

The Bellingham Plan Project Update for MNAC

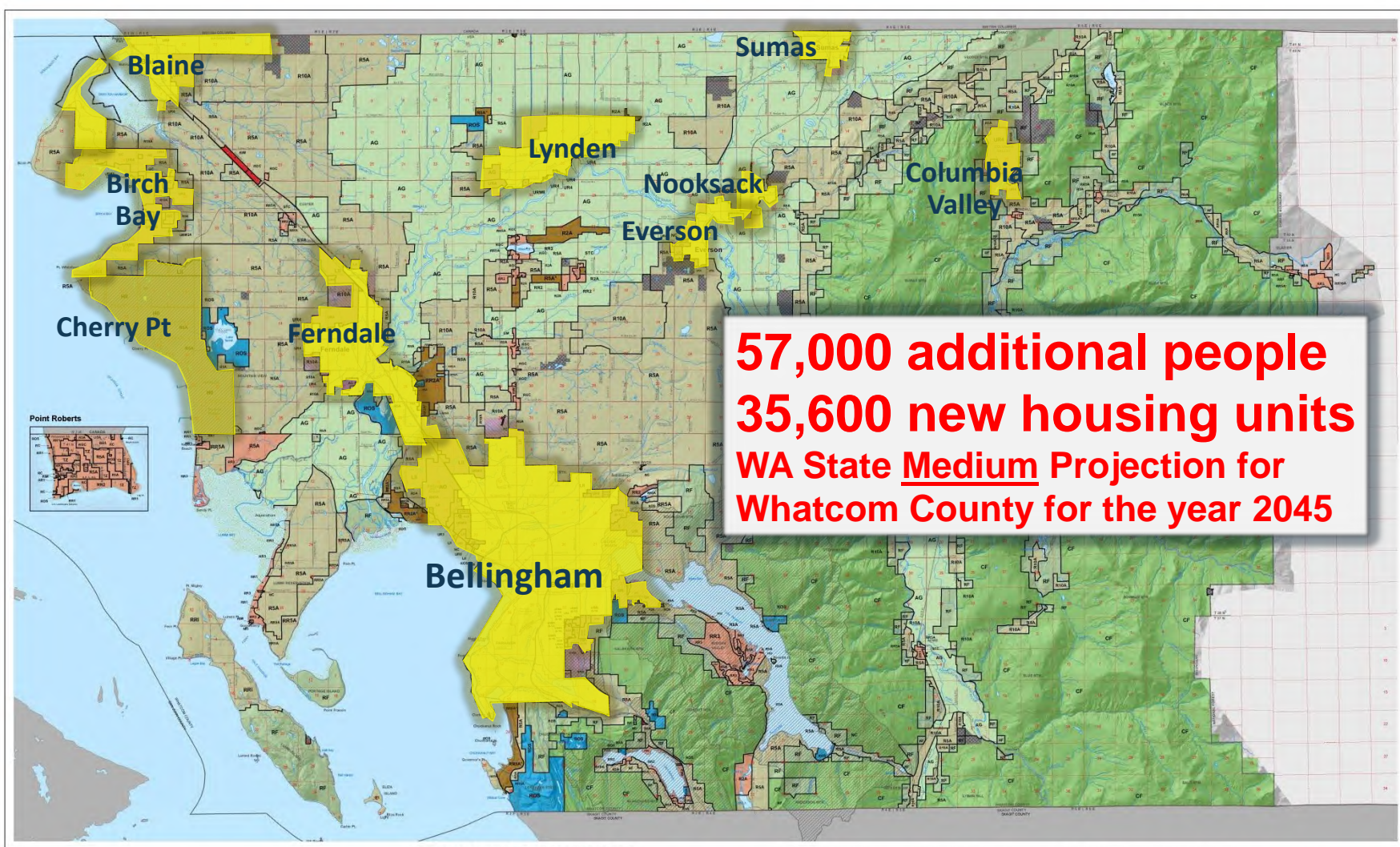
February 21, 2024



Agenda

- Reminder of Overall Project Goals approach, and schedule
- What we heard in Phase I
- Phase II goals & engagement opportunities
- State requirements and the neighborhood plans





WHATCOM COUNTY Title 20 Zoning & Comprehensive Plan Designations

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN DESIGNATIONS

- Incorporated City Limits
- Urban Growth Areas
- Urban Growth Area Reserve
- Major/Port Industrial UGA
- Rural
- Rural Neighborhood
- Rural Community
- Rural Business
- Agriculture
- Rural Forestry
- Commercial Forestry
- Mineral Resource Lands

TITLE 20 ZONING DESIGNATIONS

- URBAN RESIDENTIAL**
- URMX** Urban Res.-Mixed Use
- URMX10-24** Urban Res.-Mixed Use 10-24 Units/Acre
- URMX6-12** Urban Res.-Mixed Use 6-12 Units/Acre
- URMX6-10** Urban Res.-Mixed Use 6-10 Units/Acre
- URM24** Urban Res.-Medium Density 24 Units/Acre
- URM18** Urban Res.-Medium Density 18 Units/Acre
- URM12** Urban Res.-Medium Density 12 Units/Acre
- URM6** Urban Res.-Medium Density 6 Units/Acre
- UR6** Urban Res.-6 Units/Acre
- UR4** Urban Res.-4 Units/Acre
- UR3** Urban Res.-3 Units/Acre

- RURAL RESIDENTIAL**
- RR3** Rural Res.-3 Units/Acre
- RR2** Rural Res.-2 Units/Acre
- RR1** Rural Res.-1 Unit/Acre
- RR5A** Rural Res.-1 Unit/5 Acres
- RR10A** Rural Res.-1 Unit/10 Acres
- RURAL RESIDENTIAL ISLAND**
- RR1** Rural Residential Island
- TZ** Transitional-R5A/RR1
- RURAL**
- R2A** Rural-1Unit/2 Acres
- R5A** Rural-1 Unit/5 Acres
- R10A** Rural-1 Unit/10 Acres

- RESOURCES**
- AG** Agriculture
- CF** Commercial Forestry
- RF** Rural Forestry
- MRL** Mineral Resource Lands (Overlay Zone)

- COMMERCIAL**
- RGC** Rural General Comm.
- GC** General Commercial
- TC** Tourist Commercial
- NC** Neighborhood Commercial
- STC** Small Town Commercial
- RC** Resort Commercial

- INDUSTRIAL**
- HI** Heavy Impact Industrial
- LI** Light Impact Industrial
- GM** General Manufacturing
- RIM** Rural Ind. Manuf.
- AO** Airport Operations

- OTHER**
- ROS** Recreation Open Space
- EI** Eliza Island

R5A¹; R5A² - Rural Residential Density Overlay
 - Title 20 20.32.252
Water Resource Protection Overlay District
 - Title 20 20.20.71
Transferable Development Rights (TDRs)
TDR Receiving Areas - All URMX Zones except Bennett Dr.
TDR Sending Areas - Lake Whatcom Watershed (same boundary as Lake Whatcom portion of Water Resource Protection Overlay Zone) excluding Sudden Valley

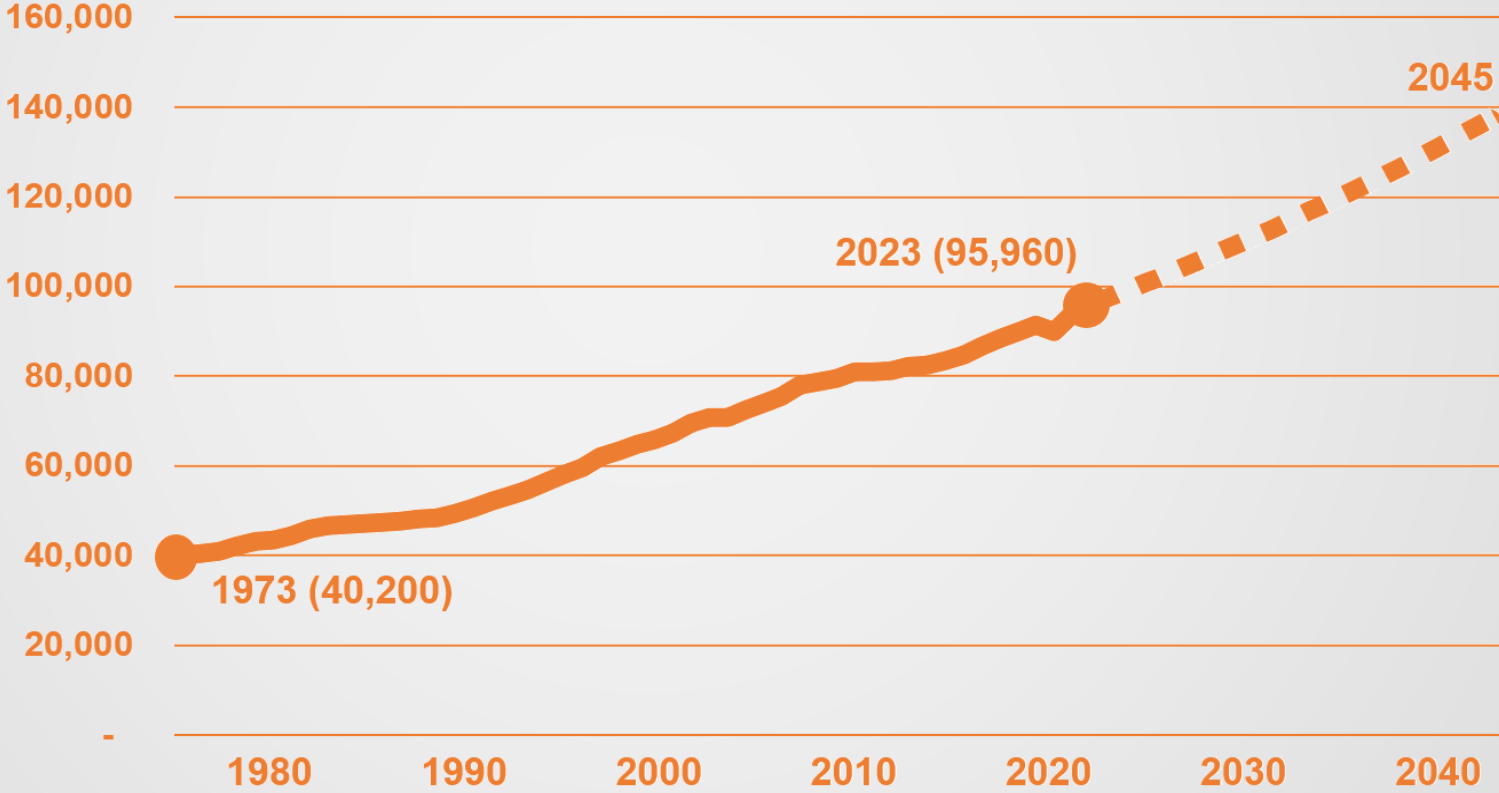
See Ord. 2015-001

USE OF WHATCOM COUNTY'S GIS DATA IMPLIES THE USER'S AGREEMENT WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT:
 Whatcom County disclaims any warranty of accuracy or warranty of title of this map for any particular purpose. Other users of the map, sources, completeness or quality of data depicted on this map. The user of this map assumes all responsibility for use thereof, and further agrees to hold Whatcom County harmless from and against any damage, loss, or liability arising from any use of this map.



Planning for 2045

Bellingham Population Growth
1973 to 2023



Overall Approach:

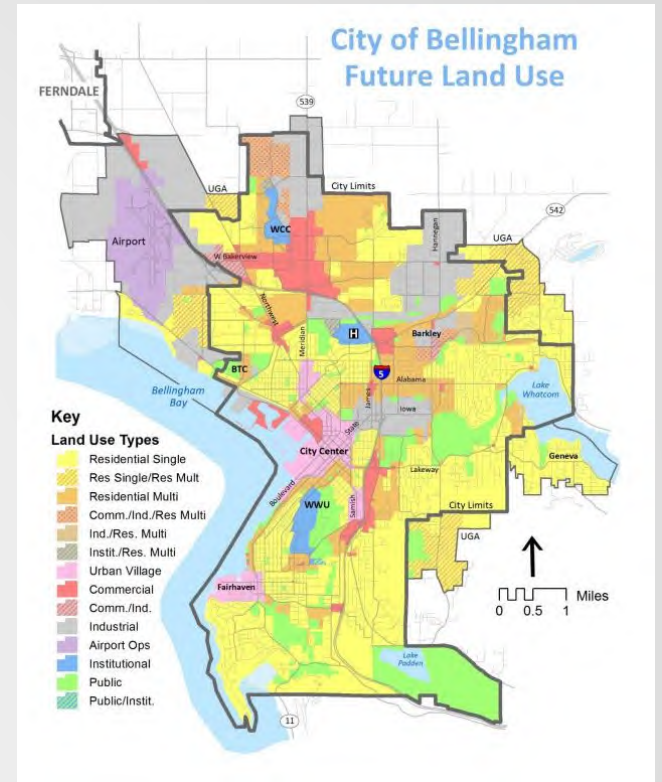


- Carry forward the essential principles and growth strategy set forth by previous plans.
- Address current concerns and/or future aspirations expressed by the community.
- Intentionally include input from segments of the community under-represented in previous planning efforts.
- Incorporate changes required by recent state legislation
 - a) Focus on housing affordability specific to each income level.
 - b) Allow middle-scale housing in all neighborhoods.
 - c) Eliminate policies that result in exclusion and evaluate policies for unintended consequences like displacement.
 - d) Incorporate and expand the community's recent policy work related to climate change.

Bellingham's Plan

- Land Use
- Community Design
- Housing
- Transportation
- Economic Development
- Environment
- Parks, Recreation & Open Space* **PRO Plan update scheduled for 2026**
- Capital Facilities and Utilities

**+ Climate
+ Community
well-being**



Project Schedule



PHASE 1 RECAP

2023 Activities Summary



EVENTS

Tabling Events

JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
Downtown Sounds	Downtown Sounds Elizabeth Park & Boulevard Park Summer Concerts	Bellingham Farmers Market	Bellingham Farmers Market	Bellingham Farmers Market	
NW Tune-Up Bike Festival	Birchwood International Market		SeaFeast Festival		
	Noisy Waters Festival				
		Public Meeting (Virtual)		WWU Urban Planning Club	Rotary Club "Future Bellingham" Presentation
	Sunrise Rotary	Public Open House at Options High School		Association of WA Realtors	Birchwood Elementary School
				WWU Open House in Viking Union	
				Buiding Idustry Association	
				Future Problem Solvers (7th & 8th graders at Fairhaven Middle School)	
				Bellingham High School Civics Classes	
				Sunnyland NH Association	

Presentations to Boards and Commissions

- Planning Commission
- Immigration Advisory Board
- Mayors Neighborhood Advisory Commission
- Arts Commission
- Tourism Commission
- Parks and Recreation Advisory Board
- Community Development Advisory Board
- Transportation Commission

Presentations & Open Houses

Phase I (July-December) - Who did we reach?

- **4,287** Valid Vision Surveys (mailed and online)
- **1,475** Housing Preference Surveys (statistically valid, online)
- **32** Student Surveys (physical and online)
- **~200** public events
- **116** Ways to Connect
- **69** online Open House
- **~250+** tabling conversations at **9** tabling locations for **15** dates
- **6** community presentations
- **~175** presentees
- **~80** youth presentees

Missing Demographics

Latine and/or Hispanic
18-24y.o. and/or students
Renters



Interest in the following:

- Housing types, rental protections, and affordability as a clear priority,
- Pedestrian-centric gathering and community spaces, including greenways and parks,
- A locally-scaled economy with an activated Downtown, livable-wage jobs, and local business support,
- A safer Bellingham, with more accessible health and social services for all,
- Lively and creative, well-connected, and walkable places with services and amenities dispersed throughout the city,
- Support for arts and culture, and
- More equitable representation of voices from historically marginalized and under-represented community groups.”

<https://engagebellingham.org/bellinghamplan>

Engage Bellingham Home About this Site Find a Project City Website Sign In Register

THE BELLINGHAM PLAN

CITY OF BELLINGHAM WASHINGTON

Welcome to the Bellingham Plan Engagement Hub

The City of Bellingham is working on the Bellingham Plan. The plan addresses important topics, such as housing, transportation, and climate resilience, and will guide development, capital investments, city programs, and other actions for the next 20 years.

The key to the Bellingham Plan is community feedback. We want to know how you want us to plan for Bellingham's future. You'll find all the ways to provide feedback digitally and in person here.

Get Project Updates

Get the latest Bellingham Plan updates and information.

[Sign Up](#)

[En Español](#) [中文](#) [ગુજરાતી](#) [русском языке](#) [Tiếng Việt](#)

The Key to the Bellingham Plan is YOU.

When you provide us with comments or attend events, you help to shape the future of Bellingham. Check back here for new engagement opportunities every couple of months, or sign up above and we will let you know when new options are available.



Upcoming Events



Community Vision

What is the community's collective vision for Bellingham's future?

[Learn More](#)

February 22, 2024



Vibrant, Equitable and Welcoming Community

Explore the importance of cultivating a vibrant, equitable, and welcoming community.

[Learn More](#)

March 6, 2024



Housing Affordability

This session will focus on the top issue identified by the Bellingham community at the start of the Bellingham Plan.

[Learn More](#)

April 16, 2024



Economic Vitality

How can Bellingham support existing businesses, leverage emerging industries, and retain and attract a diverse and sustainable workforce?

[Learn More](#)

May 15, 2024



Housing Types and Neighborhoods

Delve into what design considerations are most important as we plan for new housing types across many unique neighborhoods.

[Learn More](#)

June 4, 2024



How We Grow

As we look forward to the community we want to be in 2045, we need to choose how to address short-term immediate concerns while balancing long-term goals.

[Learn More](#)

July 17, 2024

House Bill 1220

Passed by Washington Legislature in 2021

- Amended the GMA to instruct local governments to “plan for **and accommodate**” housing affordable to all income levels.
- The amended law also directed the Department of Commerce to **project future housing needs for jurisdictions by income bracket.**
- Made significant updates to how jurisdictions are to plan for housing in the **housing element** of their comprehensive plans.



House Bill 1220

Changes to local housing elements include planning for:

Sufficient land capacity for housing needs, including all economic segments of the population:



\$800/mo.

\$1,300/mo.

\$2,000/mo.

\$2,500/mo.

\$3,000/mo.

Extremely Low	Very Low	Low	Lower Moderate	Upper Moderate	Upper
0% - 30%	30% - 50%	50% - 80%	80% - 100%	100 - 120%	> 120%

Percent of Area Median Income (AMI)*

\$102,600



* Income categories defined by Commerce utilize Median Family Income

House Bill 1220

Changes to local housing elements include planning for:

Emergency housing and permanent supportive housing.



Image courtesy LIHI



Image courtesy CCS



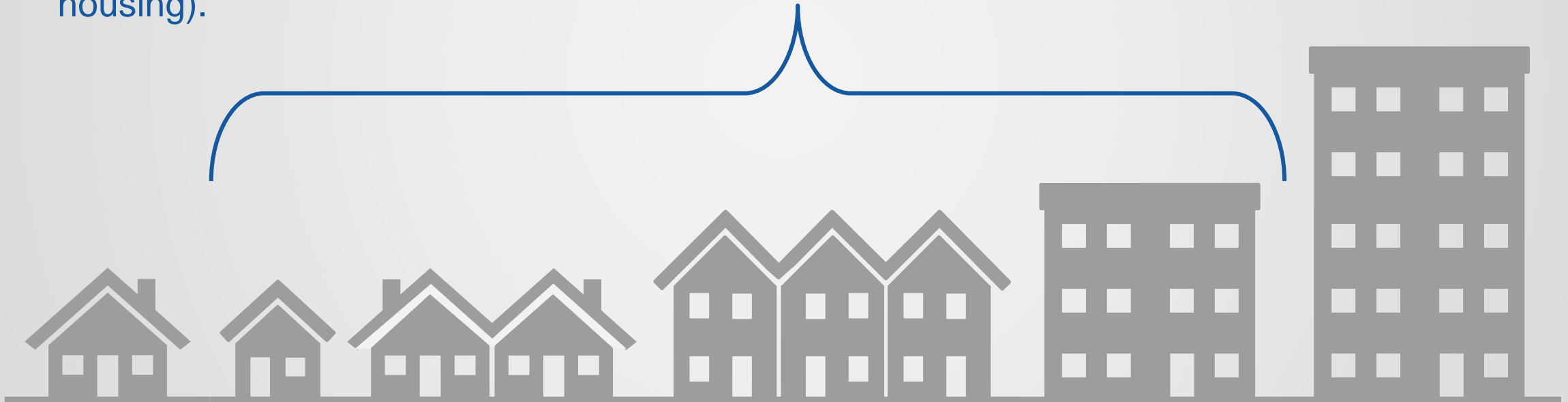
Image courtesy LMM



House Bill 1220

Changes to local housing elements include planning for:

Moderate density housing options within Urban Growth Areas (UGAs), including but not limited to ADUs, duplexes, triplexes, townhomes, and multi-plex (middle-scale housing).



House Bill 1220

Changes to local housing elements include planning for:

Making adequate provisions for housing for existing and projected needs for all economic segments of the community, including documenting programs and actions needed to achieve housing availability.

Documenting programs and actions needed to achieve housing availability

Jurisdictions are not required to construct housing or ensure housing is produced. However, they are required to identify barriers to housing production and make adequate provisions to accommodate all housing needs.

This means they must use the tools at their disposal to create the conditions that make it feasible for developers to build the kinds of housing needed at all income levels.

RCW 36.70A.070(2)(d)(ii) states that jurisdictions must assess "barriers such as development regulations, and other limitations" as part of "documenting programs and actions needed to achieve housing availability." This section describes how jurisdictions are to identify barriers to production and appropriate actions to remove those barriers.

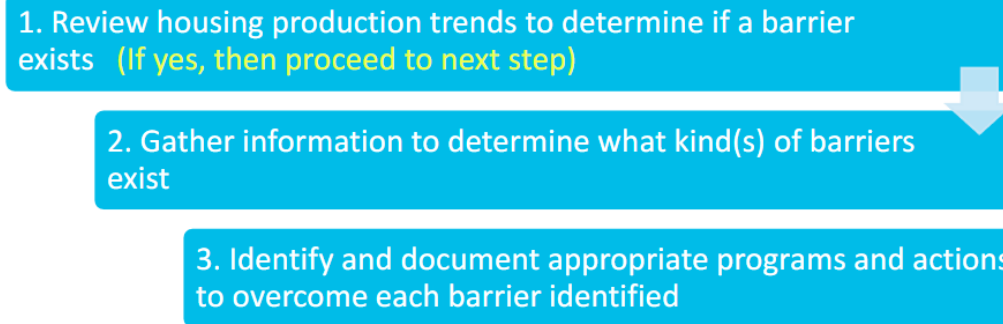
Just as the land capacity assessment breaks down total housing unit capacity by zone category based on housing types or density levels allowed, your barriers assessment should consider factors that may negatively affect production for each type of housing allowed in your community.

The role of local jurisdictions in housing production

While local governments do not typically build housing, they do influence the regulatory environment in which housing is built. Local

*From: "Guidance for Updating Your Housing Element"
HB 1220 Book 2 Housing Element Update (pp 50-51).*

Exhibit 22. Recommended steps for documenting programs and actions to achieve housing availability



House Bill 1220

Changes to local housing elements include planning for:

Identifying racially disparate impacts, displacement and exclusion in housing policies and regulations **including policies that favor single-family detached housing over other housing types**; beginning to undo those impacts; and identifying areas at higher risk of displacement and establishing anti-displacement policies.

Exhibit 1. Process for assessing racially disparate impacts



From: "Guidance to Address Racially Disparate Impacts" HB 1220 Book 3 Housing Element Update (p 10).



Exclusionary Policy Examples from Bellingham's Neighborhood Plans

“Whenever increased residential densities and mixed-use development are proposed, the approval should be contingent on projects that are done in areas which minimize impact on current single family development.”

- 1) The following characteristics are highly valued by residents and should be retained: large lots, single-family zoning, natural open spaces, views and trees consistent with Bellingham's Comprehensive Plan.

Neighborhood Priorities for Land Use:

- A. Maintain current density with single-family residences consistent with current zoning.

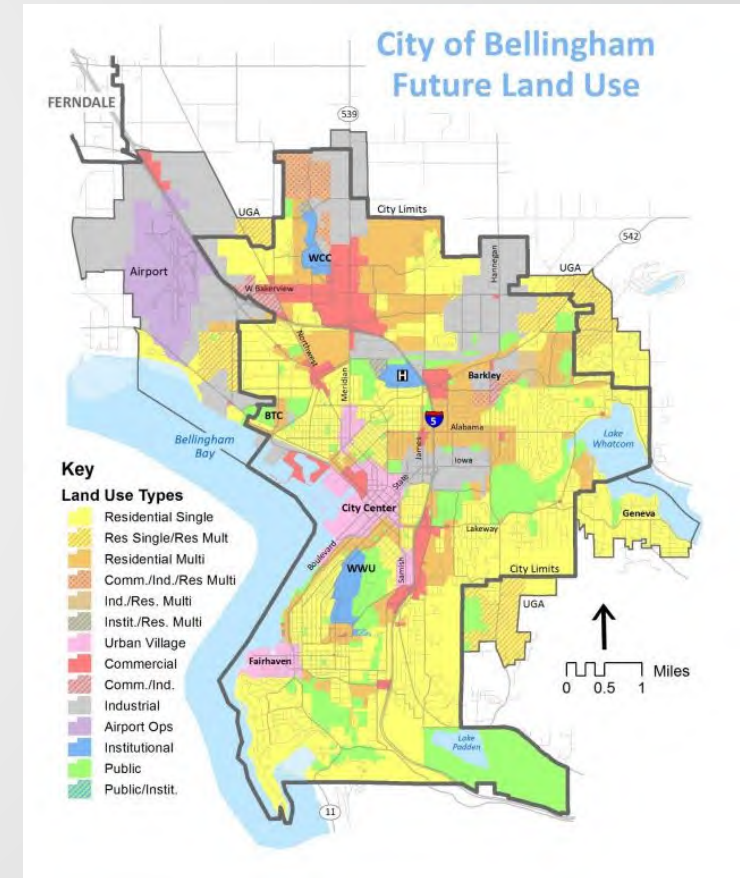
...Neighborhood wishes to maintain current density with single-family residences consistent with current zoning.

House Bill 1110 – Middle Housing

Bellingham must amend our zoning and development code to allow middle housing forms in all residential zones, and allow up to four homes per lot, or up to six homes if two are affordable to 80% of Area Median Income.

These amendments will change the nature of residential zoning, including areas that have been zoned for single-family residential development (shown in yellow on map).

The 25 existing neighborhood plans will not be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan or the revised zoning code.



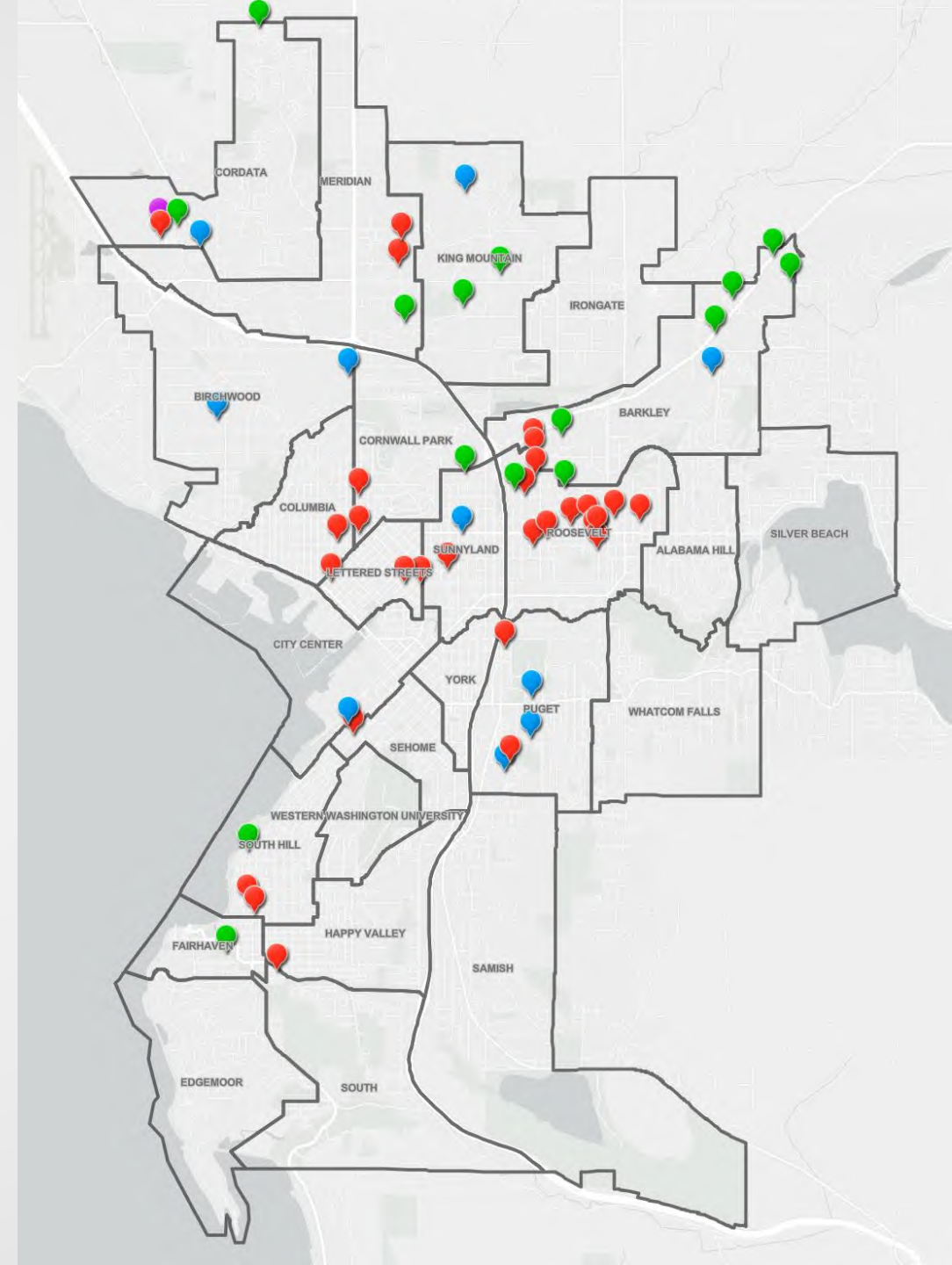
Bellingham's Approach

Considering expansion of the Infill Toolkit regulations to meet the requirements of HB 1220 and HB 1110

Infill Toolkit Housing Projects Since 2009

-  Projects Completed (291 housing units)
-  Projects Under Construction (141 housing units)
-  Projects In Application (77 housing units)

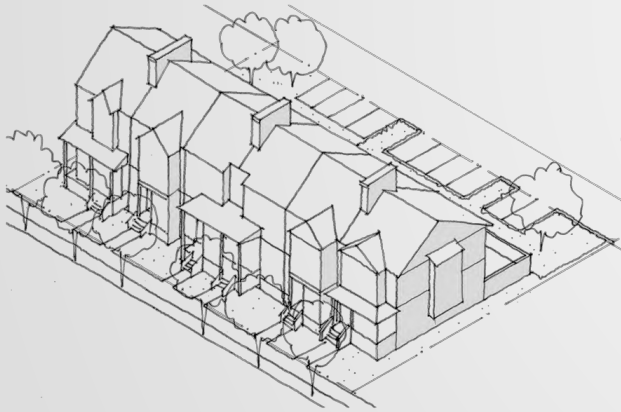
591 Total Housing Units



Infill Toolkit Housing Forms

Townhouse

A home in a row of attached homes. Intended to include the best amenities of a single family home in a denser alternative.

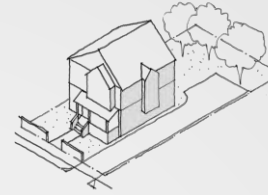


- Min FAR of 0.75 (Min Green Factor Score of 0.6 required)
- architecturally compatible design required when within established neighborhoods

Green Factor Scoring system of landscaping and low-impact development techniques.

Small Lot

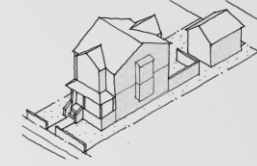
Allows for affordable, detached single family development at greater density than typical single family zones



- Lot sizes: 3,001 to 5,000 sq ft
- Max Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 0.35
- 800 sq ft max per floor
- Min 60% Open Space required

Smaller Lot

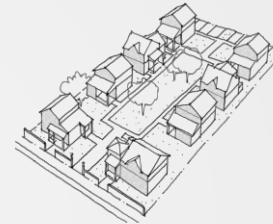
Allows for affordable, detached single family development at greater density than typical single family zones



- Lot sizes: 1,800 to 3,000 sq ft
- Max FAR of 0.4
- 600 sq ft max per floor
- Min 60% Open Space required

Cottages

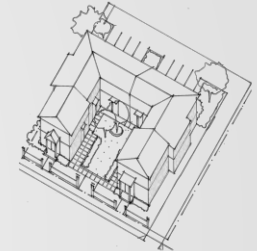
Smaller detached single family houses clustered around shared open space



- 1,000 sq ft max per unit
- Max FAR of 0.4
- 600 sq ft max per floor
- Min 60% Open Space required
- 1 parking space per unit

Garden Courtyard

6 to 8 dwelling units (separate or attached) arranged around a common garden courtyard

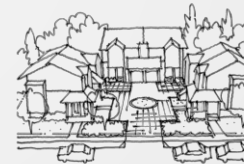


- 2,000 sq ft max per unit
- Max FAR of 0.6 (or 0.75 with Green Factor)
- each unit has a main entrance on the courtyard

Green Factor Scoring system of landscaping and low-impact development techniques.

Shared Courtyard

4 to 6 dwelling units (separate or attached) arranged around a common driveway/courtyard.

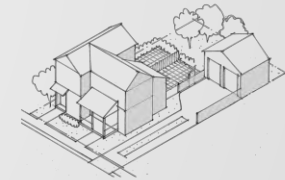


- 2,000 sq ft max per unit
- Max FAR of 0.5 (or 0.7 with Green Factor)
- each unit has a main entrance on the courtyard

Green Factor Scoring system of landscaping and low-impact development techniques.

Duplex/Triplex

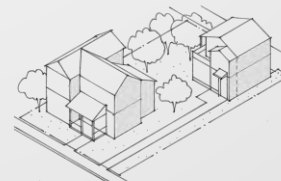
A building containing 2 or 3 dwelling units on a single lot



- 1,000 sq ft max per unit
- Max FAR of 0.5
- Min 75 sq ft private open space per unit
- Min 40% Open Space required
- 1 parking space per unit

Carriage House

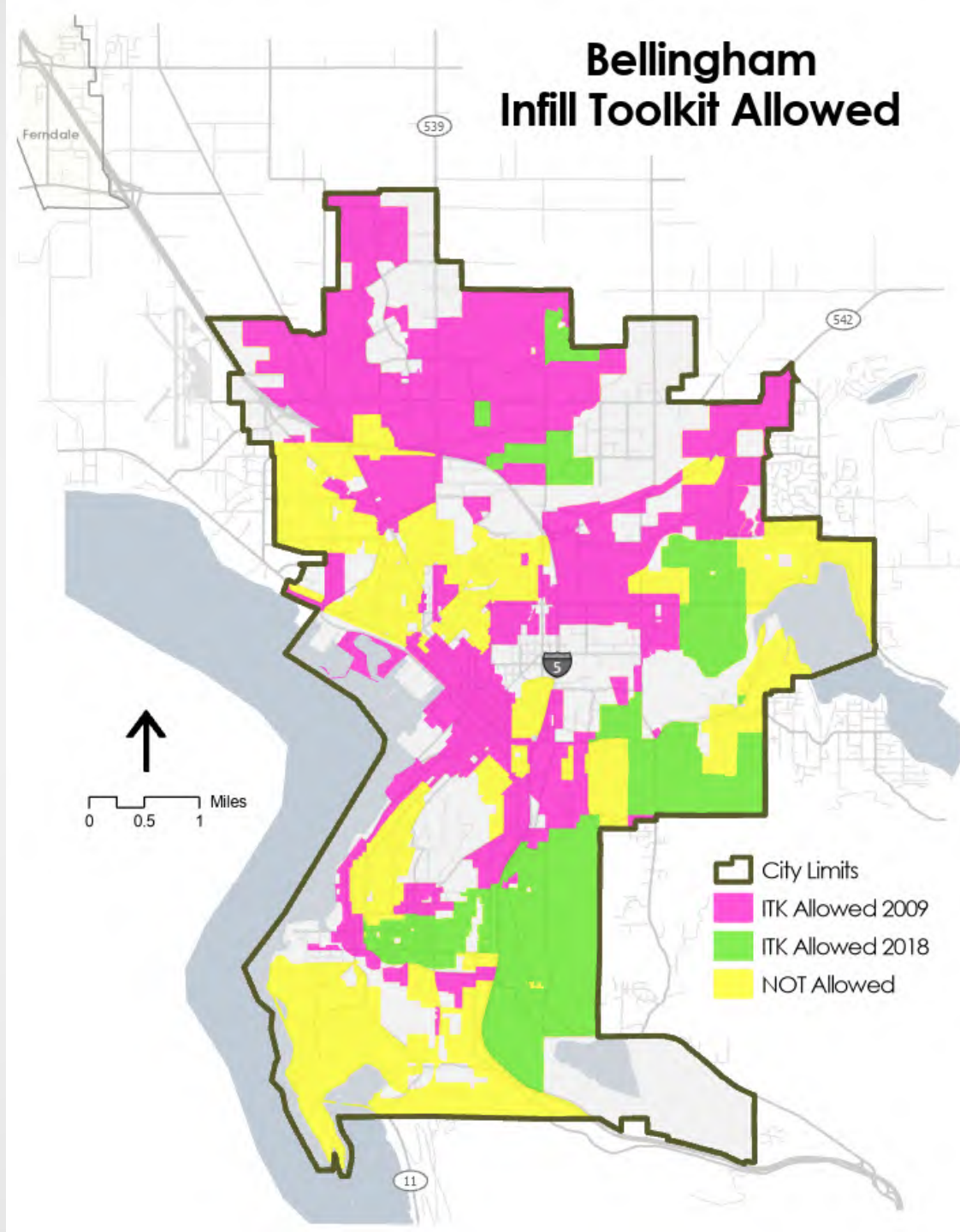
An accessory dwelling unit located above a detached parking garage and subordinate to a single-family dwelling unit on the same lot



- 800 sq ft max per unit or 40% of primary structure (whichever is less)
- Max FAR of 0.5
- owner occupancy required (primary or accessory)
- design must be architecturally consistent with primary residence

Where the ITK is allowed:

Originally implemented in multi-family, urban village, and recently-annexed single-family zones, then in 2018 subdivision code update to include single-family cluster zones



Infill Toolkit Projects



Infill Toolkit Projects



Infill Toolkit Projects



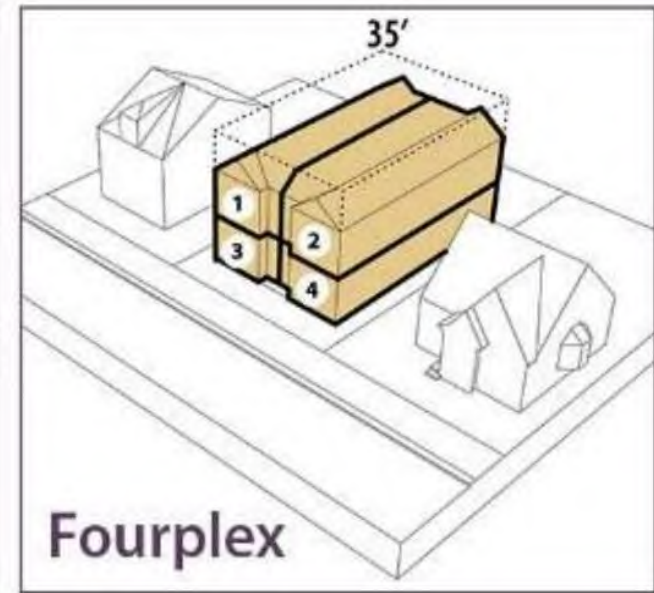
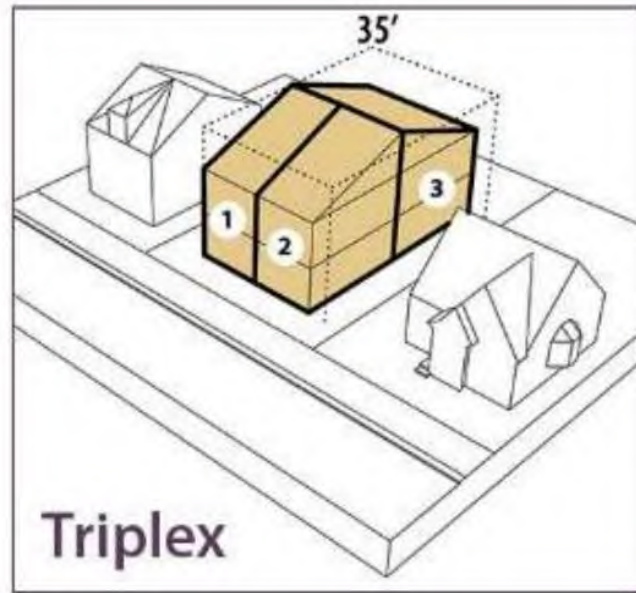
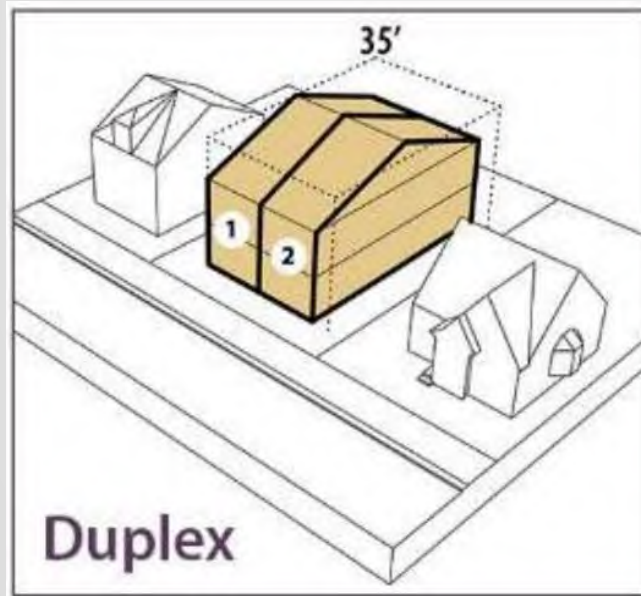
Aurora Court Plat

Greenfield development with 35 developable acres out of 70 total. 134 Apartments
334 Townhomes on fee lots

Infill Toolkit Regulations

Allow greater variety of housing types

Allowing fourplexes to create flexibility and opportunity in how the same building envelope can accommodate 2, 3, or 4 housing units (same floor area ratio or FAR)





The Bellingham Plan

MNAC February 21, 2024

TheBellinghamPlan@cob.org

(360)778-8310

