate 5 and Josh Wilson Road as a signaleless roundabout significantly improving the entrance to the southern terminus of Chuckanut Drive in Burlington. These improvements include some slight reductions in speed limits near the interstate entrances to 35 miles per hour (from 55). Near the southeast corner of the refurbished interchange, the Chuckanut Park & Ride (P&R), on North Burlington Boulevard, was constructed in September of 2011. This lot provides free parking and access to bus routes servicing Sedro Woolley, Anacortes, March's Point, and Bellingham. In particular, express route 80X connects to Lincoln Creek P&R, Bellingham Station, and WWU. Chuckanut P&R could act as a starting point for bicyclists wishing to traverse the entirety of Chuckanut Drive, completing their journey at one of route 80X's stops and returning to their automobiles via bus, a journey that could also be accomplished in reverse. While currently not stopping at South Bellingham P&R, where Old Fairhaven Parkway intersects with I-5, future adjustments to the 80X schedule could provide even easier access for bicyclists taking the 22 mile trek.

Along the Historic Fairhaven section of SR 11, WSDOT contributed to the restoration of Padden Creek, fulfilling goals of the original CMP. For over a century the waterway had been confined to a tunnel for approximately a half mile, severely impacting salmon spawning. In 2015 "Daylighting Padden Creek" was achieved, restoring natural habitats and reducing flood risk for the adjacent Happy Valley Neighborhood. WSDOT contributions included the removal of fish passage barriers in Padden Creek and nearby Hoag's Creek. This accomplishment improves the natural and scenic qualities of the northern portions of the scenic byway. A new access point to the adjacent Interurban Trail at the Rotary Trailhead (just west of 20th Street) includes a small parking lot and interpretive signs explaining the extensive and years-long restoration project, as well as creek-adjacent pedestrian and bike paths.

As of February, 2023, WSDOT does not have any projects in its Highway System Plans for SR 11.

## 7. Accommodating Commerce while Maintaining Safety and Level of Service

Commerce is dependent on efficient transportation, and reliable infrastructure. Chuckanut Drive (and the entirety of SR 11) is not a limited-access highway but rather, in many sections, a “Main Street” that businesses, residences, and recreational destinations are directly accessed from. Since completion of the original SR 11 CMP in 2003, the concept of highway level of service (LOS) been expanded from simple measurement of a road’s capacity for current and predicted vehicle volume (vehicle congestion) to include the *road system’s* capacity for serving trips (people) using all types of transportation – personal vehicles, buses, active transportation (pedestrian, bikes, rolling)

This CMP update recognizes the need to support the economic interests of Chuckanut Drive businesses by continuing to provide efficient access, safety and comfort for all travelers, and good design. If we do so, we can continue to generate the resources needed to protect and enhance the intrinsic qualities which make Chuckanut Drive unique.

### COMMERCIAL AREAS

Below are listed areas of commercial activity along Chuckanut Drive. Each of these commercial areas have unique qualities, which planning recommendations should acknowledge.

- Milepost 1-6, 7-9: Farming and farm-related industry (e.g., food shipping, processing, horse ranch) and season farmstands.
- Milepost 6-7: Rural village Edison, shops, restaurant, bed & breakfast accommodation. Limited business growth permitted through zoning.
- Milepost 9-11: Restaurants, lodging, seafood retail.
- Milepost 18.7: Chuckanut Bay Gallery.
- Milepost 19.5 – 20: Urban commercial, various services.
- Milepost 21-21.28: Grocery, gasoline, coffee/restaurant services.

### CONSUMER SERVICES

Consumers are identified as visitors, residents, or business owners along the route. Their needs overlap and vary somewhat and can be summarized as follows:

| <b>Visitors</b> | <b>Residents</b>    | <b>Business owners</b>          |
|-----------------|---------------------|---------------------------------|
| Accommodations  | Groceries, supplies | Transportation access for goods |
| Restaurants     | Services            | Commercial Services             |
| Information     | Commercial centers  | Customer access                 |
| Recreation      | Schools             | Publicity, visibility           |

|                     |                  |                   |
|---------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Events, attractions | Community events | Employee services |
|---------------------|------------------|-------------------|

Some consumer needs overlap between groups, for example, all three consumer groups utilize restaurant services. As in other aspects of the plan, each of the byway community groups will have different consumer needs.

**Samish Farmlands:** In past outreach campaigns, residents and business owners expressed satisfaction with the level of services and goods currently available along the route. Business owners, specifically farm-related businesses, emphasized the need for transportation access via the byway for equipment and vehicles during spring and autumn seasons.

Challenges can occur during the tulip festival when visitor numbers are high at the same time of year that farm-vehicle use of the roadway is important.

**Chuckanut Mountain:** Services such as those in the chart above and goods along the mountainside stretch of Chuckanut Drive are particularly sparse, however residents and business owners expressed contentment with the level of services as they currently stand. One possible exception to this is the State Park area. Residents and visitors equally noted the desirability of a small grocery store near the State Park in order to reduce the demand for car trips to town by campers and vacationers staying in the park during the summer. Management goals for Larrabee State Park include investigation into the formation of an onsite camp store that could provide basic amenities.

Residents, too, noted that they would use the services of a local grocery store for similar reasons.

*Recommendation* Study further the benefits and costs of establishing a grocery facility near the state park, including alternatives to a retail establishment at this location.

**Historic Fairhaven Parkway:** Services and goods are plentifully available along the drive as it extends through Fairhaven within the Bellingham city limits.

## Roadway Safety Improvements

The way the roadway is designed and shaped affects vehicle and traveler safety. Roadway condition and maintenance are dealt with in the Safety & Roadway Review chapter, however the interaction of users on the roadway and potentially conflicting designs or needs are discussed here. Often, the conflict is between slow-moving sight-seers and faster-moving commercial vehicles. If the volume of vehicles along the road increases steadily over the coming decades, as trends suggest, methods to address conflicting use and plan methods to avoid hazards for each of the communities will be needed.

**Samish Farmlands:** Commercial use of the road is a high priority for the Samish Farmlands area from milepost 0 to 7. Commercial and overweight trucks are restricted

from the mountainside section of the roadway and are directed by signs to exit at Bow Hill Road.

Hazards such as blind driveways or poor visibility are generally not present in this section of the byway due to the relatively straight, flat, open configuration of the roadway. However, an area of potential concern is the Edison/Bow Hill Road intersection where access and egress to the restaurants and shops is not clearly delineated.

*Recommendation: Improve safety with the addition of curbs and striping for specific entry and exit routes.*

Residents have expressed concern about safety due to the relatively high speed limit (55 mph) near residential areas, but commercial users have shown strong support for maintaining the current speed limit.

**Chuckanut Mountain:** From milepost 9.5 to 18 the steeper and curvier mountain section of SR 11 presents a different set of opportunities for improving safety.

Residents and business owners strongly support maintaining the roadway in its current historic configuration rather than straightening or widening it. Visitors, too, feel that the scenic and natural aesthetic appeal of the road is enhanced by the narrow, older style and that the design of the road encourages appreciation of the view at a slower speed.

*Recommendations: Identified safety improvements include*

- While avoiding view-obstruction and aesthetic degradation, consider site-specific warning signs, reflectors, and pavement markings at blind curves, narrow shoulders or other hazard areas.
- Install indicators or signs prior to turnouts with notification of distance ahead to prepare drivers to pull off safely.
- Work with restaurants to develop entrance and exit pavement markings or other safety measures for parking areas.
- Increase speed limit enforcement or install speed calming features at strategic locations.
- Increase monitoring to ensure that overweight commercial trucks are not using the roadway improperly.

## 8. Enhancing Visitor Experience

The appeal of Chuckanut Drive as a destination in and of itself is founded on its natural beauty and the histories of the many people who have called this area home. While strategies for maintaining and enhancing the intrinsic qualities of the corridor were addressed in Chapter 3, there are other improvements that would contribute to the

visitor experience. Following are recommendations that would make Chuckanut Drive a more accessible and welcoming destination.

## **SAMISH FARMLANDS**

From Interstate 5, basic highway signs direct a traveler to the exit for SR 11 and the Chuckanut Scenic Byway but there is no other follow-on information to assure a visitor that they have arrived at the southern end of the route in Burlington.

*Recommendation: Wayfinding signage could direct visitors to the exit's adjacent Park & Ride, where a more detailed information board or kiosk could provide additional orientation for their journey, highlighting intrinsic qualities and destinations along the route.*

The Allen Recreation Fields, located at the intersection of Sam Bell Road and Avon Allen Roads, is a local resource for sports and activities. The parking area, with its expansive views of the surrounding landscape could act as an alternative location for wayfinding information. However, there are currently no restroom facilities, picnic tables, or other amenities there.

*Recommendation: Following improvements to the park's amenities, additional signage, including local event and business advertising, would make the fields an ideal stopping point for travelers seeking not readily seen points of interest along the corridor.*

The intersection of Chuckanut Drive with Bow Hill Road presents an opportunity for visitors to experience the bounty of the surrounding farmlands at regionally renowned restaurants and cafes. Besides the cluster of businesses at the intersection, just a mile west, Historic Downtown Edison is home to galleries, workshops, a brewery, and other dining opportunities.

*Recommendation: Locally approved/designed advertising that highlights the otherwise unseen businesses in both directions of Bow Hill Road (connecting the Edison and Bow communities), would encourage visitors, otherwise just passing through, to stop and enjoy these communities' offerings.*

**Particular businesses of interest in [Historic Bow-Edison](#) include :**

At Bow Hill intersection

- [The Rhody Café](#)
- [Samish Bay Cheese](#)
- [Bow Hill Blueberries](#)
- [Brando's BBQ](#)

- [cob & cork](#)
- [Farm to Market Bakery](#)

#### Downtown Edison

- [Terramar Brewstillery](#)
- [The Old Edison](#)
- [Smith & Vallee Gallery](#)
- [The Lucky Dumpster](#)
- [Sough Food](#)
- [Breadfarm](#)
- [Indigo Dreams Fiber Studio](#)

This area is an internationally known bird watching area well known for its migratory habitat for trumpeter swans and raptors. The narrow road shoulders, which double as bike lanes, offer a small place for birders and all appreciators of nature to stop and view these special birds. However, safety is an issue.

*Recommendation: Develop interpretive signage focusing on the Colony Creek Estuary's importance to migratory birds, historical development in the area, and current wetland conservation efforts .*

The bridge crossing Colony Creek marks the transition between the Samish Farmlands and the Chuckanut Mountain communities. Traversing the bridge by automobile is currently safer than walking across the bridge, as there are no shoulders or sidewalks. Consequently, the incredible views from the bridge are inaccessible to all travelers.

*Recommendation: build on the opportunity for a visitor feature and view site, by assessing strategies and costs of making the bridge view accessible to pedestrians and safer for bicyclists, or creating a pullout at either end of the bridge so travelers can safely enjoy the views.*

## CHUCKANUT MOUNTAIN

The southern area of the Chuckanut Mountain portion of the corridor is home to several regionally popular seafood establishments and the Oyster Dome Trailhead. Parking for diners and hikers is available on sufficiently wide road shoulders but the curving approaches to these road sections make pedestrian crossings uncomfortable and potentially dangerous. Businesses along this section using road shoulders for parking or with low-profile driveways and access points include:

- [Chuckanut Manor Seafood & Grill](#)
- [The Oyster Bar](#)
- Oyster Creek Inn
- [Taylor Shellfish Farms](#) & Samish Oyster Bar



*Recommendation: Increase comfort and safety by developing signage and wayfinding that incorporates advance notice of vehicle entry and exits. Evaluate the possibility of painted and signed crosswalks at the Oyster Dome Trailhead.*

Throughout the Chuckanut Mountain section of the corridor, pullouts provide spectacular views of the Salish Sea and nearby islands. Unfortunately, these areas do not have trash receptacles and interpretive information relating to the rich historical, ecological, and geological features of the area is meager and dated.

*Recommendation: In conjunction with Larrabee State Park projects, develop additional interpretation site markers here, outlining a variety of interesting features in addition to the views. Investigate the possibility of WSDOT or State Park taking on the responsibility of trash collection, or creating signage that advises visitors to take their garbage with them.*

At milepost 14 there is a well maintained state park ranger station and parking lot that provides access to the Clayton Beach and Interurban Trailheads (Lost Lake Parking Lot). The latter allows a separated, safe travel route for bicyclists and pedestrians paralleling Chuckanut Drive for the balance of its course north and provides access to numerous state and county park trailheads. However, a parallel non-motorized trail does not exist south of the Lost Lake Parking Lot.

*Recommendation: Support Larrabee State Park's goal of establishing a multi-use trail that connects the Lost Lake Parking Lot and Clayton Beach area to Blanchard in the Samish Farmlands.*

[Larrabee State Park](#)'s main entrance sits on the west side of the road at milepost 15, where visitors have access to parking facilities, recreation vehicle accommodations, tent campgrounds, picnic areas, beach access, hiking trails and interpretive sites. Across from the main entrance to the park are small parking areas for access to Fragrance Lake and Interurban Trails. While expanding these parking areas is unrealistic, signage indicating other parking options could improve the visitor experience on busy days.

A boat launch area at the north end of the park is accessible by car from Cove Road. Ample parking is available, restroom facilities are present, and trails connect to the main park. State park signs outline water safety hazards and recommendations, but interpretive signs or maps outlining nearby trail connections are absent.

*Recommendation: Support wayfinding signage that directs visitors to larger parking areas and the additional amenities available at Larrabee State Park (Main Park, Lost Lake Parking). Develop signage at Wildcat Cove boat launch that shows its connection to the park as a whole.*

Teddy Bear Cove is a well known shoreline destination in the City of Bellingham, additionally popular for its seasonal bioluminescence. A short, unnamed frontage road adjacent to SR 11 (built for as-yet-undeveloped residential lots) provides about 12 parking spots but signage is absent to indicate its presence and it can easily overflow during peak viewing times.

*Recommendation:* Investigate the possibility of wayfinding that can direct drivers to more appropriate parking than dangerous or illegal areas along the narrow portions of SR 11 in this area.

[Woodstock Farm](#) is a Bellingham city park containing historic Craftsman era buildings that sits on a bluff with panoramic views of Bellingham Bay. The site provides a recently constructed, roadway adjacent (but safely separated) trail that connects to a viewing platform overlooking the water and nearby islands, currently with no interpretive signs. Parking for the Farm is restricted to 4 or 5 spaces, however a planned half mile trail along Chuckanut Drive's north side will connect the park to the North Chuckanut Mountain Trailhead parking area.

*Recommendation:* Support the installation of interpretive signage at the above mentioned viewing platform. In conjunction with Bellingham Parks & Recreation, the possibility of increasing parking availability for the park.

## **HISTORIC FAIRHAVEN PARKWAY**

[Chuckanut Bay Gallery & Sculpture Garden](#) is the first commercial site in this section and its accessible parking area and gateway location create an opportunity for a possible visitor stopping point. An access road for a public recreation area for the Chuckanut Bay Pocket Estuary intersects at the Gallery driveway. Since 1997, Chuckanut Bay has been posted by the Whatcom County Health Department as hazardous for shellfish collection. A gravel parking area is available for visitors to explore the estuary and tidal flats bounded by the BNSF railway to the west and interpretive signage is present, however there is no indication of the small park on Chuckanut Drive.

*Recommendation:* Support the installation of signage indicating the turnoff for the Chuckanut Bay Pocket Estuary.

[Fairhaven Park](#) provides children's play areas, picnic facilities, meeting rooms, parking areas, tennis courts, and restrooms. Fairhaven Park intersects with numerous trail routes including trails to the recently acquired [100 Acre Wood](#). Travelers arriving by foot or bicycle can reach the park from the Interurban trail, via connecting trails along Padden Creek.

[Chuckanut Center](#), located at the northwest corner of the park on the grounds of the former garden in an historic house, offers learning opportunities in food resilience and community building projects.

***Recommendation:** In conjunction with BWTC, create promotional materials advertising these well kept recreational areas, which are connected to numerous trails that extend south along the corridor. Support State Park and regional initiatives to continue trail integration and uniform signage.*

[The Fairhaven National Historic District](#) begins at the corner where Chuckanut Drive becomes Fairhaven Parkway. Public restrooms are available at a gas station, at the Bellingham Cruise Terminal, and Amtrak/Greyhound station. Restaurants, galleries, interpretive trail markers, bookstores, and other services actively cater to visitors and regional residents alike.

Historic Fairhaven Parkway continues east along Padden Creek, rejoining the Interurban Trail at approximately milepost 20. Parking and toilets are available at the Interurban Rotary Trailhead. Interpretive signs recount the [Padden Creek](#) restoration project, which daylighted the waterway after over a century of being buried. Bicycle lanes and sidewalks supplement a variety of trails through adjacent city parks and open space..

Visitors beginning their journey from the north can use the park-and-ride lot at the intersection with Interstate Highway 5, leaving motor vehicles and continuing by bicycle, bus, or foot. Currently, no interpretive sites are marked at the gateway or park-and-ride lot area. Southbound drivers using online map directions will often be routed to SR 11 via 30th St and Old Samish Parkway, bypassing the Historic Fairhaven section of Chuckanut Drive, missing an opportunity to explore the intrinsic qualities of this area.

***Recommendation:** Install wayfinding signage at the park-and-ride lot that helps visitors plan their trip south along Chuckanut Drive, including points of interest in Historic Fairhaven. Install signage to emphasize that the Old Fairhaven Parkway is the scenic byway route (to minimize unintended routings away from Fairhaven)*

## **Evaluation of Expanded Transit Options**

The 2003 SR 11 Corridor Management Plan discussed the potential benefits of shuttle services connecting the more urban areas of Bellingham and Burlington with Scenic Byway destinations such as trailheads, parks, and beaches.

Building on the previous discussions (which mostly considered small scale shuttles operated by hotels or private-sector partnerships) preparations of this update included discussions with regional public transit agencies (Whatcom

Transportation Authority (WTA) and Skagit Transit) to take stock of options, obstacles, and analogous operations elsewhere.

Similar to the 2003 plan, there are still interests in managing the demand for parking at various destinations (especially at peak times when designated parking fills and drivers park along the already-narrow roadway.)

Added to the conversation in 2023 are:

- Broad interests in improving access for underserved communities (i.e., reducing the need for personal vehicles to travel to recreation and natural spaces) and
- Reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) (i.e. moving more person-trips with fewer vehicles).

A notable example of transit connection to wilderness recreation is [Trailhead Direct](#) – a seasonal bus service delivered by King County Metro and King County Parks (with additional support from Seattle Department of Transportation and Amazon.com, Inc.)

WTA and Skagit Transit both agree with the benefits of the desired outcomes and those values are evidenced in their current long range plans and current efforts to improve transportation access to underserved communities throughout their respective service areas. But there are significant challenges to public transit operations on SR 11. These include:

- The narrow roadway and its vehicle-size restrictions limits transit to large passenger vans rather than small buses.
- Since demand would be concentrated on weekend days during the spring and summer, staffing (drivers) is very difficult for medium sized public transit agencies.

This plan supports the long-range goal of implementing expanded public transit along Chuckanut Drive, particularly to trailheads and Larrabee State Park, increasing equitable access to these intrinsic qualities and reducing the demand for personal vehicle parking. A similar option is available in the Seattle Metro area, connecting the city to King County hiking destinations (Trailhead Direct) during peak summer weekends. However, Chuckanut Drive presents unique obstacles with its vehicle size limitations, due to the narrow width and tight turns of the roadway, limiting traditional bus access. Conversations with Whatcom Transportation Authority (WTA) and Skagit Transit also support this goal, but current concerns with vehicle availability and staffing a limited, seasonal operation schedule prevent these agencies from making this recommendation a current priority. A public-private partnership is a possibility, but liability and insurance concerns would need to be addressed if non-agency drivers are considered.

Currently, WTA offers bus service throughout the Historic Fairhaven area of Chuckanut Drive, ending at Willow Road (just south of Fairhaven Park), providing access to hiking, bike trails, and parks that connect to the Chuckanut Mountain area.

Skagit Transit provides bus service to the Chuckanut Park & Ride at the southern terminus of the corridor. They are also studying microtransit transit that could expand access to the Oyster Dome portion of Chuckanut Mountain.

Given the challenges for providing SR 11 connections past the current routes with pure public-transit operations, a general strategy to explore in the near term could be a publically supported voucher program. An alternative short-term consideration to expand access is a voucher program with local taxi services or ride-sharing companies (Uber, Lyft). Subsidized, reduced rate vouchers could connect visitors from specified origins (e.g. adjacent to bus stops or park-and-rides at the north and south ends of SR 11) to various destination along Chuckanut Drive (trailheads, the state park) A similar program exists in the Tri-Cities area through Ben Franklin Transit, working in reverse, that connects riders outside of their service area to locations with bus service. In King County, half-priced “taxi scrip” is available for low-income and elderly residents, a program that could be adapted to provide access to Chuckanut Drive locations for residents without personal vehicles.

## 9. Control of Outdoor Advertising

All jurisdictions along the byway have demonstrated compliance with outdoor advertising control requirements for scenic byways, through local ordinances and legislation.

Jurisdictions include:

- [WSDOT Highway Advertising Control](#)
- **Skagit County** ([Master Program: Section 7.09](#))
- **Whatcom County** ([Whatcom Co. Code: Section 20.80.200](#))
- **City of Bellingham** ([signs ordinances](#))

In addition, the Comprehensive Plans of all three jurisdictions delineate types of development on lands adjacent to the scenic byway which discourage or prohibit outdoor advertising signage along the state highway.

From previous public outreach, recommendations of community members for this Corridor Management Plan caution against large-scale commercial development, including signage, of a type inconsistent with the current cultural and historic appearance along the drive. This plan strongly encourages the adoption of measures which ensure that the historic and

scenic quality of the drive will be maintained and preserved into the next century.

## 10. Signage Plan to Enhance Visitor Experience

This plan supports the efforts of various regional agencies to develop an integrated bicounty-wide wayfinding plan. Comprehensive plans of the jurisdictions overseeing areas of Chuckanut Drive state that cohesive and uniform signage throughout the corridor's route should be a goal, which would enhance a visitor's journey. While signs on Interstate 5 indicate the exits for Chuckanut Drive (in the south at Burlington and north at Fairhaven Parkway), there is currently no "starting point" where a visitor can orient themselves and plan their trip. Wayfinding could direct people to a welcome area that would provide maps and visuals highlighting intrinsic qualities along the corridor. This area could also provide QR codes or instructions for a mobile-device app developed for navigation to and interpretation of points of interest.

While digital technology will help reduce the need for more signage along the roadway, the preservation of scenic views and the natural landscape should be a priority when considering the addition of more signs and should be avoided where possible. If more signs are deemed necessary, the following strategies should be considered in order to avoid affecting scenic quality:

- consolidate with existing signs and signposts.
- placed in such a way as to not distract from or obstruct the scenic views.

Particularly on the Chuckanut Mountain and Samish Farmland areas, where views toward the water are essential to the quality of the visitor experience, placement of signs on the west side of the roadway should be avoided.

The following guidelines were developed for each of the byway communities:

**Samish Farmlands:** avoid placement of large signs on the west side of the roadway, in the area from milepost 7 to milepost 9, in order to avoid restricting the scenic view toward the water and islands.

**Chuckanut Mountainside:** avoid placement of additional large signs along the west side of the roadway between milepost 9 and milepost 18, in areas where views of the water would be obstructed by additional signs.

**Historic Fairhaven Parkway:** clarify signs at intersection with 12<sup>th</sup> Street such that reference to street names and highway number are consistent and understandable to visitors. Consolidate signs where possible to avoid clutter such as what currently exists at the bridge over Padden Creek. Integrate sign design with Historic theme, where possible.

With the aim of reducing collisions and promoting safety along the corridor, following are recommendations for possible implementation by WSDOT in coordination with the local jurisdiction.

**Samish Farmlands:**

- Advisory signs for slower speeds at narrow bridges.
- Safety countermeasures should be considered at the intersection at Bow Hill Road due to a high collision rate.
- Recommended advisory size restriction signs (along with weight restriction) at Blanchard Bridge to deter large motor homes which create traffic hazards when they collide with rock walls and overhangs.

**Chuckanut Mountain:**

- Reduced speed signs (mandatory rather than advisory) at hairpin turns at mileposts 10.5, 15.5, and 18. .
- Evaluate roadway geometrics to determine whether falling rock and blind corners and site-specific limitations dictate a slower speed, especially between mileposts 10 and 14.
- Crossing area or pedestrian on roadway signage at trailheads and trail crossings such as Oyster Dome, Clayton Beach, and Larrabee State Park/Fragrance Creek.
- Bicycles on Roadway signs and/or stenciling on roadway

## 11. Marketing Plan

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

## 12. Design Standards for Future Roadway Development

This plan recognizes that WSDOT maintains thorough standards in compliance with federal regulations that define roadway construction and improvements, these are outlined in their [Design Manual](#) (September, 2022). In addition, the CMP encourages future infrastructure investment to place prime importance on the natural beauty of the corridor's environs. Improvements should not hinder existing access to viewpoints or

degrade the ecological systems that make Chuckanut Drive a unique destination. Previous outreach with local stakeholders has revealed an aversion to widening the road or increasing speed limits in the Samish Farmlands. Similar considerations would be prohibitively expensive and damaging along the Chuckanut Mountain section. Reducing vehicle crashes and improving safety for bicyclists and pedestrian users of the corridor should continue to remain priorities when roadway projects are executed.

In conjunction with WSDOT goals of electrifying major highways, this plan encourages the installation of electric vehicle charging stations (EVCS) along portions of Chuckanut Drive. Currently EVCS are available in the Burlington area off of I-5 at George Hopper Road and Cook Road (which intersects with SR 11). In the northern section of the byway stations are available in Fairhaven Park and at 30th Street, near I-5. However, there are presently no EVCS between these two areas (mileposts 0-20). Providing increased availability for these resources will allow visitors to access the scenic drive without worrying about battery charge and preemptively adjust to an electric vehicle dominant future.

*Recommendation: Mirroring facilities provided at two other Washington State Parks (Daroga SP and Ginkgo Petrified Forest SP), this plan supports the installation of EVCS at Larrabee State Park, with possible locations including the Lost Lake Parking Lot and the Main Entrance Parking Lot. An additional recommended location at the corridor's intersection with Bow Hill Road would complement the many restaurants and businesses available in the Bow-Edison community.*

## 13. Interpretation Plan for Roadway Resources

While interpretive signs encouraging visitors to engage with the historical and natural qualities of Chuckanut Drive are placed along the byway, a visitor's experience would be improved with additional resources. Recommendations for additional signage are located in Section 8, "Enhancing Visitor Experience." These include new stopping points in the Samish Farmlands that would highlight the area's important wetlands, sloughs, and estuaries, prime spots for migratory bird watching. Viewpoints in the Chuckanut Mountain area could be improved with additional informative signs, particularly at the newly constructed platform accessed through Woodstock Farm. While signage exists to direct a visitor to Historic Fairhaven, it is ambiguous and a visitor will often bypass this preserved downtown area on their way to recreational opportunities along the southern portion of the corridor. This situation could be improved with signs indicating the urban portion of Chuckanut Drive as a part of the scenic byway.

Coordinating signage between the various jurisdictions the corridor passes through will aid visitors' understanding of Chuckanut Drive's continuity throughout the three distinct areas. Larrabee State Park, Bellingham Parks & Recreation, and the Department of



Natural Resources are all responsible for trails in the area and have goals of implementing such standards.

As proposed earlier, interpretive elements could begin with a “welcome area” near the southern terminus of Chuckanut Drive in Burlington or at the Allen Recreational Playfields. As a comprehensive wayfinding plan for the region is implemented we recommend that interpretive elements be linked to any proposed digital application, enabling interested parties to delve deeper into the area’s intrinsic qualities, rather than just viewing a highlighted point of interest.

## 14. CMP Implementers, Performance Measurement, and Schedule

Passing through two counties and multiple state and local jurisdictions, Chuckanut Drive's development and oversight must be approached with cooperation and coordination in mind, ensuring a unified and welcoming experience for visitors and residents.

The **WSDOT** is responsible for maintenance of the roadway and all traffic and safety signs within the right of way, sharing this responsibility with the **City of Bellingham Public Works Department** within the city's limits. Additional wayfinding and interpretive signage will need to conform to construction and design standards laid out by the former agency.

The corridor begins in the Samish Farmlands, where this plan recommends the installation of an information/welcome kiosk for the entire scenic byway near milepost 0, at the Chuckanut Park & Ride. Organizations that will need to be involved in this project include **Visit Skagit Valley**, **Bellingham Whatcom County Tourism (BWCT)**, and **Skagit Transit**. Recommendations for increased awareness, signage, and advertising of Bow-Edison visitor opportunities will also include Visit Skagit Valley participation in conjunction with local restaurant and business owners.

Continuing north, Chuckanut Drive passes into lands managed by **Larrabee State Park (LSP)** and the **Department of Natural Resources (DNR)**. This plan supports continued efforts of these agencies to coordinate projects and trail development. Proposals for improvements at scenic pullouts, including interpretive signage would be under the purview of state park officials.

Multiple Bellingham parks, including Woodstock Farm, Arroyo Park, and Fairhaven Park, are connected to state park and DNR lands with multi-use trails, particularly the Interurban Trail. Cooperative management of trail signs and continued integration of trail systems will be the responsibility of **City of Bellingham Parks & Recreation**, LSP, and the DNR, a goal shared in their respective comprehensive plans.

Continued promotion of the Historic Fairhaven district will be done by the **Fairhaven Association**, and BWCT in cooperation with the City of Bellingham.

Ecological restoration of Chuckanut Drive environments will continue to be accomplished through coordinated local and state supported efforts. The **Department of Ecology**, **Department of Fish & Wildlife**, and the DNR will all play a part in future conservation projects along with local jurisdictions and volunteer participation.

A comprehensive wayfinding project has been researched by **Whatcom County**. This plan recommends that the portion of Chuckanut Drive passing through Skagit County be included in future considerations for this project. The **Whatcom Council of**

**Governments** (WCOG) and **Skagit Council of Governments** (SCOG), with the participation of their respective tourism agencies, should coordinate their efforts to develop a unified standard for signage along the corridor.

Continued development of electric vehicle charging stations will be accomplished by WSDOT. Proposals for stations within Larrabee State Park will require the participation of **Washington State Department of Parks & Recreation**.

WCOG will periodically evaluate the progress of recommendations made in this plan, entering amendments for projects that have been completed.