

Chapter 1: Introduction

OVERVIEW OF THE PLAN AREA

The Browns Point/Dash Point area is located in northeastern Pierce County and surrounded by Puget Sound marine waters on almost three sides. The City of Tacoma is located to the south and the City of Federal Way (and King County) is located to the east. Commencement Bay and Port of Tacoma are located to the southwest. Vashon and Maury Islands are located across Puget Sound to the north.



The plan area is approximately 615 acres and is designated for urban land uses under the Pierce County Comprehensive Plan. The community plan does not contain a rural area as defined by the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA). While the two communities of Browns Point and Dash Point are somewhat distinct geographically, there is a strong combined community identity in the area.

The Browns Point/Dash Point area is characterized by a variety of residential uses on small to medium sized lots. Residential homes dominate the landscape, with a significant commercial center in the heart of Browns Point. Dash Point State Park is located to the east, straddling the Pierce/King County line. The area's dominant marine views and active recreational shoreline contribute to the community identity. State Route 509 (SR 509) crosses both communities, providing a connection to the City of Tacoma and the City of Federal Way.

The plan area encompasses portions of Township 21 North, Range 3E, Sections 9, 10, 15, 16, 17, 20, and 21, and is in Pierce County Council District #2. The entire area is located in Census Tract 708, as defined in the year 2000 census.

The total population in year 2000 was 2086 people. From US Census data, residents of Browns Point/Dash Point have a median household income of about \$68,315. That income is 151.1% of the Pierce County median household income of \$45,204 with 73% of the population employed. The communities are dependent on commuting to Tacoma, Federal Way, and other parts of King and Pierce Counties for employment.

THE ENVIRONMENT

The Browns Point/Dash Point Community Plan area is an urban area with a strong connection to its shoreline. Views of Puget Sound throughout the area attract people to visit and live in the area. Public shoreline access through the existing waterfront parks is highly utilized and protected by the community. Water access is cherished, and includes many activities, such as windsurfing, kite boarding, jet skiing, and boating. Shoreline activities draw large numbers of

people to the points, with barely enough room to cast a line along the shoreline when the salmon are running. There are pockets of natural areas associated with steep slopes and other critical areas. Dash Point State Park is the largest forested area in the near vicinity. Developed areas predominantly fall into the medium to low density residential uses.

EARLY HISTORY OF BROWNS POINT/DASH POINT AREA

The following synopsis of Browns Point/Dash Point history is liberally borrowed, summarized, and rewritten from the Points Northeast Historical Society and its website at www.pointsnortheast.org. The paragraphs and highlights are much less colorful than the well written account by Mavis Stears in *Two Points of View*, the text that is used to provide content on the website. As the account reveals, the geographic prominence of the two points has resulted in an interesting history that is carefully recorded by these communities.



THE 18TH AND 19TH CENTURIES

The two main tribes which lived in the area around Commencement Bay were the Puyallup Tribe and the Nisqually Tribe. They were friendly tribes and shared each other's berry picking and hunting grounds during the summer and fished together in the Nisqually and Puyallup Rivers in the winter.

In the spring of 1792, Captain George Vancouver and his men, who were exploring in the name of King George III of England, became the first white men to view the twin points. On May 8, 1792, Capt. Vancouver sighted the huge mountain which he named Mount Rainier for Rear Admiral Peter Rainier, an old friend. While exploring south Puget Sound on May 20th, 1792, Capt. Vancouver and his men rowed around the point into "an extensive, circular, compact bay," Commencement Bay. He had been hoping that this would be the easterly waterway that would link the west to the east.

The area was surveyed by both U.S. Naval ships and British Navy frigates and brigs and both points received their names between 1841 and 1877. Browns Point was known as Point Brown until about the 1920s. During the 19th century Dash Point was used as a geodetic survey point. On December 12, 1887 a fixed white light lens lantern was placed on a white post on Point Brown.

In 1854, Issac I. Stevens, Governor and Superintendent of Indian Affairs of Washington Territory and the chiefs and delegates of the Nisqually, Puyallup, Steilacoom, and other tribes of the lower Puget Sound region, signed the Medicine Creek Treaty. The President issued an Executive Order in January 1857 creating specific Indian reservations, including the Puyallup Indian Reservation.

The Browns Point and Dash Point areas were a part of the Puyallup Reservation. Disputes over the surveys of boundaries and tidelands were common between the government and the

tribes. A survey of the Puyallup reservation was made in 1872 assigning plots of land to individual tribal members and 167 patent deeds were signed by President Grover Cleveland and issued to the individual Puyallup tribe members in March 1886, with each given approximately 160 acres of land. Ten Puyallup tribe members were patent deeded property on Browns Point and Dash Point.

THE 1900s

In 1901 the first lighthouse at Browns Point and a house for the lighthouse keeper were built. The lighthouse was a wood frame structure on wood pilings off shore. The first lighthouse keepers were Oscar Brown and his wife Annie, who arrived by government boat in October of 1903. For the next 30 years Oscar Brown tended the battery operated lighthouse.



In 1898, Captain Mathew McDowell, a Scotsman born in the mid 1800s in Northern Ireland, began the McDowell Transportation Company. McDowell carried passengers and hauled freight on his seven steamers. The fleet was originally based in Tacoma near the smelter. In 1905 he purchased 80 acres on Browns Point from the original tribal owners and heirs.

McDowell built a house and dock in the cove not very far from the lighthouse and called his new home Caledonia. His daily runs serviced areas such as Dumas Bay, Lakota, Adelaide, Redondo, Des Moines, Zenith, Maury, Portage, Chautaugua, Vashon, Tacoma, and Seattle. As the permanent population and summer vacationers increased, his business thrived. His clientele increased even more when he built a dance hall next to his dock and his D-fleet brought fun-loving dancers from across the bay.

HYADA PARK IS PLATTED

Between 1901 and 1907 Jerry Meeker and his business partners George Taylor, J.M. Campbell, Fremont Campbell, and Frank Ross acquired and platted most of the property west of today's Eastside Drive which they called Hyada Park. Mr. Meeker chose tribal names for the streets including La-Hal-Da, his own tribal name. In 1906 he built his home on Browns Point. Next to it he built Browns Point Dock in 1907, for \$5,500. By 1941 it was deemed unsafe and was torn down by the Works Progress Administration.

As far back as 1912 Jerry Meeker's clambakes were enjoyed by his friends and neighbors. They were held on the beach, but later were held next to the schoolhouse on Tok-A-Lou. By 1918 there were enough children on Browns Point to warrant a school. It was built on the east side of Tok-A-Lou and the first year had about 12 students.

DASH POINT GROWS

Dash Point began its gradual growth as a community not long after the turn of the century. Over the first couple of decades land was purchased from the tribes by settlers who then developed their respective areas of land into a small community that grew over the century. Most of the activity of the first decade on Dash Point involved the amusement and sports of picnickers from Tacoma.



There were no roads to Dash Point unless one traveled across country on foot or by horse to the dirt roads that went through Julia's Gulch to the top of Dash Point hill. This is most likely the road now known as Browns Point Boulevard. It was, however, a dirt road and dirt roads in the Pacific Northwest at that time were usually impassable especially in the fall and winter months.

After many years of rowing boats to catch launches going in and out of Dash Point, the

community club contracted Pete Manson, who owned the best pile driving company in the area, to build a new dock for \$7,777. The community furnished the labor and on a cold and very rainy December night in 1917, with the lowest tide of the year, the community poured the concrete pilings. In about 1918 the bulk of the property, which is now the part adjoining the dock, was donated for the purpose of a park, by R.P. Milne and Louis Eberhardt. Also in 1918 Harry Johnston deeded to the County the property in front of the present Lobster Shop and tennis court, for the park. Due to the generosity of Milne, Eberhardt, and Johnston, Dash Point had property for a park. On April 10, 1923 residents voted to put the property under the jurisdiction of the Metropolitan Park District.

EASTSIDE DRIVE/MARINE VIEW DRIVE

From the beginning of building on the two points, the developers had promised their clients a road into the area. Browns Pointers could come up Julia's Gulch to what is now Browns Point Boulevard to today's Slayden Road. Dash Pointers came the same way through Northeast Tacoma but just to the top of Dash Point hill. All of these roads were narrow dirt roads, usually impassable in rainy weather.

Finally, in about 1918 three men formed the Pacific Boulevard Association and obtained the release of properties necessary for a scenic road called Marine View Drive (Eastside Drive) between Tacoma and Dash Point via Hyada Park. With the road came bus service to Tacoma provided by Joe Lyon from 1925-1937. Roy Harrison took over the bus service from 1937-1942. He made four round trips to Tacoma every day, plus a run just for the school children.

The population of Dash Point and Browns Point grew at a steady rate well into the war years. On Dash Point houses were spread fairly evenly on the north-facing hillside. On Browns Point most of the homes were located close to the beach, with very few on the hill. During 1941 to

1943 the two communities cooperated in operating the Crestview Observation Post located on the highest point above the two points. Fifty to 75 people were listed and allotted periods for plane watching. They reported any sightings and the descriptions of the aircraft to the Civil Defense headquarters. The tower was manned 24 hours a day. The code name for Crestview was “Charlie Nine One.” The beginning of World War II brought some physical changes to the points. Ship building and an all out war effort became paramount in the industrial tidelands. With the buildup came workers and their families. The need for housing was answered on the points with both developers and individuals building homes for workers.

A new clubhouse at Browns Point was completed and dedicated on February 20, 1955. The majority of the Browns Point/Dash Point Community Plan meetings were held in this clubhouse.

By 1959 the majority of Browns Point and Dash Point Hills was annexed to Tacoma. These areas automatically qualified for all the Tacoma utilities and services. The lower parts of Browns Point and Dash Point; however, remained under the jurisdiction of Pierce County.

The “Hotfooters” of Browns Point and Dash Point began their fire protection duties in 1967 under the tutelage of Fire Chief Howard K. Jones. The “Hotfooters” were 18 ladies who were dedicated volunteers for Fire District No. 13. They were ready and on call during the day when their male counterparts were at their daily jobs.

In 1967 SW 320th Street was built from Pacific Highway to Hoyt Road in Federal Way, which opened the points to King County. Through the 1970s more and more people who worked in King County began moving to the points.

COMMERCIAL LANDMARKS

In 1977, Ron and Gary Hall purchased the shopping center property from Gordon Dowling. At that time the store fronts received a new rustic wooden facade and a new name was chosen, North Bay Village. It served the three communities of Browns Point, Dash Point, and Northeast Tacoma which bordered the north shore of Commencement Bay.

In 1986, the new owner completed an upgrade to the shopping center when a new multi-shop complex housed Sav-On Drugs, Art’s Grocery, North Bay Dry Cleaners, Marvelous Movies, a barber shop, an art gallery, an auto parts store, and a few years later, Archie’s Diner. The professional center adjacent to the site also was constructed at this time.

The Lobster Shop started as a grocery/café. It was originally built on stilts which kept it high above the high tide level, but as time passed the land was filled in. It also had a porch on two sides which was enclosed to become part of the main store. When Denny Driscoll purchased the building, he opened it as a restaurant in June of 1977.

Though just south of the County line, the Cliff House has been a popular landmark restaurant for Tacoma and the surrounding areas. It was remodeled in 1977, and presents an interesting view of Commencement Bay, the Tacoma skyline, and the tideflats with the Puyallup River flowing into the bay.

Highlights in Browns Point and Dash Point History

1907	The Dash Point Social and Improvement Club was organized and registered on Sept. 4. The first meeting was held in Churchill's store.
1914	Dash Point School founded in a house directly south of the present dock.
1919	The Browns Point Improvement Club's begins.
1923	There were approximately 110 permanent families on the two points.
1925	Mr. Shuett built Browns Point's first grocery store.
1933	The wooden lighthouse was replaced by a white concrete tower.
1952	Browns Point Elementary School opened on 51st Street NE.
1955	A new clubhouse was dedicated at Browns Point Feb. 20, 1955.
1958	Meeker Middle School, adjacent to the elementary opened.
1958	Dash Point constructed a five-room addition to its school plus a multipurpose room, library and office. Northeast Tacoma had a new school built in 1959 due to population growth.
1959	Majority of Browns Point and Dash Point Hills annexed to Tacoma.
1962	Dash Point State Park, dedicated June 1962, included 272 acres and 3,100 feet of sandy beach.
1967	The "Hotfooters" of Browns Point and Dash Point, a group of 18 ladies, began their volunteer duties for Fire District No. 13.
1967	SW 320th Street was built from Pacific Highway to Hoyt Road in Federal Way, opening the points to King County.

PLANNING HISTORY

COUNTY PLANNING

1962 PIERCE COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND ZONING

The first Pierce County Comprehensive Land Use Plan was adopted on April 2, 1962. The Pierce County Zoning Code, which implemented the Comprehensive Plan, was adopted on October 8, 1962. The 1962 Pierce County Comprehensive Plan designated the Browns Point/Dash Point area as "Suburban Residential." These rules followed very basic planning principles. Zoning districts were established that dictated the appropriate location for commercial business and residential homes. However, the Plan did not offer much protection from incompatible uses and did not recognize the unique individuality of communities.

1994 PIERCE COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

In April 1990, the Growth Management Act (GMA) was passed by the Washington State Legislature. It required Pierce County to update its existing Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Regulations, including community plans. The GMA required Pierce County to develop and

adopt a comprehensive plan which would control residential, commercial, and industrial growth. Thirteen goals are listed in GMA to guide policy development in six required elements. The required elements include land use, housing, capital facilities, utilities, rural, and transportation. Pierce County also elected to include four additional elements: environment and critical areas, economic development, community plans, and essential public facilities. Each of the six GMA required elements must conform to specific standards set in the legislation. GMA required cities and counties to plan for growth based on population forecasts. Where growth is allowed, facilities and services must be planned and provided.

In April 1991, interim Growth Management Policies were adopted as a transition between the 1962 Comprehensive Plan and the more complex plan developed under the Growth Management Act. In June 1992, the Pierce County Countywide Planning Policies were adopted. The policies provided the framework and process by which Pierce County and the cities and towns within the County would establish urban growth areas, provide infrastructure and services, and preserve agricultural and natural resource lands. In November 1994, Pierce County adopted a new Comprehensive Plan. The 1994 Pierce County Comprehensive Plan replaced the 1962 Pierce County Comprehensive Plan in its entirety. The plan established population projections, urban growth areas, and rural areas. The 1994 Comprehensive Plan identified Browns Point and Dash Point as an urban area, with predominantly an Urban Residential land use designation.

COMMUNITY PLANNING

Pierce County Comprehensive Plan policies located in the Community Plans Element address community autonomy, community character, new community plans, consistency with the Comprehensive Plan, consistency with the Development Regulations-Zoning, transition strategies, and joint planning agreements.

The Community Plans Element of the 1994 Pierce County Comprehensive Plan envisions a local voice in how the Comprehensive Plan and its Development Regulations will be carried out in communities. Community plans exemplify how the objectives and policies of the Comprehensive Plan play out when applied to detailed and specific conditions. They indicate specific land use designations, appropriate densities, and the design standards that should apply in community planning areas. Preserving and building community character while ensuring an efficient and predictable development approval process is a central theme. Community plans help citizens decide what they want to retain and what they want to change at the local level.

Although the Growth Management Act (GMA) does not require comprehensive plans to provide for community plans, Pierce County Ordinance 90-47S directs County officials to prepare a Community Plans Element of the Comprehensive Plan. The majority of the unincorporated County population resides in community plan areas. The Community Plans Element spells out how to coordinate consistency between community plans and the Comprehensive Plan. Community plans must be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the GMA.

SCOPE OF THE COMMUNITY PLAN

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY TO DEVELOP THE PLAN

The Pierce County Council passed Resolution No. R2004-72 on April 20, 2004, requesting the Department of Planning and Land Services begin the development of a community plan for the Browns Point/Dash Point Area.

PURPOSE AND USE OF THE COMMUNITY PLAN

The Browns Point/Dash Point Community Plan gives details on how the community wants to develop in the future and what standards could be utilized to create and maintain the look and feel identified in the community plan. In some circumstances, the plan refines the Pierce County Comprehensive Plan to more closely reflect the needs, concerns, and desires of the residents. The plan also identifies actions necessary to implement the community plan, including adopting or revising land use regulations; identifying priorities for use of public funds to develop physical improvements such as roads and utilities, sidewalks and street lighting, and residential and commercial development.

CONSISTENCY WITH THE PIERCE COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Growth Management Act requires consistency between plans and implementing development regulations. Furthermore, the Pierce County Comprehensive Plan Community Plans Element contains specific policies that require consistency between the Comprehensive Plan and community plans. The goals, objectives, principles, and standards in the Browns Point/Dash Point Community Plan are consistent with the provisions in the Pierce County Comprehensive Plan.

COMPONENTS OF THE COMMUNITY PLAN

VISIONS

Visioning is the process of defining the expectation of what the community could be in the future. Visioning is typically completed through a series of public meetings or workshops structured to allow the community to articulate hopes for the future. Statements, thoughts, and ideas brought forth in the visioning process become the basis for the visions, goals, objectives, and principles of the community plan.

Vision statements can be either: 1) broad - painting a picture of what the community should strive to be like, physically and socially; or 2) focused - to express how the concerns, values, and hopes of the community should be reflected in various topics.

Goals, objectives, and policies (principles and standards) are used to provide measurable statements to fulfill the vision statements and are an integral part of the visioning process.