

THE BELLINGHAM PLAN



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Chapter Update Summary | November 2024





What the Community Said

These descriptions summarize the most common opinions we heard relevant to this chapter.

We want our neighborhoods to be more walkable, bikeable, “transit”able and “park”able with connections to the outdoors and activities. We also want to be close to services and jobs!

We need more living wage jobs! Wages have not kept up with housing prices.

Future high-speed rail is an opportunity for better connectivity throughout the region.

We need to make sure there is enough industrial land to protect jobs.

Remote work and other post-pandemic trends are not applicable to everyone, and people have all come out of it in different ways that make sense for them.

We should reduce barriers to allow community activity centers and cultural institutions in urban villages.

We need to diversify our economy and economic sectors.





Summary of Updates

We are proposing a variety of updates to our 2016 Comprehensive Plan. While the plan is divided into distinct chapters, there are updates that touch multiple chapters.

Here are the most significant updates related to economic development. These themes span multiple chapters beyond this one.

- >> Preparing for a future analysis of Bellingham's employment and our regional role
- >> A network of urban nodes connected by transit corridors
- >> Continuing investment in existing Urban Villages
 - >> Allowing small-scale businesses in all residential areas
- >> Adjusting what areas the city could grow into and planning long-term infrastructure needs.

Get a quick overview of the most significant updates we're proposing.

If you haven't yet, take a look at the [Summary of Proposed Updates](#). It describes the most significant updates we are proposing. We recommend viewing that the summary first, and then diving in here for more details on economic development.



Economic Development Chapter Draft Topics

Each blue box represents a topic that will later become a goal in the Economic Development Chapter. These will be the overarching goals for the City, with more specific policies to support them.

Proposed Goal Concepts

Regional Collaboration and Coordination

Coordinate and collaborate with partner organizations to promote living wage jobs.

Workforce Support

Encourage programs and priorities that support and sustain the Bellingham workforce.

Business-friendly Culture

Build and maintain a positive and competitive business-friendly culture in the public and private sectors.

Employment Lands and Supporting Infrastructure

Ensure sufficient employment lands and supporting infrastructure for a diverse mix of employment opportunities.



Walking through the Topics

Now, we'll walk through an overview of the proposed updates for each goal. Each bubble represents a concept within that goal. Each concept may become a single policy or several in the final document.

Existing Concept

This concept exists in the 2016 Comprehensive Plan already.

Some Updates

Either this concept will be emphasized more than in the current plan, or something minor is being changed about it.

New Concept/ Major Updates

This concept does not exist in the 2016 plan at all or will include significant changes.



This icon indicates this concept is related to state requirements or legislation.



Community Feedback

**As you learn about the concepts proposed in this chapter,
think about...**

**Is anything big
missing?**

**Are you excited or
concerned about any
of the ideas proposed
here?**



Regional
Collaboration
and
Coordination

Business
Friendly Culture

Workforce
Support

Employment
Lands and
Supporting
Infrastructure



Future employment study

Learning more about our future employment priorities, needs, and opportunities; regional study

Cascadia Corridor

Recognizing our place and role in the greater region

Coordinate and share resources
with regional partners

Partners include economic development organizations as well as major employers and educational institutions

Aid associations to promote
economic development and
tourism

Maintain and build relations with
the County, Port, and other cities

Support business start-up efforts

Support the Port's efforts for
Bellingham International Airport

Existing

Update

New



Regional
Collaboration
and
Coordination

Business Friendly
Culture

Workforce
Support

Employment
Lands and
Supporting
Infrastructure



Review regulations,
standards, and guidelines

Incentives to promote
economic development
activity and sustainable
business practices

Support access to working
capital for entrepreneurship

Community safety

Review economic impacts
of proposed legislation

Review and evaluate
permit processes

Support local employers

Support programs that
connect education to
industry

Existing

Update

New



Regional
Collaboration
and
Coordination

Business
Friendly Culture

Workforce
Support

Employment
Lands and
Supporting
Infrastructure



Recognizing childcare as an economic development priority

Recognizing the disparity between wages and housing costs

Childcare

Housing for the workforce

Support efforts to train workers

Expanded transportation options

City internships and job opportunities

Existing

Update

New



Regional
Collaboration
and
Coordination

Business
Friendly Culture

Workforce
Support

Employment
Lands and
Supporting
Infrastructure



Assess and manage supply of
employment lands

Reserve industrial zoning

Evaluate rezones for
employment impacts

Adequate infrastructure

Coordinating environmental
remediation

Remove barriers for
redevelopment

Urban Villages, especially the
City Center, as employment
centers

Existing

Update

New



Structural Changes

Are you familiar with the 2016 Comprehensive Plan and looking for a topic that was in that Economic Development Chapter?

It may be located in another part of the plan. The next few slides will show how the proposed updates relate to the 2016 Economic Development Chapter.





Economic Development Chapter: Existing Goals

The 2016 Comprehensive Plan Economic Development Chapter is organized around these 5 topics. Each one is written as a goal in the plan.

Business-Friendly
Climate

A Mix of
Employment and
Living Wage Jobs

Employment Lands
and Supporting
Infrastructure

Urban Villages

Quality of Life



Shifts out of Economic Development

Some concepts have been moved to other chapters in the proposed updates.

Business-Friendly
Climate

A Mix of
Employment and
Living Wage Jobs

Employment Lands
and Supporting
Infrastructure

Urban Villages

Quality of Life

Land Use Chapter

New Community
Wellbeing Chapter





Shifts within Economic Development

Other concepts have been shifted or split between each of the proposed goals.

2016 Plan Topics

