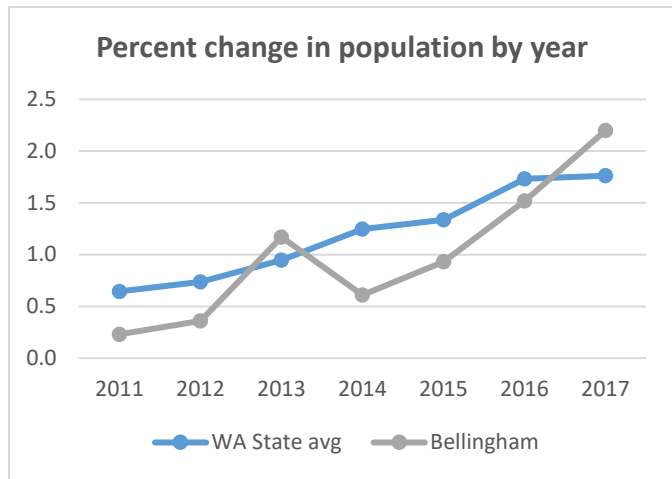


Community profile

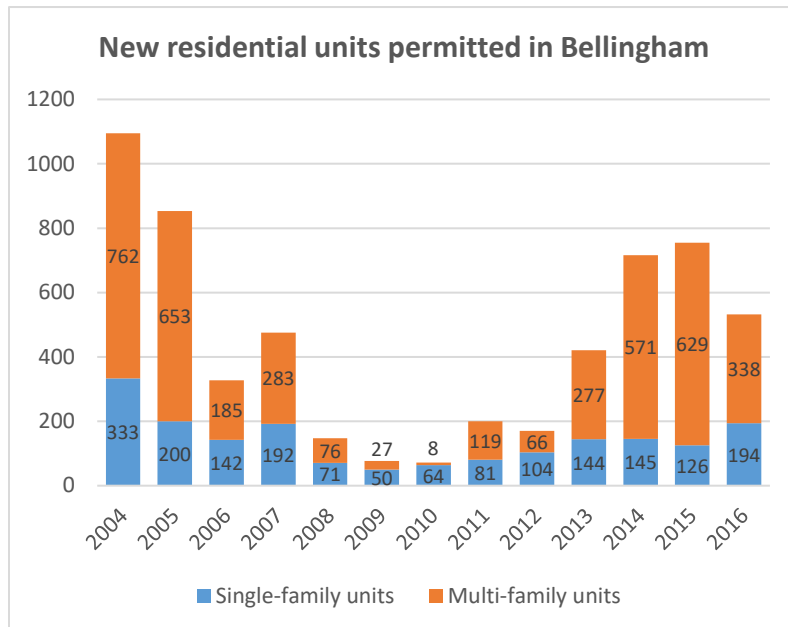
Demographics

Both Whatcom County and Bellingham have grown since the 2000 Census, but at a rate that's slightly below the State's average. Since the 2010 Census the population of Washington State has grown by 8.71%. Over the same period, Whatcom County's population has grown by 7.54% (15,160 people). Of the 39 counties in the state, Whatcom County was 11th in terms of population growth. **Compared to both the State and the county, the City of Bellingham itself has seen slightly lower than average population growth**, for a total increase of 7.21%.¹ The annual growth rate jumped above state average in 2013 and 2017, and was below state average in all other years.



In Washington State, seniors age 65+ make up 13.6% of the population, and people age 20-24 make up 7%. As a college town, Bellingham has a disproportionately large population in the 20-24 age range, at 18%. The senior population in the city has risen since the 2010 Census, but the student population has remained relatively constant as a percentage of the City's total population. According to the latest American Community Survey (ACS), people aged 65+ make up 13% of Bellingham's population, just a bit below the state average.

Housing supply



There are an estimated 39,078 housing units in Bellingham city limits, which is an increase of 2,318 since 2010 (excluding annexations). These units are split roughly equally between single-family and multi-family units (49.8% single-family and 47.8% multi-family units). As the graph shows, the development of new housing units slowed significantly between 2007 and 2013 during the recession. The number of units being permitted and built is now on the rise, with the majority of new permits going toward multi-family units.²

¹ WA State Office of Financial Management. April 1, 2017 official population estimates.

² Adapted from June 7, 2017 staff presentation by Lisa Pool.

Community profile (continued)

Housing units and population change

Bellingham does not have a shortage in the number of bedrooms available for the current population, but rather a mismatch between the type of homes available and the affordability of those units. **The average number of persons per household has declined over time, corresponding with an increased demand for individual units** (one-bedroom or studio). This demand increase exceeds general population growth. Currently, 46% of the housing units in Bellingham have three more bedrooms while the average number of people per housing unit is 2.17. Sixteen percent of housing units have one bedroom.

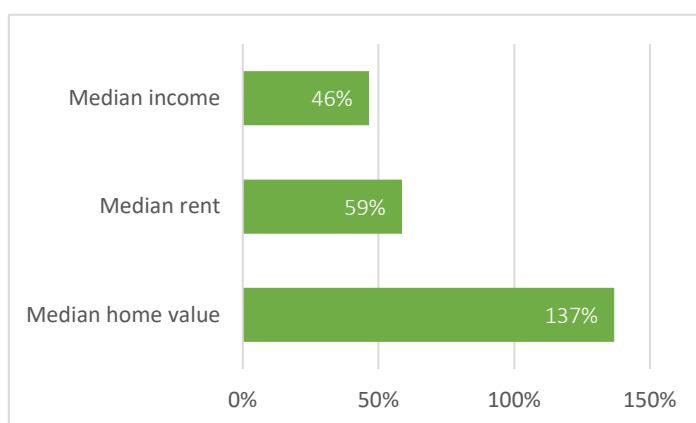
The City defines a single family as not more than three unrelated individuals living in the same home, as it applies to zoning. This definition, in contrast to the available housing stock and the needs of the population, may constrain the number of homes for single individuals to rent since renting to more than three unrelated individuals in a single-family neighborhood is technically a code violation.

Population growth and new housing units	
2015 population estimate	83,580
2017 population estimate	86,720
Population change	+3,140
Total multifamily permits in 2015-2016	947
Total single family permits in 2015-2016	320
Average persons per multifamily unit	1.937
Average persons per single family unit	2.495
Estimated # of people housed in new multifamily units	1,834
Estimated # of people housed in new single family units	798
Total estimated # of additional people housed	2,633
Shortage (new people in excess of new units)	507

Since 2015, the population has risen by 3,140 to a total of 86,720 residents.¹ Meanwhile there were 1,267 new units permitted in 2015 and 2016 combined. Using the average persons per household for multifamily and single family units, we can estimate there are enough housing units available to accommodate 2,633 new residents.³ After a construction lag during the recession, the production of new units is catching up with population growth rates, however this does not account for a pre-existing housing shortage or affordability issues.

Incomes

In Bellingham, the median household income is \$43,536, compared to \$53,145 in Whatcom County. **Both lag behind the State's median household income of \$61,062.**⁴ Even so, housing costs have grown faster than incomes in recent years.⁵ The median household income in Bellingham has risen 46% from 2000 to 2016, while the median rent has risen 59%, and the median home value has risen 137%.⁶



³ City of Bellingham 2017 Estimate Review worksheet (06/09/2017). Internal.

⁴ US Census. 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-year estimates, Whatcom County.

⁵ Adapted from June 7, 2017 staff presentation by Lisa Pool. American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, Whatcom County.

⁶ US Census. 2000 Census (Base Year), 2016 ACS 1-year estimate (Most recent year).