

# 1 INTRODUCTION



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## 1a PURPOSE OF MASTER PLAN



### SUPPORT OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN

The fundamental rationale for Master Planning is to continually confirm that the physical environment of the College is supporting the instructional strategic plan. Summarized as the Mission, Vision and Goals of the College (see Section 2), this plan is what guides the institution in its formation, continuation and development of programs, curriculum, community and workplace. Changes to the physical environment that are necessary to improve existing conditions or provide new facilities are directly linked to the assessment of these goals and the adequacy of current facilities.

### CAPITAL PLANNING

Long-range planning of educational goals and facilities is required in order to stay ahead of the curve for capital planning. Typical new construction projects require six years from proposal submission to construction completion. The Master Plan establishes a direction and strategy for future development for which funding proposals, new construction, renovation projects, limited public works projects and additional studies can be initiated. In addition to guiding what should be done, a proper plan acts to prevent misguided development that could potentially get in the way of future plans.

### CITY OF BELLINGHAM

Bellingham Technical College currently comprises roughly Thirty-two acres of land, including approximately nine acres of undeveloped property. While not large enough to be classified as "institutional" under the City of Bellingham Municipal Code, the Technical College's classification under "schools" does not quite encompass the complexity of its planning within the framework of the City and County. Institutional entities are required to submit an Institutional Master Plan (IMP), "to provide for the development of large campus type public or quasi-public uses in a planned and coordinated manner."<sup>1</sup> While not required, a Master Plan submittal for Bellingham Technical College is accepted by the City as a framework for future growth that will influence the development of their Comprehensive Plan and aid in the permit review and approval process.

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<sup>1</sup>City of Bellingham Municipal Code, 2007.

## 1b HISTORY OF BELLINGHAM TECHNICAL COLLEGE



Bellingham Technical College (BTC) began its long and rich history as the first “Industrial School” built by the Bellingham School District. The first buildings were opened in 1911. This school then became a manual-training facility for Whatcom High School and in 1917, with the passage of the Smith-Hughes Act, courses in automotive mechanics and machine shop for Fairhaven High School were offered.

The need for evening classes emerged with the onset of World War II. BTC expanded its role and provided training for industry for nearly 4,000 persons during wartime. In 1952, local school districts realized that the vocational programs being offered were not meeting the needs of the community. An advisory committee was formed from local labor and management organizations and in 1957, Bellingham Vocational Technical Institute was established as a separate entity from the School District. The campus grew and expanded along with programs needs, and the Institute served the community in this way for thirty-four years.

In 1991, the name officially changed to Bellingham Technical College and its governance was transferred to the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) and a newly formed local Board of Trustees, elevating the College’s status among other State two-year community colleges and technical and professional institutions.

Formal Accreditation followed in 1999, after years of bolstering programs, updating facilities and continued excellence in instruction.

Development of new facilities on its original twenty-one acre site began in 1955 with Buildings A and B. Sixteen buildings were added in the period between 1965 and 1985. The most recent capital project involved the construction of the Morse Center for Welding and Auto Collision Technology, and multiple projects covering additions, renovations, and improvements during the 2005-2007 State funding biennium.



# 1c HISTORY OF CAMPUS PLANNING @ B T C



Formal Master Plan and Existing Conditions Surveys for the campus did not begin until 1993. Up to that point, development on the twenty-one acre parcel was primarily done as needs arose, with one building block growing up next to the last. A core of classroom buildings started to evolve along Lindbergh Avenue, the south edge of the campus. Vocational Lab buildings were sited in the next two rows of buildings to the north, creating an organized, but tight grouping of uniform, single story masonry buildings.

As the campus grew to the east, new buildings and infrastructure were added as required, but an overall sense of campus organization was lacking. This left the tertiary spaces between buildings undefined, pedestrian routes meandering, vehicle and pedestrian traffic mixed, and parking sporadic.

In 1993, the architectural firm of Olsen Sundberg developed the first Master Plan for future growth. It was the first study of the campus to determine existing conditions, future needs and potential organization.

Zervas Group Architects prepared a Capital Budget Plan in 1997 to evaluate the previous Master Plan, the existing state of the campus and potential growth for twelve years into the future. This plan continued previous planning themes and identified new building projects for funding proposals.

In 2002, The Henry Klein Partnership, Architects provided a comprehensive Master Plan for BTC. The proposed 20 year Master Plan illustrated the potential build-out of the entire existing BTC property. It realized the main objectives of the College which were to provide a definitive campus entrance, improve and enhance the existing campus core, provide new state-of-the-art facilities for programs in need, move vehicular dependant programs to the perimeter of the site and provide adequate parking, pathways, and lighting throughout campus.



20-year Campus Plan,  
Henry Klein Partnership, Architects, 2002 Master Plan