

To:
Cc:
Bcc:
Subject: Fw: Fairhaven Neighborhood and Urban Village Plan

From: "Denis Hayner" <dhayner2@comcast.net>
To: <gaucutt@cob.org>
Cc: <jthomas@cob.org>
Date: 04/16/2012 10:49 AM
Subject: Fairhaven Neighborhood and Urban Village Plan

Greg Aucutt, Project Manager
Fairhaven Neighborhood and Urban Village Plan

We will not be attending the April 19, 2012 public meeting to discuss the Fairhaven Neighborhood and Urban Village Plan, so would like the following comment to be entered into the record. We object to the proposed maximum height allowances in the Historic District and the Historic Influence Area listed in Table .330-A and shown in Figure .330-B (indicated below). We request that the height in both areas be limited to 35'.

Table .330-A: Standard Development Regulations.

Maximum Height
Historic District:
4 stories and 56'

Historic Influence Area:
6 stories and 66'

Figure .330-B: Building Height Options.

Denis and Ruth Hayner
1101 McKenzie Ave Unit 201
Bellingham, WA 98225
dhayner2@comcast.net



Fw: Fairhaven Neighborhood and Urban Village Plan
Greg Aucutt to: Fiona E Starr

04/24/2012 12:39 PM

Greg Aucutt, AICP, Senior Planner
City of Bellingham Planning Department
210 Lottie Street, Bellingham, WA 98225
(360) 778-8344

----- Forwarded by Greg Aucutt/planning/cob on 04/24/2012 12:39 PM -----

From: Christine Roberts <mycoart@gmail.com>
To: gaucutt@cob.org
Date: 04/16/2012 11:42 AM
Subject: Fairhaven Neighborhood and Urban Village Plan

Dear Mr. Aucutt,

As a Fairhaven neighbour I would like to recommend the guidelines developed in the Fairhaven Neighborhood and Urban Village Plan, in particular the 35 foot height limits on buildings in the commercial core. I think that allowing buildings over this height will destroy the current pleasant atmosphere and views enjoyed in the historic district, and since the tourists come for that particular atmosphere and views, taller buildings will most likely reduce the tourist dollars to the businesses both in the commercial core and the surrounding areas.

Yours faithfully,
Christine Roberts
425 Chuckanut Dr. N. #38,
Bellingham
WA 98229



Fw: Necessary Elements for Successful Pedestrian Malls
Greg Aucutt to: Fiona E Starr

04/26/2012 09:21 AM

Another letter to post...

Greg Aucutt, AICP, Senior Planner
City of Bellingham Planning Department
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(360) 778-8344

----- Forwarded by Greg Aucutt/planning/cob on 04/26/2012 09:20 AM -----



Chuck Robinson
<chuck@villagebooks.com>
04/20/2012 09:47 AM

To planningcommission@cob.org
cc Kelli Linville <mayorsoffice@cob.org>
Subject Necessary Elements for Successful Pedestrian Malls

Dear Commissioners,

I am sorry I was unable to attend the Planning Commission meeting last evening. Robin Roberston said this morning that Commissioners expressed interest in the elements that have been common to those few pedestrian malls in the United States that have been successful. Those that failed--Kalamazoo; Tampa; Eugene; Chicago, Elgin, Decatur & Danville, IL; Galveston & Waco, TX; Baltimore; Allentown, West Chester & Philadelphia, PA; Little Rock; Louisville; Tulsa and others--all lacked one or more of these components:

- 1) large and dense population of "captive" users, including residents
- 2) shortness of the mall (even Boulder, CO, which is several blocks long, is broken by cross traffic each block)
- 3) sufficient parking structures and lots (Boulder has 6 parking structures and 4 parking lots within a couple blocks of the mall)
- 4) special design features that attract folks (not simply closed streets)
- 5) well-integrated transportation system
- 6) heavily programmed activities
- 7) strong anchors that serve as pedestrian generators and help enclose the space

I am a strong proponent of pedestrian malls--when all elements are present and carefully planned for. I would certainly argue that nearly all of these elements are absent in Fairhaven at this time.

More importantly, however, no proposal should be made for a solution to a problem that has not been defined. I've yet to hear anyone clearly articulate the problem that a pedestrian mall in Fairhaven is proposed to solve.

Thank you, once again, for your work on the Planning Commission. I look forward to your recommendations to Council for the Fairhaven Urban Village Plan.

Best,

Chuck Robinson
Village Books/Paper Dreams
Locally Owned & Independently Operated Since 1980

1200 11th Street
Bellingham, WA 98225
(360)671-2626

www.villagebooks.com

Blog: http://villagebooksblogs.typepad.com/village_books_blog/

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facebook fan page: <http://www.facebook.com/villagebooks>



Chuck Robinson
<chuck@villagebooks.com>
04/21/2012 04:09 PM

To planningcommission@cob.org
cc Kelli Linville <mayorsoffice@cob.org>
bcc
Subject Height Limits in Fairhaven

Dear Commissioners,

I have attached photos of the Village Books building that was built in 2004. It was built to 40 feet -- five feet higher than some folks have recommended as height limits in the core of Fairhaven. It was barely economically feasible to build the building at the time, and it is extremely unlikely that it could be built today. As a small business, even though we were able to negotiate good lease terms, we struggle with the occupancy costs, with the total cost of the building amortized over such a small square footage. I can't imagine how the rent structure of a 35-foot building would permit a small business to be sustainable.

I ask that you support the staff-recommended height limits that will create a vibrant urban core and allow small, independent businesses to be sustainable in Fairhaven.

Thank you,
Chuck Robinson





Chuck Robinson

Village Books

Locally Owned & Independently Operated Since 1980

1200 11th Street

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Blog: http://villagebooksblogs.typepad.com/village_books_blog/

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Fw: Port Comments on FNUV Plan for Planning Commission Consideration
Greg Aucutt to: Fiona E Starr

04/24/2012 12:44 PM

----- Forwarded by Greg Aucutt/planning/cob on 04/24/2012 12:44 PM -----

From: "McHenry, Greg" <GregM@portofbellingham.com>
To: Gregory Aucutt <GAucutt@cob.org>
Cc: "Goodwin, Sylvia" <sylviag@portofbellingham.com>
Date: 04/24/2012 11:13 AM
Subject: Port Comments on FNUV Plan for Planning Commission Consideration

Good Morning Greg,

Would you please see to it that the attached Port comments on the FNUV plan are forwarded to the Planning Commission for consideration at their next work study session?

Thanks,

Greg McHenry
Planning Analyst
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Fax: (360)671-6411
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Port Comments to Planning Commission 4242012.pdf



PORT OF BELLINGHAM
Washington State

April 24, 2012

Planning Commission
City of Bellingham
210 Lottie Street
Bellingham, WA 98225

RE: Fairhaven Neighborhood and Urban Village (FNUV) Plan

Dear Planning Commission,

I would like to take this opportunity to clarify and follow up on the comments made by Greg McHenry, Port Planning Analyst, given at the public hearing regarding the FNUV plan on April 19th. I would also like to respond to some of the public comments regarding port property, the ports intent and height limits.

The Port's current Fairhaven Improvement Plan, adopted by the Port Commission in December 2008 after an extensive public process, is to maintain existing Port facilities in Fairhaven while promoting projects which support economic development and jobs, environmental restoration and public access to the water. Specifically in regards to Area I-2, the Port's Fairhaven plan states that the Port will seek a change in zoning that would allow light industrial uses at the Port's Fairhaven Marine Industrial Park (FMIP) east of Padden Lagoon in addition to marine industrial uses. The Port's Fairhaven Plan also recommends seeking a change in zoning towards more tourist oriented commercial uses at Fairhaven Station west of Padden Lagoon.

As FMIP and Fairhaven Station are both located in Area I-2, the Port recommended that offices, personal services and retail uses be permitted in Area I-2, similar to uses currently allowed in other light industrial zones in the City. Additional commercial and office uses are most critical for the area west of Padden Lagoon near Fairhaven Station. The office space within Fairhaven Station and the vacant lot adjacent to the Washington Wind Sports are not conducive to industrial use, and would be more appropriate for office, retail or personal service uses especially when the new pedestrian way standards for this area are applied. If the Planning Commission is opposed to expanding the uses for the entire I-2 area, the Port would suggest that the area west of Padden Lagoon become part of Area I-3. (see attached map).

At the public hearing, some members of the community expressed concern about hotel, motel, & hostels and convention centers uses in Area I-2. The Port did not seek to have these uses be

added to area I-2. Nor is the Port seeking development proposals for these types of uses. However, the Port believes that greater flexibility within the land use classification tables is a good thing and is ok with these uses being permitted or conditionally permitted.

As it relates to the Fairhaven Neighborhood Association's comments which requested height limits of 35' everywhere outside of the commercial core, the Port would be opposed to this request particularly where marine industrial uses functionally require higher limits. The existing buildings within FMIP are 28' to 30' tall and are not tall enough to allow indoor construction or repair of larger vessels. If additional industrial buildings are constructed at FMIP to accommodate this type of use, buildings heights of 60' to 65', similar to what was approved in 2010 for the Seaview North location at Roeder and Squalicum Way, would be desirable.

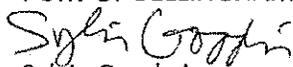
In regards to the public trail parallel with the shoreline, through the marine industrial area of FMIP and adjacent to the railroad tracks, as depicted on page 33 of the draft FNUV Plan , the Port remains skeptical because the Port intends to keep this area industrial, likely beyond the 20 year planning period. Even if this area did re-develop during the FNUV planning period, this proposed trail would not provide access to water and would likely need to be fenced for safety reasons as long as the railroad continues to operate.

As Greg stated at the hearing, the Port believes that overall, City staff did a good job putting together the FNUV plan and associated design standards. Offices, retail and personal service uses were initially allowed in Area I-2 in the draft FNUV document issued in December 2011 but were removed in the March 2012 draft. So we therefore, are bringing this request to your attention for your consideration. Greater flexibility in use is needed in that portion of Area I-2 located west of Padden Lagoon.

The Port of Bellingham remains committed to promoting a vibrant waterfront economy by creating conditions that will be attractive to jobs of the future. Thank you for your consideration and your public service commitment.

Sincerely,

PORT OF BELLINGHAM


Sylvia Goodwin

Planning and Development Director

c: Rob Fix, Interim Executive Director, Port of Bellingham
Port of Bellingham Board of Commissioners

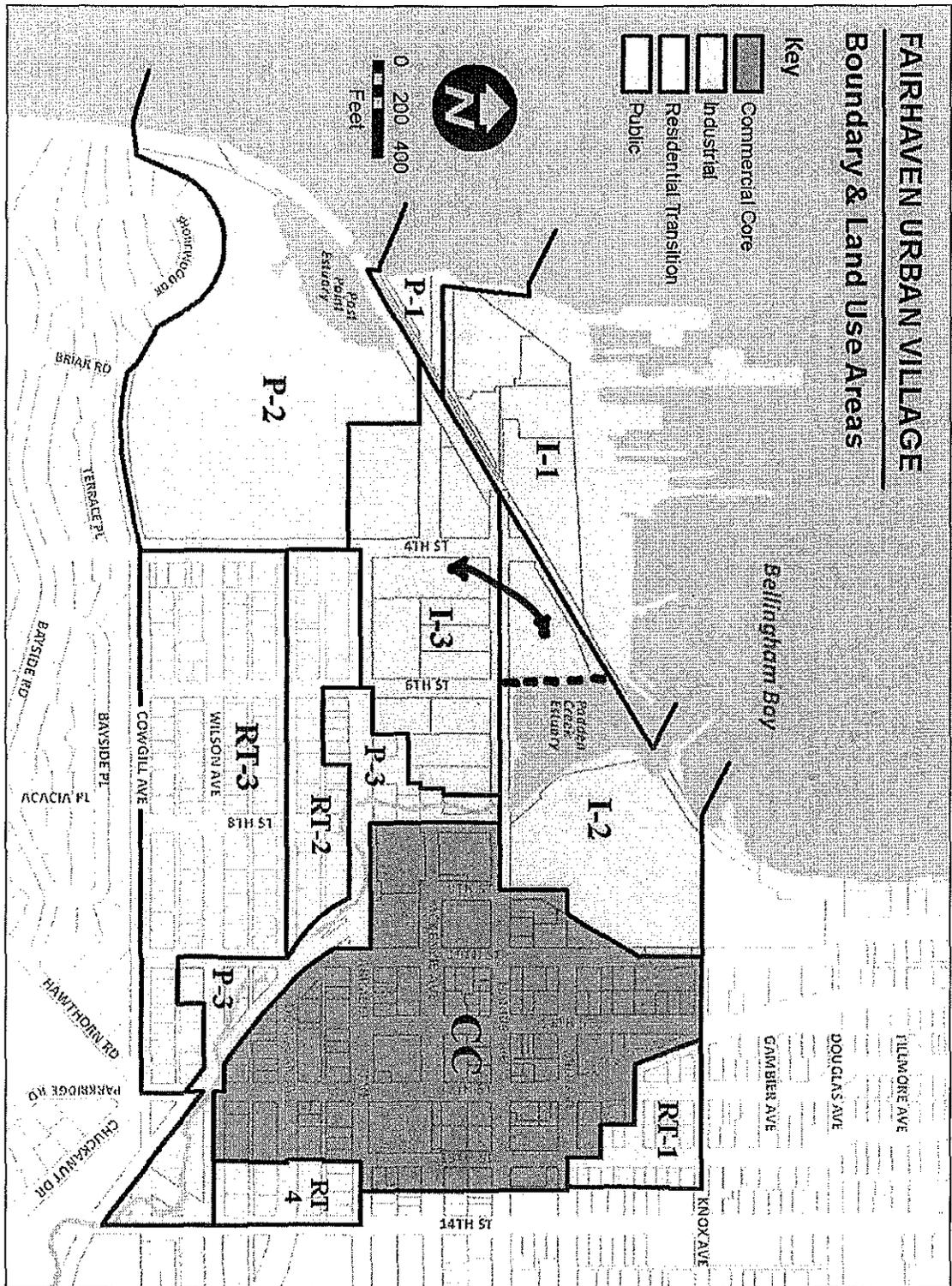


Figure .310-A: Fairhaven Urban Village and Area Boundaries Map
March 20, 2012 DRAFT

To:
Cc:
Bcc:
Subject: Fw: Written version of my April 19 comments to commission

Heather Aven, Planning Secretary
City of Bellingham
Planning and Community Development
Tel: (360) 778-8345
Fax: (360)778-8302

----- Forwarded by Heather M Aven/planning/cob on 05/01/2012 10:04 AM -----



Constance Shannon
<innkeeper@fairhavenvillagei
nn.com>
04/24/2012 12:32 PM

To: planningcommission@cob.org
cc: gaucutt@cob.org, Jthomas@cob.org
Subject: Written version of my April 19 comments to commission

April 24, 2012

From: Connie Shannon, owner Fairhaven Village Inn LLC

Dear Planning Commission Members,

Updated comments: After last Thursday's hearing, I am including a snapshot of the 39-foot Fairhaven Village Inn and the City of Bellingham's Existing Conditions Map of Fairhaven for that height documentation. Those scans can be found at the end of my spoken comments (below) I provided to you last Thursday.

Twelve years ago the Fairhaven Village Inn building did not exist. Gene and I believed in the "Mom and pop" approach to a small boutique hotel built by Ken Imus and the importance of retail commercial in the building for locals and visitors alike. That is why today you can stay at the Inn, have breakfast crepes at Magdalena's, wine and cheese at Daphne's bar in the evening after browsing the Human Society the "Paws Awhile" shop and the wide range art jewelry at Whimsey...all in the building at the Fairhaven Village Inn.

This building provides jobs and opportunity. When we purchased the building in 2004, the Inn had one full-time employee. Today we have 7 full-time employees and many part-time jobs for students to early-retired folks alike.

But our success is woven together with the success of retail and services and residential in the core of Fairhaven. Small retail and services need anchors like the Inn, Village Books and Fairhaven Market to draw larger numbers who become exposed to their unique products and services. Those anchor businesses may need to be in bigger buildings. Without that thriving

base of retail/commercial partnership and the fairly recent addition of the variety of residences at Fairhaven Gardens, Harris Square and Mackenzie Square, the Inn would not attract thousands of people a year as it did in 2011.

Industry standards indicate that visitors contribute an additional 2 1/2 times their room cost to a community in which they stay! All these guests of the Fairhaven Village Inn are good for Avenue Bread and Village Books and, Renaissance Art Glass and Blessings Salon and Skylark's and Fairhaven Bike shop....and the City of Bellingham.

But we need more than hotel guests to sustain our vibrant district.

We in the commercial core are all acutely aware that only a small percentage of our annual revenue is from residents immediately outside the Commercial core. That is why we spend so much of our hard earned money and time promoting Fairhaven within 100 mile radius, develop unique events, and contribute willingly to our own Fairhaven marketing and advertising budget.

My point. It seems to work just fine if you take snap shot of today. But, Fairhaven needs a flexible urban plan that allows the core to be liberally responsive to marketplace over time both in building type and design and type of permitted businesses. That is what individual businesses must do to sustain their viability.

Fairhaven has lived and died at least 4 times over the last 100 years. We hope the Fairhaven Village Inn will be here decades from now, but it cannot stand-alone. To continue as a healthily core for living, working, and visiting

Fairhaven must have the flexibility to build and design to the marketplace. No commercial area is unique enough to remain stagnant and be successful.

Sincerely,

Connie Shannon

Fairhaven Village Inn

Enclosures:

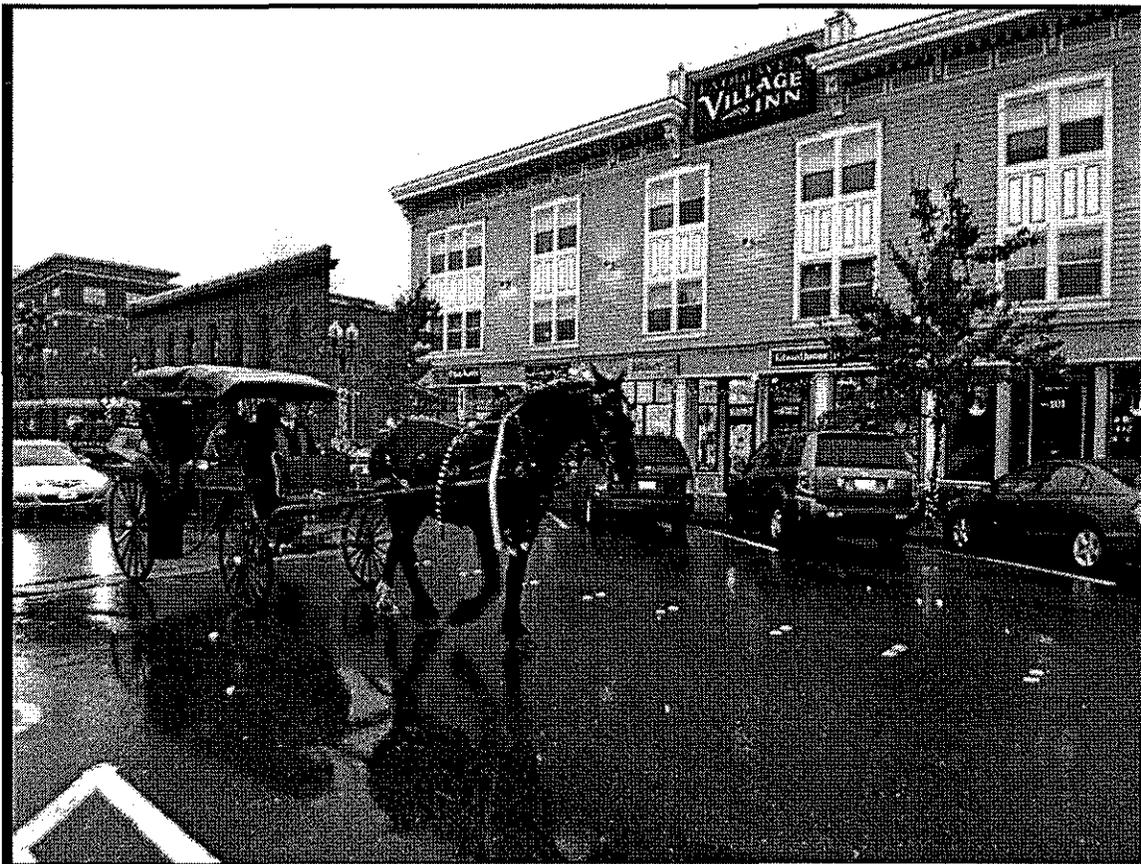
- A snapshot of the 39-foot high Fairhaven Village Inn
- City of Bellingham Existing Conditions map of Fairhaven showing height of the hotel.



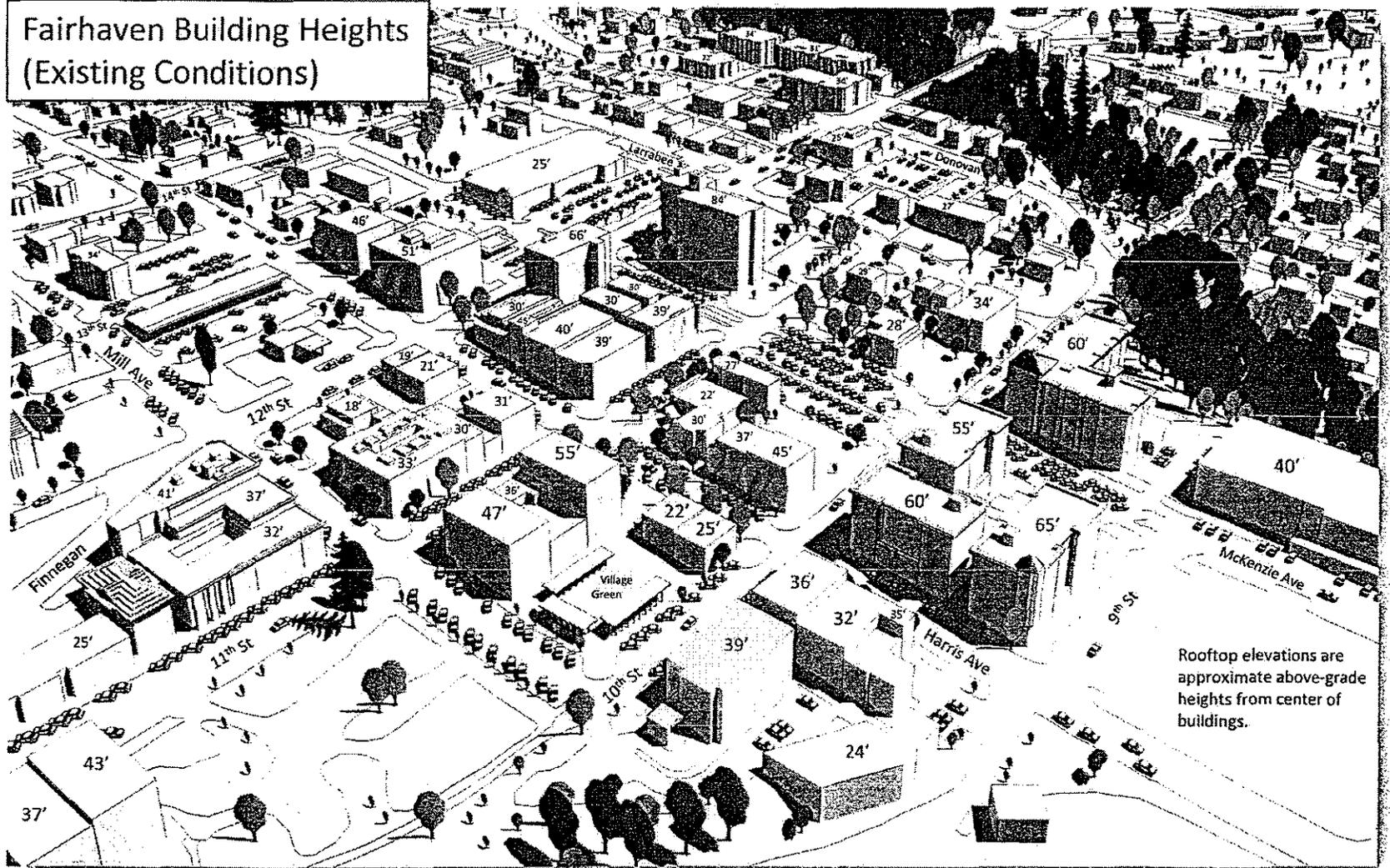
Fairhaven Village Inn.pdf



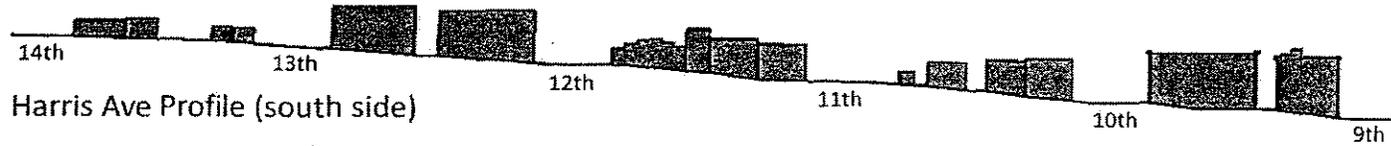
COB Existing Conditions Map.PDF



Fairhaven Building Heights (Existing Conditions)



Rooftop elevations are approximate above-grade heights from center of buildings.





Fw: FNUVP Draft of 2/20/12

Greg Aucutt to: Fiona E Starr

04/24/2012 02:13 PM

Cc: Heather M Aven, Jeffrey B Thomas, Kurt Nabbefeld, Jackie Lynch,
Chris J Koch, Kathryn E Franks, Christopher J Behee

Another one to post and send to the PC....

----- Forwarded by Greg Aucutt/planning/cob on 04/24/2012 02:12 PM -----

From: "Ralph W. Thacker" <rwthacker1@comcast.net>
To: "Greg Aucutt" <GAucutt@cob.org>
Date: 04/24/2012 01:13 PM
Subject: FNUVP Draft of 2/20/12

Hi, Greg:

Attached is a written comment on the FNUVP that follows up my oral comments at last Thursday's meeting for the Planning Commission.
Please, post it to the COB website and send copies to the PC members. I hope to attend this week's PC session.

Cheers!

Ralph



PS Don't forget to call me when things are less hectic. PC Letter 4.21.12 A.doc

Date: April 24, 2012
To: The Bellingham Planning Commission
From: Ralph W. Thacker

Re: The FNUVP Draft of 3/20/12

Dear Members of the Bellingham Planning Commission:

Thank you for the civil and productive meeting on April 19th largely devoted to oral comments on the FNUVP Draft of 3/20/12. This letter is a follow-up to the issues to which I spoke that evening. Staff has done a commendable job at the detail level. However, I feel that several basic planning concepts are inadequately reflected. Here are some specific recommendations:

1. Revise the vision statement on Page 4 to emphasize Fairhaven's function as the retail, commercial, industrial and recreational center for the surrounding neighborhoods and the wider community and to advance the concept that infill encompasses these elements as well as housing. The vision statement should recognize that the primary opportunities for residential infill on Bellingham's Southside lie in the Happy Valley and South Neighborhoods, since they provide more far more opportunities for developing moderately-priced housing (and using the "Infill Toolkit") than Fairhaven does.
2. Add an eighth goal statement on Page 5 stating the importance of maximizing the value of Fairhaven's two-level setting to differentiate between major land uses and to enhance the experience of being either above or below the bluff, by providing an instant, palpable and unforgettable sense of place. (Please see the brief on this issue copied on Page 2.)
3. Add policies on Page 20 similar to Policies 2.15 and 2.19 requiring view preservation for the Columbia, Knox, Gambier and Douglas rights-of-way, whether vacated or not.
4. Add a policy on Page 22 requiring each mixed-use project proposed for Fairhaven's commercial area to include at least two units of moderately-priced housing for each higher-priced unit.
5. Add a separate chapter on economic development expanding the brief overview on that topic offered in the proposed revision to the FNP submitted by Fairhaven Neighbors in 2007. This statement should aim at encouraging organic growth stemming primarily from expansion in the industrial and light-industrial sectors.
6. Frame height limitations to keep development of taller buildings in as centralized and compact an area as possible in order to maintain Fairhaven's intimacy and pedestrian orientation, to minimize obstruction of views and to prevent urban village sprawl.
7. Restrict the heights of new and redeveloped buildings on all Fairhaven property owned and/or managed by the Port of Bellingham to the height of the bluff immediately east of the site involved, allowing 60' in special cases like dry-stack storage or large boat repair.
8. Extend the Fairhaven urban village boundary to include the Taylor Ave. Dock.

Thoughtfully and hopefully yours,

Ralph

BANKING ON THE BLUFF

The Waterfront Futures Group (WFG) was a two-year, citizen planning effort jointly sponsored by the City and the Port of Bellingham tasked with proposing improvements for Bellingham's entire eleven-mile shoreline. Hence, the WFG initially chose the motto, "Connecting Bellingham to the Bay," and later changed it to "Connecting Bellingham with the Bay," in recognition of the presence of a bilateral relationship. Early in its deliberations, the WFG pondered the question of how to affect architectural integrity over such an extensive area. So, the issues of both physical and visual connectivity were clearly in the WFG's purview.

However, the WFG did not fully appreciate the fact that the bluff, which lines almost all of Bellingham's shoreline, was the sole connection between its uplands and tidelands until over four-hundred acres of landfill were created below it to facilitate industrial uses. Moreover, the WFG undervalued the fact that the bluff is unavoidably a key factor for improving connectivity between the two levels and achieving continuity along the entire waterfront. From the bluff, one always sees the water spreading below. From the water, one always sees the bluff rising above.

Thus the reciprocity of adding value heralded by the WFG motto is facilitated by the bluff. Residents and visitors find a sense of warmth, familiarity, security in the uplands and enjoy a sense of refreshment, openness and adventure by the water. Both of these experiences are enhanced by investing a few minutes of time and energy in transitioning from one level to the other by moving up or down the face of the bluff. The bluff offers an existential means of achieving connectivity and continuity by prompting a palpable sense of place derived from the consciousness of being always either above it or below it.

In a January 2004 presentation to the WFG, architect Arlan Collins declared: "Cities which have taken back their industrial waterfronts and devoted them to public use have added more value to their broader communities than those that have allowed intensive private development to dominate those areas." For Bellingham, one unique source of generating value for the City and the County and of creating a world-class ambiance, is maximizing the value of our two-level natural setting. We can make moving from one level to the other the essence both of our sense of place and of our sense of community.

Meeting this challenge will require taking such steps as:

- Establishing "pausing places" along the top of the bluff and the edge of the water
- Maintaining frequent view corridors between the face of the bluff and the water
- Preventing building heights on the lower level from hiding the vertical differential
- Maximizing public access and utilization both from the land and the water
- Designing pedestrian and vehicular accesses that preserve the bluff's integrity
- Concentrating selected land uses on the waterfront and others in the uplands
- Differentiating architectural motifs between the waterfront and the uplands

If we fail to do so, our posterity will suffer an irreparable loss and may never forgive us.

Ralph W. Thacker, MPA

Originally prepared on February 25, 2006 and revised on April 22, 2012

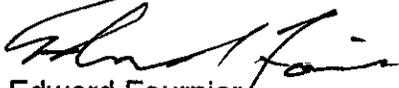
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Planning and Development Commission
Planning and Community Development Department
210 Lottie Street
Bellingham, WA 98226

APR 24 2012

City of Bellingham
Planning

Fairhaven draws visitors who are largely unaware of its' greatest need, parking. Residents of greater Bellingham as well of Whatcom County hesitate coming to Fairhaven because of the known lack of parking. Unless transportation and parking are dealt with, increasing the local density will only compound the problem. The present height restriction should be maintained. Additionally, there exists inadequate water runoff planning for any dramatic increase in density. For these reasons, an increase in density (by raising building height) isn't feasible.



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Gene Shannon
<gvshannon@mac.com>
04/25/2012 12:40 PM

To GAcutt@cob.org, JThomas@cob.org,
Planningcommission@cob.org
cc
bcc
Subject Oral comments put to writing: Fairhaven Plan proposal

Re: Fairhaven Urban Village Plan

To: Planning Commission Members

Honorable members:

My wife Connie and I have been owner-managers of the Fairhaven Village Inn since 2004. For the past five years now, we have been attending meetings and writing letters to the planning department as part of the struggle to see if a new plan for Fairhaven can be developed that can actually become a functioning document for many decades to come.

In my view, the current draft document has come a long way towards achieving the clarity and consistency that a properly functioning long lasting and successful plan will require.

I concur with the observations made by Chuck Robinson in his letter especially regarding the need to commission a task force to take on the future of Fairhaven parking and the need to include our only grocery store--the Fairhaven Market--within the Fairhaven Village Boundary.

But there is something in the current draft plan that to my knowledge has had little or no public examination. I and most other Fairhaven merchants and business property owners find it troubling and ask you why in the world has the Port of Bellingham been penciled into the Fairhaven Plan as direct competitors to the heart and soul of what makes Fairhaven, Fairhaven—small businesses running hotels, eating and drinking establishments, countless varieties of retail activities as well as medical offices and clinics.

Let me explain.

If adopted as now written, the Fairhaven port lands could achieve zoning permits for hotels, eating & drinking establishments, retail activities and medical offices and clinics.

I ask, isn't that exactly what the Fairhaven Commercial District is already striving to do by private owners

with no tax subsidies?

Why would we do this?

I'm not aware of any serious public deliberation on the merits of these uses on Fairhaven

Port property adjacent to private businesses that have and will try to continue to offer and develop these services unless they are faced with competition from the Port.

Why would we allow this important public entity to convert scarce industrial zoning lands with marine access and allow it to be converted into zoning that puts a public entity in direct head to head competition with small private business men and women of Fairhaven? These port sites are distant from the commercial core and as well, the Port has already dedicated the Georgia Pacific site away from industrial and on into mixed use.

It seems to me that the core business of the Port of Bellingham in Fairhaven is to support transportation and private business development--especially marine-related industries.

If the port wants to live up to that model, they might want to consider provide a parking structure to support the general economic development of Fairhaven. This would be consistent with parking already provided by the Port for the Ferry Terminal and the Train Station.

And why doesn't the Port step up and take a leadership role and encourage the general economic growth of Fairhaven by helping to facility a wastewater treatment facility? It has the space for it.

These are two activities--well within their mandate—that would be enormously helpful to the economic vitality of the Fairhaven Business District.

I respectfully ask that you strike the Port's unvetted inclusion of these zoning privileges from the Draft Fairhaven Plan and help redirect the Port of Bellingham back to its core business—helping private business interests to grow and prosper while refraining from using taxpayers money and to compete against taxpaying businesses.

Thank you.

Gene Shannon

Fairhaven Village Inn LLC

1200-10th St.

Bellingham, WA 98225

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Planning and Development Commission
Planning and Community Development Department
210 Lottie Street
Bellingham, WA 98226

APR 25 2012

City of Bellingham
Planning

I believe that the current planning for Fairhaven includes two failed goals. I have addressed them below.

"Reduce loom ability". Tall building near the core would actually loom above it. The effect of stepping works strictly at the street level. I believe this places value on visitors at the expense of permanent residents. Right now the historical area appears to be the center, seemingly the high point. Tall buildings would make the historical area appear as if it is at the low point in a valley. Please keep the present height restriction near the core.

"Maintain a 3-4 story street presence" ignores present views. 14ft. ceilings on 1st floors near the core is hardly defensible when the need for energy conservation is paramount! Extra high ceilings exist in many historical buildings out of necessity. They require extra energy to heat. That translates into extra cost to merchants. Don't propose inefficiencies. While we enjoy the old flavor of the historical center, we do not want to mimic it's shortcomings.



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APR 25 2012

City of Bellingham
Planning

Planning and Development Commission
Planning and Community Development Department
210 Lottie Street
Bellingham, WA 98226

Building height does not equal density. There are four people living atop Village Books. There are four people on the top floor of Fairhaven Gardens. There are four people at the top of the Waldron Building. Please retain the current height restriction for foreseen residential building.



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APR 25 2012

City of Bellingham
Planning

Planning and Development Commission
Planning and Community Development Department
210 Lottie Street
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I used to live on 12th Street. It had a water view but I found it difficult to get around there after my stroke in 2003. I moved to Fairhaven Gardens believing that I'd have a water view from the 4th Floor patio even if a building was built in "The Pit". Living in the Fairhaven Village also allowed me an opportunity to be more active. The proposed change in building height threatens my view. Please maintain the current height restrictions to meet projected density needs.



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APR 25 2012

City of Bellingham
Planning

Planning and Development Commission
Planning and Community Development Department
210 Lottie Street
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Meeting Bellingham's' projected growth by a dramatic increase in Fairhaven's previously planned density is a plan guaranteed to destroy Fairhaven's village atmosphere. Please help keep Fairhaven's appeal intact by following present height restrictions, especially near the core where large buildings would loom over and eclipse the center. Plan to enhance, not distract.



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APR 26 2012

City of Bellingham
Planning

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210 Lottie Street
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While the current proposal represents a lot of work to increase density in Fairhaven, it does so while paying inadequate attention to the very quality of Fairhaven's historical core. Raising the building height near it's core will detract from historical Fairhaven's dominance, ruining the village atmosphere that attracts visitors and. Coupled with Fairhaven's lack of parking, increased density is not in historical Fairhaven's best interest.



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26 April 2012

APR 26 2012

To: City of Bellingham Planning Committee Members
From: Josselyn Winslow
Re: Public Input Session – April 18, 2012

City of Bellingham
Planning

Thank you for conducting a public input session that provided an equitable amount of time to people who wished to speak for themselves.

My comments at the meeting were specifically about height limits to the west of Fairhaven Gardens as they were defined at the time we purchased our unit in 2005. But, beyond height limits, what makes Fairhaven a unique urban village is the overall mixture of old and new buildings with compatible heights and scale. If new buildings on the north-eastern boundary of Fairhaven don't blend in with the old we will repeat the sad situation we have with the too-big buildings of Harris Square.

Visit the two Harris Square buildings south side of Harris Street – constructed about the same time as Fairhaven Gardens, 2005 – and you will see at least two things that make the buildings seem too big:

1) The scale of the Harris Square buildings overwhelms the buildings across on the north side of the street. The buildings are massive, partially because of the street level floor height. It seems the ground level ceiling height of 14 feet must have been applied at the highest point, at the corner of Harris and 10th, but further down the hill on Harris Street the second floor is probably 20 feet as measured from street level. And, the low corner of the lower building's second floor is also probably at least 20 feet above the street. Inside, the corner shop's ceiling is extremely high.

2) A second reason for the "too big" appearance is the streetscape. Harris Square has an accessible walkway on the east side from 10th Street down into an inviting courtyard with shops and parking on the south side of the two buildings. But, from mid-block on Harris a pedestrian has to climb up a flight of concrete steps between those two buildings to reach the courtyard. This makes the buildings seem more fortress-like than friendly; it does not invite customers.

I can only surmise that city planners had requirements to follow in approving plans for Harris Square, but those requirements did not guarantee good results.

Height is a critical issue. Does the Planning Department designate a specific GIS point for each building – at the lot's highest Mean Sea Level point – from which all of that building's heights are calculated? Clarification about the specific GIS point for each building will eliminate confusion.

I do not envy the task of the Planning Commission. I understand that a single very specific plan makes it easy for developers to meet the requirements but different areas within Fairhaven need different standards. The chair's request as to where city planners might recommend taller building heights gave me hope that within distinctive zones in Fairhaven higher buildings could be permitted while maintaining the 35 foot limits, at least the 2A area north of Harris, as they had been defined in earlier years.

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cc: Mayor Kelli Linville
City Council Members