

Project Scope

Updates to the plan will focus on changes that...

Build upon what is valued today

- » Outdoor recreation and opportunities to explore nature
- » Convenient access to friends and family, a variety of activities, services, and more
- » Small and local businesses
- » Vibrant and unique places
- » Mitigation of climate change contributions/GHG emissions
- » Connections to Bellingham's full range of historic periods

Respond to changed conditions

- » Expanded capacity for housing and jobs to meet expected 20-year growth
- » Planning for increased telework to jobs based both in Bellingham and elsewhere
- » Health resilience and accommodation
- » Housing affordable to all income bands (HB 1220), especially those aligned with local employment
- » Integrated and comprehensive approach to address gaps in housing and human services
- » Approaches to assist vulnerable populations struggling with mental health and addiction issues
- » Climate resilience and adaptation (HB 1181)
- » A range of housing types to support current and future residents' housing needs, including a diversification of middle scale housing with larger units (HB 1110, HB 1337)
- » Land use investment in planned transit network improvements
- » Potential annexation and/or changes to the UGA boundary

Aspire to a brighter future

- » A safe and welcoming environment
- » A healthy community, physically and mentally
- » Economic vitality, business diversification, and living-wage jobs
- » An active community that is informed and engaged on a range of city issues
- » Gathering places of varied types and sizes across the city
- » An accessible, diverse, equitable, and inclusive community (ADEI)

Increase the legibility of the plan for a broad range of audiences

- » Document simplification and usability improvements
- » Links between related topics
- » Online interaction in addition to traditional printable format

What's Missing?

What topics aren't covered in the scope? What would you like staff to incorporate or consider in this update?

On legibility, I'd love to see more city ID/gis features/ layers available to the public.



A focus on TOD/ increasing transit options

No mention of unduly RDIs

Public Safety without law enforcement
Mental health services disconnected from police.

Electric buses

Expanded public transport system. More separated bike lanes, reliable bus system.

I think climate resilience/adaptation should be its own topic and more defined than vague

It is working
How does the city adapt?

Expanding the UGA should not be included in the scope. We can't lose any more farmland for sprawl.

Consider Disabled Voices

Consider neurodivergent Voices

Consider LGBTQ Voices

Consider Trans Voices

I think this is climate mitigation and adaptation can and should be woven into all aspects of city development and operation. What are we doing, and how can we be better as a community (climate mitigation)?

Recognition of Bham's racist history, efforts to make bham feel safer for POC folk

Consider BIPOC Voices

Consider homeless Voices

More communal housing/ spaces/ organizations

openness to community engagement (clubs/leagues/orgs)

Recognition of Bellingham's history as a Sandown town

Funded community garden to allow for food sovereignty (especially for POC as bare minimum reparations)

Along w/ housing, better public transport outside of the downtown - WWU pipeline. Students can't access housing outside of the 15 min from campus (w/ cars (classes))

Homes housing issues

Project Scope: Cross-topic Themes

Private Property

What do you hope for Bellingham related to this topic?

What is the biggest barrier to getting there?



Accessibility, Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (ADEI)

Creating BIPOC Spaces that are safe
 Improving sidewalks
 Replacing policing and incarceration with more equitable alternatives

Knowing the difference between Segregation and Separation
 City just trying to "include" historically disempowered groups rather than providing resources to initiatives led by these groups
 The whatcom county Council does not incorporate accessibility, diversity, equity, or inclusion principles in their work



Climate Mitigation & Resilience

Building edible foodscapes into the urban fabric
 No pesticide/chemical sprays allowed?
 Regenerative Agriculture programs (Carbon sequestration)
 Investing in sustainable housing - renewable powered!!!

Convincing stakeholders & taxpayers that this goal is achievable and worth the \$
 Getting leaders to support implementation
 Oil Companies
 Paradigm shift



Economic Vitality

Jobs!
 Redistribution of wealth & more unionized jobs
 Jobs in science for entry level
 Versatility of jobs ranging outside Vets/Volunteer
 Science jobs within 30 minute drive
 Continuing to focus on workers needs and concerns as well as small business

Anti-union management, discriminatory practices
 Employment discrimination particularly surrounding disability
 Companies "hiring" (not actually hiring)
 Not enough jobs available.
 High competition for minimum wage jobs



Housing Options & Affordability

Rent Control
 More units, as many as possible
 Legalize single-stair apt. buildings (see Larch/Lark)
 Leasing rights, more middle housing
 more short term/emergency housing
 more communal housing
 Accessible Housing
 Landlord Accountability
 Holding bad landlords accountable (not to challenge unfair practices)
 Middle housing, rent control
 Zoning laws, money, high demand
 Large property management companies
 Housing managers, rent hikes and low housing quality
 Abuse housing companies/leaders/owners



Public Health & Safety

Free health clinics that are welcoming to all, with translators on site
 mental health and addiction services
 Updating/renewing safety of crosswalks - lighting, area, bus stops
 Free STI testing
 Free mental health services
 HPV shots for men too! lets end cervical cancer
 Free gender affirming care

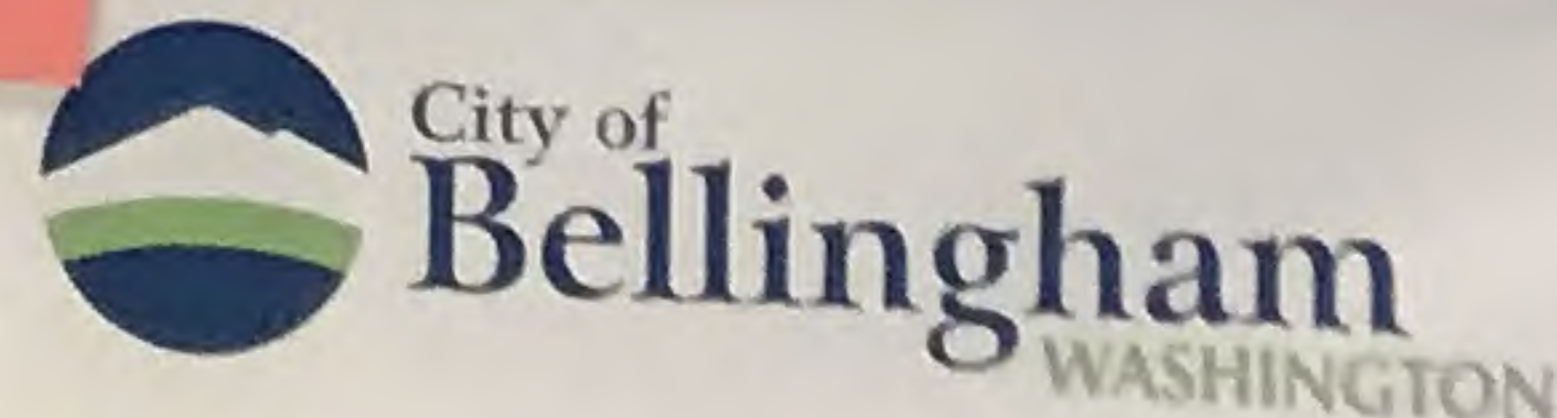
Lack of state funding
 Lack of free/public third places
 Gentrification
 Mounting Environmental Responsibility
 Shift Residents only to avoid more commercial, retail, more community centers

Vibrant & Unique Places

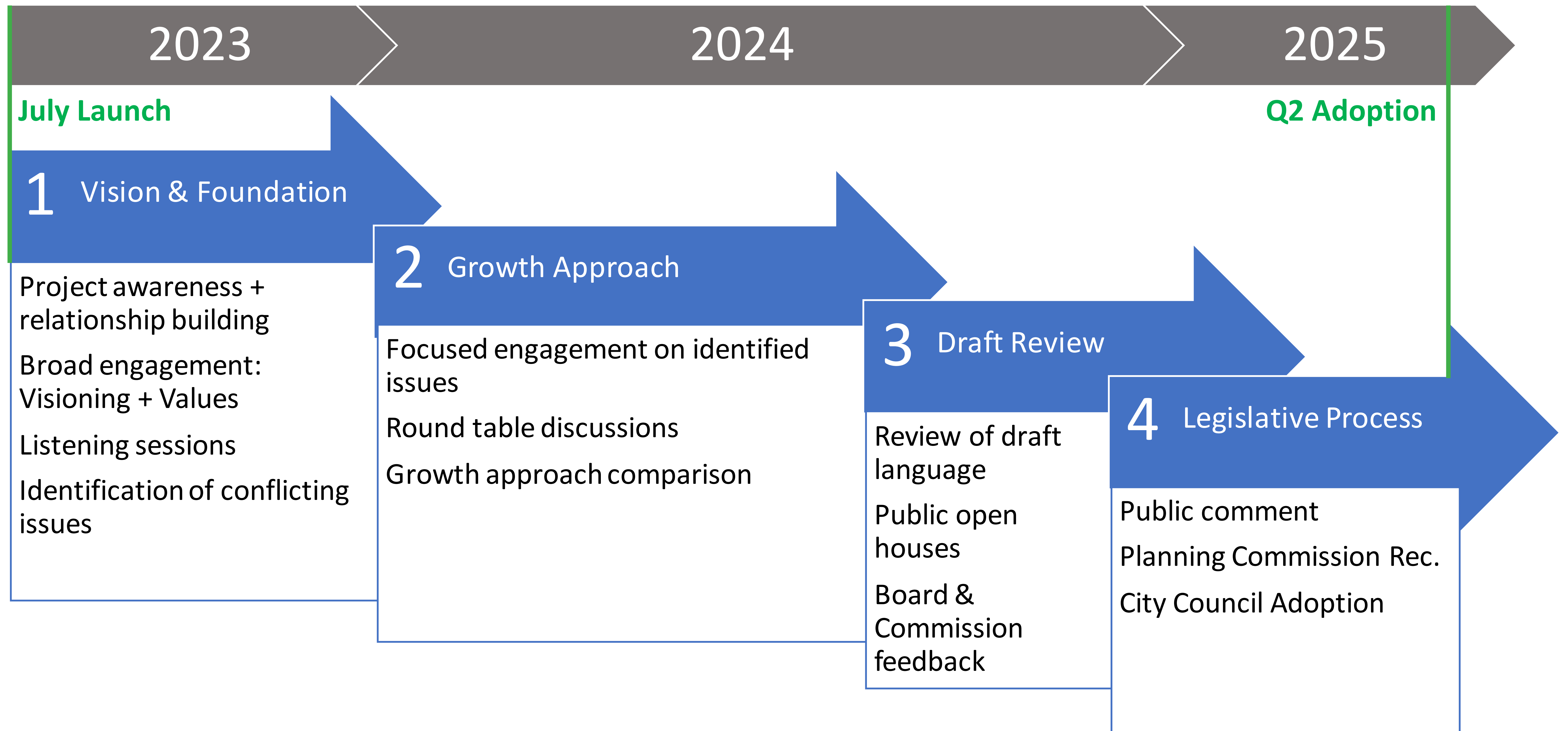
cool new meeting places, like arotelium
 Unique moments place in Bellingham would be nice
 Continued support of local owned businesses
 Park on a hillside like San Francisco
 Public place w/o profit
 Pursuing Historic Locations (main roads)

Boardwalk connecting Fair Haven to Downtown

The Bellingham Plan

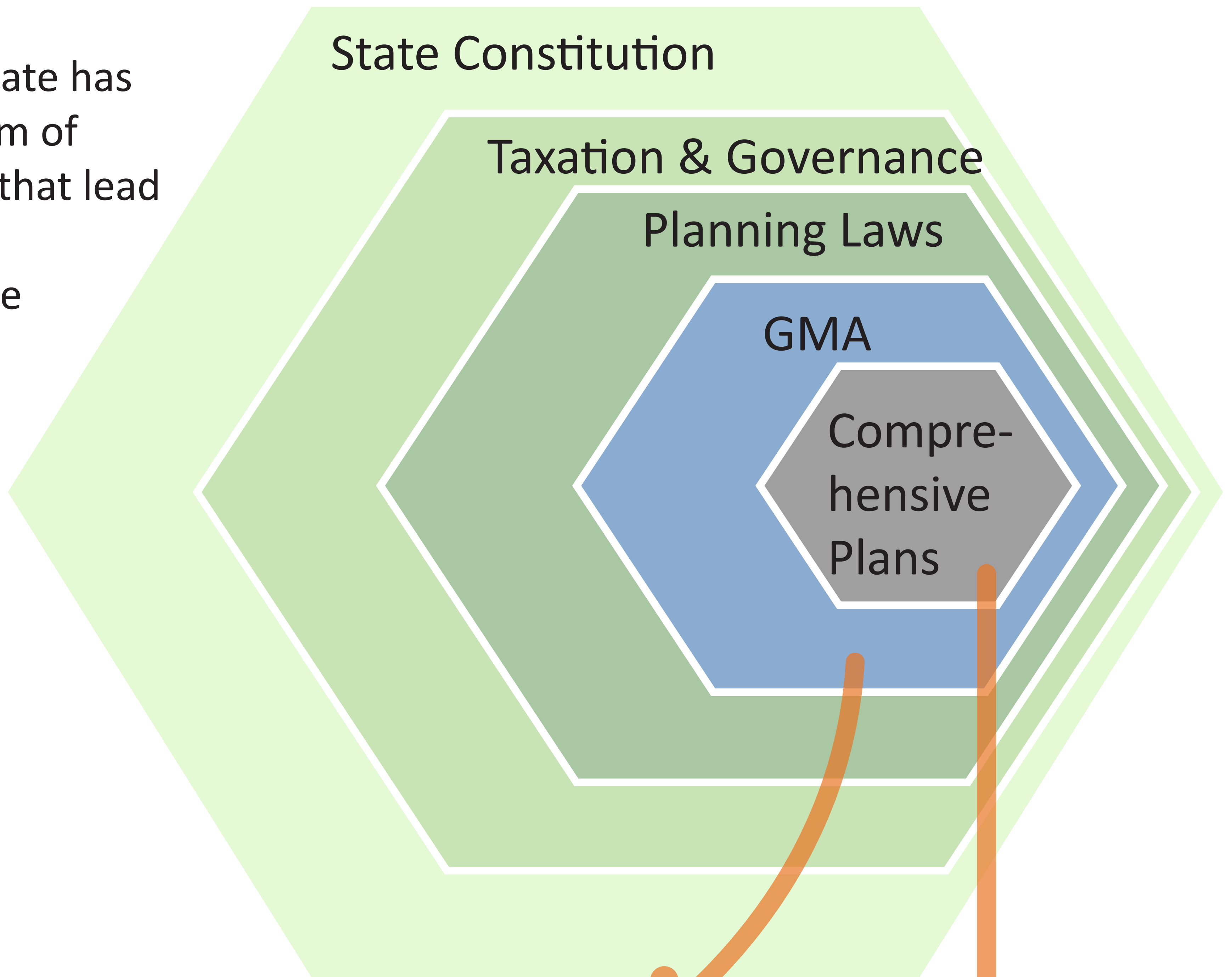


Project Schedule: Engagement

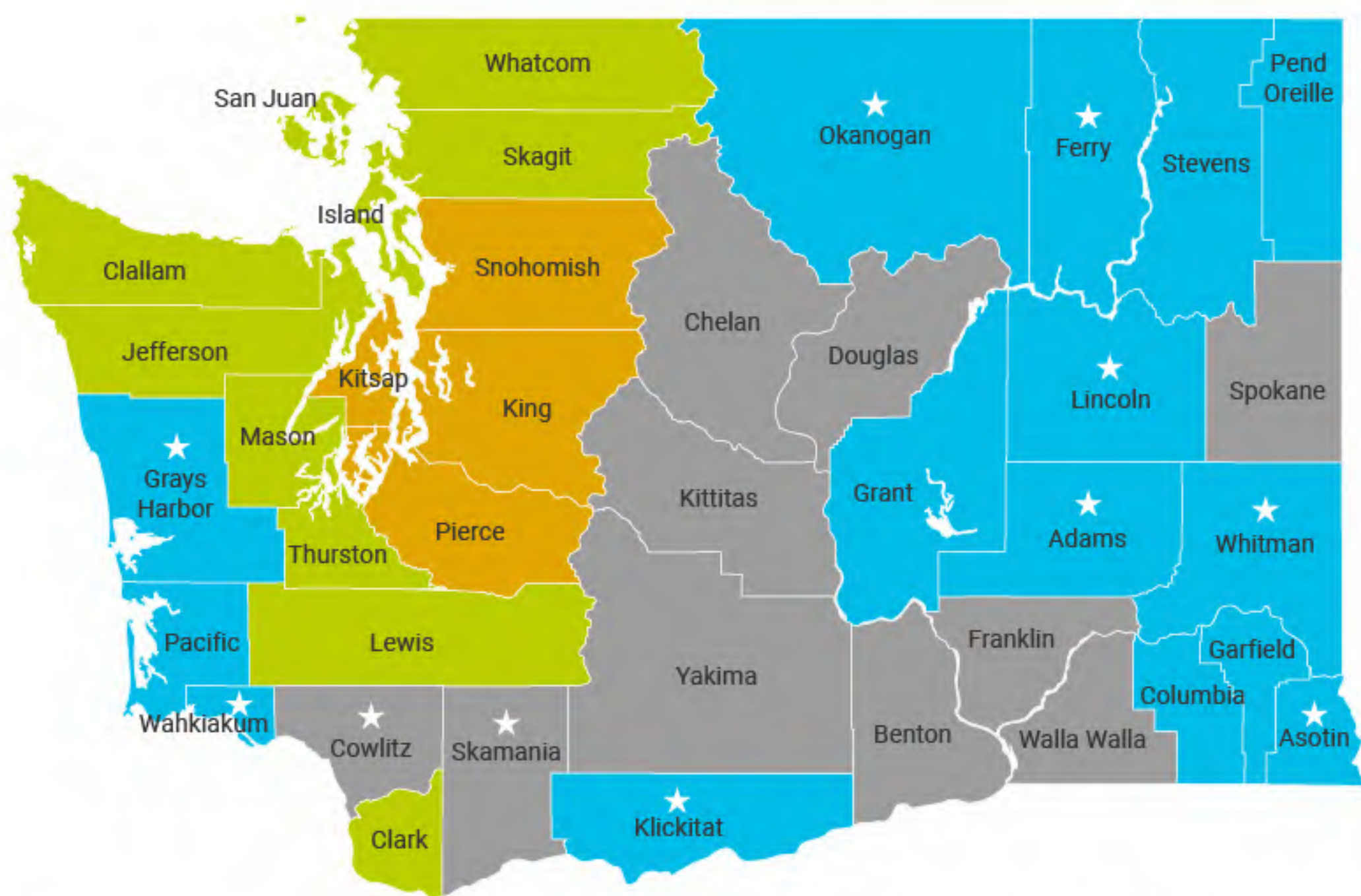


State Planning Framework

Washington State has a nested system of planning laws that lead to local Comprehensive Plans.



Growth Management Act (GMA)



2024 Due December 31st 2025 Due June 30th 2026 Due June 30th 2027 Due June 30th

★ Starred counties are partially planning under the Growth Management Act

The Periodic Update applies to each area in turn

The Bellingham Plan

The Bellingham Plan represents the Periodic Update to the City's Comprehensive Plan, which is required every 10 years in the GMA

Growth Management

We plan for growth because...

People are going to move here. People and jobs are shifting to urban areas all over the world, and Bellingham is particularly appealing to many. When we plan for this growth intentionally:



Natural lands outside the city are protected from increased development, and the required infrastructure and transportation impacts are more efficiently located within the city.



Real estate prices are stabilized rather than heightened by increased demand on the existing supply. Displacement of existing residents is limited.



Infrastructure like transportation and utilities can be designed for that growth rather than overloaded by unplanned sprawl.



Public benefits like open space or affordable housing can be included.

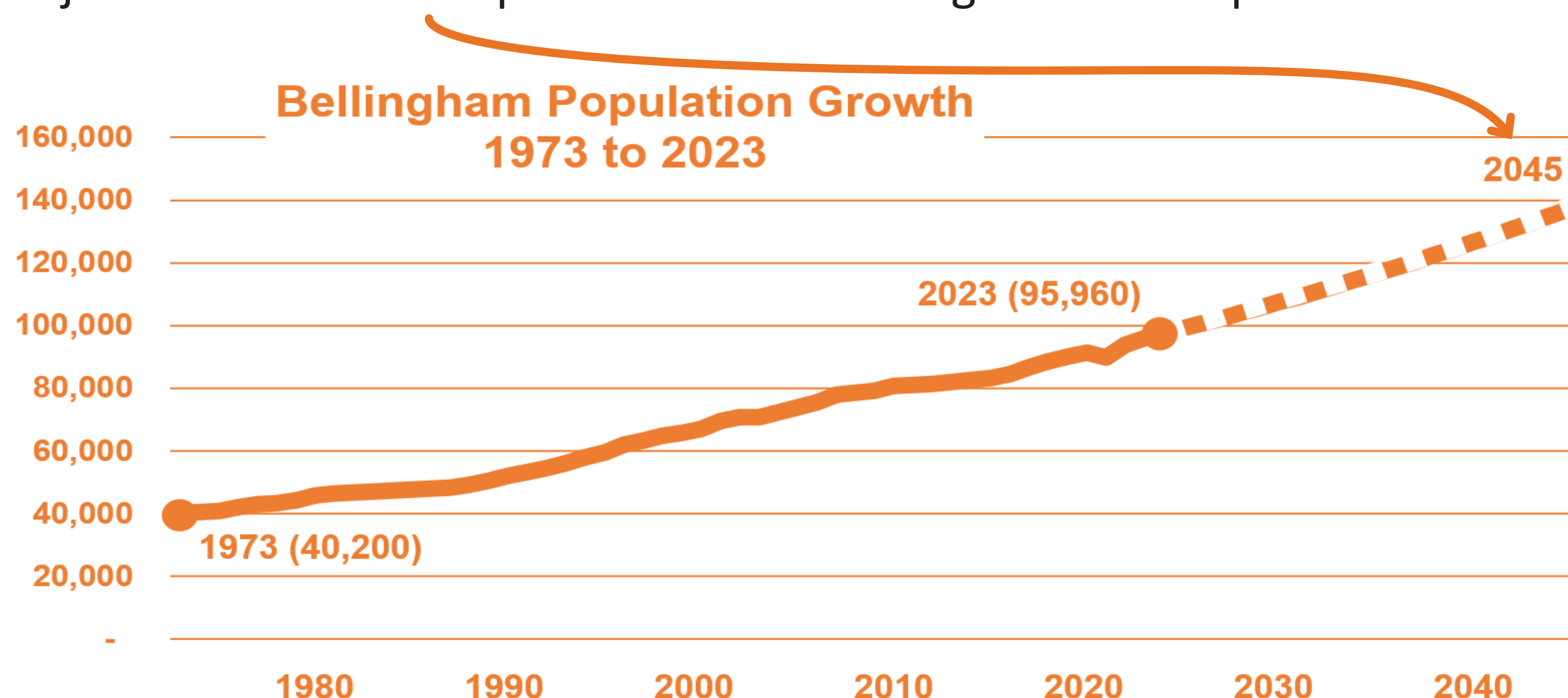


Our vision for Bellingham can be realized.

Therefore, the State requires growth management.

The process includes several steps to guide planning decisions.

- 1 The State (OFM) continually projects population growth over the next 30 years.
- 2 Ahead of the required Periodic Update, the State distributes the 20-year growth forecast to each County. Whatcom's 2045 forecast is 292,714 people, a similar but slightly increased rate of growth to that seen in the last 20 years.
- 3 The Cities within Whatcom County will collaborate to distribute this anticipated growth between jurisdictions. This represents Whatcom's growth extrapolated to Bellingham.



- 4 The Bellingham Plan update will plan for Bellingham's allocated 20-year growth projection.

Let's plan together to create a vision for Bellingham's future.

State Legislation



Legislation passed in recent years at the state level impacts the Bellingham Plan. See June 5th City Council presentation for details.

HB 1220 (2021) - “Housing for All”

This bill changed the way housing planning happens across WA, especially:

- » Redefining housing projections by income band and emergency housing types such as shelters
- » Requiring jurisdictions to plan for and accommodate those projections (62% of Whatcom County’s allocated units fall below 80% of the Area Median Income)
- » Requiring identification and addressing racially disparate impacts of existing housing policies

HB 1181 (2023) - Climate

This bill increased planning requirements related to climate change and resiliency, such as:

- » Adding a climate change element
- » Adding emissions reduction and resiliency sub-elements
- » Increasing requirements related to emissions and vehicles miles traveled (VMT)

HB 1110 (2023) - “Middle Housing”

This bill requires jurisdictions like Bellingham to allow the following:

- » At least four units per lot on residential lots
- » An additional two units per lot if affordable
- » At least six units per lot near transit like the Amtrak station
- » Only administrative design review based on objective standards

HB 1337 (2023) - ADUs

This bill is focused on limiting barriers to accessory dwelling unit (ADU) development. It has already been addressed by recent Bellingham legislation with changes such as:

- » Allowing two attached or detached ADUs per lot
- » Allowing ADUs up to 1000 square feet in size and up to 24’ in height
- » Prohibiting more stringent design review for ADUs than for single family residential structures
- » Prohibiting owner occupancy requirements (not in effect in Bellingham until HB 1337 applies)



Chapters of the Plan

- **Land Use**

This chapter guides growth by establishing the future land uses across the city. The Land Use Map at right guides these permitted land uses (such as are defined in the zoning code).

- **Community Design**

This chapter recognizes the community's desires to retain features that make neighborhoods unique and improve the livability of the built environment as the community grows.

- **Housing**

This chapter contains an analysis of existing housing in Bellingham and policies to support future housing needs. This chapter may be expanded to include human services topics.

- **Multi-modal Transportation**

This chapter includes an analysis of the existing transportation system and projections of future needs including alternative modes, such as walking, bicycling and transit systems.

- **Economic Development**

This chapter highlights the City's commitment to create a vibrant, sustainable economy and identifies the City's role in economic development activity. It includes characteristics of the local economy and employment sectors.

- **Environment**

This chapter implements the vision of Bellingham as a city with treasured natural features. This chapter may be expanded to "Climate and the Environment" or a new Climate Change chapter may be created.

- **Parks, Recreation, and Open Space**

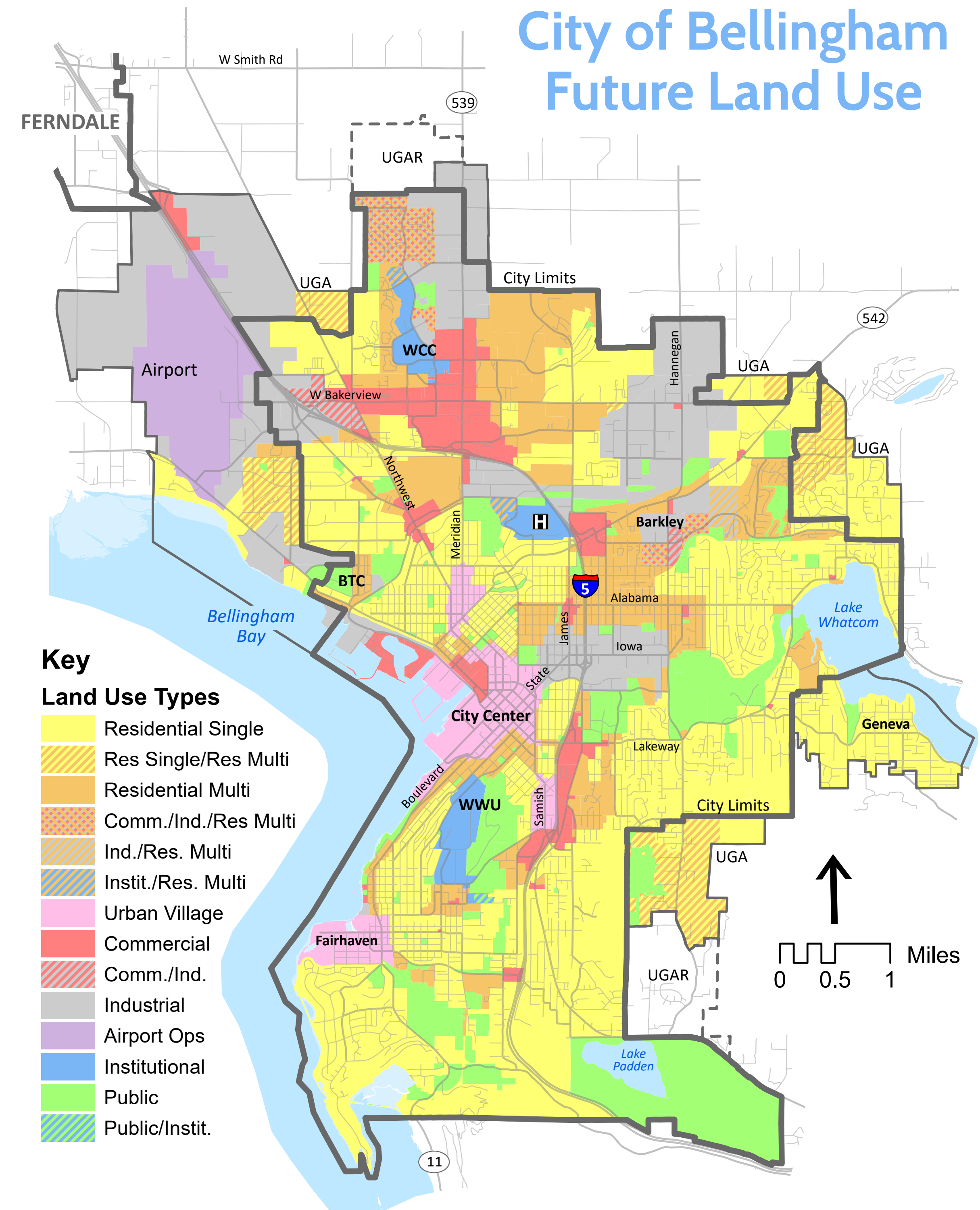
This chapter includes an inventory and level of service standards for existing and proposed facilities, and projections for future needs. This chapter is a functional plan and will be updated shortly after the rest of the plan.

- **Capital Facilities and Utilities**

This chapter contains a description of existing public facilities and services and includes projections of future needs for facilities and services.

New chapters under consideration:

- » *Climate Change and Resiliency (or incorporation into Environment Chapter)*
- » *Community/Public Engagement*
- » *Human Services (or incorporation into Housing Chapter)*



» The above map has been simplified from that referenced by the Comprehensive Plan. Additional detail is included in the Neighborhood Land Use Maps available online.

Recent Comprehensive Plan Updates

While the Comprehensive Plan is updated annually in minor ways, the larger Periodic Update occurs once a decade as outlined below. This one is due in mid-2025.

2006 Update

Drivers going in

- » Growing city
- » Constrained land supply
- » Changing economic base
- » Infrastructure challenges



Changes resulting from it

- » Urban Village framework, including Samish Way
- » Neighborhood infill strategy
- » Waterfront Vision incorporation
- » Concurrency Management



Photo Credit: Jeff Barclay



Samish Way Urban Village (2022 Pictometry Image)



Photo Credit: Robin Eldore

2016 Update

Drivers going in

- » Increasing housing costs and disparity
- » Equity and Accountability
- » Active community interest
- » Legibility concerns



Changes resulting from it

- » Homelessness & housing for unique groups focus
- » Sustainability framework
- » Healthy lifestyle additions
- » Document Accessibility



Photo Credit: Lauren McClanahan



Photo Credit: Anya Gedrath



Photo Credit: Rita Fox

Bellingham's Climate Action

The City of Bellingham is committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and increasing the resiliency of our community to prepare for the coming impacts of climate change that we are already experiencing. Our climate work is guided by the city's Climate Action Plan.

Timeline of Recent Climate-Related Engagement

2017 - 2018

Outreach to community interest groups and a public hearing regarding Climate Action Plan update

2018 - 2019

Climate Task Force meetings open to the public, with subject specific meetings and a City Council public hearing

2019 - 2023

Climate workplan presentations to Council

2023

Engaged community members on discussions of three main topic areas: transportation electrification, building electrification, and renewable energy

Current Workplan Programs Include Approaches To:

- » Increase the use of electric vehicles
- » Reduce emissions in homes and other buildings
- » Plan and respond to extreme heat and wildfires
- » Assess risk for sea level and storm surge
- » Create and buy renewable energy
- » Consider community resilience facilities
- » Coordinate with other stakeholders across all sectors

How does this relate to "The Bellingham Plan?"

Consistent with House Bill 1181, signed into law in 2023, the City will be updating The Bellingham Plan to include a climate element (the most recently added mandatory element). This climate element will include goals and policies that:

- Focus on resiliency – improving climate preparedness, response, and recovery efforts
- Maximize economic, environmental, and social co-benefits and prioritize environmental justice
- Reduce overall emissions and vehicle miles traveled

*Learn more about the City's Climate Action Plan at cob.org/climate
Contact Seth Vidaña, Climate and Energy Manager, for additional questions:
savidana@cob.org*

We want to know

COST OF LIVING

Housing Insecurity

Parking

Living expenses

- Gas
- housing
- food
- etc

Parking

Lack of job opportunities for students

What are the biggest challenges facing students in Bellingham?

Food prices

Poor Housing conditions + cost

Food deserts

Housing cost
Housing access
Housing quality

Housing Insecurity

Cost of living, for sure

Housing/grocery costs

getting to places that aren't far away or downtown via bus, most our maps are 1 hour so we have to

Police

Transportation + Rent

Parking/nutrient dense food accessibility

Lack of affordable housing/general cost

Lack of dependence, lack of fun for fourth

Expensive housing! Rents going up faster than my wages. Extremely bleak prospects of buying home here in my future.

Housing Cost Too High

Housing Costs

Housing cost

Housing cost predatory landlords

Transportation/bus routes + protected bike lanes

Abusive Landlords

Correlation on economic issues related to housing insecurity and availability

Lack of Affordable Housing

Discrimination

Housing cost/insecurity

Please let me swipe people in even w/o unlimited meal plan

Mental Health

No support for renter issues/ Rent increases

Parking!!!

price of food

Housing costs

Housing dignity and affordability
- lack of code enforcement
- exploitative landlords

Difficult landlords + housing companies who take advantage of students as first-time renters

What are the best things about Bellingham for students?

Environment

(Mostly) LGBTQ+ Friendly

accessibility

rent increases

Fairly Walkable

Public Transit

7p water + transit

Access to outdoors and night life

Public Transit

WTA public transportation - good

Public transit, local nature

Public transportation

The community and access to resources is amazing! Also there is a really wonderful sense of community.

Night life community walkability

Robust bus system

Food Insecurity

Health/Mental care (affordable)

Lots of hiking nearby!

Environment Restoration program

Bus system

Fairly good transit

Night Hiking areas

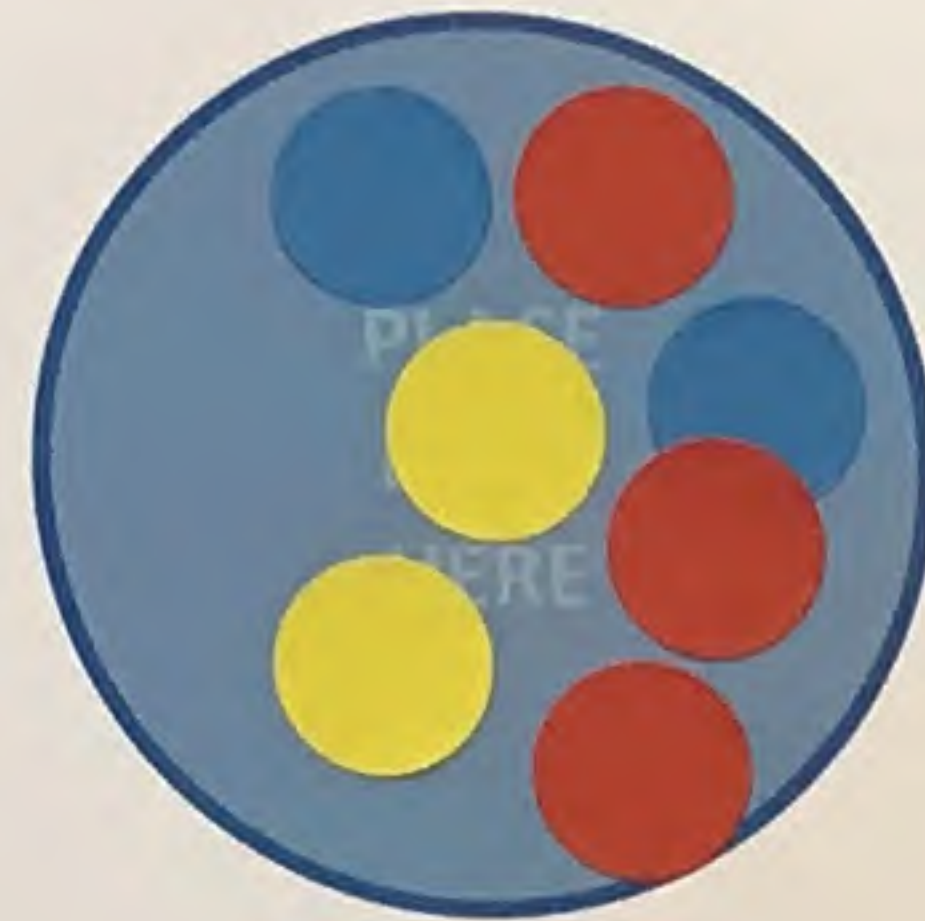
Student Amenities

Which of the following amenities are most important to have near campus? Place a dot on your top **three** preferences.



Grocery Store/Market

With fresh produce, dairy, bakery, pharmacy, convenience items.



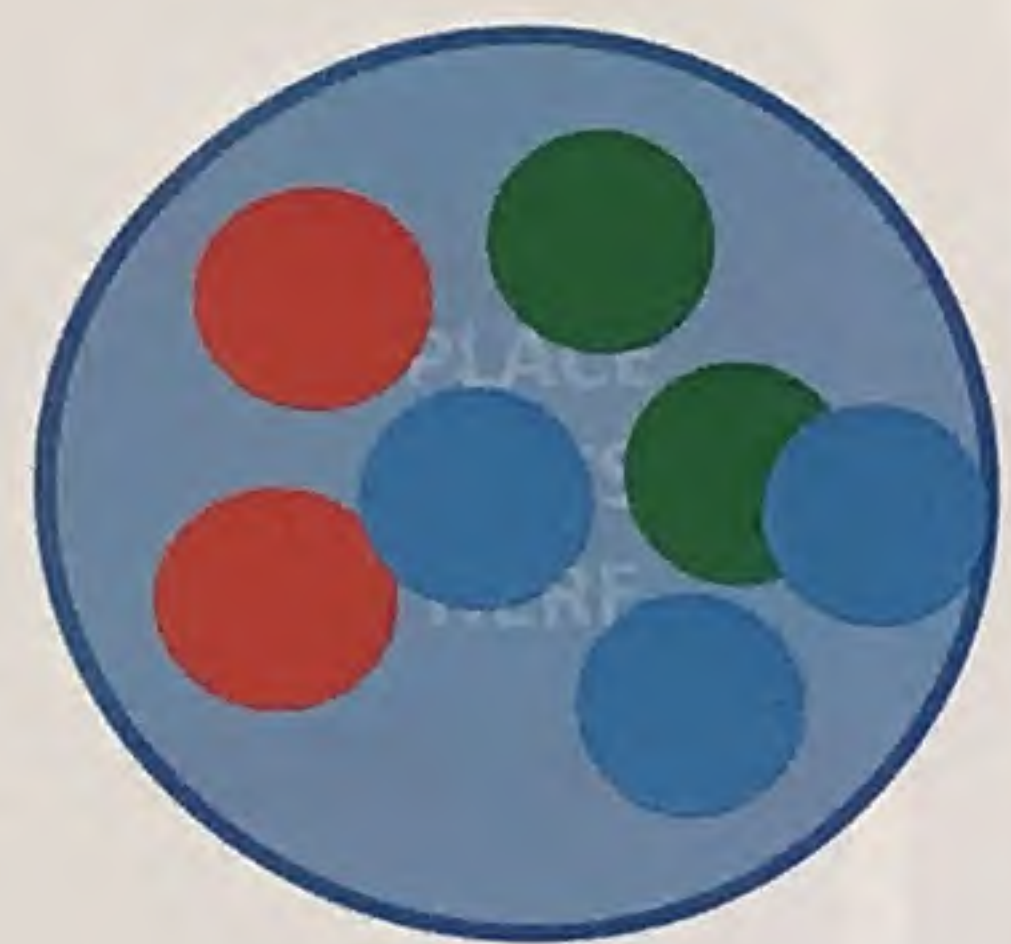
Retail Stores/Services

New or second-hand clothing, bike shops, books, drugstore/personal care, banking, services.



Doctor/Clinic

Primary care, specialty care, therapy, walk-in.



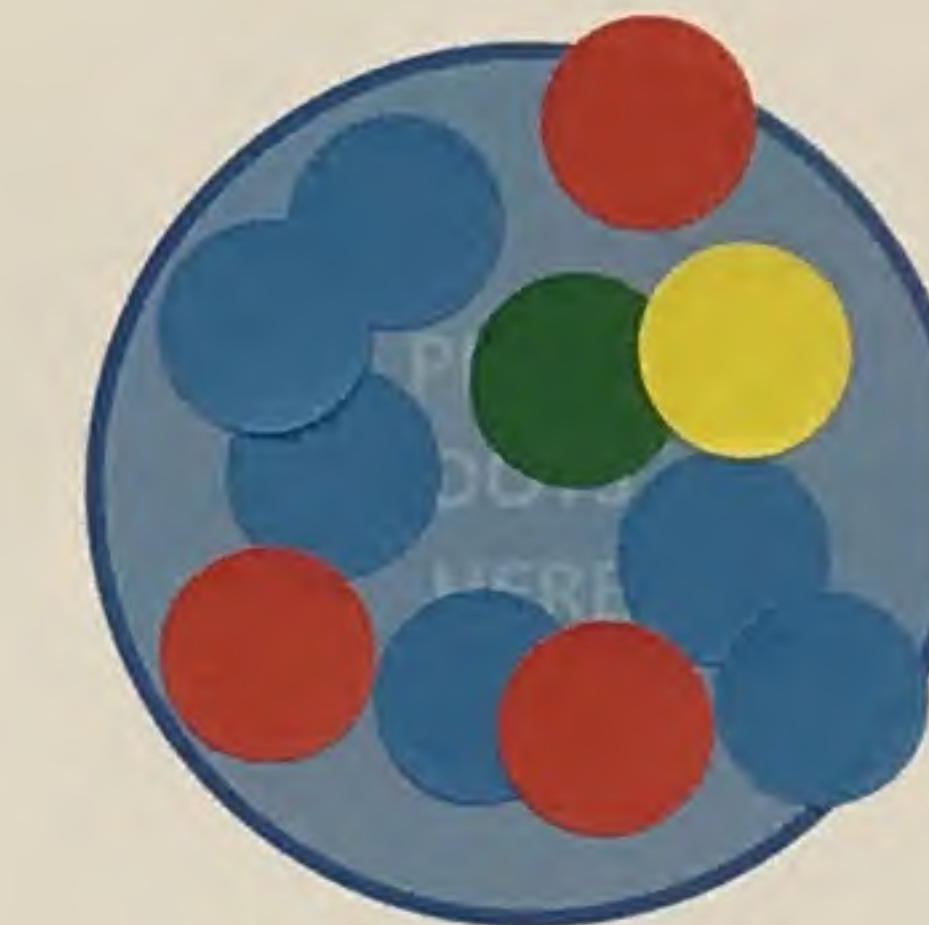
Cafe

Coffee, tea, baked goods, indoor and/or outdoor seating, WiFi.



Religious Organization

Church, Synagogue, or similar faith-based community supportive of students.



Arts and Cultural Spaces

Theatre, cultural activities, other entertainment



Restaurant

Counter-service or sit-down, with indoor and/or outdoor seating.



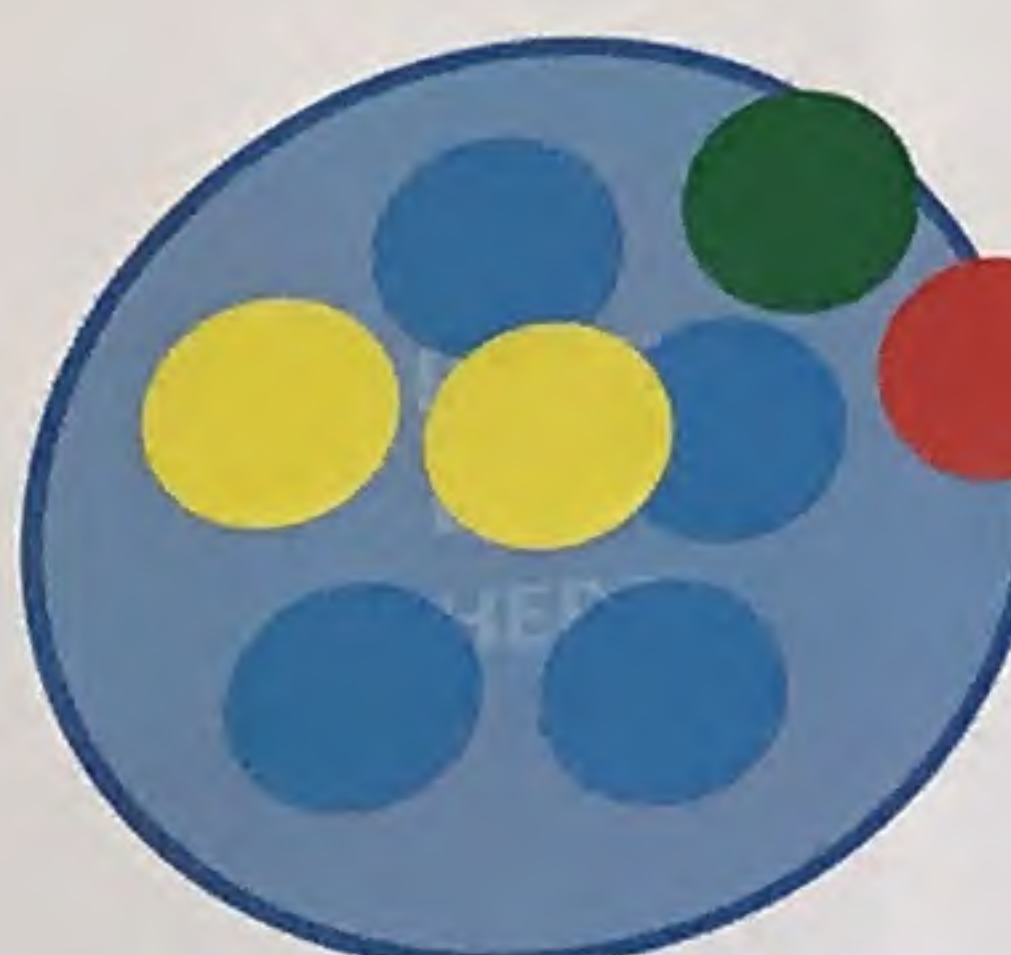
Community Garden

Assigned/reservable or common plots.



Childcare/Petcare

Full and/or partial day options.



Food Truck Plaza/Village

With shared outdoor seating.



Athletic Business

Gym, courts, pool, yoga, spinning, climbing, etc.

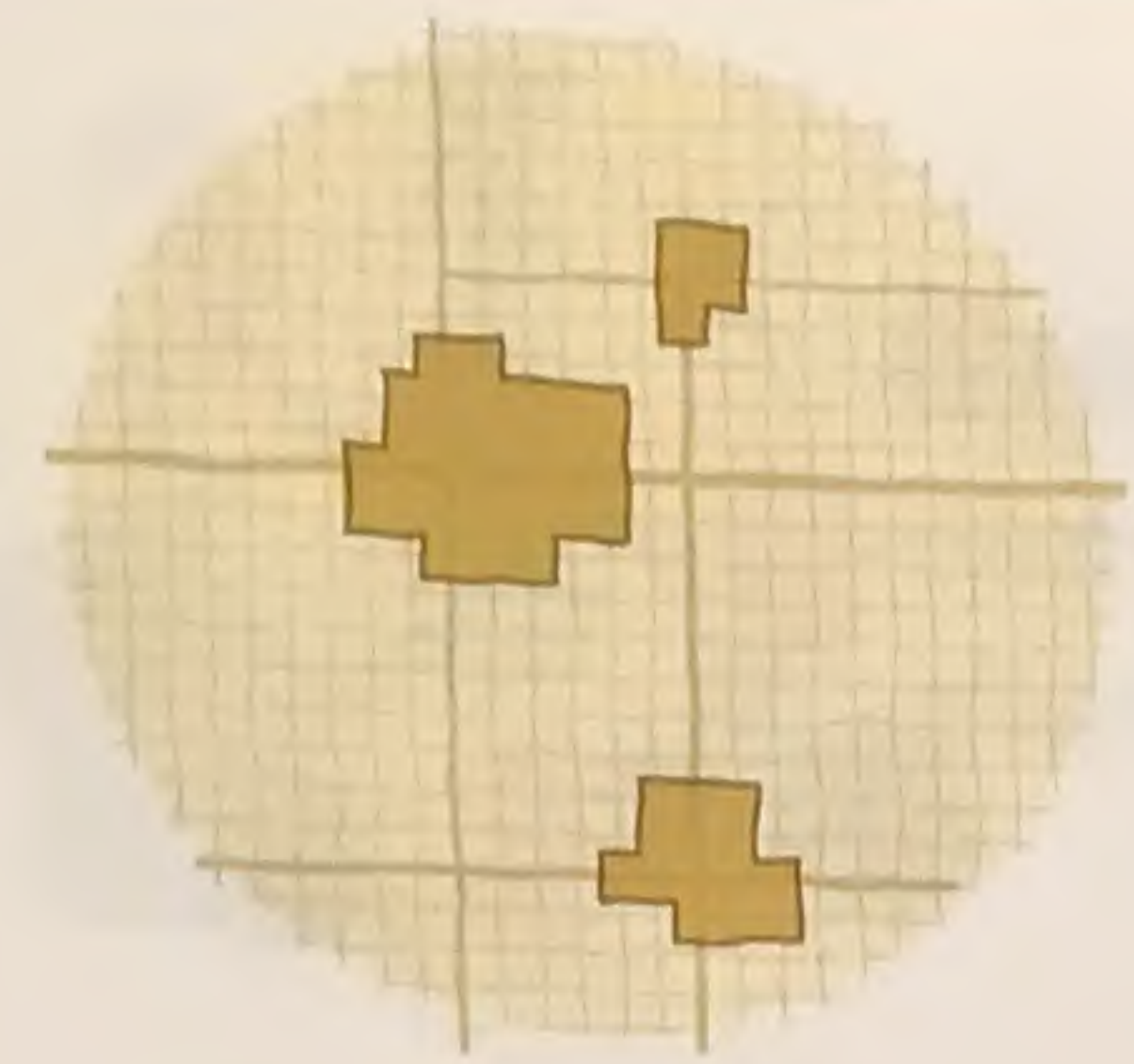


Parks and Trails

Walking, biking, recreation, experience nature.

Ways the City Could Grow

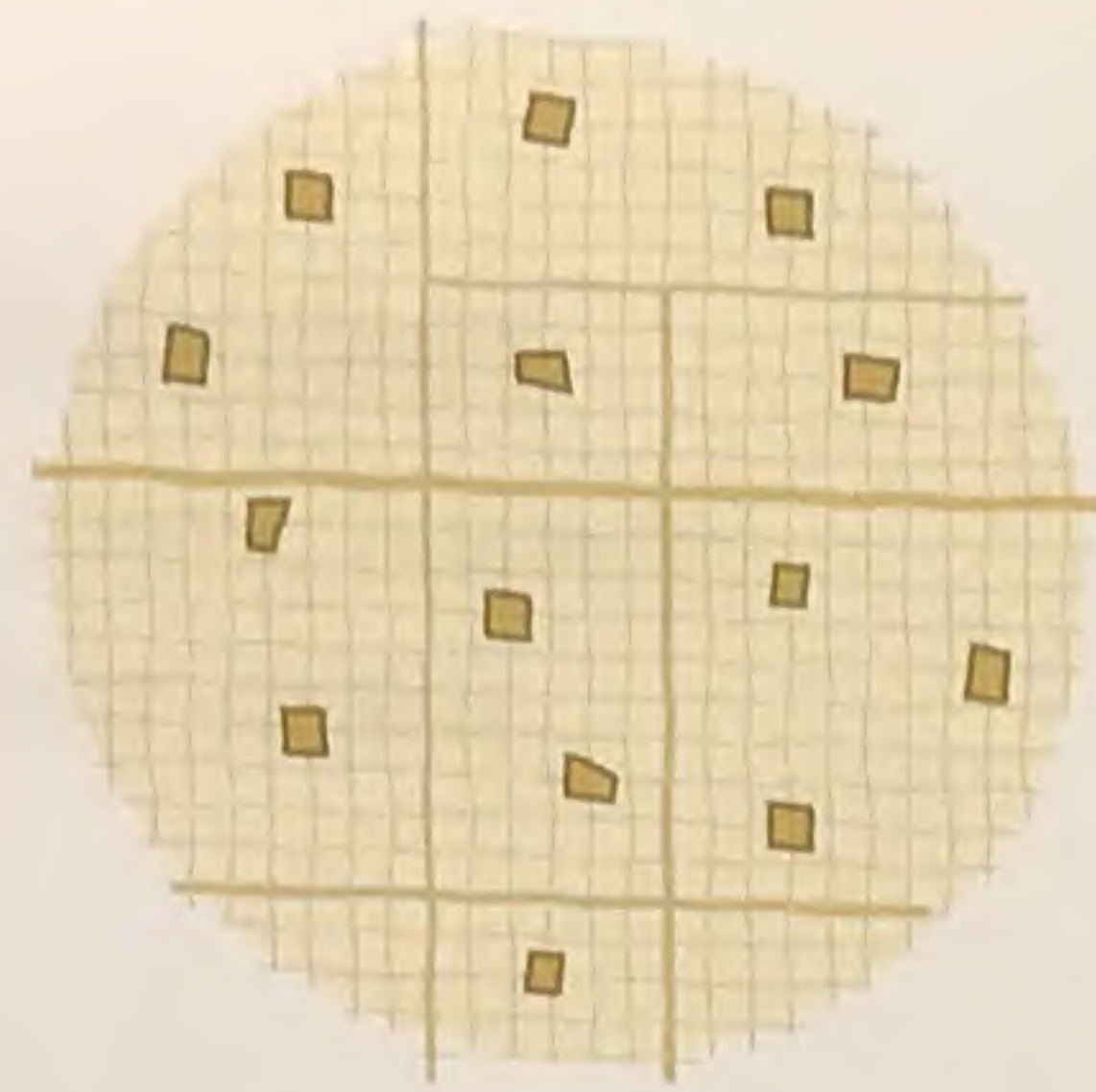
Add a green sticky for "pros" & pink for "cons"



Focus on Urban Villages

Continue development of Downtown, Fairhaven, Samish Way and other urban villages with a mix of uses and opportunities for people to live close to jobs, transit, services, entertainment, and recreation.

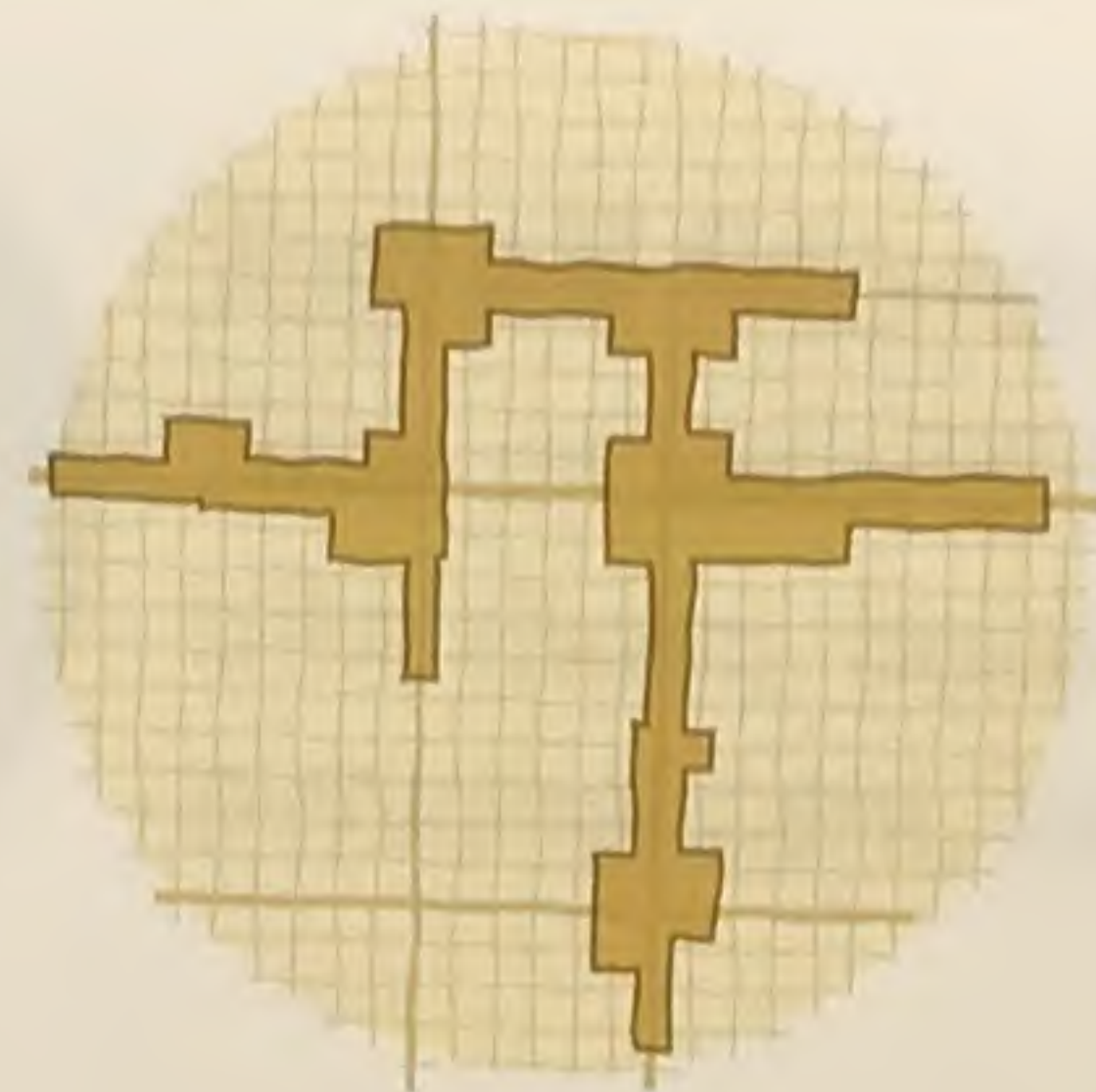
Densification of the city rather than sprawl
 Community farming instead of recreation
 Recreation opportunity
 Reduce suburban sprawl



Focus on Distributed Nodes ("15-minute city")

Allow small-scale commercial services to locate inside neighborhoods within walking distance of where people live.

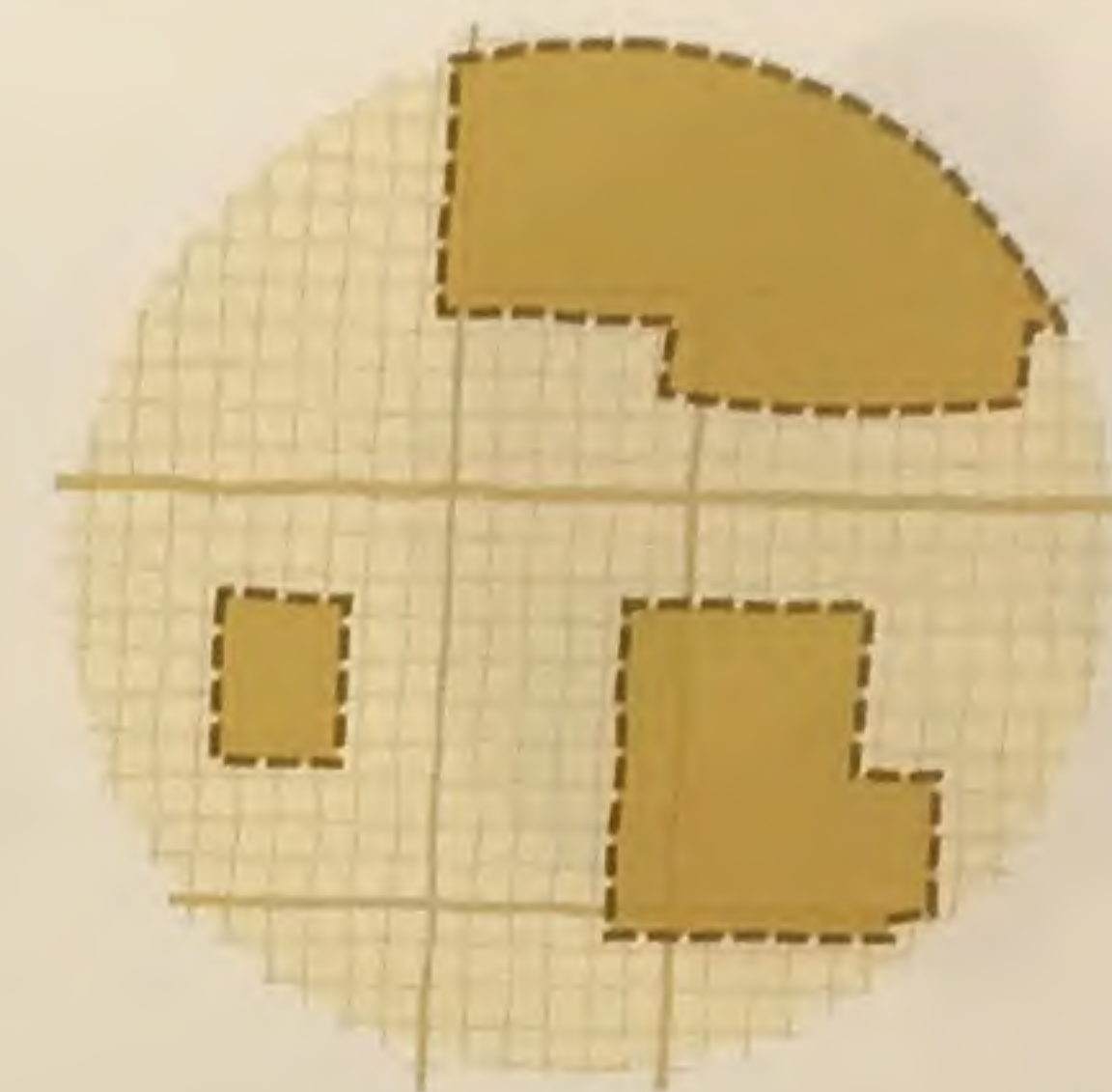
Reducing auto dependency
 Yes!!! Walkability is so important in future planning
 Increasing transportation costs & inputs
 !!
 Creates opportunities for community development



Focus on Corridors (Transit-Oriented Development)

Allow higher-density development with more housing, offices, and commercial services to develop along transit corridors to support higher frequency bus service and reduce personal vehicle trips.

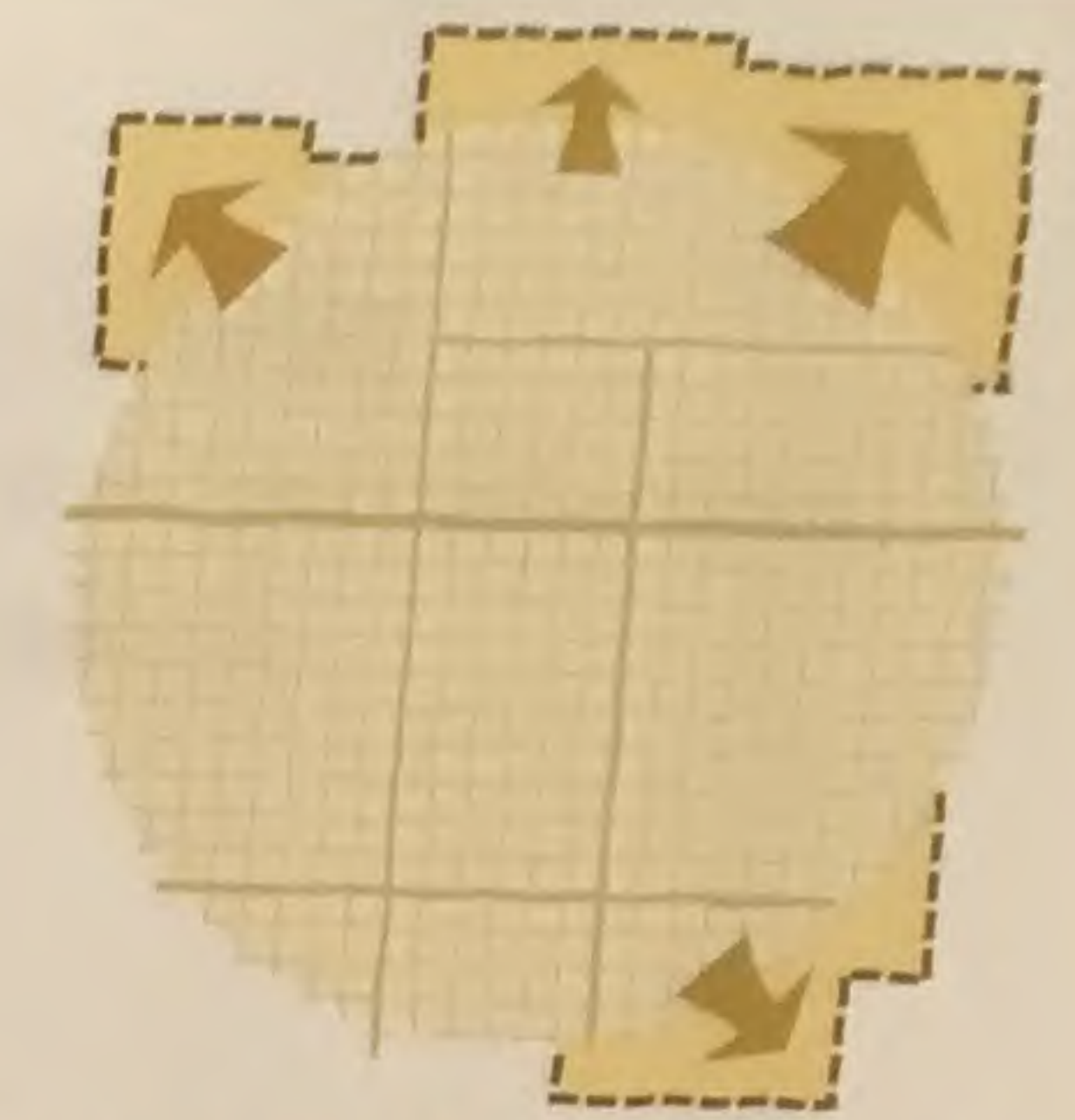
Preservation of space
 !!
 Pollution increases within corridor
 Pro-Courtesy other cities to B'ham
 Yes public transit
 This would make getting around easier



Focus on areas with fewer opportunities today

Direct investment for infrastructure like parks, trails, sidewalks, street lights, and libraries to recently annexed, low-income, or under-invested-in areas.

YES
 Increased job versatility and opportunity
 Community gardens funded by city
 Invest in formerly distressed communities w/ accessible transit, nutritional ballgame space
 Develop areas like Barkley Village, Schome, so they have a vibrant atmosphere, quality of experiences like w/ parks, restaurants, nightlife etc. So it's not only concentrated in Downtown Bham
 YES
 OK low nightlife spawned to prompt



Focus on Urban Growth Area Expansion

Allow expansion of city boundaries to areas where new neighborhoods can be created and provide funding for extension of urban services.

What states are being used to determine population growth?
 No urban sprawl - but...
 We do not want all of Whitman County to become a massive suburban sprawl.
 No
 Why?
 Why not?

What kind of housing?

As our city grows, what kind of student housing opportunities do you want to see more of? Place a dot on your top **one or two** preferences.



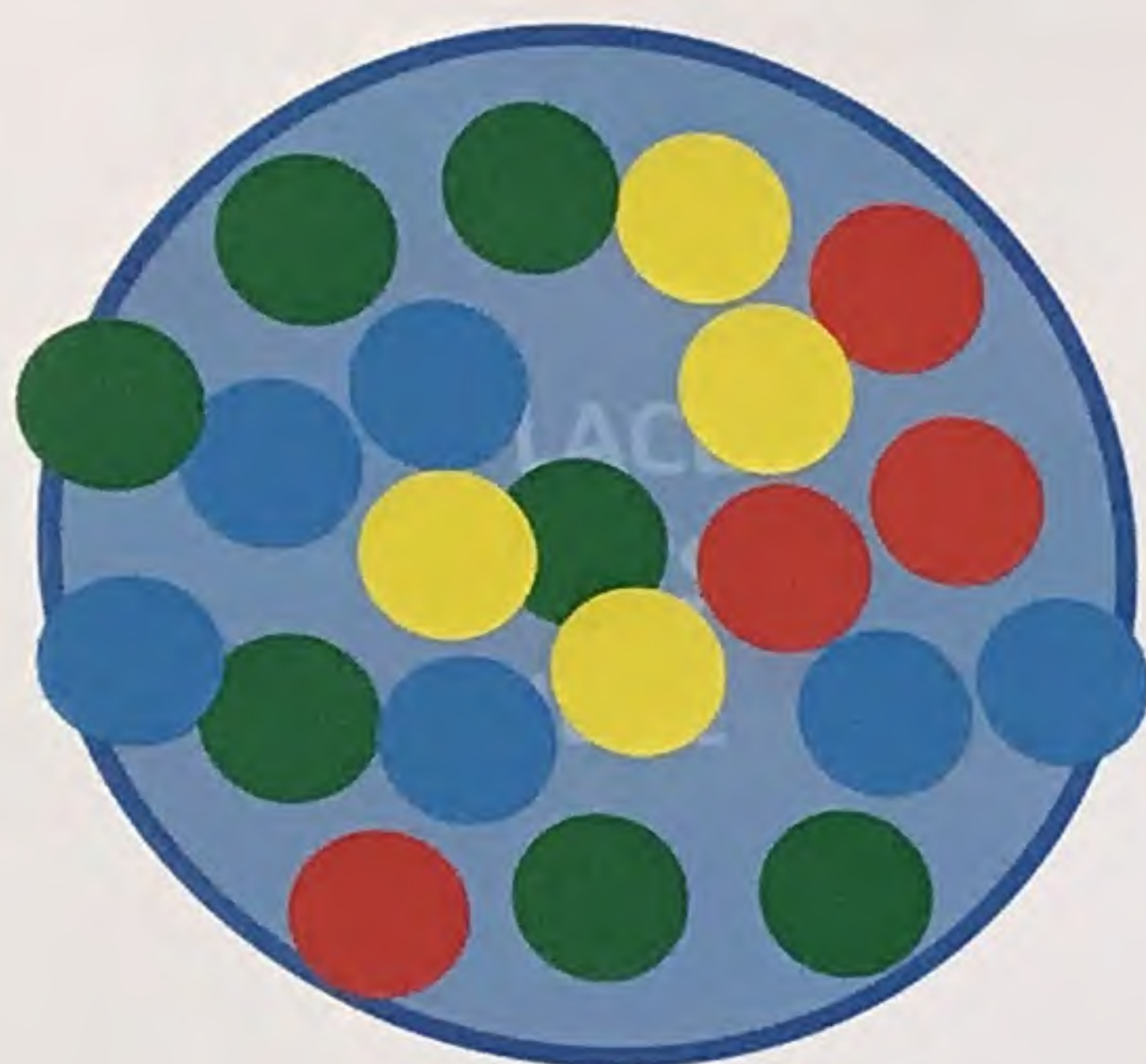
Traditional, On-Campus Residence Halls:

Providing easy access to classes and academic resources with shared facilities like common lounges and dining halls. Proximity to campus makes it easy for students to engage in on-campus activities and events.



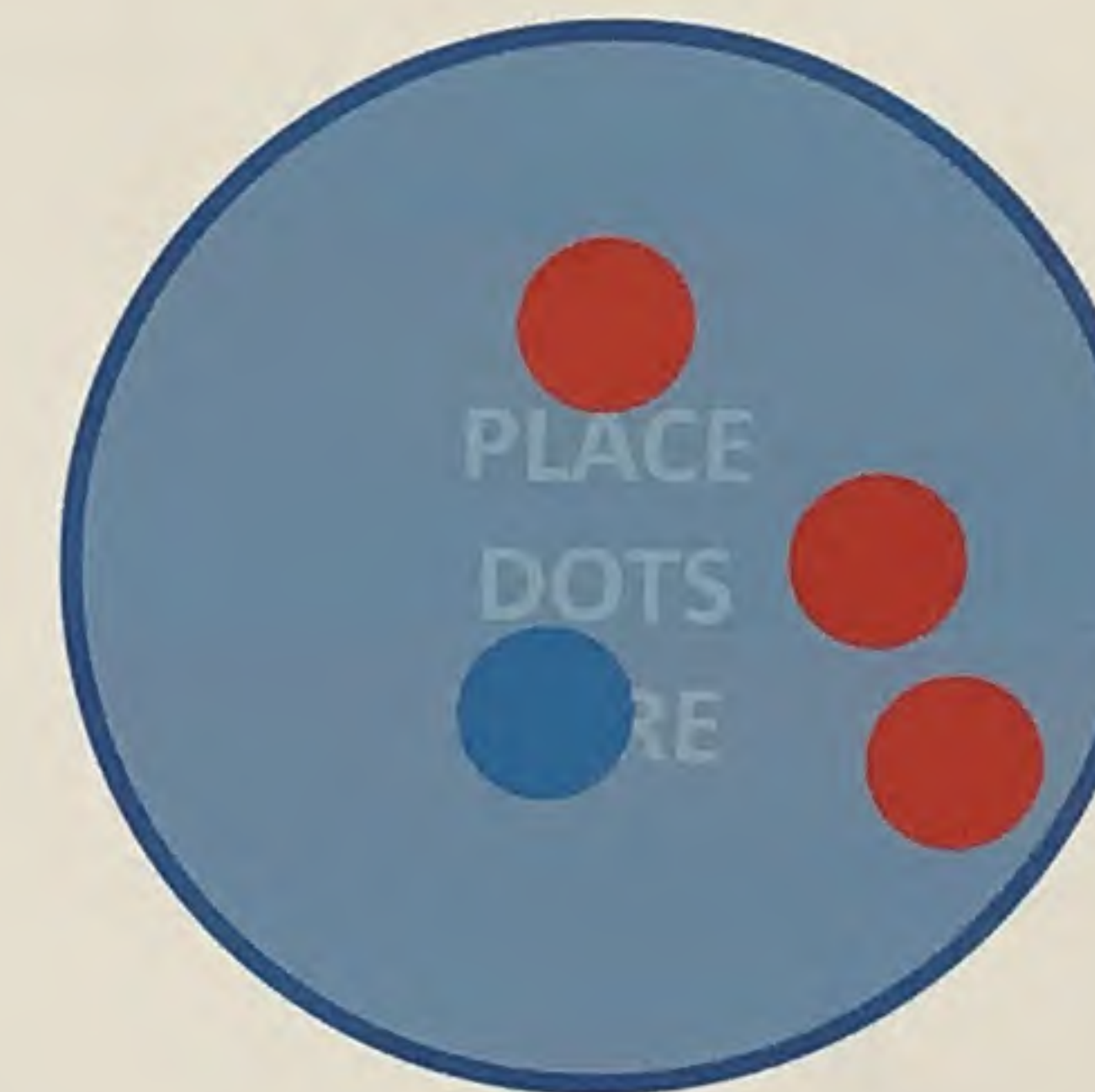
Off-Campus Cooperative Housing:

Students share responsibilities for cleaning, cooking and maintaining a house. A popular option for students looking for affordability and a strong sense of community; however, housing options may be older and less well-maintained.



Off-Campus Apartments Near School:

Typically a mix of one to four-bedroom units with more space and privacy. Usually, these apartments are within walking or biking distance to campus, making it convenient for students to attend classes and access campus amenities.



Off-Campus Student Housing Community:

Designed to cater to needs and preferences of students. Often in the form of apartments or townhomes, they offer a range of amenities such as fully furnished apartments, study lounges, or gymnasiums. Mostly rented room-by-room with shared common spaces.



Off-Campus Single-Occupancy or Studio Apartments:

Designed for one person with a private bathroom and kitchen. They are ideal for students who prefer complete privacy and independence; however, they are typically much more expensive to rent.

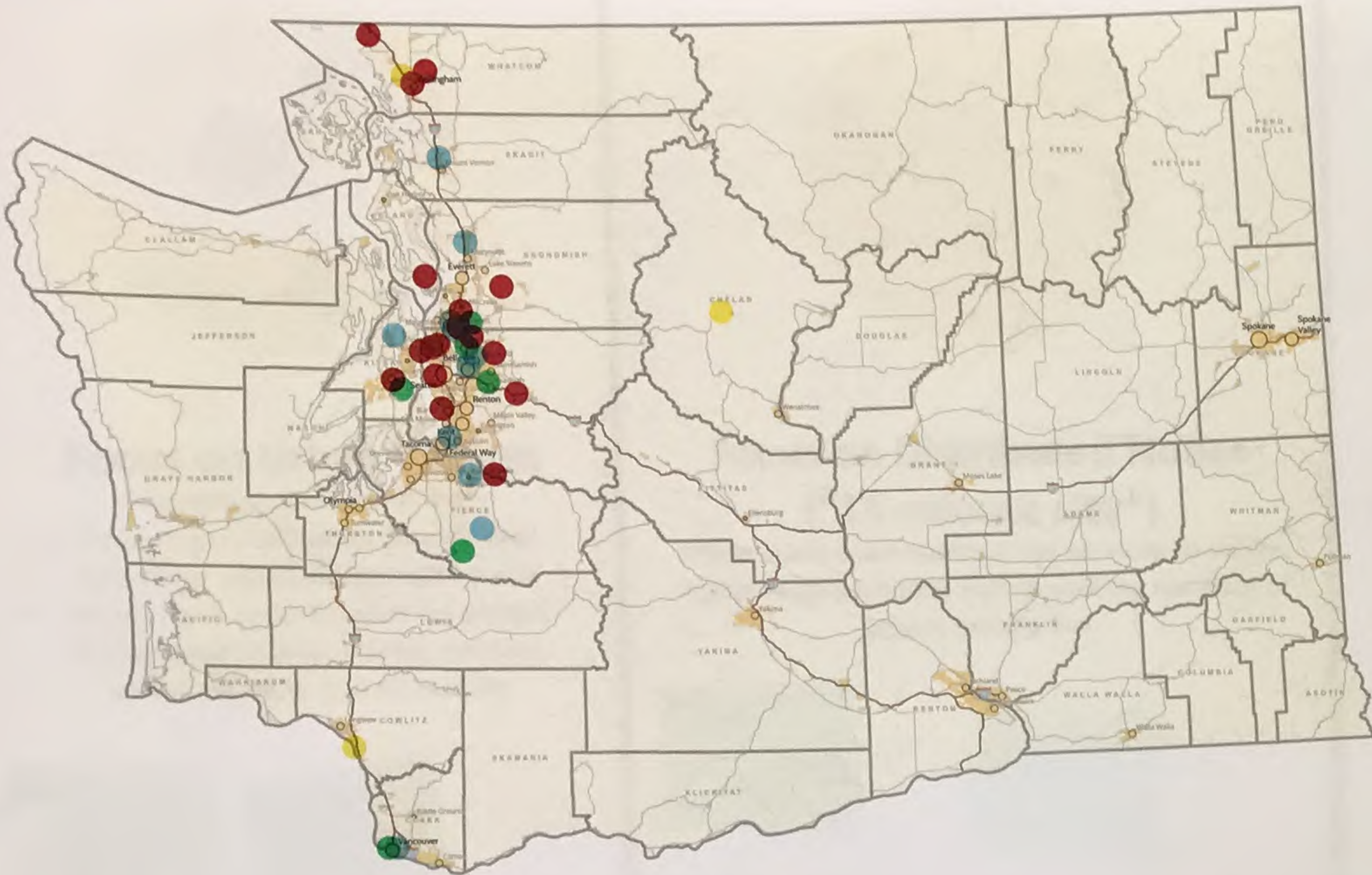


Off-Campus Homestays and Family Housing:

Includes living at home or with a local host family; also includes students who are married or have children for whom family housing is crucial. These options may be located further away from campus and in proximity of amenities such as playgrounds, family activities, and schools.

Where are you from?

Place a dot where your last permanent residence was located before starting college/university



Opportunities for student engagement



Take our student-oriented survey

This survey will help inform work on The Bellingham Plan. While your needs may be very different in 20 years, there will still be students like you in Bellingham.

Visit surveymonkey.com/r/BhamPlanStudents or scan this QR code at right to take part.



Sign up for updates

Visit engagebellingham.org/bellinghamplan to join our mailing list to learn more about future engagement opportunities.



Applications will open mid-November at cob.org/go/public/bc
Stay tuned!

Apply to be a part of The Bellingham Plan Community Workgroup

This group will meet eleven times throughout 2024 to discuss key issues and priorities and inform The Bellingham Plan Update. The Community Workgroup will represent a diverse cross-section of our community, and we encourage applications from students. Workgroup members will have the option to receive **up to \$600 in compensation** for their involvement in meetings.



Staying in Bellingham for winter break?

Stay tuned for our winter Bellingham Plan Scavenger Hunt!

Check our website and email updates for more information on a planning scavenger hunt throughout town.



*Students:
We want your
input!*

Free Pizza!

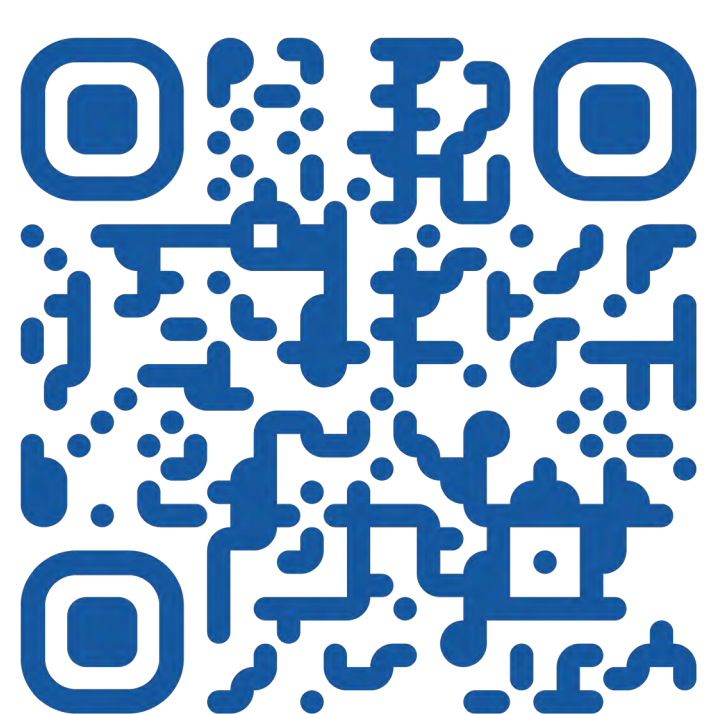


The Bellingham Plan

Updating our Comprehensive Plan

*Today in the VU MPR!
11:30am - 1:30pm*

Share your thoughts on housing,
transportation, climate resilience,
and more!



engagebellingham.org