



architecture planning & interiors

wagarch.com

Wolfe Architectural Group
1015 North Calispel, Suite B
Spokane, WA 99201
t 509 455 6999

Date: 03.06.2025

Addressee: City of Bellingham- Planning Department

RE: Project Narrative - WTB Bellingham – DR2025-0002 and CAP2025-0002

To whom it may concern;

Provided below is a narrative describing the compliance of the aforementioned Washington Trust Bank project with the City of Bellingham Design Standards, specifically **20.25.090 Commercial Development**.

1. Site Design

- a. The intent of the Orientation to the Street is to reinforce pedestrian activity, orientation to ground floor activities, and enhance the liveliness of the street through building design and orientation and building entrance locations.*

We believe the proposed design meets this intent while also dealing with significant existing site conditions, primarily building setbacks, easements, and topographical challenges.

The building is set back 30' from the property line along West Bakerview Road due to a 25' setback and a 5' buffer of landscaping that is comprehensively designed around the building perimeter. Within the setback is a significant grade change and existing retaining wall that is to remain.

Along Cordata Pkwy, there is an existing tract that is in the process of being dedicated for ROW. The building is set back a total of 20' from the property line to allow for landscaping and secondary egress.

We believe the building addresses the public ways and contributes to a strong building edge as much as the required setbacks, ROW conditions, and topography allow. A small plaza space is also provided immediately adjacent to the building entry to support this.

Regarding the building entry, although it is located parallel to West Bakerview Road, we believe the design supports a strong articulation at the corner of the building to signify and suggest entry while also dealing with the realities of the access conditions from the public way to the building entry, which is heavily sloped. Locating entry on the frontage would require further setting back the building, and provides a lesser accessible condition in relation to parking.

b. Surface Parking

- i. The intent of surface parking location is to ensure that surface parking lots are not a dominant element within commercial districts and to minimize the impact of surface parking on the pedestrian environment.*

We believe the proposed design meets this intent as the building is placed at the intersection of the primary frontages, and the parking surface is inbound of the site, being concealed from the frontages by either building, landscaping, site amenities (plaza), and drive aisles with landscape buffering. Hard parking surface is minimized to allow for as much permeable landscaping as possible while still facilitating necessary site vehicular circulation and spaces needed for the function of a financial institution that includes drive through service.

c. Mixed Residential and Commercial Site Design

Not applicable

2. Screening

a. Refuse

- i. Refuse and recycling storage areas shall be located so as to be screened from arterial streets, pedestrian walkways, and neighboring residential properties.*

We believe the proposed design meets this requirement as the trash enclosure is inbound of the site and is screened both by landscaping and the enclosure itself will be of masonry construction with metal gates, fully obscuring refuse and recycling containers. Material and colors will match those present in the building design. An example is provided below.



Typical WTB trash enclosure

b. Mechanical Equipment

- i. Intent is to reduce the impact and view of mechanical equipment.*

This project will utilize the building parapets to screen view of rooftop mechanical equipment from the public way. An example photo of another WTB project is provided below to show that no mechanical equipment is visible from the public way.



Example of rooftop mechanical screening in another WTB project

c. Neighboring Residential – Not Applicable

3. Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED).

a. Safety

- i. Intent is to enhance public safety and deter crime through thoughtful site design.*

We believe the project will meet all intents of this section as ample site lighting is to be provided both for pedestrian and vehicular safety on site, and also for public safety due to the security requirements and considerations for a financial facility. Site lines, security cameras, and lighting are all heavily scrutinized and implemented carefully due to this use.

4. Optional Public Amenity

- a. Public Amenity intent is to encourage integration of commercial uses with neighborhoods, commercial developments are encouraged, but not mandated, to provide a public amenity.*

The project provides a small “plaza” area adjacent to the building entry where the flag pole is located. Although not required, we believe this space to be a small amenity to the public that is navigating to the bank. A small amount of fixed bench seating will be provided.

5. Connectivity

a. Pedestrian

- i. Intent is to provide a safe pedestrian access element to commercial development.*

We believe the project fulfills the intent by providing a continuous path of pedestrian travel from the north to south edge of the site, connecting the public ways to the building and parking provided on site, and follows the guidelines outlined in this section.

b. Bicycle

- i. Intent is to provide a safe bicycle access and storage element to commercial development.*

The project meets the requirement by providing bicycle racks are provided and located adjacent to the building entry and small plaza space.

c. Vehicular

- i. Intent is to provide a safe vehicular access element to commercial development*

The project provides direct vehicular access to the south off of Cordata Parkway and allows for vehicular site access within the site and east – west for future site development.

d. Open Space

- i. Intent is to promote connectivity and interaction between commercial development and public open space.*

Public open space does not exist adjacent to this property and does not apply in this project.

6. Lighting

- a. Lighting intent is to provide architectural character and safety and to minimize impacts to neighboring properties and the night sky.*

We believe the project meets the standards as outlined in this section shielded lighting will be provided throughout the site with specific attention to the elevated nature of the site to the public way. LED fixtures will be specified throughout. All building mounted lighting will be in coordination with the architectural design and materials. Below is a reference photo of another WTB location.



Example of site lighting in another WTB project

7. Building Design

a. Scale

- i. Intent is to establish compatible scales of development with surrounding properties.*

The project meets the intent of this section as it is comparable to other single story commercial buildings along West Bakerview Road. The exception to this section is that the entry is provided just to the West of the frontage on Bakerview due to reasons addressed elsewhere in this narrative including site circulation, existing topography, and accessibility.

b. Massing and Articulation

- i. Intent is to reduce the apparent mass of large buildings, to provide visual interest, and pedestrian scale.*

This project would not be considered a large building. The proposed articulation of the façade as shown in included renderings places glazing on the frontage, creates visual interest in materials and massing, and provides an interesting architectural presence to the public ways.

c. Blank Walls

- i. Intent, to provide visual interest and avoid negative impacts of blank walls.*

This project provides no blank walls on its public frontages. The glazing will meet the requirements of 60% of the building wall facing public streets as required by this section.

Please contact our office if any questions or concerns arise regarding the contents of this project narrative.

Thank you,

Matt Edwards
Wolfe Architectural Group