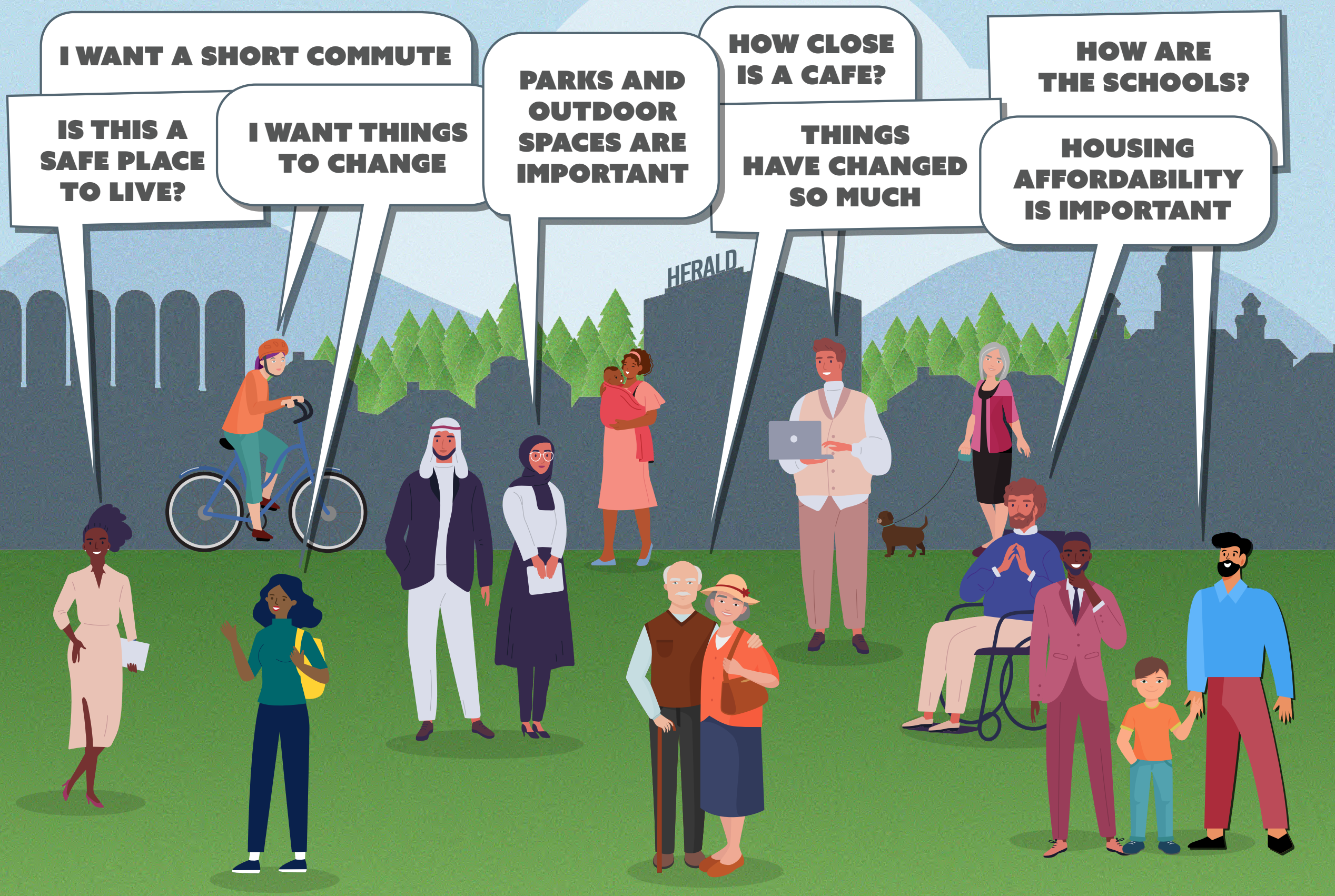


THE BELLINGHAM PLAN

Updating our Comprehensive Plan

EVERYONE HAS EQUAL SAY



*Students:
We want your
input!*



Free Pizza!

Today in the VU MPR!

11:00am - 1:30pm



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



engagebellingham.org

PHASE 1 RECAP

What we heard from you.

Phase 1 Visioning Themes based on community response

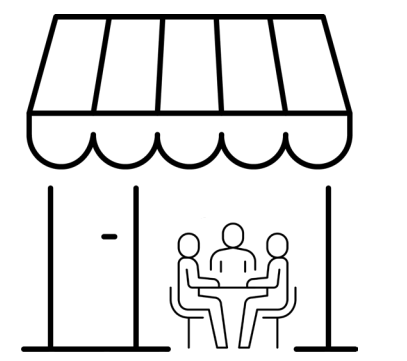


Vision Survey
Summary Report



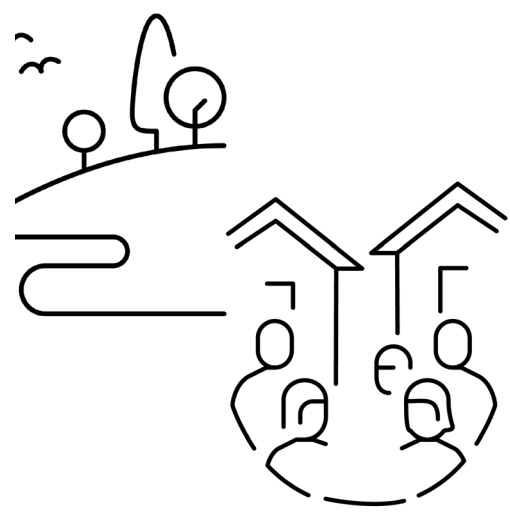
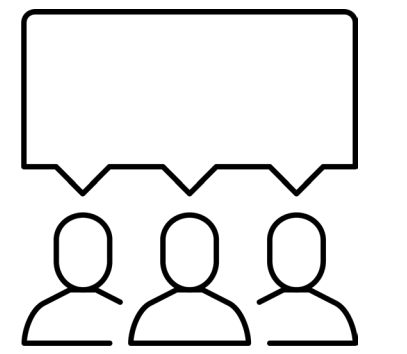
Housing types, rental protections, and affordability are clear priorities

Lively and creative, well-connected, and walkable places with services and amenities dispersed throughout the city



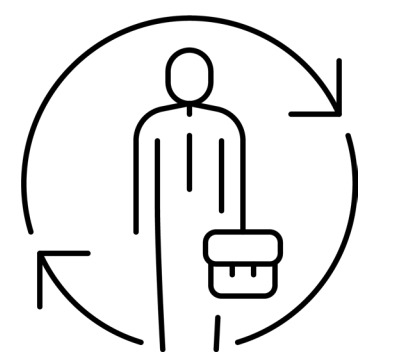
A safer Bellingham, with more accessible health and social services for all

More equitable representation of voices from historically marginalized and underrepresented community groups



Pedestrian-centric gathering and community spaces, including greenways and parks

A locally-scaled economy with an activated downtown, livable-wage jobs, and local business support



Support for arts and culture

Phase 1 Summary Report



PROJECT SCHEDULE

And engagement plan.

2023

2024

2025

July launch

Q2 Adoption

1 Vision & Foundation

We are here

2 Growth Approach

3 Draft Review

4 Legislative Process

Project awareness +
relationship building

Broad engagement:
visioning + values

Listening sessions

Identification of conflicting issues

Focused engagement on identified
issues

Round table discussions

Growth approach comparison

Review of draft
language

Public open houses

Board and
commission feedback

Public comment

Planning Commission
recomendation

City Council adoption



Phase 1
Summary
Report



Bellingham Plan Open House event at Options High School, September 2023

GROWTH MANAGEMENT

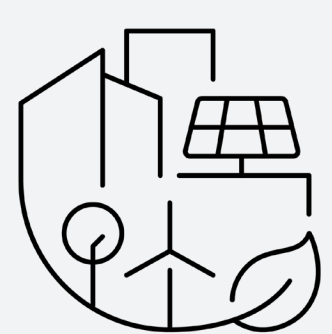
We plan for growth because...

1. People are going to move here.
2. People and jobs are shifting to urban areas all over the world.
3. 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.



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



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



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

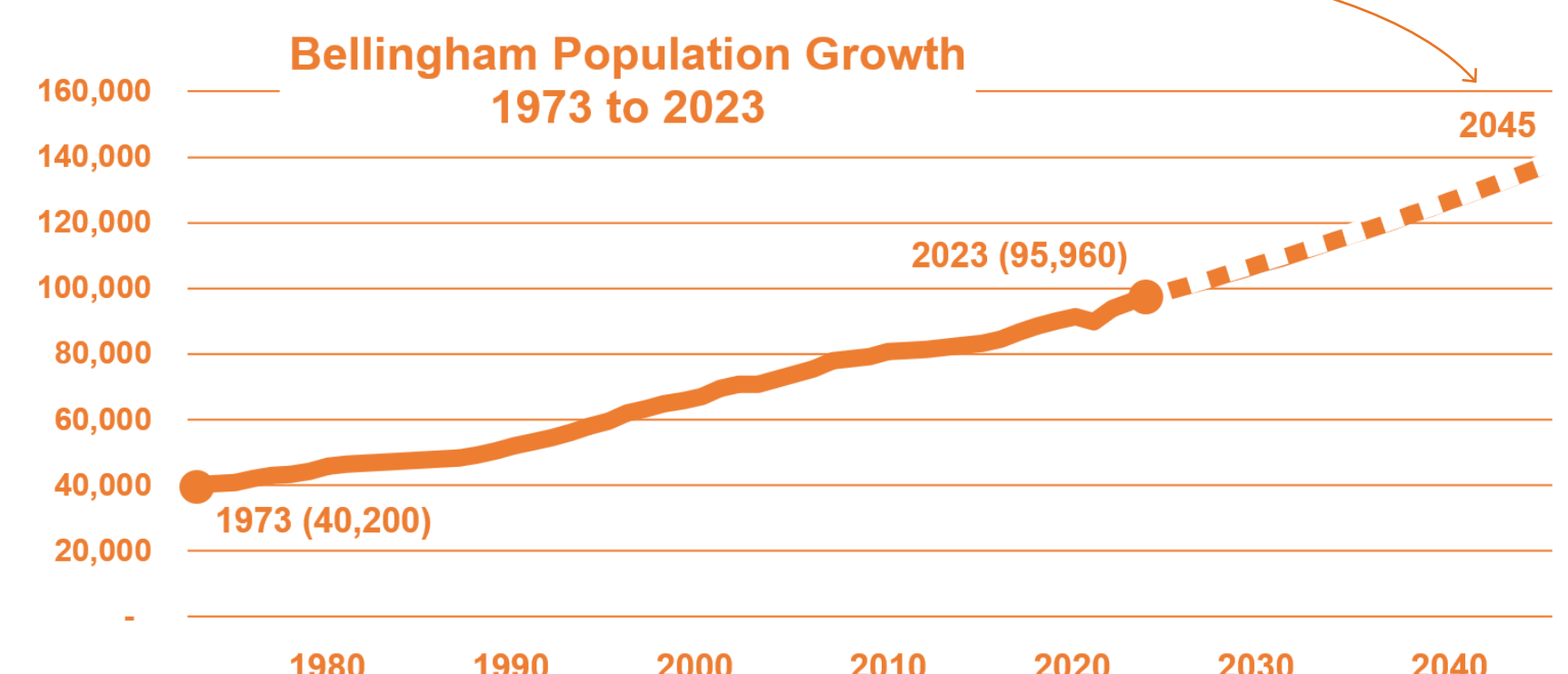
*Let's plan together
to create a vision
for Bellingham's
future*

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 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 collaborate to distribute this anticipated growth between jurisdictions.
- 4 The Bellingham Plan update will plan for Bellingham's allocated 20-year growth projection.

*This represents
Whatcom's growth
extrapolated to
Bellingham.*



DEFINING COMMUNITY FEATURES

...to support for future generations.

Add a dot to up to 3 features (including new stickies!) that you think should be priorities in this update

Features that are emphasized in the 2016 plan			
Beautiful natural environment	Healthy community	Safe and diverse methods of transportation	Unique and diverse neighborhoods
Expansive outdoor recreation	Innovative planning policies	Sustainable living	World-class network of parks and trails
Features we've heard need to be emphasized more in the 2025 plan			
Affordable access to healthy food	Integrated cultural resources	Supportive mental and physical health services	Unique and varied housing choices
A unique and exciting downtown experience	Safe and accessible public gathering spaces	Prioritized local businesses	Welcoming and diverse community

DEFINING COMMUNITY FEATURES

...to support for future generations.

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A unique and exciting downtown experience 	Safe and accessible public gathering spaces 	Prioritized local businesses 	Welcoming and diverse community

Integration of green space & transportation service is a whole package

affordable housing please!

no string attached (ref. case study)

active transportation community, streetscape opportunities

PAST AND PRESENT

A look back at how a few of our urban villages have evolved.

Waterfront District Urban Village Plan Adopted in 2013 as outlined in 2006 Comprehensive Plan



2004

2022

Samish Way District Urban Village Plan Adopted in 2009 as outlined in 2006 Comprehensive Plan



2016

2023

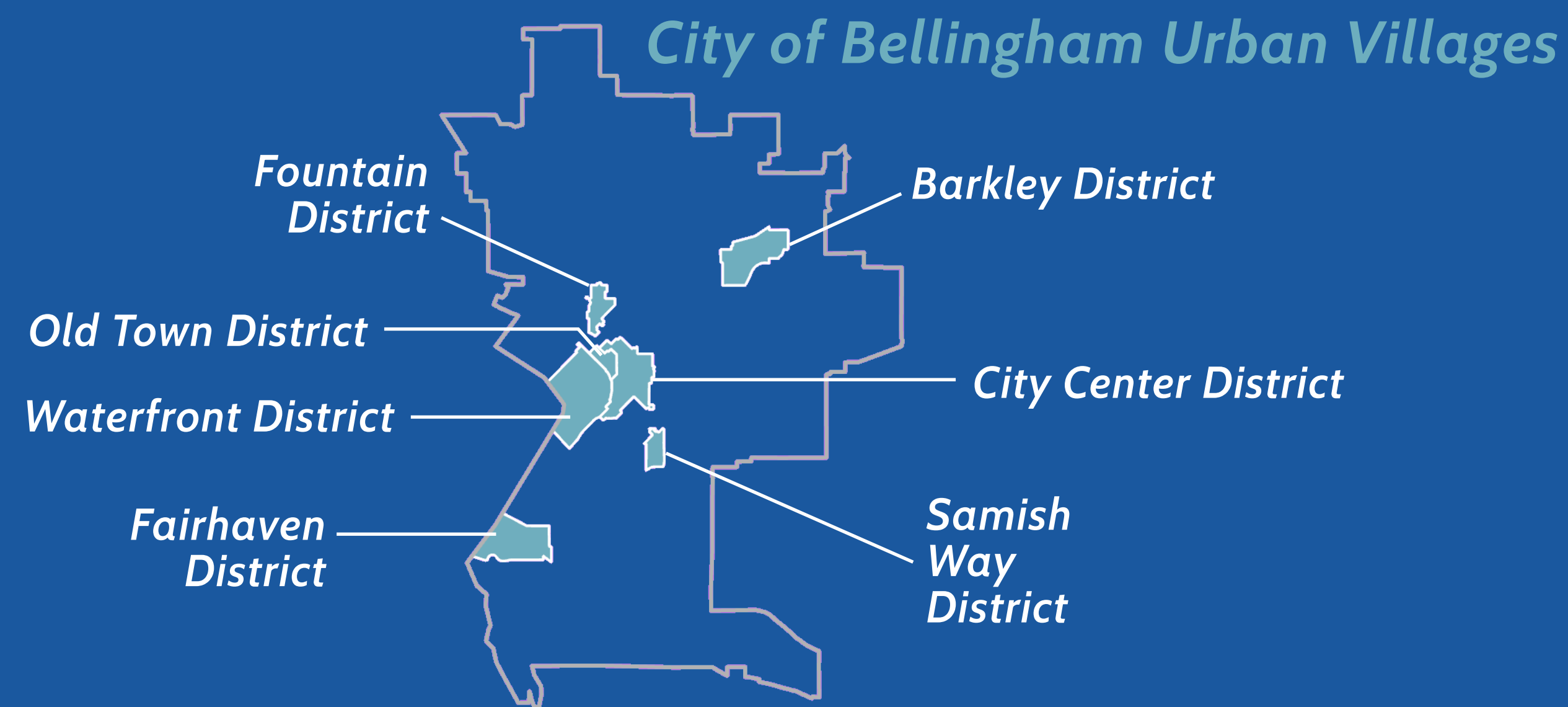
Fountain District Urban Village Plan Adopted in 2010 as outlined in 2006 Comprehensive Plan



2012

2023

The 2006 Comprehensive Plan update responded to increasing growth pressures, cost of infrastructure and regional economic changes. The 2006 Plan included an emphasis on urban villages as one of the City's primary strategies for addressing growth, offering a smart and sustainable way to grow and improve our community.



Past plans have created impactful change. Think about what the 2025 plan should change.

CLIMATE ACTION

The City of Bellingham is committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and increasing community resiliency to the impacts of climate change. Our climate work is guided by the city's Climate Action Plan and climate adaptation initiatives.

Current Climate Workplans Include Actions to:

- » Increase the use of electric vehicles
- » Support active transportation
- » Reduce emissions from homes and other buildings
- » Respond to extreme heat and wildfire smoke events
- » Assess sea level rise and storm surge risk
- » Create and buy renewable energy
- » Coordinate with partners and stakeholders

How does this relate to “the Bellingham Plan?”

Consistent with the passage of Bill 1181 in 2023, the City will be updating the Bellingham Plan to include a mandatory climate element. This climate element will include Resilience and Mitigation goals and policies that:

- **Improve community resilience to climate change**
- **Prioritize climate justice**
- **Reduce carbon emissions from buildings and transportation**
- **Support renewable energy**

Upcoming Climate Events:

The Bellingham Public Library is partnering with WWU's Sustainability Engagement Institute and Center for Community Learning to bring our community together to talk about sustainability, and you're invited! Please join us to share your hopes and challenges related to creating a more sustainable region and meet others doing inspirational work. We'll leave with new connections and opportunities for action!

Powering a Sustainable Future - Thursday, April 18, 2:30-4:00 pm

The Future of Work - Thursday, May 2, 2:30-4:00 pm

Constructing Resilient Communities - Thursday, May 16, 2:30-4:00 pm

Toward a Fair and Just Future - Thursday, May 30, 2:30-4:00 pm



Scan QR Code for event information

- Forums are free and open to all.
- Snacks provided!
- No registration required.
- All of the Forums will take place in the Lecture Room on the lower level of the Central Branch of the Bellingham Public Library (210 Central Ave).

Learn more about the City's climate programs →

Contact the Mayor's Office of Climate staff for more information.

savidana@cob.org or cfogelsong@cob.org

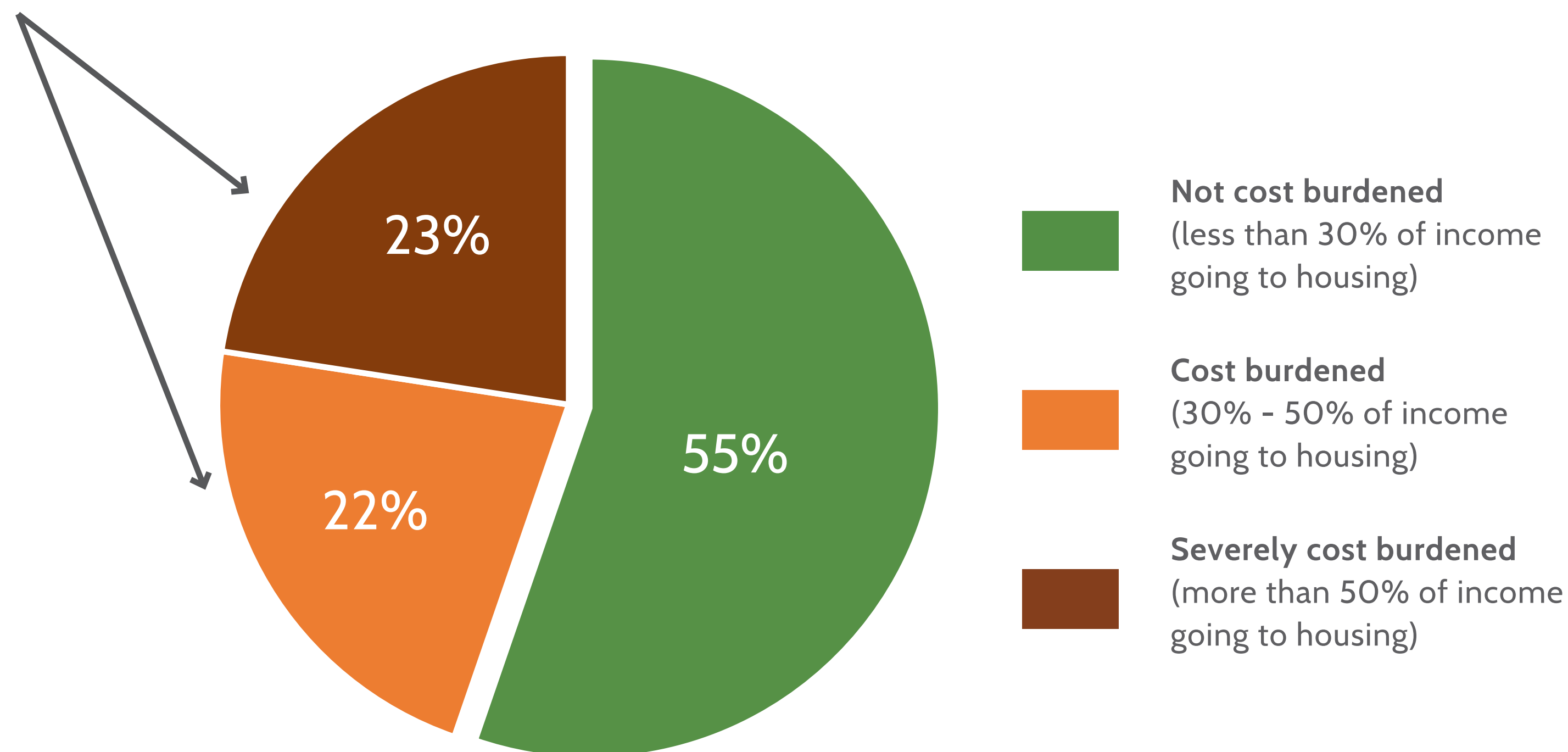


COST BURDEN

Cost burden is defined as paying more than 30% of household income for housing (rent or mortgage, plus utilities).

Severe cost burden is defined as paying more than 50% of household income for housing.

45% of all households in Bellingham, are cost burdened.



More than **50%** of Bellingham **renters** are cost burdened, with **32%** of those renters spending more than half of their income on housing.

Are you cost burdened?

To see if you are cost burdened, use the calculators provided to **divide your total housing expenses by your gross monthly income.**

Housing Expense:

For renters, include rent payments and any utility costs (including internet). For homeowners, include mortgage payment, taxes, insurance and utilities (including internet).

Gross monthly income:

How much money an individual earns before deductions (taxes, medical, retirement contributions, etc.).

$$\text{total housing expenses} \div \text{gross monthly income} = \text{percentage of income towards housing}$$

Use a sticky to reflect on this calculation. Were you surprised by where you fell in the range? Why or why not? You do not need to include your specific calculation result.

U.S. Census Bureau. "Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income in the Past 12 Months." American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Detailed Tables, Table B25070, 2022

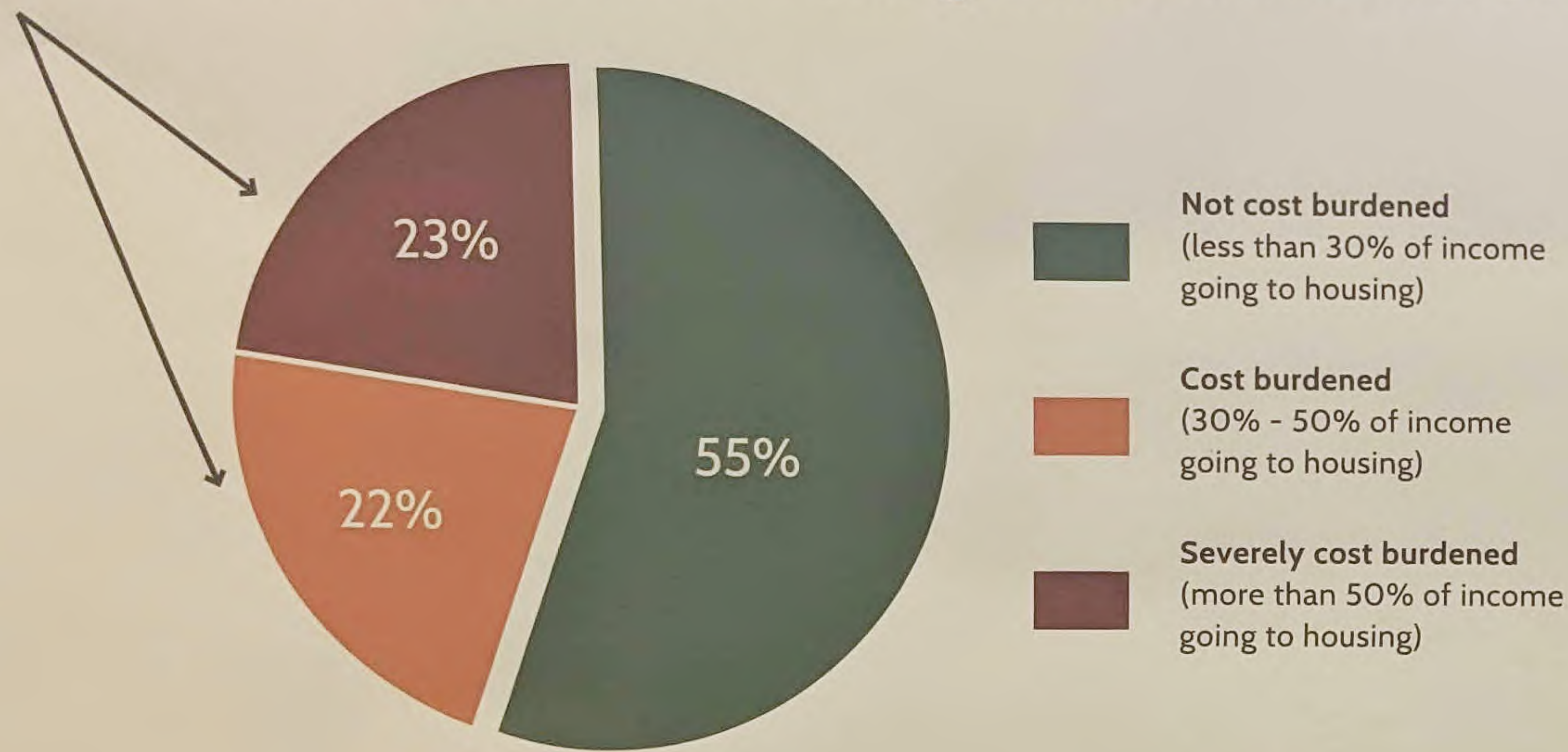
U.S. Census Bureau. "Mortgage Status by Selected Monthly Owner Costs as a Percentage of Household Income in the Past 12 Months." American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Detailed Tables, Table B25091, 2022

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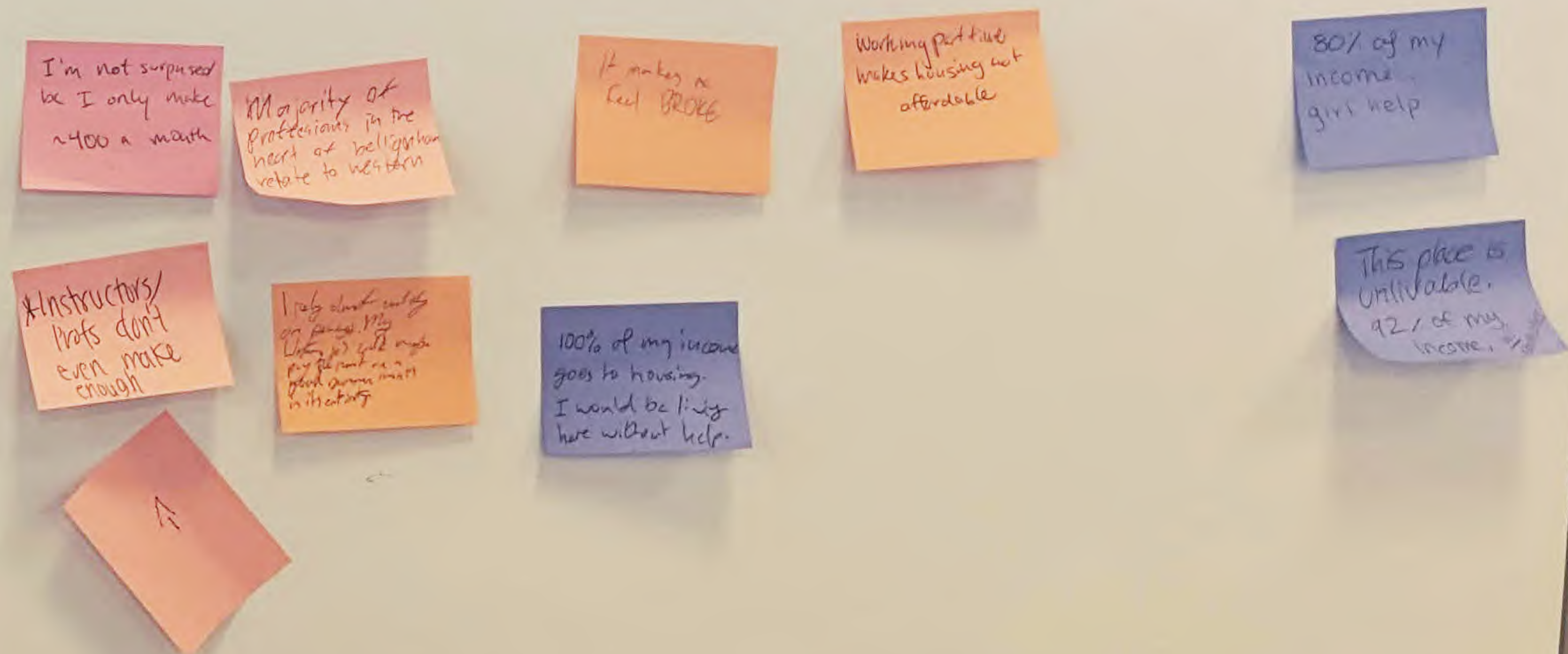
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expenses

income

percentage of income towards housing

Use a sticky to reflect on this calculation. Were you surprised by where you fell in the range? Why or why not? You do not need to include your specific calculation result.

I'm not surprised bc I only make ~400 a month

Majority of professionals in the heart of Bellingham relate to western

It makes me feel BROKE

Working part time makes housing not affordable

80% of my income... girl help

*Instructors/ Profs don't even make enough

I rely almost entirely on parents. My living is still maybe pay full rent on a good summer month in its entirety

100% of my income goes to housing. I would be living here without help.

This place is unlivable. 92% of my income, ^{with} _{facilities}

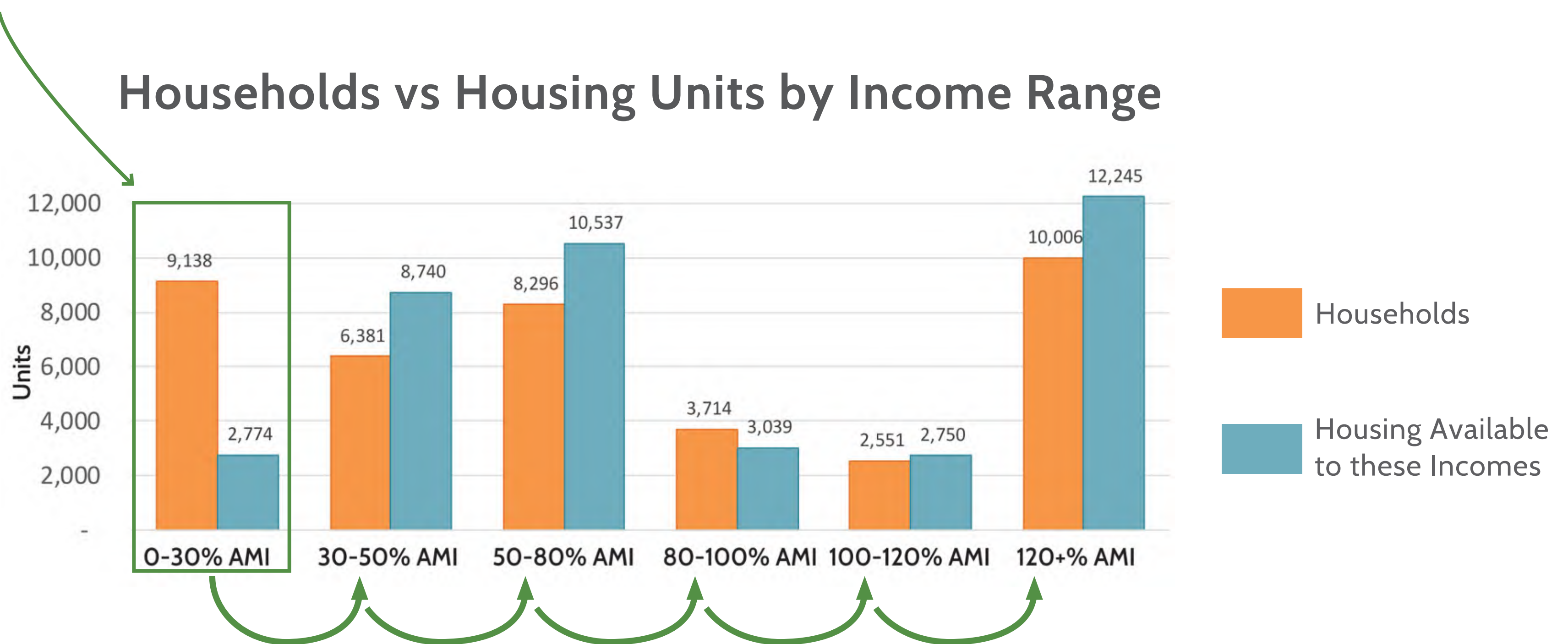
A

COST BURDEN AND HOUSING GAPS

The private market does not supply housing for all incomes.

Many people in Bellingham are cost burdened because there is a mismatch between wages and the existing housing stock.

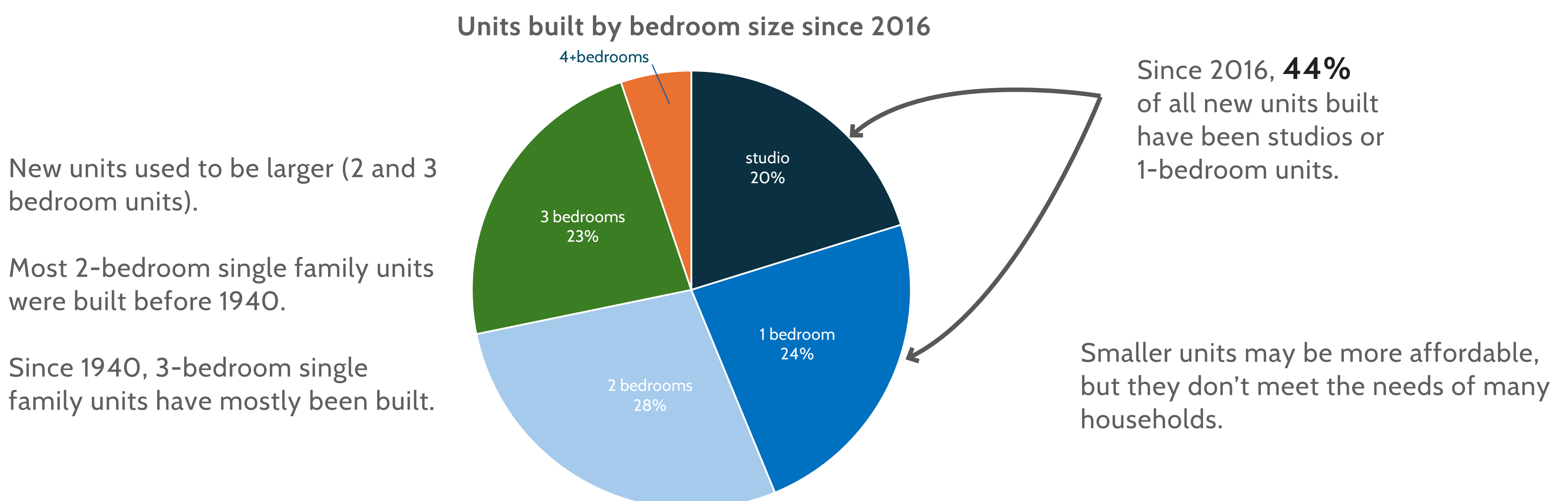
This graph shows that in Bellingham there are far more extremely-low income households than units available.



Because these households can't find housing they can afford, they have to spend more on housing. This has a cascading effect, making less affordable housing available for everyone.

Additionally, there are gaps in the size of units desired.

The City's 2023 housing preference survey found that most people in Bellingham would prefer at least **two bedrooms**.



AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Housing affordability references the ability for someone to afford their housing, no matter their income.

“Affordable Housing” (with a capital “A”) refers to housing that is restricted to those earning at or below a certain income.

Income-restricted Affordable Housing is restricted to tenants at or below a certain income threshold.

Generally set forth in covenants on the property, requiring this affordability for a certain time period.

Income-restricted Affordable Housing

Helps ensure some units are reserved for those most in need. Here are some ways it is created:

Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing

(NOAH) Housing that is older, smaller, less convenient, or otherwise less in demand. It is often less expensive by its nature than other market-rate housing. Tenants in these homes are often at risk of displacement due to buildings being demolished and replaced with new, more expensive housing. The City and County have at times been able to protect NOAH by purchasing it and putting a covenant on the property requiring that it be retained as Affordable Housing for tenants at or below certain income levels.

Housing Choice Voucher (Section 8)

A rent subsidy program funded by the federal government and administered locally by the Bellingham Housing Authority (BHA). Approved households generally pay private landlords no more than 40% of their income for rent and utilities, and the BHA pays the remainder of the rent directly to the landlord.

Subsidized Affordable Housing Projects

A project that is exclusively composed of Affordable units. These are generally funded through a combination of public and non-profit funds.

The City of Bellingham has focused most of its funding on projects in this range. The City has many income-restricted units in this range, but it is still far fewer than the number of households earning incomes in this range.

Community Land Trusts

A shared equity model that separates the cost of the land from the cost of the unit. These are generally non-profit organizations that purchase the land, build new income-restricted units on that land, and then sell the units separate from the land. The new owner can gain equity in their home, but increased value is capped at a rate to ensure long-term affordability, restricting new tenants by income as well. Bellingham has projects built by two local active land trusts.

Mixed Income Projects

Projects with some market-rate units and some Affordable units. These are most common through city programs that either incentivize or require affordability in exchange for additional density or financial benefits. The City of Bellingham has programs in place today to incentivize this, but they are rarely utilized. The City is exploring alternative approaches to further encourage mixed income projects.

These approaches generally are only able to produce housing at or above this range. The City of Bellingham has limited income-restricted units in this range.

Income Limits by household size

1-person household	4-person household
0%-50% AMI \$33,600	0%-50% AMI \$48,000
51%-100% AMI \$67,200	51%-100% AMI \$96,000

AMI = Area Median Income
The median household income for the area. This is defined by the federal government for our area (Whatcom County) and means that half of households earn more than this number and half earn less. The number changes based on household size.

There are also additional programs that can assist with housing costs, such as:

The City’s **Home Rehabilitation Loan** program, which provides low-interest loans to low-income homeowners to rehabilitate their homes and assists in navigating the process.

The City’s **Downpayment Assistance** program, which supports low-income first-time home buyers by providing down payment assistance.

The State’s **property tax exemption for senior citizens and people with disabilities** program, which reduces property taxes for qualifying applicants.

For more information, visit the “Housing Resources” links found on the handout provided at tonight’s event.

MIDDLE HOUSING

Recent State legislation impacts how we plan for mid-scale housing types.

Providing a variety of housing choices to meet the full range of housing needs and income levels is critical. Middle housing, or housing that is at a middle scale between single-family homes and larger apartment buildings, will need to be expanded in Bellingham.

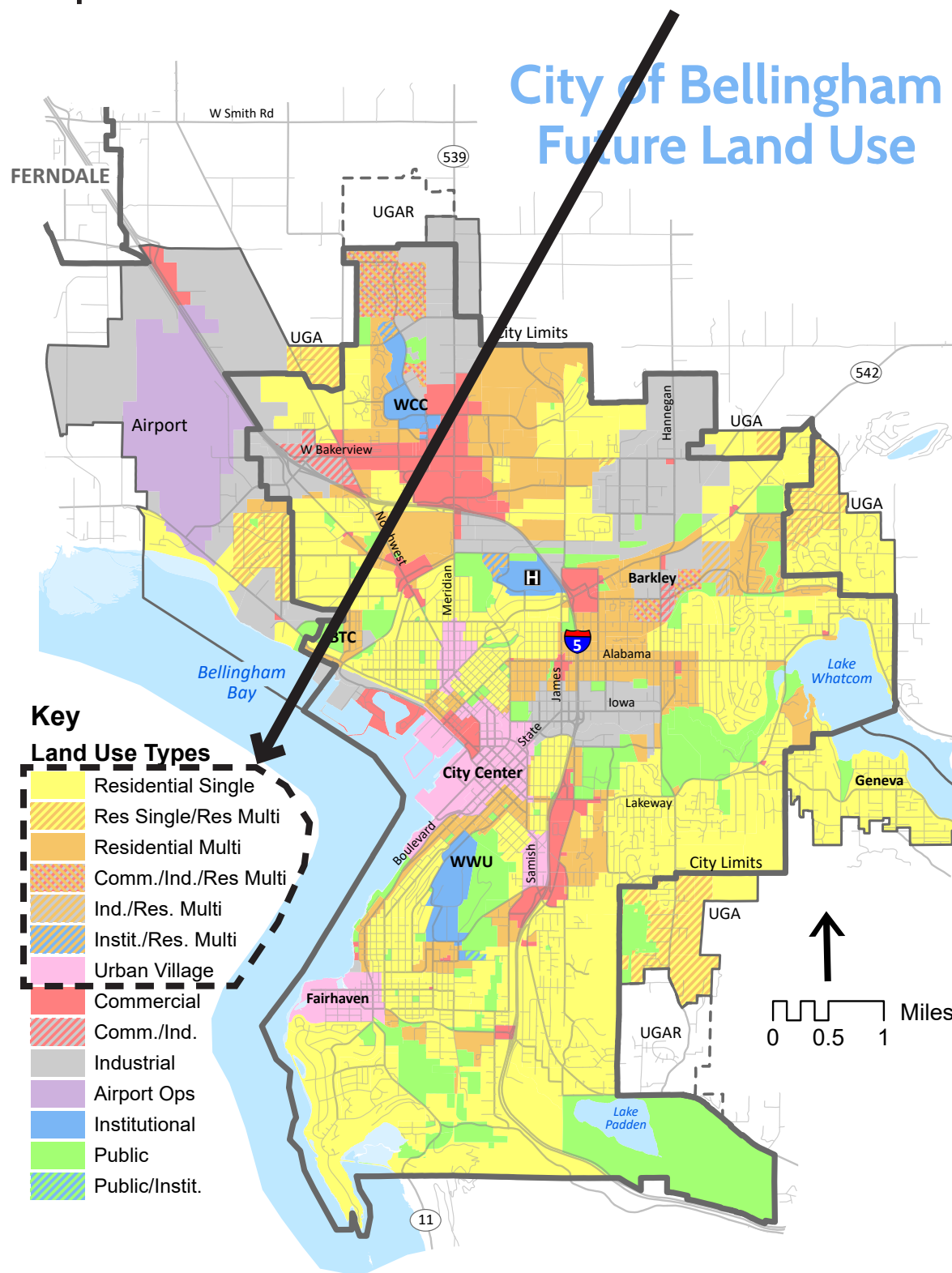
House Bill 1110

Passed by Washington Legislature in 2023

Legalizes middle housing forms in residential neighborhoods.

This bill requires jurisdictions of Bellingham's size to allow a variety of middle-scale housing types up to four units per lot in all residential zones. Six units per lot must be allowed in some areas, depending on proximity to transit and affordability of the units. Additionally, regulations for these housing forms may not require standards that are more restrictive than those required for detached single-family housing.

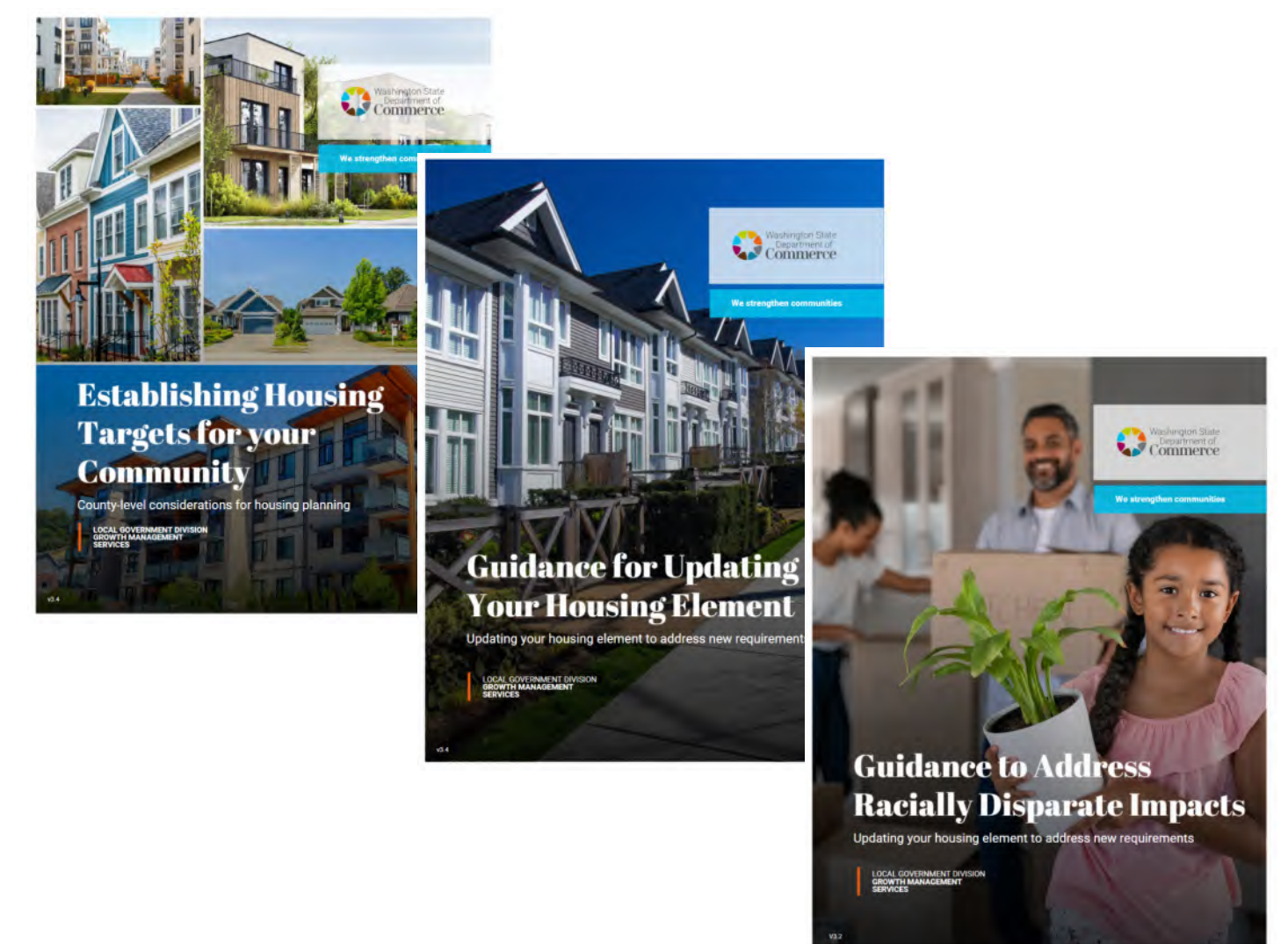
Middle housing forms up to 4 or 6 units per lot must be allowed in these areas.



Planning for emergency housing and permanent supportive housing



Planning for moderate density housing options, including but not limited to ADUs, duplexes, triplexes, townhomes, and multi-plex (middle-scale housing).



House Bill 1220

Passed by Washington Legislature in 2021

Amended the GMA to instruct local governments to "plan for **and accomodate**" housing affordable to all income levels.

Changes to local housing elements include planning for sufficient land capacity for housing needs, including all economic segments of the population. This means planning for more variety of housing types, including middle housing.

The WA State Department of Commerce provides guidance to help jurisdictions:

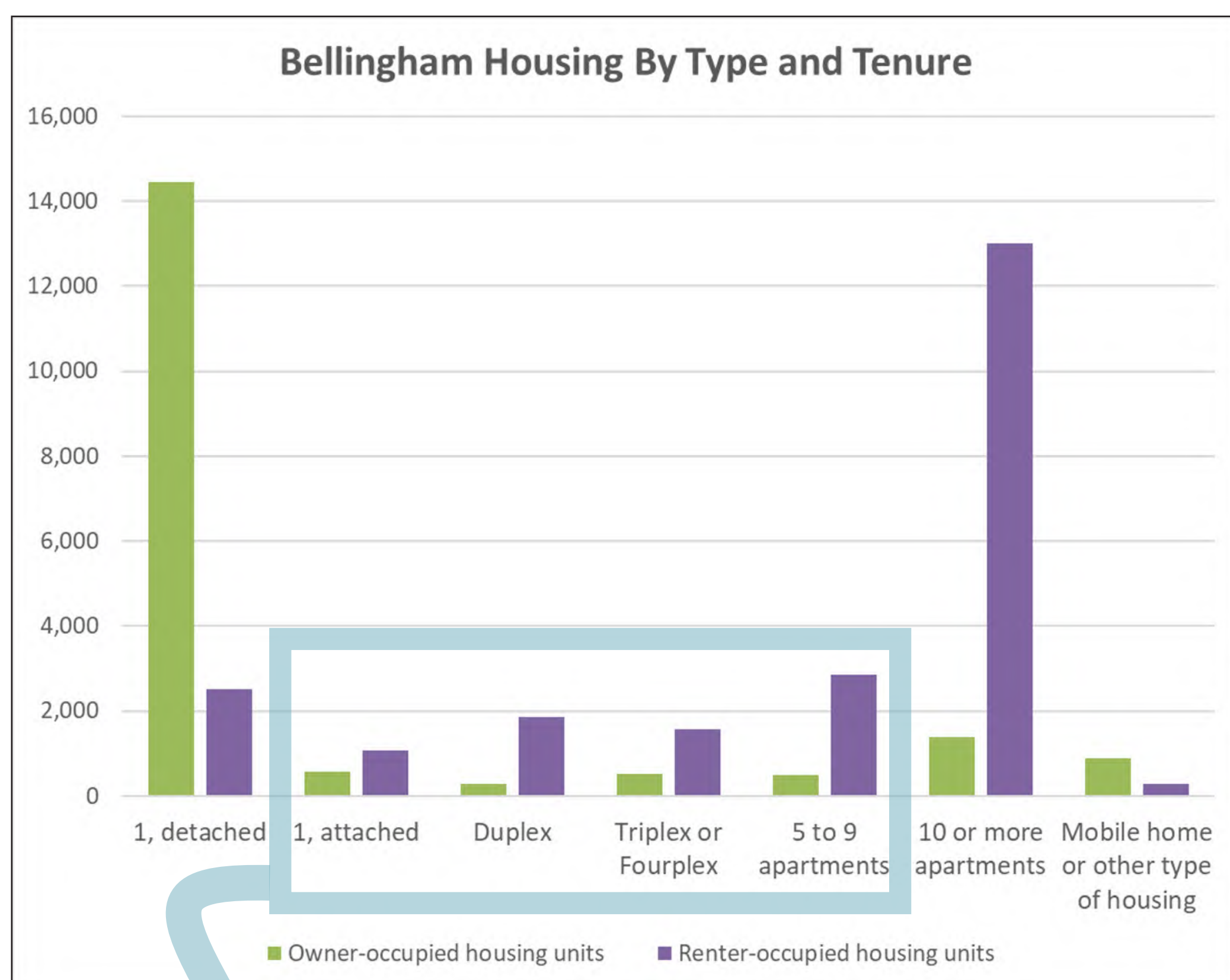
- Establish income-based housing targets.
- Evaluate and update policies and regulations to remove barriers to housing production.
- Ensure adequate capacity and opportunity exist to meet housing needs.
- Identify and address racially disparate impacts like exclusionary zoning that favors single-family detached housing over other housing types.

For a full list of recently passed legislation affecting housing supply, stability and subsidies, scan the QR code at right.



BUILDING TYPES

And housing affordability

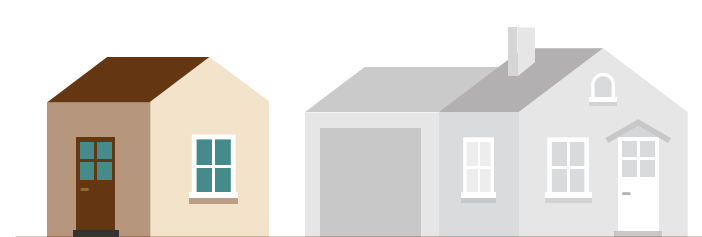


There are very few units in buildings between single family homes and large apartment buildings.

This graph displays the discrepancies in the existing housing stock in Bellingham. As it becomes more viable to build ADUs, triplexes, fourplexes, and even small apartment buildings, we may see more of them throughout the city.

Other unique living situations may become more common as well. Additionally, cooperative or communal living could exist in more traditional buildings forms – both small and large!

Use a sticky note and provide comments on the emerging building types below.



DADU



COTTAGE HOUSE



TOWNHOUSE



CO-OP HOUSING



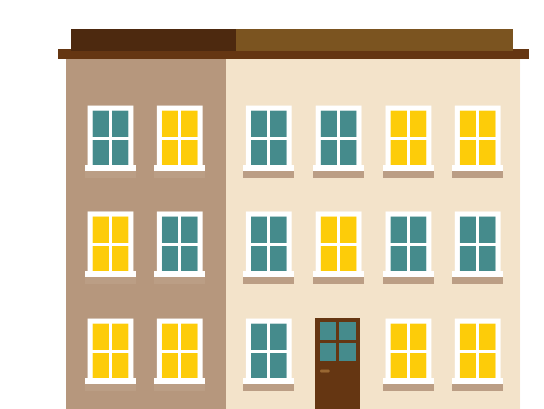
DUPLEX



COURTYARD APARTMENTS



STACKED FLAT



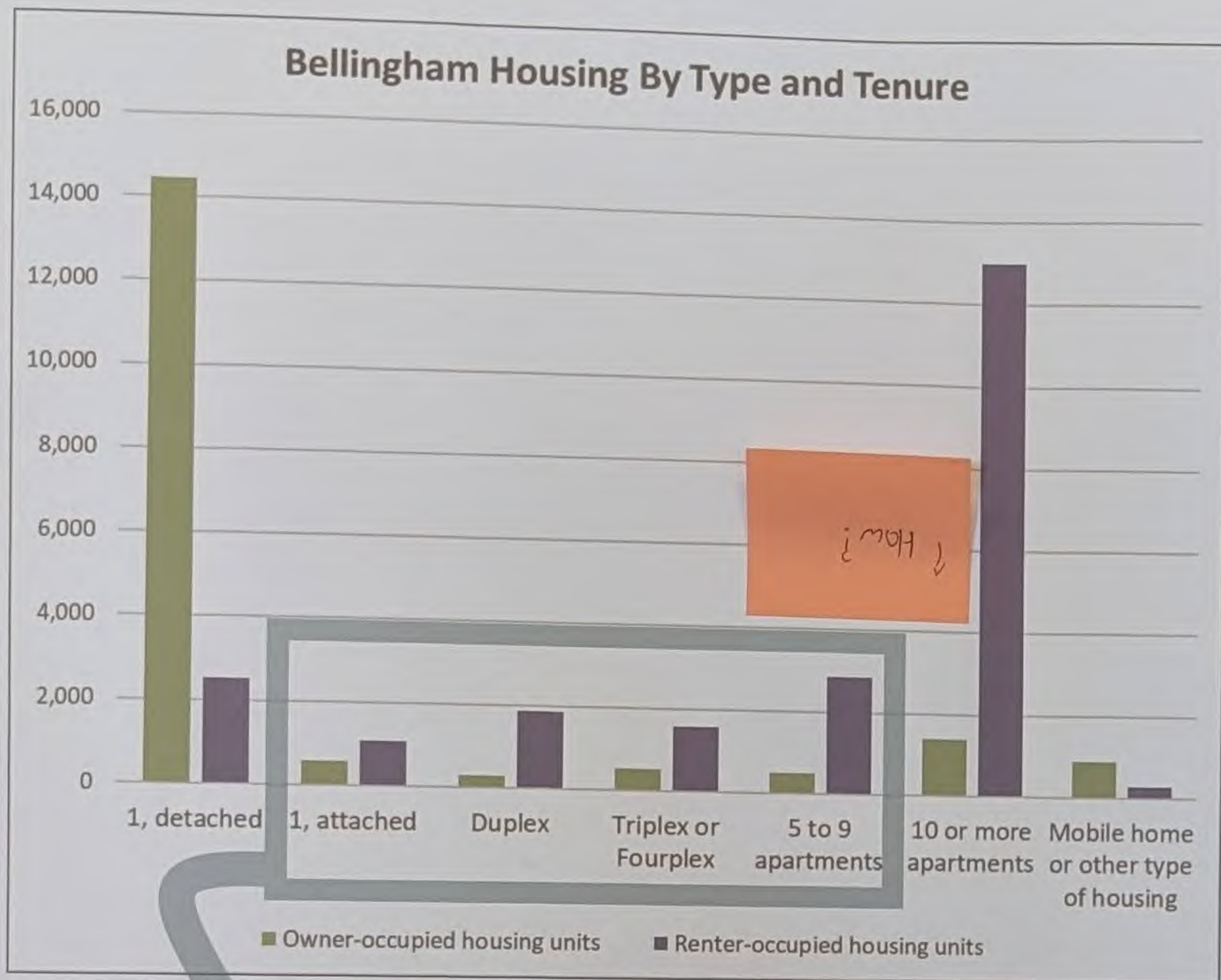
MULTI-UNIT

Or list other housing types below

For more information on current housing statistics, visit cob.org/housingstats

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And housing affordability



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Other unique living situations may become more common as well. Additionally, cooperative or communal living could exist in more traditional buildings forms – both small and large!

Use a sticky note and provide comments on the emerging building types below.



DADU



COTTAGE HOUSE

I'd love more of these for sound issues, but they're so expensive ↓



TOWNHOUSE



CO-OP HOUSING

Yes!

♥



DUPLEX

These are really expensive!!



COURTYARD APARTMENTS



STACKED FLAT

I ♥ stacked flat

I would live here. Seems cool, more space. I'd live here.

yes!



MULTI-UNIT

Or list other housing types below

BUILDING DESIGN STANDARDS

Regulated design standards aim to control the physical characteristics and appearance of a community's housing stock. Many local governments, including Bellingham, have used design requirements to:

- Ensure development fits a desired aesthetic that enhances the public realm.
- Creates a sense of place, and promotes pedestrian activity.
- Integrate infill housing into existing neighborhoods.

Building design standards can include but are not limited to:

Prescribing the use of a certain number and type of **exterior materials**



Requiring building **articulation or modulation** to reduce the apparent size of a building

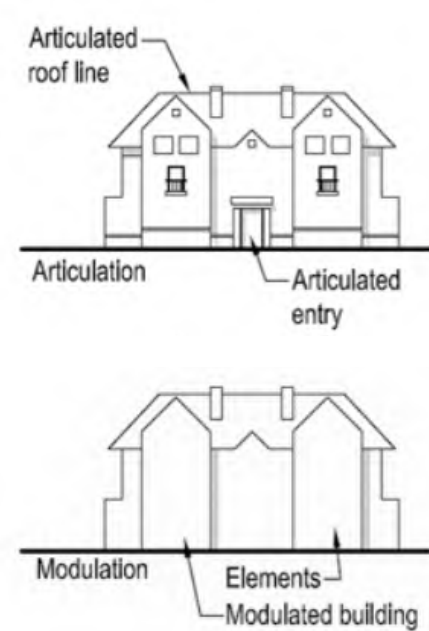
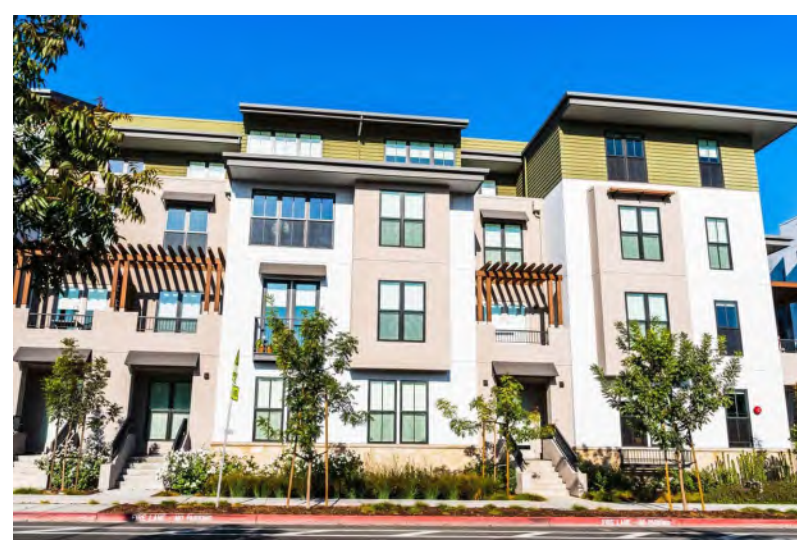


Image source: City of Redmond BMC

Incorporating **architectural details** to provide visual interest at a pedestrian scale (windows, awnings, dormers, trims, balconies, decks, etc.)



Building **orientation** with front porches and entries facing the street



Unique or **varied building segments** to avoid a repetitive or monotonous design.



Image source: RJ Group, Peabody Townhomes


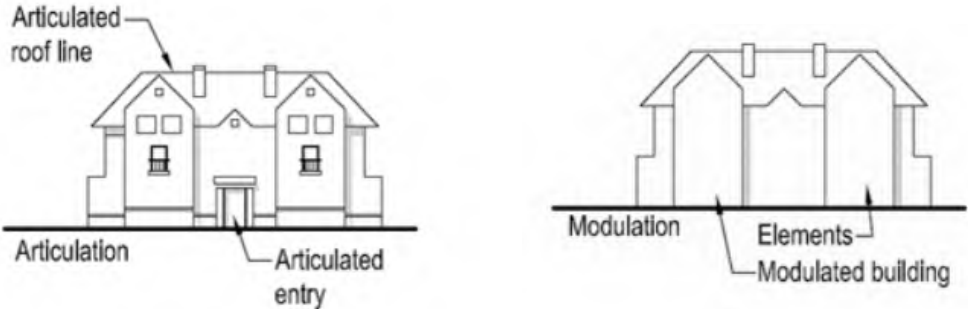



While design standards have been criticized for impacting housing affordability, they have many other important community benefits, such as:

- Addressing crime prevention through environmental design
- Promoting durable materials in our built environment
- Creating well-designed housing that remains desirable over time
- Encouraging more compact, pedestrian-oriented neighborhoods

Did you know? House Bill 1293 streamlines local design review processes, requiring "clear and objective" standards that don't reduce development capacity otherwise allowed. In addition, the process cannot require more than one public meeting.


BUILDING DESIGN STANDARDS

Place a dot on the category of design standards that you think provides the most community benefit:

Exterior materials	Articulation and modulation	Architectural details for visual interest	Building orientation	Unique and varied building segments
				

BUILDING DESIGN STANDARDS

Place a dot on the category of design standards that you think provides the most community benefit:

Exterior materials	Articulation and modulation	Architectural details for visual interest	Building orientation	Unique and varied building segments
 	  	 	 <p>Everyone I know wants south facing windows</p> 	 

Sunsets@Boulevard Park

WWU hosting the
Comp plan open house!

The Brewery

What's your
favorite thing about
Bellingham?

Walkability (+3)

Downtown
Mountains
+
Ocean

30 to 40
(the sea)

SUMMER
TIME!

x2
The sunsets!
-The views

The Arboretum

The people :)

Ocean :)

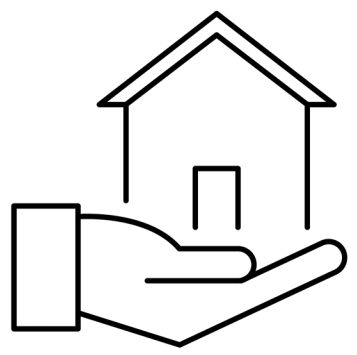
Access to
outdoors

Boulevard
Park

Nature

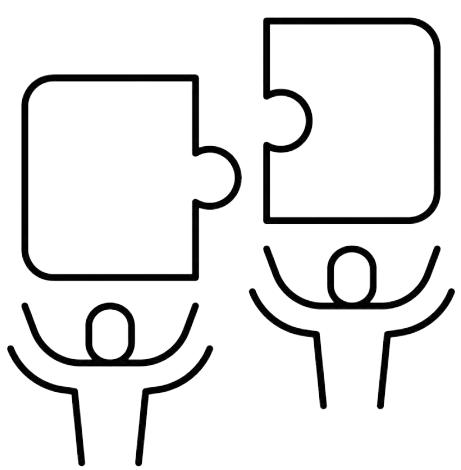
TELL US YOUR STORY

We want to hear...



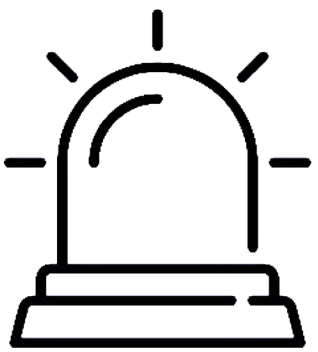
Your Housing Story

Share your housing story and thoughts on what types of housing you would like to see more/less of.



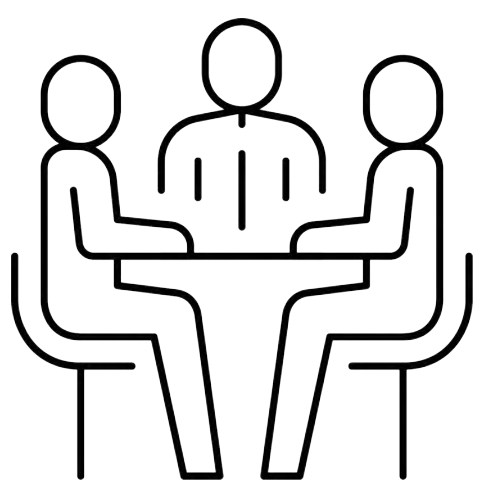
Your Bellingham Story

We want to hear what you love about Bellingham and what you hope for the future of Bellingham.



Your Safety Story

What does safety mean to you? In what context don't you feel safe in Bellingham?



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?



To see all engagement opportunities, register for upcoming events and see information from past events, scan the QR code at the right.

To learn more visit EngageBellingham.org



TELL US ABOUT YOUR EMPLOYMENT

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

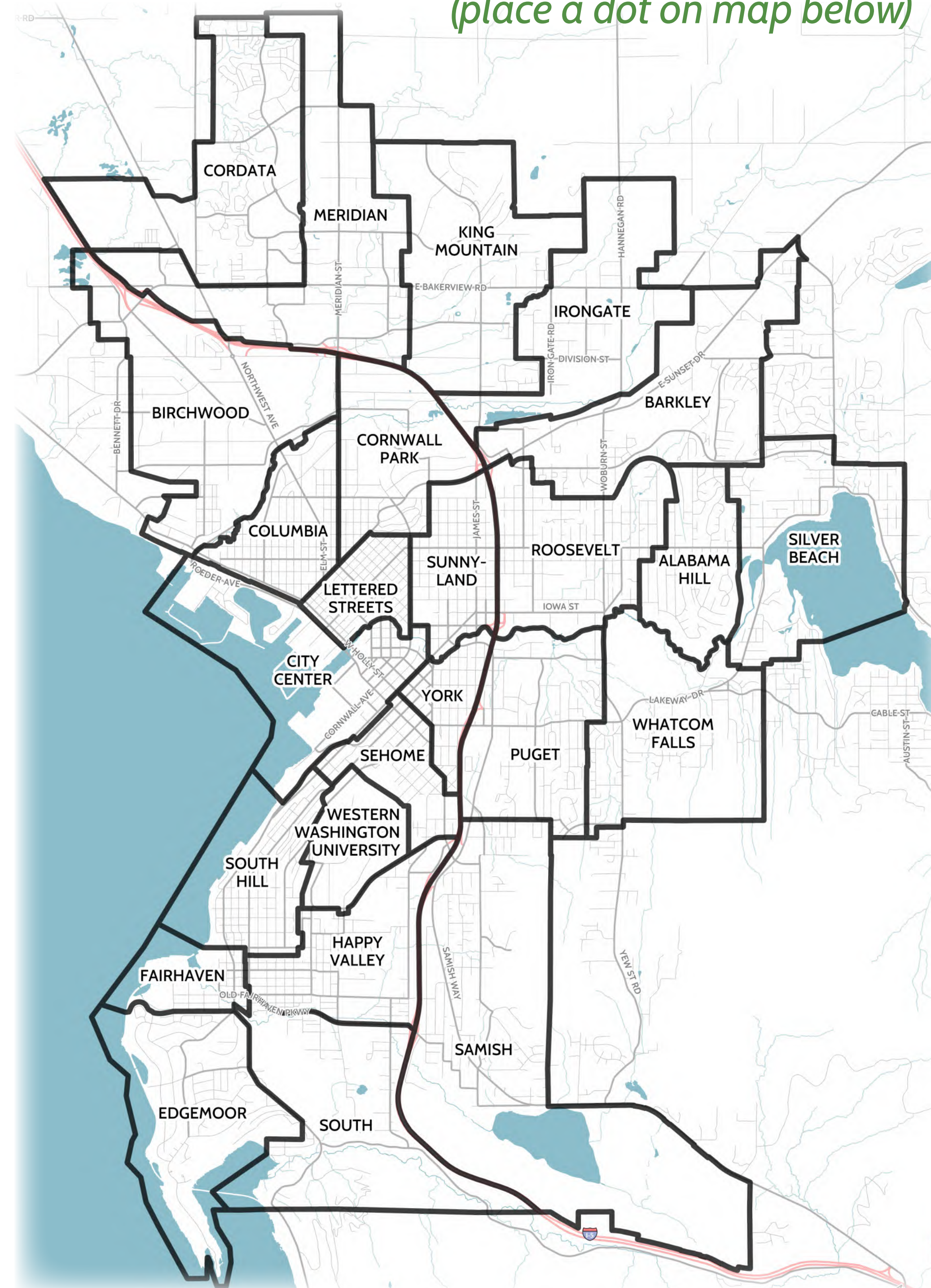
Part-time

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



US ABOUT YOUR EMPLOYMENT

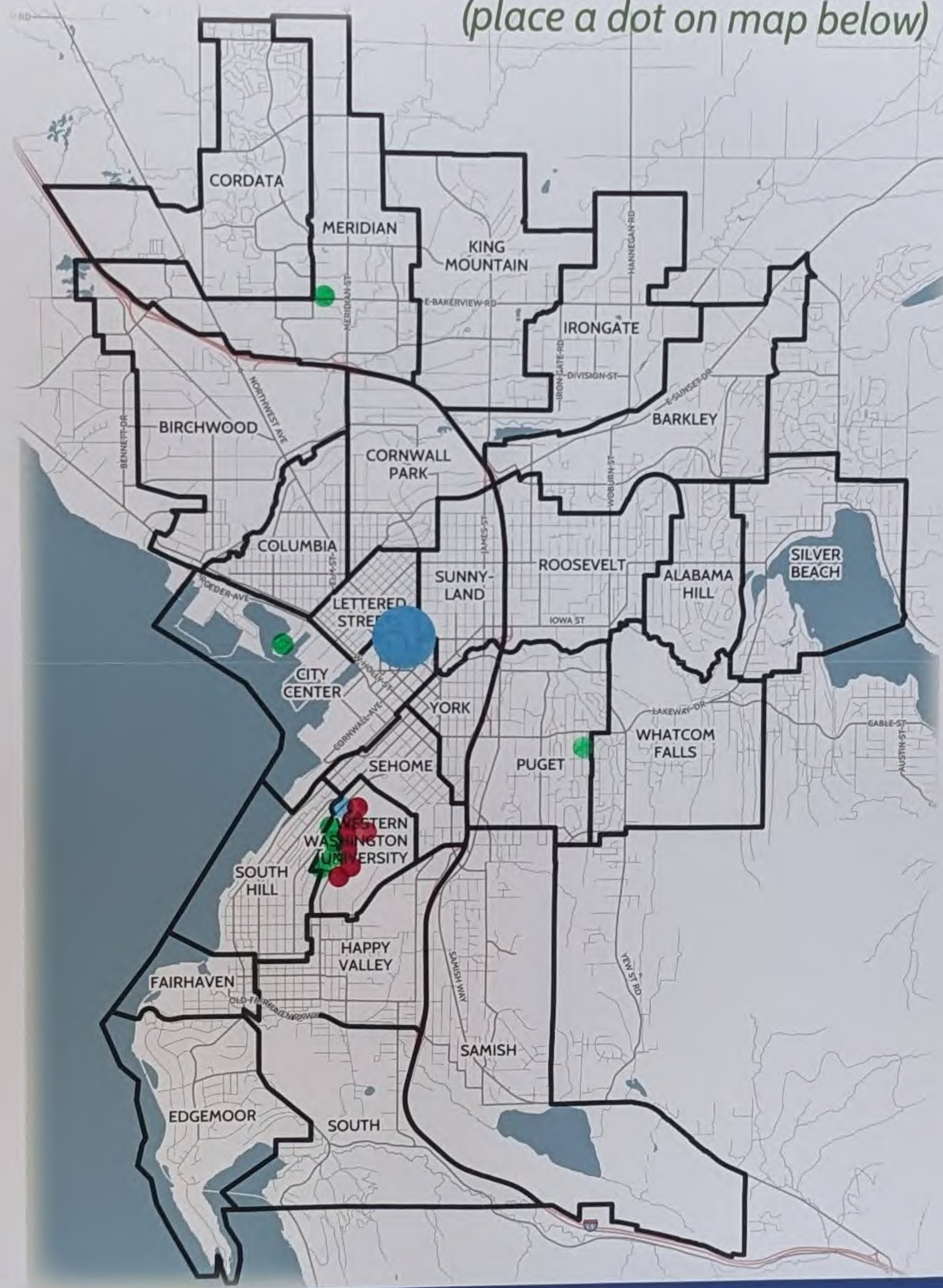
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Part-time

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

DOWNTOWN SAFETY AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT

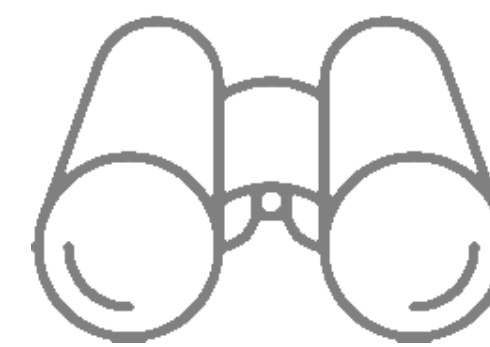
Downtown Bellingham is experiencing the effects of regional and national challenges. The City is addressing these challenges through leading edge programs, creative uses of funding and innovative partnerships.

Addressing the Fentanyl Crisis



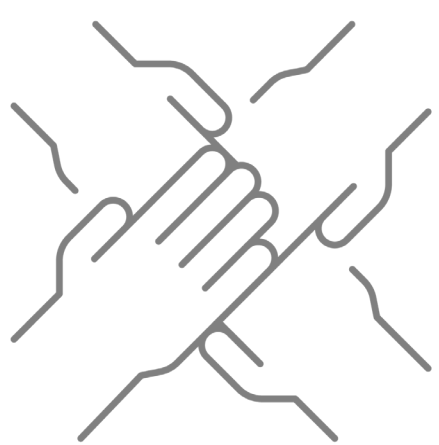
On February 20, 2024, Mayor Kim Lund signed an Executive Order that directs her administration to take immediate actions to address the fentanyl crisis and its negative impacts on the safety and well-being of Bellingham's downtown.

Downtown Safety Patrols



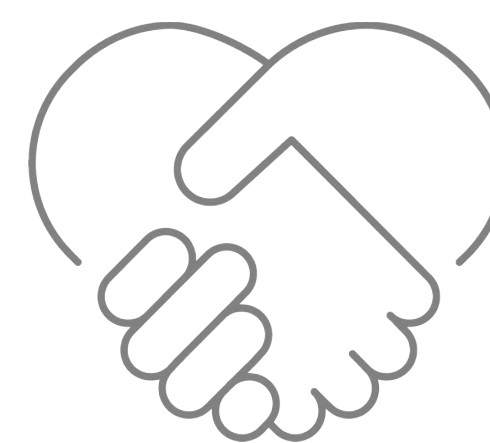
The February 2024 Executive Order directs an increased police presence downtown through additional emphasis patrols and community engagement. The City also hired Risk Solutions Unlimited (RSU), a local private security company, to provide safety patrols within the downtown core, assist in proactively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



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*



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

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?

MAKE SHIFT

PARKS!

MISSING BEACH ACCESS FOR SWIMMING

I feel like I belong in inclusive outside spaces

non-booze places open late

yes

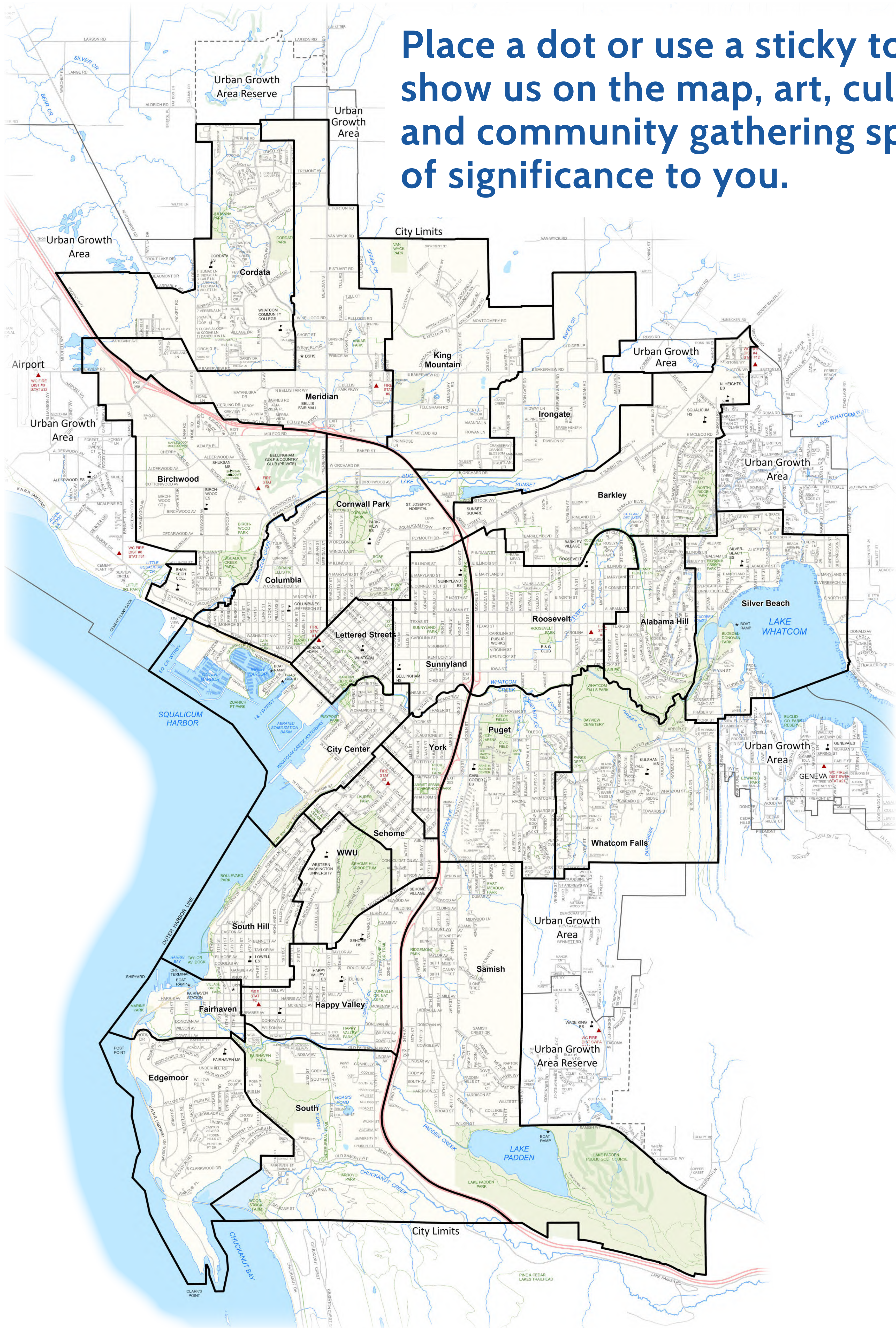
more late-night sober 3rd spaces!

MISSING COMMUNITY CENTER

MAKE SHIFT

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.



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