



To:  
Cc:  
Bcc:  
Subject: Fw: Reminder: Fairhaven Neighborhood and Urban Village meeting tonight, 6:30 FMS

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From: Doug Robertson <doug@belcherswanson.com>  
To: "NOliver@cob.org" <NOliver@cob.org>  
Date: 06/06/2011 01:57 PM  
Subject: RE: Reminder: Fairhaven Neighborhood and Urban Village meeting tonight, 6:30 FMS

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Nicole

Both Robin and I have a conflict this Wednesday. I have spoken with Bill G. and he has a good understanding of our concerns.

In short, the Fairhaven Neighborhood Plan, along with the Urban Village Plan should allow for the utilization of this urban area. The 15 different zoning areas (+/-) should be replaced with the four as proposed by the merchants and property owners. Further, the development regulations for these areas should be simplified and clarified to allow development at least to the extent identified for the urban commercial areas in the Old Town and Samish plans. Our city must accommodate its growth. Fairhaven is the urban area that must be planned to accept higher density development to prevent the need to sprawl. All urban services are right there. Transportation connectivity is in place. Consumer services are available and will need to be promoted if the urban village is to thrive. Subjective goals such as protection of quality of life and protection of undefined views will result in a choking off of development that is needed to service the anticipate growth for our city.

Further, the residential area to the south should be identified to allow the entire tool kit of in-fill alternatives, as well as multi-family. This is a transitional part of the neighborhood and will, in the years to come, act as the connector b/w the SFR neighborhoods of Edgemoor and Fairhaven commercial area.

Finally, design review criteria must be relaxed. We were in Portland this weekend. We walked through both the NW P-town area and the Pearl District. There the urban landscape is vibrant with diverse yet compatible architectural styles. I fear that the restrictive design code we now have is resulting in an almost "Disney-esque" feel: a homogenous style that mimics as style with no character. While the center core may require some restrictions, all the other areas covered by design review must be relaxed to allow a diversity of styles.

Thanks for accepting this input.

Douglas K. Robertson  
Belcher Swanson Law Firm, PLLC  
900 Dupont Street  
Bellingham, WA 98225  
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**From:** NOliver@cob.org [mailto:NOliver@cob.org]

**Sent:** Wednesday, May 25, 2011 12:06 PM

**Subject:** Reminder: Fairhaven Neighborhood and Urban Village meeting tonight, 6:30 FMS

Hello Fairhaven Stakeholder -

Tonight is the 3rd in the public meeting series to gain insight and clarity on elements that will be contained in the Fairhaven Neighborhood and Urban Village Plan. Tonight's meeting will focus on Fairhaven Design Review and historic resources. Fairhaven Middle School, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Please note that the next two meetings, June 8th and June 22nd, will both take place at Fairhaven Middle School as well, same time. Thank you.

Nicole

**Nicole C. Oliver**

Communication Coordinator

Planning & Community Development

City of Bellingham

360.778.8353

[www.cob.org/pcd](http://www.cob.org/pcd)



Re: Fairhaven Urban Village - Height & View Homework Exercise

Pam to: NOliver

06/12/2011 01:24 PM

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History: This message has been replied to.

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Nicole,

If I may, some thoughts on the Multimodal Transportation, Circulation and Parking section of the Fairhaven Neighborhood & Urban Village Plan:

1. I believe a crosswalk (and stop signs?) is needed at Harris Ave and 9th Street. That way, when people/shoppers look west down the block, they see a way to cross over and come back up the other side. Thus, they are more likely to visit shops on both sides
2. I believe that sandwich boards should be permitted in the Urban Village under the new proposed OFA guidelines.
3. I believe "freight movement" should be DISCOURAGED, and Amtrak trains ENCOURAGED!
4. I live on the south side of Cowgill (technically Edgemoor). This is an easy cut-through street between 4th and 12th Streets for bikes, skateboarders, pedestrians (including children and dogs), and, of course, cars. Especially at certain times, the cars go TOO FAST! There should be speed limit signs, and other traffic calming devices such as shallow speed-bumps (as used in neighborhoods in Portland) or three-way stops at intersections.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this project. I think you and the Planning Department are doing a superb job with this challenging update.

Pam Went  
112 Bayside Place  
Bellingham  
Edgemoor Neighborhood Association past Board Member  
Old Fairhaven Association Board Member

On Jun 10, 2011, at 4:39 PM, [NOliver@cob.org](mailto:NOliver@cob.org) wrote:

Hello Fairhaven stakeholders:

Attached is a homework assignment that was distributed at Wednesday night's meeting regarding the Public Realm: Transportation & Streetscapes. Exercise #1 concerned Neighborhood Connections, and focused on missing pedestrian links as well as streetscape amenities.

Our next, and last meeting will focus on the Private Realm: Height and Uses, and will explore development character, including building height, bulk, setbacks, view corridors and uses. In preparation for the meeting, this assignment will help provide you with a first hand understanding of what currently exists in Fairhaven. Please also notice the vacant and underdeveloped parcels, as any new regulations will be especially important to consider for those properties. The map prints on 11X17 but you can shrink the size and print to 8.5X11 if needed.

Feel free to send your responses to me in advance of the meeting, so that I may compile what we receive. We will be starting the June 22nd meeting at Fairhaven Middle School with a discussion of your homework findings. We will have staff available with a 3D model of Fairhaven to assist with our discussion. The goals of the meeting are to:

- Become familiar with existing context of allowed uses and height limits in Fairhaven
- Identify opportunity sites
- Identify key public views
- Discuss potential urban village planning boundary, height limits and allowed uses
- Obtain public input on all of the above.

I look forward to seeing you there, and do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions. As always, see the project website for more details at [www.cob.org/fairhaven](http://www.cob.org/fairhaven).

**Nicole C. Oliver**

Communication Coordinator

Planning & Community Development

City of Bellingham

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[www.cob.org/pcd](http://www.cob.org/pcd)

<2011-06-08-existing-bldg-heights.pdf><building height exercise.doc>



Fairhaven Plan Update - Exercise #2 Homework: Public view corridor , height and bulk

SUSAN KAUN to: Nicole Oliver

06/14/2011 09:17 AM

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History: This message has been replied to.

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TO: Nicole Oliver, Project Manager, Fairhaven Plan Update  
FROM: Susan Kaun, Fairhaven Resident  
DATE: June 14, 2011

SUBJECT: Fairhaven Plan Update - Exercise #2 Homework:

Thank you for the efforts by you and many on Planning Staff to create an inviting and comfortable set of meetings to discuss the Fairhaven Plan; where many stayed to talk even after the meeting officially ended - the mark of successful meetings! Additionally, the 3D map of existing Fairhaven Building Heights is of great assistance in thinking about and answering the 'homework' questions listed below regarding view corridors, heights and bulk of future buildings in Fairhaven.

I'm very sorry to miss the important June 22nd meeting, so I appreciate having this opportunity to provide comment on Exercise #2:

**1. Key public view corridors:**

Because Fairhaven is located on a hillside, curving around and overlooking Bellingham Bay, there are many wonderful views of the Village and the Bay from a great number of public places in the surrounding neighborhoods; as well as stunning views from the water looking up the hill. In order to preserve and protect Fairhaven's special sense of place and connection to the seaside, I believe the future built environment should stair-step down the hillside to the water, by use of a similar height limit for all new buildings.

In my opinion Mill, Harris, and McKenzie Avenues are established view corridors to the water, and no new buildings should be allowed to limit or narrow the existing views along each street down to the water and/or estuary.

In particular I'm concerned about the 20' utility easement in the McKenzie Avenue public right-of-way, between 8th and 9th Streets, which was given away by the Public Works Director in 2005, and added to the property on the north side of McKenzie. It narrows the view corridor at 12th Street. According to the City Charter, only the City Council has the power to make that determination, and therefore, I believe the law was circumvented. I

hope the Planning Department will take the time to look into this matter, as it doesn't seem legal or ethical in my opinion.

Eighth Street was envisioned by the Waterfront Futures Group in 2004 to be closed to vehicle traffic, for use as a protective riparian area for the estuary as well as a trail replacement for the existing trail between McKenzie and Harris Avenues, west of and adjacent to the estuary. The existing trail is too close to the estuary and disrupts its essential function. The Settlement Agreement of 2006 with Fairhaven Harbor, the City and Fairhaven Neighbors provides for the closing of 8th Street. This action will create new public open space and a public view corridor, as well.

## **2. Building heights, bulk, setbacks, entry accessibility, etc:**

The Webster's Desk Dictionary defines village: "1. a small rural community, usually smaller than a town."

In keeping with that definition the height of 35', or up to 54' with Council approval should be the maximum height in the Design Review Core. Bulk, floor-area-ratio, and exterior design of new buildings in the Core should mimic the existing historic buildings as much as possible, so as to enhance rather than diminish the authentic sense of the old village. Example: Fairhaven Gardens, Village Books, and the Waldron Building, although new or extensively remodeled buildings, fit into the existing Village area harmoniously.

The Design Review Influence and Approach Areas should be merged into one Area, because buildings constructed in either area will impact the village and/or the residential area to the south. I would like to see a height limit of 35' with up to 54' maximum with City Council approval, and bulk and exterior design of new buildings in these areas should be compatible with the Core buildings.

The visionary Shoreline Management Act of 1971, 90.58.320 set height limits of 35' on the landward 200' of shorelines of the state "that will obstruct the view of a substantial number of residences on areas adjoining such shorelines....." The same protective measure should be in place for properties in the adjoining Influence and Approach Areas.

During an appeal of the Fairhaven Harbor project in 2006, Historical Architect Michael Sullivan testified that construction of tall and large scale buildings in the Influence and Approach areas would create a 'donut hole' effect, dwarfing the original, authentic village area, and taking away from

the historic sense of place. He stated there are only a few of these original seaside villages remaining on the entire west coast, and they need to be protected.

Except for the brick façade, I don't think the 55-65' tall buildings along 10th Street and Harris Avenue and 10th Street and McKenzie Avenue compliment or enhance the Core in any way -- too tall, too bulky, shaded, windy, and not pleasant to walk near. They've begun to create the 'donut hole' effect -- closing in, overshadowing, and diminishing the older buildings in the nearby Core.

Buildings taller than 54' will also impact the residential area to the south, if they are taller than the treed buffer along Padden Creek and Marsh areas. The Neighborhood Plan of 1980 envisioned development of: "...a linear buffer/pedestrian access route along Larrabee Avenue and Padden Creek to separate commercial, industrial, and residential uses..." If the buildings in the Influence and Approach areas are taller than the buffer, their lights and windows will destroy the existing semi-rural residential character and feel of the neighborhood.

Taller buildings will cast light reflection during the day and lights at night directly into the Padden Creek Estuary, located near 8th Street between Harris Avenue and McKenzie Avenue. Best available science has established that these pocket estuaries are fragile nurseries for the Nooksack River salmonids, and the estuary riparian area needs to be shady and dark in order to provide protection for an at-risk fishery. Great care needs to be taken when planning for construction on either side of the estuary, and buildings and activities should be of low impact development.

The Habitat and Wildlife Assessment conducted by Ann Eissinger, discussed the serious problem of Herons and many birds being killed after striking tall buildings with lots of exterior reflective glass. The Padden Creek Estuary, Marsh and Lagoon area is part of the Pacific Flyway, attractive to numerous bird species, and an alternate feeding and nesting site for the Heron Colony located near Post Point Lagoon.

I respectfully disagree with comments about heights made during the meeting of June 8th, when some in attendance stated Fairhaven should consider the other urban village height limits set at 70'. As yet, those are not developed, successful urban villages, so it seems to me we should not risk the success of Fairhaven's well-established urban village, until those newly planned areas of Bellingham have been developed to the same functioning level as Fairhaven.

I agree with the analysis of our first meeting on the Plan Update on May 10th, which recognized the highest threat to Fairhaven as: "lack of height limits; view blockage; "Manhattanization"; relaxing height limits; (not) keeping and reusing old buildings; modern architecture; loss of character; inappropriate development regulations."

This analysis mirrors the results of the Fairhaven Neighbors Questionnaire of April 24, 2007, which had a 36% response rate of over 1,000 questionnaires mailed out. The demographics of the returned questionnaires indicated 28% were Commercial Owners and/or Commercial Renters, 61% Residential Owners, and 11% Residential Renters.

(Page 10): 12. How would you rate the impact of a 10-story tall building, on or near Mackenzie Ave and 9th Street in Fairhaven, on neighborhood character, appeal and community? Results: The large majority (75%) said the impact of a 10-story building on neighborhood character would be Bad or Very Bad, with just over half (51%) answering Very Bad.

(Page 10): 13. How would you rate the impact of a 10-story tall building on or near Mackenzie Ave and 9th Street in Fairhaven on economic and commercial prosperity in Fairhaven? Results: People were evenly split on the impact of a 10-story building on local prosperity: one third saying the effect would be Good, a third saying Bad, and another saying Neither Good nor Bad.

(Page 11): 14. Do you agree or disagree that there should be a 35-foot height limit in all of the Fairhaven commercial core area ( most of the Fairhaven core already has a 35-foot limit)? Results: The great majority (79%) of people support 35-foot height limits in the Fairhaven core area, with 54% indicating that they Strongly Agree with the 35-foot height limit.

In conclusion, I believe height limits need to be legally and carefully determined by the City Council for every zoning area in the Fairhaven Neighborhood. The issue of height limits has been a contentious subject for over twenty years, and was part of the legal Appeal and Agreement for the Ferry Terminal project in 1988-9 by Concerned Southside Citizens. Unfortunately, the issue was not thoughtfully resolved at that time, and continues to create discord in the community today. Solving the issue should help to re-establish tranquility in this unique neighborhood.

To: City Planning Department

From: Steve Papadakis, Owner Dirty Dan Harris Steakhouse.

Dirty Dan Harris Steakhouse has been an anchor merchant in Fairhaven for 37 years. My wife Kathy and I have had the privilege of owning and operating Dirty Dan's for the past 15 years. The products and services we provide attract a wide spectrum of guests, from multiple demographics, ranging from Seattle to Vancouver B.C. In addition we attract numerous guests from around the world. We also benefit and enjoy a relationship with the local Fairhaven Neighborhoods. However over 97% of our business comes from outside the Fairhaven area. I have spoken to other merchants, who reflect comparable sales data.

The point is that Fairhaven is not only a local business district, but a regional hub, that attracts visitors from a wide demographic. The local Fairhaven neighborhood support, is not sufficient to sustain businesses in Fairhaven. In the years that I have operated my establishment, numerous businesses have opened, and closed within a year or two. One could argue that a poor business model resulted in their failure. In some cases I believe this to be true. However, new businesses need an opportunity for growth and continued economic development will only enhance their chance for success.

In general, there are probably two types of stakeholders in the Fairhaven planning process. The first are a group of residents within and surrounding the core business district. These neighbors have the best of intentions, and a desire to maintain the local flare of Fairhaven. The second type of stakeholders, are the Merchants and Property owners who have made a serious financial investment into the future of Fairhaven. Most of these merchants are small entrepreneurs, such as myself, who have taken financial risks and

stand to gain or lose from their efforts. Not only the Merchant owners, but hundreds of employees depend on the continued economic success of Fairhaven for their livelihoods.

The following are key items that need to be included in the Urban Village Plan to enhance the economic vitality of Fairhaven.

- 1) Adopt a final Urban Village Plan with related Design Standards and development regulations that establish consistency, predictability and easy management of Fairhaven.
- 2) Maximize street parking on all existing right-of-ways within the commercial core. Establish parking structure locations at the core perimeter and other locations.
- 3) Enhance and expand mooring opportunities for visiting boaters.
- 4) Create direct connection from the waterfront to the commercial core.
- 5) Establish clear guidelines to maintain Fairhaven's historic character.
- 6) Preserve, protect and enhance the Padden Creek corridor in cooperation with the residential area.
- 7) Extend the Village Core zoning down Harris Avenue from 10<sup>th</sup> Street to 4<sup>th</sup> Street, so that the south side of Harris is encouraged to meet the market demand for a wide range of uses.
- 8) The final Urban Village product should encourage investment, and maintain its historical characteristics.
- 9) Encourage urban densities in the Village residential areas immediately adjacent to the commercial core. Protect the residential

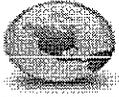
character of the areas south and west of Padden Creek by including it within the UVP boundary, and permitting use of the new city infill zoning criteria.

10) Permit building heights equal to heights previously built in historic Fairhaven buildings.

Thank you for your consideration,

*Steve N. Papadakis*

Steve Papadakis, Owner  
Dirty Dan Harris Steakhouse  
1211 11<sup>th</sup> St.  
Bellingham, Wa 98225  
360-676-1011



RE: Fairhaven Urban Village - Height & View Homework Exercise  
Josseyln to: NOliver

06/20/2011 08:18 PM

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Nichole

Since we have already talked about sidewalks, I wanted to send another segment that is needed.

On the west side of 11<sup>th</sup> as you travel from town towards Fairhaven and past the *Welcome to Fairhaven* sign along Finnegan we need a sidewalk.

Thanks you – and for all of the work you and the others are doing.

Josselyn Winslow

**From:** NOliver@cob.org [mailto:NOliver@cob.org]

**Sent:** Friday, June 10, 2011 4:39 PM

**To:** undisclosed-recipients:

**Subject:** Fairhaven Urban Village - Height & View Homework Exercise

Hello Fairhaven stakeholders:

Attached is a homework assignment that was distributed at Wednesday night's meeting regarding the Public Realm: Transportation & Streetscapes. Exercise #1 concerned Neighborhood Connections, and focused on missing pedestrian links as well as streetscape amenities.

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Feel free to send your responses to me in advance of the meeting, so that I may compile what we receive. We will be starting the June 22nd meeting at Fairhaven Middle School with a discussion of your homework findings. We will have staff available with a 3D model of Fairhaven to assist with our discussion. The goals of the meeting are to:

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I look forward to seeing you there, and do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions. As always, see the project website for more details at [www.cob.org/fairhaven](http://www.cob.org/fairhaven).

**Nicole C. Oliver**

Communication Coordinator

Planning & Community Development

City of Bellingham  
360.778.8353  
[www.cob.org/pcd](http://www.cob.org/pcd)

To: Nicole Oliver, City of Bellingham Planning Dept.  
Re: Fairhaven Urban Village Planning Process  
Responses to Exercise #2:

I am very familiar with Fairhaven, having had a business on 11<sup>th</sup> St. for the past 20 years and owning two commercial properties in Fairhaven.

Public view corridors:

13<sup>th</sup> to bay – Mill, Harris, McKenzie

Need to protect our view corridors not repeat what happened with buildings at 10<sup>th</sup> and Harris, one of which was built into the right of way forever blocking a part of the public's beautiful view.

Relate to the Street – 11<sup>th</sup> St. Knox to McKenzie and Harris, 12<sup>th</sup> to E. side of 10<sup>th</sup>, I feel hold together best as whole “blocks” – there is variation in heights and styles while the buildings maintain a pedestrian friendly scale. In the heart of the village (11<sup>th</sup> and Harris) are two businesses not in commercial “buildings,” the red double decker bus “fish and chips” restaurant and the simple wooden garden “shed” housing a garden shop. I know it is unrealistic to expect that such charming structures will survive, but I appreciate this village aspect and it's one of the reasons 11<sup>th</sup> and Harris is one of my favorite parts of Fairhaven. Perhaps we should allow some village friendly setbacks from the sidewalk, especially on corner lots.

One glaring example of poor relationship to the street and pedestrians is the N. side of McKenzie Sq. (along McKenzie). It is a windowless, concrete wall that is not pedestrian friendly or an attractive building façade.

Building Heights, Bulk, Topography

Fairhaven village with its eye friendly red brick, with buildings nearly touching one another, tucked to expansive sidewalks, remains precious to us partly for its historic buildings that are functioning in new ways today, but also because it holds together as a village. The scale of most buildings is human friendly, not dwarfing the pedestrian walking from shop to shop. Most buildings occupy one or two lots, only two (that I identify) of the historic buildings are built on more than two lots – Sycamore Square and the Waldron. This aspect of scale has been changing with recent buildings that occupy half a block and more – Harris Square, McKenzie Square, and Fairhaven Gardens are the largest of the new buildings and represent a change in design from the existing village. With this new trend, buildings are not only taller but loom larger because they are taller AND have a massive footprint (bulk).

The Historic Preservation Commission, in an effort to address this “bulk” issue, required some changes to the facade of Fairhaven Gardens along 11<sup>th</sup> St to make the four-lot building appear to be three different buildings. This alteration works and along 11<sup>th</sup> St. the building appears more to scale with then existing Fairhaven than either Harris Square or McKenzie Square.

When looking at the Harris Street profile on the handout provided, the new buildings on 10<sup>th</sup> alter the previously existing pattern of buildings following the hill slope. Excepting the public housing building and the Waldron, these new buildings are also our tallest. An important feature of a hill slope is that, if properly built, uphill views are maintained as new buildings are built downhill and the natural contour of the slope is preserved. The proposed Fairhaven plan addresses this important issue by requiring that buildings follow the slope of the hill.

If the historic core is to remain the “heart” of Fairhaven, buildings there should remain our tallest. If tall, massive buildings are built on Harris as it descends to the sea, or if they are built in the approach areas (think of Finnegan at 11<sup>th</sup> and at Mill, Larrabee, Donovan) the historic core will feel like the hole in a doughnut instead of the vibrant “heart” of this village.

With demands of the building code and costs of building, it is understandable why buildings are growing larger, not only taller. However, if we continue developing Fairhaven in this way, we are redefining Fairhaven and it no longer will have the characteristics of a village, which make it distinctive and charming. A public parking structure could possibly assist with smaller developments by housing their parking requirements, similar to the parking district we have in place, but with sufficient dedicated parking spaces.

Height restrictions and views are a sensitive issue. Whenever a building is built it changes the landscape and alters views. However, maintaining certain standards ensures that all property owners are equally protected and treated. Where we have had height restrictions in place, they have served us well. Harris Sq. and McKenzie Sq. were outside of the height limitations for the rest of Fairhaven, which is why they could build the tallest new buildings in the village and why they are the new buildings that don't “fit” with the existing village.

As an owner of a new building along Finnegan Way, in an area restricted to 35 feet from sidewalk, I am concerned about any increase in building heights in this area. Along Finnegan Way /12<sup>th</sup> St. and 11<sup>th</sup> St. north of Mill, 5 buildings have been built recently, all adhering to the 35 foot limit except Fairhaven Gardens which was granted a variance. Because of the slope, most buildings restricted to 35' above the mean sidewalk average are already TALLER than 35' (Fairhaven Gardens 41', Triple I building – 43', Fairhaven Bike & Ski- 37').

To the West of 11<sup>th</sup> St. lies the “parking pit” which is one of the last large pieces of undeveloped land in the historic area, nearly 2/3 of a block. If this property is developed according to the plan in place at this time, the building can, with proper design, fit into the village and residents of Fairhaven Gardens (4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> floors) and we will look over the new structure to see the bay and islands. If height limits are raised, I foresee another massive development like Harris Square, destroying the village ambiance and our property values.

Another large under-developed parcel is along 12<sup>th</sup> between Harris and Mill. Under current zoning, any new structures cannot exceed 35' from the sidewalk. This significant property is half a block and along the arterial entrance to Fairhaven. Imagine the impact a McKenzie Sq. would have in this place, not only height, but the mass of a block large building. Views are not the only issue with height. Shadowing the sidewalks and adjacent buildings (the "wall" effect) as well as feeling out of proportion with the rest of Fairhaven are other impacts of raising height limits.

Thank you for your consideration,  
Barbara Zielstra

RECEIVED

JUN 22 2011

City of Bellingham  
Planning

## JACARANDA LAND & DEVELOPMENT

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1305 11<sup>th</sup> St.  
Bellingham, WA 98225  
(360) 752 3357  
bsimus@gmail.com

June 21, 2011

Jeff Thomas  
Planning and Community Development Department  
210 Lottie St.  
Bellingham, WA 98225

Jeff,

Jacaranda has been actively involved in the development of Fairhaven's commercial core for almost forty years. Starting with The Mason Bldg. (Sycamore Square) in 1972 we have restored many of the districts historic buildings, as well as developed new infill properties such as The Village Inn hotel. We have strived to maintain the districts historic character and ambience, adding to it wherever possible. We are responsible for much of what people say they enjoy about the area. All told we currently own seven commercial buildings, along with several sizable parcels of vacant land.

For many (waay too many) years businesses in Fairhaven came and went so quickly that it was difficult to keep track. The local market simply wasn't enough to support them, but we continued to invest our time and money hoping that we could broaden the appeal of the area and attract more visitors. It wasn't until the mid to late '90s that Fairhaven seemed to reach that critical mass that allowed businesses to reliably prosper.

Two major contributors towards this were the opening of the Cruise Terminal in 1989 and the implementation of the parking district in 1995. The Cruise Terminal gave Fairhaven additional exposure to people from outside the local area. The parking district provided more parking for those out of town visitors, and by removing most on-site parking requirements it facilitated construction of many additional infill buildings, creating the compact core we now have.

While there are many important 'quality of living' items that need to be looked at in the new Neighborhood and Urban Village Plan, we can't ignore those that are important to the economic viability of Fairhaven, such as the ability to expand upon the current parking district and building height and design issues. We need to maintain the historic character of Fairhaven, but should be allowed to compete on even ground with all other districts in the city- too many/too restrictive regulations put us at a disadvantage. It has to make sense to a developer to spend their time and money- too many regulations and they'll go elsewhere.

Fairhaven today has become much more than a local neighborhood center- it has grown into a regional market serving NW Washington, lower BC and beyond. With its diversity- the commercial core, working waterfront and residential areas, Fairhaven is the urban village that other Bellingham business districts aspire to be. We care very much about Fairhaven and its future and hope that the new Neighborhood and Urban Village Plan will be written in a way that will allow businesses in Fairhaven to continue to prosper, and will help to encourage continued investment and improvement of Fairhaven for the benefit of all.

Sincerely,

Brad Imus  
Jacaranda Land & Development Corp.

# FAIRHAVEN VILLAGE ASSOCIATION

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1305 11<sup>th</sup> St  
Bellingham, WA 98225

Brad Imus, President  
752-3357  
bsimus@gmail.com

Phyllis McKee, Treasurer  
676-5278  
jonasson@aol.com

RECEIVED

JUN 22 2011

City of Bellingham  
Planning

June 21, 2011

Jeff Thomas  
Planning and Community Development Department  
210 Lottie St.  
Bellingham, WA 98225

Jeff,

The Fairhaven Village Association (FVA) was established by commercial property owners and merchants to preserve and promote the Fairhaven Business District, and to administer the operation of a parking and business improvement area within the district.

In 1994 a public/private partnership was established between the City of Bellingham and the FVA for the purpose of improving on-street parking facilities in Fairhaven. The City adapted "Area-Wide Parking Plan" allowed the FVA to privately develop parking utilizing COB rights-of-way, along with additional parking improvements COB made on its own. It also phased out certain on-site parking requirements.

This parking district has been crucial in the success of Fairhaven- without it Fairhaven might still be little more than a handful of old buildings with a bunch of vacant lots between them. Or parking lots between them. By creating new on-street parking throughout the district, and removing requirements for on-site parking for most types of new construction, it opened the doors for many new infill buildings that have helped create the compact, pedestrian friendly core we have today.

As long as the automobile is our prime means of transportation, we need to accommodate it for the health of the area businesses. Expanding upon the existing parking agreement to maximize the use of existing rights-of-ways for on-street parking, and exploring options for future parking needs such as locations for periphery parking lots or parking structures must be included in the new Urban Village Plan. The FVA looks forward to working with the City to this end.

Sincerely,



Brad Imus  
President FVA

# FAIRHAVEN URBAN VILLAGE PLAN DEVELOPMENT / REDEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

1. Harris / 12<sup>th</sup> Street block – gas station and old train car site
2. Harris / 9<sup>th</sup> / McKenzie / 8<sup>th</sup> block – vacant land
3. Harris / 6<sup>th</sup> / Larrabee / Padden Creek block – Haskell property
4. Harris / 6<sup>th</sup> SW corner
5. West of 10<sup>th</sup> between Knox and Douglas – Reid Boiler Works
6. East of 10<sup>th</sup> between Mill and Knox
7. West of 10<sup>th</sup> and Mill – adjacent Village Inn
8. Corner of Mill / 12<sup>th</sup> – lot south of Library
9. East of Haggen Store to 14<sup>th</sup>

## General Areas & redevelopment potential

10. Multifamily zone sw of 13<sup>th</sup> / Knox to Finnegan Way
11. 12<sup>th</sup> / Larrabee / 14<sup>th</sup> / Donovan block
12. SW corner 12<sup>th</sup> / Donovan
13. 12<sup>th</sup> / Mill SW corner – bank site
14. Infill residential opportunities per new City code BMC 20.28

Prepared in cooperation with Fairhaven commercial property owners, Old Fairhaven Association (merchants) and Fairhaven Village Association

By Bill Geyer, AICP, Geyer & Associates, Inc.

June 22, 2011

## FOUNTAIN DISTRICT

**Table .230-A: Development Standards**

Development Standards	Area			
	Commercial Core	Commercial Transition	Residential Transition	
			BMC 20.28 Infill Housing	BMC 20.30 Residential Single Development
Minimum lot size	None	None	(1)	5,000 SF
Maximum Density	None	None	2,500 SF per unit	5,000 SF per unit
Setbacks from property lines	None (3)	None (1, 2)	(1)	(2)
Maximum Height	45' (4, 5)	35' (4)	(1)	(2)
Maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR)	1.5 (5)	.6 FAR	(1)	N/A

**Notes:**

- (1) Subject to BMC 20.28 Infill Housing
- (2) Subject to BMC 20.30 Residential Single Development.
- (3) See Subsection C.2 for setback and height adjacent residential zones and areas.
- (4) Height is measured per Height Definition #1 as per BMC 20.08.020 H 1 (a).
- (5) See Figure 210-A, for Commercial Core "opportunity site." Maximum Height shall be 55' and a maximum FAR of 2.5.

## SAMISH WAY

**Table 130-A: Standard Development Regulations**

Development Standards	Area						
	Commercial Core	Commercial Approach	Commercial Transition 1	Commercial Transition 2	Residential Transition Areas		
					BMC 20.29 Infill Housing	BMC 20.30 Residential Single Development	BMC 20.32 Residential Multi Development
Minimum lot size	None	None	None	None	(1)	5,000 SF	5,000 SF
Maximum Density	None	None	None	None	2,000 SF per unit	5,000 SF per unit	2,000 SF per unit
Setbacks from property lines	None (4)	None (4)	None (4)	None (4)	(1)	(2)	(3)
Maximum Height	75' (5)	75' (5)	45' (5)	55' (5)	(1)	(2)	(3)
Maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR)	2.5, up to 3.5 (6)	2.5, up to 3.5 (6)	2.5, up to 3.5 (6)	2.5, up to 3.5 (6)	(1)	N/A	N/A

**Notes:**

- (1) Subject to BMC 20.29 Infill Housing and Section 130 C, and D.
- (2) Subject to BMC 20.30 Residential Single Development and Section 130 C, and D.
- (3) Subject to BMC 20.32 Residential Multi Development and Section 130 C, and D.
- (4) See Subsection C.2 and C.3 below for applicable setbacks when adjacent to residential zones or areas.
- (5) Height is measured per Height Definition #1. A building may be divided into modules and stepped with height measured on a per module basis in response to topography on sloping property.
- (6) See Subsection B.2, below for FAR standards and bonus criteria.



12th Street Shoes  
1204 Harris Avenue  
Bellingham, WA 98225  
360-733-2066  
[www.12thstreetshoes.com](http://www.12thstreetshoes.com)

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June 22, 2011

Planning and Community Development Department  
210 Lottie St.  
Bellingham, WA 98225

Attn: Mr. Jeff Thomas

Dear Mr. Thomas,

I am writing to voice my opinions in the Fairhaven Neighborhood and Urban Village Planning process. I own 12<sup>th</sup> Street Shoes, a business that has been in Fairhaven for the past 12 years. I also live within walking distance to Fairhaven in the South Hill neighborhood. I absolutely adore Fairhaven and am very devoted to the future of the district. I am very active in the Merchant's Association, currently serving as Vice President of the OFA.

I am very concerned for the future of Fairhaven and this Urban Village Plan. My livelihood is dependent on the economic viability of the district. Fairhaven should be considered as a district that serves more than just the local community in Bellingham. 12<sup>th</sup> Street Shoes' business is supported by many outside of Whatcom County, accounting for approximately 25% of our customer base. Many of these are repeat customers, coming from Canada and the Seattle area. We also serve tourists that are visiting Fairhaven for the first time. Although the majority of our customers are locals, please do not discount the growing numbers for visitors from outside Whatcom County. Fairhaven is rapidly becoming a major tourist destination, as can be seen in the many articles written about this area in national publications.

I also have concerns for growth in our district. Personally, I would like to see the vacant lots developed but done so in a controlled manner. I believe the heights of the buildings should stay consistent, maintaining balance. I am more concerned for the overall "look" of the buildings. Fairhaven has many beautiful buildings from the 1800's and I would like to see that flavor carried over into any new construction so the district blends. Signage should also be addressed in this plan. I have previously submitted a proposal for

To: Nicole Oliver, Project Manager, Fairhaven Neighborhood Plan Update  
Date: June 22, 2011

As a "Fairhaven Stakeholder" in an immediately adjacent neighborhood, I am grateful for the opportunity to weigh in during the planning update for the Fairhaven Neighborhood. Most of the residents who enjoy life in the southside neighborhoods consider Fairhaven to be their Urban Village and are regular supporters of businesses there. The atmosphere and the overall feel of the place is a large part of what makes it so inviting, and so it is natural that we are concerned and have thoughts about its development future, and it is appropriate that our thoughts be included in this process. Thank you.

During the appeal of the Fairhaven Harbor project during 2006, I took the opportunity to attend all of the hearings and listened carefully to the considerable amount of professional and informative testimony. Unlike the Hearing Examiner, I came away with a very different conclusion and a clear sense of what was appropriate for a community such as this one: I firmly believe that the height limit of 35' to 54' with City Council approval, should be the maximum height permitted in the design review core of Fairhaven. Unlike some of our other developing urban villages, this area is defined, in fact marketed, celebrating its historic buildings. To overwhelm them with much larger, and towering taller ones is completely inappropriate in my opinion. In fact, though we grow used to them, I still find both Harris and McKenzie Squares too tall, bulky and imposing. In addition, tall buildings will most certainly affect view corridors looking to the north from Edgemoor, and conceivable from other angles as well. I understand wind and light and other environmental impacts from overly large buildings would impact wildlife in our greenway areas, as well as, of course, human beings who live in or near our beloved Fairhaven.

I am fully aware that there are opposing opinions from those who wish to profit from development in this neighborhood. That is understandable, and they are entitled to their opinions. But they are not entitled to have their opinions overwhelm the process, or push aside the opinions of the vast majority of citizens who live here and support the merchants and restaurants and other services offered in the Fairhaven business district. Please be sure to refer to the results from the questionnaire sent out by the neighborhood association to every single possible stakeholder at the beginning of this challenging plan update. If I remember correctly, it had quite a statistically significant response rate and represented a broad range of those who care about Fairhaven. Let their voices be heard.

June 24, 2011

Memo to: Jeff Thomas, Planning Director &  
Nicole Oliver, planning staff

Regarding: Fairhaven Plan

From: Connie Shannon  
Fairhaven Village Inn LLC  
1200-10<sup>th</sup> S., Bellingham, WA 98225

**Fairhaven is not to be preserved like a pickle.**

This Village core plan must create a distinction about what requires “preservation” and what requires “vitalization”. Some wish to essentially prevent development and the other attempts to “give strength and energy” to the Fairhaven Village business core. While preservation of important elements such as historic structures and services such as the library are laudable, it is not possible to “preserve” the commercial core in a point in time and expect that the core will remain vital. I am not a professional planner, but simple history of growth of any community shows that communities need to grow and adapt over time to remain vital.

Without the ability or will to do so, the community languishes as Fairhaven has done in the not-so-distant past. Some want to preserve Fairhaven like a pickle. They advocate for all manners of restrictions, corridors, and limits to height, build and design. If they succeed, I fear business like mine will fail.

We are pleased to have owned and managed the Fairhaven Village Inn since 2004. The Inn building also contains 5 retail spaces, which we lease out. Additionally, we own the development lot to the north of the Inn whose footprint is similar in size to the Inn itself.

Since 2004, we have increased employees from one full-time person to 7 full time positions while occupancy at the hotel has nearly doubled. The retail spaces at the Inn are now home to a creperie, bar a jewelry store and collectibles shop. The Inn itself was built in 1999 as an early seed in the growth of Fairhaven’s newest revitalization. In our time in Fairhaven, several other building sites have been developed in Fairhaven with mixed residential commercial uses. While most of these new residents are not guests at the Inn, they do eat at the restaurants, they buy at the shops and they contribute to the city’s health and well-being.

The new buildings themselves have accommodated many new businesses that became major contributors to the look and feel of the village. Guests of the Inn come to Fairhaven in large measure because of the interesting shops and restaurants. The Visitors Bureau documented that visitor spend about \$150 a day on things like entertainment, fish and chips, books and cupcakes. This is money coming directly into the city with very little impact to city services. They come, spend money, have a good time, and then leave.

I can tell you that the Fairhaven business community is committed but stands on a fragile commercial underlay. For example, a cupcake shop can easily relocate to any number of other locations in Bellingham or Whatcom County. If Fairhaven cannot offer the affordable locations and traffic needed, these merchants will move—of necessity—to retain their livelihood. Without facilities, arterials, and possibility to expand, grow and attract other interesting businesses and residents, the businesses in Fairhaven will not be sustainable for very long.

*Does COB planning understand what this “delicate ecosystem” requires to be vital?*

(More)

### **Process Recommendations**

I am frustrated by the City of Bellingham's (COB) lack of dedication to engaging planners of substantial expertise into Fairhaven as was done for the neighborhoods of Samish Way and Fountain District. Much time and effort is wasted in unproductive and unprofessional mucking about by those disqualified to complete the task. I would think the planning department should be embarrassed by the continuing lack of clear vision and effective process that's been going on in Fairhaven now for three years.

### **Fairhaven - a Tier one designation**

The COB comprehensive plan submitted to the state identifies Fairhaven as Tier 1 for residential growth. As result of primarily condo residential development in the urban core and retail/restaurant space in the past 10 years, hundreds of people now live in the core; some of them work at the Fairhaven Village Inn. Because more people live, work and play here, the core has experienced new life that is well worth sustaining. It should continue to be allowed to develop organically. Additionally, our core serves a broad market – Fairhaven surrounding neighborhoods, Whatcom County, regional 100-mile area, and international visitors like those from Canada, Australia, and China. It solidly supports the transportation hub commitments for the Port of Bellingham (POB) and the Alaska State Ferry, COB bus system and several private local transport buses (Airporter), taxis, San Juan Cruises, as well as services to Coast Guard vessels.

A parking facility should be supported by the COB in the "landlocked" geography of Fairhaven. Property tax and sales tax figures for Fairhaven reveal the major contributions made by the Fairhaven Village Inn hotel and more than 150 new passionate entrepreneurs as well as established long- time businesses.

### **Interdependence of the core:**

Fairhaven's geographic location requires a substantial committed public partnership with the POB to increase access for individuals, watercraft and business.

### **Height, view and design considerations:**

Building heights should be permitted to the 70-foot range, as was the iconic Fairhaven Hotel. For those whose intention is to truly "preserve" this should be acceptable. Reduce the height of new development with in one block of POB property to 55 feet. View corridors should be developed using connected and adjacent public rights-of-way to achieve bay and mountain views. (Note: Fairhaven pictures from 1960's & 1970's show lots of "view corridors" and plenty of parking in and around the empty and dilapidated buildings.)

The POB has substantial property with the possibility of develop to any height. To best ensure the vitality of Fairhaven, the core plan should anticipate POB development that might well is in the 4-story range or higher if and when it happens.

Finally, the approach of attempting to "preserve" Fairhaven with a snapshot in time cannot sustain it.

A village is not a pickle!

There are many exciting possibilities of new vitality in Fairhaven. To achieve them requires--and deserves--a comprehensive, predictable plan that builds in the flexibility for the commercial community to respond to the times.



FW: Fairhaven Neighbors Cancel Effort for Joint Planning  
Doug Robertson to: NOliver@cob.org

07/14/2011 02:50 PM

History: This message has been forwarded.

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Nicole,

First, please include this in the public comment file for the Fairhaven Urban Village project  
Second, would you pass this on to Je. He has not been blessed with the entire last four years of "process"  
but this is a continuation of what is going on  
The OFA and FVA will continue to work cooperatively on all Fairhaven issues but there are impediments

Thanks

Douglas K. Robertson  
Belcher Swanson Law Firm PLLC  
900 Dupont Street  
Bellingham WA 98225  
Tel: 360-734-6390  
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**From:** Bill Geyer [mailto:[billgeyer@comcast.net](mailto:billgeyer@comcast.net)]

**Sent:** Thursday, July 14, 2011 12:07 PM

**To:** Bradley Imus; Chuck Robinson; Connie Shannon; David Moody; Don Keherer; Doug Robertson; Fred Haskell; Gene Shannon; Jody Finnegan; John Servais; Mike Black; Patrick Uy; Phyllis McKee; Ralph Black; 'Robin Robertson'; Stephanie Johnson; Steve Papadakis; Troy Muljat

**Subject:** Fairhaven Neighbors Cancel Effort for Joint Planning

Greetings Fairhaven Core Group,

We have been informed by Vince' Biciunas that the Fairhaven Neighbors (FN) Board of Directors voted to not meet with representatives of FVA, OFA and commercial property owners as previously planned. FN expressed concerns about the lack of merchants attending the recent planning sessions and FN would like to remain within the current planning process being run by the City.

Therefore, the proposed joint planning session planned for July 20 with Fairhaven Neighbors is cancelled.

We proposed a genuine offer to meet and conduct a joint planning charette, some FN representatives initially agreed, we took steps to set up the session, now the FN Board has declined to act on this offer.

Looking forward to any comments you may have on this latest development. Thank you,

**Bill Geyer, AICP**

Geyer & Associates, Inc.

360.738.2836 office / 360.224.6317 cell

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Good Afternoon Nicole:

My husband, Don, and I were very impressed with the presentation of the three-dimensional views and interactive view session yesterday at city hall. Chris Behee was very patient and helpful, while we asked many questions.

It was startling to see the impact of tall buildings along Harris Avenue to the neighborhood residential area between 4th and 10 Streets, Donovan and Cowgill Avenues, where we live. With tall buildings towering above our home, we would see windows with unwanted lighting at night. We also worry about the lighting from taller buildings along Harris Avenue impacting the natural function of the Padden Creek Estuary south of Harris.

Therefore, we do not believe the buildings should be taller than the tree line along the Larrabee Trail and Padden Creek Marsh Trail areas, which according to the Fairhaven Plan of 1980, was constructed to separate residential from commercial and industrial areas in Fairhaven. Those trees are probably 35-45' tall.

After looking at the views from the Taylor Street Bridge, the 12th Street Bridge, and other places in Fairhaven, it seems to us the 35' tall buildings are more compatible with a historical village environment, rather than taller buildings of 55-65-75' heights. The taller buildings also greatly impacted the existing views of the bay from areas in Fairhaven, such as the Village Green and 14th Street.

We hope in the future that all areas in Fairhaven will be assigned a height limit that is compatible with the surrounding area.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on building heights in Fairhaven.

Kind regards,

Susan and Don Kaun  
613 Donovan Ave.  
Bellingham WA 98225



Fairhaven Neighborhood Update Plan Comments  
Sheldon Pravda to: noliver

07/30/2011 09:34 PM

Dear Ms. Oliver,

I would like to make a last-minute comment on the Fairhaven Neighborhood Update Plan.

As a person with worsening visual disability, I moved from California almost seven years ago and bought a retirement home in the Fairhaven neighborhood specifically for its compactness and walkability. I paid a premium for this but it has allowed me to access independently most of the services I need day to day. There have been changes that have had an increasingly negative impact on my ability to access everything that Fairhaven has to offer, all of which involve use of the public sidewalk by businesses.

Ideally a person should be able to walk in a straight line from crosswalk to crosswalk down a comfortably wide sidewalk parallel to the curb. One should not have to pay undue attention to avoid signage and street furniture, or have to thread ones way between outdoor seating and curbside obstructions like tree plantings or more signage. Commercial exploitation of the public way both physically and visually has become epidemic in Fairhaven. Because businesses are distributed throughout our neighborhood, there's hardly a sidewalk or parking strip to be found without several of these intrusions on the residential population.

Above all, this is a safety issue that needs to be regulated and enforced for the public good and not for the marginal profit of one segment. Fairhaven has a municipal legacy in many places of narrow or non-existent sidewalks and misplaced light and power poles which make for pedestrian difficulty without the addition of commercial clutter.

This neighborhood is also a retirement destination which requires that we put the comfort and safety of an aging population in the forefront.

Regarding signage, I have seen a proposed guideline that would go far to rectify the problems I have spoken of above. I think it is not clear on many points and could justify even more signs, but its saving grace as far as I'm concerned is that it requires a clear area of six feet down the centerline of the sidewalk. Bravo.

Given the climate in our city, I think that use of outdoor seating at restaurants should be more restricted than it seems to be in Fairhaven. I have seen very little use of these spaces for most of year and find that a number of establishments abuse the privilege. I can appreciate the potential cosmopolitan atmosphere that can be created when outdoor seating is held close to their establishments and if they are removed after the "season", but only if there is sufficient sidewalk space for this use.

Respectfully,

Sheldon B Pravda  
1306 Old Fairhaven Pkwy #101  
Bellingham WA 98225-7416

s\_pravda@comcast.net

(360) 756-1220



Fairhaven Planning --Part 1 of 4  
Gene Shannon to: Gene Shannon  
Cc: Nicole Oliver, Jackie Lynch

07/31/2011 02:00 PM

July 26, 2011

To: Bellingham City Planning Director, Jeff Thomas

Dear Mr. Thomas,

A short drive north on I-5 towards Ferndale tells a sad tale that reads like a "Who Was Who" in Bellingham.

Every state, city, county and neighborhood is in competition for talent and private investment....that's the stuff that makes a community dynamic and successful. But investment money is fluid--it flows best where it is welcome.

Private production of goods and services is the source of jobs, the source of income, the source of wealth. Or as was once said: "If you want jobs, you better like business because that's where the jobs are."

So how has Bellingham treated businesses and jobs in recent years?

Here's just a partial list of former Bellingham businesses:

Walton Beverage, Barron Heating, Hempler's, Wilson's Furniture, Digital Threads, Fasteners Inc., Triton Marine, Mills Electric and others. Some of these companies were in Bellingham for decades--at least one for more than 70 years.

What happened? Well, Bellingham has become increasingly unfriendly for many businesses.

And as they leave Bellingham, their infrastructure, jobs, income multiplier, and tax base for the city and school district goes with them.

Connie and I have owned the Fairhaven Village Inn since 2003. We employ ten to 12 full and part time people. We draw thousands of people a year into the heart of Fairhaven. Our guests spend generously in Fairhaven, Bellingham and Whatcom County. Our payroll stays here, our banking is here, we bring our customers here and most of our suppliers are from here.

All of these dollars circulate many times locally before moving into the larger economy. (see attachment from Bellingham-Whatcom County Tourism Financial Impact)

But we don't live in a vacuum.

It's been a long, slow slog, but the Fairhaven Business District has evolved into a good place to operate a business. But it is a fragile environment in a very competitive world. There are many other choices for businesses to locate and the turmoil and uncertainty of the ongoing Fairhaven planning effort makes it really hard to explore new business opportunities for economic development in Fairhaven.

Fairhaven Business District needs more infill of residential and commercial space in order to retain and advance its competitive edge. It is ideally suited to become a pedestrian village and has a nice mix of services that support residential living.

ITEMS:

\* It is vital and, frankly, I think urgent that Haggens be allowed to expand on its land parcels at the current location. A full service grocery store is the bedrock of a successful urban village. Although Haggens is a long-standing Bellingham business, it is not immune to the never-ending demands to keep up with the competition. The new Market on Lakeway and on Old Fairhaven Parkway are really stretching new standards for depth and breadth of customer choices. The recession puts enormous pressure on businesses to perform. Since the recession, Haggens has in fact closed marginal operations. It would not surprise me to see this store close at some point in the near future if the Fairhaven site can not be enlarged to support its competitive advantage. That would be a devastating blow to the successful future of Fairhaven Business District as an Urban Village and a loss to the greater community as well.

\* It is equally vital that buildings be allowed to at least 55 feet while some sites might be viable at up to 75 feet. And please don't smother us needless design minutia. Fairhaven has done rather well without someone telling us what kind of windows and trim and park benches we can have. We need flexibility to meet market demands. And who wants to make it Disneyland?

\* Density is good for business. It provides for more potential customers who in turn support better and more diverse services.

\* Density reduces the need for car trips. More goods and services are available within easy walking distances.

\* Density is the touchstone that supports effective and efficient bus service.

\* Density in the Fairhaven Business District is why the City of Bellingham designated it 'Tier 1' to achieve compliance with of it's Comprehensive Plan under the Growth Management Act. It's not OK to tell the state that you wanted to achieve density in Fairhaven back when and propose changes today that say by--way of new restrictive zoning-- "We didn't really mean it."

Fairhaven Business District is ideally set up to become a strong Urban Village. It is a business district and zoning ought to support 'business' as it's primary focus.

But it needs a decent Urban Village Plan that has all of the benefits of fully professional planning that is not more restrictive than Urban Village Plans for Samish and the Fountain District.

Please don't develop a plan that turns us into a "Who Was Who" in Fairhaven.

Sincerely,

Gene Shannon

Fairhaven Business Owner  
Fairhaven Business District Land Owner

Attachment: Bellingham-Whatcom County Tourism "Economics of Tourism"



Fairhaven Planning --Part 2 of 4  
Gene Shannon to: JThomas  
Cc: Nicole Oliver, Jackie Lynch

07/31/2011 02:00 PM

July 27, 2011

To: Fairhaven Planning Director, Jeff Thomas

Dear Mr. Thomas,

I find them ironic, the armchair experts outside of the Fairhaven Business District who are quick to offer their opinions at every turn.

It seems to me that the Fairhaven Neighborhood board and sympathizers of the Southwest Enclave of the Fairhaven Neighborhood (The Enclave) has had an outsized voice before city planning in everything to do with Fairhaven businesses. Yet somehow, these activists can not find a single item of self-evaluation in The Enclave--let alone find room for improvement within those blocks

No need for sidewalks or curbs, no need for street lighting, no need for consistency of architectural design, color, roofing, siding, windows or landscaping. No need for view corridor preservation within. They talk about the need to preserve the character of the Fairhaven Neighborhood but see no need for any "character protection" in their own back yard.

None.

Doesn't this beg the question that if this planning process is so important to the future health of the neighborhood then why isn't comprehensive scrutiny being applied everywhere in the Fairhaven Neighborhood--including The Enclave.

I've spend some time in the streets of The Enclave this summer and I can tell you I find an awful lot there left to be desired. There are many violations of existing city code. And traffic there is not always "light," as a city planner recently said in a public meeting who then went on to say "They're (The Enclave) happy with the way things are and that's OK (with the city)."

Really?

Why is The Enclave given a pass--not even a cursory evaluation within its blocks-- while the the Fairhaven Business District is subject to intense scrutiny?

Over the last few years of endless "planning," activists from this group have made some of the most amazing claims Here's a favorite: *"Fairhaven (business community) can't be 'walkable' if buildings are taller than 35 feet."*

What?

Have these critics never been to Seattle, Portland, San Francisco, Chicago, Manhattan where pedestrians thrive amid very tall buildings. Yet The Enclave has no sidewalks at all, no curbs, no street lights--all things that promote safe walking. Cars are parked all over the place, often right in the the driving lane. And within the Public Rights of Way there is ubiquitous storage of garbage totes, piles of junk, and abandoned vehicles with expired plates. In fact, there are all manner of things in the public Right of Way that ought not to be there such as soccer nets, fishing boats and trailers, materials storage, a basketball hoop, a soccer net and an old stove-- to name a few.

This certainly is not the standard the Fairhaven Business has set for itself--nor would most of us expect anything less within The Enclave and still call it part of the Fairhaven Neighborhood

Still, the Fairhaven Neighborhood board members, sympathizers, and activists have offered up an amazing array of proposals and requirements for the Fairhaven Business Community and it is smothering. Controls for lighting, controls for park benches, controls for waste baskets, controls for height, controls for sidewalks, controls for color, shape, design, windows, siding and all manner of architectural detailing and not the least--building height. And many remaining building sites have now been flagged as important diagonal view corridors that should be preserved. Most recently, an activist suggests the Bellingham Tennis Club be made a view corridor for the benefit of The Enclave residents northward views. And for good measure, the Fairhaven Neighborhood board, sympathizers and activists arrogantly sought to close 11th Street between Mill Avenue and Harris in an early effort to cram a zoning plan down on the business district. This would cause a major disruption, loss of parking and loss of business and has

'zero' support from those adjacent business, the Old Fairhaven Association--in fact, no one at all in the Fairhaven Business District.

Had this mentality prevailed before the 1980's and '90's, the Fairhaven Business District would today remain the urban ghetto that had befallen it. All of this noise has the potential to stifle the Fairhaven Business District--the very thing claimed by the critics to be saving

Hmmm.

At a recent planning meeting, one of these armchair experts leaned back in his chair with hands clasped behind his head and after rambling on a bit, then smugly pronounced: "I think there's enough residential development in Fairhaven now."

All of these pearls of wisdom offered up with no concern for the practical challenges of business development. That, of course, would suit many. If this plethora of "*No Growth-by-regulation stranglehold*" sympathies are successfully zoned into a new Fairhaven Plan, it will be the beginning of the end to the long-term viability of the Fairhaven Business District.

I encourage the city to give full consideration to separating The Enclave into its own neighborhood. Perhaps the double standards the activists propose for themselves versus their demands from the business community can then be justified.

The Fairhaven Business District is a Tier 1 high density location. The City of Bellingham made it that way when it submitted its Comprehensive Plan to achieve, in part, its compliance with Growth Management Act. It's not OK to tell the state back when that it really wanted a lot of growth and development in Fairhaven but now develop zoning restrictions that in effect say "We didn't really mean it."

Below are some photos from The Enclave taken a few weeks ago

Sincerely,

Gene Shannon

Fairhaven Business Owner

Fairhaven Business District Land Owner



Boat trailer, flatbed trailer and junk in ROW



Architectural inconsistency in additions



One of many abandoned vehicles in ROW, expired plates

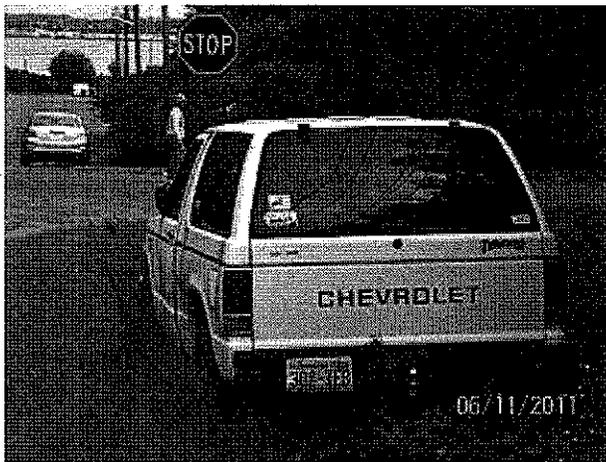




Abandoned vehicle in ROW



Historical architecture?



Another abandoned vehicle in ROW, expired plates



No sidewalks, no curbs, no lighting



Two more abandoned cars in ROW, expired plates; garbage tote stored in ROW





Expired plates, ROW



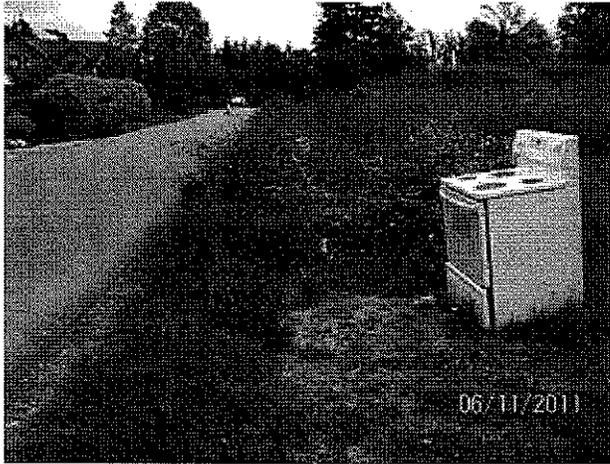
Parking in the driving lane...said to be a lightly used streets by a city planner



Another abandoned vehicle in ROW, expired plates



Abandoned stove in ROW



Another abandoned car in ROW



Expired plates in ROW



Parking in the driving lane--lightly traveled?



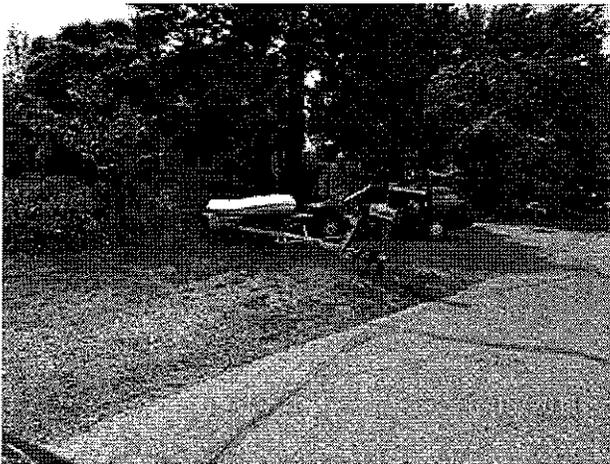
Another abandoned vehicle in ROW, expired plates



Expired plates in ROW



Soccer net in ROW



Fishing boat anchored to mailbox in ROW



Fairhaven Planning --Part 3 of 4  
Gene Shannon to: JThomas  
Cc: Nicole Oliver, Jackie Lynch

07/31/2011 02:00 PM

July 28, 2011

To: Bellingham Planning Director Jeff Thomas

Dear Mr. Thomas,

I just want to recap a few points about the property and business owners in the Fairhaven Business District. The planning for Fairhaven that started under Tim Stewart has been confusing, divisive and counterproductive. For that reason, a core group of Fairhaven Business District property and business owners over these past many months got together and passed the hat to hire some assistance in our effort to better understand the planning process.

Our lives and our livelihood are dependent on adoption of an Urban Village Plan that can actually be developed and not become another dust covered report on the shelf. We expect a quality planning process that implements the Bellingham Comprehensive Plan, is compliant with the State Growth Management Act and meets generally accepted professional planning standards.

I respectfully submit the following to you for your consideration in the development of a Urban Village Plan for Fairhaven. The thrust of this information may have been submitted elsewhere but here it is from me.

Here are major core points within our vision statement of our draft Urban Village Plan:

- Fairhaven's success is due serving a regional and local market for goods and services. It is a vibrant, diverse, urban village with more than 130 year history serving Bellingham and the surrounding area.
- Fairhaven's continued success will be determined by continuing to serve a regional and local market.
- The merchants and property owners invest significant amounts of their cash and time to serve their market and become successful.
- Maintaining the historic character of Fairhaven is important to maintaining its success.
- Fairhaven is THE urban village that all other Bellingham business districts aspire to be.
- Fairhaven is a unique location with a core commercial area, a working waterfront, dense residential areas, multi-modal transportation and significant green space, all within walking distance on a saltwater shoreline. The diversity is important.

Here are our specific recommendations in our draft Urban Village Plan:

- **railroad quiet zone** and reduce the number of railroad crossings. Maintain arterial road designations, transit service and marine access; enhance as needed. Consider northern access from the waterfront via the 10<sup>th</sup> Street right of way.

- Simplify to 4 (no more than 5) zoning categories for easier land management.
- Permit height, bulk and floor area ratios equal to or greater than those standards previously approved in the Samish Way or Old Town Urban Village Plans. Permit building heights equal to heights previously built in historic Fairhaven buildings.
- Extend the Village Core zoning down Harris Avenue from 10<sup>th</sup> Street to 4<sup>th</sup> Street so that the south side of Harris is encouraged to meet the market demand for wide range of uses: commercial, light industrial, mixed use or high density residential.
- Preserve, protect and enhance the Padden Creek corridor in cooperation with the residential area. Maintain key trail connections and access to public squares.
- Create direct connection from waterfront to commercial core.
- Enhance and expand mooring opportunities for visiting boaters.
- Include all of the current Fairhaven neighborhood plus the area of Reid Boiler Works within the Urban Village Boundary.
- Encourage urban densities in the Village residential areas immediately adjacent the commercial core. Protect the residential character of the area south and west of Padden Creek by including it within the UVP boundary, and permitting use of the new City infill zoning criteria.
- Maximize on street parking on all existing right-of-ways within the commercial core. Establish parking structure locations at the core perimeter and other locations shown on our map. Use the existing private parking system created by commercial property owners to build and operate new parking locations.
- Establish a clear design palette of proscriptive design elements that reflect Fairhaven's historic character. Adopt a design regime for Core, Approach and Transition areas.
- Adopt a final Urban Village Plan with related Design Standards and development regulations that establish consistency, predictability and easy management for Fairhaven. The final product must be substantially better than the current development, otherwise this effort is of no value.
- The final products should encourage investment, enhancement and maintenance of Fairhaven so that it can continue to serve its customers, visitors, residents, merchants and property owners.

Sincerely,

Gene Shannon

Fairhaven Business Owner

Fairhaven Business Land Owner



Fairhaven Planning --Part 4 of 4  
Gene Shannon to: JThomas  
Cc: Nicole Oliver, Jackie Lynch

07/31/2011 01:49 PM

July 29, 2011

To: Bellingham Planning Director, Jeff Thomas

Dear Mr. Thomas,

I respectfully offer the following additional comments for your consideration in conjunction with Public Works.

Pedestrian Safety--

In one of the earlier meetings you held, I noted my concern for public safety at the intersection of Mill Avenue, 10th Street, the Village Green and the South Bay Trail.

Here I offer some additional notes of concern for public safety at the mid-block crossing on Harris between 10th Street and 11th Street. Mid-block crossings I find to be inherently dangerous because drivers don't expect them to be there. It is my recommendation that signage and cross walk paint be established and maintained at this location.

The intersection of Mackenzie on 12th Street is another inherently dangerous crossing. It is the confluence of an arterial street with entry and exit traffic from Haggens and Wins, a city bus stop, and Mackenzie Ave traffic. The extra component here is the high concentration of elderly who live in the adjacent high rise, many of whom negotiate this crossing in motorized chairs and walkers on their way to the bus stop and services at Haggens and beyond.

My recommendation here is install and maintain crosswalk striping and on-demand flashing lights. This should optimize traffic flow but create a safer crossing for pedestrians.

Street Repairs--

The condition of Harris Avenue between 10th Street and 12th Street is awful. This is a significant street within Fairhaven. The bricks over the old streetcar line are spalling, blacktop patches are blowing out above broken, shifting plates of concrete. If this area of the street is not on a reconstruction list, I request that it be added.

The blacktop on Mill Avenue between 11th Street and 12th Street has not been maintained and is now badly deteriorated. If this area of the street is not on a reconstruction list, I request that it be added.

Sincerely,

Gene Shannon

Fairhaven Business Owner

Fairhaven Business Property Owner

## Fairhaven Planning - July 31, 2011

Following are my suggestions for consideration as the Fairhaven Neighborhood Plan is drafted by Planning Staff this summer. I attended all five of the "Listening" sessions and think these suggestions and concepts are in addition to what was presented at the meetings.

1. Set the building heights on Harris Ave below 9th to 75 feet at the sidewalk, with decreasing heights to 45 feet at the South edge at the Larrabee Street right of way. The biggest sticking point is bulk and height of new buildings. The biggest open spaces are the Haskell properties on Harris Avenue. These heights will not impede the views from the residential area to the south.
2. Vacate Larrabee Street from 9th to 4th and create a green buffer between the commercial and residential areas. Currently, it is used as a green buffer. It should be made permanent and enhanced. This will provide further screening for the residential area.
3. In the plan, anticipate vacating 6th Street at some point in the future. This will serve to allow more possibilities for what might be developed on the Haskell properties. It will also avoid 6th Street from becoming a defacto arterial feeder into the commercial district in the future.
4. Anticipate daylighting Padden Creek through the 10th and Donavon Avenue corner. This should be within our 20 year planning horizon. Anticipate installing a foot and bicycle bridge over the creek for residents to be able to access the commercial district.
5. With the possible closing of 6th Street, anticipate a food and bicycle bridge over the Padden Creek at 8th Street. This would further aid the access to the Commercial District.
6. Put in language to protect the residential areas from light and noise pollution from the commercial district. As the Haskell properties are developed in whatever manner, they should pay particular attention to bright lights facing south and noise from night time truck deliveries or any other common commercial district noises.
7. Use Historic design criteria only in the historic core. The so called "Approach" zones are way too large in area and should be reduced to half a block or less. Outside these zones, and in particular on the areas west of 9th, the design criteria should be very open to innovative and exciting designs.
8. For all the area west of 9th, the zoning should be very open to most any commercial activity. We should not plan now for what may eventually be proposed for development west of 9th. We have a very exciting area and we as a community should not be afraid of the future nor of new concepts and designs.
9. The concept of "view corridors" should be tossed in the junk. These are so subjective and so dependent on individual perspectives as to be useless for planning. One person's beauty is the next person's horror. Staff repeatedly noted in presenting the computer views of future buildings that one could "see" some building. Horror. I would like to see the Planning Department do a computer model of the residential area with maximum building sizes under present zoning and with all the trees and vegetation removed - just as was done with the commercial area.
10. The commercial core should be recognized as having regional commercial value.

I hope these concepts are included in the draft plan. They will certainly be advanced during the hearings this fall and winter.

John Servais, 1609 Mill Ave, Bellingham

Owner, [www.fairhaven.com](http://www.fairhaven.com) - a website that promotes commerce in the Fairhaven commercial district

I should note that I've been involved in Fairhaven for over 40 years, working down there in the 70s and in years since. Since 2002 my website has been the official website of The Old Fairhaven Association. I was part of the alternative scene in Fairhaven in the late 1960s. All in all, I have a deep and long understanding of Fairhaven and what it has gone through over the decades. Contrary to staff statements at the Listening meetings, it was vibrant and exciting in the 1970s - not dead and empty as staff stated.

RECEIVED

AUG 04 2011

City of Bellingham  
Planning

August 3, 2011

Dear Planning Department & COB:

According to FLUP 4, 35 feet height limits in the Fairhaven Neighborhood Plan were recommended by consensus via hard work and a community survey in 2007.

Please respect the plan as it stands docketed.

Thank you,  
Sheryl Davis  
1001 Larrabee Ave #306  
Bellingham, WA 98225

1/20/20

1/20/20

To Nicole Oliver

RECEIVED

AUG 04 2011

City of Bellingham  
Planning

August 3, 2011

Dear Planning Department -

Please adhere to FLUP 4  
in the Docketed Plan March 2011

Also would like to see a  
35' height limit in the areas  
1, 1A, 1B and 4

Historically there has never been  
any intent for huge buildings in  
Fairhaven. This latest push by  
developers for huge height is  
unconscionable and very self serving  
and does not reflect the historic  
nature of this village.

Best,

Chadler

1001 Landree Ave Fairhaven

DEVELOPMENT

1984

1985

RECEIVED

AUG 04 2011

8/03/2011

To: City of Bellingham  
Planning Dept  
City of Bellingham  
Planning

Dear Nicole,

Re. Height limits in the Fairhaven Area, I strongly support adherence to the various max heights outlined in the Neighborhood draft. Because the area is so small, excessive height and bulk can easily annihilate views and change the nature of the area. The visual projections made to clear tower views of water, the tree lines, and the mountain were covered when all heights went to 45 and even 55 feet. The idea of a "village" is to maintain a small, intimate and prosperous center.

It is almost impossible to have a single height range because of the changing heights & flows of land. At the top of the hill a higher building has less impact than lower down the hill. This is the reason a range of heights with design & planning is important.

To thrive economically, Fairhaven needs to preserve and enhance what is attractive about Fairhaven. People come here because it is historic, interesting, different from malls & cookie-cutter centers, and in a beautiful setting. People locally come because it's our cozy home. People from other parts of Bellingham come because it is the

hub of a number of trail systems and between mountain & sea, and because of special shops & restaurants. People from outside Bellingham come to a location because it's fun, interesting, & unique. Too intense development can destroy this thru creating shadow, lack of views, obliteration of the history, and disconnect from the Bay.

We need to develop in a way that preserves the 'golden eggs' that make Fairhaven special and prosperous. This is what will keep Fairhaven healthy in the future.

There is plenty of room for development and infill at 35' height. Most of the recent development has been within 35' and this has been economically viable. The several developments that are significantly above that height, are generally less inviting, creating shadow, & often not inhabited. We have clear examples of what works, and sadly, what doesn't work.

None of the presentations have shifted my view from the well-considered and thought-out opinions of the Neighborhood dept. The extra "value" of additional height would only benefit the original developers to the detriment of the whole community.

Thank you,  
Janet Simpson  
@Juno.com

Janet Simpson  
409 Cowgill, Bellingham  
360-671-9713

RECEIVED

AUG 04 2011

Fairhaven Neighbors  
City of Bellingham  
Planning

www.fairhavenneighbors.org

PO Box 4142 Bellingham WA 98227

August 4, 2011

Nicole Oliver, Project Manager  
Planning and Community Development  
Bellingham City Hall  
210 Lottie Street  
Bellingham, WA 98225

Dear Ms Oliver:

The sole agenda item at last night's regular Fairhaven Neighbors monthly meeting was discussion of the Fairhaven Neighborhood Urban Village master planning process and what our written comments to you should be.

The overwhelming message I would like to convey is to reaffirm our Fairhaven Land Use Policy statement FLUP-4, that except for public or residential zones, "Two to four story buildings with a height range of 35-54 feet are most appropriate for all commercial areas of the Fairhaven neighborhood in order to preserve the historic and pedestrian friendly character of the area."

We would also like to reaffirm our Vision, distilled back in 2007: "The Fairhaven Neighborhood seeks a balance of environmental stewardship, quality of living and economic well-being."

The economic well-being of the commercial core must be enhanced by buildings that do not overshadow the historic district. It is instructive to remember that many of the buildings built in the last twenty years do not exceed 39 feet, and of those four 'new' buildings that do reach 55 to 65 feet, we can say that they do not improve the district visually, and only serve in a positive way as increasing residential opportunities in the core. New residential buildings of 32, 34 and 37 feet are more in keeping with the quality of living we wish to maintain. We have and want to maintain that which is unique to Fairhaven, and valuable to our future, and assert that these limits retain the prospect of economic feasibility. We think it is a canard to assert "the land is so valuable, we have to go dense." We are defining the value right now, as we codify the Plan, and we hope to stop the pattern of building "whatever works" or whatever one can get away with.

We look forward to learning the results of the traffic and parking studies being conducted this summer. How will these measurements and projections relate to our proposed building height limits? We are reminded that our streets are relatively narrow, and in most cases, cannot be widened. Do we really have the capacity to take unlimited populations?

We also remember that with the recently built multi-family residential units, Fairhaven has already met and exceeded the growth projections for the year 2030 per the

Comprehensive Plan. Our Draft Plan represents a generous allowance for future density in a manner that is consistent and predictable.

One other aspect of predictability is our recommendation that areas that currently have no height limits be designated with height limits. It is not consistent for a developer who asks for predictability to also lobby for unlimited heights. We believe that Fairhaven is valuable right now, in terms of quality of living, and that value is not likely to increase with higher buildings.

Design standards are another important aspect to Fairhaven's future growth. We believe those design guidelines should extend to all commercial zones, not just the core. We are reminded that cities such as San Antonio, and later Santa Barbara, have maintained and enhanced their tourism attractions using specific design guidelines. Fairhaven, while a small area, has a rich seaport and Victorian Era history that should be preserved.

The ideas and boundaries of the core, influence and approach areas still need discussion and redefinition. What should be the historic definition limits?

Our waterfront is our most valuable asset, whether we just view it from a distance or see jobs created there, or enjoy our recreation or travel at the beach or boat docks. We would like our Plan to stress the importance of industry and jobs and restore the balance for living in an area where you might not need your car most days.

We would like to see view corridors preserved, not just along streets, but also along the formerly vacated rights of way, and including Port property.

Finally, we were reminded last night by a visitor from Birch Bay, that people come to Fairhaven to take advantage of our connections to the many trails and green spaces, as well as our fine restaurants and shops. Those natural environment aspects need to be protected as well.

We really appreciate the efforts being made by you, Nicole, and city staff in all of the departments who are working on this Fairhaven Plan update. We were glad to attend the six meetings in May, June and July of this year and look forward to further refinements before approval of the final Fairhaven Neighborhood and Urban Village Plan. Thanks!

Respectfully,



Vince Biciunas, President

cc: Mayor Dan Pike  
Planning Commission  
City Council  
Old Fairhaven Association



Fairhaven Neighborhood Plan update  
jim johannessen to: noliver

08/04/2011 09:30 AM

To: City of Bellingham Planning and Community Development  
Attn: Nicole Oliver  
Re: Fairhaven Neighborhood Plan update  
August 4, 2011

I am writing regarding the refinement of the Fairhaven neighborhood plan. I have been very involved with this process years ago when we started urging the city on the need to update the outdated plan as well as during the initial stages

of drafting a plan. I received the recent mailer on ADUs also, as we live within the Lower Fairhaven area on Wilson Ave.

I will outline my desires and what I feel is the best way forward at this time and several topics here.

**Building heights** - within the Fairhaven core all parcels should have clear building height limits. The allowance for no limits for certain sub-areas is no longer acceptable (nor was it when it was drafted). I am in favor of building heights

between 45 and 55 feet. Slightly higher than the 35 ft height proposed for some area allow for more density where it belongs. This would allow for adequate density to make better transportation, parks, and other urban services, while

not unduly altering the existing development pattern in the core, or significantly changing the character of the neighborhood. The lots west of 9th St should have height limits of no greater than 45 ft, and need to be lower in the

shoreline zone (as at present).

**Accessory dwelling units** - the lower Fairhaven Neighborhood area bounded by Donovan and Cowgill Avenues and 4th and 10th Streets is under consideration for allowing any ADUs. This type of modest increase in density is probably

wise at this time so close to an urban center. It is true that many ADUs already exist in this area and the City has not regulated or enforced them. Many wonder if this will be the case with the new proposal. However it appears appropriate

to allow ADUs along with all of the proposed conditions by the City, and perhaps more controls, as the lack of enforcement will surely be a problem in the future.

**Design review standards** - these standards should be clarified and also preserved in order to attempt to maintain

some character and a certain level of consistency and design while allowing for some variety in design. More clarity and predictability is what is needed. Developments that were allowed in the recent decades have certainly not all been

appropriate for maintaining design standards. Some are downright ugly and out of scale, and have decreased the character of the neighborhood core and probably also the property values. Improvements in clarity and outcome is

necessary in the standards has clearly demonstrated by recent processes and the fact that consultants were able to achieve they owner's outcome more often than not.

**Natural Environment** – this is a critical element of this plan, or any land use plan. I expect it has gotten less attention.

The original work that went into the draft plan by the Neighborhood should be retained to the greatest extent possible.

This was not a trivial amount of effort that was put into the draft. I understand that there may be a few too many specifics in there, but they were well thought out and made possible by a great understanding of the area through

many years of observation and study. In particular, the greenways and other buffer and potential buffer areas adjacent to Padden Creek should be enhanced at every opportunity. Stormwater is a huge problem that the City has not at all

adequately addressed in the neighborhood, and needs to be called out in this plan. A large volume of untreated, urban, stormwater is dumped into Padden Estuary, which has documented use by endangers species. Surrounding land

uses and locations of development at the Padden Estuary are also negatively affecting water quality and habitat quality and should be altered to allow for a much larger, vegetated, buffer surrounding the lagoon. All new development must

meet current water quality treatment standards, to include on-site treatment that is not dependant on expensive and poorly-performing vaults with filters.

**Parking** - The Fairhaven Parking District should be abolished. It has not performed well and has been abused by business

owners. has simply been a way to not install adequate parking.

**Expansion Area** - the Port of Bellingham area extending north up to Douglas should be added to the Fairhaven Neighborhood. this will make sense for future planning of the waterfront.



August 4, 2011

Dear Nicole and Planning Staff:

Please accept my gratitude for helping citizens review the draft Fairhaven Neighborhood Plan Update in an open and collegial environment. The meetings you created to present the many sections of the draft Plan were interesting and enjoyable to attend. Citizens I spoke with felt comfortable to participate and share their thoughts.

I know it was a great deal of work on the part of staff, but it's my hope that you were able to elicit from the participants a feeling of just what this neighborhood means to its many and diverse residents. It seems clear to me that Fairhaven evokes a special sense of 'place', even from those who don't live here.

At a Fairhaven Neighbors meeting last evening I listened to a candidate for County Executive and his wife offer to share what Fairhaven means to them. They live out in the County, but talked animatedly about Fairhaven's wonderful one-of-a-kind shops like Village Books and Fairhaven Runners, and the fact that Fairhaven is at the center of an incredible trail system, which can take them along the waterfront to downtown or through the forest to Larrabee Park. They may not live in the neighborhood, but they're enthusiastic about Fairhaven, and take great personal interest in its future well-being.

I trust the Planning Department staff has sensed the same passion from residents -- many eager to share what they think is best about where they live, offering suggestions about how to fix what needs fixing, and why they strive to preserve it. Most are intensely passionate about their neighborhood's environment, the jewel of an authentic urban village shared with nearby neighborhoods and others, a working waterfront (of which more and better access is desired), the fish and wildlife of Padden Creek Estuary and Lagoon, access to a unique trail system, and above all the fact they do not want to lose Fairhaven's essence with poorly planned growth.

The sense of 'place' is so ingrained that 'for sale' signs are a rarity, and I've found that most residents have no plans to ever move again. Whenever I

mention where I live to others in Bellingham or even from the Northwest, their eyes immediately light up and they say: " I LOVE Fairhaven."

It's my understanding that the Fairhaven Neighborhood has already surpassed growth projections, and there are empty condo units awaiting a change in the market. So, in my opinion this has been the perfect time for the residents, businesses and landowners to consider how to not diminish Fairhaven, but to enhance and protect it. Land values reflect the market's perception of the high value of a rare place like Fairhaven, just as it exists today. I fear it could easily be diminished by too much density and tall buildings.

Consequently, I believe creating height limits for all areas is essential to protecting and enhancing Fairhaven. The 3-D projections helped me visualize the impacts to the Fairhaven neighborhood and commercial area. The 35-foot high buildings added on vacant lots didn't seem to create much visual impact, and left the historic core area as the center of Fairhaven. Fifty-five foot heights made the core, approach and influence areas feel very dense. Therefore, I believe the City Council should make the final determination of which, if any, projects would warrant extra height, and what public amenities the project will give back to the community in added benefit.

After looking at the 3-D projections of 65-feet to 75-feet, I believe such tall buildings will limit existing views will diminish the esthetic and financial value of Fairhaven's village and residential areas. The Fairhaven Neighborhood Questionnaire results of April 24, 2007 overwhelmingly supported this fact, and, importantly, commercial owners and renters were 28% of the respondents to the Questionnaire.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the draft Fairhaven Neighborhood Plan Update. I've enjoyed participating the well-organized and professionally-run Planning and Community Development Department process very much!

Kind regards,

Susan Kaun  
613 Donovan Avenue  
Bellingham WA 98225  
(360) 527-9660  
[kauns49@msn.com](mailto:kauns49@msn.com)



Fairhaven Urban Village - comments  
wkochantx to: NOliver, vbiciunas

08/04/2011 05:19 AM

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Nicole,

Early this morning I got some clarity as to what was important to me about Fairhaven and what may have been important to Dan Harris many, many years ago. I googled Fairhaven. In the United States, there is only one other city with the name of Fairhaven (MA). Dan Harris named the area Fairhaven. Or was it really Fair Haven. Truly the area is beautiful or Fair. And maybe he felt this area was a haven from the troubles of the world.

My wife and I moved ourselves here from Texas several years ago. We used to live in Seattle before that. Neither of those places offer what we have here. We didn't move here because of what developers were planning on building. We moved here because it was nice and the area fit with the literal meaning of its' name - it was a Fair Haven. We are hoping that the Urban Village plan will allow for the maintenance of what could have been Dan Harris's vision.

thanks

Walt Kochan  
929 11th st  
Board Member of Fairhaven Neighborhood

Date: August 4, 2011

To: Nicole Oliver

From: Ralph W. Thacker

Subject: My latest thoughts on the Fairhaven Neighborhood and Urban Village Plan.

**Boundaries:**

- \* The boundaries of the Fairhaven Neighborhood should be returned to their original, 1883 locations, i.e., Douglas Avenue on the North, the Shoreline on the West and the line between 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> Streets on the East. On the South, the land now occupied by the Fairhaven Middle School and most of the land now occupied by Fairhaven Park were originally part of Fairhaven.
- \* The map included in the final plan should show all of the 100' and 200' lines established by the Shoreline Management Act with the associated height limitations.
- \* The Fairhaven Historic District should be expanded to include all existing buildings that were constructed before 1930.
- \* The Fairhaven Urban Village boundary should be the north side of Padden Creek on the South, 8<sup>th</sup> Street and the edge of the bluff on the West, Knox Street on the North and 13<sup>th</sup> Street on the East plus the strip of land along the South Bay Trail between Mill and Taylor Avenues, including the east side of 10<sup>th</sup> Street between Douglas and Taylor.
- \* The current designations of core, influence and approach areas should be replaced by design standards specifically established for each area, e.g., single family, multi-family industrial, light industrial and commercial.

**Zoning:**

- \* The use of the Planned Commercial Zone should be eliminated in Fairhaven.
- \* Building heights on all Port of Bellingham property outside of the 200 foot line should be limited to 65 feet.
- \* The number of separate zoning areas in Fairhaven should be reduced as far as possible.
- \* Specific zoning should be established to prevent future development in all rights of way that end at the shoreline, whether or not they have been vacated, e.g., Taylor, Easton, Douglas, Gambier, Knox, Columbia and Mill.

**Economic Development:**

Fairhaven economic development should be focused on light industrial uses on the properties of the Port of Bellingham, the Haskell Corporation and the City of Bellingham.

## THE ELEMENTS OF AN URBAN VILLAGE

Like its historical prototypes, an urban village (See definitions \*) is a compact settlement created by a human community at a central location to meet its everyday physical, social, cultural, recreational and spiritual needs. As basic economies shifted from agrarian to industrial activities and as major institutions developed, populations tended to migrate to cities and cluster around their new places of employment and the providers of goods and services accompanied them. The new settlements became identified by their natural settings, cultural backgrounds and economic endeavors, e.g., the Greek Agora and the Roman Forum.

In the case of Fairhaven, a bluff-rimmed harbor, surrounded by hillside forests watered by Padden Creek supplied the natural setting. Peoples of Native American, European and Asian origin provided the cultural background and lumbering, salmon canning and boat building comprised the basic economic endeavors. Ships, trains and automobiles have furnished transportation. The decline in basic industries and the disbursement of the population due to widespread automobile usage have diminished Fairhaven's communal life and caused over-dependence on the retail sector.

Here are some of the elements that deserve consideration in Fairhaven's Neighborhood and Urban Village process:

- Unique natural, cultural and historical assets
- Compact form
- Availability of goods and services
- Pedestrian orientation
- Public transit accessibility
- Mixed-use development or redevelopment
- Industrial or light-industrial firms with well-paying jobs and career opportunities
- Wide range of housing styles and prices
- Enriching quality of life
- Assurance of personal safety
- Access to views, green spaces and natural habitat
- Organized and informal recreational opportunities
- Frequent pausing places
- Distinctive and pleasing senses of place and community

\* **Urban**, a. [L. *urbanus*, from *urbs*, a city]

1. of, in, or constituting a city or town;
2. characteristic of the city as distinguished from the country.

\* **Village**, n. [L. *villaticus*, belonging to a country house, fr. *villa*, a country house or farm]

1. a group of houses in the country, smaller than a town or city and larger than a hamlet;
2. a primitive type of organized farming community, regarded as the basic self-governing political unit from which the modern state developed, and characterized by communal ownership of land, part of which was apportioned among householders for cultivation, the nonarable part being left as common land.

*Webster's New Universal Unabridged Dictionary, Deluxe Second Edition*, New York, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983, Pgs. 2010 and 2038.



Fairhaven plan comment  
Martin Passmore to: Nicole Oliver

08/05/2011 03:00 AM

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History: This message has been replied to.

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Dear Nicole

This is intended as electronic backup of the print copy I put into the City's mailbox earlier Thursday evening. (Vince had asked us to get our comments to you by then). I see that I have drifted into Friday while editing--I hope that doesn't disqualify me. Besides mostly typos, I simplified the bike-path proposal at the end from that in the print version.

I hope in the event this ends up not being very useful, you will at least find it entertaining.

#### FAIRHAVEN: DEFINING ITS ESSENTIAL IDENTITY, AND ITS ROLE AS A DENSITY-NODE IN THE EVOLVING ECONOMIC ECOSYSTEM

This is to sum up my personal experience, as a Fairhaven resident, of the process of hammering out the comprehensive plan update. First, I'd like to express my appreciation for the way the planning department and your very personable staff have conducted this business--the spirit of the way you have gone about seeking out and coordinating input is extremely positive.

Especially to have done so in such trying times is a reminder of precisely the sort of reasons that make Bellingham such a great place to live.

Last night's neighborhood meeting helped me to crystallize my thoughts into what I hope is a more coherent and useful form.

The main issue to become clear to me was the building-height discussion, which not being a business-owner I had previously felt did not concern me directly. What I had not understood was its relationship via land values to the core nature of the district which we are working to define and augment.

This latter boils down for me to a couple of things, of which the most important is the least tangible. One very strong element is having enough thriving small specialty destination businesses and eateries: Village Books, Tony's Coffee, Fairhaven Cycle and Ski, Fairhaven Runners, the Chimney Sweep, Toy Garden and Archers' Alehouse come to mind, but there are many others. (It's true that there are a number of "gift" shops, but they do not yet dominate, as they do in too many other places promoted as tourist destinations). The idea of the effect of height restrictions as limiting both the price of land and the need for adequate return on that investment as a driver of non-human-scale structures I found very insightful. (It was also pointed out that much of our business district is as yet not built up even to the three-story level--there is still lots of room for new enterprise). And these very important local employers have not yet been priced out by the forces which have homogenized-to-banality so many once-attractive places.

Of course the splendid setting, and reminders of it in the urban streetscape play a part. Even small things like preventing large structures from rising in vacated street-ends can be strategic here.

But the real attractant is a bit mysterious, a hard-to-define quality, a bit like "coolness", although that word has not itself come up in my hearing in this context. It underlies every conversation

with a visitor or new arrival: "We just really like it here". For example, I had been discussing our respective pipe-dreams for "entrepreneurial hotbeds" (facilities with common office/warehousing and shared access to a mentoring and capital infrastructure) with Joe Yaver (who brought SPIE here) in the parking lot after the meeting. He brought up the critical role of employee turnover in the planning of a high-skill enterprise: well-paid people have lifestyle choices. Replacing them is difficult and expensive. As I was leaving, I noticed the license plate on the SUV in the next slot. The driver had just finished strapping her child into the rear seat and I remarked "You're a long way from San Diego". They had long been visitors here, but when a sideline computer business morphed into a viable enterprise, they took the opportunity to relocate....

We cannot afford to kill the golden goose, that essential quality of life which brings and keeps talented people here. And perhaps part of that is the critical mass we already have, where chance conversations with strangers and neighbors constantly surprise us with strategic novel insights. Which is not at all to underplay the pleasant courtesy which is still the norm in our ordinary mundane interactions.

The collapse of previous wealthy societies teaches us that the economy is only a subset of the human geographical ecosystem. Long-term prosperity, far from being in conflict with environmental realism, is utterly dependent on it. Entrenched and powerful interests have been successful in exploiting the language and attitudes of the "chattering classes" as "ivory tower" elitist, and in particular to allege that ecosystem concerns are in conflict with family-wage jobs. But, however the parameters of "growth" (as the defining metric of economic activity) may evolve in a future of exponentially-rising demand upon finite resources, the brazen nineteenth-century take on eco-priorities defined by "You can't stand in the way of progress" or the Lancashire saying "Where there's muck there's brass" is now utterly inverted; it's a dead man walking. The current battle over coal trains starkly illustrates the point: if the consequences are indeed as feared, not only will we experience a perhaps-karmic inversion of the once colonial relationship--exporting a valuable raw material to a major economic power!--but it will be the utter end of any hope for our future as an innovation hub. Talk about a "giant sucking sound" of disappearing jobs...

Back to the geography: cities tended to rise at some form of natural cross-roads, especially at the intersection of different modes of transportation, such as where a road crossed a river at the lowest ford, the nearest point to shipping. (An interesting exception is now being claimed--the rising dominance of airports. We shall see how this trajectory co-evolves with the crises/opportunities of hydrocarbon fuel).

Bellingham came to be where the main north-south land route between the Cascades and the Pacific encountered a great natural harbor fronting both a world-class fishery and prime agricultural land under rich forest. Today, Fairhaven is essentially where Interstate 5 crosses the Ski-to-Sea route. With the rise in the recreational and innovation economies coincident with the decline in forestry and fishing, this is rather more than a decorative metaphor; especially so when these activities are so remarkably synergistic. This is the central idea by which I anchor our economy within our ecosystem.

Seattle's Capitol Hill had came up in the meeting as having a comparable role to ours in its metropolitan context, albeit at far greater size and density. This may be relevant to our own future. Should present trends continue, in not too many generations there is the possibility of the

coastal corridor having a population density approaching that of Belgium, 600 or more per square mile. Cap Hill too has suffered gentrification, if defined as the pricing-out of such amenities as artist studio space and many once-viable small businesses, But it retains an attractiveness by no means limited to its continuing role as a gay-friendly destination: at one end of Broadway is the Tech College and a thriving entertainment neighborhood, at the other is the Harvard Exit independent movie house and Metrixcreatespace, a flourishing center of DIY 3-D printing and a fascinating and unusually co-ed collaboration of geeks and artists, There is still a constantly-evolving mix of mainstream and eccentric establishments extending for the best part of a mile between them. Most significant for this aspect of the discussion (since parking has been impossible there for more than a generation, while still free in Fairhaven) is the full block opposite the (signature) Dick's drive-in, now fenced-in for the building of the light rail station. Capitol Hill is only one of many "third-, or come-to-" places in the area, but the Sound Transit station points the way to it continuing this aspect of its nature long into the future. If indeed such densities lie ahead, it underscores the importance of neighborhoods engaging in friendly competition to scout viable pathways to maintaining high liveability.

My own vision for the future is also about transportation, although at a more attainable level for the short term than light rail. I am interested in win-win solutions for the increased flow which more density will inevitably bring. At present, except for freeways, and for rare and increasingly controversial tunnels, all traffic is in competition over the pavement-space at intersections, too often with tragic or at the very least, expensive results. This reality, and the strong reaction to cameras as an overpriced and over-intrusive attempted solution (reminiscent of the reality which brought about the ponderous imposition of Prohibition) just underscores the point.

The harsh battle-lines now mutually drawn between motorists, cyclists and pedestrians is in my view nearly as destructive to our everyday lives as the ideological deadlock in the other Washington has become for our shared infrastructure. Whilst anyone who has either commuted or done extensive touring by bike, anywhere, has encountered dangerous and occasionally vicious weaponization of motor vehicles, it is also true that every driver, and especially every commercial driver, has experienced provocative obstruction by cyclists, pedestrians and unctuously-slow car-drivers. Cyclists are not universally cautious around shoe-leather users either. But unnecessarily-punitive responses actually raise the sum total of frustration and occasional anger. Whatever the painful shortcomings of a car-centric culture, measures intended to make driving more arduous are perceived as hypocritical and are counterproductive because of the hostility they inevitably generate. It is a safe bet that the predictably ever-rising cost of driving is alone enough to ensure more equitable shares of right-of-way in the future, even if carbon taxes are the currently-unimplementable best solution to the peak-oil and co2 and rising 3rd-world use trilemma.

Some solutions: European-style pedestrian islands between streams of traffic, rather than blocking turn-lanes to shorten crosswalks. These lessen the need for pedestrian-operated stoplights, because there is no need to wait for a simultaneous gap in the opposed lines of cars--a much longer wait than for single gaps. It also reduces the minimum time that the pedestrian is exposed to risk, with minimal interruption to motor traffic.

I do appreciate the cultural reluctance to import an element of infrastructure or technology unmodified from elsewhere. (This happened when bicycles reappeared on the American scene with the introduction of 10-speeds. No self-respecting young person dared be seen with a bike adorned with the effeminate fenders so dear to foreign riders. It has taken 4 decades of wet

shirt-backs for us to reinvent protection from wheel-thrown water. In the opposite direction, Europeans importing the idea of supermarkets insisted on improving shopping carts by equipping them with swivels on all four wheels. These are impossible to steer loaded on a slope, as a visit to Ikea will quickly demonstrate). The recent adoption of roundabouts here is an encouraging move in the right direction. In Britain, they gained a bad reputation as the nuclei of traffic jams on newly-built bypasses. But eventually giving the right-of-way to traffic already in the circle turned out to be a simple fix for that problem. It's true that their roundabouts are considerably larger in diameter, which gives drivers significantly more time to make the decision when to enter. But the dual surfaces we see here are a creative solution to the difficulties large trucks would otherwise have with the tight turn, which is itself probably just due to the cost of land acquisition next to an existing roadway.

Another win-win would be to plan and implement an engineered approach to bike travel which came within a few orders of magnitude of the extraordinary high technical standards currently seen in bicycles themselves. People spend an astounding amount of money on bikes; perhaps we would voluntarily tax ourselves to get real, nail-free, broken-glass free, dangerous-crossing-free and psychopath-free decently surfaced ways of getting across town with a trailer--preferably with thoughtfully aligned grades and a few strategically placed bridges. The cost would be on the asteroid scale among the astronomical dollar numbers of the concrete and motor infrastructure, and the cost-benefit analysis differential would likely be in the opposite exponential direction. In contrast, the very best paint-decorations of asphalt really don't cut it: effective physical separation of traffic whose kinetic energy differs profoundly is the only true answer.

One actual local example, pertaining precisely to Fairhaven. To go downtown from here, once I pass the cutoff to the armory (S.State St), there is a minor hill; a down hill stretch, another minor hill. A stranger at this point would shortly find herself squeezed between two converging lines of traffic, one of whom has just had to make a very tight turn in a narrow lane, and the other who has finally seen a chance to pass the clown who has been driving for the last mile or more at 5 miles under the speed limit. At this precise moment she has to shift gears and go up a steep hill. I am rather afraid that some poor person will one day become the literal meat in this grisly sandwich. There are no signs warning the wheeler of the peril to come. As a local, however, I happen to know that there is a delightful bridge which leads from Wharf St into an alley, which for the price of some very bumpy paving and a few busy street-crossings, will provide decently graded, low-traffic paths to the northeast and to the northwest, and also to some very useful motor-free bridges across the creek and the freeway. So currently I carry my bike down the 30 steps just before the BELLINGHAM sign and take the interurban north to Wharf. For the cost of a couple of days' work by a cat-skinner, a few loads of crushed rock and some signs we could have a ramp down to the trail just north of the steps. I'd suggest removing the bike lane altogether on the east side of Boulevard from there north (to where Boulevard forks to become N. Forest). Signs would direct cyclists instead to use the crossing at the S. State fork to access the ramp and discourage their use of the main roadway north, and also warn strays who do reach the 25-zone of the hazard ahead. I'm sure this would all be cheaper than paying for the inevitable disaster presently awaiting someone. Then, the mother who would love to take her child downtown to go shopping and to the library could reasonably do it with a trailer on her bike without needing to be a really hardcore daredevil cyclist. And who knows how many fewer cars would need to use that road on any given day (at least in summer...)

And back to the ecosystem argument: it would hardly hurt for us to gain a reputation challenging

Portland's as an outstanding bike-friendly place.

Sincerely--and thanks.

Martin Passmore