



Introductions

## 10 Key Principles of Urban Village Design



Connectivity



Walkable



Housing Options



People to Support  
Businesses and Services



Defined Center and Edge



Quality Design & Materials



Supports Multiple Travel  
Modes



Mix of Uses



Sustainable

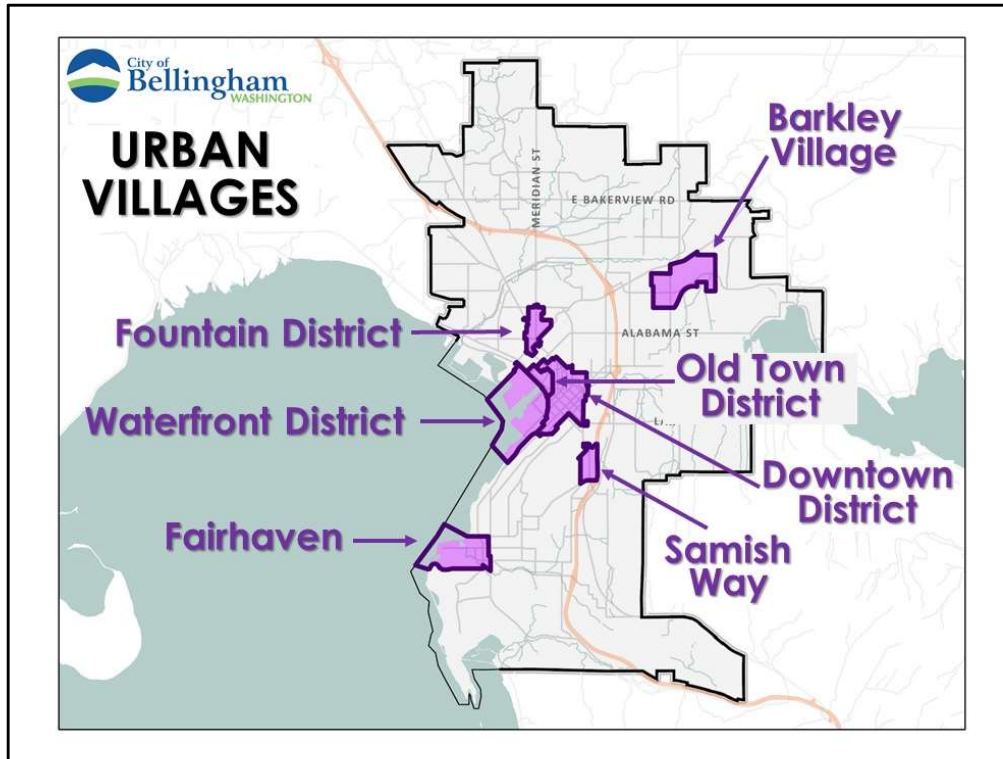


Quality of Life

“The City's **primary growth strategy** is to accommodate future growth and development through a system of compact, walkable urban villages...”

### What is an urban village?

- ▶ Diversity of use: retail stores, restaurants, residences, offices, recreational places and parks, service industries, etc.
- ▶ Walkable distance to amenities and necessities
- ▶ Designed for pedestrians, bikes, and transit, not *just* the car
- ▶ A place that strengthens human connections
- ▶ How cities used to be built: trying to recreate this form is challenging



Plans to create or further develop these urban villages were adopted between 2008 (Old Town) and 2014 (updated Downtown Plan).

Many of these areas were established and in various stages of evolution well before urban village plans were adopted.

Barkley is one of our best examples of an urban village, and there isn't an official urban village plan in place.

Some like Samish Way are in very early stages of development.

There is not a formula for creating these plans: each urban village plan builds on the history of the area, current conditions, and the community vision for future growth and character. Associated development regulations carry out the vision by describing the rules for what can be built on the property.



The Fountain District urban village plan was adopted by City Council in October 2010.

This was after dozens of meetings, public hearings, focus groups, careful analysis and review by various boards and commissions.

The community identified strengths, challenges and needs that led to the adoption of the plan and associated regulations.

How many of you were involved in or aware of this effort at that time?

## Fountain District Urban Village -- BOUNDARIES

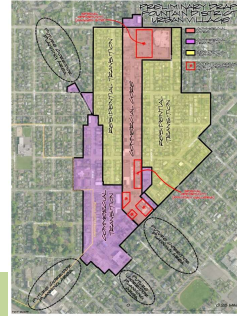
*How was the boundary established in 2010?*



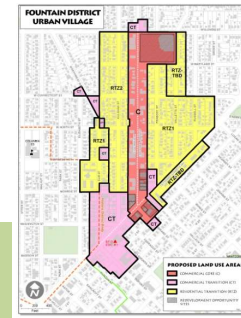
**Prior Zoning**



**Current Land Uses**



**Public Input +  
Additional Study**



**Urban Village Boundary**

This is an example of how the different areas of the urban village were established.

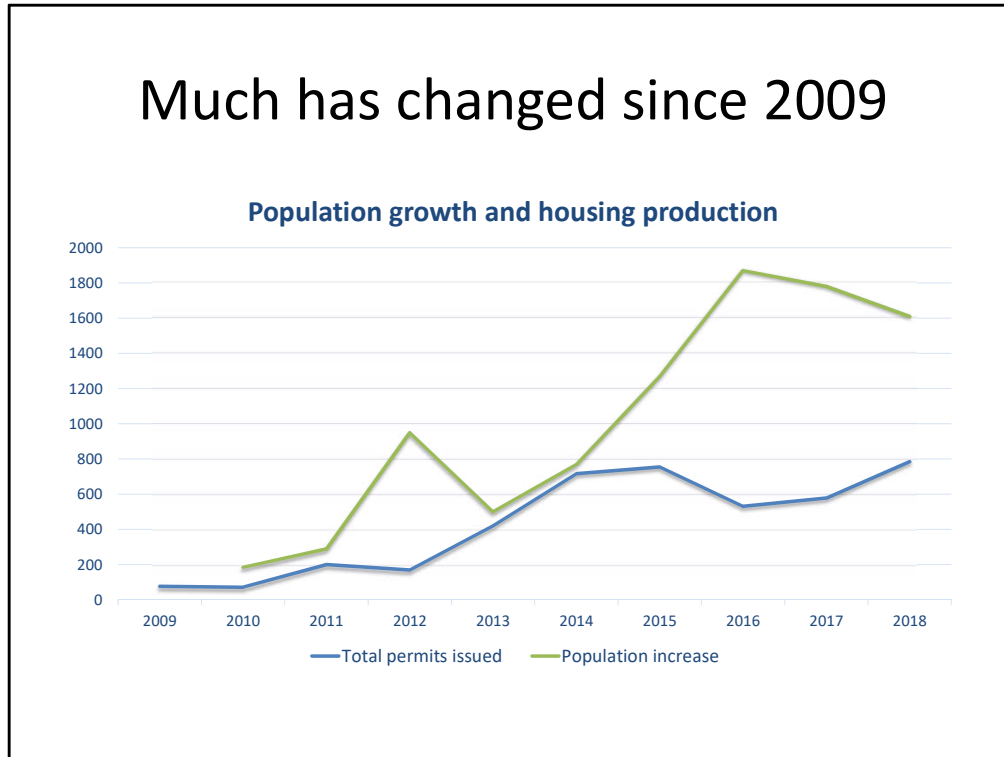
Core area along Meridian Street

Commercial transitions to the north and south

Residential transitions to the east and west

Limited size and scale of commercial uses due to close-proximity to residential; setbacks and height limits from residential property lines.

## Much has changed since 2009



Since the urban village plan was adopted 10 years ago, there have been a lot of changes in our community.

The green line is the number of new residents of Bellingham (population increase which includes people being born and moving here).

Blue line is all new units permitted per year. Housing production continues to rise, but not at the same rate as population growth.

Since 2010, Bellingham's population has risen by 11.4%.

At the same time, there was only a 9.7% increase in the number of housing units that were built.

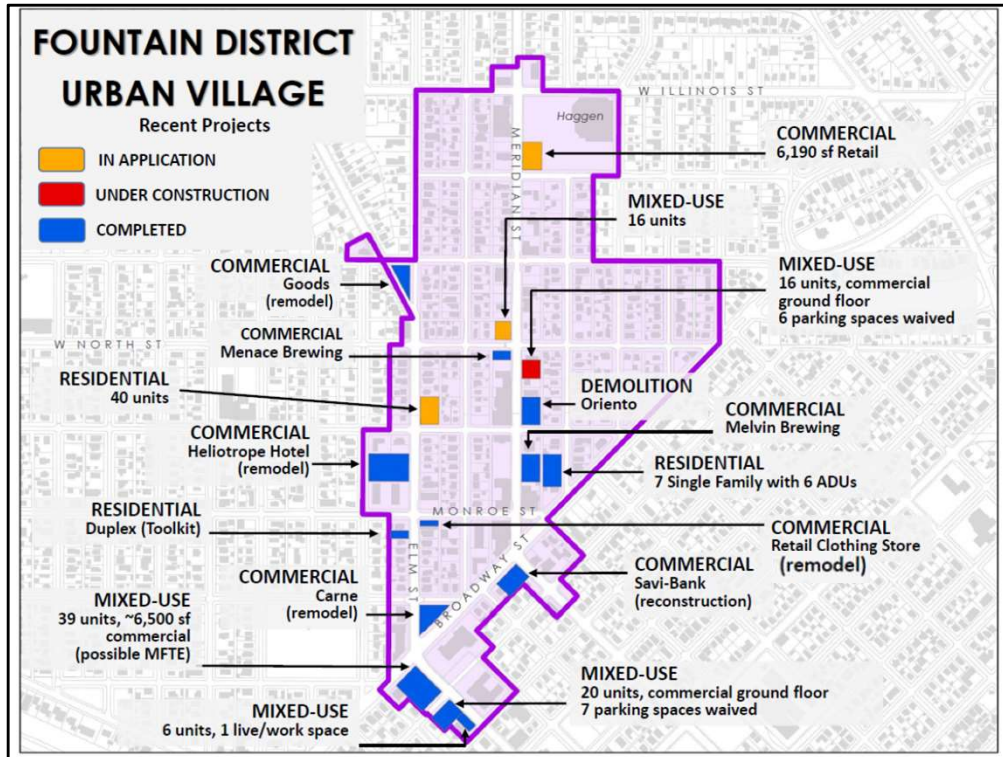
From 2007 to 2017, the median household income increased by 15%, while the median home value increased by 67%.



Last year, the City Council directed staff to conduct an analysis of all seven urban village to assess how each plan has been implemented so far. This included an analysis of the incentives, market factors, and city regulations that could influence how each urban village plan was living up to it's potential.

Describe Fountain District current conditions.

(See urban village status report for more information)



Interviewed builders, architects and city staff to identify what was working and not working well for redevelopment.

Were there barriers or incentives the City could adjust to encourage more investment in these areas?

For the Fountain District, issues with parking spillover and the redundancy of floor area limits were identified as things that needed attention.

City Council asked us to pursue these issues and bring back an analysis and proposal. This is why we are here today.

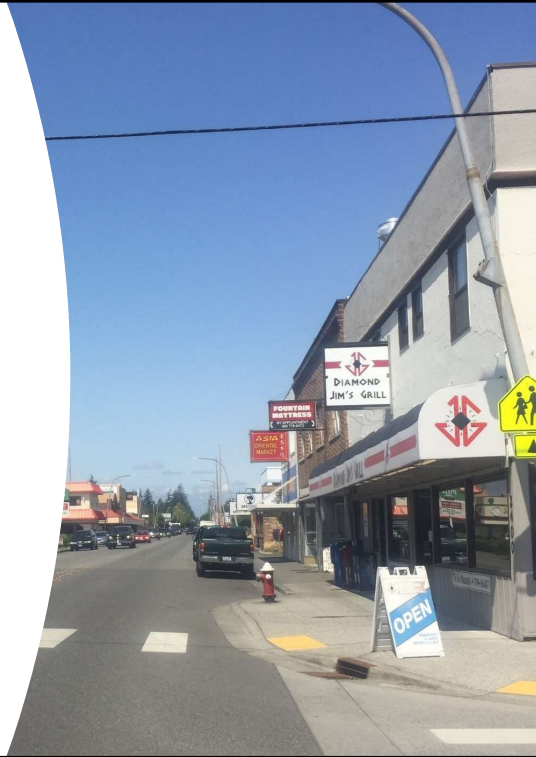


## 2019 Parking Study

- May 20 – June 21
- Morning, mid-day and evening counts
- 73 observations
- Used aerial photos, maps, and site visits to determine number of available onstreet parking spaces

### Findings

- Meridian saw an overall utilization of < 50%.
- Some places may warrant traffic management, especially at southern end of the district.
- Lack of formalization of parking may be resulting in conflicts and inefficiencies.



The purpose of this study was to better understand the current parking demand, assess how much of an impact future development would have on businesses and residents in the Fountain District.

Update 2009 parking study

### METHODOLOGY

- Measured a standard parallel parking stall using aerial photos and GIS (9' x 22')
- Eliminated areas that couldn't be parked (fire hydrants, driveways, loading zones, obstructions, etc)
- Checked on the ground.

Basic summary of findings, refer to the report, maps:

- Broadway and surrounding blocks most highly utilized overall, especially during business hours.
- Kulshan and Elm more heavily parked in the evenings.

Threshold for managed parking is usually considered 85% utilization.

See parking study report for more information.

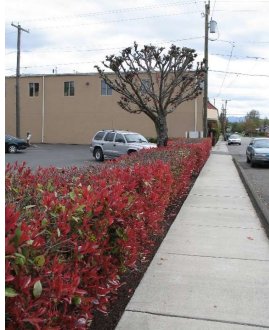
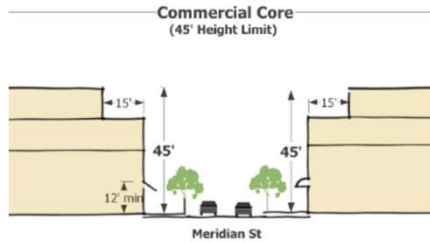


- 1) Methodology would show this as 2-3 parallel parking spaces. But maybe people typically park at an angle.
- 2) It is hard to tell if this is a grassy landscaped area or supposed to be used for parking
- 3) This driveway doesn't appear to be utilized....is it a parking stall?
- 4) Good example of vehicles parked both angled and parallel on the same block
- 5) Driveway entrance/private parking/public parking?

If everyone in this room went out with a clip board and a measuring tape, they'd get slightly different numbers.

Happy to show you what numbers we used and discuss whether they should be changed for the purpose of the calculations.

## What regulations limit building size in Fountain?



### Building Height Limits

45 foot maximum in Commercial Core  
35 feet maximum in Commercial  
Transition & Residential

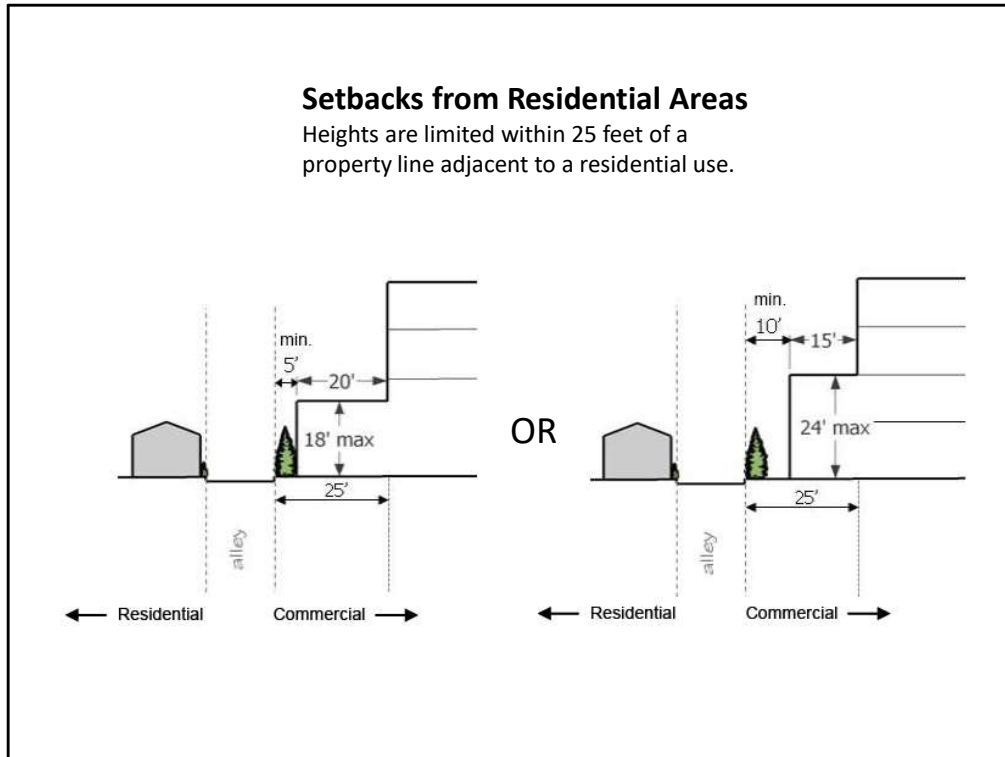
### Parking Requirements

Number of parking stalls often dictates  
the number/type of residential units  
and size of commercial spaces.

- 1 stall per residential unit
- 1 stall per 500 sf (Core)
- 1 stall per 350 sf (CT)

35 feet is roughly a 3 story and 45 a four-story building.

This is the only urban village that has a different parking requirement (more stringent) for a CT area



Within 25 feet of a property line that is adjacent to a residential area:

- 18 foot height limit if building is setback five feet
- 24 foot height limit if building is setback 10 feet

Typically, this requirement results in buildings having a 25-foot setback, due to the cost of bumping walls back.

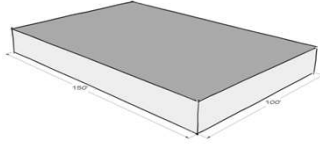
The height limit in single family and residential transition areas is 35 feet, and buildings can be 5 feet from the property line in these areas with no design review or special approvals.

There are no proposed changes to any of these regulations at this time.

## Floor Area Ratio (FAR)

The floor area of the building, divided by the lot size  
(Lot size x FAR = maximum building size)

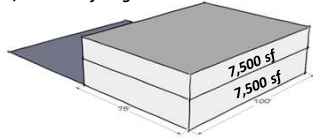
15,000 sf bldg



### 1.0 FAR – 1 story

$$15,000\text{sf}/15,000\text{ sf} = 1.0\text{ FAR}$$

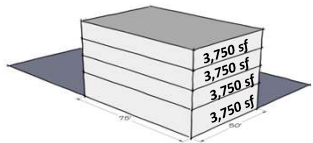
15,000 total sf bldg



### 1.0 FAR – two story

$$(7,500 + 7,500)/15,000\text{ sf} = 1.0\text{ FAR}$$

15,000 total sf bldg



### 1.0 FAR – four story

$$(3,750 + 3,750 + 3,750 + 3,750)/15,000\text{ sf} = 1.0\text{ FAR}$$

13

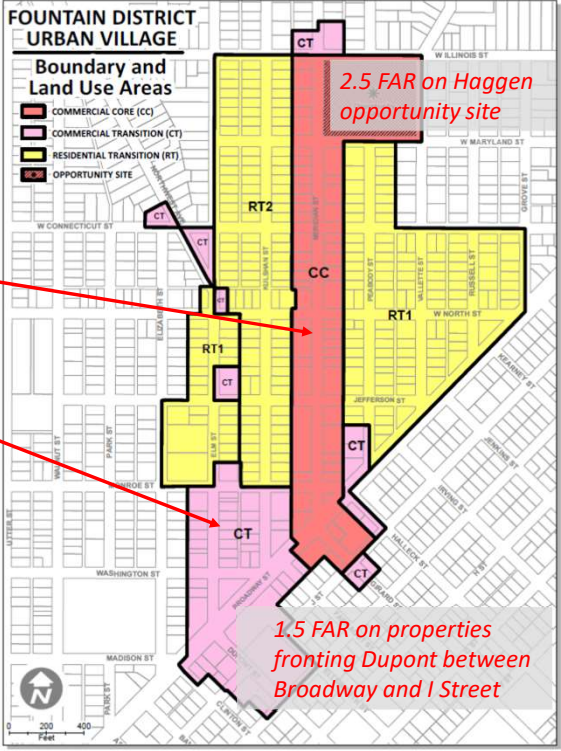
1.0 FAR means a 15,000 square foot lot has a maximum building size of 15,000 square feet. This can be configured in different ways. Something that was added to urban village plans....somewhat redundant to the other requirements. It was a newer concept at the time.

**Floor Area Ratio:  
Current Limits in  
Fountain District**

Commercial Core: 1.5 FAR

Commercial Transition:  
0.6 FAR

Residential Transition:  
*Single family: 5,500 sf max*  
*Infill toolkit: by unit type*





### Commercial Core Case Study: Buzz Thru & Starvin' Sams

Buzz Thru: 8,600 sf lot (1.5 FAR = 12,900 sf building)

Proposed 19-unit, 3-story mixed use building, setback 25 feet from the residential property line.

At the maximum floor area

FAR increase could potentially allow for a 4<sup>th</sup> story, provided onsite parking requirements could be met.

(Understand parking may be limiting factor for this project, not FAR)

## Commercial Core Case Study: Starvin' Sam's Gas Station Site

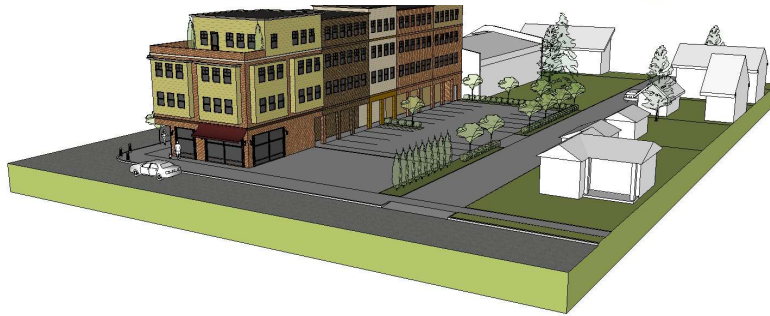
**Location:** Corner of Meridian  
and W. North

**Lot Size:** 150 x 100

**Height:** 45'

**FAR:** 1.4

**Parking:** 1 space / 500 sq ft



16

Example from the Fountain District urban village planning period

~ 5,000 s.f. groundfloor commercial

14 units (5, 5, 4)

FAR = 1.4

Large surface parking lot

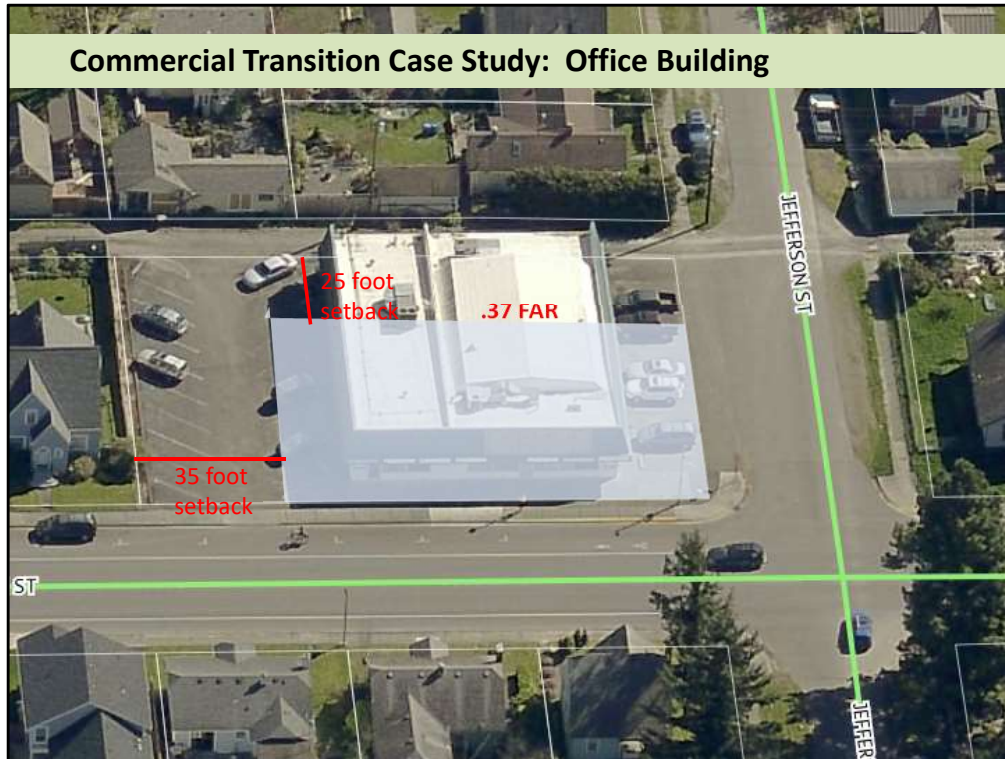
Additional FAR may provide an opportunity for additional housing units over the parking lot, if setbacks and height limits could be met.





Former Oriento site.

- Proposal for a 2,000 sf restaurant and 30 units of housing, 4 stories.
- Floorplate desired by a local restaurant could not be duplicated on the upper stories
- Expansion of the commercial space into the surface parking area would've exceeded the FAR.
- Increasing FAR would be an opportunity to create more units with very little additional impact on the alley (potentially 15 additional units)
- Parking may have been a limitation (unsure whether the administrative reductions or shared parking was explored in this case)



2500 Elm professional building (RJR real estate)

1 story, approximately 5,600 sf building on 15,000 sq foot lot (typical lot size) = 0.37 FAR

With ample setbacks, footprint of a new building could be 8,625 square feet (complies with current 0.6 FAR, at 0.575). **ONLY ONE STORY!!**

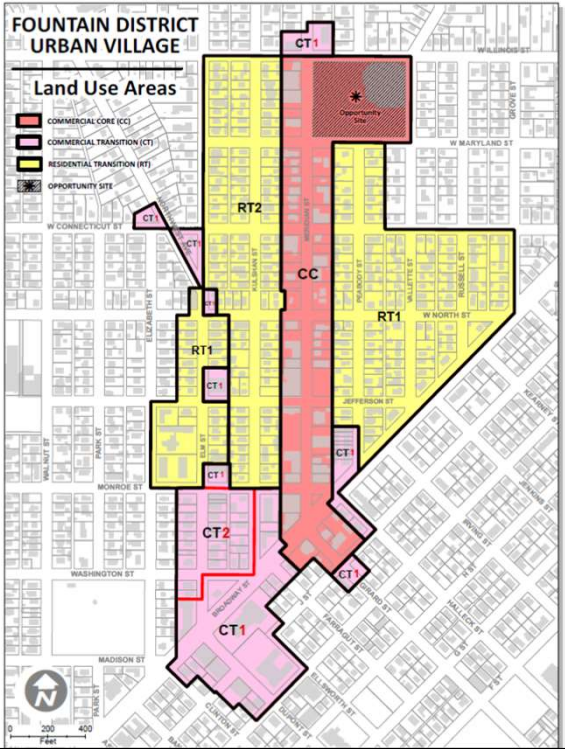
With the 35-foot height limit, 1.5 FAR could potentially allow two additional stories of housing with very little impact. Some parking could be provided under the structure, supporting additional housing units above.

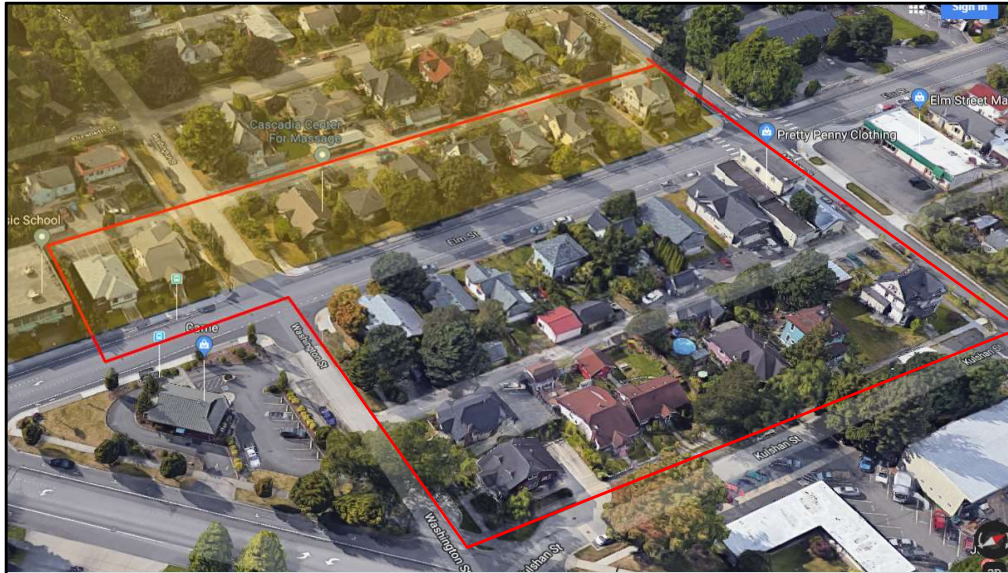
**Floor Area Ratio:  
Proposed Limits**

Commercial Core: 1-5  
2.5 FAR

Commercial Transition 1: 0-6  
1.5 FAR

CT 2 / Residential Transition:  
*No change*





### **Elm Street Area**

- Primarily residential uses and buildings; opportunities for commercial uses in existing structures
- Eldridge National Historic District overlap
- Maintain 0.6 FAR

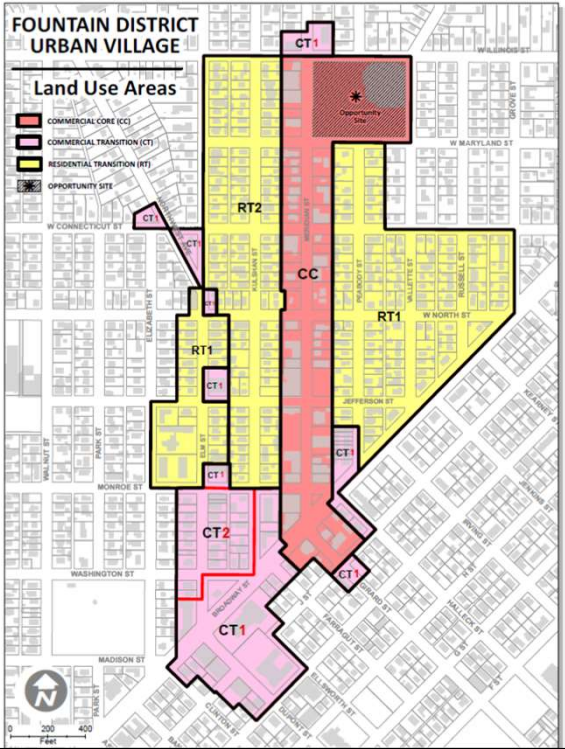
Would not recommend making any changes to this area.

**Floor Area Ratio:  
Proposed Limits**

Commercial Core: 4.5  
2.5 FAR

Commercial Transition 1: 0-6  
1.5 FAR

CT 2 / Residential Transition:  
*No change*



## Bicycle parking amendment

Currently: 15% of automobile parking

Proposed:

Short-term (visible, main entrance)

- 0.05 per bedroom (minimum 2)
- 1 per 5,000 s.f. commercial (min 2)

Long-term (secure, weather protected)

- 0.5 per bedroom (minimum 2)
- 1 per 10,000 gross s.f. commercial  
(per 12,000 s.f. for retail)

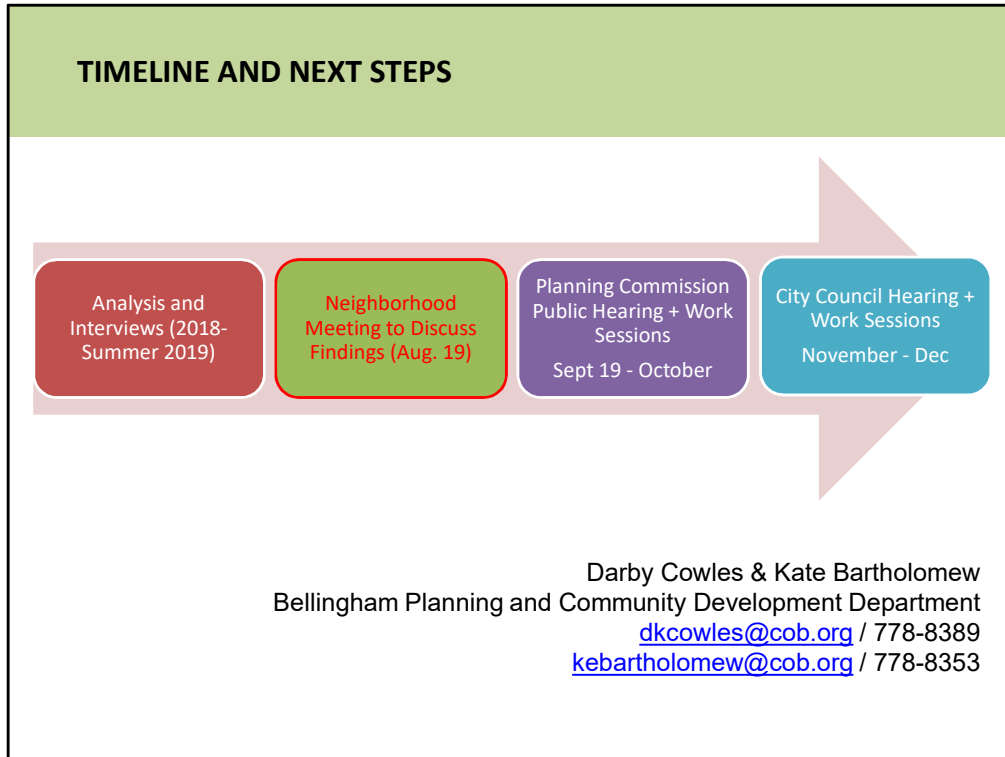


Exempt for buildings less than 2,500 s.f.

Consistent with bicycle parking requirements for our other urban villages

Improvements to pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure is directed via the Bike and Ped master plans and implemented using voter-approved Transportation Benefit District funds.

- Bike lanes on Elm/Northwest
- Bulbouts and crossings at Meridian, Broadway
- Bike boulevards



More opportunities to comment throughout the process.

Notice will be mailed to those property owners directly effected and within 500 feet, as well as neighborhood associations and reps.