

3.13 PUBLIC SERVICES

The following section compares the probable significant impacts from the Preferred Alternative and the Straight Street Grid Option on public services to those associated with the Redevelopment Alternatives (Alternatives 1 – 3) in the 2008 *New Whatcom Redevelopment Project Draft EIS* (DEIS) and identifies any new or increased significant impacts and/or mitigation.

3.13.1 Affected Environment

The DEIS describes the existing status of City of Bellingham entities providing public services to the New Whatcom site. Municipal services considered in the DEIS include: fire and emergency services, police, schools, parks and recreation, and street maintenance. As described in the DEIS, the above-listed public services are currently available to the site. The existing status of public services has generally remained the same as presented in the DEIS; therefore, no changes to the discussion of existing conditions is warranted in this SDEIS (see DEIS Section 3.13.1 for a description of the existing status of these services).

3.13.2 Impacts

Draft EIS (Alternatives 1 – 4)

As described in the DEIS, during construction of the New Whatcom Redevelopment Project there could be a short-term increase in demand for fire and police services to respond to potential construction-related accidents and injuries, and construction site theft and vandalism, respectively. Under DEIS Alternatives 1 – 3, potential impacts to future onsite parks and trails associated with construction activity onsite could also occur, including temporary increases in dust, emissions and noise. All construction-related impacts on public services would be temporary in nature, would occur over an extended period of time given the phased construction of the site and would cease once full build-out occurs.

Operation of the assumed redevelopment under DEIS Alternatives 1 - 3 would result in added demand for fire/emergency and police services from the City of Bellingham Fire and Police Departments on an incremental basis. Assumed multifamily residential development under DEIS Alternatives 1 - 3 would generate additional student enrollment at Bellingham School District schools serving the New Whatcom site, also on an incremental basis. New site residents and employees would increase demand on existing local and regional parks and recreational facilities, and generate the need for additional parks and recreational facilities. DEIS Alternatives 1 – 3 would include new on-site parks, trails and habitat areas, as well as a marina, which would provide new opportunities for recreation and access to the waterfront for site residents/employees and the overall community. The new trails would complete links to area parks and trails, and connect neighborhoods/areas in the City. The new parks, trails and habitat areas included in the project would require operations and maintenance support from the City of Bellingham Parks and Recreation Department. Assumed redevelopment would include new public streets that would also require operations and maintenance support from the City of Bellingham Public Works Department.

As described in the DEIS, construction and operation impacts under the No Action Alternative would be similar in nature, but less than those under the Redevelopment Alternatives.

Potential impacts for fire service, police service, parks maintenance, and street maintenance were estimated for the DEIS using an economic model developed by the City of Bellingham for the New Whatcom site (Waterfront District). Fire and police services were based on a ratio of calls for service per 1,000 residents/employees for a comparable area of downtown Bellingham (an area with a similar mix of uses and density). This ratio was then applied to the projected onsite resident and employee population to determine the estimated calls for service for each EIS Alternative. Estimated fire and police service needs were then calculated based on the estimated calls for service and any available equipment or personnel capacity for each department. Parks and street maintenance needs were determined based on the amount of new onsite parks and public street area that would require city services. Public school impacts were estimated based on students per household generation rates from the Bellingham School District's 2004-2009 Capital Facilities Plan (see Section 3.13.2 for more information on the methodology used in the DEIS).

Table 3.13-1 provides a summary of the probable significant impacts of the EIS Alternatives on public services at assumed buildout in 2026 (see DEIS Section 3.13.2 for details on these impacts).

Preferred Alternative

As described in Chapter 2 of this SDEIS, levels of redevelopment under the Preferred Alternative would be within the range of redevelopment assumed for DEIS Alternatives 1 - 3. Redevelopment under the Preferred Alternative would mix and match elements of Alternatives 1 - 3.

Construction of redevelopment under the Preferred Alternative would result in short-term increases in demand for police and fire services, and temporary impacts to future onsite parks, similar to that described under DEIS Alternatives 1 - 3.

Operation of redevelopment under the Preferred Alternative would result in increased demand for public services, within the range of impacts under DEIS Alternatives 1 - 3. The density levels and nature of redevelopment (i.e. types of land uses) under the Preferred Alternative would be similar to under DEIS Alternative 2. It is assumed, therefore, that the City's Economic Model would result in staffing and equipment levels similar to that estimated for Alternative 2 with the following limited differences.

Impacts on fire and emergency services and police services would be similar to DEIS Alternative 2 due to similar onsite population levels (11,970 residents and employees under the Preferred Alternative and 11,690 residents and employees under DEIS Alternative 2). Public school impacts under the Preferred Alternative would be somewhat less than DEIS Alternative 2 due to lower amounts of housing, which would result in fewer potential students.

The Preferred Alternative would include approximately 33 acres of new onsite parks, trails and habitat areas, as well as a marina (see **Chapter 2** for more information on these areas). These areas would be comparable in amount and function to the areas assumed under Alternative 1 in the DEIS. The proposed parks, trails and habitat areas included in the Preferred Alternative would require operations and maintenance support from the City of Bellingham Parks and Recreation Department, at a level similar to that assumed under DEIS Alternative 1 (see Table 3.13-1 and DEIS Section 3.13.2 for details).

Table 3.13-1
PUBLIC SERVICES IMPACTS COMPARISON
DRAFT EIS ALTERNATIVES AND PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE – 2026

	DEIS Alt. 1 Higher Density	DEIS Alt. 2 Medium Density	DEIS Alt. 2A Medium Density	DEIS Alt. 3 Lower Density	DEIS Alt. No Action	Preferred Alternative
Fire Service	9 firefighters, 3 captains, 9 medics required 1 engine, 1 medic unit required	9 firefighters, 3 captains, 9 medics required 1 engine, 1 medic unit required	9 firefighters, 3 captains, 9 medics required 1 engine, 1 medic unit required	9 firefighters, 3 captains 1 engine required	No fire department staff required No vehicles required	9 firefighters, 3 captains, 9 medics required 1 engine, 1 medic unit required
Police Service	8 patrol units and officers, 1.3 detective, 1.5 records clerk required 8 patrol vehicles required	7 patrol units and officers, 1.1 detective, 1.2 records clerk required 7 patrol vehicles required	7 patrol units and officers, 1.1 detective, 1.2 records clerk required 7 patrol vehicles required	5 patrol units and officers, 0.7 detective, 0.8 records clerk required 5 patrol vehicles required	1 patrol unit and officer, 0.1 detective, 0.2 records clerk required 1 patrol vehicle required	7 patrol units and officers, 1.1 detective, 1.2 records clerk required 7 patrol vehicles required
Schools	496 students generated	379 students generated	379 students generated	214 students generated	No students generated	305 students generated
Parks & Recreational Facilities	33 acres of parks/open space ¹ provided 6.8 FTE Parks and Recreation Department staff required	24 acres parks/open space ¹ provided 4.7 FTE Parks and Recreation Department staff required	24 acres parks/open space ¹ provided 4.7 FTE Parks and Recreation Department staff required	15 acres of parks/open space ¹ provided 2.8 FTE Parks and Recreation Department staff required	No parks/open space provided No Parks and Recreation Department staff required	33 acres of parks/open space ¹ provided 6.8 FTE Parks and Recreation Department staff required
Street Maintenance	0.9 FTE Public Works Department staff required	0.8 FTE Public Works Department staff required	0.9 FTE Public Works Department staff required	0.7 FTE Public Works Department staff required	0.2 FTE Public Works Department staff required	0.9 FTE Public Works Department staff required

Source: City of Bellingham, 2008.

¹ Includes parks, trails and habitat restoration areas.

FTE = fulltime equivalent employee

Redevelopment under the Preferred Alternative would include phased redevelopment of an onsite street grid to serve the New Whatcom site. The street grid under the Preferred Alternative would include a total of approximately 29 acres of public streets; this amount would be similar to the amount analyzed for Alternative 1 in the DEIS. As such, operations and maintenance support from the City of Bellingham Public Works Department for the public street network under the Preferred Alternative would be similar to that for Alternative 1 (see **Table 3.13-1** in this SDEIS and DEIS Section 3.13.2 for details).

Straight Street Grid Option

The Straight Street Grid Option assumes the same mix and density of land uses as those proposed under the Preferred Alternative. As a result, potential impacts to fire and emergency services, police services, and public schools would be the same as those described under the Preferred Alternative. The configuration of parks and open space under the Straight Street Grid Option would be slightly different than under the Preferred Alternative; however, the overall amount of parks and open space is assumed to be the same and, therefore, the potential parks service impacts would also be the same. The street network configuration under the Straight Street Grid Option would also be different than the Preferred Alternative; however, it is assumed that the Straight Street Grid would include a similar total amount of public street area when compared to the Preferred Alternative and, therefore, would have similar potential impacts.

3.13.3 Conclusions

The probable significant impacts of the Preferred Alternative and the Straight Street Grid Option on public services (fire and emergency service, police service, schools, parks and street maintenance) would be within the range of impacts identified for DEIS Alternatives 1 – 3. The public service impacts of the Preferred Alternative and Straight Street Grid Option would be similar to DEIS Alternative 2, with the exception of proposed parks, trails and habitat areas, which would be similar to DEIS Alternative 1. No change in conclusions regarding significant impacts on public services would be anticipated with the Preferred Alternative or the Straight Street Grid Option, when compared to the DEIS.

3.13.4 Mitigation Measures

Mitigation measures to address the probable significant public service impacts of Alternatives 1 – 3 were identified in the DEIS (see DEIS Section 3.13.3 for a list of these measures). These mitigation measures would also apply to the Preferred Alternative and the Straight Street Grid Option. Because no additional significant impacts were identified for the Preferred Alternative or the Straight Street Grid Option, no additional mitigation measures would be warranted.

3.13.5 Significant Unavoidable Adverse Impacts

With the implementation of the mitigation measures identified in the DEIS, no significant adverse impacts to public services would be anticipated to result from redevelopment under the Preferred Alternative or Straight Street Grid Option.