

Point Roberts Economic Development Strategy

Point Roberts, Washington

Prepared for Port of Bellingham

Project No. M0763.13.001

Prepared by



Point Roberts Economic Development Strategy

Point Roberts

Whatcom County, Washington

Prepared for:

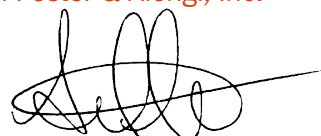
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Abbreviations

WCC

WSDA

Whatcom County Code

Washington State Department of Agriculture

AASHTO	American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials
ACS	American Community Survey
B.C.	British Columbia
BHAC	Boyle Heights Arts Conservatory
CDBG	Community Development Block Grants
CERB	Community Economic Redevelopment Board
Commerce	Washington State Department of Commerce
CSA	Community Supported Agriculture
County	Whatcom County
DAHP	Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation
DU	Dwelling Units
Ecology	Washington Department of Ecology
EDS	Economic Development Strategy
FCRI	Faunteroy Center & Resilience Incubator
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
I-5	Interstate 5
JAC	Jansen Arts Center
JARPA	Joint Aquatic Resource Permit Application
LOSS	large onsite sewer system
Marina	Point Roberts Marina
Mbps	Megabytes per second
NAICS	North American Industry Classification System
NRCS	Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service
The Point	Point Roberts
Port	Port of Bellingham
PSE	Puget Sound Energy
PUD	Public Utility District
RC	Resort Commercial
RIM	Rural Industrial and Manufacturing
RR1	Rural Residential-1
RTEBN	Rebuilding Together: East Bay Network
SMP	Shoreline Master Program
STEP	Septic Tank Effluent Pumping
UGA	Urban Growth Area
USDA	US Department of Agriculture

Executive Summary

The Point Roberts Economic Development Strategy (EDS) offers a comprehensive framework to tackle the community's ongoing economic challenges and guide its transition towards resilience and revitalization. Historically dependent on cross-border commerce and seasonal tourism, Point Roberts (the Point) has faced persistent economic decline, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, trade disruptions, and limited infrastructure capacity. In response, the Port of Bellingham (Port) successfully secured a planning grant from the Washington State Department of Commerce Community Economic Revitalization Board to conduct the EDS for the Point. This EDS report integrates a diverse set of development approaches into a single, cohesive document, offering a **unified framework for action to support Point Roberts in achieving its resilience and revitalization aspirations**. The report should also serve as a strategic instrument to secure additional grant funding and financing, advancing these economic development initiatives.

The project began with a comprehensive assessment of existing conditions, including a market analysis, stakeholder interviews, and a community meeting. This process surfaced a range of constraints to economic development in Point Roberts, such as limited access, inadequate infrastructure, restrictive zoning, environmental limitations tied to natural resource protections, a shortage of skilled labor, insufficient affordable housing, and unreliable internet connectivity. Through this outreach, **the community articulated a set of key values to guide the development of economic strategies—namely resiliency, self-sufficiency, preservation, and livability**. These values, combined with the findings from the existing conditions analysis and targeted stakeholder outreach, informed the creation of five foundational economic development strategies:

1. **Public acquisition and revitalization of the Point Roberts Marina.** A thriving Marina would serve as the economic anchor of Point Roberts, supporting general connectivity, local trades businesses, tourism, charter boat service, and denser commercial and residential development.
2. **Formal establishment of a Point Roberts Resilience Hub.** A robust economy requires a cohesive and equally robust community. Stakeholders were proud to share that one of the key reasons to live on the Point is the existing sense of community. Establishing a formal Resilience Hub on the Point will further solidify the connectedness of the Point Roberts community during everyday life as well as during times of distress and recovery. It could also serve as an incubator for small-scale businesses and artists, and potentially as a workforce development center.
3. **Expansion and improvement of broadband infrastructure and service.** Broadband is an essential component of a community's infrastructure, and it facilitates the increasing number of remote and hybrid work opportunities available.
4. **Multiple options for installation of a sewer system on the Point.** Currently, the septic-only wastewater on the Point limits commercial and residential development. Installation of an improved sewer system can support sustainable economic growth and more affordable and accessible housing options.
5. **Economic and Environmental Resilience:** The Point Roberts community can enhance its economic resilience by cultivating businesses that both meet local needs and appeal to visitors. Targeted infrastructure improvements that increase accessibility to community resources will further support sustainable economic growth and community vitality. This collection of strategies embodies core community values and draws on proven case studies to guide Point Roberts toward a more sustainable and resilient economic future.

These strategies are **designed to activate underutilized assets, diversify the local economy, and engage the community to strengthen their future**. Each initiative is tailored to the unique geographic and demographic context of Point Roberts, with an **emphasis on building local capacity and reducing reliance on external**

Point Roberts Economic Development Strategy

systems. Drawing on case studies from similarly isolated communities, the strategies are supported by examples of economic and environmental sustainability achieved in the face of comparable challenges. These model communities provide valuable lessons and inspiration for the Point, offering practical pathways toward resilience and long-term vitality.

The report **outlines detailed implementation actions, funding and financing pathways, and ownership considerations to support each strategy**. It underscores the importance of community leadership, phased investment, and community-driven planning to overcome regulatory, infrastructural, and demographic constraints. Strategic linkages such as aligning sewer upgrades with Marina redevelopment or leveraging broadband to attract remote workers are essential to maximizing impact.

Together, these strategies form a cohesive and adaptive roadmap for Point Roberts to transition beyond economic stagnation. **By leveraging its natural assets, cultural identity, and deeply held community values, the community can catalyze inclusive growth, attract new residents and visitors, and cultivate a more vibrant, resilient, and self-sustaining local economy.**

1 Introduction

The Port of Bellingham (Port) received a planning grant from the Washington State Department of Commerce (Commerce) Community Economic Revitalization Board (CERB) to conduct an Economic Development Strategy Study (EDS) for Point Roberts (the Point), an unincorporated pene-exclave community in Whatcom County. The purpose of this EDS is to identify economic development opportunities and prepare a plan of action for Point Roberts. The implementation section of this report includes an action planning table for each economic development strategy. These tables outline the responsible entities, proposed actions to advance the strategy, and potential funding and financing mechanisms to support successful implementation.

1.1 Background

Point Roberts is a uniquely scenic and peaceful place in the Pacific Northwest. Located in the United States, but adjacent to the major metropolitan area of Vancouver, British Columbia (B.C.), it is a place that both Americans and Canadians have called their full time or seasonal home since its founding. Adjacent to highly developed residential and agricultural land in Delta, BC, Point Roberts presents a heavily treed and slowed down way of life compared to its northern neighbor.

Accessible by land only through Canada, the Point is known to be a safe place to live for families and retirees. This unique geography has attracted and woven a one-of-a-kind community fabric, composed of people whose connection to the Point is made evident through their committed volunteerism and dedication to their community's health. This rural enclave adjacent to a major metropolis has bred a healthy art and artisan scene, numerous local food growers and producers, and very diverse perspectives and experiences packed together on just five square miles of land.

Since the 1950s, Point Roberts has depended heavily on Canadian spending to sustain its local economy. However, recent political and economic disruptions, such as the closure of the Point Roberts border crossing during the COVID-19 pandemic and the current U.S. administration's tariff policies, have highlighted the community's vulnerability to fluctuations in Canadian economic engagement. While Canadian participation will always remain a vital component of the local economy, the strategies outlined here were developed with a focus on building long-term economic resilience and sustainability to mitigate larger geopolitical and macroeconomic risks.

1.2 Existing Conditions and Stakeholder Engagement

Task 1 of this EDS process included an assessment of existing conditions, a review of existing planning documents, a market analysis, stakeholder interviews, and a community meeting which collectively resulted in identifying constraints to economic development in Point Roberts, including but not limited to general access, lack of infrastructure, restrictive zoning, development restrictions related to natural resources, lack of adequate workforce, lack of affordable housing, and lack of adequate internet access. The findings from Task 1 also supported opportunities linked to Point Roberts' natural beauty and existing assets such as the Point Roberts Marina, golf course, and natural areas. The full Existing Conditions Report can be found in Appendix A, and the Community Member Interview Summary can be found in Appendix B of this report.

While a wide range of economic development ideas emerged during the community meeting and interviews, the Port and project team ultimately prioritized five key strategies: acquiring and redeveloping the Marina, establishing a resilience hub, expanding broadband access, and upgrading sewer infrastructure, economic and environmental resilience. Together, these strategies are designed to identify a foundation for revitalizing the Point Roberts economy and supporting long-term community resilience.

Point Roberts Economic Development Strategy

https://Maulfosteralongi.Sharepoint.Com/Sites/Thesource/Final Documents/M0763.13 Port Of Bellingham/001_2025.10.01 EDS Report/Dr_Economic Development Strategy.Docx
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Community Identity: Vision, Values, and Mission of the EDS

To ensure that project outcomes reflect and reinforce Point Roberts' distinctive character, the project team grounded this effort in existing community vision statements. These statements, shared by members of the Point Roberts Community Advisory Committee, are believed to meaningfully capture the aspirations of residents. As such, they serve as a foundational guide for the Economic Development Strategy.

Community Vision Statement from 2017 Sub-Area Plan Update

Point Roberts is a small, quiet, diverse and geographically unique American community located in a magnificent natural setting in close proximity to a major Canadian metropolitan area. The Point's unique maritime location and natural environment are its greatest assets and are integral to community character. Point Roberts strives to retain its small town character while promoting focused development that is sustainable and appropriate (County 2017).

Community Vision Statement from Point Roberts Community Advisory Committee

Point Roberts is a rural settlement that is safe, quiet and welcoming with unique history and geography that creates a diverse and harmonious international community of residents and visitors.

Our history as a place of importance to the peoples of the Salish Sea laid the basis for our origins as a community of homesteaders physically isolated from the rest of the United States. These have formed the foundations for our traditions of self-sufficiency, resilience, and economic and social responsibility to each other.

Point Roberts celebrates its heritage of fishing, farming, homesteading and home-based and small industry. Community development in Point Roberts fosters a sense of belonging and livability through a diverse economy of small businesses, self-employed professionals and creative individuals that support local residents, cottagers, and tourists.

Above all, we cherish and honor Point Roberts' largely undisturbed natural assets including wildlife, forests, beaches and trails. Our magnificent natural setting offers an abundance of unrestricted outdoor leisure opportunities: biking, hiking, bird watching, boating, whale watching, golfing, kayaking, fishing, swimming, dog walking, sky watching, star gazing, gardening and just being.

Our land base is small and limited, so we strive to ensure that it is used in ways in which our economic and social activities can be in harmony with our natural assets.

Our rural "home town atmosphere" is based upon a network of neighbors and business people who care deeply about this place, our unique community and each other.

Values Driving Economic Development Strategy

The economic development strategies presented in this project are firmly rooted in the community's vision and informed by the core values that emerged through extensive public engagement and stakeholder consultation. Community input played a central role in shaping the following mission statement that guides the Economic Development Strategy:

Establish a self-sufficient economy with tools that ensure resilience, allowing Point Roberts to withstand market changes and cross-border politics, maintain key infrastructure and services, and support residents in living, working, and recreating locally.

Reflecting a deliberate alignment with locally expressed priorities, the strategies developed in this report are designed to foster a resilient and inclusive future for Point Roberts. Following the initial community meeting held on February 20, 2025, the project team synthesized public feedback gathered through interviews and outreach into the following four foundational values that guide this effort.

Resiliency: Point Roberts has an economy that is diverse and robust enough to withstand and adapt to evolving social, political, environmental, and economic conditions.

Self-Sufficiency: Point Roberts has an economy that is not overly reliant on external resources. If the community were to be isolated, essential functions could continue to operate and sustain themselves.

Preservation: Point Roberts has an economy that protects, honors, and economically benefits from the natural assets and cultural character of the community.

Livability: Point Roberts has an economy that provides a high quality of life through services and amenities that support residents' comfort, safety, and sense of community.

1.3 Economic Development Strategies

Economic development is fundamentally a long-term pursuit. As detailed in the Existing Conditions report, numerous factors such as patterns of homeownership, demographic shifts, and zoning regulations create significant challenges to economic development. While this study is not designed to address every obstacle or provide a comprehensive roadmap from current circumstances to lasting prosperity, it does outline four foundational strategies as a starting point. These strategies form a flexible and adaptive framework, each targeting specific, often interconnected, opportunities and barriers unique to Point Roberts. Grounded in existing conditions research, these strategies emerged from collaboration among stakeholders, the Port, and the project team. Ultimately, the success of these initiatives will hinge on the community's shared commitment and collective action to reverse economic decline and spark renewed vitality on the Point.

1. **Public acquisition and revitalization of the Point Roberts Marina.** A thriving Marina would serve as the economic anchor of Point Roberts, supporting general connectivity, local trades businesses, tourism, charter boat service, and denser commercial and residential development.
2. **Formal establishment of a Point Roberts Resilience Hub.** A robust economy requires a cohesive and equally robust community. Stakeholders were proud to share that one of the key reasons to live on the Point is the existing sense of community. Establishing a formal Resilience Hub on the Point will further solidify the connectedness of the Point Roberts community during everyday life as well as during times of distress and recovery. It could also serve as an incubator for small-scale businesses and artists, and potentially as a workforce development center.
3. **Expansion and improvement of broadband infrastructure and service.** Broadband is an essential component of a community's infrastructure, and it facilitates the increasing number of remote and hybrid work opportunities available.
4. **Multiple options for installation of a sewer system on the Point.** Currently, the septic-only wastewater on the Point limits commercial and residential development. Installation of an improved sewer system can support sustainable economic growth and more affordable and accessible housing options.
5. **Economic and Environmental Resilience:** The Point Roberts community can enhance its economic resilience by cultivating businesses that both meet local needs and appeal to visitors. Targeted infrastructure improvements that increase accessibility to community resources will further support sustainable economic growth and community vitality. This collection of strategies embodies core community values and draws on proven case studies to guide Point Roberts toward a more sustainable and resilient economic future.

1.4 Implementation

The implementation tables in each section summarize actions for implementing each economic development strategy. The key implementation factors include estimated costs, potential barriers, timelines, funding sources, roles and responsibilities, and associated tasks. The broader planning effort recognizes the interconnected nature of these initiatives. Strategic synergies exist where one effort enables or amplifies the impact of another. For instance, the installation of a centralized sewer system in the Marina area would significantly expand the range of viable redevelopment options for adjacent properties. Likewise, enhanced broadband infrastructure would not only support telecommuting and digital inclusion, but also serve as a backbone for the growth of homegrown businesses, remote services, and local entrepreneurship associated with the Resilience Hub. Taken together, the strategies form an adaptive roadmap for catalyzing long-term economic resilience in Point Roberts. The full implementation tables are compiled as Appendix C of this report.

The development strategies outlined in this report can serve as a valuable reference during the County's 2027–2031 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) update. Action items identified within each strategy may be incorporated into the CEDS priority project list, helping to elevate local initiatives within a regional planning framework. While each strategy will require further feasibility analysis, the framework established in this EDS report provides a foundation for identifying and prioritizing next steps.

Additionally, the findings of this report can inform planning workshops and applied research studies led by Western Washington University (WWU), which offers a strong platform for attracting funding and academic support. As of Fall 2025, \$55,000 in Workforce Education Investment Account funding has been allocated to WWU's Department of Urban and Environmental Planning and Policy to conduct a series of studies in Point Roberts focused on the economic development strategies identified in this report. Continued collaboration with WWU may contribute to advancing the economic development strategies presented herein.

2 Case Studies

In alignment with the strategies outlined in this report, case studies from comparable communities can serve as valuable reference points, offering inspiration, practical insights, and aspirational benchmarks as Point Roberts advances its economic development goals.

Point Roberts occupies a unique position within North America, distinguished by its remarkable geography and by specific economic and infrastructural challenges. Although a small number of other pene-exclaves are found within the United States, none exhibit Point Roberts’ particular combination of border complexities, significant foreign ownership of housing, and a limited local workforce. Nevertheless, instructive precedents may be found in other remote communities that have successfully advanced their economic resilience.

The project team conducted a comparative analysis of three geographically relevant communities: Alburgh, Vermont; Mackinac Island, Michigan; and Samsø, Denmark. Each of these communities was selected for its applicability to the unique circumstances of Point Roberts and for the alternative development pathways they represent. Alburgh, situated on Lake Champlain, faces border-related issues analogous to those of Point Roberts. Mackinac Island exemplifies the potential of an economy centered on tourism, while Samsø is internationally recognized for its achievements in energy independence and circular economic practices. Collectively, these case studies demonstrate that physical isolation need not preclude economic vitality; rather, adaptive planning and judicious investment can foster both resilience and prosperity.

The case studies referenced above and detailed in the section below offer invaluable insights into how geographically isolated communities have overcome challenges analogous to those facing Point Roberts. By examining the successes and setbacks of Alburgh, Mackinac Island, and Samsø, stakeholders can identify strategies that translate effectively to Point Roberts’ unique context.

Adapting the lessons of these communities to Point Roberts will require thoughtful consideration of local values, resources, and aspirations. It is not a matter of copying solutions wholesale, but rather of customizing proven tactics to fit the distinctive social, economic, and environmental landscape of Point Roberts. By embracing open-minded planning, fostering strong partnerships, and prioritizing both resilience and sustainability, Point Roberts can chart a course toward long-term prosperity. The experiences of Alburgh, Mackinac Island, and Samsø serve not only as models, but as sources of inspiration, reaffirming that with vision and commitment, even the most remote communities can thrive and evolve amid changing times.

Table 2-1 provides a summary of comparison of these communities by general characteristics, infrastructure, and amenities.

Governance

Point Roberts differs from Mackinac Island, Samsø, and Alburgh in that it lacks geographically specific local governance. Samsø is a municipality with its own mayor and council; Mackinac Island has a city government; and Alburgh, a New England town encompassing the entire pene-exclave, is governed by a five-member Selectboard. For this study, “Alburgh” refers to the town, not the smaller village within it. While incorporation is outside the scope of this analysis, the nearby community of Birch Bay is conducting an Incorporation Feasibility Study, concluding December 31, 2025, which may offer relevant insights for Point Roberts residents.

Table 2-1. Summary of Comparable Case Studies

Characteristics	Point Roberts	Alburgh (a)	Mackinac Island	Samsø Denmark
Size (sq. mi.)	4.9	29.1	4.4	44.3
Full -time Population (2023) ¹	1,275	1,802	663	3,716
Average Age (2023)	55.7	49.5	39.8	51.8
Governance	County, through Point Roberts Community Advisory Committee	Municipal	Municipal	Municipal
Infrastructure				
Wastewater	Septic	Sewer & septic	Sewer & septic	Sewer; septic; advanced water treatment
Accessible by:	Road through Canada; private aircraft; private water vessel	Road through the US and Canada; private water vessel; public bus	Private ferry; private aircraft; private water vessel (b)	Public ferry; private water vessel; aircraft
Transportation on site	Public van; personal vehicle; cycling	Cycling; personal vehicle; public bus	Cycling; horse-drawn carriage	Public bus; taxi; personal vehicle; cycling
Amenities				
Golf course	1	1	3	1
Cycling-specific infrastructure	No	Yes (c)	Yes	Yes
Dining	<5 establishments	<10 establishments	40+ establishments	10+ establishments
Art, music and cultural festivals	Apple Harvest Festival; 4 th of July on the Point; Strings & Things	Community festivals; Alburgh Rail Trail (d)	Lilac Festival; 4 th of July; Fall Fudge Festival; Halloween Weekend	Samsø Cup fishing festival; Viking Day; Samsø Festival; Samsø Pianofestival; and more
Ecotourism & natural amenities	Beaches; county parks; wildlife and bird viewing	Alburgh Dunes State Park;	Boating tours; State parks, beaches, and other natural amenities	Raptor center; historical sites; beaches

Note
sq. mi= square miles
¹ Census data does not account for seasonal variation.

Source
(a) VBI. 2025.
(b) Mackinac Island. 2025.
(c) TrailLink. n.d.
(d) Town of Alburgh. 2024.

2.1 Alburgh, Vermont

Alburgh, Vermont, a pene-exclave that juts into Lake Champlain from the Canadian province of Quebec, is the United States location that is most geographically like Point Roberts. The Alburgh pene-exclave (known as Alburgh Town) has a similar sized population, and, like Point Roberts, experiences a summer population swell where the number of summertime residents increases by a factor of nearly three. Moreover, residents report that Alburgh has experienced economic decline in recent years, much like the situation in Point Roberts (NBC-WPTZ. 2024).

The most notable differences between Alburgh and Point Roberts are size and accessibility. Alburgh spans 29.1 square miles and is directly connected to the mainland United States via US Highway 2 and Vermont Route 78. In contrast, Point Roberts covers only 4.9 square miles and relies on a road connection that requires passing through two U.S.-Canada border crossings, underscoring its geographic isolation as a pene-exclave.

Food and Beverage

While both Alburgh, Vermont and Point Roberts have fewer than ten dining establishments, Alburgh has a more diverse culinary landscape that offers potential models for economic diversification in Point Roberts. Notably, Alburgh's Kraemer & Kin Brewery produces and bottles beer year-round, generating a stable revenue stream that helps offset seasonal population fluctuations (see Figure 2-1). During peak tourist months, the brewery expands operations by opening its taproom to the public, providing both a community gathering space and seasonal employment opportunities. This dual-use model which combines light manufacturing with hospitality illustrates how localized amenities can reinforce economic resilience. For Point Roberts, similar ventures such as mobile food vendors and microbreweries could introduce new third-place destinations while addressing current service gaps. **Given the Pacific Northwest's strong affinity for craft brewing, a locally operated brewery may represent a particularly well-aligned opportunity to foster tourism, community engagement, and small-scale job creation.** This operating model fits the seasonality of the Point well. There is potential for additional food offerings that support both in-person dining and commercial distribution, which could be especially beneficial for Point Roberts.

Figure 2-1. Alburgh's Kraemer & Kin Brewery



Source

Mapquest. 2025. "Kraemer & Kin." Accessed August 13, 2025. <https://www.mapquest.com/us/vermont/kraemer-kin-431174906>.

Alburgh also features a resident food truck that serves burgers, sandwiches, and other light fare. This increasingly popular dining model has gained traction across the United States, generating \$1.8 billion in revenue in 2024 alone (Toast, 2025). Food trucks offer a cost-effective path for entrepreneurs, requiring relatively low startup capital, minimal overhead, and flexible staffing. Their mobility enables service in high-traffic areas without the need for a permanent storefront. **Introducing food trucks to Point Roberts could invigorate the local food scene, broaden dining options, and stimulate small business development.**

Agriculture

According to the 2024–2032 Alburgh Plan, the community retains abundant agricultural resources despite a decades-long decline in active farms (Town of Alburgh 2024). Local farming continues to bolster economic resilience and food security and is highlighted in the plan as a key sector to preserve and expand. Strengthening the agricultural economy could enable the provision of fresh, locally produced food to residents of Point Roberts, while also supporting broader sustainability and economic development goals.

One Alburgh farm in particular has developed a novel way to generate income from agricultural land and foster local energy resilience. Borderview Research Farm, a family-owned former dairy operation, has transitioned away from cattle and now experiments with biodiesel production from sunflowers and canola, as well as grass pellet production from switchgrass (VBI 2013). This innovative alternative to land-intensive dairy production serves as a learning facility for University of Vermont researchers and draws 130–150 visitors during its educational field days. Though niche, this model demonstrates how thinking beyond traditional agricultural frameworks can foster energy resilience, diversify income streams, and attract visitors.

Building on Alburgh’s example, Point Roberts may pursue several pathways to integrate agriculture into its economic development strategy. **Local food production offers a direct means of enhancing food security and community resilience. Supporting small-scale farms and community gardens would supply fresh produce to residents and local businesses, while a seasonal farmers market would stimulate commerce and reinforce regional identity.** Farm-to-table partnerships with restaurants and hospitality providers could further embed agriculture into the local economy. Additionally, agritourism presents an opportunity to diversify the visitor experience through farm tours, harvest festivals, and educational workshops. Collaborations with regional universities or agricultural extension programs could establish demonstration sites and research initiatives, while interpretive signage and trails would help showcase sustainable practices and local ecology.

2.2 Mackinac Island, Michigan

This island community in Michigan serves as an example of a robust tourism-based economy, elements of which Point Roberts could aspire to emulate. Voted the number one summer travel destination in the US in 2023, 2024, and 2025, Mackinac’s unique character has created a thriving local economy, home to over 40 food and drink establishments, three golf courses, and waterborne ecotourism, all with a year-round population under 1000 (Mackinac Island Tourism Bureau, 2025).

Car-Free Transportation

Mackinac Island’s century-long commitment to car-free transportation is one of its defining features (Mackinac Island Tourism Bureau, 2025). Visitors explore the island by bicycle, on foot, or via horse-drawn carriage—modal choices that reinforce its distinctive charm and pedestrian-oriented culture (Figure 2-2). Point Roberts, similarly known for its safe and welcoming atmosphere, has an opportunity to enhance these attributes by addressing concerns raised by interviewees regarding vehicle speeds. Expanding car-free infrastructure and promoting a walkable, bike-friendly environment would further elevate the feeling of safety for both residents and visitors.

Slower modes of transportation encourage deeper exploration of local shops and businesses, which can increase revenue while fostering informal social interaction. This dynamic helps strengthen community identity and offers visitors a more authentic sense of place. Although a completely car free environment may not be practical for Point Roberts, **strategic and temporary street closures during peak tourist periods—such as Canada Day on July 1st through Independence Day on July 4th—could enhance pedestrian access and stimulate economic activity.** For example, closing the intersection of Gulf Road and Marine Drive during these celebrations could draw foot traffic to nearby establishments including Saltwater Café, Kiniski’s Reef Tavern, and future businesses that may emerge in the area.

Figure 2-2. Cyclists on Mackinac Island



Source

TrailsandTravel. 2018. “Circling Mackinac Island.” Accessed August 12, 2025. <https://trailsandtravel.com/circling-mackinac-island/>.

To complement these efforts, **implementing a designated bikeway around Point Roberts would improve cycling infrastructure and serve as both a recreational amenity for residents and a compelling attraction for visitors.** A clearly marked scenic loop could connect key destinations such as the marina, Lighthouse Marine Park, and the town center, while promoting active transportation and reducing vehicle congestion. Enhanced cycling access would support local businesses, encourage longer stays, and align with broader sustainability and wellness goals. Integrating the bikeway into wayfinding systems and tourism marketing could further position Point Roberts as a welcoming and accessible destination for cyclists and pedestrians alike.

Outlined below are potential pedestrian and cycling routes that warrant further exploration and investment:

- Tyee Dr safe cycling infrastructure for cross-border cycling.
- Connect to the Boundary Bay Dyke Trail in Delta, B.C.
- Four Corners Parks tour: Connect Memorial, Lily Point, Maple Beach and Lighthouse Marine Parks.
- Commercial square tour: Park at International Marketplace or the former Breakers Bar. Cycle to connect the commercial areas of Point Roberts including Gulf Rd & Tyee Dr intersection, Gulf Rd and Marine Dr, Marine Dr to Edwards and around the Marina to the Pier.

Festivals, Markets, Ecotourism, and Community Events

Mackinac Island offers a diverse calendar of festivals throughout the year, with particular emphasis on the summer season. These events range from cultural celebrations such as Halloween weekend and Independence Day to seasonal gatherings like the renowned Lilac Festival. In comparison, Point Roberts currently hosts a limited number of community events, including Strings & Things and the Apple Harvest Festival, which contribute to its local identity.

There is significant opportunity to expand the event landscape in Point Roberts in order to attract additional visitors and strengthen community engagement. Resilient Point Roberts has proposed a suite of activities that

showcase the region’s natural and cultural assets, including self-guided bike and car tours, beachcombing excursions, birdwatching outings, educational programs focused on local eagle populations, seasonal flower and pollinator tours, farm and food stand circuits, and expanded music festival offerings.

Consistent with the community vision, Point Roberts’ most valued characteristics are its natural assets—landscapes, wildlife, and recreational potential. [Strategically curated events that highlight these features can draw tourism, support local businesses, and reinforce the Point’s identity as a destination rooted in environmental appreciation and community connection.](#)

2.3 Samsø, Denmark

Samsø, Denmark is a 44-square-mile island with a population of just over 3,700. Though larger and more developed than Point Roberts, Samsø offers a compelling case study in local resilience. The island’s globally recognized sustainability initiatives and community-driven development provide valuable inspiration for Point Roberts as it seeks to strengthen its own resilience and self-sufficiency.

Energy Self-Sufficiency

Samsø, Denmark is internationally recognized for its pioneering achievement in energy transformation, having reached 100% renewable electricity generation in 2001 and becoming carbon negative through strategic investment in wind, solar, and bioenergy. Its success has positioned the island as a global model for resilience and sustainability, with a well-defined brand as a forward-looking, community-driven energy innovator. In contrast, Point Roberts currently relies on imported electricity from B.C. Hydro. While this arrangement is stable for the foreseeable future, it presents inherent vulnerabilities, particularly for a geographically isolated U.S. community dependent on a foreign energy provider. Enhancing local energy resilience is a prudent long-term goal.

Like Samsø, Point Roberts possesses a distinct geographic profile that lends itself to renewable energy production. Located within the Olympic rain shadow, the area receives a high number of sunny days each year and experiences consistent wind patterns from October through April. These conditions are well suited to solar and wind energy generation (Weather Spark, n.d.). A feasibility study conducted by Cascadia Renewables and Resilient Point Roberts has already identified priority sites for community solar installation. In addition, the Point’s extensive tree canopy offers potential for biomass-based energy generation. If agricultural development is pursued, biodiesel production could also become a viable opportunity. While full energy self-sufficiency may remain a long-term objective, Point Roberts can draw inspiration from the Samsø model. [By leveraging its natural assets and advancing renewable infrastructure in measured phases, the community can strengthen its energy independence, environmental stewardship, and resilience to future power disruptions.](#)

2.4 Lessons Learned

Strategic initiatives such as expanding bike infrastructure, hosting festivals and markets, and supporting food and beverage enterprises, can generate employment within the hospitality and service sectors, helping reinforce the Point’s appeal as a tourist destination. Additional attractions, including museums and historical sites, offer further opportunities to cultivate tourism and create jobs.

Revitalizing food and beverage offerings through ventures such as microbreweries, food trucks, and farm-to-table partnerships would stimulate small business development, create seasonal employment opportunities, and enrich the visitor experience. These initiatives would also help address current service gaps, foster community gathering spaces, and reinforce Point Roberts’ identity as a welcoming and locally rooted destination.

Agricultural development presents another promising avenue for community benefit. By supporting small-scale farming, community gardens, and energy-oriented agriculture, Point Roberts could improve food security, promote environmental stewardship, and generate alternative revenue streams. Agritourism and educational programming would attract visitors while deepening local engagement with sustainable practices. These efforts, paired with thoughtful land use planning, would allow the community to repurpose underutilized parcels for productive use while preserving ecological integrity.

Finally, enhancements to transportation infrastructure, including the creation of a designated bikeway and strategic pedestrian access improvements, would support active mobility, reduce vehicle congestion, attract tourism, and elevate the overall quality of life. These changes would benefit both residents and visitors by improving safety, encouraging exploration of local businesses, and reinforcing the Point’s reputation as a nature-oriented and culturally engaging destination. Together, these strategies offer a comprehensive pathway to revitalization, grounded in community values and long-term sustainability. The implementation steps for these actions are detailed in Table 5 of Appendix C.

3 Point Roberts Marina

The Marina is a vital asset to the community of Point Roberts. Besides the road-entry border and the seldom-used airstrip, the Marina serves as one of the few entry points into the Point. Currently, the privately owned Marina accommodates 900 recreational boat slips, ranging in size from 20 to 50 feet. Commercial activities are currently limited to a restaurant and the Marina-supporting uses. According to community input, the land surrounding the Marina is heavily underutilized and poorly kept up, under the ownership of absentee investors.

The Marina represents an economic opportunity for Point Roberts, with the potential to enhance access, generate commercial activity, and support recreational tourism. The Port has already taken preliminary steps to assess the feasibility of acquiring the Marina, with the goal of revitalizing and redeveloping the Marina’s surrounding parcels. The Port could acquire and operate the Marina either independently or through a public-private partnership. Pursuing a joint acquisition (public-private) model would enhance financial feasibility while preserving a public stake in the Marina’s long-term redevelopment. This approach is especially critical given the Marina’s current underperforming condition under private ownership, which limits public influence over its maintenance, programming, and strategic direction. This initiative would give the Port a direct role in driving local economic development in Point Roberts and the nexus for public input on development decisions in the Marina. Additionally, the redevelopment could pave the way for the construction of a public boat ramp, further expanding recreational access and attracting more visitors to the area.

3.1 Current State

The Marina property totals 150 acres including 45 acres of underutilized developable land, 15 of which have marina frontage. The Marina is privately owned by Point Roberts Resort LP. The current marina has over 900 slips, a travel lift, a visitor dock, a fueling facility, and a 24,000 square foot building on the east end of the marina containing a boat repair facility, former chandlery, restaurant, yacht club and marina offices. Figure 3-1 depicts the existing amenities at the Marina.

Most of the developable land surrounding the Marina is zoned RC, which permits a mix of uses including restaurant, lodging, residential, and retail. At present, residential or lodging development is limited to a density of two dwelling units per acre due to the absence of sewer service. Extending sewer infrastructure to the Marina would enable denser residential and commercial development. Additional land use and critical area constraints are outlined in the Existing Conditions report, provided as Appendix A.

Figure 3-1. Marina Existing Conditions



3.2 Changes Envisioned

If the Port purchases the Marina, it will be uniquely positioned to reimagine the waterfront properties through a range of redevelopment schemes that align with both community aspirations and long-term economic sustainability. **This opportunity could allow the Port to transform the area into a vibrant, multi-functional destination that supports maritime heritage, environmental resilience, and public access.** The proposed redevelopment schemes reflect a diverse set of priorities and uses that enhance economic and recreational opportunities for residents and tourists alike. Each scheme offers a distinct vision for the future of the Marina and a cohesive and dynamic waterfront experience:

- Maritime Village and Mixed-Use Waterfront
- Marina Recreation
- A Blue Economy and Working Waterfront Hub
- An Eco-Marina and Resilient Waterfront

As described in the following section, some redevelopment approaches require zoning changes to allow for commercial and industrial use. Redevelopment schemes that include intensive land uses such as multi-dwelling residential and lodging, commercial, and industrial will require an upgraded sewer system. Each redevelopment concept is detailed below. The final plan may incorporate a blend of elements from multiple schemes to create a dynamic and sustainable waterfront destination.

Maritime Village and Mixed-Use Waterfront

The Maritime Village and Mixed-Use Waterfront scheme focuses on providing infrastructure for tourism, hospitality, and community and economic vitality. Features that may be included in this community focused scheme include waterfront promenades with restaurants and shop fronts. This scheme will also provide access for non-motorized water recreation, such as kayaks or paddleboards, and may also offer rentals. The existing resort and restaurant can be the catalyst for commercial development in this concept. Additional mixed use, residential, and commercial development could be included on the marina-fronting property as well as the stand-alone parcel west of the marina. Existing vehicle access provided by Tyee Drive would be adequate to support the redevelopment proposed under this scheme. Existing zoning and shoreline zoning designations support this redevelopment scheme. Sewer upgrades are required for dense multi-dwelling unit development. This redevelopment scheme was explored in a 2016 port-commissioned conceptual redevelopment plan (see Figure 3-5).

Figure 3-2. Marina Conceptual Redevelopment Plan



Marina Recreation

The Marina Recreation scheme focuses on outdoor recreation and lifestyle tourism. Features that may be included in this recreation-focused scheme are enhanced marina infrastructure with transient moorage and superyacht slips, RV parks and camping areas with waterfront views, marina hotels and expanded yacht club, charter fishing, whale watching, and sailing schools, food truck plazas, and seasonal farmers markets (Figure 3-6). Existing vehicle access provided by Tyee Drive would be adequate to support the redevelopment proposed under this scheme. Existing zoning and shoreline zoning designations support this redevelopment scheme.

Figure 3-3. Example Maritime Recreation Scheme in Newport, California



Notes
RV sites surround a recreation type marina in Newport California.

Source
Stay Boutique. N.d. “Newport Dunes Waterfront Resort & Marina.” Accessed May 28, 2025. <https://stay-boutique.com/locations/newport-dunes-waterfront-resort-marina/>.

Blue Economy and Working Waterfront

The Blue Economy and Working Waterfront scheme focuses on industry, innovation, and economic sustainability. Features that may be included in this economic development focused scheme are seafood processing and cold storage facilities, marine research centers, upgraded lift and boatyard to support commercial vessels, and shore power and clean fueling infrastructure (Figure 3-7). Implementing this scheme presents challenges, most notably the absence of adequate stormwater and sewer infrastructure to support high intensity land uses. The existing zoning and shoreline designations do not support this redevelopment scheme and therefore, in addition to the identified utility improvements, the area would need to be rezoned to Rural Industrial and Manufacturing (RIM). Additionally, sewer upgrades are required to support proposed commercial and industrial uses under this scheme.

Point Roberts Economic Development Strategy

Figure 3-4 Example Blue Economy and Working Waterfront in Newport, Oregon



Note
Working waterfront of Newport, Oregon.

Source
Port of Newport. 2025. “Commercial Marina.” Accessed May 28, 2025. <https://www.portofnewport.com/commercial-marina-e39f20f>.

Eco—Marina and Resilient Waterfront

The Eco—Marina and Resilient Waterfront scheme focuses on ecological integrity and climate adaptation, innovation, and economic sustainability. Features that may be included in this environmentally focused scheme are ecologically friendly design such as LEED-certified marina buildings, living shoreline and restored wetlands, solar infrastructure, electric boat slips, kayak and paddleboard rentals, a public kayak launch, seasonal farmers markets, and interpretive signage and cultural/natural educational materials (Figure 3-8). Existing zoning and shoreline zoning designations support this redevelopment scheme. While this scheme aligns well with existing zoning, infrastructure, and the rural character of Point Roberts, it does not offer the same level of economic development potential as the Blue Economy, Maritime Village, or Mixed-Use waterfront concepts.

Figure 3-5. Example Eco—Marina and Resilient Waterfront in San Francisco Bay, California



Note
Kayak launch at the Antioch Marina in the San Francisco Bay.

Source
East Bay Times. 2017. "Kayak launch installed at Antioch's marina." Rowena Coetsee. Accessed May 28,2025.
<https://www.eastbaytimes.com/2017/06/08/kayak-launch-installed-at-antiochs-marina/>.

Redevelopment Constraints and Strategic Implications for Marina Reuse

The existing sewer infrastructure, along with shoreline and zoning regulations, do not permit the types of uses envisioned in the Blue Economy and Working Waterfront redevelopment plan. Additionally, the existing utility infrastructure serving the Marina is insufficient to support residential development exceeding two dwellings per acre and cannot accommodate commercial or industrial uses without significant upgrades. The wetlands on the parcel west of the Marina will require mitigation ahead of development. Based on these constraints, the redevelopment of the Marina is better suited to lower intensity redevelopment schemes with residential and recreational characteristics. General liabilities associated with the redevelopment of the Marina include the costs associated with necessary dredging of the entry channel, dredging of the basin, redevelopment of several moorage floats, and a new water treatment facility.

3.3 Industries and Employment

The Marina currently hosts a mix of commercial, marine, and hospitality-related businesses. Most of these operations are based within the existing Marina resort building located on the eastern side of the marina, which serves as a central hub for activity. This includes marine service providers, retail shops, and guest accommodations. Industries currently present in the Marina include service/hospitality, vessel maintenance, and government.

The Marina's transformation may impact several important sectors, including hospitality, recreation, and the blue economy which encompasses marine transportation as well as seafood harvesting and processing industries. The number of jobs created through the Marina's redevelopment will vary based on the selected scheme, ranging from modest employment opportunities under the Eco-Marina and Resilient Waterfront model

to substantial job generation associated with the Blue Economy and Working Waterfront. Notably, sectors within the Blue Economy such as merchant wholesalers of nondurable goods, warehousing and storage, and support activities for transportation tend to offer higher wages than those found in hospitality and tourism industries, including accommodation, and food services and drinking establishments. Table 3-4 presents wage data for Whatcom County industries related to Marina redevelopment, categorized by three-digit NAICS codes.

Table 3-1. Marina Related Industries in Whatcom County

Redevelopment Scheme	Industry	NAICS Code & Industry Subsector	Hourly Wages
		Overall (a)	\$29.66
WW	Blue Economy	112: Animal production and aquaculture	\$20.30
WW	Blue Economy/Recreation	114: Fishing, hunting and trapping	ND
WW	Blue Economy	311: Food manufacturing	\$24.40
WW	Blue Economy	336: Transportation equipment manufacturing	\$25.87
WW	Blue Economy	424: Merchant wholesalers, nondurable goods	\$33.36
MV, MR, Eco	Hospitality	445: Food and beverage retailer	\$17.93
WW, MV	Blue Economy	483: Water transportation	ND
MR, Eco	Blue Economy/Recreation	487: Scenic and sightseeing transportation	ND
WW, MV	Blue Economy	488: Support activities for transportation	\$25.98
WW	Blue Economy	493: Warehousing and storage	\$30.56
WW	Blue Economy	238: Specialty trade contractors	\$11.02
MV, MR, Eco	Hospitality	721: Accommodation	\$15.92
MV, MR, Eco	Hospitality	722: Food services and drinking establishments	\$12.39

Note
(a) Accounts for average across all industries in the County
ND=Wages not shown to avoid disclosure of data for individual employer.
WW= Blue Economy and Working waterfront
MR= Marina Recreation
Eco= Eco—Marina and Resilient Waterfront
MV= Maritime Village and Mixed-Use Waterfront

Source
WESD 2024

3.4 Housing and Land

Housing is a critical component of workforce development under each proposed redevelopment scenario. As identified in Section 3.1 of the existing conditions report, there is a significant lack of multifamily and affordable housing on Point Roberts. Industries related to hospitality, dining, and retail have lower wages than overall wages in the County and will require delivery of additional affordable workforce housing.

Incorporating mixed-use development with multifamily housing into a Marina-front maritime village concept could enhance housing options and economic activity at the Point. This type of development would create a dynamic, walkable community that blends residential, commercial, and recreational uses, attracting a diverse mix of residents and tourists. By integrating housing into a broader mixed-use framework, the area could support local businesses and foster a more vibrant year-round environment. Due to the desirable waterfront location, much of the new housing is expected to appeal to mid- to high-income households. These units would likely benefit from strong market demand and contribute to the financial viability of the redevelopment. To promote a more inclusive community and adequate workforce housing, it is important to ensure that housing opportunities are accessible to a broader range of income levels.

The Port could take an active role by setting aside a portion of the development specifically for low-income or workforce housing. This would help address regional housing needs, support local employment by allowing workers to live near their jobs, and encourage a more balanced and diverse community. Including affordable housing from the outset would align with both social equity goals and long-term economic sustainability.

3.5 Community Benefits and Opportunities

Procurement and Operations Costs

In 2022, the Port conducted an economic analysis to evaluate the feasibility and implications of acquiring and operating the Marina. The proposed acquisition encompassed approximately 135 acres of land, including existing infrastructure and assets, with an estimated purchase price of \$20 million. The financial model assumed a 30-year amortization at a 3 percent interest rate, incorporating a 2.35 percent inflation rate across the planning horizon. An additional \$20 million was allocated for capital improvements over the first two decades to restore commercial operability.

The primary objective of the acquisition was to reposition the Marina toward its highest and best use by enhancing its economic productivity and potentially transforming it into a commercially viable or community-serving asset. The analysis revealed that only 45 of the 135 acres were considered developable due to critical area designations and zoning limitations. Operational and management costs were projected to consume 30–40 percent of Marina-generated revenue, underscoring the need for sustained financial commitment.

While the analysis provided a foundational framework, it also acknowledged several critical uncertainties that remained unquantified. These included challenges related to marketing and marketability, the absence of a defined development strategy (e.g., whether to retain or divest redeveloped assets), and significant infrastructure costs such as dredging, float reconstruction, and water treatment upgrades. These unknowns introduce strategic and financial complexity, suggesting that the acquisition, though potentially beneficial in the long term, would require a phased, adaptive approach. Success will depend on clear planning, flexible investment strategies, and responsive management to navigate evolving conditions and optimize outcomes.

Benefits

Redevelopment of the Marina has the potential to serve as a catalytic project, sparking broader revitalization and investment across the Point. **Through strategic investment and active management of the Marina, the Port can enhance connectivity, strengthen community ties, and lay the foundation for sustainable, long-term growth in the area.**

3.5.1.1 Economic Benefits

Upon acquisition, the Port would assume both ownership and operational responsibilities for the Marina. Based on current zoning, redevelopment is expected to follow either the Maritime Village and Mixed-Use

Waterfront or Maritime Recreation schemes. These approaches would generate revenue through moorage fees, leasing agreements, property sales, and rental income.

A financial model developed by the Port projects approximately \$3.4 million in annual moorage revenue at full (100%) occupancy. The model assumes an initial occupancy rate of 30%, increasing by 10 percentage points annually over five years to reach 80%. Thereafter, revenue is projected to grow by 3 percent annually to account for inflation, with operating costs estimated at 40% of gross revenue. **Under these assumptions, the model forecasts total net revenue of approximately \$34 million over a 20-year horizon.** In addition to moorage income, existing Marina operations including the travel lift/boat lift, fueling facility, and visitor dock generate approximately \$50,000 in annual revenue. The 24,000-square-foot building housing the boat repair facility, chandlery, restaurant, yacht club, and Marina offices also contributes leasing and tax income. Future leasing and tax revenue from redevelopment will depend on the specific scheme pursued by the Port.

The Port would also retain up to 20 acres available for resale to private developers, with estimated proceeds of up to \$15 million. Unlocking commercial use at the Marina offers strategic logistical advantages, allowing materials to be delivered directly by boat and bypassing highway transport and border-related complications. Moreover, higher-density commercial development typically yields greater revenue per square foot than passive residential uses.

As illustrated in Table 3-4, employment associated with commercial and industrial redevelopment scenarios tends to offer higher wages than those tied to residential or hospitality-focused schemes. This reinforces the potential for a more economically productive and resilient redevelopment strategy centered on mixed-use and commercial activity.

3.5.1.2 Community Benefits

Port acquisition and redevelopment of the Marina positions the site as a cornerstone of local economic growth. **Revitalizing this key waterfront asset will spark business activity, attract tourism, and generate jobs, reinforcing its role as an economic anchor for the Point.** The project also serves as a catalyst for future investment, infrastructure upgrades, and housing, laying the foundation for long-term economic resilience. Port ownership introduces greater flexibility in redevelopment strategies and ensures expanded opportunities for public input on the Marina’s future use.

Redevelopment of the Marina enhances connectivity to economic opportunity. Improved infrastructure and public amenities will make the waterfront more accessible and inclusive, opening doors for small businesses, marine trades, and recreational operators. With upgraded facilities and improved water access, the site can function as a vital hub for emergency response, evacuation, and supply delivery, a growing priority in the face of growing geopolitical, environmental, and economic vulnerabilities. These upgrades ensure that the waterfront remains a shared community asset, welcoming residents and visitors alike to enjoy the natural beauty and recreational opportunities of the Point Roberts Waterfront. The costs and benefits associated with purchase and redevelopment of the Marina are listed in Table 3-5.

Table 3-2. Costs-Benefit Summary

Cost	Benefit
• Purchase price \$20 million for 135 acres, amortized over 30 years at 3% rate • \$20M of capital improvements in first 20 years • Operation and management of the Marina is 30-40 percent of revenue • Marketing costs • Preliminary design and engineering • Dredging costs • Infrastructure costs including floats, boat ramp, and docks • Water treatment facility	• Approximately \$3.4 million in annual moorage revenue at full (100 percent) occupancy. • Total net revenue of approximately \$34 million over 20 years • Resale of property with revenue up to \$15 million • Catalytic economic development • Increase in jobs • Increase in housing opportunities • Tourism attraction

3.6 Funding and Financing

The improvements and initiatives outlined in the Marina Economic Development Strategy are eligible for both funding and financing across all phases of project development, including acquisition, design, engineering, permitting, and construction of land, infrastructure, and buildings. Table 3-6 displays funding options for funding and financing opportunities related to the Marina. Contingent upon the Port’s acquisition and management of the Marina, these funding opportunities are available for the Port to pursue and implement.

Table 3-3. Marina Funding and Financing Opportunities

Grant Name	Funder	Funding	Application Close Date	Relevant information
United States Marine Highway Program (a)	USDOT MARAD	\$14 million grant award limit	Funding is closed for this cycle, will likely renew in 2026	Planning and construction of transportation alternatives during times of disaster or national emergency
CERB Prospective Development Program (b)		\$3 million per project loan/grant award limit	03/15/2027	Planning and construction of Marina build-out. Grant: Up to 25% of total award, determined by the underwriting process and the Debt Service Coverage Ratio. <i>Example: \$3 million CERB + \$3 million minimum match = \$6,000,000 Total Project Cost</i>
CERB Committed Private Partner Program (c)		\$5 million per project loan/grant award limit	03/15/2027	Planning and construction of Marina build-out. A private partner and specific development must be identified prior to application. Grant: Up to 25% of total award, determined by the underwriting process and the Debt Service Coverage Ratio. <i>Example: \$5 million CERB + \$1,250,000 minimum match = \$6,250,000 Total</i>

Grant Name	Funder	Funding	Application Close Date	Relevant information
Public Works Board Financing (d)	Washington Department of Commerce	Loan up to \$10 million (\$1 million of which is for preconstruction)	08/08/2025	Eligible activities include design, engineering, environmental study, and construction of Marina infrastructure. This includes build-out of master planned roadways and the utility extension.
Boating Facilities Program (e)	Washington Recreation and Conservation Office	\$1 million	October 29, 2026 - November 3, 2026	Eligible activities include acquisition, development, and planning/engineering of Marina infrastructure. Applications open August 4, 2026.
Small Shipyards Grants (f)	USDOT MARAD	Average \$1 Million	Not yet determined for FY 2026	Planning and construction for boatyard elements such as travel lifts, fire suppression systems, floating docks, and wash equipment.

Note
USDOT MARAD= US Department of Transportation Maritime Administration

Source
(a) USDOT MARAD. 2025a.
(b) Commerce. 2025b
(c) Commerce. 2025c
(d) Commerce. 2025d
(e) WRCO. 2025a
(f) USDOT MARAD. 2025b.

3.7 Implementation

The Marina-focused action items outlined in Table 3-7 present a phased, multi-dimensional approach to site acquisition, governance, infrastructure planning, and redevelopment. These efforts center on transforming the Marina into a community and economic asset by addressing land use constraints, infrastructure upgrades, and alignment with long-term strategic priorities. In the short term, emphasis is placed on due diligence, zoning reform, and securing funding for acquisition. Mid-term actions focus on developing a governance framework, identifying capital improvements, navigating complex permitting processes, and advancing design and engineering efforts. Long-term goals include physical redevelopment, public-private partnerships, and targeted marketing to stimulate investment and align development proposals with community values. While opportunities for grant funding are available, persistent challenges such as regulatory barriers, stakeholder coordination, and financial feasibility require deliberate planning and adaptive management from the Port and its partners. A comprehensive table outlining the marina strategy implementation is provided in Table 1, located in Appendix C.

Table 3-4. Marina Action Items

Action	Responsible Entity	Timing	Related Tasks and Considerations
Define desired redevelopment scheme	Port, County, Community stakeholders	Short term	- Define steering committee for decision making - Convene stakeholders including residents, marina users, marina workers, the Port, and the County - Hire consultant to support conceptual design and community engagement
Define strategic priorities for the acquisition	Port, private partners	Short term	- Pursue zone and shoreline designation change based on desired redevelopment scheme - Implementation of sewer system - Assess additional infrastructure needs - Determine critical areas constraints
Update Port due diligence	Port, private partners	Short Term	- Evaluate ownership records, lease agreements, and operational liabilities - Consider hiring a consultant to assist with due diligence analysis - Coordinate findings with funding strategy and acquisition goals
Pursue funding opportunities for procurement	Port, private partners	Short term	- Prepare preliminary budget and timeline for procurement activities - Align funding applications with strategic priorities and due diligence findings
Execute purchase of Marina	Port, private partners	Mid Term	- Finalize negotiations with current owner and legal counsel - Prepare contingency plans if sale terms are unfavorable - Incorporate the redevelopment of the Marina into the Port’s Comprehensive Scheme of Harbor Improvements
Establish governance structure and staffing for oversight of Marina	Port, private partners	Mid Term	Establish interim management protocols during transition

Action	Responsible Entity	Timing	Related Tasks and Considerations
Identify and prioritize capital improvements	Port, private partners	Mid Term	- Conduct stakeholder engagement with moorage holders, adjacent property owners, and local businesses - Develop criteria for prioritizing improvements (e.g., safety, economic impact, environmental benefit) - Align improvements with long-term redevelopment vision and funding opportunities
Identify permitting needs for improvements	Port, private partners	Mid Term	- Engage permitting agencies early to clarify requirements and timelines - Coordinate permitting strategy with capital improvement priorities
Pursue funding opportunities for the planning, engineering design, and permitting of capital improvements	Port, private partners	Mid Term	- Develop scope of work for planning and design consultants - Align funding applications with permitting strategy and stakeholder input - Prepare phased implementation plan to support further funding requests
Redevelop Marina properties	Port, private partners	Long Term	- Finalize design and engineering plans based on stakeholder input and permitting outcomes - Evaluate opportunities for public-private partnerships in redevelopment
Market the Marina and pursue private development opportunities	Port, private partners	Long Term	- Develop marketing materials using master plan visuals and strategic priorities - Engage prospective developers through targeted outreach and RFPs - Host stakeholder forums to align development proposals with community interests

Notes
DOE= Department of Energy
RCO= Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office
USDOT MARAD= US Department of Transportation Maritime Administration

4 Resilience Hub

Resilience Hub Overview

During stakeholder outreach, Point Roberts community members expressed a strong interest in establishing a Resilience Hub to serve local needs. According to the Urban Sustainability Directors Network, “Resilience Hubs are community-serving facilities augmented to support residents, coordinate communication, distribute resources, and reduce carbon pollution while enhancing quality of life. Resilience Hubs can meet a myriad of physical and social goals by utilizing a trusted physical space such as a community center, recreation facility, or multi-family housing building as well as the surrounding infrastructure such as a vacant lot, community park, or local business” (USDN 2025).

Resilience Hubs are designed to support communities both in everyday life and during times of disruption and recovery. They are categorized as “base,” “optimal,” and “ideal” and reflect the range of services a Hub may provide, from essential daily support to comprehensive emergency response and long-term recovery functions (One Architecture 2023). Table 4-1 defines these service categories and their associated characteristics, offering a framework for tailoring a Resilience Hub to meet the unique needs of Point Roberts.

Table 4-1. Resilience Hub Service Categories

	Base	Optimal	Ideal
Definition	Sites meet the minimum criteria for being a Resilience Hub across all three resilience modes.	Site meets all the minimum criteria set for the Base Hub but will also incorporate a range of expanded services and resilience-enhancing retrofits.	Resilience Hubs have (and meet) ambitious goals that provide community benefits year-round.
Characteristics	• Strong community support and leadership • A site that is well-trusted • A building or set of buildings • Resilient energy systems • Resilient communications systems • Base programming and services co-developed with community	• Water capture and filtration onsite • Air filtration • Solar with battery backup • Community gardens	• Greywater reuse onsite • Biophilic design standards • Net zero energy • Having community solar benefits for the surrounding community.

4.1 Current State

Currently, a range of community assets including the public library, community center, senior programs, local events, and existing solar infrastructure collectively perform many of the functions typically offered by a formal resilience hub. These amenities not only support day-to-day quality of life, but also provide critical resources during disruptions, such as access to information, social connection, and safe gathering spaces. The presence of solar infrastructure further enhances energy resilience, positioning these facilities as informal but essential anchors in the community’s preparedness network. These existing assets serve as a key foundation of the Resilience Hub.

4.2 Changes Envisioned

Point Roberts Resilience Hub

Based on the vision that community members hold for the Hub, it would operate around the “optimal” level as described in Table 4-1. The Existing Conditions review and community interviews indicate that Point Roberts needs many services that a Resilience Hub can offer, specifically consistent internet; community space for the Point’s artists and makers to come together to do their work; off-grid power generation and back-up storage for emergencies; workforce and skills development opportunities. The following goals reflect a shared vision for a Resilience Hub as defined by the Point Roberts community and key stakeholders:

- Establish a permanent, multi-use community hub to support social services, economic development, and emergency readiness.
- Provide infrastructure for job creation, skills training, and micro-enterprise development.
- Foster intergenerational engagement through programming for youth and seniors.
- Increase community resilience through off-grid energy capabilities and shelter space.

With programming focused on youth, seniors, tradespeople, entrepreneurs, and emergency preparedness, the Hub would be a physical space in the community and comprise a mix of the following features:

- **Maker Space & Trades Training Center:** Hands-on learning opportunities for youth and adults in carpentry, fabrication, and green trades.
- **Commercial Kitchen:** Certified space for local food businesses, cooking classes, and food security initiatives.
- **Broadcast Studio:** Digital hub for podcasting, local radio, and emergency communications.
- **Recreational:** Pickleball/ multi-use court, interior gym
- **Youth/Senior Programming:** Wellness, recreation, and learning programs targeted at the community’s most underserved age groups.
- **Job Center & We-Work Space:** Support for job seekers, small businesses, and remote workers with high-speed internet access.
- **Emergency Shelter:** Capacity to support up to 100 residents in the event of an emergency, with beds, food storage, and emergency power.

Case Studies

While each Resilience Hub is tailored to the needs and character of its own community, there are several U.S.-based examples that offer valuable inspiration for Point Roberts. The following section highlights a selection of Resilience Hubs across the country to illustrate concepts and frameworks that could inform the development of a locally grounded and impactful Hub in Point Roberts.

Rebuilding Together: East Bay Network (RTEBN) - Berkeley, CA

East Bay Network is located in the San Francisco Bay Area. The organization mission is: “We coordinate donors and volunteers to meet critical needs in our community for repairs, renovations, safety modifications, housing and work force development” (RTBEN n.d). RTEBN helps develop a trades workforce through construction training programs, provides housing opportunities with the housing constructed through training programs, supports income-qualified residents in Berkeley with home electrification, facilitates aging adults to age-in-

place by modifying their homes, hires high-barrier individuals to clean out estates, and more. The RTEBN also helps outfit existing shelters with additional amenities, such as solar electricity generation and air conditioning, to make them more robust in various emergencies.

The Point Roberts Resilience Hub could play a vital role in addressing local workforce gaps by offering training in high-demand trades, while also creating meaningful employment pathways for young residents.

Boyle Heights Arts Conservatory (BHAC), Los Angeles, CA

Los Angeles based Boyle Heights Arts Conservatory’s mission is “Creating pathways and comprehensive workforce development initiatives in careers across film, television, broadcasting, and digital media” (BHAC 2025). The organization provides space for artists working with multiple different media to use the space, offers youth programming, and workforce development, among other services. BHAC has a primary focus on providing spaces for community members, especially those who are traditionally underserved, for workforce development and training in arts and media. It hosts a computer lab, recording and broadcasting studio, maker/art space, and more. They focus on empowering historically underserved groups to build skills in the arts, journalism, and computer-literacy.

By offering a space where individuals of all ages, backgrounds, and life experiences can gather, learn, and build skills, BHAC fosters a more resilient and connected community. **The Point Roberts Resilience Hub could draw from this model to create inclusive spaces where residents can access internet services, enhance digital literacy, and engage in community programming.** Point Roberts residents frequently emphasize the strong sense of community found on the Point. The Resilience Hub can build on this asset by offering everyday services and providing critical support during times of disruption.

Faunteroy Center & Resilience Incubator (FCRI) – Washington DC

Faunteroy Center & Resilience Incubator, located in Washington DC, seeks to “embolden self-determination in the community by providing consistent programming and services that are aligned with community needs through education, exposure, enrichment, and excellence while enabling resilient and sustainable outcomes” (FRCI 2025).

The FCRI incorporates many features valued by Point Roberts residents, including a makerspace, media studio, computer lab, and commercial kitchen, making it a compelling model for the Point Roberts Resilience Hub. Originally established to support neighborhood residents, the FCRI has since evolved into a dynamic community center that offers spaces for creative production, digital access, culinary activities, and social gathering. Its programming spans youth engagement, senior activities, and broader community events, alongside workforce development initiatives focused on both artistic and technology-driven careers. To further enhance its resilience and sustainability, the FCRI is currently installing solar power generation with battery backup.

Jansen Arts Center (JAC) – Lynden, WA

The Jansen Arts Center’s mission is to “create opportunities for the community to engage in the arts. Our center is a beautiful and historic home to galleries, classes, concerts, and more” (JAC 2022). It is a vibrant cultural hub housed in a historic building, offering galleries, studios, and performance spaces that invite creative exploration across all ages and skill levels. Through its diverse classes, exhibits, and concerts, it fosters artistic growth and community connection throughout Whatcom County.

Although the Jansen Arts Center is not formally designated as a resilience hub, it exemplifies many core elements associated with such facilities. **Located in Whatcom County, the center fosters community connection, provides arts education, and offers studio space for local artists, features that align closely with the aspirations expressed by Point Roberts community members in recent public outreach. Moreover, the**

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center stands as a successful model of civic collaboration, having been established through a partnership between private citizens and local government. Its development illustrates how shared investment and creative cooperation can result in spaces that not only enrich cultural life but also strengthen community resilience.

4.3 Industries and Employment

The Resilience Hub holds potential to bolster the local economy by providing space and support for microbusinesses including artists, craftspeople, artisans, and small-scale food producers and can function as an incubator for community-driven entrepreneurship. A recording studio offers versatile applications: enabling podcasters to produce content, giving local businesses a platform to create marketing materials, and empowering community members to share stories and broadcast locally relevant media. These capabilities not only enrich community engagement but also contribute to economic resilience by diversifying opportunities in a rural context.

Interviews with residents consistently highlight a lack of skilled tradespeople, underscoring the importance of expanding vocational training in the community. By offering workforce development programs and a tool lending library, the Resilience Hub can help nurture and support a greater number of qualified trades professionals on the Point. Contractors and craftspeople play a vital role in overall resilience, especially in a town dominated by residential properties—many of which are vacant for parts of the year but still require ongoing upkeep and repair.

Table 4-2 highlights the industry sectors related to the development of a Point Roberts Resilience Hub. Hourly wages for careers in broadcasting and content creation and miscellaneous manufacturing are slightly below the county average, while those in construction stand out at more than \$10 higher than the average. This underscores the need to invest in local workforce development initiatives that cultivate skilled tradespeople, particularly to meet demand within the construction sector.

Table 4-2. Resilience Hub Related Industries

Industry Sector	NAICS Code & Industry Subsector	Wages
Overall (a)		\$29.66
23: Construction	236: Construction of buildings	\$42.71
31 Manufacturing	311: Food manufacturing	\$24.40
33 Manufacturing	339: Miscellaneous manufacturing	\$27.96
51: Information	512: Motion picture and sound recording industries	\$19.16
51: Information	516: Broadcasting and content providers	\$27.57
61: Educational services	611: Educational services	15.96

Note
(a) Accounts for totals and averages across all industries in the County
Source
WESD. 2024.

4.4 Land and Housing

Resilience Hub Facility

Many resilience hubs nationwide adapt existing buildings to meet community needs, an approach that Point Roberts should follow to minimize permitting and funding hurdles. The Hub could anchor itself in familiar, centrally located spaces in the Small Town Commercial (STC) zone such as Breaker's Beach Club, Blackfish Resort, or the library and community center which already serve as gathering points. Oversight would best fall to a trusted local group, like PRCAC or Resilient Point Roberts, with county support to ensure climate resilience and long-term stewardship. The community center, which already hosts programs for residents and seniors, is well positioned to be the Hub's primary venue.

Housing Supply

Several resilience hubs reviewed during this study demonstrate strong connections to housing. For example, the Faunteroy Center & Resilience Incubator provides affordable housing for neighborhood residents, while the Rebuilding Together East Bay Network constructs accessory dwelling units (ADUs) and facilitates placement by matching ADUs with appropriate sites. In the long term, there is potential for the Hub to support housing indirectly, particularly if it evolves into a workforce training facility. Modeled after the Rebuilding Together initiative in Berkeley, CA, the Hub could serve as a venue where trainees learn the basics of construction and apply it to housing on the Point.

Solar Generation and Storage

Resilient Point Roberts, in collaboration with Cascadia Renewables, conducted a feasibility study to explore opportunities for integrating solar energy generation and battery backup storage within the community (Cascadia Renewables 2024). The study pinpointed several promising locations across Point Roberts where solar installations could be effectively implemented, aligning with broader goals of energy independence and resilience. The findings highlighted both the technical practicality and the long-term benefits of adopting renewable energy solutions, especially in the context of supporting a future Resilience Hub. These installations would occur at a building-by-building scale; currently, no zoning designation in Point Roberts permits the implementation of solar arrays.

Despite these encouraging results, progress has been temporarily paused due to current funding limitations. Although this delay presents a challenge, the groundwork laid by the initial study provides a strong foundation for future action. As funding opportunities arise, the community remains well-positioned to resume its pursuit of solar infrastructure—particularly as these efforts dovetail with the vision for a centralized Resilience Hub.

By linking solar generation and energy storage to the development of the Hub, Point Roberts can create a facility that not only serves immediate community needs but also ensures continuity of essential services during power outages or emergencies. The integration of renewable energy infrastructure into the Resilience Hub's operations would represent a significant step toward a more sustainable, self-reliant, and prepared community.

4.5 Community Benefit and Opportunities

A Resilience Hub in Point Roberts would serve as a centralized anchor for essential services, offering residents reliable support in both everyday life and during emergencies. By repurposing familiar community assets—such as the community center, library, the former location of Point-to Point Parcel, or a resilience focused location nearby the fire district, health unit, and water district—the initiative can build on trusted gathering spaces while streamlining implementation. Oversight by local organizations like Resilient Point Roberts or PRCAC, in coordination with county agencies, would ensure strong stewardship, operational continuity, and alignment

with climate resilience goals. These qualities are critical given Point Roberts' documented vulnerability to natural hazards including flooding and tsunamis as identified in the Whatcom County critical areas maps (see Section 4.3 of the Existing Conditions report).

Integrating solar power and battery backup would strengthen energy reliability and reduce dependence on external systems. The Hub could also foster grassroots enterprise and vocational training, serving as an incubator for microbusinesses, creative production, and workforce development via makerspaces, commercial kitchens, and shared resources. While immediate housing impacts are limited, future training programs could support workforce-led housing initiatives.

The Resilience Hub would serve as a dynamic community anchor, offering inclusive programming and facilities that support youth, seniors, tradespeople, entrepreneurs, and emergency preparedness. By combining hands-on training, wellness activities, digital media access, and economic development resources, the Hub fosters lifelong learning, local enterprise, and social connection. Its emergency shelter capacity and food infrastructure further strengthen community resilience, ensuring safety and continuity during times of crisis. Overall, by combining community, energy, and economic opportunities, the Resilience Hub would become a cornerstone for a more connected and resilient Point Roberts.

4.6 Funding and Financing

Resilience Hub initiatives may be eligible for funding and financing of planning, engineering, construction of a Resilience Hub and related efforts that make Point Roberts a more self-sufficient community. Applications for funding may be pursued by the County, the Port, or community organizations such as the PRCAC or Resilient Point Roberts. Table 4-3 summarizes the funding and financing opportunities to support development of the Resilience Hub.

Table 4-3. Resilience Hub Funding and Financing Opportunities

Grant Name	Funder	Funding range	Application Close Date	Relevant information
CDBG (a)	Commerce	\$1-2,000,000	No date listed	Funding would need to be procured by either the Port or County as small, rural cities/towns and counties that are not entitled to receive CDBG funds directly from US Department of Housing and Urban Development. Funding is intended to assist eligible Washington State small cities, towns, and counties in carrying out community development projects that principally benefit low-and moderate-income people. Eligible General Purpose grant activities include Public facilities, such as water, wastewater, streets and sidewalks, Community facilities, such as community centers, fire stations, homeless shelters, and childcare facilities, Infrastructure in support of affordable housing and housing rehabilitation, and Economic development such as micro-enterprise assistance. The County or Port would be required to apply for this grant on behalf of the Point Roberts community.
Building Communities Fund	Commerce	Up to 25% of capital projects	Funding is closed for current cycle but will reopen in 2026	Resilient Point Roberts is eligible to submit for this grant on behalf of the community. Funds can be allocated to the construction or rehabilitation of the Resilience Hub.
Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (b)	Federal Emergency Management Agency	Not stated	15 months after disaster declaration	The Hazard Mitigation Grant Program provides funding to local governments so they can develop hazard mitigation plans and rebuild in a way that reduce future disaster losses in their communities. Funds from the Hazard Mitigation The applying entity (County or Port) needs a strong nexus between the programming of the Resilience Hub and disaster response. This could be incorporated in natural disaster programming for the proposed Resilience Hub.

Grant Name	Funder	Funding range	Application Close Date	Relevant information
T-Mobile Hometown Grants (c)	T-Mobile	Up to \$50,000, \$25 million total funding pool	25 grants awarded each quarter.	Intended to support projects in small towns with population less than 50,000. Applicant’s proposal must include plans, budget, timeline, anticipated impact, and up to five letters of support. Application portal closes on last day of each quarter and opens on the first day of the next. Applicants are notified within 30-60 days on status of submission. Community organizations such as PRCAC or Resilient Point Roberts may apply for this grant.
Foundation Competitive Grant Programs (d)	Puget Sound Energy Foundation	Up to \$15,000	Funding is closed for this cycle, will likely renew in 2026	Provides funding to support initiatives in food security, shelter, literacy, and nonprofit staff development, including program expansion, facility improvements, and professional training. The County or Port would be required to apply for this grant on behalf of the Point Roberts community.
Private funding opportunities	Whatcom Community Foundation; Point Roberts Community Chest	Varies	Varies	Private funding opportunities may be available through established philanthropic organizations and charitable foundations. One such emerging resource is the recently formed Point Roberts Community Chest, which has the potential to serve as a conduit for locally focused donations and strategic investments. This entity could play a vital role in aligning community-driven initiatives such as the Resilience Hub with funding sources that share a commitment to social equity, environmental stewardship, and regional well-being.

Notes
CDBG= Community Development Block Grant

Source
(a) Commerce. 2025a.
(b) FEMA. 2025.
(c) T-Mobile. 2025.
(d) PSE. 2025.

4.7 Implementation

The Resilience Hub action items presented in Table 4-4 outline a strategic roadmap for establishing a locally governed, community-serving facility that enhances Point Roberts’ adaptive capacity in the face of economic and environmental challenges. Short-term priorities focus on formally establishing a leadership entity, identifying project team roles, and developing a funding strategy. Mid-term tasks include evaluating potential hub sites through feasibility studies and implementing supporting solar infrastructure. Long-term efforts emphasize construction or renovation of the hub itself, development of community programming, and integration of renewable energy systems. While grant opportunities are available to support each phase of development, persistent barriers including governance disagreements, permitting complexity, and construction costs highlight the need for clear coordination and broad stakeholder consensus to ensure successful implementation. A comprehensive table outlining the Resilience Hub strategy implementation is provided in Table 2, located in Appendix C.

Table 4-4. Resilience Hub Action Items

Action	Responsible Entity	Timing	Related Tasks and Considerations
Define leadership entity	Resilient Point Roberts, Whatcom County, community identified representative	Short Term	• Convene relevant stakeholders and community members to determine the charter and leadership structure for the Resilience Hub • Clarify governance model (e.g., advisory board vs. executive leadership) • Determine Hub project director
Identify resilience hub project team	Resilient Point Roberts, Whatcom County, community identified representative	Short Term	• Define the roles and responsibilities of the team • Determine if programming is feasible based on volunteer participation and availability
Seek funding for preferred alternative	Resilient Point Roberts, Whatcom County, community identified representative	Short Term	• Develop cost estimates and match funding strategy in coordination with Port and County • Seek funding for a project and programming director
Conduct a feasibility study for potential sites	Resilient Point Roberts, Whatcom County, community identified representative	Mid Term	• Procure a consultant to conduct a feasibility study for potential sites including the former Point to Point Parcel facility, the library/community center, marina buildings and international marketplace • Complete and implement the solar feasibility study
Build solar infrastructure	Resilient Point Roberts, Whatcom County, community identified representative	Long Term	• Secure interconnection agreements with PSE • Assess long-term operations and maintenance requirements • Fund and construct identified improvements in the solar feasibility study • Integrate solar improvements to resilience hub

Action	Responsible Entity	Timing	Related Tasks and Considerations
Remodel or construct resilience hub	Resilient Point Roberts, Whatcom County, community identified representative	Long Term	• Renovate or construct the resilience hub structure • Identify network of buildings for various uses (i.e. podcasting, workshop, etc.) • Align with future programming and capacity needs • Utilize local contractors if available
Establish programming	Resilient Point Roberts, Whatcom County, community identified representative	Long Term	• Identified leadership develops the programming for the hub • Establish partnerships with workforce development entities

Notes
Commerce= Washington State Department of Commerce
CDBG= Community Development Block Grant
FEMA= Federal Emergency Management Administration
PSE= Puget Sound Energy

5 Broadband

Broadband connectivity has emerged as one of the most pressing issues facing Point Roberts, highlighted consistently in interviews and community engagement. Access to reliable, high-speed internet is a foundational element for economic development, public services, education, and everyday life. For Point Roberts, improved broadband would enhance quality of life for residents and unlock significant economic potential. Improved internet service would strengthen existing on-Point businesses, attract and retain remote workers, and encourage year-round economic activity.

5.1 Current State

Internet service in Point Roberts remains limited, with notably slow upload and download speeds. Community input suggests that internet performance poses significant challenges for remote work, often restricting users to basic tasks such as email and minimal communication. This lack of capacity affects local businesses and residents seeking to work remotely. While Starlink is technically available in Point Roberts, dense tree coverage across the area frequently disrupts connectivity, rendering satellite-based service inconsistent and unreliable.

5.2 Changes Envisioned

The Point Roberts broadband project, funded through the Washington State Broadband Office’s (WSBO) American Rescue Plan Act program, has secured over \$3.7 million in combined state and County funding. Whatcom Public Utility District (PUD) received its executed contract in late 2023. No construction has occurred as of the writing of this EDS report. Significant delays arose during contract negotiations between Puget Sound Energy (PSE) and the PUD, as the proposed cost for accessing PSE poles exceeded initial estimates by more than twofold. WSBO agreed to cover the additional expense, allowing engineering and design work to proceed.

To comply with permitting requirements, Whatcom PUD engaged Drayton Archeology for Tribal consultation. However, Lummi Nation declined to participate, which set forth extensive conditions likely to drive up costs and extend the project timeline considerably. In response, the project scope was adjusted: all underground construction was removed, and pole replacements were restricted to existing locations. As a result, service coverage was reduced by more than 300 address points. Although the project is proceeding, only seventeen months remain to finalize both design and construction, and the risk of further delays or increased expenses could jeopardize its completion.

To ensure the continued progress of this initiative, the Port and Point Roberts community must actively support the PUD’s efforts, advocate with stakeholders to highlight the challenges facing the broadband project and work together to find effective solutions. Additionally, the Port can help safeguard the project by seeking further public funding to bolster its success.

5.3 Industries and Employment

Expanding reliable broadband access in Point Roberts would unlock substantial economic potential by enabling participation in high-wage, connectivity-dependent industries. This is important given the low labor force participation on the Point (see section 5.1.5 in the Existing Conditions Report). The introduction of reliable broadband in Point Roberts is expected to attract a younger, more technically skilled workforce, bringing greater alignment with prime working-age demographics than the current labor pool (see Existing Conditions Section 5.1). It would also diversify the employment on the Point which is currently dominated by retail trade and warehousing jobs (see section 5.2.1 of the Existing Conditions report). Residents could tap

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into remote work opportunities in sectors such as computing infrastructure and web hosting services (NAICS 518), which offer average wages of \$61.44/hour, and professional, scientific, and technical services (NAICS 541), at \$41.99/hour. Telecommunications (NAICS 517), another viable remote work field, averages \$40.24/hour, further illustrating the earnings potential made possible through improved internet access. Local businesses could also capitalize on reliable broadband by adopting cloud-based tools, expanding e-commerce, and improving customer engagement—capabilities aligned with sectors like management of companies (NAICS 551, \$41.59/hour) and insurance services (NAICS 524, \$37.90/hour). For a geographically isolated community like Point Roberts, investing in broadband is not just about convenience, it’s a strategic move to diversify the local economy, attract digital professionals, and elevate household incomes through access to knowledge-based industries. Table 5-1 shows wages for industries associated with broadband improvements.

Table 5-1. Broadband Improvement Related Industries in Whatcom County

Industry Sector	NAICS Code & Industry Subsector	Wages
Overall (a)		\$29.66
31-33: Manufacturing	311: Food manufacturing	\$24.40
51: Information	517: Telecommunications	\$40.24
51: Information	518: Computing infrastructure providers, data processing, web hosting, and related services	\$61.44
51: Information	519: Web search portals, libraries, archives, and other information services	\$29.49
52: Finance and industry	523: Securities, commodity contracts, other financial investments and related activities	ND
52: Finance and industry	524: Insurance carriers and related activities	\$37.90
52: Finance and industry	525: Funds, trusts, and other financial vehicles	ND
54: Professional, scientific, and technical services	541: Professional, Scientific, and technical services	\$41.99
55: Management of companies and enterprises	551: Management of companies and enterprises	\$41.59
81: Other services, except public administration	813: Religious, grantmaking, civic, professional, and similar organizations.	\$23.29
GOV: Government	Federal Government	\$54.42
GOV: Government	State Government	\$45.67
GOV: Government	Local Government	\$30.94

Note
(a) Accounts for totals and averages across all industries in the County
Source
WESD. 2024.

5.4 Land and Housing

The land disturbance associated with broadband enhancement in Point Roberts is expected to be minimal, contingent on successful agreements between PSE and the PUD, as much of the required infrastructure is already in place. Existing telephone poles owned by PSE and a colocation facility operated by Whidbey Telecom, the primary provider on the Point, form a foundational network of infrastructure for upgrades. If PSE and the PUD are unable to reach agreement on pole access, installation of additional poles may be required to support broadband deployment. To prepare these poles for broadband deployment, Whatcom PUD must secure pole access rights from PSE and complete any required structural improvements to support aerial cable installation. To protect the area’s archaeological character, no groundlines will be installed. A Canadian-owned colocation facility on the Point has already been identified and will serve as the terrestrial landing site for a subsea cable connection.

Improving broadband infrastructure in Point Roberts has the potential to reshape the local housing market by increasing interest among remote workers and digital entrepreneurs seeking scenic, affordable places to live and work. Reliable high-speed internet could attract U.S.-based telecommuters and small business owners, fostering job creation and year-round economic vitality. This trend may gradually diversify homeownership patterns, decreasing the current predominance of second-home ownership and encouraging full-time residency (see section 5.4 of the Existing Conditions report). As permanent settlement increases, demand for housing could rise, strengthening the local tax base, enhancing civic participation, and promoting long-term community stability.

5.5 Community Benefits and Opportunities

Reliable, high-speed internet is now essential for economic activity, supporting everything from retail transactions to remote work. Communities like Point Roberts face disadvantages without robust broadband, as limited connectivity restricts work-from-home, virtual meetings, and online learning.

Expanding broadband access boosts opportunities for local businesses, artisans, and remote workers by enabling e-commerce and supporting the Resilience Hub (see Section 4). It also improves telehealth, education, and overall quality of life, particularly for students who must travel across borders to attend school (see section 5.1.4 in the Existing Conditions report).

Key stakeholders including Whatcom PUD, Whidbey Telecom, Whatcom County, and the Port face significant initial investment in infrastructure, but stand to benefit through increased economic resilience, higher property values, reduced cross-border reliance, and greater business viability in Point Roberts. These improvements align with regional economic development strategies outlined in the County’s comprehensive plan.

5.6 Funding and Financing

The expansion of broadband infrastructure to Point Roberts is actively underway, led by Whatcom PUD in partnership with Whidbey Telephone Company. Core project funding has been largely secured. Table 5-2 outlines the confirmed funding sources as well as additional mechanisms that may be leveraged to support continued implementation of broadband improvements.

Table 5-2. Funding and Financing of Broadband Improvements

Grant Name	Funder	Funding range	Application Close Date	Relevant information
Previously Awarded Funding				

Grant Name	Funder	Funding range	Application Close Date	Relevant information
Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Program (a)	Commerce Washington State Broadband Office	\$1-2,000,000	Previously allocated	Federally funded and administered by the Washington State Broadband Office. The initiative is aimed at closing the digital divide by expanding high-speed internet access across underserved communities as micro-enterprise assistance.
ReConnect program (b)	United States Department of Agriculture	Financing up to \$50 million, funding up to \$25 million	Previously allocated	Local governments, tribes, cooperatives, and private entities are eligible to receive support for the construction, improvement, or acquisition of broadband infrastructure
Middle Mile Program (c)	National Telecommunications and Information Administration	Grants from \$2.7 million to \$88.8 million, with an average of \$25.1 million per project	Previously allocated	Funds fiber, permitting, engineering, and personnel—to connect local networks with internet hubs and lower deployment costs in underserved areas
Community Connect program (d)	United States Department of Agriculture	Grants range from \$100,000 to \$5 million. Requires 15% non-federal match	Previously allocated	Provides grants to expand broadband service in rural, economically challenged areas where internet access is limited or nonexistent. It funds infrastructure to deliver speeds of at least 100 Mbps down / 20 Mbps up
Additional Funding				
CERB Rural Broadband (e)	Commerce	\$3 million with grants available up to 25% of the total award	Funding cycles through March 29, 2027	Provides low-interest loan/grant packages to local governments, financing the cost to build infrastructure to provide high-speed, open-access broadband service, to rural underserved communities, for the purpose of community economic development. The County or Port would be required to apply for this grant on behalf of the Point Roberts community.

Note
Commerce= Washington State Department of Commerce

Source
(a) Commerce. 2025e.
(b) USDA. 2025b.
(c) NTIA. 2025.
(d) USDA. 2025c.
(e) Commerce. 2025f.

5.7 Broadband

Table 5-3 outlines targeted actions for broadband implementation, presenting a focused strategy to enhance connectivity throughout Point Roberts and foster economic growth and digital equity. With a funding deadline set for December 2026, priority efforts include completing infrastructure projects, securing additional grants, and initiating competitive bids for service providers. Concurrently, the plan calls for overcoming permitting challenges, collaborating with tribal and utility partners, and seeking further sources of support to ensure sustained progress. Despite obstacles such as compressed timelines, regulatory delays, and reduced construction scope, these initiatives emphasize the vital role of broadband as a cornerstone for business development, telehealth, remote learning, and civic participation. Continued advocacy from local and county stakeholders will be essential to maintain momentum, helping Point Roberts achieve lasting digital resilience and future-ready community infrastructure. A comprehensive table outlining the broadband improvement strategy implementation is provided in Table 3, located in Appendix C.

Table 5-3. Broadband Action Items

Action	Responsible Entity	Timing	Related Tasks and Considerations
Implement broadband infrastructure	Whatcom PUD	Short Term	• Continue ongoing projects with the goal to complete them ahead of December 2026 funding cutoff • Coordinate with WSBO to monitor funding deadlines and compliance • Develop a contingency plan in case of further delays • Schedule regular check-ins with PSE, DAHP, and Lummi Nation to track progress • Prioritize critical path activities to meet construction timelines • Identify supplemental funding sources to offset rising costs
Initiate bids for broadband service providers	Whatcom PUD	Short Term	• Drive a competitive bid for service providers on the Point including local provider options • Explore wireless, satellite, or mesh network solutions for remaining hard-to-serve areas • Prepare a detailed scope of service to guide provider bids • Assess potential service levels, pricing models, and network management options • Identify backup options if insufficient bids are received • Include evaluation criteria that emphasize community benefit and long-term viability
Pursue further funding opportunities	County, Port	Short Term	• To advance the ongoing broadband implementation and overcome existing barriers, the community, Port, and County should pursue additional funding sources ,mainly CERB Rural Broadband program, to support infrastructure upgrades and service expansion. • Document economic impacts and community need to strengthen grant applications • Schedule internal deadlines for proposal development and review • Develop cost estimates and match funding strategy in coordination with Port and County

Action	Responsible Entity	Timing	Related Tasks and Considerations
Public outreach on improvements	Whatcom PUD	Short Term	• Keep community, Port, and County informed on progress and delays so they may react accordingly. • Develop messaging that emphasizes transparency, urgency, and inclusiveness • Coordinate with local press and digital media to extend outreach
Continue to support broadband access on the Point	Port, County, PR Chamber of Commerce	Mid Term	• Identify advocacy roles for Port, County, and Chamber stakeholders • Engage local representatives to advocate for the continuation of broadband infrastructure development on Point Roberts. • Pursue continued funding opportunities to leverage funding that has already been allocated for broadband improvement.

Notes

CERB= Washington Department of Commerce Community and Economic Revitalization Board

DAHP= US Department of Archeology and Historic Preservation

PUD= Public Utility District

USDA= US Department of Agriculture

WSBO= Washington State Broadband Office

6 Sewer

Point Roberts does not have a centralized wastewater management system that can effectively encourage commercial and residential development opportunities. To highlight this need and analyze potential options for the Point, four wastewater management system alternatives were compared, including the existing system, community drainfield (public), community drainfield (private), and a centralized sewer system. The analysis focuses on the key decision-making criteria including the creation of diverse employment opportunities, efficiency of land usage, promotion of diverse and affordable housing, and the cost of construction for each system.

6.1 Current State

The existing wastewater infrastructure in Point Roberts presents a substantial constraint to future development. Under the “Existing System” scenario, wastewater is managed primarily through private septic systems and scattered large on-site sewage facilities located throughout the Point. Effluent from these systems is pumped and transported across the border to Canada by a private contractor. This decentralized and cross-border arrangement limits the scalability and reliability of wastewater services, underscoring the need for more sustainable and locally controlled solutions. Due to the high amount of land required for development of septic systems, the size of commercial and industrial buildings is severely limited. For businesses that have higher average wastewater flow, such as the hospitality industry, this sewer system is even more limited.

6.2 Changes Envisioned

Three alternative wastewater management approaches were evaluated for Point Roberts: A private community drainfield system, a public community drainfield system, and a centralized sewer system.

Community Drainfield Scenario (Private and Public)

These scenarios envision a decentralized network of combined septic drainfields, incorporating both private and public configurations. It would leverage existing private septic infrastructure through Septic Tank Effluent Pumping (STEP), which transports liquid effluent to shared drainfields while retaining solids in individual tanks. Solid waste would continue to be hauled to a Canadian treatment facility for disposal under both public and private scenarios.

Both public and private models for community drainfields were examined. In the private scenario, development and maintenance would be handled by individual land developers, who would also absorb the associated costs. Ownership and ongoing oversight would remain in private hands. Notably, the Point Roberts Marina currently operates a private combined septic drainfield, serving as a precedent for this approach. While this system offers moderate scalability and cost efficiency, its reliance on cross-border disposal and fragmented ownership may limit long-term viability. By contrast, a public community drainfield would be constructed and managed by the County, with communal facilities located within a sewer main in the public right-of-way. This approach would be funded through tax revenues.

Centralized Sewer Scenario

This scenario proposes a conventional public sewer system constructed within the public rights-of-way. Wastewater would be conveyed via a main extension to the Tsawwassen Wastewater Treatment Plant in Tsawwassen, British Columbia. A comparable arrangement exists in Sumas, Washington, where the city maintains an agreement with Abbotsford, Canada, to discharge wastewater into its municipal system. That

agreement stipulates discharge limits based on the receiving plant’s capacity. The new central sewer lines are expected to be strategically routed along key commercial corridors with the highest potential for upzoning and redevelopment, including Tyee Drive and Gulf Road. A comprehensive sewer master plan can further define phased expansion based on desired development densities across the Point.

Despite multiple inquiries to the City of Delta’s Sanitary Sewer Department—which oversees the system serving Tsawwassen—no response has been received to date. Because the current capacity and demand of the Tsawwassen facility are unknown, this analysis assumes that the plant could accommodate additional flow from Point Roberts. This centralized solution offers the greatest potential for supporting future growth, though it would require significant coordination with Canadian authorities and upfront infrastructure investment.

6.3 Industries and Employment

The following wastewater system types have a major impact on land use and development potential in Point Roberts

Community Drainfield

The community drainfield scenario is a more efficient and cost-effective alternative than the existing system for supporting commercial growth. Public or privately operated systems could serve employment clusters, allowing for denser development in commercial zones. For example, localized collection systems could support commercial parks, service hubs, or hospitality corridors—facilitating new construction, operational expansion, and incremental job growth. This scenario would also allow for denser residential development and workforce housing opportunities. The Point Roberts Marina exemplifies this model, demonstrating how shared septic infrastructure can unlock development potential while preserving open space.

Centralized Sewer

A centralized sewer system represents the most transformative option for industry and employment in Point Roberts. Connection to a public sewer main such as the Tsawwassen Wastewater Treatment Plant would allow businesses to decommission septic systems and reclaim land for productive use. Industrial firms could construct larger facilities, expand production capacity, and increase on-site employment. Hospitality businesses could add rooms and amenities, enhancing tourism-related job opportunities. Moreover, the availability of scalable, reliable wastewater infrastructure would attract new developers and employers, catalyzing mixed-use projects, commercial centers, and employment districts. This scenario offers the highest potential for dense residential development to accommodate workforce housing needs. This scenario positions Point Roberts for robust economic growth, diversified industry, and sustained job creation and retention.

6.4 Land and Housing

Residential development is currently constrained by reliance on individual septic systems, which demand significant land area and favorable soil conditions—effectively capping density at approximately two dwellings per acre. The following section evaluates how each sewer system alternative would influence land use efficiency and housing.

Land

Land coverage and suitability are driving factors for the applicability of each scenario. The following analysis considered the soil types present within Point Roberts and the land coverage each scenario would require.

Existing System

The current wastewater system within Point Roberts is highly dependent on the geological qualities of the existing soil. This can put a restriction on development and force landowners to lose buildable space within their property to place a septic drainfield. For example, a septic drainfield serving a two-unit residential property may require anywhere from 250 to 700 square feet—a substantial range that reflects the influence of site-specific factors such as soil composition and percolation rates. These fields must remain unobstructed, meaning they cannot be built over or driven across, resulting in a permanent loss of usable land on each parcel. While this system may be suitable for rural development and large-lot configurations, it poses significant constraints for higher-density residential and industrial projects.

Community Drainfield

Utilizing a network of community drainfields could be a valuable way to maximize the buildable space of parcels within diverse soil groups. The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Group Classification describes the textural qualities of the underlying soil. The drainfield sizing is based on Table VIII of Whatcom County Code Section 24.05.120, which provides a maximum loading rate for septic drainfields based on AASHTO Soil Classification. Class A-1 and A-2 soils are the most suitable for drainage, and as the soil class increases, the soils become less suitable for drainage. An analysis of drainfield sizing based on underlying soil characteristics is summarized in Table 6-1.

Table 6-1. Community Drainfield Sizing by Soil Type

AASHTO Group Classification	Required Drainfield Size ¹
A-1	270 sf
A-2	270 sf
A-3	338 sf
A-4	450 sf

Note
⁽¹⁾ Drainfield sizing is based on a single 2-bedroom dwelling unit.
The outputs are approximate but show the effect that soil conditions can have on septic drainfield sizing.
AASHTO= American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials

Analysis of the NRCS Web Soil Survey reveals that approximately 66 percent of land in Point Roberts is classified as A-1 or A-2—soil groups considered most favorable for drainfield construction due to their high permeability and stability. In contrast, roughly 9 percent of the land is designated as either A-8 or N/A, indicating conditions unsuitable for onsite wastewater treatment. An additional 22 percent falls under the A-4 classification, which supports only limited drainfield functionality and offers approximately half the land-use efficiency of A-1 and A-2 soils. Table 6-2 provides a detailed breakdown of AASHTO soil group distribution by acreage, offering a quantitative foundation for evaluating development potential.

Table 6-2. Centralized Sewer Sizing by Soil Type

ASHTO Group Classification	Acres	Percent Coverage
A-1	1,461	44%
A-2	722	22%
A-3	295	3%
A-4	715	22%
A-8	135	4%
N/A	177	5%

Source
NRCS 2024

Appendix D illustrates the distribution of soils across Point Roberts using AASHTO Group Classification. Class A-1 soils—shown in green and labeled “51” on the map—are primarily concentrated on the east side of the Point, where zoning supports residential and transitional uses. An additional pocket of Class A-1 soils is located in the southwest corner (labeled “111”), encompassing existing residences, including areas within the RC zone that permit denser residential development with the use of communal drainfields. Class A-2 soils, marked in red and labeled “48,” are found throughout the central, southern, and northwestern portions of the Point. These areas include residential neighborhoods, transitional zones, and the golf course. With the implementation of community drainfields, these zones offer strong potential for more concentrated development due to their moderate soil suitability and existing land use patterns.

In contrast, much of the western portion of Point Roberts is characterized by soils that either require expansive drainfield footprints or are unsuitable for onsite wastewater treatment altogether. These areas are classified as A-4 (brown, labeled “1675,” “184,” and “94”) and A-8 (dark green, labeled “143”), presenting significant constraints to residential development without centralized sewer infrastructure. Notably, the area surrounding the Marina lacks soil rating data or is marked as unrated, leaving the suitability for drainfield installation in that zone undetermined.

Centralized Sewer

A centralized sewer could service poor soil areas and provide a wastewater solution that allows for the same dense development opportunities across all soil types.

Housing

Each of the systems analyzed would be beneficial for different types of housing. While the Existing System is beneficial for rural development patterns, it is more limiting than community drainfields and Centralized Sewer alternatives.

Existing System

The existing wastewater system within Point Roberts is the most limiting for development capacity and space efficiency. This system is efficient for single-family homes on large parcels of land, where large drainfields can be placed. However, it is inefficient for dense development due to a lack of open space. As a result, it is estimated that Point Roberts could accommodate 2,337 residents at full build-out if the current wastewater system were to remain (County 2017).

Community Drainfield

The construction of community drainfields would allow for denser housing developments than the existing system. This scenario would be most beneficial for attached and/or clustered development, as it can be scaled efficiently based on need. This option is not as beneficial for the development of multi-family housing,

as the drainfield for such an application would be large by itself. Combining this system with other nearby septic systems may not be space efficient. Residential capacity impacts resulting from community drainage implementation requires too many hypothetical scenarios of land aggregation to be modeled as a part of this study.

Centralized Sewer

A major barrier to affordable housing in Point Roberts is the limited supply of multifamily units, which comprise just 2.5% of the local housing stock—25% lower than the proportions observed at both the county and state levels (see Section 5.4 of the Existing Conditions report). Expanding multifamily, clustered, and attached housing options will require foundational infrastructure upgrades, most notably a centralized sewer system. As outlined in Whatcom County’s 2017 subarea plan, such a system could support up to 9,304 residents in Point Roberts, dramatically increasing development capacity (County 2017). This scenario would unlock significant housing potential by enabling developers to utilize a broader range of parcel sizes and soil conditions, thereby reducing constraints and enhancing feasibility across diverse sites.

Zoning

As noted in the Existing Conditions Report, Point Roberts faces a shortage of land designated for commercial and industrial use. Within existing commercial zones, only 43.1 percent of built square footage is currently occupied by commercial uses. The remainder is utilized for residential dwellings, and other miscellaneous uses (see Section 6.1 of the Existing Conditions Report). The installation of a new sewer system, particularly a centralized system, would enable expanded development capacity and open new opportunities for zoning adjustments. At present, even parcels within commercial and industrial zones are constrained by the absence of adequate sewer infrastructure.

If a new system is implemented, a targeted zoning study should be conducted to evaluate opportunities for upzoning and intensification. This study should assess the potential to support higher-value commercial uses and promote denser development patterns, especially along key corridors such as Tyee Drive and Gulf Drive.

6.5 Community Benefits and Opportunities

Centralized sewer and community drainfield options provide greater flexibility for land use and support higher-density development on the Point. Table 6-3 outlines the advantages of each alternative. The following analysis presents construction-only cost estimates for three scenarios, followed by a comparative summary highlighting the strengths and limitations of each approach.

Existing System

The cost for a singular septic system varies largely depending on soil characteristics and building size. According to an article by Ginny Bartolone titled “How Much Does Leach Field Replacement Cost?” (Forbes, 2024), the average expected cost for construction of a drainfield is around \$6,000. In addition, maintenance and pumping of private septic systems typically cost between \$100 and \$200 per calendar year.

Community Drainfield

A community drainfield may utilize the existing infrastructure of septic tanks within Point Roberts to benefit existing development, on top of new development. Existing septic tanks can be connected to shared effluent piping through a STEP system. This would lower individual maintenance costs for property owners. Community drainfields, particularly those publicly owned, can be scaled to meet demand or fit available land. However, limitations in soil suitability for drainfields continue to pose spatial constraints that hinder opportunities for denser development. Identifying a centralized location with sufficient capacity may be difficult, and extending effluent piping to more remote sites could incur substantial costs.

Privately owned community drainfields offer greater flexibility in this regard and could be incorporated into the design of new subdivisions or business parks. However, retrofitting such systems into existing developments is less feasible. Shared fields require a sizable contiguous area, which is unlikely to be available in built-out neighborhoods without prior land dedication.

It is also important to note that individual septic tanks would still be required on each parcel. While these tanks occupy a relatively small footprint, ongoing maintenance and periodic removal of solid waste would remain necessary.

Cost estimates were prepared for two community drainfield systems (public and private). Both systems were designed to handle the flow of 20 two-bedroom single-family dwelling units (DU). Also, both systems assumed that 650 linear feet of sewer main would be constructed to collect and discharge the wastewater to a drainfield.

The first alternative is a publicly managed system in which wastewater is conveyed from individual septic tanks via a STEP system into a centralized sewer main located within the public right-of-way. The estimated construction and connection cost for this sewer infrastructure is approximately \$9,000 per DU. The second system evaluated is a privately managed community drain field. Although the associated costs would not be borne by the County, they have been included in this analysis for comparative purposes. The total estimated cost for this system including lateral connections to individual dwelling units is \$118,000, assuming no trenching within the public right-of-way. On a per-unit basis, the cost equates to approximately \$5,900.

Both systems would require regular maintenance of septic tanks by their owners. These costs are assumed to be comparable to the existing system costs of \$100 to \$200 per year.

Centralized Sewer

A centralized sewer system would have a large impact on the ability to utilize land on Point Roberts. Removing the requirement for septic tanks and septic fields would create more developable land on new and existing parcels. Upsizing an existing septic system can be costly and restrictive based on layout, and construction of a new septic system can be limiting to developable land. A centralized sewer could also be beneficial for the areas on Point Roberts that are not suitable for drainfield construction

A high-level cost estimate was prepared for the construction of a centralized sewer main that would connect Point Roberts to the Tsawwassen municipal sanitary sewer system in Canada. The costs only include the construction of a singular sewer main that would follow along Tyke Drive and does not include the cost for connection to the sewer, or for branching sewer mains. For the purposes of estimating required flow rate, it was assumed 3,000 DU will connect to this system. Due to many unknown factors and costs, a contingency of 30% was added to the estimate.

The centralized sewer scenario analyzed the construction of approximately 5,800 linear feet of sanitary sewer main pipe that would connect from Tsawwassen, south along Tyke Drive, and would extend through Gulf Road. The estimated cost for this sewer main extension project is approximately \$2,000,000 to \$2,500,000. This price includes excavation, backfill, sanitary sewer infrastructure, multiple lift stations, and surface finishing.

As a point of reference, the City of Sumas, Washington, maintains a cross-border wastewater agreement with the City of Abbotsford, British Columbia, allowing Sumas to discharge its municipal wastewater into Abbotsford’s treatment system. This arrangement provides a precedent for international sewer service coordination, similar to what Point Roberts may consider with the Tsawwassen Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Under this agreement, residential customers in Sumas who are connected to the public sewer system pay a monthly sewer rate of \$12.70 (Sumas, 2023), totaling approximately \$152.40 annually. This relatively low

cost reflects the financial viability of cross-border wastewater partnerships and offers a benchmark for estimating potential user fees in Point Roberts under a centralized sewer scenario.

While rate structures may vary based on system capacity, infrastructure investment, and intergovernmental agreements, the Sumas-Abbotsford model demonstrates that international wastewater service can be both technically feasible and economically sustainable for small communities.

Comparison of Alternatives

Table 6-3 compares three wastewater management scenarios with varying development potential and infrastructure costs.

The existing wastewater system relies heavily on favorable soil conditions and the availability of buildable land, which significantly limits its development potential. It supports only low-density residential uses—primarily single-family housing—and offers minimal capacity for employment-generating activities. **With service restricted to a single dwelling unit at an estimated cost of \$6,000 per unit, the system lacks scalability and constrains both housing diversity and economic growth.**

The community drainfield option expands service capacity to approximately 20 dwelling units, offering a modest improvement over the existing system. However, it still depends on decentralized septic infrastructure and remains sensitive to soil suitability and site configuration. At a cost of \$9,000 per unit, this system allows for slightly more housing flexibility but continues to restrict development intensity. While it may support limited mixed-use or employment functions, its reliance on on-site treatment limits its broader applicability in a redevelopment context.

The centralized sewer system enables transformative development potential by removing constraints related to soil conditions and land availability. Capable of serving up to 3,000 dwelling units, it supports a wide range of housing types—including multi-family—and accommodates high-intensity employment uses. With total infrastructure costs estimated between \$2 and \$2.5 million, the system achieves a per-unit cost of approximately \$3,500, making it the most cost-efficient option when scaled. **Despite the higher upfront investment, this scenario facilitates compact growth, maximizes land use efficiency, and delivers substantial long-term economic and community benefits.**

Table 6-3. Comparison of Alternatives

Scenario	Industry	Land	Housing	Construction Cost, # of DU Serviced per system	Cost per DU
Existing System	Low Intensity Employment Opportunities	Cost and size of the system is reliant on soil characteristics. Will take up the most buildable area of all scenarios.	Can provide wastewater management for single-family detached housing	\$6,000 1 DU	\$6,000
Community Drainfield, Public	Low Intensity Employment Opportunities	Cost and size of the system is reliant on soil characteristics. Requires some on-site buildable space for septic tank.	Can provide wastewater management for single-family detached and single-family attached housing	\$180,000 20 DU	\$9,000

Centralized Sewer	High Intensity Employment Opportunities	This system is not reliant on soil characteristics. Requires no on-site treatment.	Can provide wastewater management for single-family detached, Single-family attached, and multi-family Housing	\$2,000,000 - \$2,500,000 3,000 DU	\$3,500
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Notes
DU= dwelling unit

6.6 Funding and Financing

Table 6-4 presents a comprehensive overview of grant and loan programs available from federal and state agencies to advance sewer infrastructure projects. Together, these programs create a robust financial framework that supports the development and modernization of sewer infrastructure. The County or Port would be required to apply for and administer the following grant opportunities on behalf of the Point Roberts community.

Table 6-4. Sewer Funding and Financing

Grant Name	Funder	Funding Range	Application Close Date	Relevant information
Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (a)	Federal Emergency Management Agency	Applicant provides benefit-cost analysis.	To be determined.	Provides funding to develop hazard mitigation plans to protect life and property from future disaster damage and rebuild in a way that reduces or mitigates future disaster losses in their communities. <i>Program guidance is being revised as of July 2025.</i>
Rural Water & Waste Disposal Loan & Grant Program (b)	U.S. Department of Agriculture	To be determined.	Applications accepted year round.	Long-term, low-interest loans available. A grant, if available, may be combined with a loan. Available for sewer collection, transmission, and disposal.
Water & Waste Disposal Predevelopment Planning Grants in Washington (c)	U.S. Department of Agriculture	Maximum is \$60,000 or 75% of eligible costs.	Applications accepted year round.	Only for LOSS. The area must have a median household income below the poverty line or less than 80 percent of the statewide non-metropolitan median household income.
Economic Adjustment Assistance (d)	U.S. Economic Development Administration	Formula based.	Application period is ongoing.	Assists in devising and implementing long-term economic development efforts through a variety of non-construction and construction projects. Applicants must meet Economic Development Administration distress criteria.
Public Works Board Financing (e)	Commerce	Loan up to \$10 million (\$1 million of which is for precon).	August 8, 2025; December 5, 2025; February 27, 2026; May 1, 2026	Five-year (preconstruction) and 20-year (construction) loans fund design, engineering, environmental study, and construction of infrastructure in the site. This includes buildout of master planned roadways and the utility extensions. Recent (less than 10-year-old) Capital Facilities Plan or Capital Improvement Plan required for application. Other eligibility conditions apply; see program guidance.

Grant Name	Funder	Funding Range	Application Close Date	Relevant information
Prospective Development Program(f)	Commerce	\$3 million per project loan/grant award limit.	Application period is ongoing.	Planning and construction of site buildout. Grant: Up to 25% of total award, determined by the underwriting process and the Debt Service Coverage Ratio. <i>Example: \$3 million CERB + \$3 million minimum match = \$6,000,000 Total Project Cost</i>
CWSRF Loan (g)	Ecology	Up to \$7,000,000	Prerequisite documents due October 10, 2025; final due December 15, 2025.	Includes planning, design, and construction of wastewater infrastructure. Fiscal sustainability (asset management) plan required. Note that the EAGL application period closes September 3, 2025.
Local Solid Waste Financial Assistance Program	Ecology	Formula based.	In 2025, application period was open Jan. 15–Feb. 12.	Supports local hazardous and solid waste planning, plan maintenance, implementation of eligible activity in those plans, and enforcement of rules and regulations governing solid waste handling. Guidance allows for special projects.

Notes
CERB = Community Economic Revitalization Board.
CWSRF = Clean Water State Revolving Fund.
EDA = U.S. Economic Development Administration.
precon = preconstruction.
(a) FEMA. 2025.
(b) USDA. 2025d.
(c) USDA. 2025e.
(d) USEDA. 2025.
(e) Commerce. 2025d.
(f) Commerce. 2025b.
(g) Ecology. 2025.
(h) Ecology. n.d.

6.7 Implementation

Table 6-5 outlines the key actions necessary to implement the Sewer Strategy, addressing both community drain field systems and centralized sewer infrastructure. The recommended approach involves phased upgrades to Point Roberts’ wastewater facilities, with a focus on enhancing economic redevelopment, public health, and environmental protection. Initial steps prioritize maintaining current septic systems and conducting a short-term feasibility study to explore alternatives and funding sources. Medium-term objectives center on monitoring system performance, developing a comprehensive sewer master plan, and engaging the community to shape future investments. Long-term actions include coordinating international waste disposal, finalizing design and permits, overseeing construction, and establishing sustainable operations and maintenance. Strategic upzoning connected to sewer expansion will enable denser, more diverse development. Although state and federal funding opportunities exist, significant challenges remain—such as high costs, complex permitting, the need for interagency cooperation, and the geopolitical intricacies of cross-border infrastructure projects. A comprehensive table outlining the sewer improvement strategy implementation is provided in Table 4, located in Appendix C.

Table 6-5. Sewer Improvement Action Items

Action	Responsible Entity	Timing	Sewer System	Related Tasks and Considerations
Maintain existing septic systems	Individual property owners	Ongoing	Existing	• Maintain private septic systems and Marina's on-site system
Conduct a sewer feasibility study	County	Short Term	CDF, CS	• Procure consultant to conduct feasibility study • Conduct an in-depth alternatives analysis and feasibility study to determine best system to implement. • Evaluate Public vs. Private STEP system models of community drain fields
Seek funding for preferred alternative	County	Short Term	CDF, CS	• Use findings from the sewer feasibility study document to emphasize economic impacts and community need to strengthen grant applications. • Develop cost estimates and match funding strategy in coordination with Port and County
Monitor soil conditions and system performance	County	Mid Term	CDF, CS	• Monitor soil conditions and system performance • Prepare baseline soil condition analysis for the comprehensive sewer master plan
Develop Comprehensive Sewer Master Plan	County	Mid Term	CDF, CS	• Procure a consultant to develop the master plan • Conduct public outreach and engagement • Determine best locations for implementation of sewer improvements • Work to adopt the sewer master plan into the county's comprehensive plan • Identify a list of priority investments in a capital improvement plan
Negotiate agreement with Tsawwassen plant	County	Long Term	CS	• Engage Tsawwassen with a sewer plan if partnership on a centralized sewer system is desired • Provide findings of previous studies • Pursue legal consult on an international sewer treatment agreement and use Sumas-Abbotsford agreement for reference.
Engineering and design of sewer improvements	County	Long Term	CDF,CS	• Develop preliminary engineering plans • Prepare design report • Develop construction-ready engineering plans • Coordinate with utility providers
Permitting	County	Long Term	CDF,CS	• Consult with agencies early to get a comprehensive picture of permitting requirements. • Identify necessary federal, state, and local permits • Engage Lummi Tribe and DAHPP early in the process to identify immediate barriers to sewer implementation
Construction of sewer improvements	County	Long Term	CDF,CS	• Manage bidding and procurement • Identify contractor • Conduct public outreach related to construction location and schedule • Oversee phased implementation • Prepare as-built engineering plans

Action	Responsible Entity	Timing	Sewer System	Related Tasks and Considerations
Operations and maintenance	County	Long Term	CDF,CS	• Develop staffing and maintenance protocol • Establish long-term funding strategy • Determine utility rates
Upzone areas of the Point based on updated development capacity	County	Long Term	CDF,CS	• Conduct a zoning study once a new sewer system is implemented • Determine areas most viable for commercial redevelopment • Determine zones for multifamily housing potential • Submit for a comprehensive zone change for the Point

Notes
CDF= Community Drain Field
CS= Centralized Sewer
CWSRF = Clean Water State Revolving Fund.
Ecology= Washington Department of Ecology
EDA= United States Economic Development Agency
STEP= Septic Tank Effluent Pumping
USDA= US Department of Agriculture
WWDPG= Water & Waste Disposal Predevelopment Planning Grants in Washington

7 Economic and Environmental Sustainability

The economic development strategies presented in this report outline a clear and actionable path to confronting long-standing infrastructure and economic challenges. Through targeted investment in the Marina, broadband expansion, sewer infrastructure, and the establishment of a Resilience Hub, the community can catalyze inclusive growth, diversify its economic base, and strengthen its capacity to adapt to future economic and environmental challenges. The success of these initiatives will depend on coordinated leadership and sustained public engagement. **By leveraging existing assets, aligning with community values, and pursuing innovative funding mechanisms, Point Roberts can transition from economic stagnation to long-term vitality.**

This final strategy functions as a unifying platform for initiatives that promote both economic and environmental sustainability. Grounded in the case studies presented in Section 2, it draws on proven practices and replicable models that reflect the values articulated by the Point Roberts community through stakeholder engagement and public outreach throughout this project. The initiatives included in this strategy build upon existing efforts underway in Point Roberts, offering a timely opportunity to reinforce progress and expand impact. The corresponding implementation actions are designed to sustain momentum, deepen community resilience, make Point Roberts a more attractive and marketable place for tourism, and establish clear pathways toward long-term success and sustainability.

7.1 Building Momentum

The following initiatives have the potential to strengthen the economic vitality of Point Roberts by drawing on its natural assets and distinctive community character. The list includes community-led efforts currently in development, initiatives that were previously pursued or studied but are now inactive, and new proposals informed by public input and analysis of existing conditions. Each concept is intended to inspire action and offer models that could reinforce and renew Point Roberts’ identity while improving the quality of life for residents and visitors.

Salish Sea House: The Salish Sea House is an existing 501C(3) non-profit intended to provide adult family home living and care facilities for the elderly in Point Roberts. With an aging population, increasing opportunities for existing residents to age-in-place would help retain community character and preserve history, while freeing up additional housing capacity for new residents.

Cycling and Pedestrian Infrastructure: Point Roberts geographic profile is suitable for cyclists and walkers, with little elevation change, multiple county owned parks, public road access throughout, and a small geographic area. However, community members have cited roads as being unsafe for pedestrians and cyclists, lacking shoulders and adequate speed control. The Point could benefit from **continuing work with the County Parks and Recreation Department to plan and construct safe cycling infrastructure that connects various destinations on the Point.**

Biking and cycling are well-established attractions in Whatcom County, with local tourism efforts already effectively promoting recreational opportunities in the region (BWCT 2025). Building on this momentum, Gravel Adventure Field Guide (GAFG 2025), an outdoor recreation organization, is working to establish a gravel cycling route connecting Bellingham to Point Roberts. The proposed “Point Roberts Odyssey” route guides riders from Blaine to Point Roberts and back to Bellingham, encouraging overnight stays and promoting lodging and camping options within the Point. **Point Roberts businesses and lodging providers can leverage**

existing cycling-focused marketing efforts to attract patronage from recreational riders. This initiative could also be integrated into the community’s broader tourism strategy, positioning Point Roberts as a destination for outdoor recreation and active travel.

Lighthouse Marine Park: In previous years, a group of residents established the Point Roberts Lighthouse Society to build momentum for constructing a lighthouse at Lighthouse Marine Park, including efforts to secure private funding. The initiative reflected strong community interest and organizational capacity for a signature structure at the park. Building on community momentum, County Parks and the Point Roberts community groups should jointly advocate for park improvements, beginning with a comprehensive park plan or conceptual design at Marine Park. **This initial investment can establish the park as a cornerstone for future recreational development on the Point, laying the foundation for a cohesive park system comprised of all four County Parks that attracts both residents and visitors.** Coordinating with County Parks on branding and marketing will amplify visibility, positioning the Point as a destination for tourism and outdoor recreation.

Art Spaces: Point Roberts is home to a robust arts and artisan craftsperson community. **Utilizing a historically relevant space, like the former Breakers Bar, as an art activation and exhibition space could generate revenue, provide space for artists and artisans to sell their wares, and attract visitors to the Point who may spend money at other establishments.**

Cross-Promotion of Businesses: The Point Roberts Chamber of Commerce, in conjunction with brick-and-mortar businesses on the Point, have developed a Point Roberts Passport to incentivize folks to visit the various commercial spaces on the Point. **Additionally, businesses like the International Marketplace and Point Roberts Golf and Country Club developed an initiative to offer discounts when a customer showed their receipt from the other businesses. Creative cross-promotion ideas like these can help to build a strong business network and increase reciprocal sales – when visitors come to the Point for one purpose, they would be encouraged to discover another.**

Eco-tourism/health tourism: Point Roberts stands out as a unique haven of natural beauty amid the surrounding urban landscape. According to accounts from several Coast Salish tribes, the area was historically used for sanctity and purification rituals (Borell, 2017). Its pristine coastal ecosystems, abundant bird and whale activity, clear waters, and clean sandy beaches offer a unique opportunity to cultivate tourism centered on ecology, restoration, and healing.

Promotion of RV park infrastructure: Point Roberts currently hosts one RV park, and some community members are exploring the development of an additional site to expand overnight accommodations. **This would allow visitors to experience the area’s peaceful atmosphere more directly from their campers, while also supporting tourism-related activity.** Enhancing RV infrastructure could additionally serve as a flexible housing option for seasonal workers during the busy summer months, helping to meet temporary workforce needs without permanent development.

7.2 Funding and Financing

Table 7-1 summarizes public and private funding for economic and environmental sustainability objectives in Point Roberts, including grants supporting community facilities, tourism, cycling infrastructure, and renewable energy. It helps match projects to suitable funding sources based on program focus, eligibility, and timing.

Table 7-1. Economic and Environmental Sustainability Funding and Financing

Grant Name	Funder	Funding range	Application Close Date	Relevant information
Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) (a)	Commerce	\$1-2,000,000	No date listed	Funding would need to be procured by either the Port or County as small, rural cities/towns and counties that are not entitled to receive CDBG funds directly from US Department of Housing and Urban Development. Funding is intended to assist eligible Washington State small cities, towns, and counties in carrying out community development projects that principally benefit low-and moderate-income people. Eligible General Purpose grant activities include Public facilities, such as water, wastewater, streets and sidewalks, Community facilities, such as community centers, fire stations, homeless shelters, and childcare facilities, Infrastructure in support of affordable housing and housing rehabilitation, and Economic development such as micro-enterprise assistance. The County or Port would be required to apply for this grant on behalf of the Point Roberts community.
T-Mobile Hometown Grants (b)	T-Mobile	Up to \$50,000	25 grants awarded each quarter.	Intended to support projects in small towns with population less than 50,000. Applicant's proposal must include plans, budget, timeline, anticipated impact, and up to five letters of support. Application portal closes on last day of each quarter and opens on the first day of the next. Applicants are notified within 30-60 days on status of submission. Community organizations such as PRCAC or Resilient Point Roberts may apply for this grant.
State of Washington Tourism Grants (c)	State of Washinton Tourism	Varies	Funding is closed for this cycle, will likely renew in 2026	The State of Washington Tourism has a variety of grant programs at different time periods. These can fund rural tourism marketing, sporting events (like golf tournaments), sustainable tourism development, and more. The Point Roberts Chamber of Commerce may apply for these grants.

Grant Name	Funder	Funding range	Application Close Date	Relevant information
Safe Streets and Roads for All (d)	US Department of Transportation	\$100,000-\$25,000,000	Funding is closed for this cycle, will likely renew in 2026	Eligible applicants include a metropolitan planning organization; a political subdivision of a State or territory; a federally recognized Tribal government; and a multijurisdictional group of entities described in any of the three types of entities. The County or Port would be required to apply for this grant on behalf of the Point Roberts community.
Pedestrian and Bicycle Program (e)	Washington Department of Transportation	\$50,000-10,000,000	Closes July 1, 2026	All public agencies in Washington, including tribal governments, may submit applications for pedestrian/bicyclist safety and/or mobility infrastructure improvements. Funding applies to activities including construction, preliminary engineering, right of way, or development/design phases. The County or Port would be required to apply for this grant on behalf of the Point Roberts community.
Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program	Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office	\$500,000	April 30, 2026	The County or Port may apply for this grant on behalf of the community. The funding can be applied to buildings, viewing areas, and other general park amenities.
Private funding opportunities	Whatcom Community Foundation; Point Roberts Community Chest	Varies	Varies	Private funding could be secured through existing philanthropic organizations and foundations including the recently established Point Roberts Community Chest.
Energy Improvements in Rural or Remote Areas (f)	US Department of Energy	\$2,000,000-50,000,000	August 28, 2025	The County or Port would be required to apply for this grant on behalf of the Point Roberts community. This program serves communities of 10,000 people or fewer. Eligible activities include projects that: • Improve overall cost-effectiveness of energy generation, transmission, or distribution systems • Site or upgrade transmission and distribution lines. • Reduce greenhouse gas emissions from energy generation in rural or remote areas. • Provide or modernize electric generation facilities • Develop microgrids • Increase energy efficiency

Grant Name	Funder	Funding range	Application Close Date	Relevant information
Local Food System Infrastructure Grant (g)	Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA)	Up to \$75,000	Funding is closed for this cycle, will likely renew in 2026	The purpose of the Local Food System Infrastructure Grant program is to support local food supply chains and market access for farms, ranches, food processors, and food distributors. Eligible activities under this grant include planning, equipment, and facilities that support post-harvest handling, aggregation, processing, manufacturing, storing, distribution, and sale of Washington grown, caught, and raised foods. Existing farms, businesses, or nonprofits are available to apply for this grant.
Local Food Promotion Program (h)	US Department of Agriculture	Up to \$500,000	Funding is closed for this cycle, will likely renew in 2026	Supports development, coordination, and expansion of local and regional food business enterprises that engage as intermediaries in indirect producer-to-consumer marketing to increase access to and availability of locally and regionally produced agricultural products. Eligible entities include Agricultural businesses and cooperatives, Community Supported Agriculture networks and associations, food councils, economic development corporations, local governments, nonprofit and public benefit corporations, producer networks or associations, regional farmers' market authorities, tribal governments.

Notes
CDBG= Community Development Block Grants

Source
(a) Commerce. 2025a.
(b) T-Mobile. 2025.
(c) SWT. 2025.
(d) FundHub. 2025a.
(e) FundHub. 2025b.
(f) USDOE. 2025.
(g) WSDA. 2025.
(h) USDA. 2025.

7.3 Implementation

The proposed action items outlined in Table 7-2 form a strategic foundation for advancing economic and ecological sustainability objectives in Point Roberts. These initiatives are designed to foster local resilience through coordinated investment in infrastructure, food systems, energy independence, tourism development, and land use planning. From short-term feasibility studies and stakeholder engagement to long-term programmatic commitments such as bike infrastructure, small-scale agriculture, renewable energy, and community events, each item reflects an effort to align economic revitalization with environmental stewardship. Funding opportunities are varied and competitive, with most actions facing challenges related to permitting, coordination, and limited leadership or financing capacity. Nevertheless, the initiatives represent a coherent pathway toward sustainable development through public-private collaboration, community input, and strategic leveraging of local identity and assets. A comprehensive table outlining the economic and ecological sustainability strategy implementation is provided in Table 5, located in Appendix C.

Table 7-2. Economic and Ecological Sustainability Action Items

Action	Responsible Entity	Timing	Related Tasks and Considerations
Targeted support to existing local businesses facing economic challenges	Point Roberts Chamber of Commerce, Resilient Point Roberts, Community identified representative	Short Term	• Conduct a business survey to gauge level of distress across Point businesses. • Create a Point business cross-promotion program • Identify and prioritize needs • Provide incentives • Promote cross selling and collaboration across businesses • Establish a Small Business Relief Fund
Identify focus area of limited development for areas including the Marina, Gulf Road, and Marine Drive	Point Roberts Chamber of Commerce, Resilient Point Roberts, Community identified representative	Short Term	• Conduct a development feasibility study and identify priority development projects (i.e. bike infrastructure, brewery, energy infrastructure) • Pair findings with development of the other economic development strategies • Create a master plan for implementation of economic development strategies • Implement priority projects into capital improvement plan • Engage community stakeholders to align priorities
Develop a Park Facility Master Plan	County Parks, Port, Resilient Point Roberts	Short Term	• Pursue targeted funding streams to initiate parks master planning activities. • Complete a comprehensive parks master plan establishing a park system that connects all four County Parks • Initiate conceptual design, engineering, and planning for Lighthouse Marine Park improvements as inaugural project.
Seek funding opportunities	Point Roberts Chamber of Commerce, Resilient Point Roberts, Community identified representative	Short Term	• Develop cost estimates and match funding strategy in coordination with Port and County • Screen existing capital plans for funding gaps or leverage opportunities

Action	Responsible Entity	Timing	Related Tasks and Considerations
Include biking infrastructure into the Transportation element of the Comprehensive Plan	Point Roberts Chamber of Commerce, Resilient Point Roberts, Community identified representative	Mid Term	• Build on existing trail connections between Point Roberts and Bellingham • Advocate for Point Roberts bike improvements to be included in the County Comprehensive Plan • Establish funding for planning, engineering, and construction • Incorporate biking infrastructure into community tourism strategy • Work with County Parks to determine best potential routes
Promote small-scale agricultural system	Point Roberts Chamber of Commerce, Resilient Point Roberts, Community identified representative	Mid Term	• Pursue targeted funding streams to initiate a community-based agriculture program focused on local food production, education, and economic resilience • Identify and assess potential sites for agricultural use, including leased, donated, or community-owned land, with attention to infrastructure, zoning, and long-term sustainability • Integrate the agriculture program with a regional farmers market—by partnering with the Tsawwassen market or establishing a dedicated Point Roberts market to promote local growers and products • Develop structured programming to support peer exchange, technical education, and collaborative learning among local agriculturists
Continue development of self-sustaining energy sources and system	Point Roberts Chamber of Commerce, Resilient Point Roberts, Identified representative	Mid Term	• Conduct a feasibility study for implementation of solar and wind implementation • Secure interconnection agreements with PSE • Assess long-term operations and maintenance requirements • Fund and construct identified improvements in the solar feasibility study • Integrate solar improvements to resilience hub
Establish marketing campaign for the Point’s new amenities	Point Roberts Chamber of Commerce, Resilient Point Roberts, Identified representative	Long Term	• Hire marketing consultant to run a Point Roberts tourism campaign • Host stakeholder forums to align development proposals with community interests • Promote new assets in collaboration with regional tourism effort
Identify buildings with redevelopment potential for location of brewery or restaurant	Point Roberts Chamber of Commerce, Resilient Point Roberts	Long Term	• Complete feasibility study • Engage prospective developers through targeted outreach and RFPs • Align with tourism branding and local identity

Action	Responsible Entity	Timing	Related Tasks and Considerations
Start committee to help establish and operate festivals and markets	Point Roberts Chamber of Commerce, Resilient Point Roberts	Long Term	• Define committee structure, roles, and decision-making protocols • Recruit diverse members representing local businesses, artists, nonprofits, and residents • Develop a seasonal calendar of events aligned with tourism patterns and community interests • Coordinate with existing venues (e.g., Marina, Community Center, Gulf Road) for logistics and permitting • Establish partnerships with regional tourism boards and cultural organizations • Create branding and promotional materials for events • Develop vendor guidelines and outreach strategy for market participation • Align with local food systems and agricultural initiatives to feature farm stands and artisanal goods • Explore integration with existing events like Strings & Things, Apple Harvest Festival, and July Fourth celebrations

Notes
PSE= Puget Sound Energy
RFP= request for proposals
SWT= State of Washington Tourism
USDA US Department of Agriculture
USDOT= US Department of Transportation
WSDA= Washington State Department of Agriculture
WSDOT= Wahington Department of Transportation

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Limitations

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Opinions and recommendations contained in this report apply to conditions existing when services were performed and are intended only for the client, purposes, locations, time frames, and project parameters indicated. We are not responsible for the impacts of any changes in environmental standards, practices, or regulations subsequent to performance of services. We do not warrant the accuracy of information supplied by others, or the use of segregated portions of this report.

Appendix A

Existing Conditions Report



MAUL
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Existing Conditions and Market Analysis Summary Report

Point Roberts Economic Development Strategy Study

Point Roberts, Washington

Prepared for Port of Bellingham

Project No. M0763.13.001

Prepared by



Photo: Marinas.com

Existing Conditions and Market Analysis Summary
Report
Point Roberts
Whatcom County, Washington

Prepared for:

Port of Bellingham

April 18, 2025

Project No. M0763.13.001

The material and data in this report were prepared
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Abbreviations

ACS	American Community Survey
B.C.	British Columbia
CEDS	Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy
CZM	Coastal Zone Management Program
County	Whatcom County
DAHP	Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation
DNR	Washington Department of Natural Resources
Ecology	Washington Department of Ecology
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
GRAPI	Gross Rent as A Percentage of Household Income
HCA	Habitat Conservation Area
I-5	Interstate 5
JARPA	Joint Aquatic Resource Permit Application
Mbps	Megabytes per second
NAICS	North American Industry Classification System
NRCS	Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service
The Point	Point Roberts
Port	Port of Bellingham
SMP	Shoreline Master Program
SMOCAPI	Selected Monthly Owner Costs as a Percentage of Household Income
UGA	Urban Growth Area
WCC	Whatcom County Code

1 Overview

The Port of Bellingham (Port) received a Washington State Department of Commerce Community Economic Revitalization Board planning grant to conduct an Economic Development Strategy (EDS) for Point Roberts (the Point), an unincorporated pene-exclave community in Whatcom County (County). The purpose of this EDS is to evaluate development opportunities and prepare a plan of action for Point Roberts. This Existing Conditions and Market Analysis Summary Report provides an assessment of physical, regulatory and market conditions at the Point that will impact development opportunities.

The assessment provided in this report is informed by a synthesis of past planning efforts and an analysis of publicly available data. The findings of the assessment were presented to community stakeholders through interviews and a community meeting held in February of 2025. The feedback received during this engagement process was used to refine and ground truth report findings. The findings inform the type of development that Point Roberts can support, document existing infrastructure serving Point Roberts and infrastructure gaps, and identify issues that impact economic development feasibility. Included in this report are:

- A review of existing plans, reports, and other studies relevant to the Point.
- Analysis of parcel information, infrastructure location and condition, zoning, and other environmental constraints.
- Market analysis of industries, land use, workforce, and real estate conditions in the region that will influence how the Point is developed.

The Port’s goal is to encourage economic opportunities that best suit the residents of Point Roberts. This information will be used to inform a feasibility assessment, and an action plan.

1.1 Summary of Findings

Table ES--1 summarizes key findings from the existing conditions and market assessment in this report.

Table ES-1: Summary of Existing Conditions

Category	Findings
Access	• Point Roberts is geographically isolated from Whatcom County and the mainland United States. The community can only be accessed from the rest of the county, and vice versa, by boat or via two border crossings and a 23-mile drive through Canada.
Existing Uses	• Most land on Point Roberts is dedicated to single-family rural residential use.
Infrastructure	• Point Roberts is served by water, power, and irrigation. Improvements to the water system will be required in new areas of development. • There is a gap in electrical utility service within the Small-Town Commercial district; improvements may be necessary to encourage business development. • Development in Point Roberts is constrained by the lack of a public sewer, stormwater, and natural gas service. • Slow internet speeds limit business development and remote work in Point Roberts. • Private ownership and existing use limit the potential economic opportunity of the Point Roberts Marina.
Regulatory	• Point Roberts has limited land zoned for commercial and industrial use. • Areas along the Point Roberts coastline are regulated under the county Shoreline Master Program.

Category	Findings
Natural and Cultural Resources	• Point Roberts contains 81-acres of wetlands and 1,049 -acres of habitat conservation areas that will prohibit or regulate development. • There are FEMA Floodplains along some coastal areas of Point Roberts that will be subject to floodplain development standards established in WCC 16.16.420
Environmental Cleanup	• There are three ongoing cleanups in Point Roberts commercially zoned areas related to gas station activity. Mitigation and cleanup of identified sites with ongoing cleanups may be required prior to redevelopment.
Targeted Industries	• Transportation and warehousing are leading employment sectors in Point Roberts. • During the community engagement process, stakeholders revealed that a considerable portion of employment in Point Roberts is tied to service work catering to weekend and seasonal visitors.
Workforce	• The median age of the Point Roberts population in 2023 was 56, 18 years older than the median age of the county and state. • Working aged people make up just 24.6 percent of Point Roberts’ population while people aged 55 and above make up 55.9 percent. • The public education is limited to the primary level. Middle school- and high school- aged children are required to cross two international borders each way to attend school in Blaine, Washington. • Although available, visas for Canadian workers in the US require sponsorship and are mostly reserved for highly skilled professions. This does not benefit the top two industries on Point Roberts (retail trade and warehousing) that typically do not require highly skilled workers. • A low unemployment rate on Point Roberts underscores the need to develop and retain the labor force that is younger than 25 and to encourage the working age population that is currently not in the labor force to reengage. • 69 percent of Point Roberts residents work outside of Point Roberts and 42.4 percent of workers work from home, indicating there are many Point Roberts residents who work remotely. • Most housing is owned by seasonal residents, creating a barrier to local workforce housing. • There is a dearth of multifamily housing in Point Roberts, constraining the ability to provide affordable workforce housing. • Forty seven percent of Point Roberts renters spend 35 percent or more of their income on rent. • Thirty seven percent of Point Roberts homeowners with a mortgage spend 35 percent or more of their income on their mortgage.
Real Estate Market Overview	• There is limited existing commercial building space in commercial zones on Point Roberts. • Most of the existing commercial buildings in Point Roberts are less than 5,000 square feet and more than 40 years old. • A quarter of commercially zoned space in Point Roberts is in residential use. • There are only two vacant commercially available buildings in Point Roberts listed by the Commercial Brokers Association (as of DATE). • There is one 3.4-acre undeveloped property that allows for industrial development in Point Roberts.

Opportunities

Point Roberts’ natural beauty and recreational opportunities make it a destination for vacationers and seasonal residents. The Port may market these assets to attract businesses and workforce. Although small, Point Roberts has a growing share of manufacturing employment and existing retail trade and warehousing industries. However, Point Roberts generally has limited opportunities for development in its existing condition.

Constraints

Point Roberts’ geographic isolation and limited points of entry are a central challenge Point Roberts faces when considering development opportunities. Furthermore, unlike its neighbors across the Canadian border to the north, Point Roberts does not have sewer, stormwater, or gas service. Slow internet speeds challenge general business development and the attraction of a larger remote workforce. Point Roberts contains several wetlands, habitat conservation areas, and FEMA special flood hazard areas that will further constrain or inflate the cost of development.

There is limited acreage of land zoned for commercial and industrial use. Additionally, shoreline zones established by the county Shoreline Master Program limit the uses available along the coastal sections of the Point. There is limited commercially available building space and only one 3.4-acre undeveloped property that allows for industrial development.

Point Roberts has a median age over 55 years old and there is a shortage of working-age people. The low unemployment rate on the Point underscores the need to develop and retain the labor force. There are no formal workforce development entities, and no schooling offered past the primary level in Point Roberts. Most land on Point Roberts is zoned for single-family rural residential use and is owned by non-resident owners. Furthermore, many Point Roberts residents spend 35 percent or more on their housing costs. There is no recorded vacancy for the limited multi-family housing options on Point Roberts which impacts the ability to deliver affordable workforce housing to support future development.

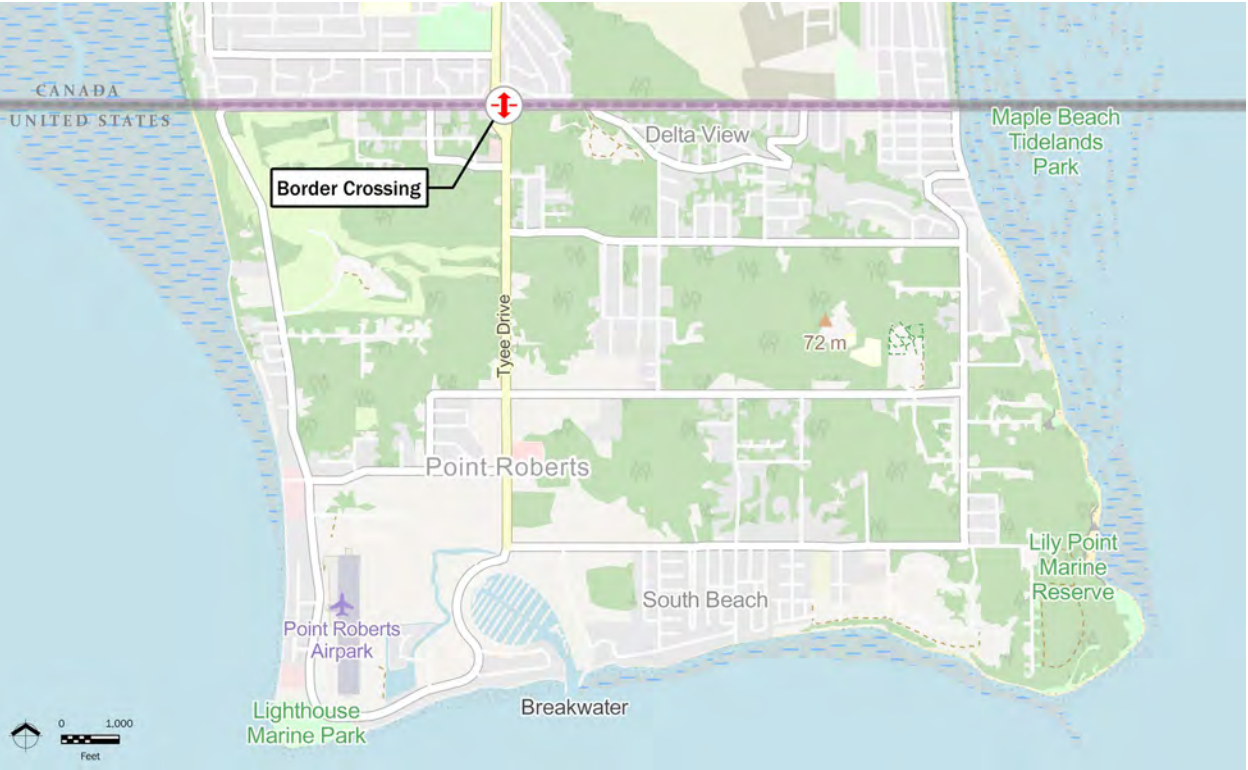
Implications for development

Significant investment in infrastructure development will be necessary if commercial and industrial development is desired. Point Roberts landowners will need to work with Whatcom County to rezone areas of Point Roberts to allow for concentrated development and additional options for multi-family housing. If development occurs, Point Roberts will need to actively market its natural beauty and recreational opportunities to attract more working-age people.

1.2 Study Area Overview

Point Roberts is a sparsely developed, unincorporated pene-exclave community in Whatcom County. The community can only be reached from the rest of the county, and vice versa, by boat or via two border crossings and a 23-mile drive through Canada (County 2022). The community is defined by its rural, natural, and coastal resort characteristics. Community assets such as natural areas, beaches, and other recreational opportunities draw Canadian residents to travel to or own a vacation home in Point Roberts (County 2017a). According to a population survey from the year 2000, nearly 75 percent of Point Roberts’ population consisted of seasonal residents (County 2017a). Limited infrastructure, geographic isolation, and community desire to maintain its rural character have kept the community relatively undeveloped.

Figure 1-1. Study Area Map



1.3 Location

Point Roberts is located on the tip of the Tsawwassen peninsula, directly west of Blaine and across the Strait of Georgia from Vancouver Island. The international border crossing to Canada separates the Point Roberts’ community from any major highways, airports, or rail stations. The Point also lacks basic community amenities such as, veterinarians, salons and barbershops among others. Point Roberts shares the peninsula with Tsawwassen, British Columbia (B.C.), a sprawling suburban center of nearly 24,000 with high-density commercial strip malls and traditional single-family residential areas (County 2017a). Tsawwassen, a Vancouver Suburb, has the dense development and infrastructure that Point Roberts lacks.

Figure 1-2. Regional Context



1.4 Study Area History

In 1846 Point Roberts officially became a US territory as the result of an US/British treaty making the 49th Parallel the north-south dividing line (County 2017a). A colony of Icelandic homesteaders moved to the peninsula and established a fishing community in the late 1800s. The community transitioned to a resort community that is highly dependent on US/Canadian monetary exchange rate in the 20th century (County 2017a). According to the 2017 Point Roberts Sub-Area Plan, more US residents have chosen to move to Point Roberts over the past 20 years, but many of the platted lots are owned by Canadians and the majority of the visitors to Point Roberts come from the greater Vancouver area.

1.5 Previous Planning

1.5.1 Point Roberts Sub-Area Plan

The 2017 Point Roberts Sub-Area Plan provides specific guidance on the establishment of future uses at Point Roberts consistent with the direction of the May 1997 Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan (County 2017a). The Sub-Area Plan makes observations related to land use, economic development, and community vision in Point Roberts and offers potential solutions to identified constraints.

Land use

There are a significant number of platted but undeveloped residential lots in Point Roberts that are the result of speculative investment and development in the mid-20th century. There are approximately 3,400 lots platted at urban densities in Point Roberts, 40 percent of which remain undeveloped due to their small size, undesirable location and the lack of adequate infrastructure to facilitate their development (County 2017a). Most of these substandard lots are in the interior of Point Roberts, as the more desirable waterfront land is

prioritized for development. The existing substandard residential lots represent 40 percent of Point Roberts’ “future development inventory.” Lack of water supply and wastewater systems are the most substantial infrastructure related impediment to interior development of Point Roberts. The Sub-Area plan proposes the following solutions to resolve identified development constraints:

- Mandate replats with reduced density.
- Consolidate and simplify Point Roberts zoning designations.
- Limit sewer service area in the exterior sections of the island to channel services to the interior.
- Implement new development standards.
- Plan future land uses within Point Roberts that are not tied to urban densities and eventual incorporation.
- Designate Point Roberts as an Urban Growth Area (UGA).

Build-out analysis of the Point predicts a significant population increase if sewer and stormwater infrastructure are provided to the area. The community voiced their desire to maintain a rural-residential character while developing sustainable economic development during the community engagement process for the Sub-Area Plan. The Sub-Area plan offers the following solutions to promote a balanced approach to economic development:

- Sustainable tourism – Centered in the promotion of annual festivals and the development of smaller hotels and lodges catering to the multi-day visitor and conventions/conferences.
- Create a focused mixed-use village center – Centered in higher-density “village-scale” (two to three story) residential and pedestrian-orientated commercial uses.
- High tech & office development – Centered in international and professional needs and located adjacent to the Village Center.
- Redirected & focused residential uses – Centered in higher-density Village Center uses and low-density residential uses in other sections of Point Roberts.

Economy

According to the Sub-Area Plan, Point Roberts experiences seasonal demands for services but currently lacks the year-round resident base to support a diverse economy (County 2017a). Commercial activity is closely tied to the US/Canadian currency exchange. The main economic goal outlined in the 2017 Sub-Area Plan is to foster and promote a strong and diverse economy that will sustain fluctuations caused by the seasonality of population on Point Roberts and impacts caused by the fluctuation of US/Canadian currency exchange. Other economic goals identified in the Sub-Area Plan include providing educational opportunities including job training, ensuring an efficient infrastructure system, and supporting effective working relationships. The Sub-Area Plan reiterates the following economic diversification and development strategies that were introduced in the 1999 Point Roberts Strategic Economic Plan:

- Increasing retail shopping opportunities
- Development of arts, crafts, galleries & other specialty goods
- Developing more diverse eating and drinking establishments
- Increase the number of camping/Recreational Vehicles facilities, Bed & Breakfasts, and small hotels
- Positioning Point Roberts as the US headquarters for Canadian firms
- Make Point Roberts an efficient place for the Canadian film business

Overview

- Develop high tech business opportunities for data processing & internet-based businesses

Community Vision

Various group activities were conducted throughout the Sub-Area planning process. Much community comment was received noting that the urban development densities in Tsawwassen were not desired in Point Roberts. Additional public comments were centered on the need for a focused community vision (County 2017a). During this process, the Point Roberts community drafted the following vision statement that reflects a desire to foster strategic and thoughtful development while retaining its unique rural residential character:

Point Roberts is a small, quiet, diverse and geographically unique American community located in a magnificent natural setting in close proximity to a major Canadian metropolitan area. The Point’s unique maritime location and natural environment are its greatest asset and are integral to community character. Point Roberts strives to retain its small town character while promoting focused development that is sustainable and appropriate.

1.5.2 Whatcom County CEDS 2022-2026

The 2022-2026 County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) is a strategic plan that outlines the County’s economic development goals, priorities, and actions to achieve economic growth (County 2022). The strategy highlights Point Roberts as a “highly unusual geographic feature of Whatcom County” with a substantial unincorporated community. Point Roberts faces development vulnerabilities including inadequate internet speeds, lack of access to healthcare, and heavy reliance on open border crossings. The Lighthouse Marine Park boat launch repair project is identified in the CEDS project list. This project includes \$50,000 worth of repairs to a boat launch that was damaged during a 2018 storm.

Goal 4.3 of the CEDS is “Work with border communities and cities in Whatcom County, such as Birch Bay, Blaine, Lynden, the Nooksack Valley, Point Roberts, and Sumas, on US-Canada border issues and economic development opportunities.” The County CEDS identified the deliverable of this goal to be an exploration of opportunities, for economic diversification and improved infrastructure to reduce dependence on the US/Canada land border. The following additional CEDS goals are pertinent to economic development in Point Roberts:

Goal 1.5: Support innovative recreation industries and projects that have the potential to increase sustainable tourism, value-added manufacturing, and/or create new or improved infrastructure and transportation benefits to the community.

Goal 1.12: Support partner activities to develop local markets.

Goal 2.1: Support and promote partners that work on transportation and utility improvements and development.

Goal 2.2: Support enhanced coordination and expedited, sustainable, and business friendly processes for county-wide planning and permitting.

Goal 2.3: Work with partners to develop and support infrastructure construction, including broadband, and funding opportunities.

Goal 4.1: Develop a strategy to collaborate with Canadian companies with goal of expanding to Whatcom County.

Goal 4.2: Support and promote the work of partners who work directly on US-Canada relations and cross border issues.

Goal 4.3: Continue to develop relationships with Canadian economic development partners.

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Goal 6.4: Participate in long-term recovery and reopening discussions to ensure commercial and trade openness along the US-Canada border during and after the COVID-19 closure.

1.5.3 Point Roberts 2020 Economic Profile

The Point Roberts 2020 Economic Profile, conducted by the Western Washington University Center for Economic and Business Research in 2019, provides a basic overview of the Point Roberts economy and identifies factors that may impact it (WWU 2019). However, the findings of this report are not further utilized in this Existing Conditions and Market Assessment Report due to the transformative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the local economy. The following economic data points are presented to offer a snapshot of the pre-pandemic economy:

- The average wage in Point Roberts is generally lower than that of Whatcom County.
- Both Point Roberts and Whatcom County employ a significant number of people in the retail sector.
- The County and Point Roberts share five additional common industries. Transportation and warehousing; arts, entertainment, and recreation.
- In 2019, the largest group was between 55 and 64 years of age and over half of the population (53.3 percent), is over 55 years of age.
- Within the data, Point Roberts demonstrates a low occupancy rate for both owners and renters. This is due to the fact that seasonal, recreational, or occasional use homes make up the majority of units, which are classified as vacant by the Census
- The average assessed values of new construction have been steadily increasing since 1992.
- Retail trade makes up the largest portion of the gross business income within Point Roberts, followed by Construction and Professional Services.
- Retail sales trends fluctuate with the Canadian-US dollar exchange rate.
- The cost-of-living index is the same between Whatcom County and Point Roberts.
- Campsite revenues consistently increased, and boat launch revenues were variable throughout 2014 to 2019.

2 Utilities and Infrastructure

This section provides an overview of the existing utilities and infrastructure present on Point Roberts. Table 2-1 lists the service, service provider, if the service is provided to Point Roberts, if investment is needed to deliver service and support future industrial development, and notes for additional context.

Point Roberts currently has access to potable water, fire flow, power, broadband, and irrigation. Based on an engineering evaluation of existing utilities completed for this report by Maul Foster & Alongi, Inc. in 2025, water, power, and irrigation services may be sufficient to support limited economic development. Point Roberts does not have a public sewer, stormwater, or natural gas service which limits its development potential. Investments in a public wastewater system and a public stormwater system would allow for denser and more cost-efficient development. Also, providing access to a more reliable and faster internet service alternative would support economic growth.

Table 2-1. Infrastructure Summary

Utility	Utility Provider	Provided to in Point Roberts	Notes
Potable Water/ Fire flow	Points Roberts Water District No. 4	Yes	Potable water and fire services are currently supplied by Point Roberts Water District No. 4 through a series of reservoirs. Most of the development area is serviced by 8-inch and 6-inch water mains. These mains are sufficient to provide potable water and fire flow to expanded development. A water main sizing of 6-inches is recommended to provide sufficient fire flow. Figure 2-1 shows the current and planned water system coverage for Point Roberts. Based on this map, most tax parcels have or are planned to have access to a 6” water main along their street frontage. If additional areas of development are identified, investment in 6-inch water mains will need to be considered. In addition, the size and number of water reservoirs will need to be evaluated and may need additional investment to provide sufficient flow to areas of new development.
Wastewater	None	No	Point Roberts utilizes private septic systems and a large On-site Sewage System at the Point Roberts Marina Resort. The use of private septic systems as the primary source of wastewater control limits the size, cost, and ease of development. The current need for wastewater control is met, but investment in a centralized sewer system would encourage development and increase property values. A sewer system would provide additional protection for the wetlands and protected species habitats found in Point Roberts (See Section 4 of this report). Due to the high cost of investing in a central sewer system, investment in a smaller, more focused area of development could be more cost-efficient while still providing incentive for development.

Utility	Utility Provider	Provided to in Point Roberts	Notes
Stormwater	None	No	Surface drainage occurs through natural gullies and open drainage ditches in the upland areas and through a ditch network in the lowlands (County 2017a). Meeting stormwater discharge requirements would likely require expensive, large systems. As a result, investment in stormwater infrastructure may be necessary to encourage higher density development. This system would create more developable space, would minimize impacts to the environment, and would make development more cost-effective for potential developers. A drainage masterplan is currently being developed for Point Roberts.
Power	Puget Sound Energy	Yes	Power is provided to Point Roberts by electrical line. Most parcels within the development area are within 60 feet of an existing electrical line, as shown in Figure 2-2. However, there are several parcels within the Small-Town Commercial district that are not within 60 feet of an electric line. More information may be needed to understand how these parcels currently access power and how that may affect future construction and connection to power. Investment in power infrastructure in this district may be necessary to encourage new development.
Natural Gas	Not Available	No	Natural gas is currently not supplied to Point Roberts. Natural gas can typically provide an inexpensive source of power. However, providing natural gas to Point Roberts would likely require supply from Canada. This could be highly expensive to implement and may not provide enough economic benefit to justify the complicated logistics and high cost of investing and importing this utility.
Internet	Delta Cable	Yes	Internet is provided by Whidbey Telecom throughout most of Point Roberts. However, speeds are below 25 Mbps (Whidbey Telecom, n.d.), the speed that allows users to do basic internet functions, such as utilizing streaming services. Businesses may turn to satellite internet, which can provide faster internet speeds than is currently provided, but at a higher cost (Forbes, 2025). Investment in reliable and fast internet will be necessary to develop commercial, industrial, and remote technical service businesses.
Irrigation	County	Yes	Investments made to improve the current irrigation water and conveyance system in Point Roberts is not expected to provide significant benefit to future development.

Figure 2-1-. Water System

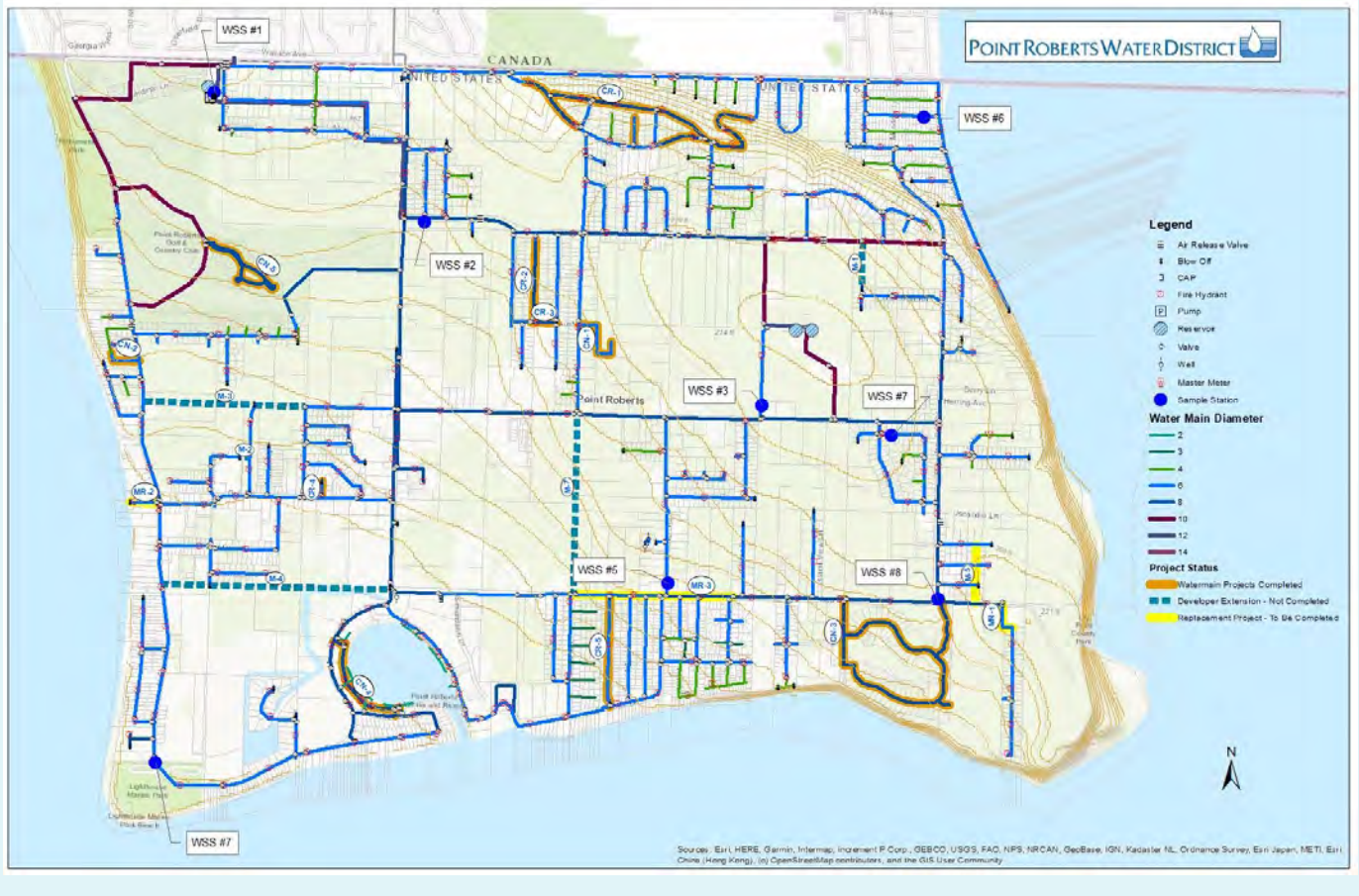


Figure 2-2-. Power and Sewer System



2.1 Access

Primary & secondary access: Port Roberts can only be reached from the rest of the county, and vice versa, by boat or via two border crossings and a 23-mile drive through Canada (County 2022). Tyee Drive, a north-south oriented rural major collector road, connects the community to the border crossing at Point Roberts. There is a grid network of roads and dead-end cul-de-sacs throughout the Point. The community is served by a small airstrip and a limited, volunteer-operated transit service consisting of one van. The Point Roberts Marina is privately owned and is utilized as a resort and for moorage by recreational boaters, but not for commercial uses. The Point has no consistent ferry service to mainland US or elsewhere.

There is a border crossing to Canada between the community and any major highways, airports, or rail stations. B.C. Highway 17 in Canada connects Tsawwassen to Provincial Highway 99 and Vancouver, B.C. Vancouver has a major regional airport, extensive transit system and other transportation services offered by major metropolitan hubs.

Parking: The narrow rural roadways connecting Point Roberts neighborhoods to the main roads limit the availability of street parking. The limited commercial businesses on the Point are served by parking lots. Parking is also made available for recreational activities across the Point including Lily Point Marine Reserve and Light House Marine Park.

ADA accessibility: There are almost no sidewalk networks in Point Roberts.

3 Regulatory Analysis

3.1 Zoning Overview

Most existing zoning designations in Point Roberts support rural residential, recreation, and open space (Whatcom County Code Title 20). The only existing zone that supports any form of industrial development is Rural Industrial and Manufacturing (RIM), which allows for light manufacturing, fabrication, and office use. Commercial use is supported in the Rural General Commercial (RGC) and Small-Town Commercial (STC) zones. The majority of Point Roberts consists of rural residential zones Rural Residential-1 (RR1) Rural Residential-2 (RR2), Rural Residential – 5A (R5A), and transition zones (TZ) which hold space for future residential development or natural preserve/agriculture use. Figure 3-1 shows the existing zoning designations across the Point and Table 3-1 provides a description of those zoning designations.

Figure 3-1 Zoning

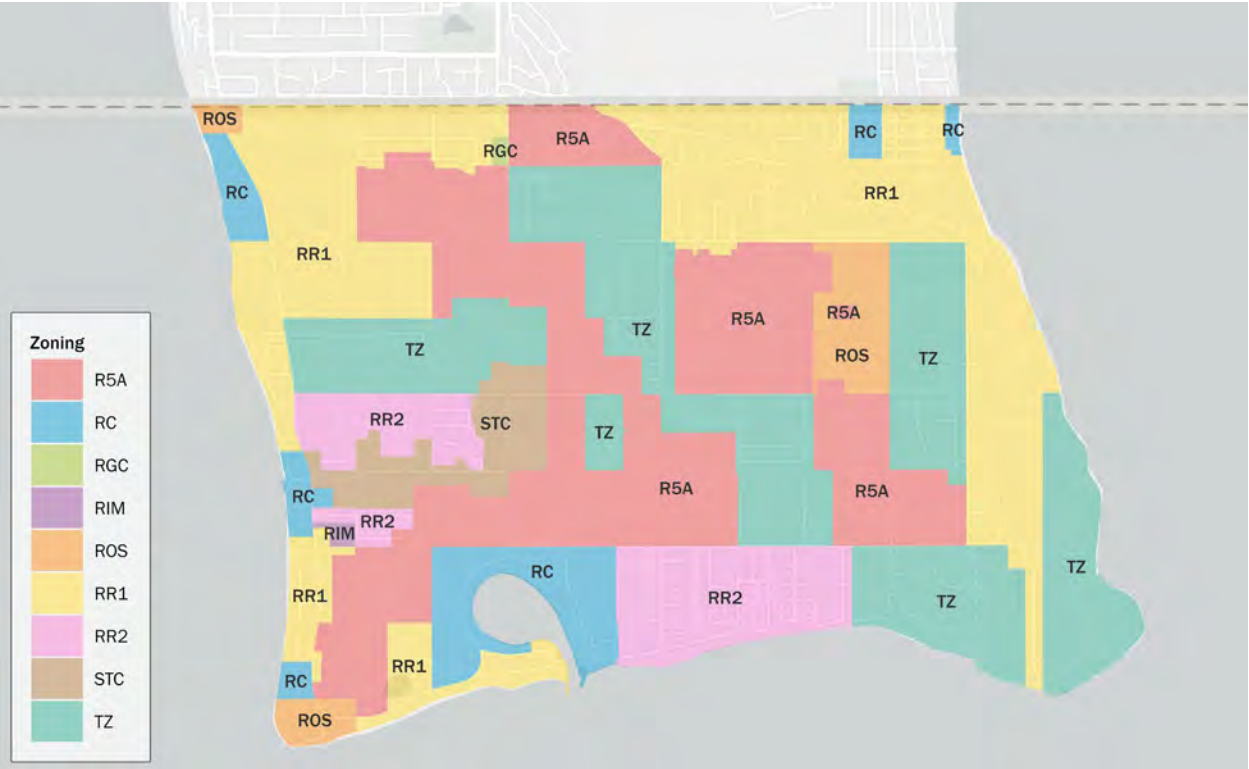


Table 3-1. Allowed Uses

Zoning Designation	Overview	Allowed Uses	Conditional Uses
Small Town Commercial (STC)	Provides for a range of commercial uses and services to meet the everyday needs of rural residents and natural resource industries, to provide employment opportunities for residents of the rural area.	Retail, auto service stations, veterinary practices, grocery stores, day cares, public markets, self-storage, restaurants, residential, public facilities	Some public and community type uses, light fabrication
87 total acres			

Zoning Designation	Overview	Allowed Uses	Conditional Uses
Resort Commercial (RC)	Provides land areas which, through their natural location and setting and manmade attributes, attract resort activities .	Retail and office, restaurant, lodging, residential, public uses	Auto repair, gas stations, hotels/condos with more than 16 units, recreation uses
166 total acres			
Rural General Commercial (RGC)	Provides for limited commercial activities which serve the surrounding community and provide job opportunities for residents of the rural area.	Retail and office, self-service storage, restaurants, single family or duplex style home, auto repair, public uses	Hotels, kennels, commercial truck servicing, recreational type uses, public uses, fabrication of mechanical equipment, storage and warehouse
2 total acres			
Rural Industrial and Manufacturing (RIM)	Provides for industrial and manufacturing uses that are commonly accepted in rural areas, to provide employment opportunities for residents of rural areas.	Light industrial manufacturing, office use, small warehousing, boat and equipment repair, some public uses	Heavy industrial manufacturing of non-metallic products, and petroleum, auto repair, solid waste
5 total acres			
Transitional Zones (TZ)	The intent of this district is to create and protect a permanent network of interconnected open spaces and to provide the opportunity for development of building sites which maximize the efficient use of both infrastructure and land by allowing an option for clustering residential lots.	Single family dwellings, public parks, agriculture, natural preserves, trails	Public facilities, schools, churches, retirement homes, golf courses, plant nurseries, campground, athletic facilities, solid waste facilities
720 total acres			
Rural Residential-1 (RR1)	Maintains the low density rural residential character of the areas designated as rural neighborhoods or rural communities. Allows for one dwelling unit per acre.	Single family residential, parks, agriculture, private docks, trails, boarding homes	Public facilities, churches, recreation, campgrounds, feed lots, plant nurseries, athletic fields, schools
582 total acres			
Rural Residential-2 (RR2)	Maintains the low density rural residential character of the areas designated as rural neighborhoods or rural communities. Allows for two dwelling units per acre.	Single family residential, parks, agriculture, private docks, trails, boarding homes	Public facilities, churches, recreation, campgrounds, feed lots, plant nurseries, athletic fields, schools
156 total acres			
Rural Residential – 5A (R5A)	Maintains the low density rural residential character of the areas designated as rural neighborhoods or rural communities. Allows for one dwelling unit per five acres.	Single family residential, parks, agriculture, private docks, trails, boarding homes	Public facilities, churches, recreation, campgrounds, feed lots, plant nurseries, athletic fields, schools
763 total acres			
Rural Open Space (ROS)	Provides a variety of services, optimizing public investments, conserving recreation and open space resources and uses, and promoting compatibility between public functions and surrounding land uses.	Public Parks	Public golf courses, unenclosed stadiums, refreshment stands, campgrounds, shooting range, band shells, fish propagation
98 total acres			

Source: WCC Title 20

Notes: All other uses not identified in the table as an allowed or conditional use are considered prohibited.

4 Environmental Review

The presence of critical areas including frequently flooded areas, critical aquifer recharge areas, geologically hazardous areas, environmental contaminants, wetlands, and other natural resources will impact development feasibility in Point Roberts. Any major development will be subject to State Environmental Policy Act review.

4.1 Cultural Resources

The Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation's (DAHP) archaeological predictive model tool shows Point Roberts as having a high or very high risk of having archaeological resources based on environmental factors (DAHP n.d.). Close consultation with DAHP will be required prior to any large-scale sewer or stormwater infrastructure improvements. Tribal consultation may be required with the following tribes:

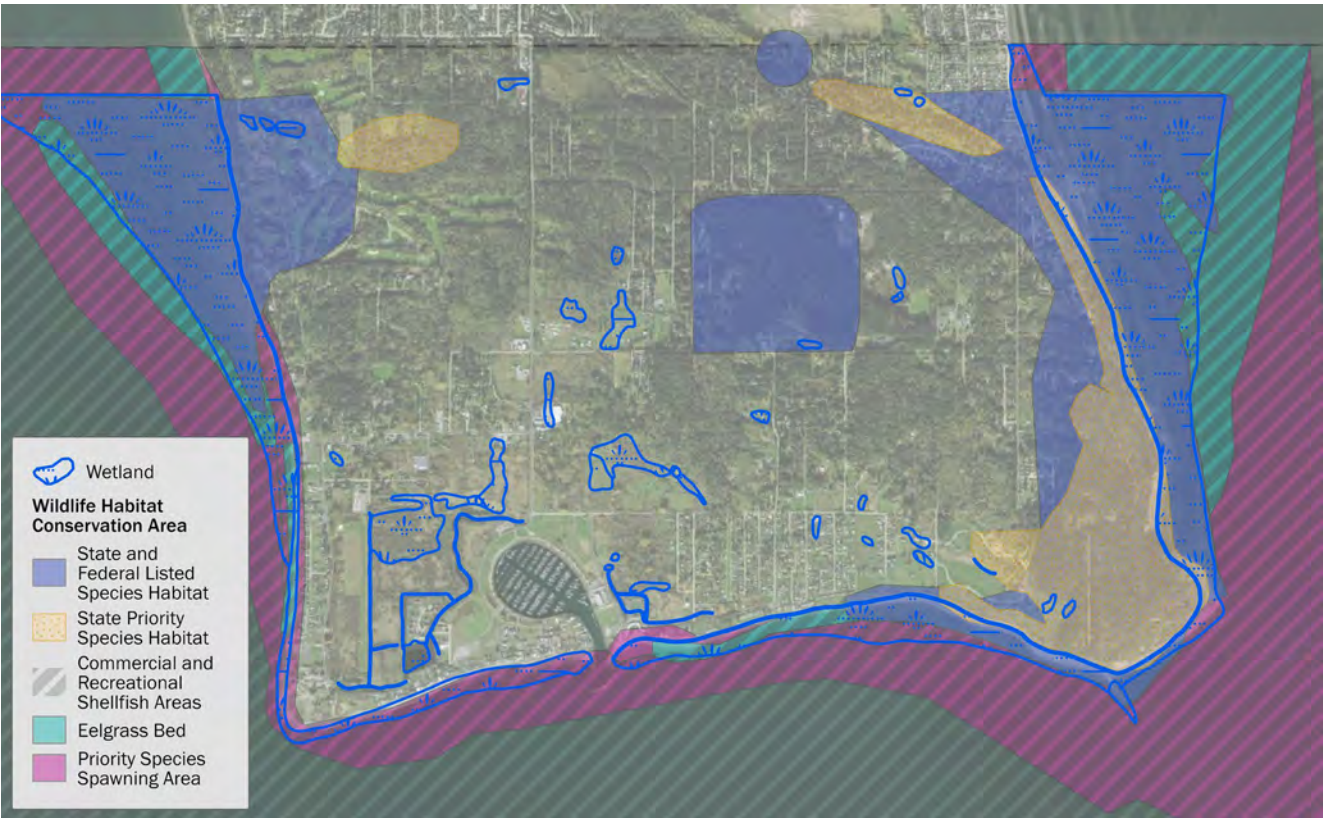
- Colville Confederated Tribes
- Lummi Nation
- Nooksack Tribe
- Samish Nation
- Sauk-Suiattle Tribe
- Snoqualmie Tribe
- Swinomish Tribe
- Upper Skagit Tribe

4.2 Wetlands and Critical Habitats

Development in Whatcom County wetlands is either prohibited or heavily regulated and requires mitigation based on the type of wetland (County 2017b). According to the US Fish and Wildlife Service National Wetlands Inventory, Point Roberts contains 81-acres¹ of wetlands that would impact future development. The larger wetlands are concentrated in the southwest corner of Point Roberts near the Marina and Airpark. All wetland development is subject to WCC 16.16.1620 and requires a Joint Aquatic Resource Permit (JARPA) issued by the Army Corps of Engineers. Figure 4-1 shows locations of wetlands and Habitat Conservation Areas (HCA) in Point Roberts.

HCAs are established in WCC 16.16.700 to regulate development as to minimize habitat fragmentation and degradation. Point Roberts contains 1,049 -acres of HCAs that are distributed throughout Point Roberts including the entire shoreline area. Development in HCAs including stream buffers, federally listed species, state priority habitats, critical saltwater habitats, and natural ponds and lakes is subject to review of a Whatcom County technical administrator and otherwise regulated under WCC 16.16.720.

Figure 4-1. Wetlands and Habitat Conservation Areas

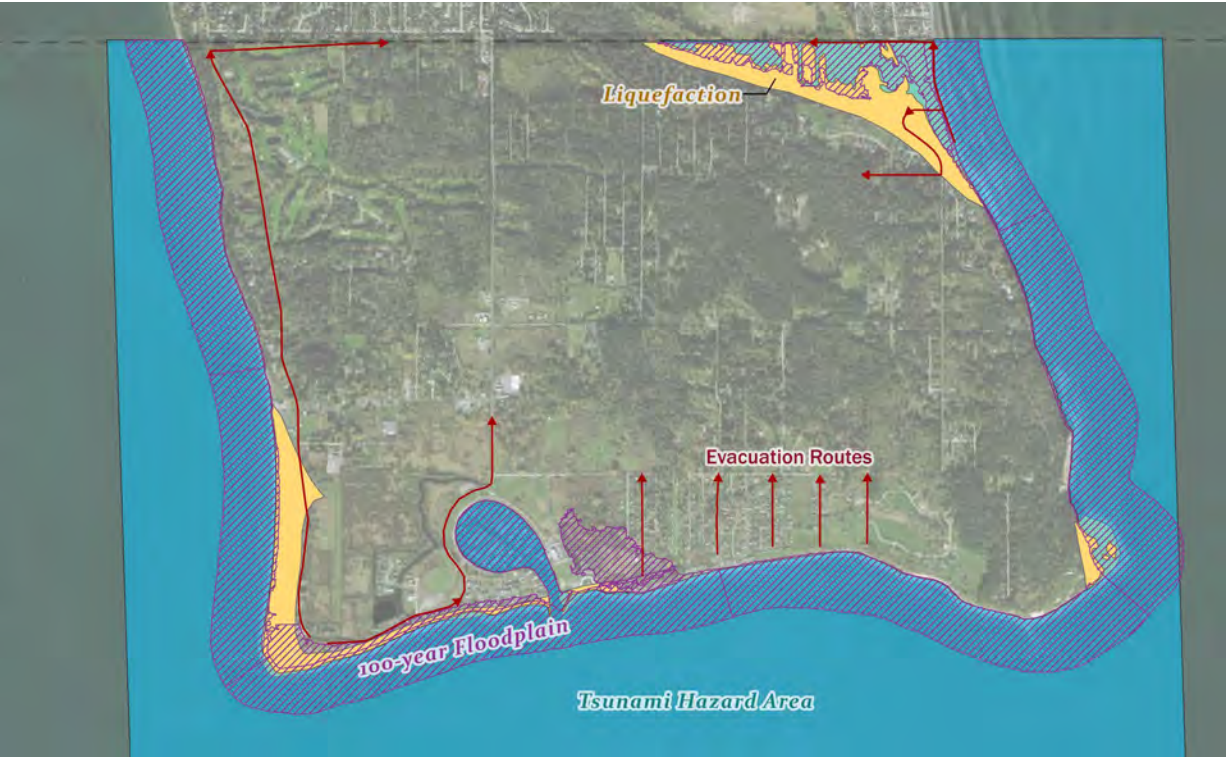


4.3 Geologic Hazards

Figure 4-2 displays geologic hazards present in Point Roberts. According to Washington Department of Natural Resource's Washington Geologic Information Portal, the study area is susceptible to tsunami hazards and landslide hazards (DNR n.d.). Development in geologic hazard areas in Point Roberts will be required to comply with development standards set in Chapter 16.16.320 of the WCC.

¹ This area only includes on land wetlands. The total acreage of wetlands including those on the shore and beyond it is 757 acres.

Figure 4-2. Geologic Hazard Areas



4.4 Geotechnical Studies

According to the US Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) soil mapper, most soils in Point Roberts are either somewhat excessively drained or moderately well drained. NRCS soil mapper development suitability analysis reveals most area in Point Roberts is “somewhat limited” for small commercial development (NRCS 2024).

4.5 Floodplains, Waters, and Shorelines

4.5.1 Coastal Zone Management

Whatcom County is one of the state’s 15 counties designated as Coastal Zone Areas (Ecology n.d.). Therefore, development in Point Roberts is subject to regulation under the Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology) Coastal Zone Management (CZM) Program. Compliance with the program is reviewed if a federal action or federally funded project is initiated. For example, if a Joint Permit Application is submitted to the Army Corps of Engineers for development in a wetland, the project will also require review through the CZM Program.

4.6 Floodplains

According to Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Map panels 53073C0580F and 53073C0585E, there are FEMA designated special flood hazard areas located along the coastline, by the marina, and on the northeast corner of Point Roberts coastal areas (see Figure 4-2) (FEMA 2019a; FEMA 2019b). Joint Aquatic Resource Permit Application requirements and the floodplain development standards established in WCC 16.16.420 and 17.12.012, respectively, would apply to development within floodplains.

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4.7 Shorelines

Figure 4-3 shows the areas of Point Roberts included in the Whatcom County Shoreline Master Program (SMP). Development of SMP shorelines requires a substantial development permit and is otherwise regulated under WCC Chapter 23.60.

Figure 4-3. Shoreline Zones



The shorelines of Point Roberts contain the following designations:

Urban: Provides for intensive development of water-oriented commercial, transportation, and industrial uses and accommodates mixed use developments such as those consisting of urban density residential, commercial and industrial uses, while protecting existing shoreline ecological functions and processes and restoring shoreline ecological functions and/or processes in areas that have been previously degraded.

Urban Resort: The purpose of the urban resort shoreline area is to provide for intensive residential and commercial uses geared to the needs of tourists and day visitors while protecting existing shoreline ecological functions and processes. Emphasis is on hotels, motels, shops, restaurants, commercial rental campgrounds, rental cabins, and shoreline-related recreation facilities.

Shoreline Residential: The residential shoreline area accommodates residential development and accessory structures.

Natural: The purpose of the natural shoreline area is to ensure long-term preservation of shorelines inside or outside urban growth areas that are ecologically intact.

Conservancy: The purpose of the conservancy shoreline area is to retain shoreline ecological functions in areas where important ecological processes have not been substantially degraded by human activities. Conservancy areas are designated outside of urban growth areas. The primary management goal is to preserve shoreline ecological functions and processes by avoiding forms of development that would be

incompatible with existing functions and processes, as well as identify and focus restoration efforts in areas where benefits to overall functions and processes can be realized. This policy should be furthered by keeping overall intensity of development or use low, and by maintaining most of the area’s natural character.

Table 4-1 shows the allowed uses in these shoreline designations.

Table 4-1 Allowed Uses in Shoreline Areas of Point Roberts

Uses	Urban	Urban Resort	Shoreline Residential	Conservancy	Natural
Residential	P	P	P	C	X
Water- oriented port/industrial	P	X	X	X	X
Water-oriented commercial	P	P	P	C	X
Water- oriented recreation	P	P	P	P	P
Agriculture	C	X	C	P	C
Aquaculture	P	C	C	P	C
Non-water-oriented port/industrial	C	X	X	X	X
Non-water-oriented commercial	C	C	C	C	X
Essential public facilities	C	C	C	C	X
Transportation facilities	P	P	P	C	X
Local utility development	P	P	P	C	X
Boating facilities	P	P	P	C	X
Mining	X	X	X	C	X
Forest practices	X	X	X	P	C

Source
WCC Chapter 23.100

Notes
P= Permitted use
C= Conditionally permitted use
X= Prohibited use

4.8 Scenic Area

Point Roberts is not within a national scenic area.

4.9 Recreation

There are several recreational activities available in Point Roberts including but not limited to beach and water recreation, golfing, wildlife observation hiking, and biking. Preservation of recreational opportunities is supported in the 2017 Port Roberts Sub-Area Plan (County 2017a).

4.10 Noise

Development related noise generated from heavy machinery, construction, and personal vehicle traffic during construction would cause short-term noise impacts. The rural residential communities of Point Roberts may be sensitive to construction noise or additional noise generated by development due to the existing quiet nature of low-density rural development.

4.11 Dust

Any construction of improvements in Point Roberts will likely generate some dust. Contractors will be required to implement dust control measures such as water application to exposed soil surfaces and covering of soil stockpiles to minimize fugitive dust as necessary.

4.12 Environmental Justice

According to the US Environmental Protection Agency’s EJScreen tool, the study area has notable drinking water non-compliance (EPA n.d.). It is unlikely further development will adversely impact any vulnerable populations in the area. Investment in water infrastructure would mitigate drinking water quality issues and enable further development in Point Roberts.

4.13 Lands of Long-Term Significance

Point Roberts does not have zones that allow for commercial opportunities in agriculture, forestry, or mining. In general, Point Roberts lacks adequate transportation and infrastructure for a natural resource economy. There are no lands of long-term significance in Point Roberts.

4.14 Environmental Site Assessment

Ecology’s “What’s In My Neighborhood: Toxics Cleanup” tool, identifies eight cleanup sites in Point Roberts, five of which are considered complete (Ecology 2024). Almost all past and present cleanup sites are in commercial zones. There are three ongoing cleanups in Point Roberts totaling three acres related to historic gas station activity. Mitigation and cleanup of identified sites with ongoing cleanups may be required prior to redevelopment. All Point Roberts cleanups identified by Ecology are listed in Table 4-2.

Table 4-2. Environmental Cleanups in Point Roberts

Site Name	Site ID	Address	Status	Parcel Acres	Zoning
Point Roberts Exxon	5522	365 TYEE DR	No Further Action	2.3	STC
Point Roberts Gas Barn	6831	486 TYEE DR	Cleanup Started	1.7	STC
Point Roberts Landfill	3810	2030 BENSON RD	No Further Action	1.5	R5A
Point Roberts Marina Resort	13138	713 SIMUNDSON DR	No Further Action	NA	RC
Point Roberts Marina Waste Oil Tank 1998	8170	713 SIMUNDSON DR	No Further Action	NA	RC
Point Roberts Shell	6280	423 TYEE DR	No Further Action	2.4	STC
Point Roberts Texaco	9414	1557 GULF RD	Cleanup Started	0.8	STC
USA Station 319	10695	490 TYEE DR	Cleanup Started	0.5	STC

Notes
Ecology 2024
NA= Not available

5 Market Analysis

Due to the unique classification of Point Roberts as neither a city nor a designated area, in addition to its small size, it should be noted that data errors may result from attempts to extract data specific to Point Roberts. Data used in this Market Analysis is sourced from the most recent reports from the US Census Bureau (Census), Washington Employment Security Department (WESD), County Assessor Data, and CoStar, a third-party real estate data company.

5.1 Workforce Analysis

5.1.1 Population

A growing regional population is important to maintain a ready labor force. As of 2023 Point Roberts was home to 1,275 residents. According to the US Census Bureau 2023 American Community Survey (ACS) estimates, Point Roberts gained 84 residents, a rate of 1.4 percent per year, between 2018 and 2023 (Census 2025a). The population growth rate in Point Roberts was greater than both the county and state between 2018 and 2023. Between 2018 and 2023 the county gained about 11,620 residents and grew at a slower rate than the state (Census 2025a). The median age of the Point Roberts population in 2023 was 56, 18 years older than the median age of the county and state. According to the 2023 ACS, nearly 40 percent of residents are foreign-born (Census 2025a) Table 5-1 shows the population growth of Point Roberts, the county and the state between 2018 and 2023.

Table 5-1. Population Growth 2018-2023

Geography	2018 Population	2023 Population	Median Age (2023)	Population Change	Annual Growth Rate
Point Roberts	1,191	1,275	56	84	1.4%
Whatcom County	216,812	228,432	38	11,620	1.1%
Washington State	7,294,336	7,740,984	38	446,648	1.2%

Source
Census. 2025b. ACS 5-Year Estimates Data Profiles: ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates. Washington, D.C. Accessed on January 3, 2025.
https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDP5Y2023.DP05?t=Age+and+Sex&g=040XX00US53_050XX00US53073_160XX00US5355015

5.1.2 Working Age Population in Point Roberts

The prime working age population is defined as the population between the ages of 25 and 54 (BLS n.d.). According to ACS estimates, the percentage of working age population grew by 10 people or 5.1 percent between 2010 and 2020 (Census 2025b). Between 2010 and 2020 the percentage of people under 24 shrunk by 1.7 percent and those aged 55 years or older decreased by 3.5 percent. The majority of the Point Roberts population is 55 years old and over. The distribution of working age population in Point Roberts is shown in Table 5-2.

Table 5-2. Point Roberts Prime Working Age Population 2010-2020

Age	2010	%	2020	%	Difference	%
24 and under	207	16.1%	158	14.4%	-49	-1.7%
Working Age (25-54)	317	24.6%	327	29.7%	10	5.1%

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Age	2010	%	2020	%	Difference	%
55 and over	763	59.4%	615	55.9%	-148	-3.5%
Total	1,286		1100		-187	-0.1%

Source
Census. 2025c. ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables. Age and Sex. Washington, D.C. Accessed on January 3, 2025.
https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2020.S0101?g=040XX00US53_050XX00US53073_160XX00US5355015
Working aged people make up just 29.7 percent of Point Roberts’ population. This is smaller when compared to both the county and state which consist of 37.7 percent and 41.4 percent of working-age population, respectively.

5.1.3 Working Age Population in Whatcom County

Between 2010 and 2020, the prime working age population in the county grew by 6,494 people, or 0.8 percent, per year. Between 2020 and 2030, the state projects that the prime working age in the county will increase by another 9,750 people, or 1.2 percent, per year (WESD 2024a). This is illustrated in Table 5-3.

Table 5-3. Whatcom County Prime Working Age Population Projection 2010 to 2030

Working Age	2010	2020	2030	2010–2020		2020–2030	
				Change	Annual Growth Rate	Change	Annual Growth Rate
25–29	14,019	14,759	14,613	740	0.5%	-146	-0.1%
30–34	12,150	15,189	14,540	3,039	2.5%	-649	-0.4%
35–39	11,676	14,684	15,885	3,008	2.6%	1,201	0.8%
40–44	12,319	13,690	17,649	1,371	1.1%	3,959	2.9%
45–49	13,532	12,650	16,297	-882	-0.7%	3,647	2.9%
50–54	13,797	13,015	14,753	-782	-0.6%	1,738	1.3%
Total	77,493	83,987	93,737	6,494	0.8%	9,750	1.2%

Source
WESD. 2024a. Whatcom County Profile, Population by Age & Sex, Whatcom County, 1980 – 2040. Washington State Employment Security Division. Last Modified June 2022.

5.1.4 Workforce Development

The working age population in Point Roberts is limited and there are no dedicated workforce agencies on the Point. Additionally, the public education offered in Point Roberts is limited to primary education. Middle school- and high school- aged children are required to cross two international borders each way to attend school in Blaine, Washington (Visit Point Roberts n.d.). Despite this barrier, Point Roberts has a greater percentage of people who graduated high school or higher and people with a Bachelor’s degree or higher than both the county and state (Census 2025c). This could be the result of people 55 and over with high educational attainment migrating to Point Roberts to work from home or retire. Educational attainment in Point Roberts, the county, and the state is shown in Table 5-4.

Table 5-4. Educational Attainment, 2023

Educational Attainment	Point Roberts	Whatcom County	Washington State
Less than 9th grade	0.5%	2.2%	3.4%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	2.2%	4.1%	4.4%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	16.8%	21.4%	21.7%
Some college, no degree	23.0%	23.6%	21.7%

Educational Attainment	Point Roberts	Whatcom County	Washington State
Associate's degree	9.1%	10.7%	10.0%
Bachelor's degree	29.0%	23.5%	23.7%
Graduate or professional degree	19.4%	14.6%	15.1%
High school graduate or higher	97.3%	93.8%	92.2%
Bachelor's degree or higher	48.4%	38.1%	38.8%

Source

Census. 2025d. ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables. Educational Attainment. Washington, D.C. Accessed on January 31, 2025. https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2023.S1501?t=EducationalAttainment&g=040XX00US53_050XX00US53073_160XX00US5355015.

Point Roberts might attract Canadian workers to address challenges in workforce related to an elderly population and a lack of educational and skill development opportunities. However, there are challenges to developing a Canadian workforce in the United States. Long-term work visas available to Canadians are mostly limited to highly skilled and educated workers.

A common long-term work visa for Canadians working in the US is a H-1B visa for professionals which is granted to foreign workers with specialized skills or knowledge in high demand within the US. The number of H-1B visas available each year is limited, with demand exceeding supply (Malescu Law 2024). A NAFTA Professional (TN) Visa is like H-1B and is offered to Canadians in specific professional roles identified in 8 CFR 214.6. There is no limit to TN visas. Both visas require sponsorship from a US employer. L-1 Visas are available for Canadian employees of companies with branches or affiliates in both Canada and the United States that transfer to the United States (Richard and Jursik 2025). In 2024 there were no active H-1B visas issued to employers based in Point Roberts (USDHS 2025).

5.1.5 Labor Force

A region’s labor force includes all people aged 16 and older who are either working or actively looking for work. As of 2023, the labor force in Point Roberts totaled 696 people out of a total population aged 16 and older of 1,156. The labor participation rate was 60 percent compared to 63 percent countywide and 65 percent statewide. The labor force participation rate of the prime working age was 79 percent, which is four percent less than both the county and state. Well-paying industrial or commercial jobs with benefits may attract a greater share of the working age population from nearby areas, including Canada.

Compared to the county and state, Point Roberts has a smaller prime working age labor force relative to the total working age population. Census data shows there is little to no unemployment among the prime working age population on Point Roberts. This suggests a need for more prime working-age people to bolster the Point’s employment pool. This data is summarized in Table 5-5.

Table 5-5: Whatcom County Labor Force

Category	Point Roberts ¹		Whatcom County		State of Washington	
	16 and over	Prime Working Age	16 and over	Prime Working Age	16 and over	Prime Working Age
Total Population	1,156	381	190,060	86,147	6,252,501	3,200,283
Labor Force Participation	60%	79%	63%	83%	65%	83%
Active Labor Force	696	301	119,738	71,856	4,045,368	2,666,173
Employed Population	680	301	113,276	69,219	3,782,763	2,513,497

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Unemployment Rate	2.3%	0.0%	5.4%	3.7%	6.5%	5.7%
Unemployed Population	16	0	6,462	2,637	262,605	152,676

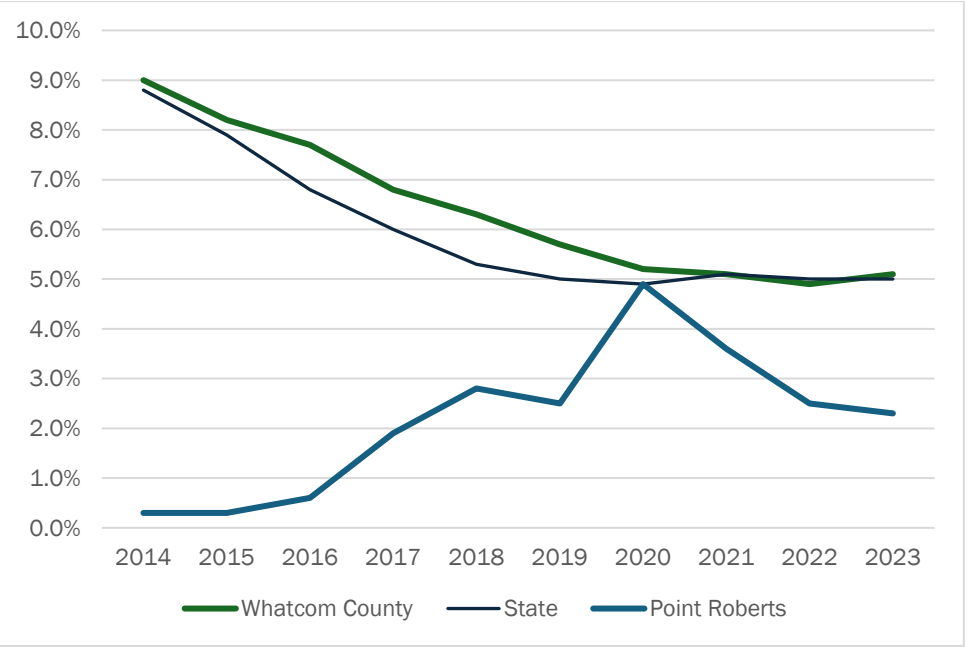
Source

Census. 2025e. ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables. Employment Status. Washington, D.C. Accessed on January 31, 2025. https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2023.S2301?t=Employment+and+Labor+Force+Status&g=040XX00US53_050XX00US53073_160XX00US5355015,5355015.
Census. 2025f. ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables. Selected Economic Characteristics. Accessed January 3, 2025. https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDP5Y2023.DP03?t=Employment&g=040XX00US53_050XX00US53073_160XX00US5355015,5355015.

5.1.6 Unemployment

Figure 5-1 illustrates unemployment trends between 2014 and 2023. The unemployment rate in Point Roberts trended lower than the county and state between 2014 and 2023, with the exception of 2020 when it matched the state unemployment rate. During the same time, unemployment steadily rose from a low of 0.3 percent in 2014 to 2.3 percent in 2023. The average unemployment rate in Point Roberts between 2014 and 2023 was 2.2 percent. The low unemployment rate underscores the need to develop and retain the labor force that is younger than 25 and to encourage the working age population that is currently not in the labor force to reengage. New employment opportunities may also attract labor from outside the state, county and from Canada.

Figure 5-1. Average Unemployment Rate Trend, 2014 to 2023



Note

Census. 2025f. ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables. Selected Economic Characteristics. Accessed January 3, 2025. https://data.census.gov/table?t=Employment&g=040XX00US53_050XX00US53073_160XX00US5355015,5355015.

5.2 Target Industries

5.2.1 Employment by Industry

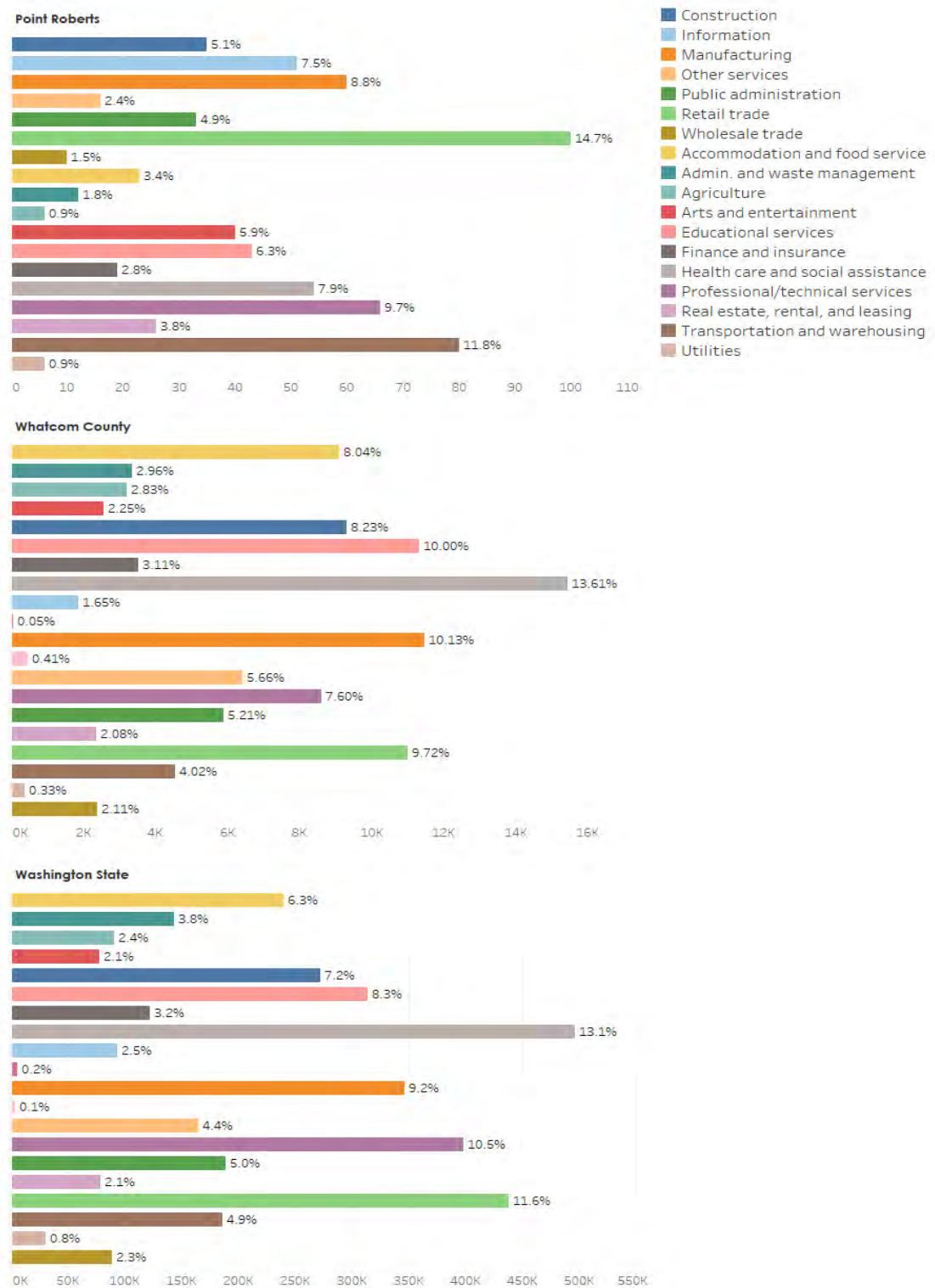
According to ACS estimates for residents of Point Roberts retail trade jobs are the largest source of employment and account for 14.7 percent of employment. The employment share of retail trade jobs is higher in Point Roberts than both the county and state. There are 80 jobs in transportation and warehousing which makes up 11.8 percent of employment share and the second largest source of employment in Point Roberts.

As of 2023 manufacturing accounts for 60 jobs, or 8.8 percent of employment share in Point Roberts and is the 4th largest employment sector. Although the share of manufacturing jobs in Point Roberts is lower than in both the county and the state, they are growing at a faster rate. Point Roberts has a higher share of transportation and warehousing jobs across industries than both the county and state. This can likely be attributed to the parcel shipping businesses serving Canadian customers in Point Roberts.

Health care and social assistance make up the highest employment share in both the county and state. Manufacturing is 10.1 percent of the employment share in the county, which is higher than both Point Roberts and the state. While Census data shows that accommodation and food services account for only 3.4 percent of employment, stakeholders indicate that hospitality work catering to weekend and seasonal visitors is a crucial industry in the Point.

According to the Census, 286 workers, or 42.4 percent of all workers (both private and public) in Point Roberts, worked from home in 2023 (Census 2025e). Additionally, a work destination analysis reveals that the majority of residents work for employers outside of the area (Census 2024). This trend is further supported by the fact that professional, scientific, and technical services, an industry conducive to remote work, account for 9.7 percent of the employment share, making it the third largest employment category in Point Roberts. Figure 5-3 shows employment share across industries in Point Roberts, the county, and the state.

Figure 5-2. Employment Industries in Point Roberts, Whatcom County, and Washington State, 2023



Source

Census. 2025g. ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables. Industry by Sex for the Civilian Employed Population 16 Years and Over. Washington, D.C. https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2023.S2403?t=Industry&g=040XX00US53_050XX00US53073_160XX00US5355015. Accessed on February 4, 2025.

5.2.2 Industrial Sector Employment and Target Industries

The Port of Bellingham has identified seven target industries: manufacturing, food and beverage processing, technology, recreation, health and wellness, agriculture and maritime (Choose Whatcom 2024). Of those seven, four industries are manufacturing related (manufacturing, technology, maritime, and food and beverage processing). Point Roberts offers target industries including manufacturing, recreation/health and wellness, and agriculture. Table 5-6 shows the growth trends of target industries between 2018 and 2023. Manufacturing realized a large growth in employment share between 2018 and 2023, jumping from 2.6 percent in 2018 to 8.8 percent in 2023. Industries related to recreation/health and wellness, and agriculture lost jobs and employment share between 2018 and 2023.

Table 5-6 Target Industries Employment in Point Roberts, 2023

Geography	2018 Employment/ Employment Share	2023 Employment/ Employment Share	Growth	Percent annual growth
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	7/1.2%	6/0.9%	-1	-2.9%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	41/9.9%	23/3.4%	-18	-6.2%
Manufacturing	15/2.6%	60/8.8%	45	60.0%

Source

Census. 2025g. ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables. Industry by Sex for the Civilian Employed Population 16 Years and Over. Washington, D.C. Accessed January 31, 2025.
https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2023.S2403?t=Industry&g=040XX00US53_050XX00US53073_160XX00US5355015.

A closer look at the countywide employment trends between 2018 and 2023 for industrial and transportation and warehousing employment sectors, (the two-digit North American Industry Classification System [NAICS] code 31-33, and two-digit NAICS code 48-49, respectively) is summarized in the following bullets and are depicted in Table 5-7.

- Key industries such as food manufacturing (NAICS code 311) and beverage and tobacco product manufacturing (NAICS code 312), gained both firms and workers between 2018 and 2023. Computer and electronic product manufacturing (NAICS code 334) maintained the same number of firms but gained nearly 60 jobs.
- Petroleum and coal products manufacturing (NAICS code 324) and wood products manufacturing (NAICS code 321) both lost a firm but gained workers and percent of total manufacturing jobs between 2018 and 2023.
- Printing and related support activities (NAICS code 323), textile product mills (NAICS code 314), Plastics and rubber products manufacturing (NAICS code 326), Fabricated metal product manufacturing (NAICS code 332), Machinery manufacturing (NAICS code 333), Electrical equipment and appliance manufacturing (NAICS code 335), and other industries lost both jobs and firms between 2018 and 2023.
- In 2018, manufacturing (NAICS code 325) and furniture and related product manufacturing (NAICS code 337) did not have enough firms to be accounted for by NAICS. By 2023, both industries had at least 10 firms and over 80 employees.

Table 5-7.County Manufacturing Sector Employment Trends, 2018–2023

Three-Digit NAICS Code and Industry Description	2018			2023		
	Firms	Jobs	% of Jobs	Firms	Jobs	% of Jobs
Manufacturing						
311: Food manufacturing	55	2,190	21%	62	2,271	25%
312: Beverage and tobacco product manufacturing	22	296	3%	29	361	4%
313: Textile mills	*	*	ND	*	*	ND
314: Textile product mills	18	411	4%	14	318	4%
315: Apparel manufacturing	*	*	ND	*	*	ND
316: Leather and allied product manufacturing	*	*	ND	*	*	ND
321: Wood products manufacturing	25	1,273	12%	24	1,469	16%
322: Paper Manufacturing	*	*	ND	*	*	ND
323: Printing and related support activities	16	196	2%	12	80	1%
324: Petroleum and coal products manufacturing	5	1,234	12%	4	1,281	14%
325: Chemical manufacturing	*	*	ND	17	95	1%
326: Plastics and rubber products manufacturing	13	327	3%	12	107	1%
327: Nonmetallic mineral product manufacturing	11	232	2%	11	159	2%
331: Primary metal manufacturing	*	*	ND	*	*	ND
332: Fabricated metal product manufacturing	45	412	4%	43	405	4%
333: Machinery manufacturing	25	484	5%	21	375	4%
334: Computer and electronic product manufacturing	11	283	3%	11	342	4%
335: Electrical equipment and appliance manufacturing	10	345	3%	*	*	ND
336: Transportation equipment manufacturing	26	1,019	10%	27	549	6%
337: Furniture and related product manufacturing	*	*	ND	12	83	1%
339: Miscellaneous manufacturing	27	572	6%	27	557	6%
Other industries	35	1,003	10%	22	602	7%
Manufacturing Total	344	10,276	11.3% ^d	344	9,052	9.7%

Notes

NAICS = North American Industry Classification System.

^a NAICS Code 31-33: Manufacturing.

^b The Other industries row sums the industries that had less than three companies in 2018 and 2023. Because the number of firms was below this threshold, the jobs could not be reported at the NAICS level. These firms are noted with an asterisk, *.

^c NAICS Code 48-49: Transportation and warehousing.

^d Industry totals percentage is percent of total jobs in the County

Source

WESD. 2018-2023.

Washington State Employment Security Department/ Labor Market Economic Analysis, 2024.

5.2.3 Canadian Business Attraction

A Canadian business looking to locate to the US typically does so to access a larger consumer market and reduce cross-border transportation costs among other legal and financial reasons unique to that specific business (Invest Buffalo Niagara 2017). The infrastructure and connectivity issues on Point Roberts decrease the incentive for a Canadian business to relocate there. Small businesses considering moving to Point Roberts would likely locate in Tsawwassen B.C. due to its greater population, access to transportation, and proximity to

a larger population. The expansion or relocation of a Canadian business to Point Roberts may not be financially feasible due to the cost of entry and lack of benefit to the relocating company.

5.3 Wages

5.3.1 Income in Point Roberts

Table 5-9 shows the median household income for Point Roberts, the county, and state. The median household income in Point Roberts was \$80,200 in 2023, which is slightly less than the county but more than \$14,000 less than the state.

Table 5-8. Median Household Income

Geography	Median Household Income
Point Roberts	\$80,197
Whatcom County	\$80,989
Washington State	\$94,952

Source

Census. 2025f. ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables. Selected Economic Characteristics. Accessed January 3, 2025. https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDP5Y2023.DP03?q=DP03: Selected Economic Characteristics&g=040XX00US53_050XX00US53073_160XX00US5355015.

5.3.2 Industry Wages in the County

Annual average wages in the county lagged significantly behind those in Washington state overall by over \$37,000 in 2023 (Table 5-10). Although overall wages are growing slower, manufacturing wages are growing faster in the county than in the state. County manufacturing wages were over \$8,000 higher than overall county wages in 2023 (WESD 2024b).

Table 5-9. Industry Wages 2018-2023

	2018	2023	2018-23 Annual Change (%)
Overall			
Whatcom County	\$39,893	\$49,798	5.0
Washington state	\$66,156	\$87,054	6.3
Manufacturing			
Whatcom County	\$49,442	\$58,514	3.7
Washington state	\$79,352	\$93,291	3.5

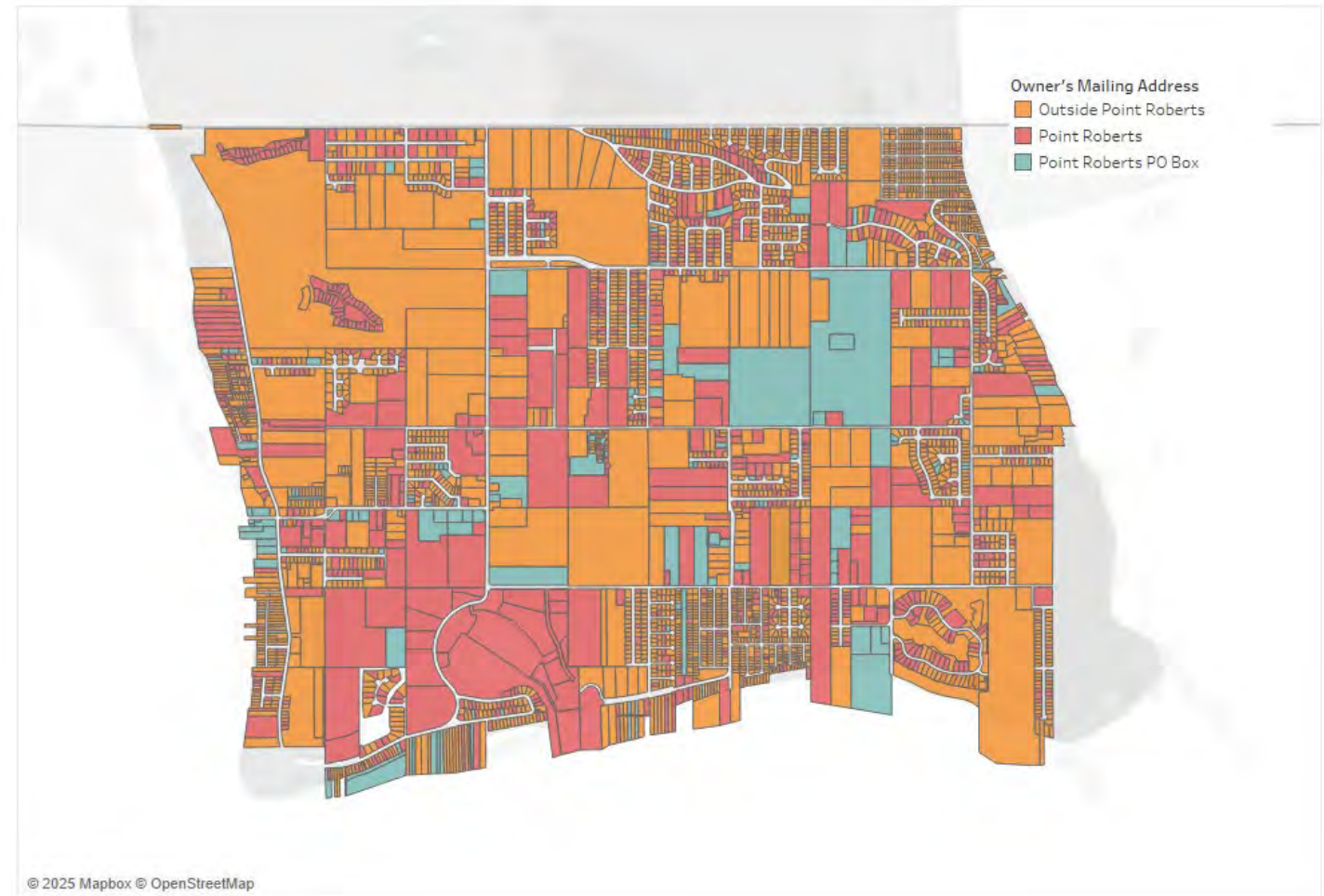
Source

WESD. 2024b. Covered Employment Classified by Three-Digit Industry Subsectors. 2023 Annual Averages (Preliminary) Percent of Employment by Industry. Washington State Employment Security Department. Accessed June 25, 2024. <https://esd.wa.gov/labormarketinfo/covered-employment>

5.4 Housing

Housing in Point Roberts poses several unique challenges to workforce development. The majority of residential taxpayers by count and acreage in Point Roberts have mailing addresses outside of Point Roberts, indicating that most Point Roberts homeowners are seasonal residents. Fifty-seven percent of residential taxpayers have international mailing addresses. Only about a third of homeowners in Point Roberts (31 percent) have a Point Roberts mailing address. The disproportionate ownership of housing for non-resident owners is a barrier to providing permanent workforce housing. Figure 5-4 shows the distribution of taxpayers with and without Point Roberts Mailing addresses.

Figure 5-3. Mailing Addresses for Residential Users in Point Roberts



	Number of Point Roberts Taxpayers	% of Point Roberts Taxpayers	Parcel Acreage	% of Total Parcel Acreage
Outside Point Roberts	1,167	64.5%	330	46.5%
Point Roberts	565	31.2%	318	44.9%
Point Roberts PO Box	81	4.5%	73	10.3%
Total	1,809		709	

Source

County Assessor. 2024.

Notes

Zones dedicated to open space and parcels that extended far beyond the shoreline were omitted for this calculation to more accurately capture residential ownership.

In 2023 over 86 percent of housing in Point Roberts consisted of single-family housing and only 2.5 percent consisted of housing with two or more units. The percentage of single-family housing in Point Roberts is greater than both the county and state by over 25 percent. Limited multi-family options and a zero percent rental vacancy rate in Point Roberts may be constraining factors to workforce and business attraction and a

barrier to delivering affordable workforce housing. The homeowner vacancy rate in Point Roberts is over 67 percent, which can be partially explained by out-of-town homeowners who are seasonal residents. Table 5-10 shows select housing characteristics reported by the Census Bureau.

Table 5-10. Housing Characteristics

	Housing Units	Single-family housing	Multi-family housing	Other housing ¹	Homeowner vacancy rate	Rental vacancy rate
Point Roberts	2,088	86.9%	2.5%	10.6%	67.6%	0.0%
County	101,928	63.3%	27.1%	9.6%	9.3%	3.0%
State	3,262,667	62.3%	27.5%	10.2%	7.4%	4.3%

Source

Census. 2025h. ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables. Selected Housing Characteristics. Washington, D.C. Accessed on January 2, 2025. https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDP5Y2023.DP04?t=HomeownershipRate&g=040XX00US53_050XX00US53073_160XX00US5355015.

Notes

¹ Other housing includes single unit attached housing, mobile homes, Recreational Vehicles, and Boats among others.

5.4.1 Housing Affordability

Overall, median rental and housing prices are lower in Point Roberts than both the county and state. Point Roberts has a comparable median household income to the county but wages lag behind the state by over \$14,000. Housing price-to-income ratio is calculated by dividing the median home price by the median household income and can be used as an indicator for homebuyer affordability (Harvard 2024). Point Roberts has a housing price-to-income ratio slightly higher than the state but lower than the county. Rental price-to-income ratio is lower in Point Roberts than both the county and state, as evidenced in Table 5-11.

Table 5-11. Housing and Rent Prices, 2023

	Median Household Income	Median Housing Price	Housing price-to-income ratio	Median Rent	Rental price-to income ratio ¹
Point Roberts	\$80,197	\$460,500	5.7	\$1,055	15.8%
Whatcom County	\$80,989	\$536,100	6.6	\$1,465	21.7%
State	\$94,952	\$519,800	5.5	\$1,682	21.3%

Source

Census. 2025h. ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables. Selected Housing Characteristics. Washington, D.C. Accessed on January 2, 2025. https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDP5Y2023.DP04?t=HomeownershipRate&g=040XX00US53_050XX00US53073_160XX00US5355015.

¹ The rental price-to-income ratio represents the percentage of a person’s monthly income that goes towards paying the median rent.

Selected Monthly Owner Costs as a Percentage of Household Income (SMOCAPI) is a Census Bureau metric that measures the percentage of a household's income spent on housing cost and can illuminate the distribution of cost of housing burden. SMOCAPI is collected for both households that pay a mortgage and those that have their mortgage paid off or otherwise do not have a mortgage. Nearly a third (36.9 percent) of Point Roberts Residents with a mortgage spend 35 percent or more of their income on housing costs. The share of Point Roberts households with a mortgage that spend 35 percent or more of their income on housing costs is larger than both the county and state. Additionally, the share of Point Roberts households spending the least amount (less than 20 percent) of their income on housing costs is less than both the county and state. Despite having low median housing price relative to the median income (see Table 5-11), a high percentage of Point Roberts residents with a mortgage are burdened with housing costs (see Table 5-12).

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Table 5-12. SMOCAPI for Housing Units with a Mortgage

	Point Roberts	Whatcom County	Washington State
Less than 20.0 percent	24.3%	36.7%	42.5%
20.0 to 24.9 percent	19.8%	16.2%	16.7%
25.0 to 29.9 percent	8.6%	12.5%	11.6%
30.0 to 34.9 percent	10.4%	8.8%	8.0%
35.0 percent or more	36.9%	25.9%	21.2%

Source

Census. 2025h. ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables. Selected Housing Characteristics. Washington, D.C. Accessed on January 2, 2025. https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDP5Y2023.DP04?t=HomeownershipRate&g=040XX00US53_050XX00US53073_160XX00US5355015.

In contrast to a high number of housing-cost burdened mortgage holders, most Point Roberts residents without a mortgage spend less than ten percent of their income on their housing costs. Both the county and state have about 13 percent fewer households without a mortgage that spend less than ten percent of their income on their housing costs (see Table 5-13). This demographic may capture the seasonal residents who own second properties outright and are unburdened by housing costs.

Table 5-13. SMOCAPI for Housing Units Without a Mortgage

	Point Roberts	Whatcom County	Washington State
Less than 10.0 percent	59.4%	45.7%	45.6%
10.0 to 14.9 percent	8.6%	22.1%	19.9%
15.0 to 19.9 percent	5.3%	8.9%	10.9%
20.0 to 24.9 percent	8.6%	6.7%	6.3%
25.0 to 29.9 percent	2.6%	4.0%	3.9%
30.0 to 34.9 percent	1.9%	2.5%	2.7%
35.0 percent or more	13.5%	10.0%	10.7%

Census. 2025h. ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables. Selected Housing Characteristics. Washington, D.C. Accessed on January 2, 2025. https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDP5Y2023.DP04?t=HomeownershipRate&g=040XX00US53_050XX00US53073_160XX00US5355015.

Gross Rent as A Percentage of Household Income (GRAPI) is a Census Bureau metric that measures the percentage of a household's income spent on rent. GRAPI statistics for Point Roberts are listed in Table 5-14. The Point has a higher percentage of residents spending less than 20 percent of their income on rent than both the county and state. Nevertheless, 47 percent of Point Roberts’ renters are spending 35 percent or more of their income on their rent. Although the majority of Point Roberts residents have low rental expenses relative to their income, there is a notable amount who are financially burdened by rental costs.

Table 5-14. Gross Rent as A Percentage of Household Income

	Point Roberts	Whatcom County	Washington State
Less than 15.0 percent	23.6%	8.0%	12.5%
15.0 to 19.9 percent	22.8%	10.9%	12.6%
20.0 to 24.9 percent	6.5%	11.7%	13.4%
25.0 to 29.9 percent	0.0%	10.7%	12.1%
30.0 to 34.9 percent	0.0%	9.4%	9.8%
35.0 percent or more	47.2%	49.3%	39.6%

Source

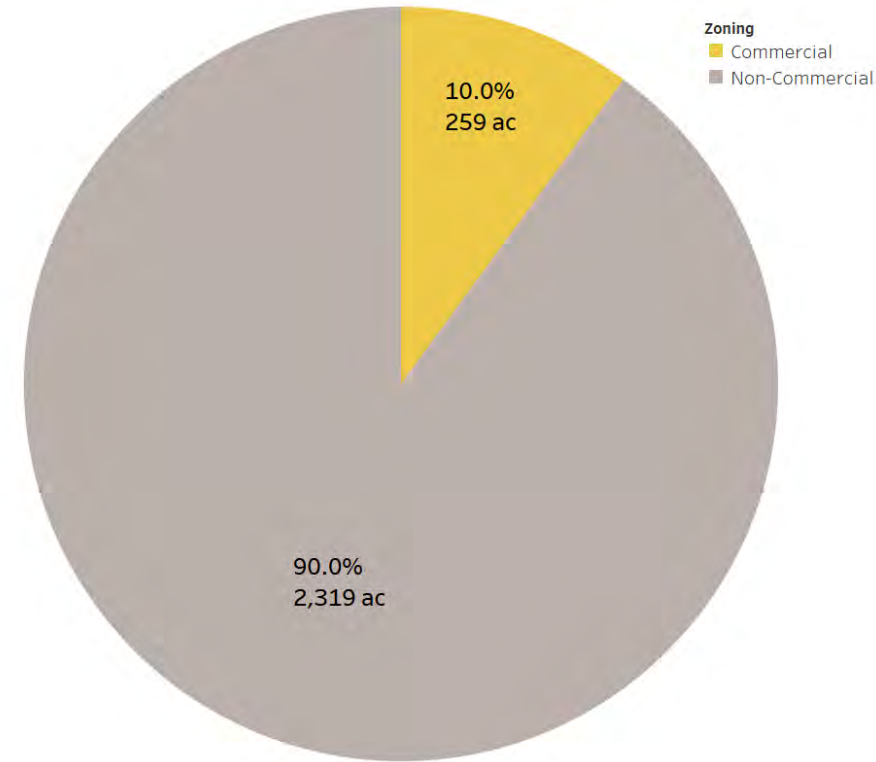
Market Analysis

Census. 2025h. ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables. Selected Housing Characteristics. Washington, D.C. Accessed on January 2, 2025. https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDP5Y2023.DP04?t=HomeownershipRate&g=040XX00US53_050XX00US53073_160XX00US5355015.

6 Industrial Real Estate Market Overview

Most land on Point Roberts is zoned to support non-commercial uses such as residences and open space. Only ten percent of the total land in Point Roberts allows for commercial or industrial use. Figure 6-1 demonstrates the imbalance of commercial and residential zoning in Point Roberts.

Figure 6-1. Commercial and Non-Commercial in Point Roberts



Source:
Whatcom County Assessor. 2024.

Figure 6-2 illustrates where the commercial and industrial zoning districts are in Point Roberts. Zoning in Point Roberts offers limited opportunity for commercial and industrial development. Rural Industrial Manufacturing (RIM), the sole zone that allows for outright industrial use, only makes up five acres or 0.2 percent of Point Robert’s total acreage. Resort Commercial (RC), Small Town Commercial (STC), and Rual General Commercial (RGC), zones that allow for commercial use make up 255 acres or 9. 9 percent of total land in Point Roberts.

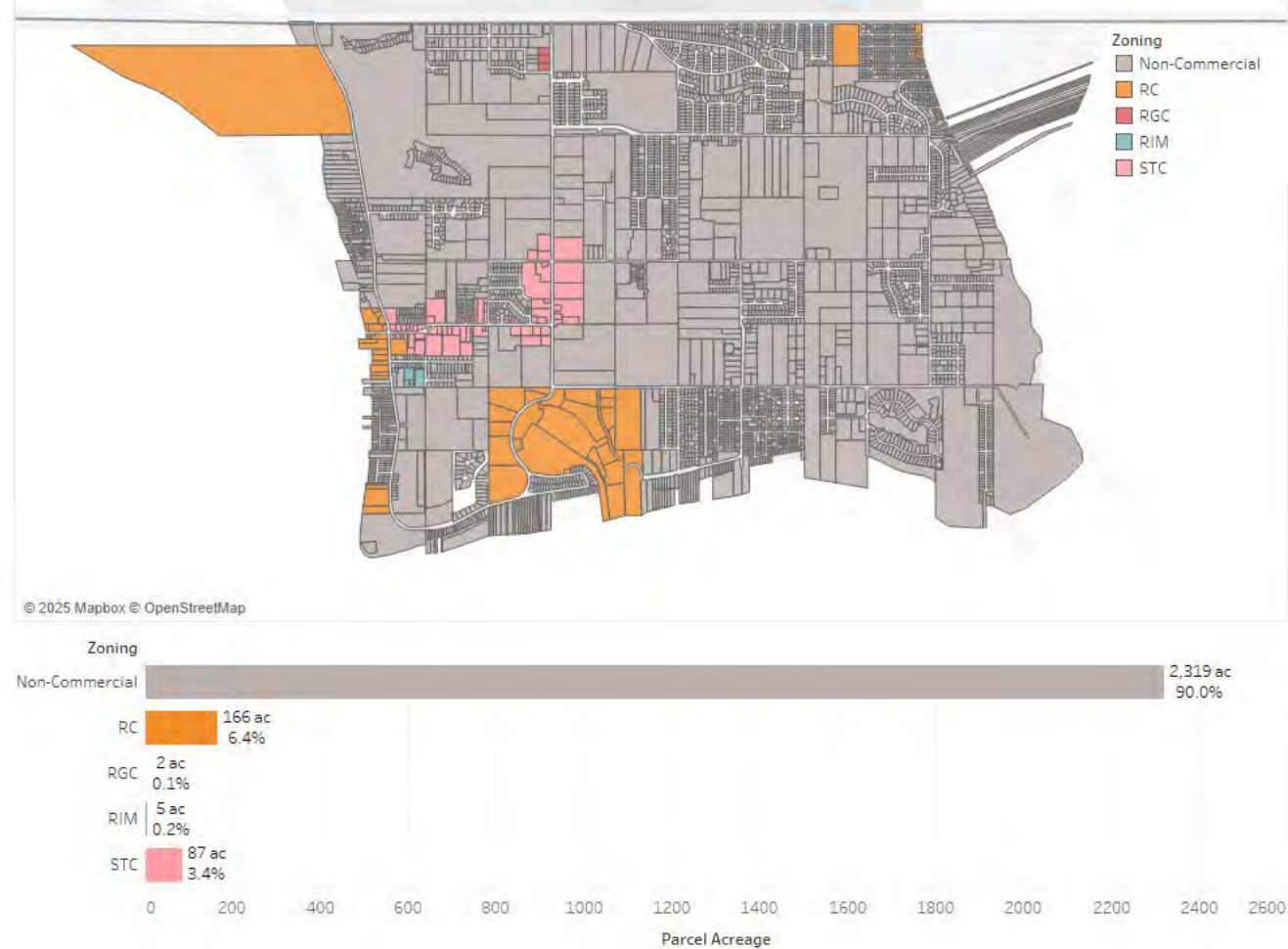
- **RIM Zone:** This zone is located north of the airport on the west side of Point Roberts. The RIM zone allows for light industrial manufacturing, retail and office, and residential development. This zone allows for the conditional use of heavy industrial manufacturing and waste services.
- **RC Zone:** There are 166 acres of Point Roberts with RC zoning which makes up 6.4 percent of the total acreage. Most of the RC zoned land is concentrated around the Marina and along the western shoreline. The RC zone allows for retail and office, restaurant and lodging, and residential uses and conditionally allows for development of gas stations, auto repair stations, and hotels/condos with more than 16 units.
- **STC Zone:** Existing commercial development in Point Roberts is concentrated in STC zoned land along Gulf Rd and Tyree Dr on the west side of the Point. The STC zone accounts for 87 acres, 3.4 percent of total

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acreage in Point Roberts. The STC zone allows for a wide range of commercial uses including retail, auto service stations, veterinarian clinics, public markets, self-storage, restaurants, and residential. The STC zone allows for conditional use of light fabrication, given buildings are under 10,000 square feet, all work is conducted inside, and the operations have proper screening.

- **RGC Zone:** The commercial zone with the least acreage on Point Roberts is RGC which accounts for 2 acres (0.1 percent of total acres) across three parcels near the border crossing on Tyee Dr. The RGC zone allows for outright use of retail and office, self-service storage, restaurants, single family or duplex style residential, and auto repair. The RGC zone allows conditional use of hotels, kennels, and light fabrication of mechanical equipment.

Figure 6-2. Zoning Distribution in Point Roberts



Source:
Whatcom County Assessor. 2024.

6.1 Commercial and Industrial Building Inventory

Table 6-1 shows the distribution of the building inventory by land use within commercial zones in Point Roberts. Point Roberts has two buildings in commercial zones with industrial building uses. Industrial Buildings in Point Roberts total 5,760 square feet, making up only 2.4 percent of commercial building square footage. There are 31 commercial buildings with a total area of 104,687 square feet in the commercial zones in Point Roberts. Eating and Drinking use types, which capture restaurant and grocery store uses, make up roughly 27 percent of the commercial building space in Point Roberts across only six buildings. The largest commercial

building in Point Roberts is the International Marketplace grocery store which is more than 33,000 square feet. A quarter of the limited existing building space in commercially zoned land in Point Roberts is dedicated to residential or other use.

Most commercial buildings in Point Roberts are small; the median size of commercial buildings is 2,600 square feet. The only commercial buildings that are greater than 20,000 square feet are the International Market Grocery Store, the Marina resort and restaurant, and a vacant resort building on the southwest corner of Point Roberts, just north of Lighthouse Marine Park on Marine Dr. Other notable commercial buildings include the gas stations and bank located near the corner of Tyee Dr and Gulf Rd. Over 75 percent of the commercial buildings with a commercial or eating/drinking land use type on Point Roberts were constructed prior to 1985.

Table 6-1. Building Inventory by Land Use Within Commercial Zones

Building Use Type	Buildings	Square Footage	Percent of Commercial Square Footage
Commercial	31	104,687	43.1%
Eating/Drinking	6	65,973	27.2%
Industrial	2	5,760	2.4%
Mini Storage	1	5,725	2.4%
Residential	57	57,659	23.8%
Other	6	2,948	1.2%
Commercial Total	103	242,752	

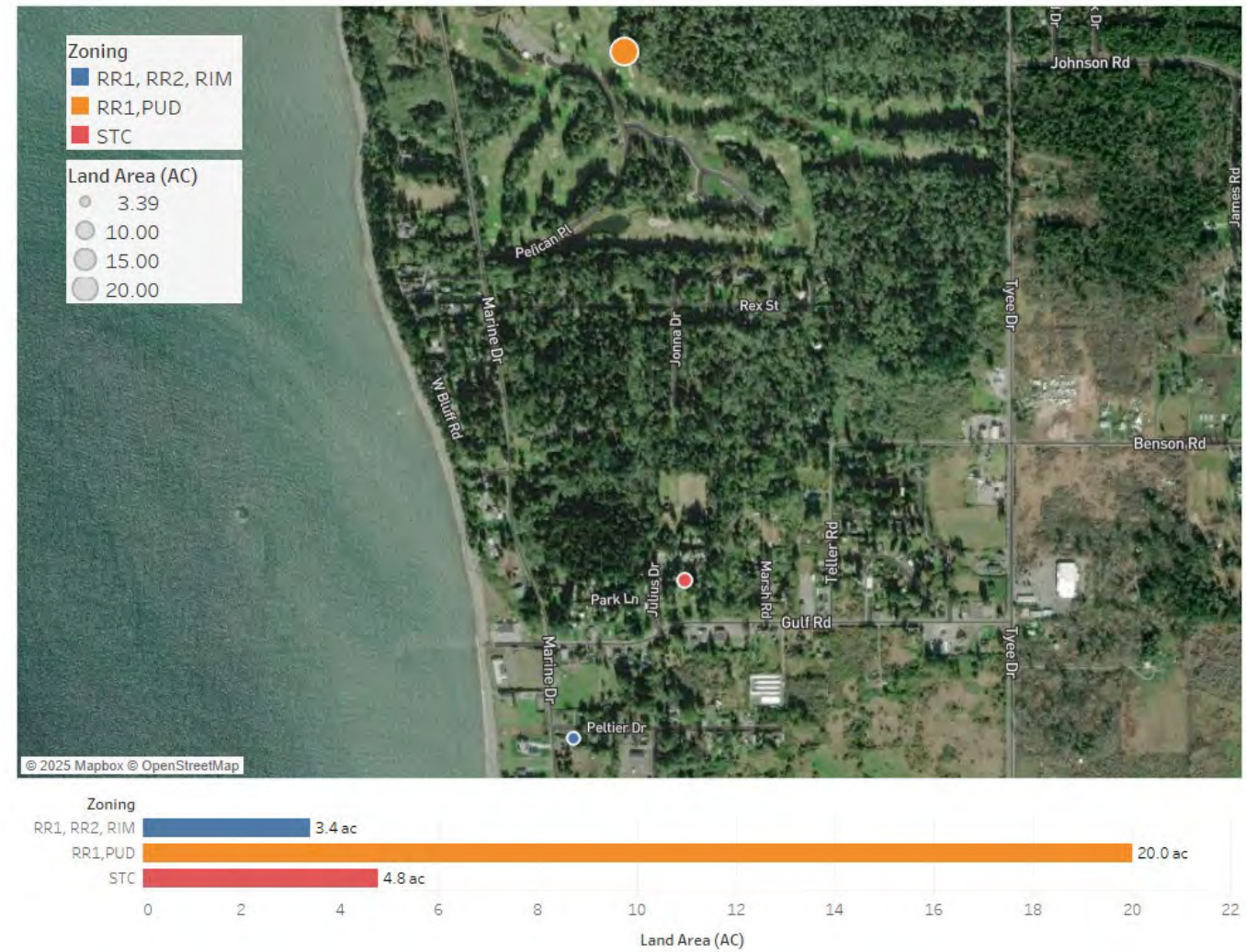
Source:
Whatcom County Assessor. 2024.

There is limited vacancy in commercially available buildings in Point Roberts. According to the Commercial Brokers Association (CBA) there were only two commercial buildings listed as vacant or available in Point Roberts at the time this report was prepared (CBA 2025). One of these buildings is the former 3,500 square foot former Speedway Express gas station on the corner of Tyee Dr and Gulf Rd. The other vacant listing is the 20,000 square foot resort building on Marine Dr on the southwest corner of Point Roberts, just north of Lighthouse Marine Park. There are currently no commercial or industrial buildings in Point Roberts that are either under construction or have submitted a proposal listed in CoStar (CoStar 2024).

6.2 Industrial and Commercial Land Supply

Point Roberts contains just 28 acres of land with zoning designations that allow for commercial or industrial use (CoStar 2024). The largest available undeveloped property in Point Roberts that allows for commercial development is a 20-acre portion of the Bald Eagle Valley resort which is zoned for planned use development. The only undeveloped property with zoning that allows for industrial development is a 3.4-acre property north of the airpark, along Peltier Drive.

Figure 6-3. Industrial and Commercial Land Supply



Source:
CoStar. 2024.

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Limitations

The services undertaken in completing this report were performed consistent with generally accepted professional consulting principles and practices. No other warranty, express or implied, is made. These services were performed consistent with our agreement with our client. This report is solely for the use and information of our client unless otherwise noted. Any reliance on this report by a third party is at such party's sole risk.

Opinions and recommendations contained in this report apply to conditions existing when services were performed and are intended only for the client, purposes, locations, time frames, and project parameters indicated. We are not responsible for the impacts of any changes in environmental standards, practices, or regulations subsequent to performance of services. We do not warrant the accuracy of information supplied by others, or the use of segregated portions of this report

Appendix B

Community Member Interview Summary



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Point Roberts Economic Development Strategy Study

Community Member Interview Summary

Prepared for:

Port of Bellingham

February 14, 2025

Project No. M0763.13.001

Prepared by:

Maul Foster & Alongi, Inc.

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Introduction

The consultant team at Maul Foster and Alongi (MFA) conducted eight interviews with Point Roberts (the Point) community members identified by the Port of Bellingham. Seven of the interviewees were members of the Point Roberts Chamber of Commerce and the eighth is a member of the Point Roberts Chamber of Commerce. Each interviewee was asked the same eight questions. Their responses are summarized in this document. The following is a summary of statements of opinion based on the experience and observations shared by the interviewees. MFA did not verify the information provided in the interviews.

1. What do you like most about living (and/or working) in Point Roberts?

Point Roberts is valued for its peaceful and rural environment, safety, proximity to Canada and Vancouver International Airport, and a strong sense of community. People appreciate its unique character, nature, abundance of trees, sun, and idyllic, pastoral surroundings.

2. How would you describe/define the Point Roberts economy?

The Point Roberts economy was described as stagnant; diminishing; highly seasonal; unsustainable; anomalous; fragmented; fragile; and aging. It is dependent on visitors and experiences negative impacts from fluctuations in the Canadian dollar. Interviewees shared that the current mainstays of the economy are gas and package purchases made by Canadians. There are not many jobs available on the Point and there are few people of the age and inclination to work in-person jobs. Those that have jobs hold onto them – there is little turnover.

The Point has amenities (i.e., marina, golf course, natural areas, parks) that could be “gems of the community” for visitors and residents. However, a lack of investment in these amenities has prevented the Point from having a destination or event to “hang its hat on.”

The economy/Point at large was also characterized by:

- A low number of full-time residents
- A high number of retirees
- Digital nomads
- Lacking a workforce
- Lacking trades
- Lacking autonomy in decision making
- Low turnover
- Lacking available affordable and workforce housing



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3. What do you envision the Point Roberts economy, and/or Point Roberts as a whole, looking like in 5 years? 10 years?

Collectively, interviewees described a vision of a self-sustaining economy with adequate infrastructure that retains the Point's rural, wild character. Specific improvements included reliable internet at all homes and commercial establishments; commercial sewer that is underway or completely installed; pedestrian and cycling amenities; a renovated marina that is up-to-code; further progress on stormwater and drainage issues; and improved zoning for development. Interviewees shared goals including offering seasonal events, addressing stormwater issues, and potentially adding elder care and health facilities.

Interviewees recognized that development takes time, and it is highly unlikely that all these ambitions could be accomplished within five to ten years. However, interviewees emphasized that the Point must have common goals to work toward and a body of leaders willing to drive those improvements forward.

4. Besides retail, are there other businesses/industries that are not in Point Roberts today but could thrive here?

Interviewees described several different types of businesses or industries that could exist or thrive on the Point; these include:

- An up-to-date marina & boat launch
- Fresh seafood
- Locally produced and healthy food options
- A tech or data center
- Water taxis between the Point and the mainland
- Tourist attractions
- Trades services
- Retirement communities
- A pharmacy or regular medical delivery service
- Small office spaces and/or an industrial park
- Low impact industry

Retail, restaurant, and hospitality businesses, along with other lifestyle services, could provide "third place" amenities. Examples include:

- Additional café(s)
- Sandwich shop
- Nail salon
- Dog groomer
- Boutique hotel & spa
- Veterinarian to service the various dogs, horses and other animals on the Point



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All interviewees identified the marina as a key opportunity. Investments and improvements could support the marine and hospitality industries, attracting visitors and residents.

Some interviewees discussed that the Port of Bellingham and/or Whatcom County could bring new full-time government positions to the Point by purchasing and operating the marina. Such stable, well-paying jobs would bring additional economic activity to the Point, helping to support retail and hospitality businesses.

Additional tourist attractions, designed to attract more visitors and full-time residents, were highlighted as key opportunities. These suggestions included:

- Whale watching tours
- Charter boats
- Reinvigorated golf course
- A golf academy
- Summer festival or seasonal event

Interviewees emphasized that commercial sewer would be necessary, or very beneficial, for many of these businesses to be developed.

5. What has changed economically in Point Roberts since the COVID-19 pandemic began in 2020?

Several businesses, including restaurants and at least one gas station, closed. Those that didn't close during the pandemic struggled. The main arterial of goods and services to the Point from the mainland was closed for some time. Visitors who would regularly visit the Point on outings before the pandemic, especially nearby Canadian retirees, ceased to make visits during the pandemic and have not resumed their visits. One interviewee observed that when the habit of visiting is broken, like it was during the pandemic, it may be unlikely to be repaired. Border crossing numbers into the Point remain lower than they were before the pandemic.

Some interviewees had the impression that more full-time residents moved to the Point during the pandemic, perhaps attracted by the perceived safety and isolation. Among these full-time residents were a greater number of families than before 2020 and a greater number of digital nomads/remote workers (especially in the tech industry). Interviewees also felt that some Canadians sold homes to Americans.

One interviewee shared that the hospitality economy shifted – more Airbnb's appeared on the Point during the pandemic, offering more short-term rentals for visitors.



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6. What do you think are the biggest infrastructural challenges that Point Roberts faces (road access, zoning, sewer availability, schools, parks/natural areas...)? What opportunities do you think there are to address those issues?

Interviewees identified numerous infrastructure challenges on the Point, the four most common being: poor broadband/internet service, lack of commercial sewer, poor stormwater infrastructure, and limited zoning. Broadband was most often highlighted as the greatest challenge. Interviewees shared that multiple projects to improve broadband and fiber-optic internet service have been started or are underway, but progress has been slow. It was mentioned that Starlink is not a viable alternative to wired internet because of the number of tall trees on the Point.

The lack of commercial sewer was brought up in every interview. The absence of commercial sewer hampers the ability of developers to build new amenities and facilities that would facilitate economic growth on the Point. Interviewees shared that this challenge remains unaddressed.

Stormwater infrastructure and drainage were frequently cited by residents as a barrier to development. They shared that the Point has a high prevalence of wetlands and poor drainage, so certain roadways will frequently flood during rain events.

Many interviewees mentioned that zoning presents a significant challenge to development. One interviewee was under the impression that there are only three types of zoning on the Point, and that certain essential businesses – like the mechanic, Whidbey Telecom, the golf course, and more – are on conditional use permits.

Additional challenges include:

- School system: the school on the Point has very low attendance and only serves young elementary ages. Older students are bussed to and from Blaine every day (which limits their ability to participate in after-school activities). There are several homeschooled students on the Point, and others that go to school in Canada. This makes it challenging for families to move to the Point.
- Drinking water is purchased from the Greater Vancouver Water District, the contract for which will be expiring in the mid-2030s.
- Cell phone service is weak and inconsistent.
- The Point has abundant wetland areas, archaeological sites, and shoreline setbacks which make development challenging.
- Roads often lack shoulders, sidewalks, and traffic calming infrastructure. Consequently, it does not feel safe for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Affordable and workforce housing is lacking.
- The border is an infrastructure challenge. Interviewees feel it is a bottleneck that restricts connection to the mainland.
- Restrictions to bringing produce over the border/changing rules about what can and can't be transported over the border.



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- Lacking tourist infrastructure (e.g., lighthouse, pier, etc.)

Interviewees identified opportunities to address these challenges, including:

- Continuing the progress made on broadband/fiber-optic internet
- Implementing commercial sewer
- Continuing to study and improve stormwater infrastructure and management (Drainage Masterplan)
- Building a ferry from the Point to Blaine or Bellingham
- Building a bridge from the Point to the mainland
- Building a pier where there had been one in the past
- Building a lighthouse at lighthouse park

7. If you could make one change to Point Roberts right now, what would it be?

Interviewees, when asked to prioritize their number one change to Point Roberts, shared the following:

- Rewrite the community plan that the County has for the Point; to help the people of the Point get together to decide “what do we really want to be.”
- Build a bridge from Point Roberts to the Mainland.
- Have one person or body that takes ownership of the development strategy and executes it. A person or body who has resources to execute the strategy.
- Change or eliminate the USDA rules restricting the transport of produce across the border to the Point.
- Install full commercial sewer on Gulf and Tyee road.
- Find a way to get the community to coalesce and act like a group with a common goal; to work together.
- Prevent any additional trees from being cut down.
- Incorporate Point Roberts so the community can gain agency over its own decisions and ability to fill its own coffers.

8. Is there anyone else we should be interviewing?

Interviewees listed the following people as community members with valuable insight. Each has been contacted for comment and their input will be integrated into our final assessment.

- | | |
|----------------|-----------------|
| - Dave Stumpo | - Wayne Lyle |
| - Mark Robbins | - Nick Kisinski |
| - Bob Hillman | |



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Appendix C

Implementation Tables



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Implementation

The tables in this Appendix present a framework for implementing each priority economic development strategy. The key implementation factors include estimated costs, potential barriers, timelines, funding sources, roles and responsibilities, and associated tasks. The broader planning effort recognizes the interconnected nature of these initiatives. Strategic synergies exist where one effort enables or amplifies the impact of another. For instance, the installation of a centralized sewer system in the Marina area would significantly expand the range of viable redevelopment options for adjacent properties. Likewise, enhanced broadband infrastructure would not only support telecommuting and digital inclusion, but also serve as a backbone for the growth of homegrown businesses, remote services, and local entrepreneurship associated with Economic and Environmental Sustainability and the Resilience Hub. Taken together, the strategies form a cohesive and adaptive roadmap for catalyzing long-term economic resilience in Point Roberts.

1 Marina

The Marina-focused action items outlined in Table 1 present a phased, multi-dimensional approach to site acquisition, governance, infrastructure planning, and redevelopment. These efforts center on transforming the Marina into a community and economic asset by addressing land use constraints, infrastructure upgrades, and alignment with long-term strategic priorities. In the short term, emphasis is placed on due diligence, zoning reform, and securing funding for acquisition. Mid-term actions focus on developing a governance framework, identifying capital improvements, navigating complex permitting processes, and advancing design and engineering efforts. Long-term goals include physical redevelopment, public-private partnerships, and targeted marketing to stimulate investment and align development proposals with community values. While opportunities for grant funding are available, persistent challenges such as regulatory barriers, stakeholder coordination, and financial feasibility require deliberate planning and adaptive management from the Port and its partners.

Table 1. Marina Action Items

Action	Responsible Entity	Timing	Related Tasks and Considerations	Funding	Costs and Barriers
Define desired redevelopment scheme	Port, County, Community stakeholders	Short term	- Define steering committee for decision making - Convene stakeholders including residents, marina users, marina workers, the Port, and the County - Hire consultant to support conceptual design and community engagement	General operating budget	- Cost of staff time or consultancy - Potential gap in Port and stakeholder consensus on redevelopment activities - Existing zoning, shoreline designation, and utility access may not support redevelopment vision.
Define strategic priorities for the acquisition	Port, private partners	Short term	- Pursue zone and shoreline designation change based on desired redevelopment scheme - Implementation of sewer system - Assess additional infrastructure needs - Determine critical areas constraints	General operating budget	- Cost of staff time or consultancy - Potential misalignment of Port and stakeholder consensus on redevelopment activities - Existing zoning, shoreline designation, and utility access may not support redevelopment vision.
Update Port due diligence	Port, private partners	Short Term	- Evaluate ownership records, lease agreements, and operational liabilities - Consider hiring a consultant to assist with due diligence analysis - Coordinate findings with funding strategy and acquisition goals	RCO Boating Facilities Program	- Cost of staff time or consultancy - Potential discovery of liabilities or constraints that could impact acquisition feasibility - The procurement timeline may not align with the seller’s intentions or due diligence efforts, potentially rendering those efforts outdated or irrelevant at the time of actual procurement
Pursue funding opportunities for procurement	Port, private partners	Short term	- Prepare preliminary budget and timeline for procurement activities - Align funding applications with strategic priorities and due diligence findings	RCO Boating Facilities Program	- Cost of staff time or consultancy - Potential funding gaps without matching contributions - Limited availability of funding cycles that align with project timelines
Execute purchase of Marina	Port, private partners	Mid Term	- Finalize negotiations with current owner and legal counsel - Prepare contingency plans if sale terms are unfavorable - Incorporate the redevelopment of the Marina into the Port’s Comprehensive Scheme of Harbor Improvements	RCO Boating Facilities Program	- Existing owners may withhold a sale or may not agree on price. - Potential for protracted negotiations or legal complications - Need for upfront capital or bridge financing to secure purchase
Establish governance structure and staffing for oversight of Marina	Port, private partners	Mid Term	Establish interim management protocols during transition	General budget	Cost of staff time

Marina

Action	Responsible Entity	Timing	Related Tasks and Considerations	Funding	Costs and Barriers
Identify and prioritize capital improvements	Port, private partners	Mid Term	• Conduct stakeholder engagement with moorage holders, adjacent property owners, and local businesses • Develop criteria for prioritizing improvements (e.g., safety, economic impact, environmental benefit) • Align improvements with long-term redevelopment vision and funding opportunities	• USDOT MARAD Marine Highway Program • RCO Boating Facilities Program • USDOT MARAD Small Shipyards Grants	• Cost of technical assessments and stakeholder engagement • Potential for conflicting priorities among stakeholders
Identify permitting needs for improvements	Port, private partners	Mid Term	• Engage permitting agencies early to clarify requirements and timelines • Coordinate permitting strategy with capital improvement priorities	• USDOT MARAD Marine Highway Program • RCO Boating Facilities Program • USDOT MARAD Small Shipyards Grants	• Significant regulatory barriers including wetlands, shoreline designations, and zoning restrictions • Time-intensive permitting processes may delay implementation • Potential need for environmental mitigation measures
Pursue funding opportunities for the planning, engineering design, and permitting of capital improvements	Port, private partners	Mid Term	• Develop scope of work for planning and design consultants • Align funding applications with permitting strategy and stakeholder input • Prepare phased implementation plan to support further funding requests	• RCO Boating Facilities Program	• Cost of consultant services for planning and design • Risk of funding gaps or delays in grant cycles
Redevelop Marina properties	Port, private partners	Long Term	• Finalize design and engineering plans based on stakeholder input and permitting outcomes • Evaluate opportunities for public-private partnerships in redevelopment	• USDOT MARAD Marine Highway Program • RCO Boating Facilities Program • USDOT MARAD Small Shipyards Grants • CERB Public Works Board Financing • CERB Prospective Development Program or Committed Private Partner Program	• High capital costs for construction and infrastructure upgrade • Zoning, shoreline designation, and utility constraints to development. • Extended and costly permitting process
Market the Marina and pursue private development opportunities	Port, private partners	Long Term	• Develop marketing materials using master plan visuals and strategic priorities • Engage prospective developers through targeted outreach and RFPs • Host stakeholder forums to align development proposals with community interests	• USDOT MARAD Marine Highway Program • RCO Boating Facilities Program • USDOT MARAD Small Shipyards Grants • CERB Public Works Board Financing • CERB Prospective Development Program or Committed Private Partner Program	• Cost of developing marketing materials and conducting outreach • Uncertainty around developer interest and market conditions • Risk of misalignment between private proposals and community expectations

Notes
DOE= Department of Energy
RCO= Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office
USDOT MARAD= US Department of Transportation Maritime Administration

2 Resilience Hub

The Resilience Hub action items presented in Table 2 outline a strategic roadmap for establishing a locally governed, community-serving facility that enhances Point Roberts’ adaptive capacity in the face of economic and environmental challenges. Short-term priorities focus on formally establishing a leadership entity, identifying project team roles, and developing a funding strategy. Mid-term tasks include evaluating potential hub sites through feasibility studies and implementing supporting solar infrastructure. Long-term efforts emphasize construction or renovation of the hub itself, development of community programming, and integration of renewable energy systems. While grant opportunities are available to support each phase of development, persistent barriers including governance disagreements, permitting complexity, and construction costs highlight the need for clear coordination and broad stakeholder consensus to ensure successful implementation.

Table 2. Resilience Hub Action Items

Action	Responsible Entity	Timing	Related Tasks and Considerations	Funding	Costs and Barriers
Define leadership entity	Resilient Point Roberts, Whatcom County, community identified representative	Short Term	• Convene relevant stakeholders and community members to determine the charter and leadership structure for the Resilience Hub • Clarify governance model (e.g., advisory board vs. executive leadership) • Determine Hub project director	General operating budget	• Potential disagreement on purpose of the Resilience Hub and the leadership roles and responsibilities
Identify resilience hub project team	Resilient Point Roberts, Whatcom County, community identified representative	Short Term	• Define the roles and responsibilities of the team • Determine if programming is feasible based on volunteer participation and availability	• Commerce CDBG • Commerce BCF • FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program • T-Mobile Hometown Grant • PSE Foundation Competitive Grant Programs	• Potential disagreement on purpose of the Resilience Hub and the leadership roles and responsibilities • Lack of funding for operation of the Resilience Hub
Seek funding for preferred alternative	Resilient Point Roberts, Whatcom County, community identified representative	Short Term	• Develop cost estimates and match funding strategy in coordination with Port and County • Seek funding for a project and programming director	General operating budget	• Cost of staff time • Potential funding gaps without matching contributions • Potential funding gaps without matching contributions • Limited availability of funding cycles that align with project timelines
Conduct a feasibility study for potential sites	Resilient Point Roberts, Whatcom County, community identified representative	Mid Term	• Procure a consultant to conduct a feasibility study for potential sites including the former Point to Point Parcel facility, the library/community center, marina buildings and international marketplace • Complete and implement the solar feasibility study	• Commerce CDBG • Commerce BCF • FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program • T-Mobile Hometown Grant • PSE Foundation Competitive Grant Programs	• Cost of staff time or consultant • Lack of funding • Potential community disagreement over preferred location
Build solar infrastructure	Resilient Point Roberts, Whatcom County, community identified representative	Long Term	• Secure interconnection agreements with PSE • Assess long-term operations and maintenance requirements • Fund and construct identified improvements in the solar feasibility study • Integrate solar improvements to resilience hub	• Commerce CDBG • Commerce BCF • FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program • T-Mobile Hometown Grant • PSE Foundation Competitive Grant Programs	• Lack of funding • Rising equipment or installation costs • Permitting complications
Remodel or construct resilience hub	Resilient Point Roberts, Whatcom County, community identified representative	Long Term	• Renovate or construct the resilience hub structure • Identify network of buildings for various uses (i.e. podcasting, workshop, etc.) • Align with future programming and capacity needs • Utilize local contractors if available	• Commerce CDBG • Commerce BCF • FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program • T-Mobile Hometown Grant • PSE Foundation Competitive Grant Programs	• High cost of construction on Point Roberts • Lack of contractors to complete work • Potential NEPA/SEPA review requirements if federal funds are used

Resilience Hub

Action	Responsible Entity	Timing	Related Tasks and Considerations	Funding	Costs and Barriers
Establish programming	Resilient Point Roberts, Whatcom County, community identified representative	Long Term	- Identified leadership develops the programming for the hub - Establish partnerships with workforce development entities	General operating budget	- Challenge of balancing programming with competing demand for space in the Resilience Hub - Limited partnership opportunities with workforce development entities due to Point Roberts' geographic isolation and associated access challenges.

Notes
BCF= Building Communities Fund
Commerce= Washington State Department of Commerce
CDBG= Community Development Block Grant
FEMA= Federal Emergency Management Administration
PSE= Puget Sound Energy

3 Broadband

Table 3 outlines targeted actions for broadband implementation, presenting a focused strategy to enhance connectivity throughout Point Roberts and foster economic growth and digital equity. With a funding deadline set for December 2026, priority efforts include completing infrastructure projects, securing additional grants, and initiating competitive bids for service providers. Concurrently, the plan calls for overcoming permitting challenges, collaborating with tribal and utility partners, and seeking further sources of support to ensure sustained progress. Despite obstacles such as compressed timelines, regulatory delays, and reduced construction scope, these initiatives emphasize the vital role of broadband as a cornerstone for business development, telehealth, remote learning, and civic participation. Continued advocacy from local and county stakeholders will be essential to maintain momentum, helping Point Roberts achieve lasting digital resilience and future-ready community infrastructure.

Table 3. Broadband Action Items

Action	Responsible Entity	Timing	Related Tasks and Considerations	Funding	Costs and Barriers
Implement broadband infrastructure	Whatcom PUD	Short Term	- Continue ongoing projects with the goal to complete them ahead of December 2026 funding cutoff - Coordinate with WSBO to monitor funding deadlines and compliance - Develop a contingency plan in case of further delays - Schedule regular check-ins with PSE, DAHP, and Lummi Nation to track progress - Prioritize critical path activities to meet construction timelines - Identify supplemental funding sources to offset rising costs	- WSBO Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Program - USDA ReConnect program - USDA Community Connect Program - CERB Rural Broadband Program	- Scheduling delays related to infrastructure agreements with PSE and permitting are causing cost and timeline overruns on the project - Ongoing projects are at risk of discontinuing - Further funding may not be available to support progress
Initiate bids for broadband service providers	Whatcom PUD	Short Term	- Drive a competitive bid for service providers on the Point including local provider options - Explore wireless, satellite, or mesh network solutions for remaining hard-to-serve areas - Prepare a detailed scope of service to guide provider bids - Assess potential service levels, pricing models, and network management options - Identify backup options if insufficient bids are received - Include evaluation criteria that emphasize community benefit and long-term viability	General operating budget	This step is contingent upon broadband infrastructure being implemented; without it, the action becomes inapplicable.
Pursue further funding opportunities	County, Port	Short Term	- To advance the ongoing broadband implementation and overcome existing barriers, the community, Port, and County should pursue additional funding sources ,mainly CERB Rural Broadband program, to support infrastructure upgrades and service expansion. - Document economic impacts and community need to strengthen grant applications - Schedule internal deadlines for proposal development and review - Develop cost estimates and match funding strategy in coordination with Port and County	General operating budget	- Cost of Port and County staff time - Compressed timelines to acquire funding to supplement existing shortfalls of the ongoing broadband improvements - The project has been re-scoped significantly, eliminating linear underground construction and over 300 address points for service. This downsizing could affect the project's alignment with original grant goals (e.g. number of households served), potentially disqualifying it from further funding tied to service coverage or access equity

Broadband

Action	Responsible Entity	Timing	Related Tasks and Considerations	Funding	Costs and Barriers
Public outreach on improvements	Whatcom PUD	Short Term	• Keep community, Port, and County informed on progress and delays so they may react accordingly. • Develop messaging that emphasizes transparency, urgency, and inclusiveness • Coordinate with local press and digital media to extend outreach	General operating budget	• Complications associated with ongoing negotiations with PSE, DAHP, and the Lummi Nation. • The nuanced timeline constraints and permitting delays may erode public confidence, especially if progress appears stalled or if expectations are not actively managed through transparent updates. • With less than 15 months remaining, there's limited time for thorough community engagement, feedback integration, and consensus-building. Delayed or rushed outreach may result in pushback, especially if residents feel excluded from revised decision-making
Continue to support broadband access on the Point	Port, County, PR Chamber of Commerce	Mid Term	• Identify advocacy roles for Port, County, and Chamber stakeholders • Engage local representatives to advocate for the continuation of broadband infrastructure development on Point Roberts. • Pursue continued funding opportunities to leverage funding that has already been allocated for broadband improvement.	• WSBO Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Program • USDA ReConnect program • USDA Community Connect Program • CERB Rural Broadband Program	• Inability of Whatcom PUD to continue their development of broadband infrastructure because of existing project barriers

Notes
CERB= Washington Department of Commerce Community and Economic Revitalization Board
DAHP= US Department of Archeology and Historic Preservation
PUD= Public Utility District
USDA= US Department of Agriculture
WSBO= Washington State Broadband Office

4 Sewer Improvements

Table 4 outlines the key actions necessary to implement the Sewer Strategy, addressing both community drain field systems and centralized sewer infrastructure. The recommended approach involves phased upgrades to Point Roberts’ wastewater facilities, with a focus on enhancing economic redevelopment, public health, and environmental protection. Initial steps prioritize maintaining current septic systems and conducting a short-term feasibility study to explore alternatives and funding sources. Mid-term objectives center on monitoring system performance, developing a comprehensive sewer master plan, and engaging the community to shape future investments. Long-term actions include coordinating international waste disposal, finalizing design and permits, overseeing construction, and establishing sustainable operations and maintenance. Strategic upzoning connected to sewer expansion will enable denser, more diverse development. Although state and federal funding opportunities exist, significant challenges remain—such as high costs, complex permitting, the need for interagency cooperation, and the geopolitical intricacies of cross-border infrastructure projects.

Table 4. Sewer Improvement Action Items

Action	Responsible Entity	Timing	Sewer System	Related Tasks and Considerations	Funding	Costs and Barriers
Maintain existing septic systems	Individual property owners	Ongoing	Existing	• Maintain private septic systems and Marina's on-site system	General operating budget	• Maintenance costs for individual property owners
Conduct a sewer feasibility study	County	Short Term	CDF, CS	• Procure consultant to conduct feasibility study • Conduct an in-depth alternatives analysis and feasibility study to determine best system to implement. • Evaluate Public vs. Private STEP system models of community drain fields	• USDA WWDPG • USDA Water & Waste Disposal Loan & Grant • EDA Economic Adjustment Assistance • Commerce Public Works Board Financing • Ecology CWSRF Loan • Ecology Local Solid Waste Financial Assistance Program	• Cost of sewer feasibility studies range from about \$25,000-\$75,000 • Time and cost associated with cross-agency coordination
Seek funding for preferred alternative	County	Short Term	CDF, CS	• Use findings from the sewer feasibility study document to emphasize economic impacts and community need to strengthen grant applications. • Develop cost estimates and match funding strategy in coordination with Port and County	General operating budget	• Cost of staff time • Potential funding gaps without matching contributions • Limited availability of funding cycles that align with project timelines
Monitor soil conditions and system performance	County	Mid Term	CDF, CS	• Monitor soil conditions and system performance • Prepare baseline soil condition analysis for the comprehensive sewer master plan	• USDA WWDPG • USDA Water & Waste Disposal Loan & Grant • EDA Economic Adjustment Assistance • Commerce Public Works Board Financing • Ecology CWSRF Loan • Ecology Local Solid Waste Financial Assistance Program	• Cost of soil study can range from about \$30,000-\$75,000 • Potential to encounter complex soil profiles and permitting delays
Develop Comprehensive Sewer Master Plan	County	Mid Term	CDF, CS	• Procure a consultant to develop the master plan • Conduct public outreach and engagement • Determine best locations for implementation of sewer improvements • Work to adopt the sewer master plan into the county's comprehensive plan • Identify a list of priority investments in a capital improvement plan	• USDA WWDPG • USDA Water & Waste Disposal Loan & Grant • EDA Economic Adjustment Assistance • Commerce Public Works Board Financing • Ecology CWSRF Loan • Ecology Local Solid Waste Financial Assistance Program	• The cost of a comprehensive sewer master plan can range from \$75,000–\$250,000+ which includes hydraulic modeling, condition assessments, capital planning, and public engagement • Requires extensive public engagement and interagency collaboration

Sewer Improvements

Action	Responsible Entity	Timing	Sewer System	Related Tasks and Considerations	Funding	Costs and Barriers
Negotiate agreement with Tsawwassen plant	County	Long Term	CS	- Engage Tsawwassen with a sewer plan if partnership on a centralized sewer system is desired - Provide findings of previous studies - Pursue legal consult on a international sewer treatment agreement and use Sumas-Abbotsford agreement for reference.	General operating budget	- Existing geopolitical tensions between the US and Canada - Complicated governance and payment structure related to international border - Potential delays or deadlocks in negotiations
Engineering and design of sewer improvements	County	Long Term	CDF,CS	- Develop preliminary engineering plans - Prepare design report - Develop construction-ready engineering plans - Coordinate with utility providers	- USDA WWDPG - USDA Water & Waste Disposal Loan & Grant - EDA Economic Adjustment Assistance - Commerce Public Works Board Financing - Ecology CWSRF Loan - Ecology Local Solid Waste Financial Assistance Program - CERB Prospective Development Program	Cost of consultant
Permitting	County	Long Term	CDF,CS	- Consult with agencies early to get a comprehensive picture of permitting requirements. - Identify necessary federal, state, and local permits - Engage Lummi Tribe and DAHPP early in the process to identify immediate barriers to sewer implementation	- USDA WWDPG - USDA Water & Waste Disposal Loan & Grant - EDA Economic Adjustment Assistance - Commerce Public Works Board Financing - Ecology CWSRF Loan - Ecology Local Solid Waste Financial Assistance Program - CERB Prospective Development Program	- Costs for permit fees and environmental documentation - Timing risk due to multi-agency review - Intensive and costly permitting with DAHP and Lummi Tribe
Construction of sewer improvements	County	Long Term	CDF,CS	- Manage bidding and procurement - Identify contractor - Conduct public outreach related to construction location and schedule - Oversee phased implementation - Prepare as-built engineering plans	- USDA WWDPG - USDA Water & Waste Disposal Loan & Grant - EDA Economic Adjustment Assistance - Commerce Public Works Board Financing - Ecology CWSRF Loan - Ecology Local Solid Waste Financial Assistance Program - CERB Prospective Development Program	- High capital investment required - May face contractor availability or material cost escalations - Intensive and costly oversight by DAHP and Lummi Tribe during excavations
Operations and maintenance	County	Long Term	CDF,CS	- Develop staffing and maintenance protocol - Establish long-term funding strategy - Determine utility rates	- USDA Water & Waste Disposal Loan & Grant - Ecology Local Solid Waste Financial Assistance Program	- Ongoing operational costs - Need for sustainable revenue source
Upzone areas of the Point based on updated development capacity	County	Long Term	CDF,CS	- Conduct a zoning study once a new sewer system is implemented - Determine areas most viable for commercial redevelopment - Determine zones for multifamily housing potential - Submit for a comprehensive zone change for the Point	General operating budget	- Cost of planning and feasibility analysis - Complicated and lengthy public and stakeholder engagement and public review process

Sewer Improvements

Notes
CDF= Community Drain Field
CS= Centralized Sewer
CWSRF = Clean Water State Revolving Fund.
Ecology= Washington Department of Ecology
EDA= United States Economic Development Agency
STEP= Septic Tank Effluent Pumping
USDA= US Department of Agriculture
WWDPG= Water & Waste Disposal Predevelopment Planning Grants in Washington

5 Economic and Environmental Sustainability

The proposed action items outlined in Table 5 form a strategic foundation for advancing economic and ecological sustainability objectives in Point Roberts. These initiatives are designed to foster local resilience through coordinated investment in infrastructure, food systems, energy independence, tourism development, and land use planning. From short-term feasibility studies and stakeholder engagement to long-term programmatic commitments such as bike infrastructure, small-scale agriculture, renewable energy, and community events, each item reflects an effort to align economic revitalization with environmental stewardship. Funding opportunities are varied and competitive, with most actions facing challenges related to permitting, coordination, and limited leadership or financing capacity. Nevertheless, the initiatives represent a coherent pathway toward sustainable development through public-private collaboration, community input, and strategic leveraging of local identity and assets.

Table 5. Economic and Ecological Sustainability Action Items

Action	Responsible Entity	Timing	Related Tasks and Considerations	Funding	Costs and Barriers
Targeted support to existing local businesses facing economic challenges	Point Roberts Chamber of Commerce, Resilient Point Roberts, Community identified representative	Short Term	• Conduct a business survey to gauge level of distress across Point businesses. • Create a Point business cross-promotion program • Identify and prioritize needs • Provide incentives • Promote cross selling and collaboration across businesses • Establish a Small Business Relief Fund	• Commerce Community Development Block Grant • State of Washington Tourism Grants • Private funding opportunities	• Strong prevailing economic headwinds and low business momentum • Existing tariff policy and response disincentivize Canadians spending money in Point Roberts • High capital investment; long lead times and coordination with utilities or agencies
Identify focus area of limited development for areas including the Marina, Gulf Road, and Marine Drive	Point Roberts Chamber of Commerce, Resilient Point Roberts, Community identified representative	Short Term	• Conduct a development feasibility study and identify priority development projects (i.e. bike infrastructure, brewery, energy infrastructure) • Pair findings with development of the other economic development strategies • Create a master plan for implementation of economic development strategies • Implement priority projects into capital improvement plan • Engage community stakeholders to align priorities	• Commerce Community Development Block Grant • T-Mobile Hometown Grant • PSE Foundation Competitive Grant Programs • State of Washington Tourism Grants • Private funding opportunities • DOE's Energy Improvements in Rural or Remote Areas	• Economic feasibility for developments may not be demonstrated • Existing zoning scheme may constrain vision of redevelopment • Community consensus on priority initiatives may be difficult to achieve
Develop a Park Facility Master Plan	County Parks, Port, Resilient Point Roberts	Short Term	• Pursue targeted funding streams to initiate parks master planning activities. • Complete a comprehensive parks master plan establishing a park system that connects all four County Parks • Initiate conceptual design, engineering, and planning for Lighthouse Marine Park improvements as inaugural project.	• Commerce Community Development Block Grant • State of Washington Tourism Grants • Private funding opportunities • RCO WWRP	• Shoreline designation restrictions on development of a lighthouse could limit vision of park development • Potential lack of funding for park improvements
Seek funding opportunities	Point Roberts Chamber of Commerce, Resilient Point Roberts, Community identified representative	Short Term	• Develop cost estimates and match funding strategy in coordination with Port and County • Screen existing capital plans for funding gaps or leverage opportunities	General operating budget	• Cost of staff time • Potential funding gaps without matching contributions • Limited availability of funding cycles that align with project timelines

Action	Responsible Entity	Timing	Related Tasks and Considerations	Funding	Costs and Barriers
Include biking infrastructure into the Transportation element of the Comprehensive Plan	Point Roberts Chamber of Commerce, Resilient Point Roberts, Community identified representative	Mid Term	• Build on existing trail connections between Point Roberts and Bellingham • Advocate for Point Roberts bike improvements to be included in the County Comprehensive Plan • Establish funding for planning, engineering, and construction • Incorporate biking infrastructure into community tourism strategy • Work with County Parks to determine best potential routes	• Commerce CDBG • USDOT Safe Streets and Roads for All • WSDOT Pedestrian and Bicycle Program	• Funding gaps for multi-phase infrastructure improvements • Misalignment with regional planning cycles • Engineering constraints for safe path development
Promote small-scale agricultural system	Point Roberts Chamber of Commerce, Resilient Point Roberts, Community identified representative	Mid Term	• Pursue targeted funding streams to initiate a community-based agriculture program focused on local food production, education, and economic resilience • Identify and assess potential sites for agricultural use, including leased, donated, or community-owned land, with attention to infrastructure, zoning, and long-term sustainability • Integrate the agriculture program with a regional farmers market—by partnering with the Tsawwassen market or establishing a dedicated Point Roberts market to promote local growers and products • Develop structured programming to support peer exchange, technical education, and collaborative learning among local agriculturists	• WSDA Local Food System Infrastructure Grant • USDA Local Food Promotion Program	• High startup costs • Limited access to credit or loans • Labor constraints • Lack of a viable market • Lack of infrastructure to support a new agricultural system • Lack of leadership and governance • Potential disagreement on structure of proposed system
Continue development of self-sustaining energy sources and system	Point Roberts Chamber of Commerce, Resilient Point Roberts, Identified representative	Mid Term	• Conduct a feasibility study for implementation of solar and wind implementation • Secure interconnection agreements with PSE • Assess long-term operations and maintenance requirements • Fund and construct identified improvements in the solar feasibility study • Integrate solar improvements to resilience hub	• Commerce CDBG • T-Mobile Hometown Grant • PSE Foundation Competitive Grant Programs • DOE Energy Improvements in Rural or Remote Areas	• Rising equipment or installation costs • Permitting complications • Limited available funding for full buildout
Establish marketing campaign for the Point's new amenities	Point Roberts Chamber of Commerce, Resilient Point Roberts, Identified representative	Long Term	• Hire marketing consultant to run a Point Roberts tourism campaign • Host stakeholder forums to align development proposals with community interests • Promote new assets in collaboration with regional tourism effort • Integrate Point branding with the County Parks department and align any new park projects with campaign to encourage visitation.	• SWT Tourism Grants • WSDA Local Food System Infrastructure Grant	• Consultant fees and production costs • Limited reach without partnerships or media leverage
Identify buildings with redevelopment potential for location of brewery or restaurant	Point Roberts Chamber of Commerce, Resilient Point Roberts	Long Term	• Complete feasibility study • Engage prospective developers through targeted outreach and RFPs • Align with tourism branding and local identity	• Commerce CDBG • T-Mobile Hometown Grant	• Redevelopment costs may be prohibitive • Site and zoning constraints or permitting challenges • Low developer interest due to market size • Dependence on long-term business support or incentives

Action	Responsible Entity	Timing	Related Tasks and Considerations	Funding	Costs and Barriers
Start committee to help establish and operate festivals and markets	Point Roberts Chamber of Commerce, Resilient Point Roberts	Long Term	• Define committee structure, roles, and decision-making protocols • Recruit diverse members representing local businesses, artists, nonprofits, and residents • Develop a seasonal calendar of events aligned with tourism patterns and community interests • Coordinate with existing venues (e.g., Marina, Community Center, Gulf Road) for logistics and permitting • Establish partnerships with regional tourism boards and cultural organizations • Create branding and promotional materials for events • Develop vendor guidelines and outreach strategy for market participation • Align with local food systems and agricultural initiatives to feature farm stands and artisanal goods • Explore integration with existing events like Strings & Things, Apple Harvest Festival, and July Fourth celebrations	• SWT Tourism Grants • WSDA Local Food System Infrastructure Grant	• Limited volunteer capacity • Need for seed funding to support initial operations, marketing, and event infrastructure • Coordination challenges across multiple stakeholders and venues • Costly permitting and insurance requirements for public events • Seasonal fluctuations in visitor traffic and vendor availability • Risk of low turnout or limited community engagement in early phases • Potential lack of sustained leadership and administrative support to maintain momentum • Potential overlap or competition with existing informal markets or events • Limited accommodation space on Point Roberts

Notes
PSE= Puget Sound Energy
RCO= Recreation and Conservation Office
RFP= request for proposals
SWT= State of Washington Tourism
USDA US Department of Agriculture
USDOT= US Department of Transportation
WSDA= Washington State Department of Agriculture
WSDOT= Wahington Department of Transportation
WWRP= Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program

Appendix D

Soils Map



MAUL
FOSTER
ALONGI

AASHTO Group Classification (Surface)—Whatcom County Area, Washington



MAP LEGEND

Area of Interest (AOI)

 Area of Interest (AOI)

Soils

Soil Rating Polygons

	A-1
	A-1-a
	A-1-b
	A-2
	A-2-4
	A-2-5
	A-2-6
	A-2-7
	A-3
	A-4
	A-5
	A-6
	A-7
	A-7-5
	A-7-6
	A-8
	Not rated or not available

Soil Rating Lines

	A-1
	A-1-a
	A-1-b
	A-2

	A-2-4
	A-2-5
	A-2-6
	A-2-7
	A-3
	A-4
	A-5
	A-6
	A-7
	A-7-5
	A-7-6
	A-8
	Not rated or not available

Soil Rating Points

	A-1
	A-1-a
	A-1-b
	A-2
	A-2-4
	A-2-5
	A-2-6
	A-2-7
	A-3
	A-4
	A-5
	A-6

	A-7
	A-7-5
	A-7-6
	A-8
	Not rated or not available

Water Features

 Streams and Canals

Transportation

	Rails
	Interstate Highways
	US Routes
	Major Roads
	Local Roads

Background

 Aerial Photography

MAP INFORMATION

The soil surveys that comprise your AOI were mapped at 1:24,000.

Please rely on the bar scale on each map sheet for map measurements.

Source of Map: Natural Resources Conservation Service
Web Soil Survey URL:
Coordinate System: Web Mercator (EPSG:3857)

Maps from the Web Soil Survey are based on the Web Mercator projection, which preserves direction and shape but distorts distance and area. A projection that preserves area, such as the Albers equal-area conic projection, should be used if more accurate calculations of distance or area are required.

This product is generated from the USDA-NRCS certified data as of the version date(s) listed below.

Soil Survey Area: Whatcom County Area, Washington
Survey Area Data: Version 24, Aug 28, 2024

Soil map units are labeled (as space allows) for map scales 1:50,000 or larger.

Date(s) aerial images were photographed: Jul 5, 2020—Sep 1, 2022

The orthophoto or other base map on which the soil lines were compiled and digitized probably differs from the background imagery displayed on these maps. As a result, some minor shifting of map unit boundaries may be evident.

AASHTO Group Classification (Surface)

Map unit symbol	Map unit name	Rating	Acres in AOI	Percent of AOI
3	Andic Xerochrepts, 60 to 90 percent slopes	A-4	79.3	2.4%
48	Everett gravelly sandy loam, hard substratum, 2 to 8 percent slopes	A-2	721.9	22.3%
50	Everett very gravelly sandy loam, 15 to 35 percent slopes	A-1	33.8	1.0%
51	Everett complex, 2 to 8 percent slopes	A-1	1,142.2	35.3%
73	Hovde silt loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes	A-4	21.2	0.7%
94	Labounty silt loam, drained, 0 to 2 percent slopes	A-4	149.6	4.6%
111	Neptune very gravelly sandy loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes	A-1	245.9	7.6%
120	Pits, gravel		31.5	1.0%
143	Shalcar muck, drained, 0 to 2 percent	A-8	135.0	4.2%
165	Tromp loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes	A-4	257.3	7.9%
170	Typic Psammaquents, tidal, 0 to 1 percent slopes	A-3	62.8	1.9%
171	Urban land		142.8	4.4%
184	Whitehorn silt loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes	A-4	205.2	6.3%
193	Water		3.5	0.1%
Totals for Area of Interest			3,239.6	100.0%

Description

AASHTO group classification is a system that classifies soils specifically for geotechnical engineering purposes that are related to highway and airfield construction. It is based on particle-size distribution and Atterberg limits, such as liquid limit and plasticity index. This classification system is covered in AASHTO Standard No. M 145-82. The classification is based on that portion of the soil that is smaller than 3 inches in diameter.

The AASHTO classification system has two general classifications: (i) granular materials having 35 percent or less, by weight, particles smaller than 0.074 mm in diameter and (ii) silt-clay materials having more than 35 percent, by weight, particles smaller than 0.074 mm in diameter. These two divisions are further subdivided into seven main group classifications, plus eight subgroups, for a total of fifteen for mineral soils. Another class for organic soils is used.

For each soil horizon in the database one or more AASHTO Group Classifications may be listed. One is marked as the representative or most commonly occurring. The representative classification is shown here for the surface layer of the soil.

Rating Options

Aggregation Method: Dominant Condition

Component Percent Cutoff: None Specified

Tie-break Rule: Lower

Layer Options (Horizon Aggregation Method): Surface Layer (Not applicable)