

Economic Vitality



What do you hope for Bellingham related to this topic?

What is the biggest barrier to getting there?

TELL US ABOUT YOUR EMPLOYMENT

My employment is....(place a dot)

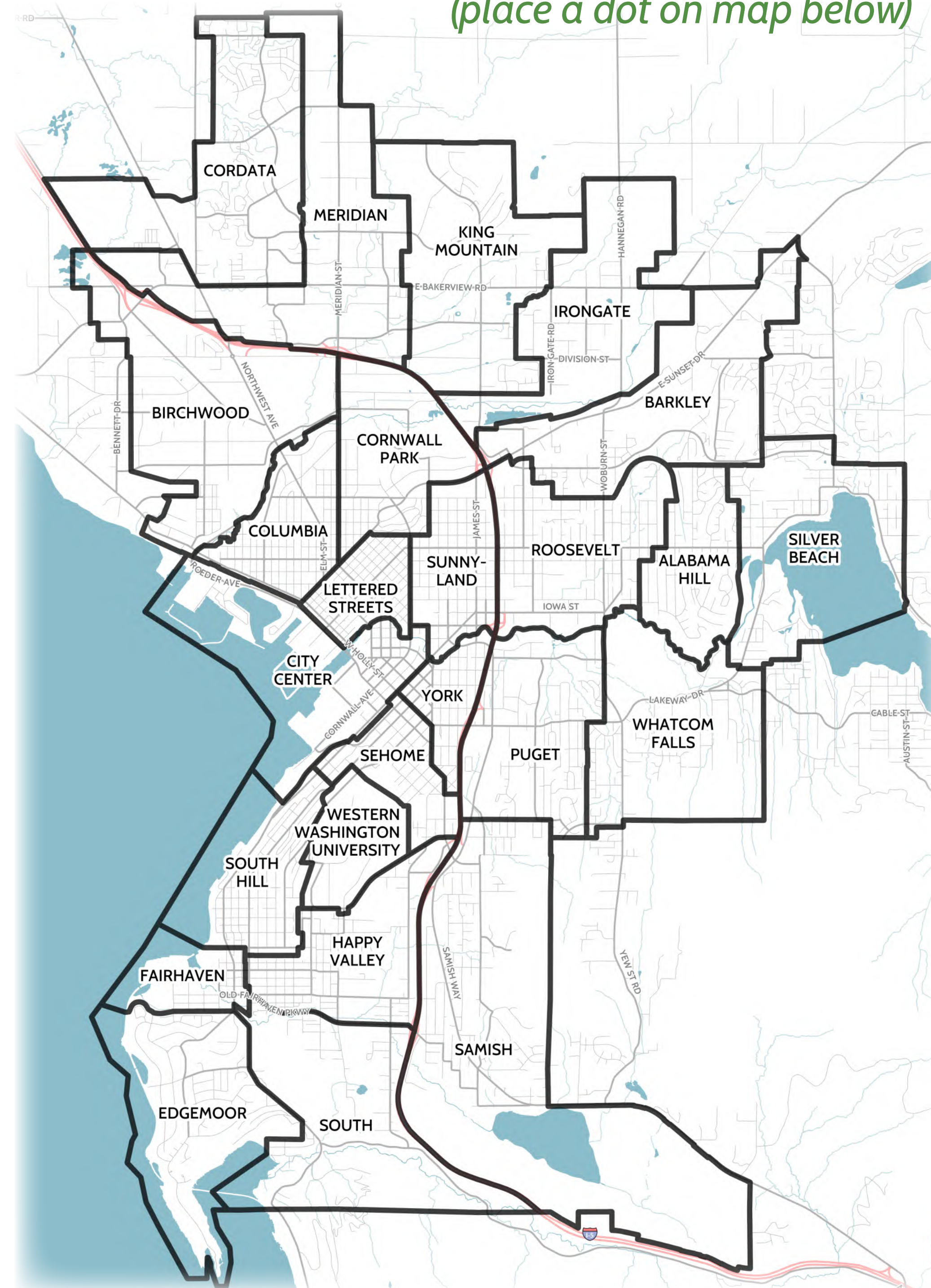
Part-time

Full-time

No current job

My employment location is....

(place a dot on map below)



Or.... (place a dot on the category below)

I work elsewhere in Whatcom County

I work elsewhere in the Puget Sound

I work further away

I work mostly remote

THE CITY'S ROLE IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

What is Economic Development?

There are many aspects to economic development. It is typically described as the creation of jobs and wealth and the improvement of quality of life for all residents. Economic development can also be described as a process that influences the growth and restructuring of an economy to enhance the economic well-being of a community – its people, businesses and government.

Economic development activities can help existing and new businesses reach their goals. Economic development programs do not directly create jobs; businesses do. Even so, the City can play an important role in providing a positive environment within which economic opportunities can thrive.

What is the City's role?

- 1 Provide strong **LEADERSHIP** to create a **POSITIVE ENVIRONMENT** (both physical and social) that supports business activity and a high quality of life for employees and residents.
- 2 Ensure there is enough properly zoned, developable **LAND** and **INFRASTRUCTURE CAPACITY** to accommodate the expected 20-year employment growth.
- 3 Provide **EXCELLENT SERVICES** that foster business growth and retention and minimize expenses.

Additionally, the City partners with a variety of agencies and organizations that recruit businesses, start businesses, and grow businesses. Economic development organizations that the City funds directly include:



Considering the City's roles in economic development, how do you think the City is fulfilling those roles? What could the City be doing better?

1

Providing strong **LEADERSHIP** to create a **POSITIVE ENVIRONMENT** that supports business activity and a high quality of life for employees and residents.

2

Ensure there is enough properly zoned, developable **LAND** and **INFRASTRUCTURE CAPACITY** to accommodate the expected 20-year employment growth.

3

Provide **EXCELLENT SERVICES** that foster business growth and retention and minimize expenses.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS

There are many agencies and organizations that support economic development efforts throughout Bellingham and Whatcom County.

Regional Economic Partnership

The Port of Bellingham's Regional Economic Partnership is the state-designated Associate Development Organization for Whatcom County. This means they are a hub for economic development and growth for all of Whatcom County – including Bellingham!

Regional Economic Partnership's roles include:

- Promote Whatcom County as a great place to live, work and do business.
- Connect businesses with economic development services and skilled workforce resources.
- Assist businesses with the creation of Federal Trade Zones, site identification and selection.
- Work with our partners in Canada to help enhance and grow cross border trade opportunities.
- Work collaboratively with our local and regional partners to create a vibrant community of higher education learning, prosperous agricultural lands, high tech businesses, marine manufacturing, and local food processing.

Whatcom County Economic Development Strategy

The Port is also responsible for updating the Whatcom County Economic Development Strategy. This is a long term planning document to guide economic development throughout the region, and is a requirement to compete for federal funding, or to be eligible for many Washington State funding opportunities.

This document contains six overarching goals:

- Build upon and strengthen Whatcom County's economic base.
- Develop and enhance critical infrastructure that promotes economic development and resiliency.
- Develop a skilled workforce, expand educational attainment, and align employer needs with educational programs and curriculum.
- Create a dynamic relationship between Whatcom County and Lower British Columbia, Skagit, Island, and San Juan Counties.
- Cultivate an economy that values diversity, equity, and inclusion for all.
- Support county-wide economic resiliency and recovery efforts.

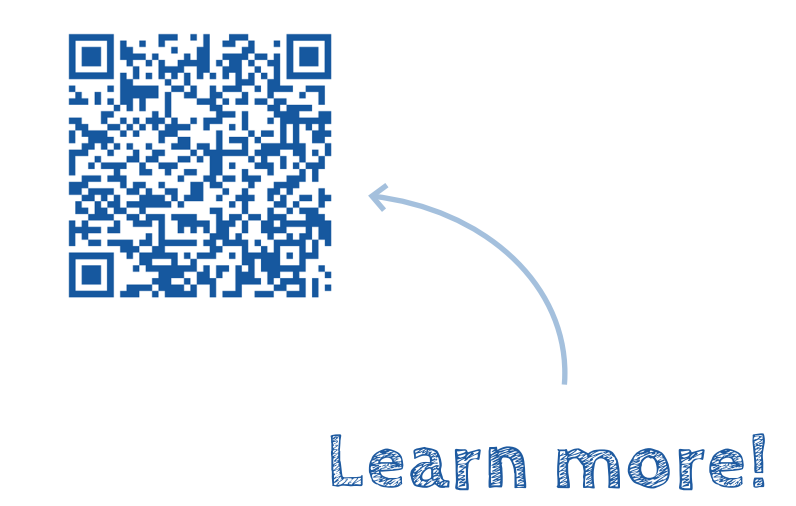
Team Whatcom is a collaboration of county-wide economic development practitioners with a mission help start, grow and relocate businesses in Whatcom County. The following organizations support economic development efforts in Bellingham.



Who can help me start and grow my business?

Who can help promote my business and network?

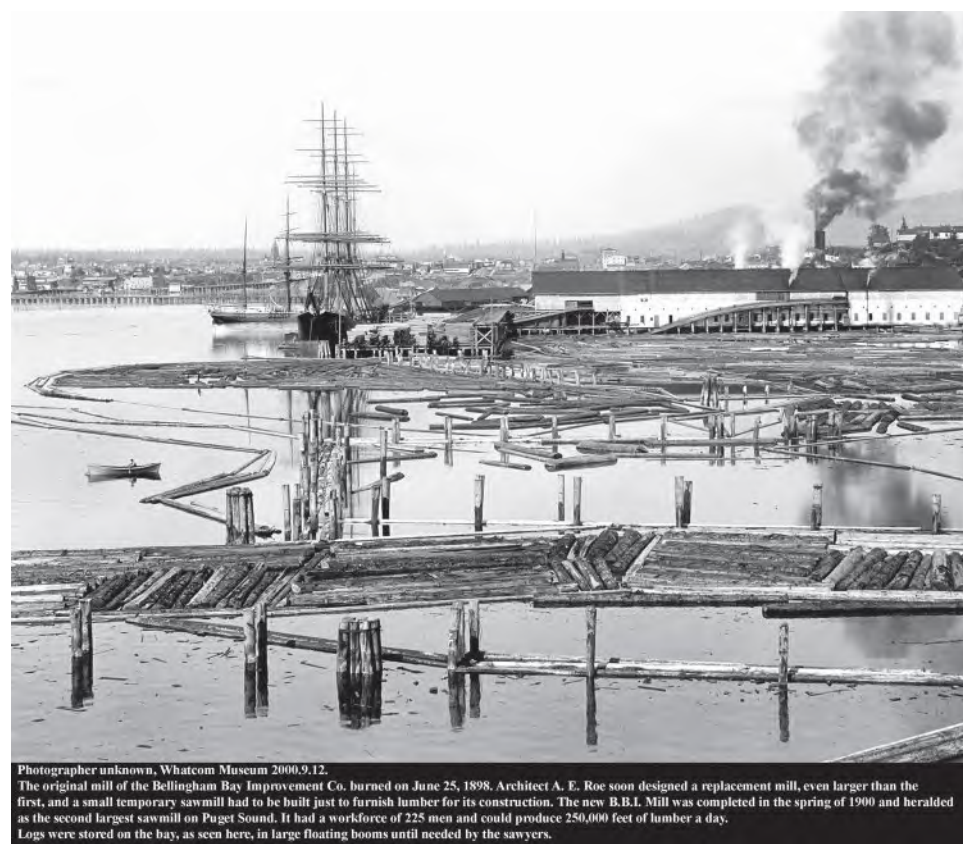
Where can I find job opportunities and develop my skills?



BELLINGHAM'S ECONOMIC HISTORY

Post-settlement natural resource economy...

- Coast Salish people inhabited this area long before European governments sent explorers to claim lands and resources.
- Much of the post-European settlement economy in the 1900's was primarily based on forest, mineral products, retail sales, and education.
- Over-cutting of the region's old growth quickly led to the depletion of forest resources.
- The post-war manufacturing industry was based on pulp and paper production.



Photographer unknown, Whatcom Museum 2008.123. The original end of the Bellingham Bay Papermill Co. burned on June 25, 1906. Architect A. E. Rice never designed a replacement mill over larger than the first, and a small temporary sawmill had to be built just to furnish lumber for its construction. The new B.B.P. Mill was completed in the spring of 1909 and located on the second largest parcel on Park Street. It had a production of 120,000 feet of rough lumber and 200,000 feet of finished lumber. The first year of operation, 1909, was a record for the mill, with a total production of 1,000,000 feet of lumber. The mill was destroyed by a fire on June 25, 1906.



Photo by Annie Curtis, 1906, Whatcom Museum 075.23.179. Photo credit: Annie Curtis, 1906, Whatcom Museum 075.23.179. Photo credit: Annie Curtis, 1906, Whatcom Museum 075.23.179.

To now...

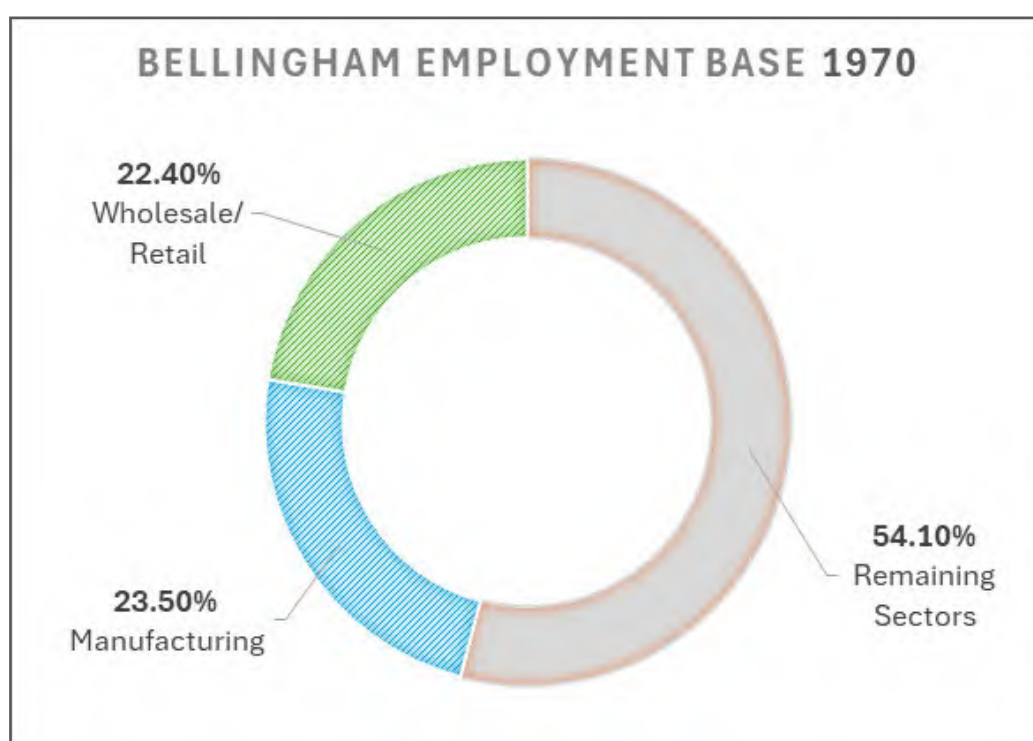
- The retail sector grew due to increased trade with the gradually growing Whatcom County population, and the rapidly expanding Vancouver B.C. metropolitan area.
- The consistent student enrollment at local colleges and universities provided a major boost to the local economy and continue to do so.



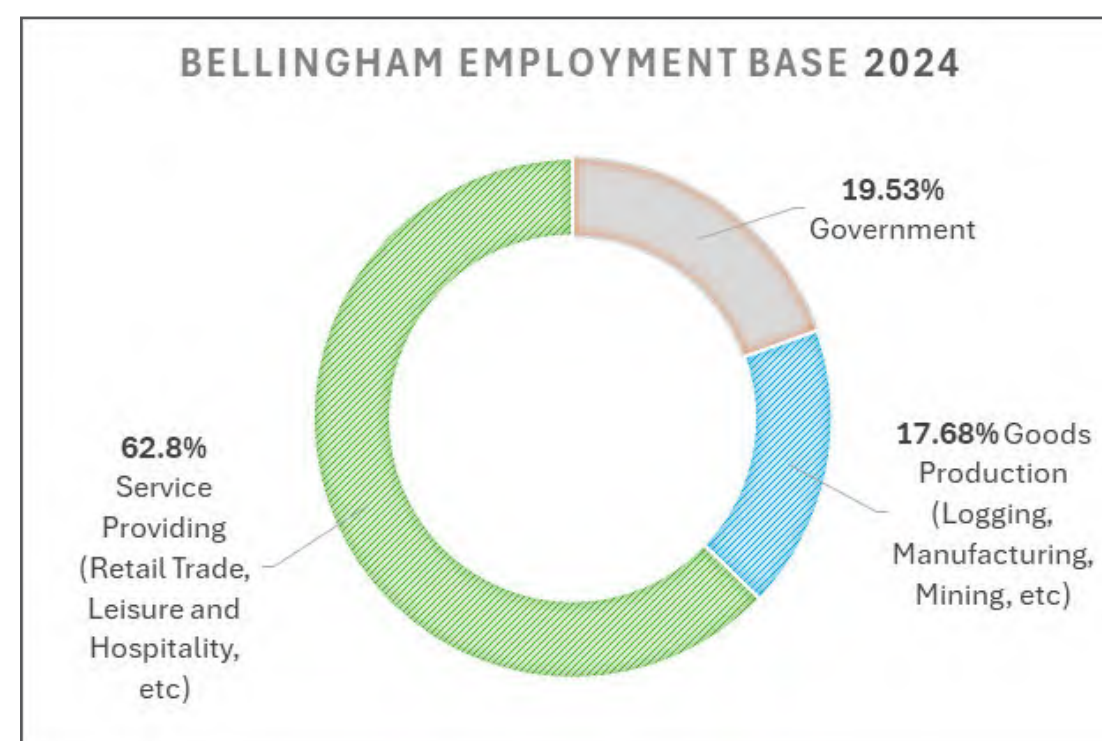
Photo Credit: Brandon Saway



Photo Credit: Philip Humphries



Data: Bellingham Comprehensive Plan 1995, Land Use Chapter



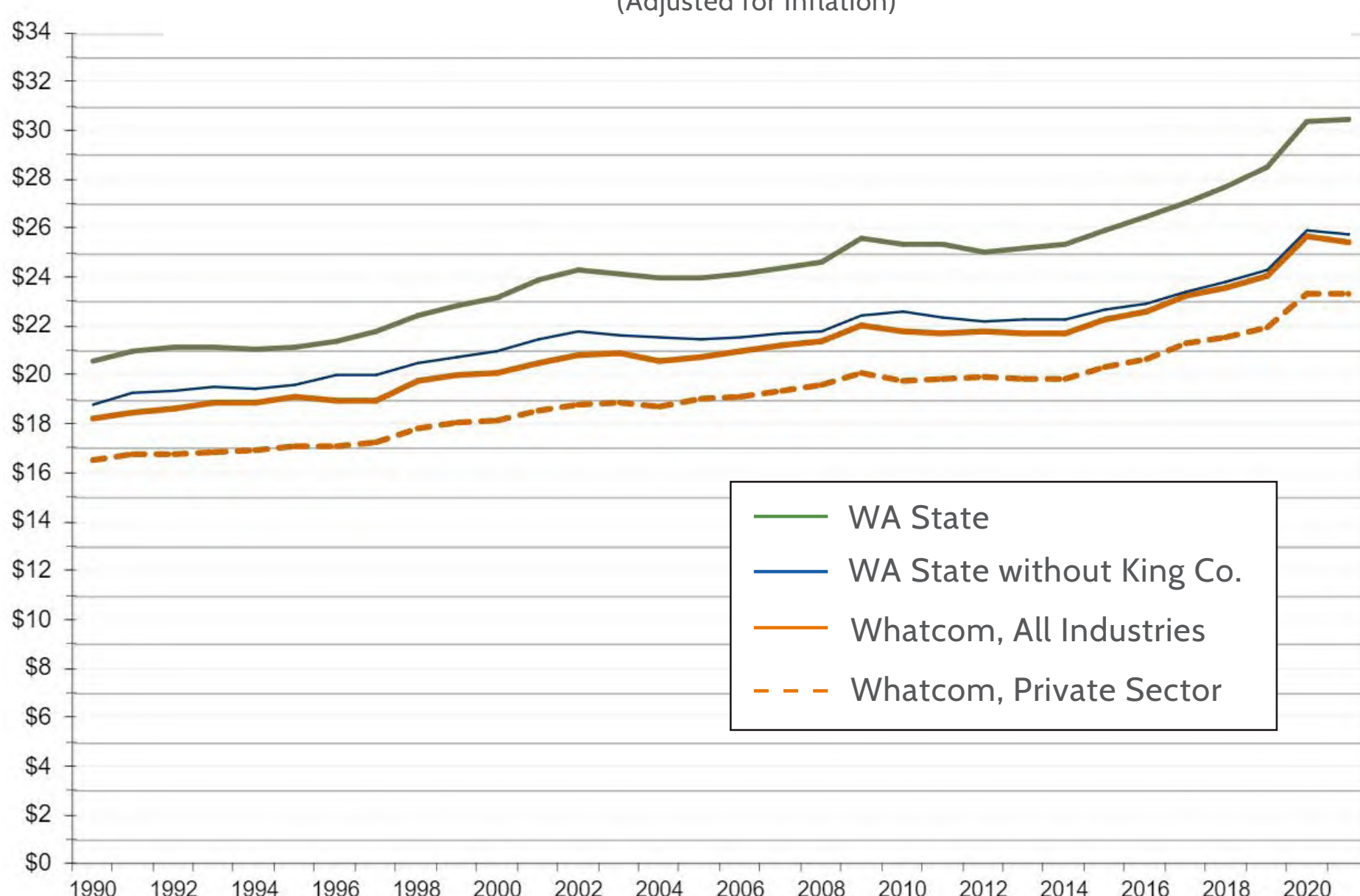
Data: Washington State Employment Security Department, Historical Employment Estimates

Occupation	Avg. Hourly Wage in Whatcom County (2021)
Cashiers	\$15.51
Retail Salespersons	\$15.61
Waiters and Waitresses	\$16.35
Production Occupations	\$20.34
Construction and Extraction Occupations	\$28.29

Data: Washington State Employment Security Department

Wages have increased over time...

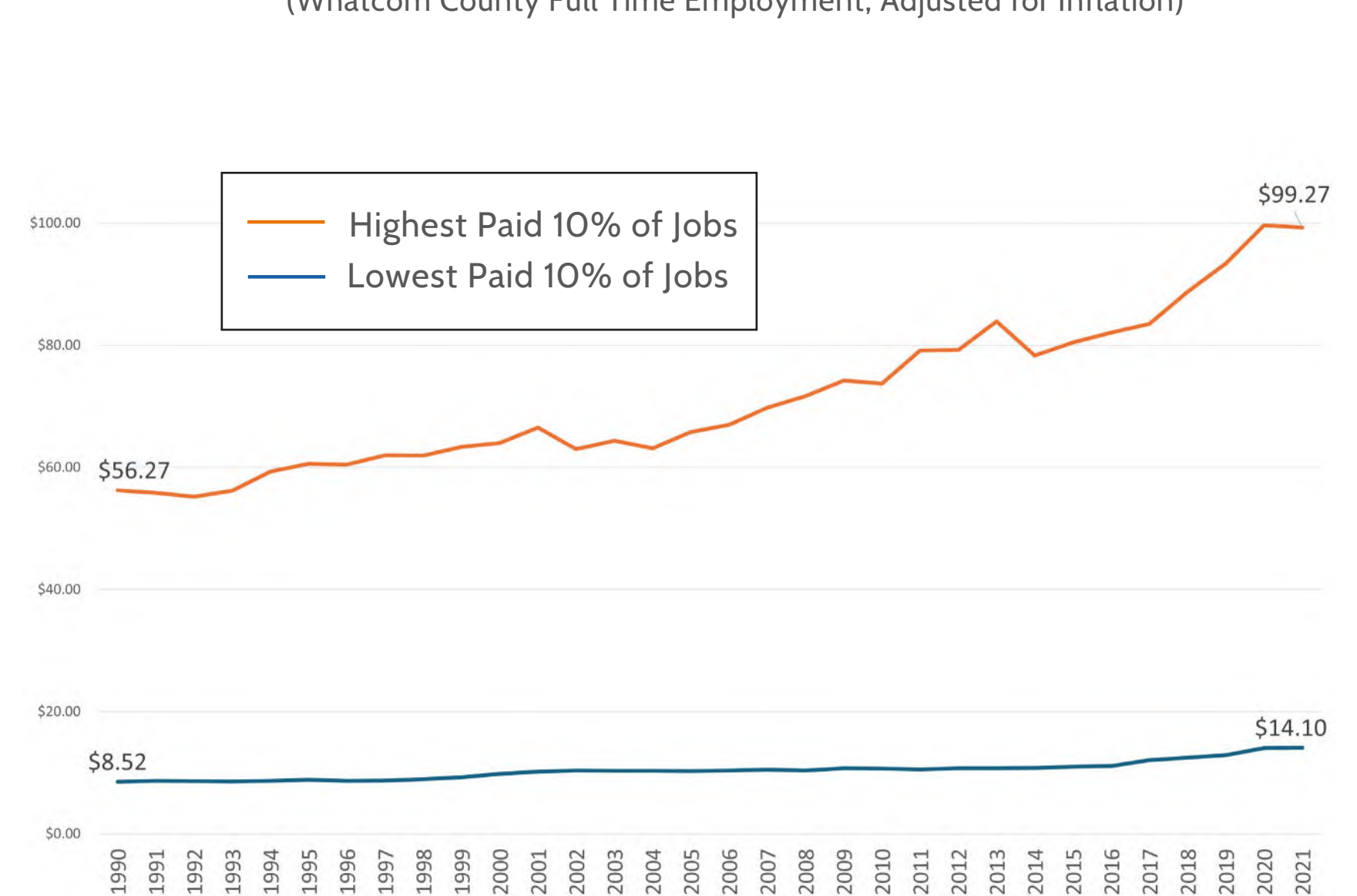
Median Hourly Wage (Adjusted for Inflation)



Data: Washington State Employment Security Department

However the gap between the highest and lowest wages is increasing.

Average Hourly Wages of Highest and Lowest Paid 10% of Jobs (Whatcom County Full Time Employment, Adjusted for Inflation)



Data: Washington State Employment Security Department

BELLINGHAM'S MAIN INDUSTRIES

There are about 3,700 businesses employing more than 51,000 people in Bellingham.

About half of all businesses in Bellingham employ 1-4 people.



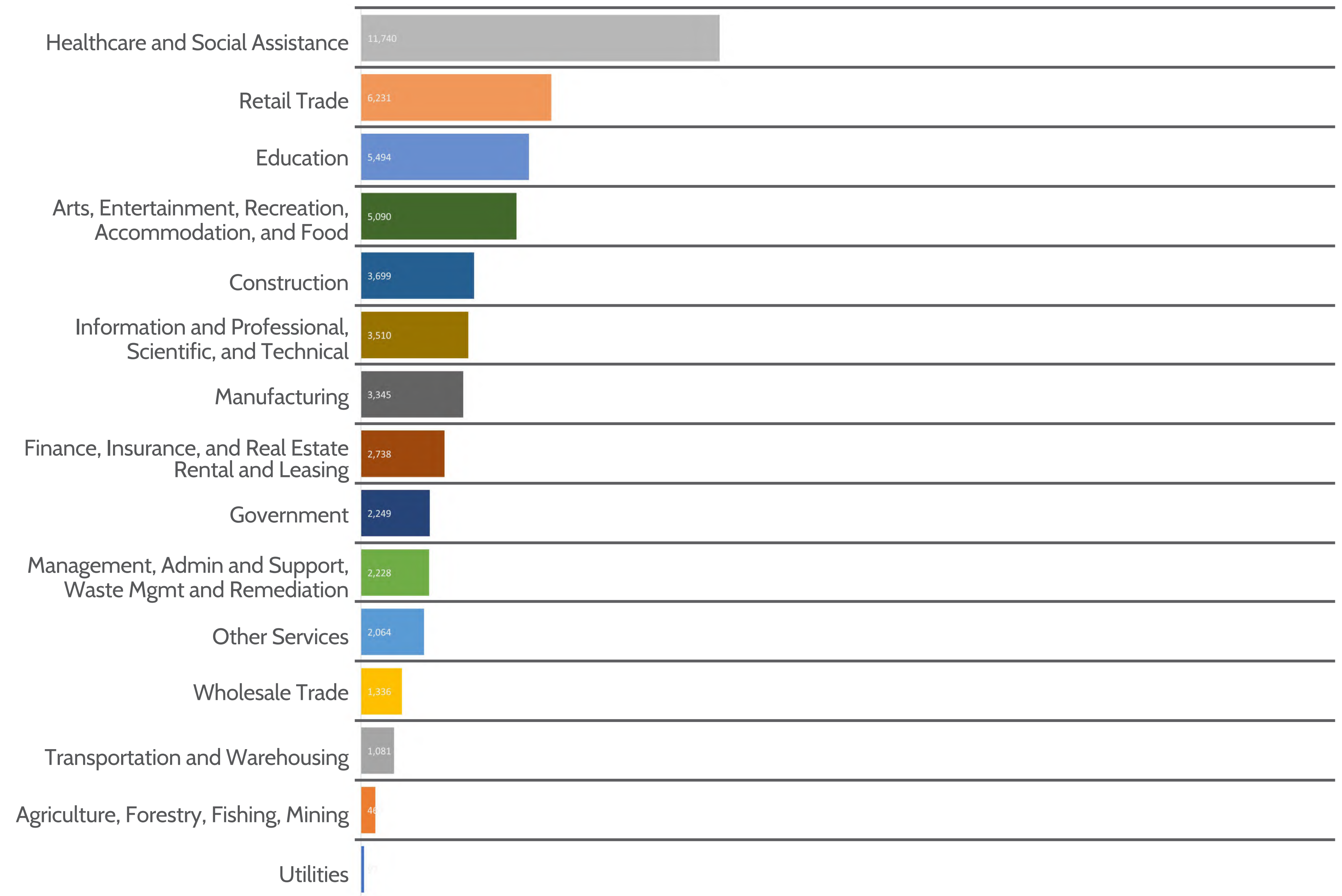
Our 10 largest employers provide about 25% of all jobs.

Rank	Company Name	Employees
1	PeaceHealth Medical Center (St Joseph's)	3,588
2	Western Washington University	2,486
3	Bellingham Public Schools	1,714
4	City of Bellingham	1,073
5	Whatcom County	959
6	Whatcom Community College	832*
7	Haggen Grocery (Albertsons)	715*
8	Family Care Network	545
9	Whatcom Educational Credit Union	419
10	Fred Meyer (Kroger)	398*

Source: Employment totals are a mix of 2023 and 2022 data* as collected by the WWU Center For Economic and Business Research.

Place a sticker in the space next to the industry sector(s) in which you work now or have worked in the past.

2021 Bellingham Employment by Sector



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (Beginning of Quarter Employment, 2nd Quarter of 2021).

EMPLOYMENT IN BELLINGHAM

Share your employment story.

Did your job bring you to Bellingham? Has it been hard to find employment in Bellingham? What aspects of your employment do you wish were different?

Post your employment story or general thoughts about employment in Bellingham on a sticky note below, or drop it in the box.

(Note: your story can be anonymous, no need to share your identity)

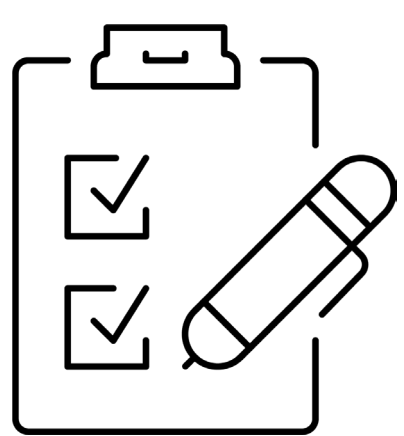
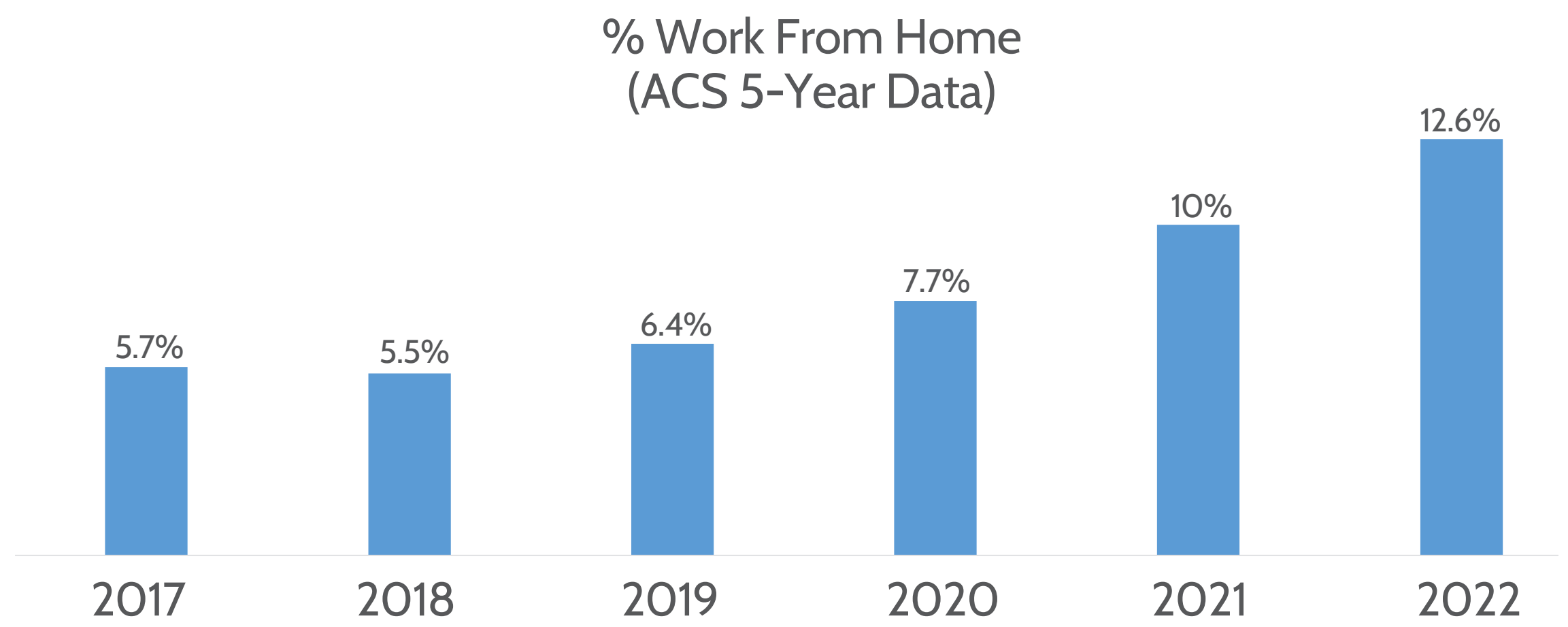
*To participate digitally in this exercise, scan the QR code at the right
You may submit your story anonymously*



REMOTE WORK TRENDS

How and where are people working now?

The Census did not previously ask complex questions about remote work, but the percentage of those in Bellingham who work fully remotely has steadily increased in recent years.



In order to understand more detail about people who work remotely, we asked the community. The survey they took was statistically valid, meaning the sampling of community members who responded reflected Bellingham demographics as a whole.

Here are some takeaways for all employed Bellingham residents:

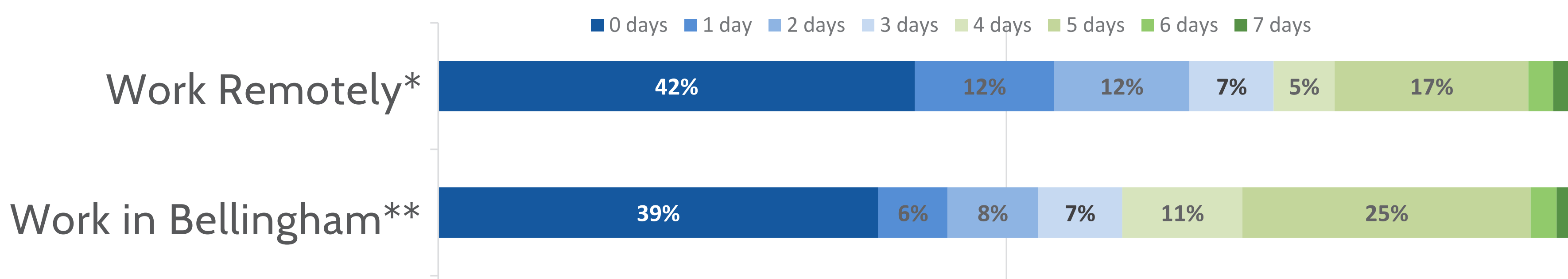
36% work partially remote (1-4 days a week)

22% work fully remote (at least 5 days a week)

39% are not commuting to a job in Bellingham (either work fully remote or travel outside Bellingham for work)

16% sometimes travel well outside of Bellingham for work (commute for at least one day in a typical week to a location at least 20 miles outside Bellingham, not including overnight stays)

How many days in a typical week do you work from each of the following locations?



*Data represents employed Bellingham residents who typically work at home or in a public place like a coffee shop.

**Data represents employed Bellingham residents who commute to a job in Bellingham.

REMOTE WORK

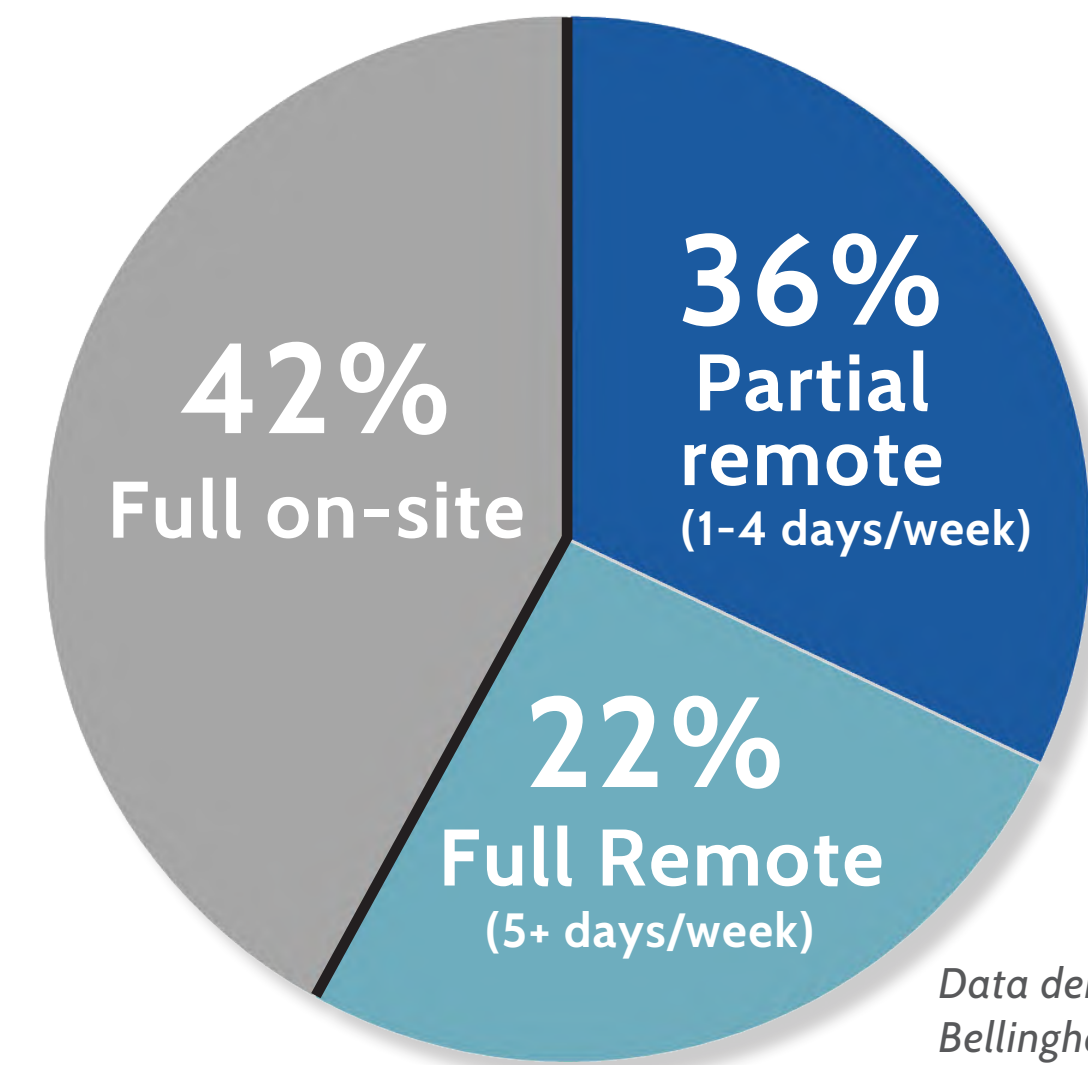
Bellingham's economy continues to shift over time.

Now, most employees in Bellingham work remotely for at least some part of the week.

The presence of remote work has economic, social, and larger regional impacts.

On-site vs. remote work

Base: Respondents who are employed (n=931)



Data derived from 2023 City of Bellingham Housing Preference Survey

Using sticky notes, write down what you think the biggest impacts of remote work are in Bellingham and what it means for our future. Include a note detailing why.

To view the full survey results from the Housing Preference Survey, follow the QR code at right



REMOTE WORK IMPACTS

At the Community Vision event held in February, community members brought up issues and opportunities.

Add to this list and provide feedback on how you think we can address and plan for these trends in the Bellingham Plan .

OPPORTUNITIES	ISSUES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">+ Personal benefits of remote work opportunities (e.g. work-life balance)+ Opportunity to reimagine office space downtown+ Transportation benefits (potential for less strain on the transportation network and decreased parking needs)+ Interest in more things closer to home, where more people are working now (see Complete Neighborhoods board) <p>What opportunities are missing?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Housing cost concerns (potential for remote workers to drive up housing prices by moving to Bellingham; concern that those working retail/service jobs may be getting priced out)- Potential for less engaged community members/less interest in local issues- Concern about losing community connections and a desire to bring the community together <p>What issues are missing?</p>
<p>How can the Bellingham Plan support these opportunities?</p>	<p>How can the Bellingham Plan address these issues?</p>

SAFETY IN BELLINGHAM

What would help our community feel safer for all?

Post your thoughts on a sticky note below, or share your safety story and drop it in the box.
(Note: your story can be anonymous, no need to share your identity)

*To participate digitally in this exercise, scan the QR code at the right
You may submit your story anonymously*



DOWNTOWN SAFETY AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT

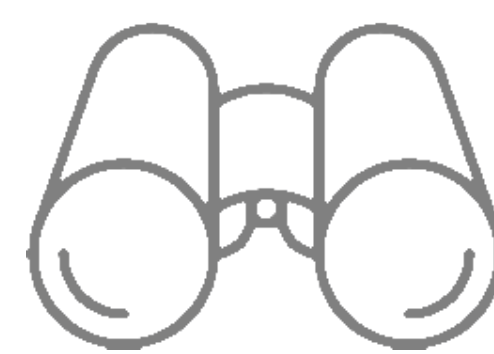
Downtown Bellingham is experiencing the effects of regional and national challenges. The City is addressing these challenges through leading edge programs, creative uses of funding and innovative partnerships.

Addressing the Fentanyl Crisis



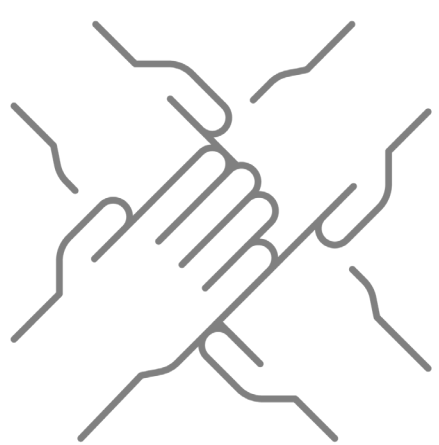
On February 20, 2024, Mayor Kim Lund signed an Executive Order that directs her administration to take immediate actions to address the fentanyl crisis and its negative impacts on the safety and well-being of Bellingham's downtown.

Downtown Safety Patrols



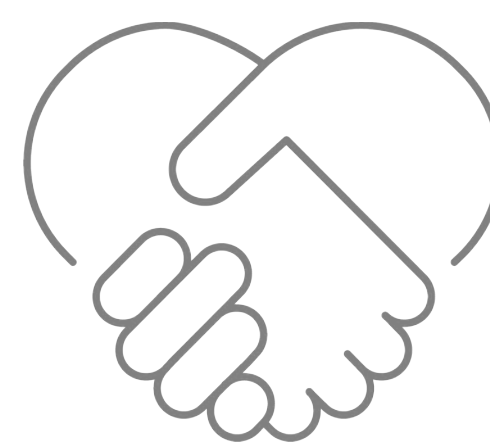
The February 2024 Executive Order directs an increased police presence downtown through additional emphasis patrols and community engagement. The City also hired Risk Solutions Unlimited (RSU), a local private security company, to provide safety patrols within the downtown core, assist in proactively identifying and responding to issues, and act as a hub to other resources.

Innovative Partnerships



In response to complex and interconnected challenges, City leaders have forged unprecedented partnerships, engaging with the public, private and non-profit sectors. This approach recognizes that the safety and vitality of downtown depends on diverse perspectives and collaborative action.

Homeless and Behavioral Health Services



During the pandemic and beyond, we have seen an increase in people who are living unsheltered. The City of Bellingham partners with local organizations and agencies dedicated to serving our community members in need.



With our partners, we are doing more than ever before to support a safe, healthy, thriving downtown.

To read the Mayor's Executive Order and learn more about the steps the City is taking to realize a downtown Bellingham that is vibrant, thriving, welcoming and safe for everyone, scan the QR code to the right.



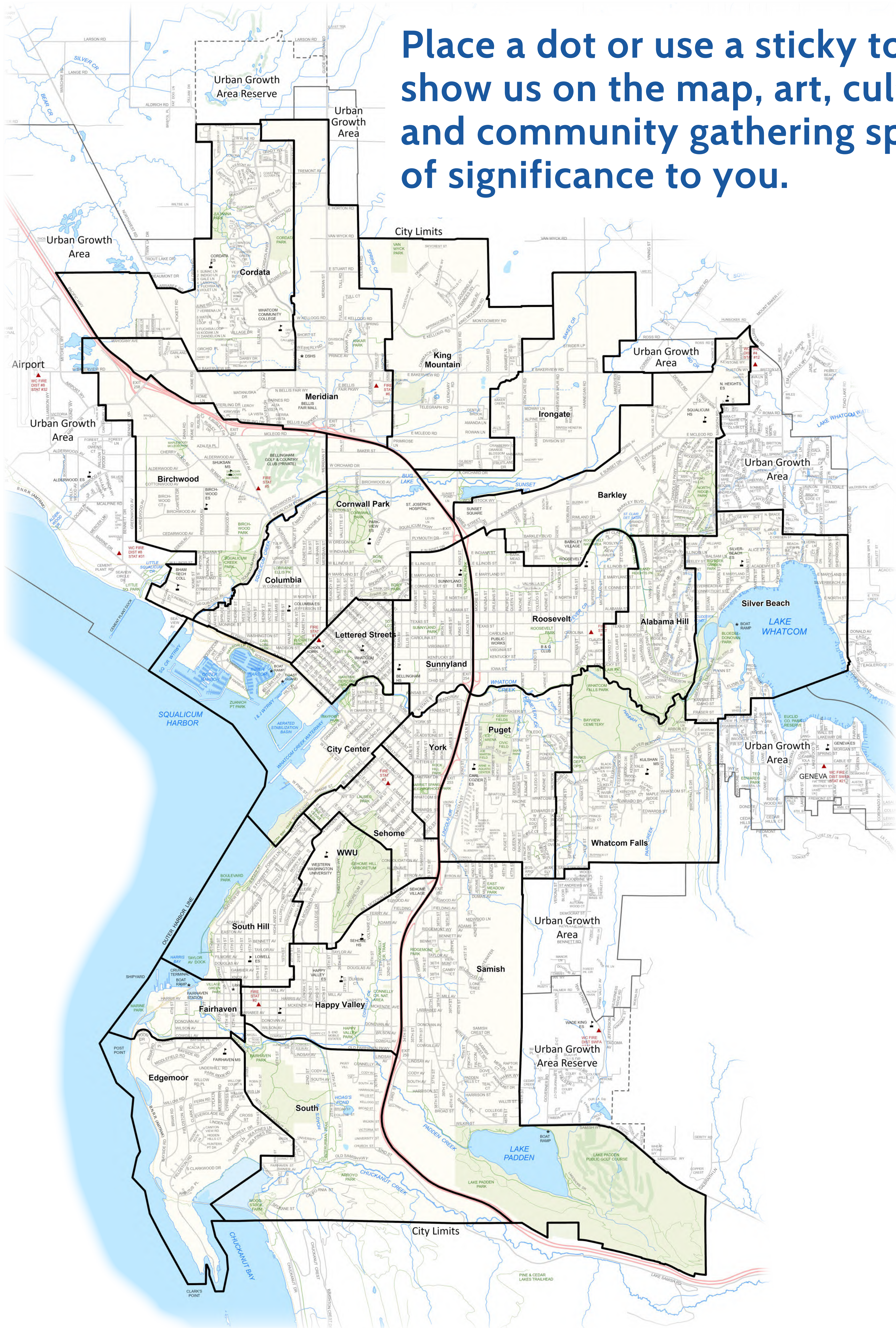
ART, CULTURAL AND COMMUNITY SPACES

Show us on the adjacent map, or use a sticky below to describe art, cultural and community gathering spaces of significance to you.

Where do you feel like you belong? What is missing?

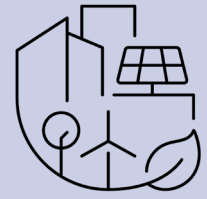

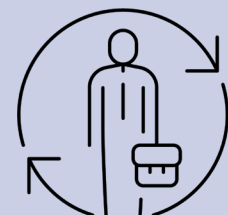

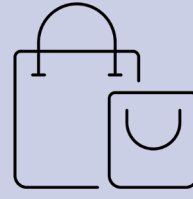
ART, CULTURAL AND COMMUNITY SPACES

Place a dot or use a sticky to show us on the map, art, cultural and community gathering spaces of significance to you.



COMMUNITY CHANGES AND ECONOMIC TRENDS

Which of these trends are you most concerned about? Excited about? Share your comments on stickies, below.

Looming Climate Impacts and Adaptation Challenges 	Food Insecurity and Urban Agriculture 	Reshoring Manufacturing Jobs 	The Future of Work 	Rise of E-Commerce and Reduction of Brick-and-Mortar Stores 
<p>Mitigating and adapting to the climate crisis requires the adoption of new technologies and industries, which likewise entails developing a workforce to support this transition.</p>	<p>Access to nutritious, high-quality food continues to be a challenge across the U.S. The changing landscape of how we grow and obtain our food also includes trends towards vertical farming, resilient agriculture driven by technological advancements, and the expansion of urban agriculture.</p>	<p>A resurgence of manufacturing in the U.S. is fueled by a strong dollar, a desire by many companies to simplify logistics and on-shore their production, the availability of skilled workers and raw materials, and crucially, a series of enticing legislative actions from the federal government.</p>	<p>The COVID-19 Pandemic and our modern world has changed how we work and how we think about our work-life balance. Some recent trends include: finding new job opportunities in other places, the ability to work remotely, and more flexible work schedules. The role of AI in the workplace today and in the future also remains contentious.</p>	<p>The growth of e-commerce has led to a reduction in physical retail spaces. Forecasts from UBS Bank predict that some 50,000 U.S. stores are likely to close by the end of 2027 due to e-commerce, increased borrowing costs, and consumer spending cutbacks.</p>

Visit American Planning Association’s 2024 Trend Report for Planners to learn about over 100 existing, emerging, and potential future trends.



CASCADIA MEGAREGION

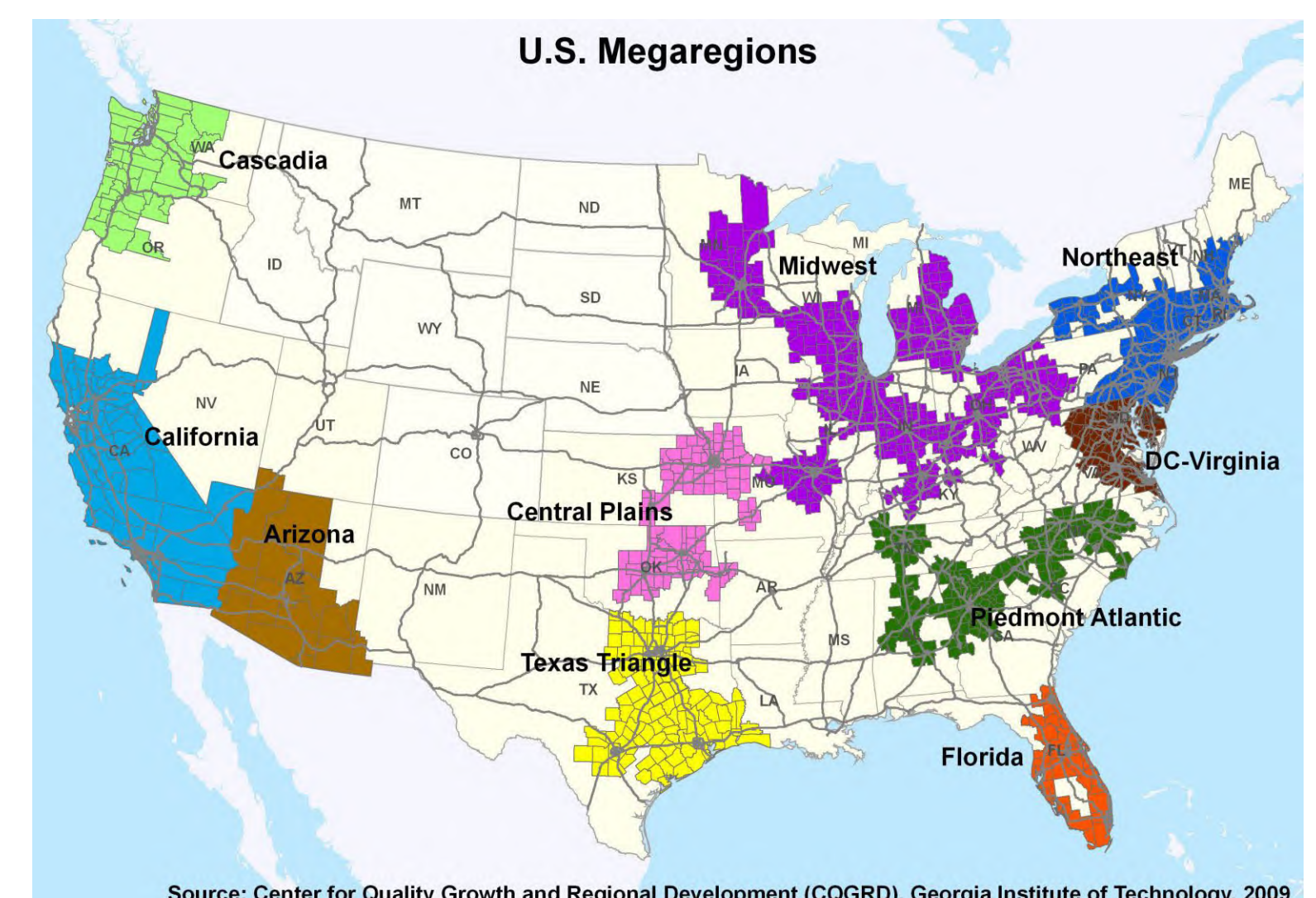
The Cascadia megaregion connects Portland – Seattle – Vancouver, BC (and beyond!)



Future High-Speed Rail Connections
Image Source: Washington State Department Of Transportation

Situated on the I-5 corridor, Bellingham sits 90 miles north of Seattle and 50 miles south of Vancouver. Megaregions are inherently connected due to proximity, environment, and culture. Cascadia is known for innovation, access to nature, and location on the Pacific Rim – Bellingham fits right in!

Here is a map showing the other megaregions in the US for perspective.



Source: Center for Quality Growth and Regional Development (CQGRD), Georgia Institute of Technology, 2009

The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) recently began collaborating with the state of Oregon, the province of British Columbia, the private sector, and other regional partners to explore how a high-speed, high-capacity corridor could better connect Cascadia. This project is called The Cascadia Ultra-High-Speed Ground Transportation Project, but the concept is more commonly known as “high-speed rail”. This project could help shape and strengthen regional transportation systems, connect communities, support jobs and the economy, improve access to housing, and help decrease carbon emissions.

(Source: WSDOT Cascadia Ultra-High Speed Ground Transportation Project Report - June 2023 (wa.gov))

Where does Bellingham fit? The most recent (2019) study included Bellingham as a stop in most potential line scenarios. If we become a stop on this route, what do you see as opportunities or challenges for Bellingham?

Opportunities	Challenges

URBAN VILLAGE INFORMATION

Since 2006, one of the City's primary growth strategies has been the establishment of a series of "urban villages." These urban village plans support the creation of vibrant mixed residential and commercial neighborhoods, boost economic development, and encourage a safe and attractive pedestrian experience. In short, urban villages offer a smart and sustainable way to grow and improve our community.

Since 2006, urban villages have accommodated

1/3

of the residential growth in Bellingham.
(3,000 units)

Urban villages are home to

10%

of Bellingham's residential population.
(9,400 residents)

Urban villages employ

30%

of all workers in Bellingham.
(1,200 businesses and 16,000 employees)


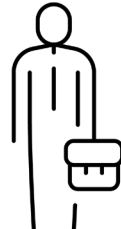
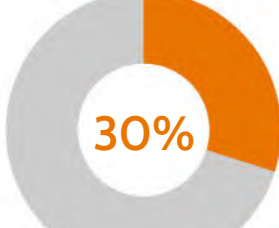
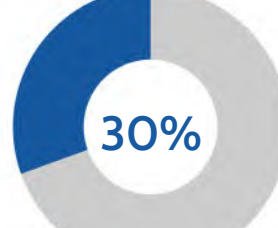
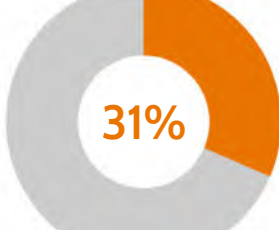
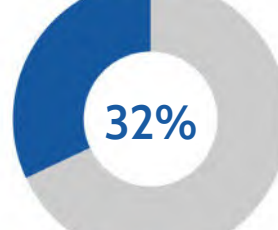
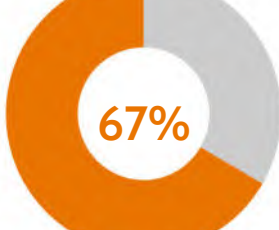
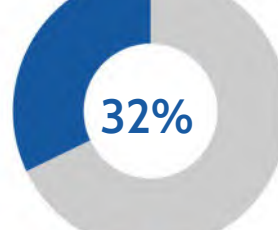
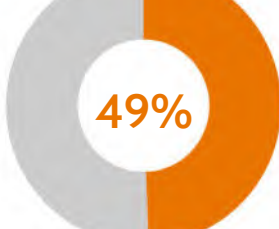
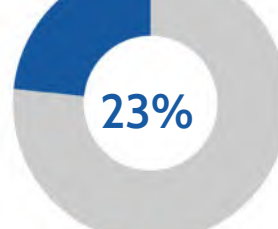
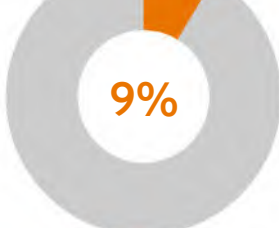
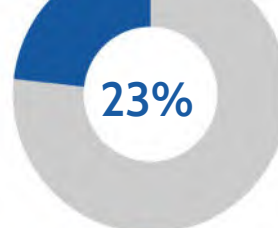
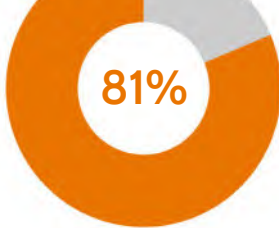
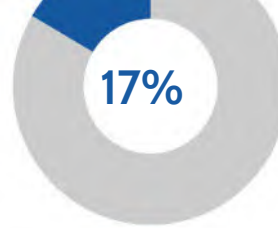
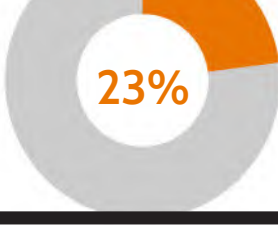
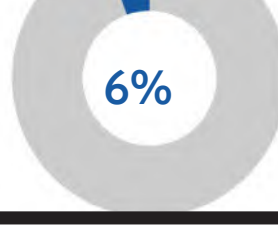
Since urban villages were adopted, development incentives have triggered over

\$550M

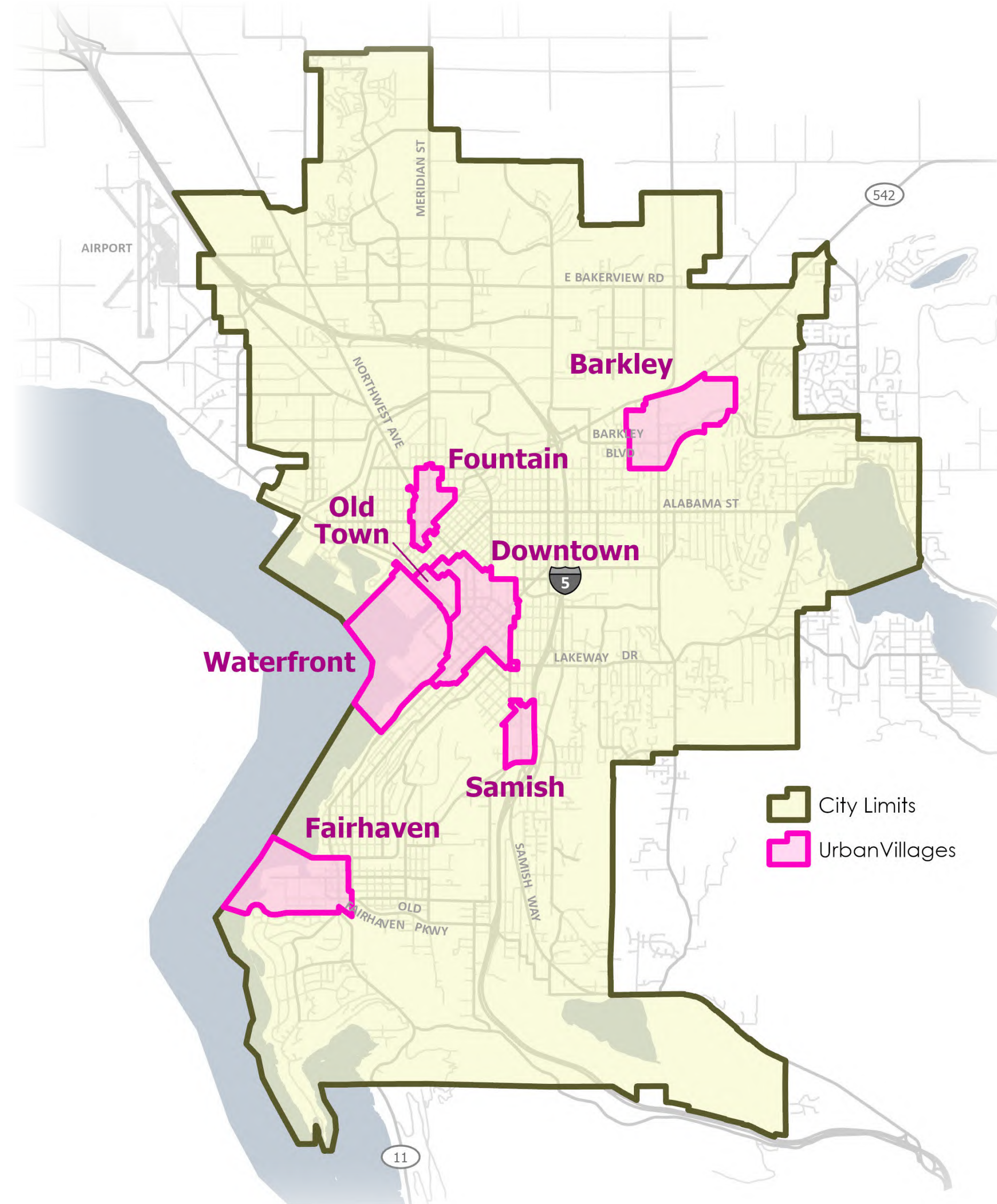
in private investment

The city offers a variety of incentives to encourage development in urban villages including tax and impact fee reductions, density and floor area bonuses, and reduced parking requirements.

Bellingham's urban villages vary widely in size, population, history, and amount of land available for potential redevelopment. The below statistics are not intended to compare the urban villages to each other, but rather to evaluate how well each village is developing according to its own unique potential.

URBAN VILLAGE				
	CURRENT HOUSING	% PROGRESS TOWARDS 2036 HOUSING GOAL*	CURRENT JOBS	% PROGRESS TOWARDS 2036 COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT GOAL*
Barkley District *Plan in process	477 units 822 residents		2,325 jobs 143 businesses	
Downtown District Adopted 2014	2,356 units 4,513 residents		9,075 jobs 588 businesses	
Fairhaven District Adopted 2012	867 units 1,589 residents		1,603 jobs 181 businesses	
Fountain District Adopted 2010	489 units 1,010 residents		819 jobs 85 businesses	
Old Town District Adopted 2008	87 units 184 residents		532 jobs 44 businesses	
Samish Way District Adopted 2009	688 units 1,198 residents		594 jobs 72 businesses	
Waterfront District Adopted 2013	83 units 141 residents		1,120 jobs 70 businesses	

Benchmark goals were developed in 2013. Goal projections are set for 20 years from the 2016 Comprehensive Plan (2036), regardless of which year the urban village plan was adopted. These goals forecast how much development would take place by 2036, and do not necessarily indicate total growth capacity.



For more details, visit the urban village dashboard at cob.org/uvdashboard or scan the QR code.



Dashboard best viewed on large screen devices.

URBAN VILLAGES OF TODAY

Urban Villages are an important part of Bellingham’s growth strategy. Each of our seven Urban Villages are at different stages of development. Some areas had established mixed-use development decades or even a century ago, others are changing significantly each year.







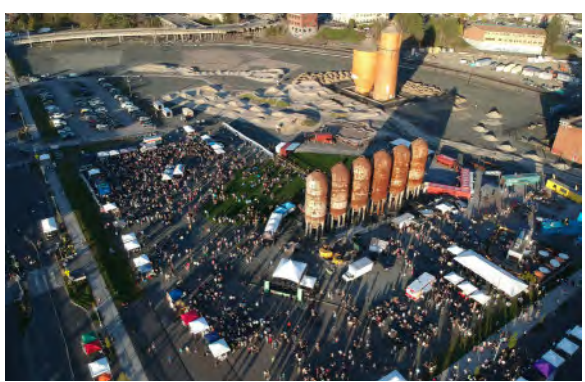
When you think of how each Urban Village is developing, what do you think is working well? What could be improved upon or changed?



Use blue sticky notes to tell us what is **working well** today.



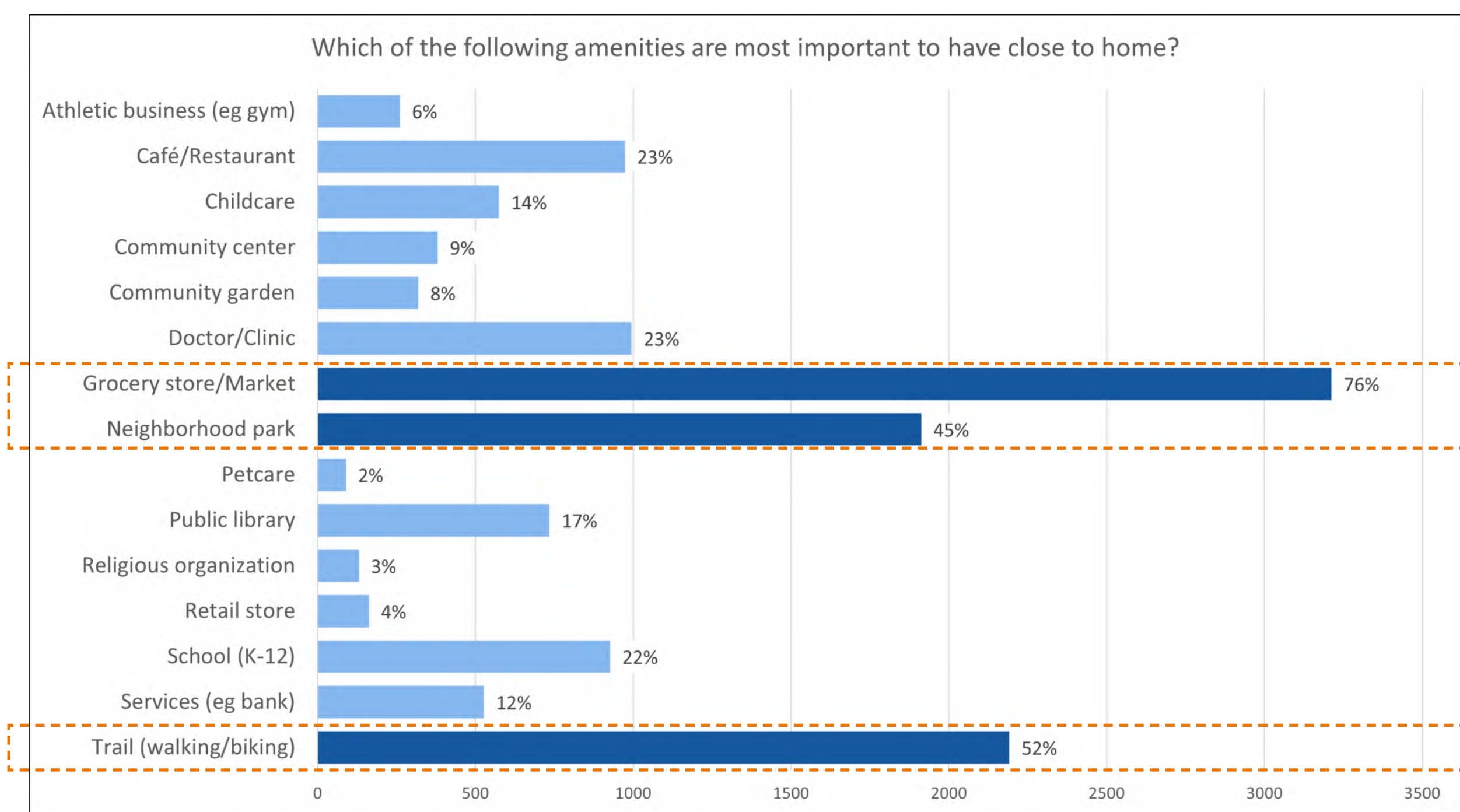
Use pink sticky notes to tell us what is **not working well** and should change.

<p>Barkley Urban Village</p> 	
<p>Downtown Urban Village</p> 	
<p>Fairhaven Urban Village</p>  <p><small>Image: Kenji Merritt</small></p>	
<p>Fountain Urban Village</p> 	
<p>Old Town Urban Village</p>  <p><small>Image: Donald Brown</small></p>	
<p>Samish Way Urban Village</p> 	
<p>Waterfront Urban Village</p>  <p><small>Image: Lauren McClanahan</small></p>	

COMPLETE COMMUNITIES

What amenities should everyone in the community have access to?

Creating complete communities where everyone has access to basic amenities and services is an important goal for the Bellingham Plan. In Fall 2023, the community described how important it is to provide a variety of amenities in every neighborhood. Over 4,000 people provided feedback on which were most important to have near home in the Bellingham Plan Vision Survey.

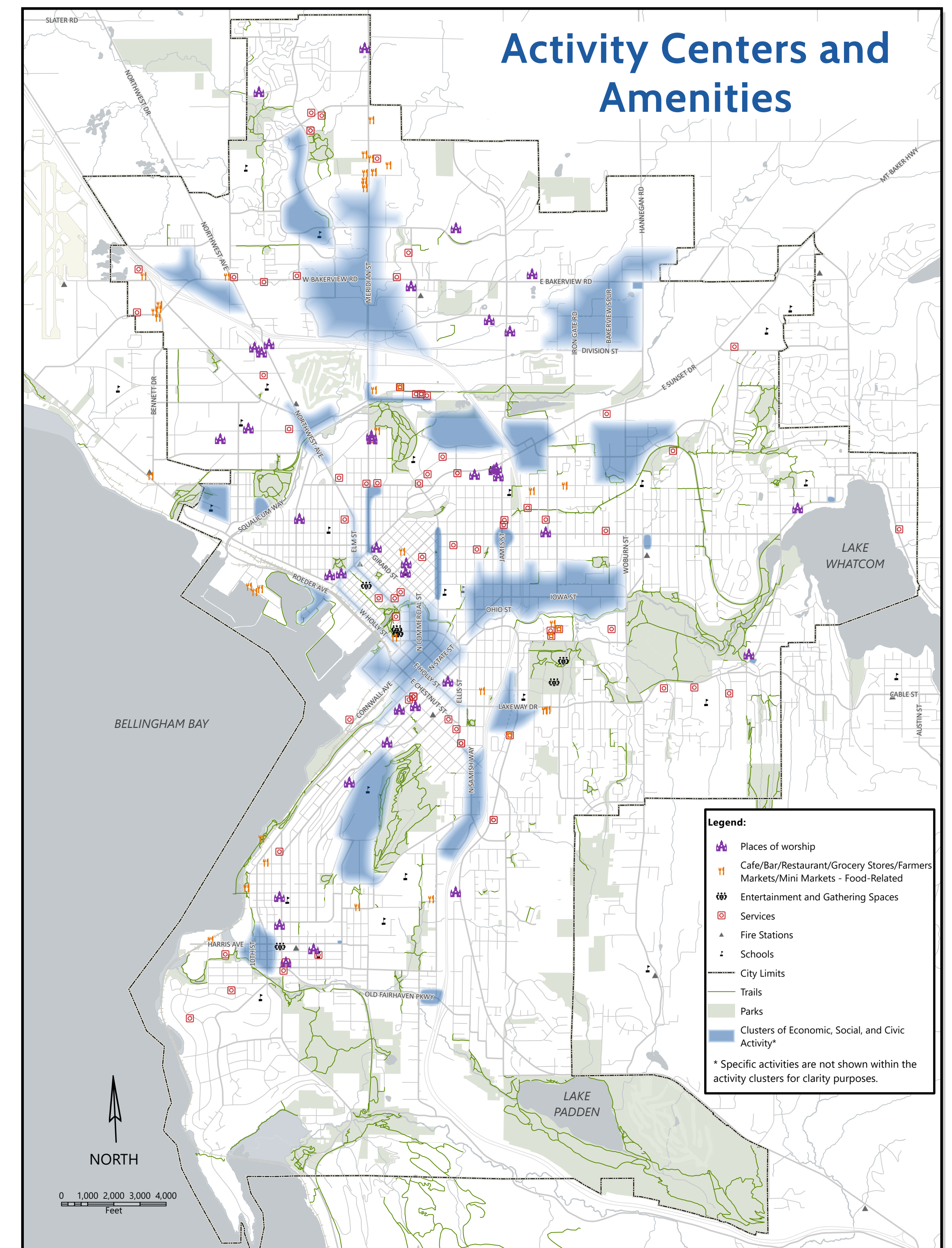


While there was some variation along demographics, the trends remained relatively consistent between owners and renters, different age groups, and other demographic variations.



Check out the Vision Survey report to learn more.

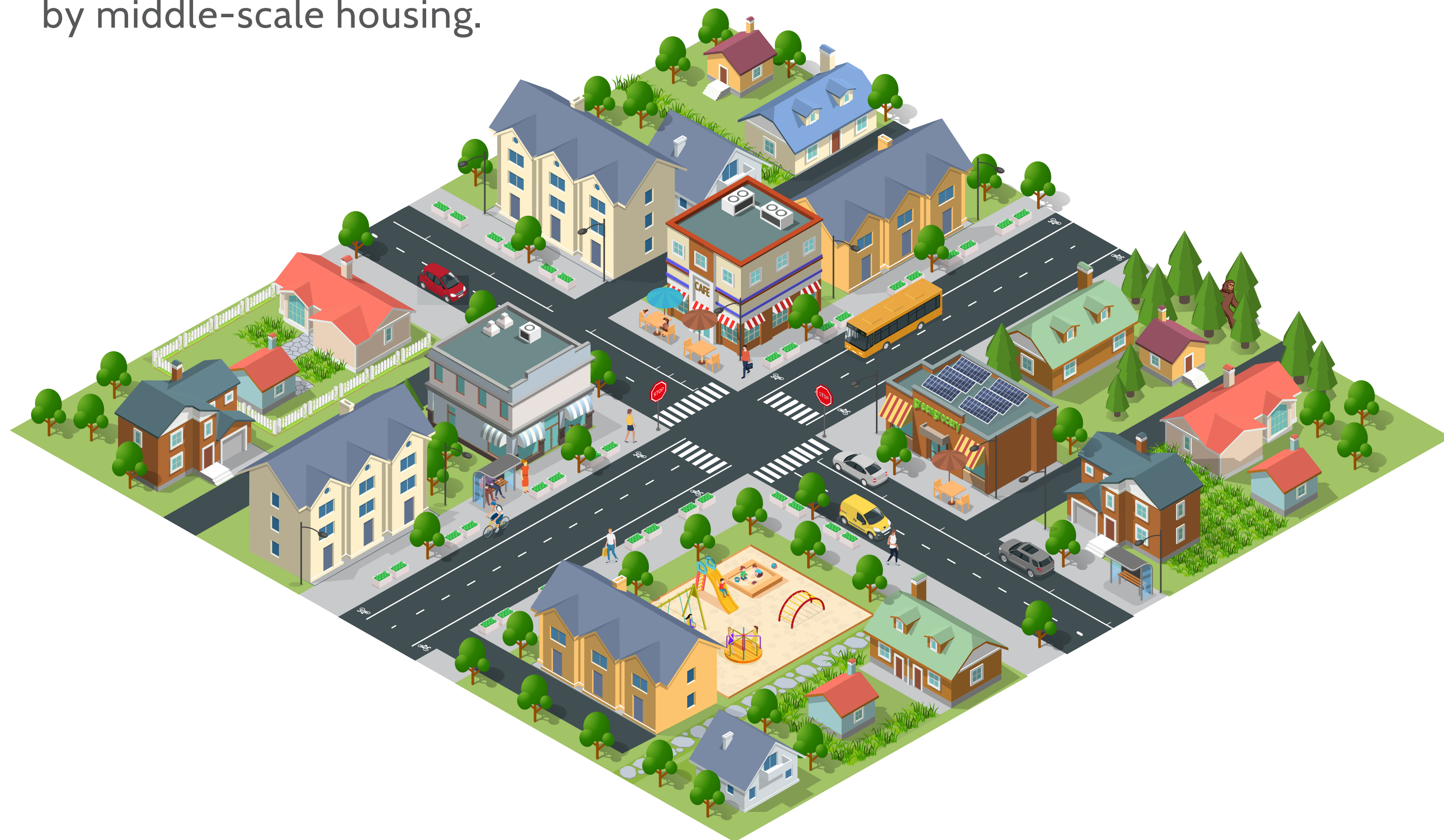
This map helps understand where these amenities and services exist today. Larger activity centers with many amenities have been faded out in blue, but areas with just a single or few uses are also shown with points. Some areas of the city do not have as much access to these uses as others.



COMPLETE NEIGHBORHOODS

There is a strong interest in the community to encourage small-scale commercial uses in residential areas. This could allow better access to the amenities listed on the previous board to people across the city.

Providing access across the city means supporting new uses in neighborhoods that don't have them today. One way to achieve this is to cluster them in small centers, similar to the example below. These areas need enough people around them to support the businesses, so they are likely to be located along a busier street and/or be surrounded by middle-scale housing.



We've heard a lot about what places people are excited to have near their homes, such as the uses seen on the complete communities board. In order for these businesses to be successful, we may need to reconsider some constraints on what is allowed. Here are some example areas we could address if we begin permitting these uses in more places.

Place a sticky note with more information on what you find most important to consider, or provide other comments in the "other" category.

<p>Location of centers (What types of areas would/wouldn't be appropriate for these centers?)</p>	<p>Operation (What things like open hours, delivery access, or other operations should be limited?)</p>
<p>Size of individual uses (Would you like to limit how big individual businesses can be?)</p>	<p>Size of buildings (How would you like to limit how big – height and bulk – the buildings can be?)</p>
<p>Appearance/design of buildings (Are there particular visual elements you'd like to see on these buildings?)</p>	<p>Other</p>

YOUR FAVORITE PLACES

Activity #1

1) Think of some of your favorite places in Bellingham.

- Where do you find yourself coming back to, over and over?
- Where do you proudly bring family or friends who visit Bellingham?

This could be a business, park, street corner, or another unique space.

2) Write the name of each space and what makes that place great on a post-it.

Fairhaven Park - casual gathering place with summer programming!

keep it simple!

3) Stick the post-it near the categories that you think fit it best.

Activity – what people around you are doing there

Beauty for the senses – what you get to see, hear, taste, smell, or feel while there

Productivity – what you can accomplish while there

Personal Experience – what you get to do while there

Connection – who you get to see or meet there

Other

Place post-it here if it fits all of these categories

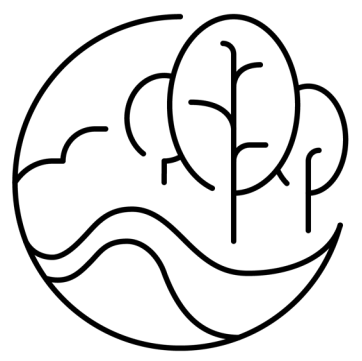
Activity #2

Read over the responses in Activity #1 (at left).

Add post-its below to **describe how the City could encourage and support more of these types of spaces**, such as “Provide small pocket parks in more neighborhoods”

ECONOMIC VITALITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE

The relationship between climate change and economic vitality is multifaceted, with both challenges and opportunities for sustainable development and prosperity. Addressing climate change requires integrated strategies that consider economic, social, and environmental dimensions.



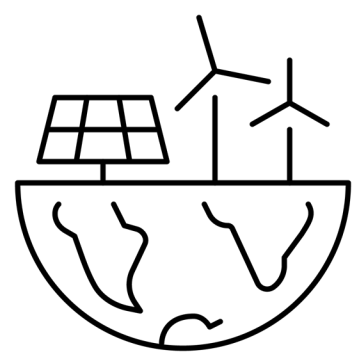
Impacts on Resources:

Climate change affects the availability and distribution of natural resources like water, agriculture, and energy, which are fundamental to economic activities.



Risk to Economic Stability:

Extreme weather events associated with climate change can disrupt supply chains, damage infrastructure, and lead to economic losses for businesses and the community.



Investment and Innovation:

While addressing climate change requires significant investment, mitigating and adapting measures can also spur innovation and economic growth. For example, investments in sectors such as renewable energy or green technologies* can create new jobs and industries, contributing to long-term vitality.



Social and Health Impacts:

Climate change can exacerbate social inequalities and health disparities, and that can affect economic productivity and resilience. For example, vulnerable populations may face increased risk from heatwaves, air pollution, or food insecurity. That, in turn, can lead to higher healthcare costs and reduced workforce participation. However, anyone can be vulnerable to these impacts of climate change.

***Results from our Fall 2023 vision survey indicate that the Bellingham community has a strong interest in encouraging sustainable or green industries:**



FOOD SECURITY AND ECONOMIC VITALITY

How does a robust local food system support economic vitality?

Local food security ensures access to nutritious food and contributes to a community's economic strength and resilience:

- » **Tourism and branding:** Local food scenes can support tourism and increase spending in local businesses.
- » **Healthcare savings:** Locally produced, fresh, and nutritious food can lead to improved health outcomes, reducing healthcare costs and increasing overall productivity.
- » **Reduced dependency and increased resilience:** Local food systems can strengthen local economies by keeping money circulating in the community and enhancing resilience to economic shocks by ensuring continued access to nutritious food sources.

According to FeedingAmerica.org, the food insecurity rate in Whatcom County was 12.5% in 2022 (26,523 people).

Per the 2023 Washington State Food Security Survey (WAFOOD) food insecurity since the pandemic has remained higher in households with BIPOC respondents, households with children, households with low incomes, and renters.*

For food insecure households, groceries were reported as the most challenging bill to afford.

*This survey launched as an effort to track impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the health, economic well-being, and food needs of Washingtonians.

Food Security Defined:

Local food security ensures access to nutritious food and contributes to a community's economic strength and resilience:

- » **Food secure** households have access, at all times, to enough food for an active, healthy life for all household members.
- » **Food-insecure** households are uncertain of having, or unable to acquire, at some time during the year, enough food to meet the needs of all their members because they had insufficient money or other resources for food.
- » Households with **very low food security** are food insecure to the extent that normal eating patterns of some household members are disrupted at times during the year, with self-reported food intake below levels considered adequate.



How does the City of Bellingham support food security?

- » Invested \$1 million in American Rescue Plan Act to support the Bellingham and Salvation Army Food Banks.
- » Increasing Human Services grant funding from \$50,000 to \$150,000 for the Bellingham Food Bank for the next fiscal year.
- » Investing \$30,000 in Maple Alley Inn, which provides nutritional hot lunch meals in a dining-room style environment at no cost, along with service provider information and connections.
- » Investing \$50,000 in the Whatcom Council on Aging's Meals on Wheels program, which provides nutritional meals to home-bound seniors.

HOUSING AND HUMAN SERVICES

An important component of economic vitality lies in ensuring people's basic needs are met.

The City of Bellingham supports a variety of critical human service programs and housing projects. The City's main role in these programs is as a funder. Using local, state, and federal funds, the City partners with many government and non-profit agencies who are working to address the spectrum of community needs through prevention, crisis response, and stability.

Prevention and Social Services

Funding a variety of programs and services to keep people from experiencing homelessness.

Top 10 Prevention Programs funded this year 2023

Opportunity Council – Rental Assistance for Tenants	\$508,800
Lydia Place – Family Services Program	\$353,719
Opportunity Council – Prevention & Diversion for Families & Seniors	\$174,935
Whatcom Dispute Resolution Center – Housing Stability Program	\$155,645
Opportunity Council – Housing Lab	\$54,114
Bellingham Public Schools – Carl Cozier Family Resource Center	\$50,000
Bellingham Food Bank – Free Grocery Program	\$50,000
Whatcom Council on Aging – Meals on Wheels	\$50,000
Brigid Collins – Targeted Intensive Case Management	\$30,000
Max Higbee Center – Weekday Program	\$30,000

Our partners provide

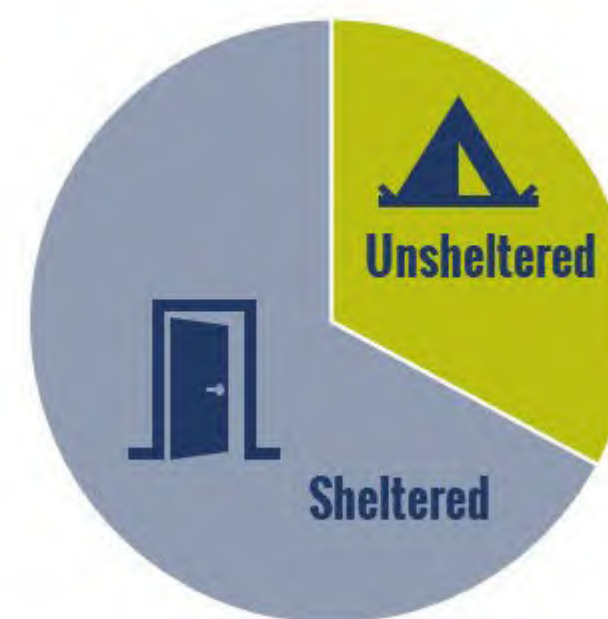
50,000+

services with the City's support



Crisis Response

Providing outreach, shelter and other basic needs to individuals and families if they become homeless.



1,059

homeless persons counted on one night in 2023
the majority seek and receive shelter

2023 Whatcom County Point in Time Count



83 TINY HOUSES

throughout the City in villages such as **Gardenview, Unity Village & Swift Haven**

As of July 2023

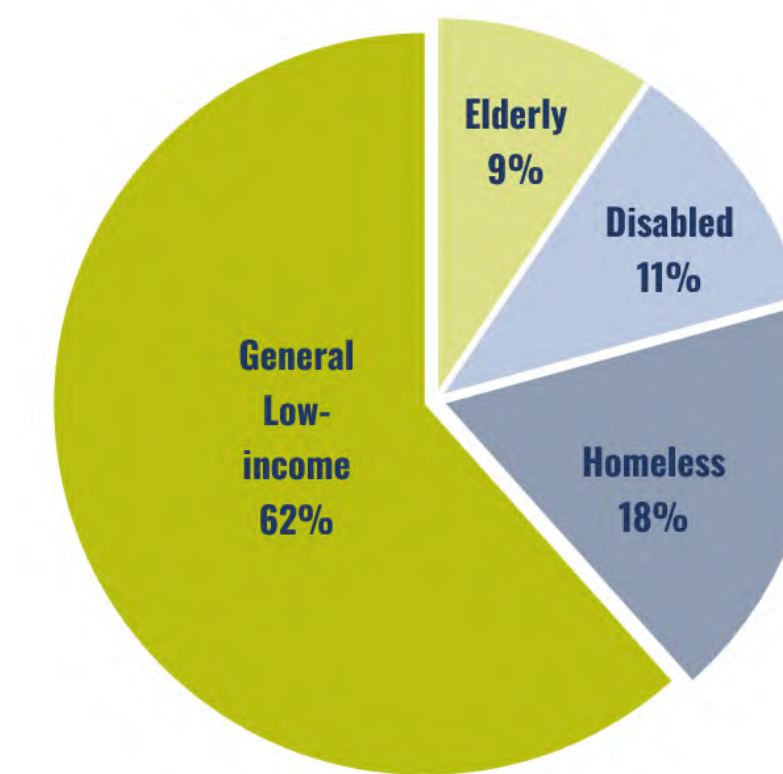
154 MOTEL STAYS for families with children & other vulnerable households

7/1/2022 – 7/31/2023

Stability

Securing long-term housing and necessary supports for those left out of the private market.

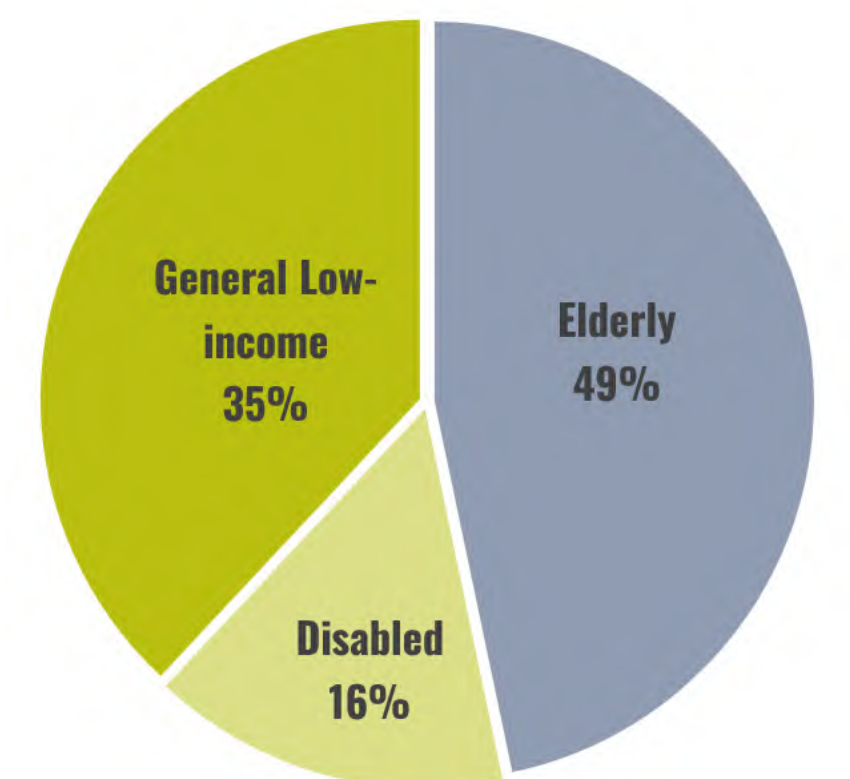
Total Rental Units Built by population served



333 Subsidized Rental Units were built or retained in 2023

Did you know?
Over 1,700 units of affordable housing have been built or maintained in the City so far.

Home Rehab Loans by population served



over **1,400** HOMEOWNERS HAVE BEEN HELPED TO STAY IN THEIR HOMES

\$14,600 AVERAGE HOME REHAB LOAN AMOUNT

Visit the "Housing Services Storymap" to learn more.
cob.org/housingservices



See the materials from the Housing Affordability event for more information

CHILDCARE

What the City is doing, what others are doing.

Childcare is essential.

Supporting access to affordable childcare increases labor force participation and regional economic growth. Lack of available, affordable care limits household economic advancement and employers' ability to fill and retain jobs.

City of Bellingham

Assisted with the purchase and interior finishing of childcare facilities.

- Facilities were within affordable low-income rental housing projects, as well as stand-alone childcare facilities.
- So far, 3 are operational, 3 nearly complete, and 1 is underway (these include Kids World, Barkley Trailview, Samish, Millworks, Laurel-Forest, Bellis, Lydia Place).

Federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), Coronavirus response funding (CARES Act), and Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds were used to support these efforts.

Provided limited subsidies to local childcare providers for operational costs and for low-income families needing assistance to secure childcare services.

- Subsidies were provided both directly and through the Center for Retention and Expansion of Childcare housing at Opportunity Council.

CARES Act and ARPA funds were used to support these efforts.

Offers a pilot program using CDBG funds to assist low-income homeowners in retrofitting their homes to provide adult family home or childcare services.

In the Community

The Opportunity Council

- Provides clients with information and referrals to licensed childcare facilities;
- Through the Center for Retention and Expansion of Childcare, providing licensed childcare providers with coaching, technical assistance, funding access, consultation services, and professional development opportunities.

Whatcom Community College

- Provides programs for Washington State childcare and early childhood education professional certifications.

Whatcom County collaboration

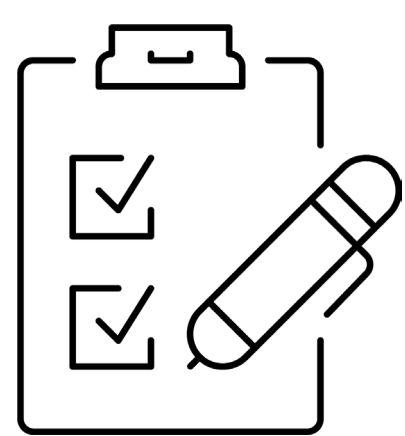
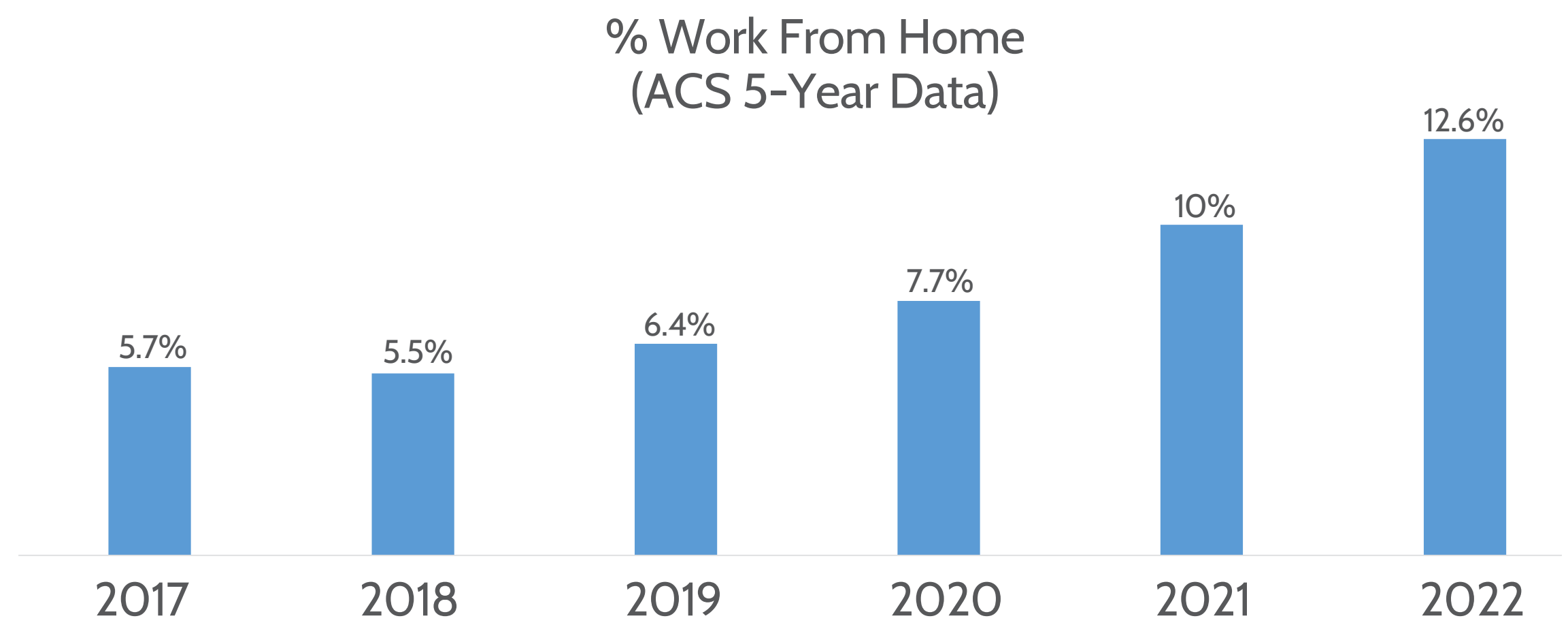
- Coordinates efforts to expand and support early learning and stability for families with young children, including through their new Healthy Children's Fund levy.



REMOTE WORK TRENDS

How and where are people working now?

The Census did not previously ask complex questions about remote work, but the percentage of those in Bellingham who work fully remotely has steadily increased in recent years.



In order to understand more detail about people who work remotely, we asked the community. The survey they took was statistically valid, meaning the sampling of community members who responded reflected Bellingham demographics as a whole.

Here are some takeaways for all employed Bellingham residents:

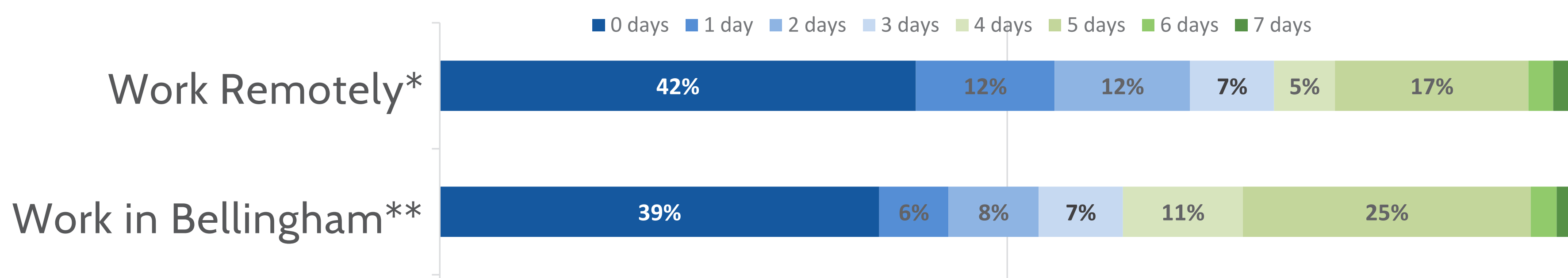
36% work partially remote (1-4 days a week)

22% work fully remote (at least 5 days a week)

39% are not commuting to a job in Bellingham (either work fully remote or travel outside Bellingham for work)

16% sometimes travel well outside of Bellingham for work (commute for at least one day in a typical week to a location at least 20 miles outside Bellingham, not including overnight stays)

How many days in a typical week do you work from each of the following locations?



*Data represents employed Bellingham residents who typically work at home or in a public place like a coffee shop.

**Data represents employed Bellingham residents who commute to a job in Bellingham.

ECONOMIC DISPLACEMENT

Displacement due to inability to afford rising rents (residential or commercial) or costs of ownership like property taxes and maintenance.

Historic discrimination has left non-white racial groups disproportionately vulnerable to the risk of displacement.

Racially disparate impacts:
When policies, practices, rules or other systems result in a disproportionate impact on one or more racial groups.

Assessing racially disparate impacts on displacement:

- Homeownership rates
- Rates of housing cost burden
- Rates of overcrowding
- Cost of housing compared to median household income
- Concentrations of racial groups with economic characteristics differing from the rest of the community

The City must assess zoning that may have racially disparate or exclusionary effects like these and establish policies to prevent displacement or reduce hardships. One way the City can do that is by engaging with the community to help identify root causes and structural factors contributing to gentrification and displacement.

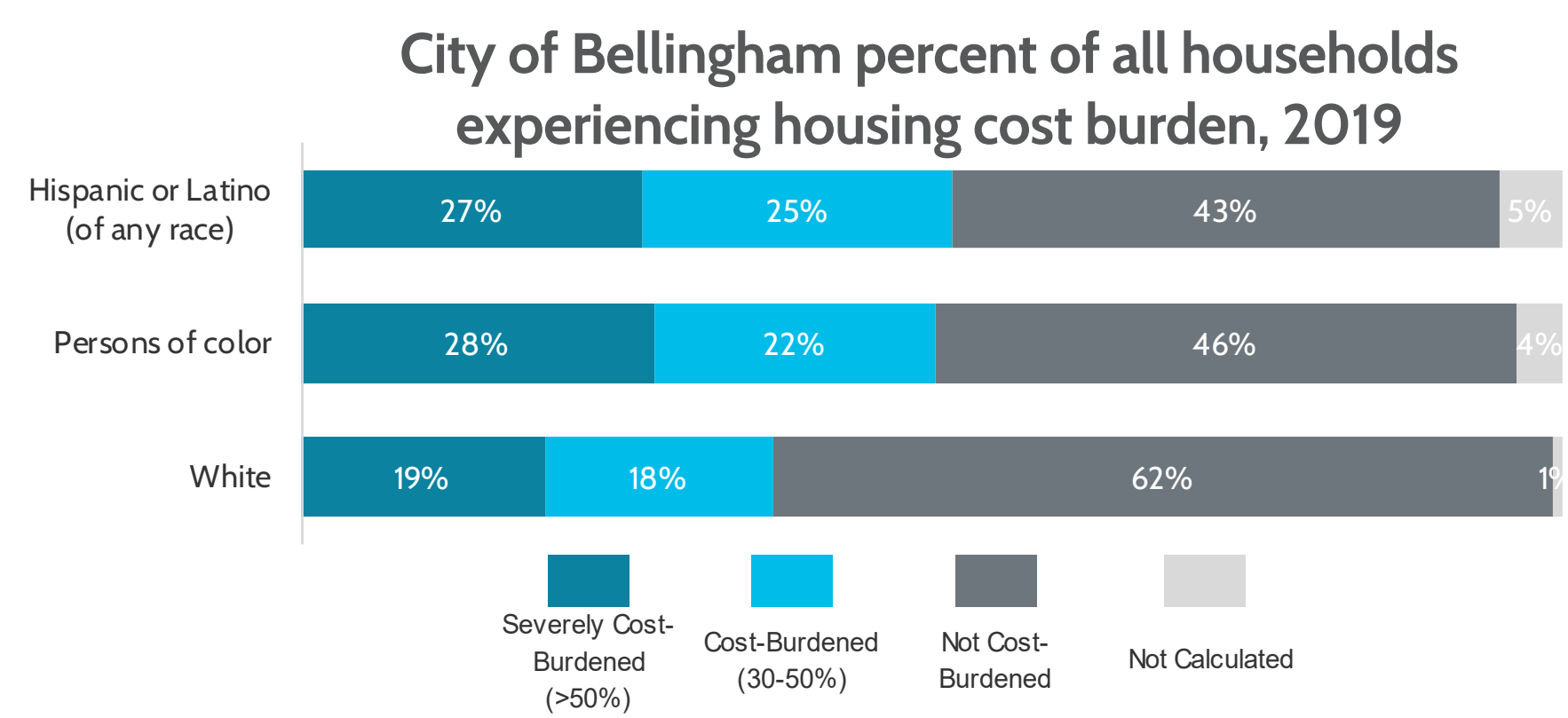
The City's role in reversing inequalities

Selections from Bellingham's 2016 Comprehensive Plan Goals and Policies:

Land Use Chapter – Policy LU-28 – “Consider social equity and health issues in siting such uses as manufacturing and essential public facilities (EPFs) to limit exposure to harmful substances and environments.”

Housing Chapter Policy – H-13 – “Consider the impacts on Citywide housing capacity, affordability and diversity when making land use policy decisions and code amendments.”

Parks Recreation and Open Space Chapter - Objective 5H – “Provide Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) training opportunities for staff.”



Washington State House Bill 1220 requires cities to remove biased language from our plan, including those that:

- Rely on euphemisms
- Conflate desired characteristics with a housing type
- Reference code administration and enforcement without clear guidelines

Example from Department of Commerce:

EXAMPLE POLICY

Maintain the character of established single-family neighborhoods, through adoption and enforcement of appropriate regulations.

REVISED POLICY

Maintain the scale and form of buildings in established residential neighborhoods through adoption of context-sensitive regulations.

- We changed “character” to “scale and form”
- We changed “single family neighborhoods” to “residential neighborhoods”
- We removed “enforcement” because that could result in displacement risks, and instead focused on solutions that were tailored to meet the needs of the community and supports allowing residents to stay in their homes as much as possible.

WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

40

Many of Bellingham's existing policies, especially in the housing chapter, need to be evaluated and amended to address racially disparate impacts in this way.