

THE BELLINGHAM PLAN



LAND USE

Chapter Update Summary | November 2024





What the Community Said

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

We should develop more around our transit corridors and in our Urban Villages. More transit service over time will be important.

We need more mixed-use neighborhoods.

Some small businesses would be great in our residential neighborhoods, but we are worried about parking and noise impacts.

It is important to be able to walk (or sometimes bike or bus) to some essential places, especially for groceries and other food.

New commercial areas or Urban Villages could help fill gaps in the community, especially in the north part of the city.

We are worried about expanding into and removing natural areas if our city boundaries increase.

We want to make sure that the changes to our residential areas are equitable and affect all neighborhoods similarly.



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 land use. These themes span multiple chapters beyond this one.

- >> Inclusive and equitable citywide planning
- >> More middle housing like triplexes and townhomes
- >> Transit corridors connecting urban nodes
- >> Future process to plan transit corridors
- >> Allowing small-scale businesses in all residential areas
- >> 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 land use.



Land Use Chapter Draft Topics

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

Proposed Topics

Limiting Sprawl

Limit urban sprawl & cluster growth in compact, walkable/transitable areas.

Urban Growth Area & Annexation

Intentionally plan any future changes to the city's boundary.

Urban Villages

Foster vibrant urban villages.

Transit Corridors

Encourage growth and transit service to grow together.

Land Use Mix

Ensure a variety of land uses to support future needs.

Complete Neighborhoods

Promote neighborhoods complete with housing, gathering spaces, goods and services.



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?**



Limiting Sprawl

Urban Growth Area & Annexation

Urban Villages

Transit Corridors

Land Use Mix

Complete Neighborhoods



Land area to meet targets

Growth strategy: Urban Villages and transit corridors between them

Cluster near facilities/amenities (efficient use of resources, preserve nature)

Preservation of land outside UGAs

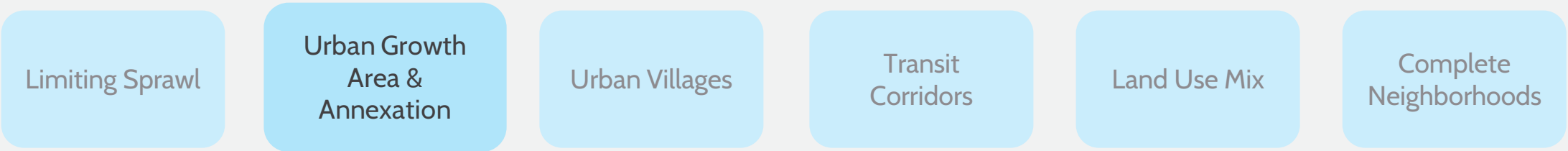
Watershed protection

UGAs (Urban Growth Areas) are the areas that the city could grow into.

Existing

Update

New



UGA planning coordination

Including coordination of services, infrastructure, and open space corridors

Financial analysis for future annexations

Ensuring that annexations are considered holistically as well as individually

Process for changes to UGA

Annexation priorities and process

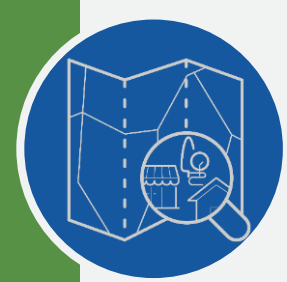
Conditions of annexation

Ensuring that future annexation areas are able to provide needed infrastructure and land use mixes

Existing

Update

New



Limiting Sprawl

Urban Growth Area & Annexation

Urban Villages

Transit Corridors

Land Use Mix

Complete Neighborhoods



Mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented, and vibrant

Each Urban Village planned individually and monitored

Incentivizing and coordinating development in Urban Villages

City Center as core center

Identification priorities for future Urban Villages

Filling community gaps, transit accessibility, options in the north part of the city

Existing

Update

New



Limiting Sprawl

Urban Growth Area & Annexation

Urban Villages

Transit Corridors

Land Use Mix

Complete Neighborhoods



Renewed emphasis

Transit as connections between Urban Villages and important destinations

Clustering commercial uses and focusing pedestrian improvements in these areas

Smaller nodes along transit at major stops (transit-oriented development)

Development of land use plans along frequent transit

*Planning with all, not just one, of the following:
Frequent transit, adequate development density, enhanced pedestrian environment, and balanced parking*

Coordinated planning in these corridors

Clearly defining when land use or transit leads the other

Investing in set frequent transit routes; coordinating other, more fluid transit with land use

Avoiding auto-oriented strip development

Existing

Update

New



Limiting Sprawl

Urban Growth Area & Annexation

Urban Villages

Transit Corridors

Land Use Mix

Complete Neighborhoods



Emphasis of alignment with economic and community needs

Monitoring and updating land supply in alignment with economy and needs

Shifting all existing definitions here

Definitions of each land use designation

Adjusting residential definitions to reflect a gradient between “house-scale” residential and high density residential; allowing small-scale commercial throughout this gradient

HB 1110 (2023)



Encouraging public amenities in large private projects

Reserving and separating industrial land

HB 1220 (2021) + HB 1923 (2019)

Allowing transitional housing, permanent supportive housing, emergency housing, and emergency shelters more broadly across the city;



Encouraging an equitable distribution across the city

Support for human services and service-enriched housing spread across the city

Planning near the airport

- Existing
- Update
- New



Limiting Sprawl

Urban Growth Area & Annexation

Urban Villages

Transit Corridors

Land Use Mix

Complete Neighborhoods



Limiting barriers to introducing uses that are missing and needed in some areas but present in other similar areas

This policy exists already to help build community, foster small businesses, and reduce reliance on cars, but the "Land Use Mix" goal will more clearly define where these uses will be allowed outright.

Additional detail to the first concept; Aligned with community interest to limit individual use size, number of commercial uses in an area, hours of operation, and impacts like noise

Applies to both residential and commercial uses, aligned with community input

Encouraging uses facing public spaces that activate them and make them more vibrant and enjoyable

Equitable mix of uses

Small-scale commercial uses promotion

Limit size, density, and operation of small commercial uses in residential areas

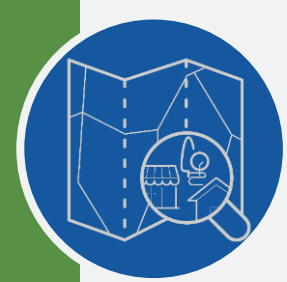
Flexibility in size and uses along arterials and near Urban Villages and amenities

Activation of public spaces

Existing

Update

New



Limiting Sprawl

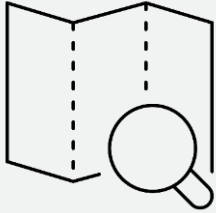
Urban Growth Area & Annexation

Urban Villages

Transit Corridors

Land Use Mix

Complete Neighborhoods



The future land use map also lives in this chapter

This map guides zoning across the city. The below outlines the major updates anticipated for it.

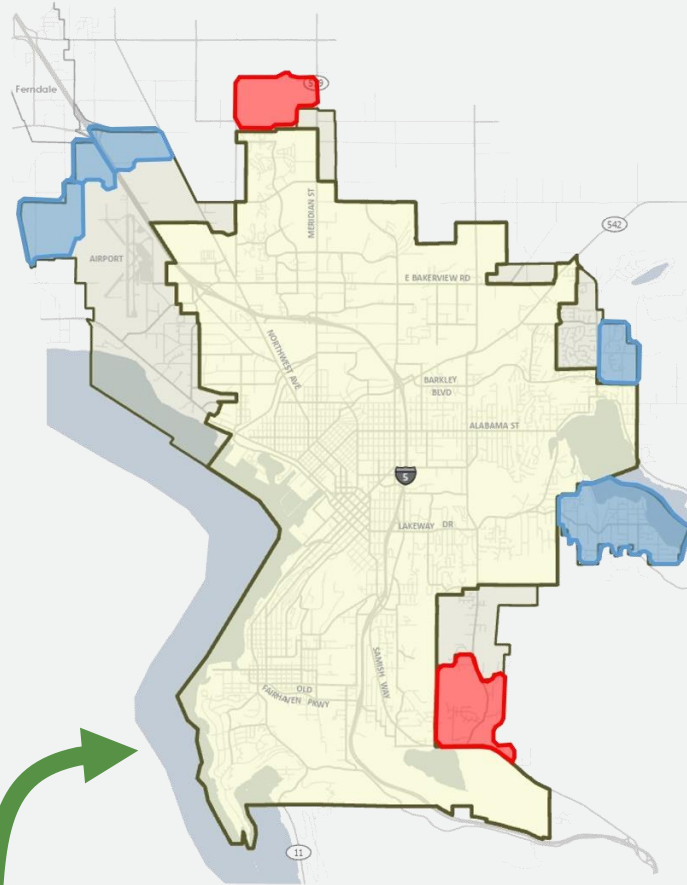


Reflect growth strategy updates outlined in previous slides

Consolidation of Residential Single and Multi areas into new residential range

Identification of transit corridor connections as area for future study

Potential changes to the UGA (Urban Growth Area)



- Current city boundary
- UGA (to remain)
- Reserve areas to consider adding to UGA
- UGA to consider shifting to reserve area

This map shows updates under consideration for the UGA (the area into which the city can grow) and the UGA Reserve (the next round of areas for evaluation to become part of the UGA).

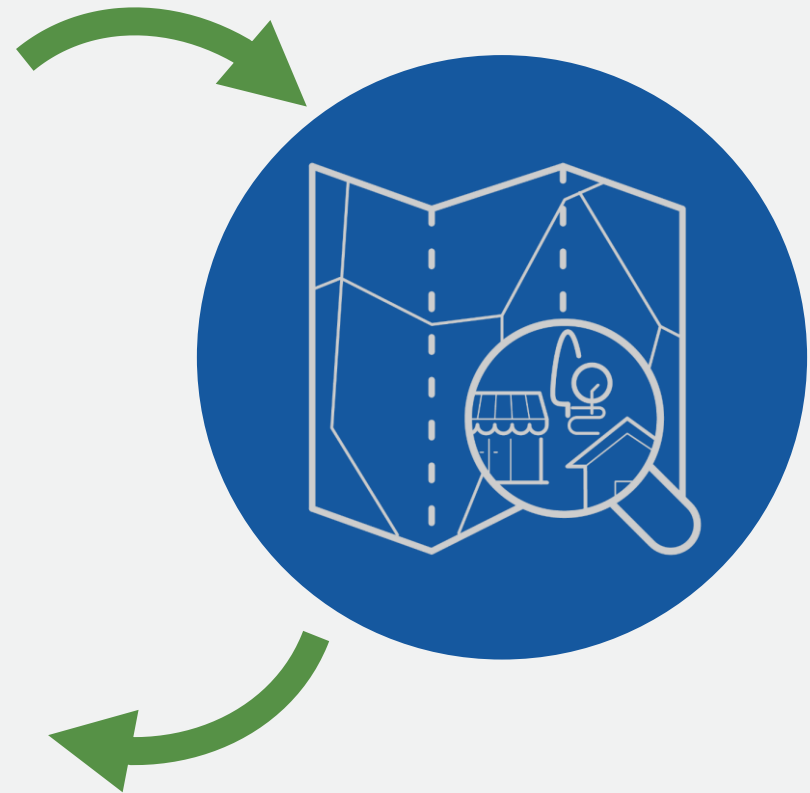
- Existing
- Update
- New



Structural Changes

Are you familiar with the 2016 Comprehensive Plan and looking for a topic that was in that Land Use 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 Land Use Chapter.





2016 Land Use Chapter Topics

The 2016 Comprehensive Plan Land Use Chapter is organized around these 7 topics. Each one is written as a goal in the plan.

Residential
Development

Urban Villages
& Transit Corridors

Commercial
and Industrial
Development

Public and
Institutional
Development

Urban Growth
Area &
Annexation

Public
Participation

Sustainable
Land Use

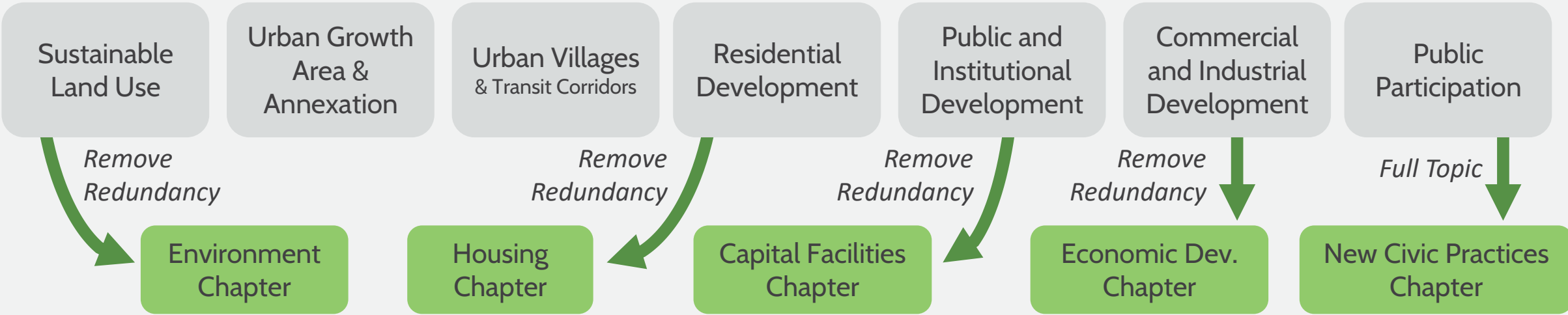
**Note: The future land use map is also
located in this chapter**



Shifts out of Land Use Chapter

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

Note: The current topics have been rearranged here to better align with the proposed topic order.





Shifts within the Land Use Chapter

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

2016 Plan Topics

