

## **PLAN BACKGROUND**

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## **PLAN BACKGROUND**

### **1. Planning Process**

The City of Brier's 2000 Comprehensive Plan was based on the previously adopted 1994 and 1989 Comprehensive Plans. In 1989, there was an extensive citizen participation process, which defined the direction and vision for the community -- to maintain itself as a low-density single family residential community. The City has not undergone major changes since the last Plan adoption. The pre-hearing draft 2004 plan is based on the same policy direction and vision as previous Comprehensive Plans. Therefore, the present planning process balances the goals and guidelines of the state Growth Management Act (GMA) with the policies and vision set forth in the 1989, 1994 and 2000 Comprehensive Plans..

The planning process for the 1994 Comprehensive Plan began with developing a Transportation Element. It started when the City adopted a Transportation Element in March 1992, after approximately 11 meetings that involved citizens and City Officials between May 1990 and June 1991. In formulating the other elements of the Comprehensive Plan, the City Council held several workshops in spring/Summer 1993 to discuss the focus and scope of the Plan update and how to address GMA requirements. The Planning Commission held a public hearing on January 19, 1994, and recommended to the City Council adoption of the draft Plan. The City Council held a public hearing on February 22, 1994 on the Comprehensive Plan at which there were no public comments. On April 26, 1994, the Council adopted Ordinance No. 270 approving the GMA Comprehensive Plan for Brier.

The City Council, Planning Commission, and Parks and Recreation Board held workshops and formal public meetings for the Plan Update process in 1999, 2000 and 2005.

### **2. Historic Context**

A description of the historical trends in Brier highlights the dominant factors that have influenced and shaped the community's growth and development. Many of these factors will continue to shape the future growth of the community. The Comprehensive Plan Updates evolved from the basis set forth in the 1965 and 1989 Comprehensive Plans that guided the City of Brier's land use decisions for the last thirty-five years. The Plans have provided a good basis for land development in the community over the past two decades.

Brier's history has had a significant influence on the City's low-density residential character. Prior to 1919 the land within the present City of Brier was raw and unplatteed. The only general activity within the area was logging. Following the completion of the logging operations the land was used for agricultural and other rural pursuits. Development of a residential community did not commence until the mid-1940's with substantial development starting in the mid-1950's.

In 1919 the Puget Mill Company recorded a plat with the county auditor. This plat included approximately the northern half of the City. The southern boundary was approximately coincident with the projection of 228th S.W. and extended across the present city. The lot sizes included in this plat varied from 4.3 to 6.0 acres. A plat covering most of the south half of Brier was recorded in 1924. This plat set lot sizes of approximately 4.5 acres.

Over the ensuing years additional subdivisions were recorded establishing a large lot rural residential development pattern. Zoning was first introduced by Snohomish County in 1958. With the exception of the small business area at 236th S.W. and Brier Road, the entire area was zoned suburban residential. In the south half of Brier lot size zoning ranged from 12,500 square feet. In the north portion of Brier the zoning ranged from 8,400 square feet to 20,000 square feet. However, there was little development in this area utilizing the County's zoning.

Most development of the area occurred in the south part of the City. For the most part development utilized lot sizes substantially greater than 12,000 square feet, maintaining a partially wooded and semi-rural atmosphere. At present, in the north portion of Brier

there are many larger homesites, many of which consist of an acre or more.

**TABLE 1**  
**Street Classifications**  
**Summary of Design and Planning Features**

CATEGORY	NO. OF LANES	AVE. DAILY TRAFFIC	TYPICAL SPEEDS	TYPICAL SPACING	TRANSIT USE	ON-STREET PARKING	TURN POCKTS/ 2-WAY LN	CROSS-WALKS	TRAFFIC DIVERTERS	THROUGH CONNECTIONS
MAJOR St.	2+	3,000+	30	Mile	Yes	Possible	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
MINOR St.	2+	1,000 to 3,000	20-30	¼ Mile	Possible	Possible	Possible	Yes	No	Possible
NEIGHBORHOOD St.	2	1,000 or less	25	500 to 1,000 ft.	Possible	Possible	No	Possible	Possible	No
LOCAL NBHD. St.	2	500 or less	20-25	100 to 500 ft.	No	Possible	No	Possible	Possible	No
SCENIC ROUTE	ANY	OF THE	ABOVE	FEATURES	POSSIBLE					
BICYCLE LANE	4-5 ft.	1-3K+	25-30	Contin. System	Possible	No	Possible	Possible	No	Possible
SIGNED BICYCLE ROUTE	2+	0-3K+	15-30	Contin. System	Possible	No	Possible	Possible	Possible	Possible
WALKWAY/ SIDEWALK	5+ ft.	--	--	City-wide	--	--	--	Possible	--	Yes
MULTI-USE TRAIL	3+ ft.	--	--	City-wide	--	--	--	Possible	--	Yes
OFF-ROAD TRAIL	Varies	--	--	City-wide	--	--	--	Possible	--	Yes

Throughout the City of Brier's history, development has resulted in an area characterized by large homesites, wooded and semi-rural in nature.

In sharp contrast to Brier's development pattern, surrounding areas were experiencing rapid and, in some instances, uncontrolled medium to high-density residential and commercial growth. Due to the threat posed by the encroaching higher density development and expanding communities, residents investigated and evaluated methods to ensure perpetuation of the Brier character and the kind of development which had been maintained for some time. Other than incorporation, no other feasible method of accomplishing this was found, and, to that end, the City was incorporated in 1965 to carry out this basic philosophy.

Self-government was felt to be essential to control taxes, develop and maintain adequate roads, water and sewage disposal systems and to carry on the semi-rural concept of country living, thus enabling people of a modest means to hold property of adequate size for the health, welfare, safety and happiness of their families.

Today the philosophy of the City is to retain and maintain the basic, original, spacious and semi-rural wooded character of the area and to remain relatively small, simple, and intimate, with a minimum of regulation and taxation. It is intended that further development of Brier will be consistent and harmonious with the established pattern.

### **3. Community Vision/Development Philosophy**

The current plan as proposed restates those desires and sets forth a continuing vision for the community. It builds on the 1965, 1989, 1994, and 2000 Plans that established a strong policy for Brier as a large lot, single family residential community.

History has shown this to be an effective plan. Further, the amenities, the quality residential areas, the dead-end streets, the parks, the views, and the natural landscape, are items that the community intends to continue in a pattern established by the previous Plans. Therefore, the 2004 Comprehensive Plan builds on this foundation.

The Land Use Element recognizes the existing character of Brier as a low density, single family, semi-rural environment. It builds on the previous Plans by incorporating most of the Goals and Policies Section. It takes into account the sensitive land areas and the existing land use patterns and character of the community. The Plan includes a significant emphasis on natural elements and existing conditions. The basic premise in the land use element is that the existing land use pattern, (i.e. predominately large lots with a minimum of 12,500 square feet and upwards of several acres) should continue to be the desired land use pattern in the community. As areas are considered for annexation to Brier (based upon the criteria set forth in the annexation policies), they would be considered with the primary intent of having them be consistent with the existing single family land use pattern and zoning of the City of Brier.

To implement the goal of maintaining the semi-rural character there will be no multifamily and no additional commercial zones. Extensive and convenient shopping areas exist on

the City's perimeters which serve its residents. Shopping areas are located in nearby Mountlake Terrace, Canyon Park, Lynnwood, Kenmore, Alderwood Mall and Lake Forest Park. Multifamily sites are located around and adjacent to the community. Due to the extent and proximity of these uses it is unnecessary to duplicate this range of multifamily and commercial uses.

Community facilities shall be scaled for a semi-rural residential community intended for the use of Brier residents. The Parks and Recreation Element of the Plan continues to emphasize the need for multipurpose non-motorized trails, such as equestrian, bicycle and walking trails throughout the community, linking areas in Brier with those in surrounding communities and the County. These trails, linkages, and proposed corridors take into account sensitive areas (stream corridors, steep slopes) while providing visual access to these areas minimizes intrusions and impacts.

It is also the goal of this Plan to encourage land use, traffic, community facility and service decisions in adjacent areas that are compatible with the City of Brier, and would not put undue burden on the City's infrastructure, nor adversely impact existing and planned land uses.

This Plan reflects the intent of the community. The Goals and Policies section of this Plan states very clearly that the community shall be maintained as a single family, residential area.

#### **4. Comprehensive Plan Goal Statement**

The overall goal of the Comprehensive Plan is to preserve the character of the City of Brier as a single-family residential community with emphasis on preservation of open space and natural landscape. The purpose of this plan will be to protect and encourage the development of all residential areas in a manner consistent with the low-density patterns already established. Since Brier is essentially a residential community, further development of a commercial, industrial or multifamily nature would be incompatible and therefore is not desired in Brier. Future growth in the City should be confined to single family homes located on quiet residential streets. It is desired that the City maintain a policy of encouraging the semi-rural atmosphere of the community with large, natural, wooded lots. As a result of Brier being a small area and due to the existing residential character, it is less able to provide a wide variety of land uses, and these uses are and will continue to be available in adjacent communities.

The Land Use Plan, Figure 1, may be found in the Land Use Element below. It depicts the land use designations to implement the community vision and comprehensive plan goal as stated above.

#### **5. Comprehensive Plan Alternatives Analysis**

A variety of land use alternatives were considered during the 1989 decision-making process for potential land uses in the Comprehensive Plan. Based upon the analysis at that time of planned and existing land uses in the surrounding communities, and the established large lot, single family residential character of Brier; the land use plan proposed no increase in commercial designated land or new multifamily zoning. This approach has been extended to the 2004 update. It is intended that the predominant

land use pattern in the community, large lot single family, be continued throughout the City of Brier. The following analysis of the surrounding development patterns and trends establish the availability of multifamily residential and commercial opportunities outside Brier yet available within the immediate vicinity.

Table 1 shows that the surrounding jurisdictions of Lynnwood, Mill Creek, Bothell and Mountlake Terrace have high proportions of multifamily units in their communities.

**Table 2**  
Comparison of Surrounding Communities' Multifamily Supply

City	2000 Population	# of multifamily / manufactured units * <sup>1</sup>	Proportion of total units
Bothell **	13,965	5,407	45.3%
Brier	6,548	0	0
Lynnwood	33,847	6,747	50.9%
Mill Creek	11,525	2,110	45.3%
Mountlake Terrace	20,362	3,231	40.9%
Unincorporated SW County	133,829	19,218	39.9%

\* Includes both owner- and renter- occupied units

\*\* Portion of City in Snohomish County

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<sup>1</sup> Snohomish County Housing Evaluation Report, PDS, 2002, Jurisdiction Profiles.

**TABLE 3**  
**Comparison of Population and Density**

Jurisdiction	2004 Population <sup>2</sup>	Rank <sup>3</sup>	Population/Sq. Mile	Rank
Brier	6,460	93	2,518	36
Bothell	30,930	30	2,518	55
Lake Forest Park	12,770	62	3,469	24
Lynnwood	34,540	27	3,444	23
Mountlake Terrace	20,390	42	5,122	3

The above table shows that one community with one of the highest density in the state **is** located in close proximity to Brier. Mountlake Terrace has nearly double the density of Brier. Brier's density is approximately 30 percent less than Lynnwood's density.

Table 3 shows that the surrounding jurisdictions of Lynnwood, Mill Creek, Bothell and Mountlake Terrace have a large number of jobs.

Table 4  
Comparison of surrounding communities' supply of jobs

City	2000 Population	# of Jobs - 2000 <sup>4</sup>	Ratio Jobs : Population
Bothell *	13,965	10,150	73:100
Brier	6,548	326	5:100
Lynnwood	33,847	24,493	72:100
Mill Creek	11,525	2,808	24:100
Mountlake Terrace	20,362	7,127	35:100
Unincorporated SW County	133,829	23,822	18:100

\* Portion of City in Snohomish County

There are many opportunities within a few minutes driving time for shopping in surrounding communities, in addition. The following retail centers are close to the City:

- a. A community shopping center at 228th and Cedar Way - one-quarter mile from the westerly city limits of Brier and its main access point;

<sup>2</sup> "Rank of Cities and Towns by April 1, 2004 Population Size," Washington State Office of Financial Management, Forecasting Division, June 30, 2004.

<sup>3</sup> IBID.

<sup>4</sup> Snohomish County Tomorrow Report, Planning & Development Services, Appendix B "Initial 2025 Employment Growth Targets for Cities, UGAs and the Rural/Resource Area Recommended by the SCT Planning Advisory Committee (Sept. 18, 2003) and SCT Steering Committee (Oct 22, 2003).

- b. A community center with discount stores at Canyon Park - two and one-half miles east of the easterly city limits;
- c. A community shopping center at Ballinger Way - one and one-half miles to the southeast of the City;
- d. Lynnwood City Center (544 businesses including retail, finance, Insurance, real estate, and services businesses); and
- e. Alderwood Mall – a regional shopping center northwest of the City.

In addition, retail development near Brier includes a neighborhood shopping center, built in 1998, with Albertson's grocery store as the anchor located at 212<sup>th</sup> Street SW and 44<sup>th</sup> Avenue W in Mountlake Terrace. To the north, the 196<sup>th</sup> St. SW and Poplar Way area in Lynnwood began developing in the latter part of the 1990s with Lowe's Hardware and Circuit City, two warehouse-type developments. Nearby, a new community shopping center with Barnes and Noble as its anchor was constructed north of 196<sup>th</sup> Street SW. New motels were also developed in this area due to the construction of a new freeway interchange. The development of the commercial area on 205<sup>th</sup> Street SW in the south part of Mountlake Terrace also burgeoned in the mid-to late 1990s, with offices, retail, movie, and restaurant businesses. To the east in Bothell, office parks and associated commercial uses (e.g., restaurants and services) continued to be developed in the years since the last plan update.

Brier's population is at the low end traditionally used to identify a neighborhood shopping center market. The existing neighborhood business area at the 236th St. SW/Brier Road intersection, coupled with the extensive retail opportunities around the City of Brier are sufficient to meet the needs of Brier residents.

#### *Population and Housing Unit Update*

Brier's population increased from 5,760 in 1992 to 6,445 in 2002, an 11.8% increase. The communities surrounding Brier also experienced growth in the same decade, particularly Bothell (3.790% due largely to annexation) and Mill Creek (60.7%).

All of Brier's development in the past decade has been single family. In 2000, the housing stock totaled 2,115 housing units. Between 2000 and 2004, an additional 38 single family housing units were added to the housing stock.

**FIGURE 1 - NEIGHBORING LAND USE DESIGNATIONS**