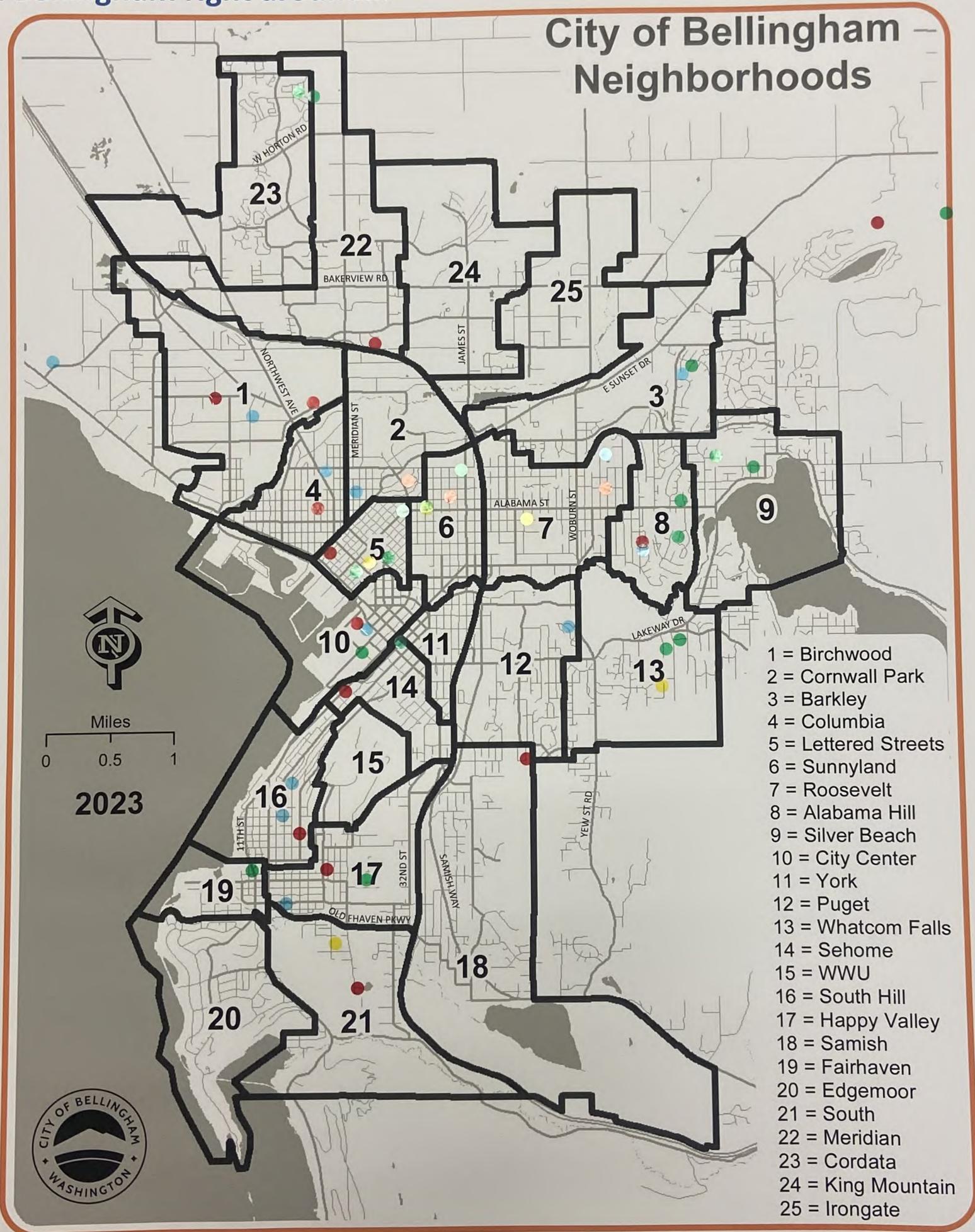


# Where do you live?

Put a dot in your neighborhood or in the box below that describes your relationship to Bellingham to let us know who we are reaching.

**I live in Bellingham right around...**



**I don't live in Bellingham, but I...**

Work in Bellingham



Visit Bellingham



# Project Scope

Updates to the plan will focus on changes that...

## Build upon what is valued today

- » Outdoor recreation and opportunities to explore nature
- » Convenient access to friends and family, a variety of activities, services, and more
- » Small and local businesses
- » Vibrant and unique places
- » Mitigation of climate change contributions/GHG emissions
- » Connections to Bellingham's full range of historic periods

## Respond to changed conditions

- » Expanded capacity for housing and jobs to meet expected 20-year growth
- » Planning for increased telework to jobs based both in Bellingham and elsewhere
- » Health resilience and accommodation
- » Housing affordable to all income bands (HB 1220), especially those aligned with local employment
- » Integrated and comprehensive approach to address gaps in housing and human services
- » Approaches to assist vulnerable populations struggling with mental health and addiction issues
- » Climate resilience and adaptation (HB 1181)
- » A range of housing types to support current and future residents' housing needs, including a diversification of middle scale housing with larger units (HB 1110, HB 1337)
- » Land use investment in planned transit network improvements
- » Potential annexation and/or changes to the UGA boundary

## Aspire to a brighter future

- » A safe and welcoming environment
- » A healthy community, physically and mentally
- » Economic vitality, business diversification, and living-wage jobs
- » An active community that is informed and engaged on a range of city issues
- » Gathering places of varied types and sizes across the city
- » An accessible, diverse, equitable, and inclusive community (ADEI)

## Increase the legibility of the plan for a broad range of audiences

- » Document simplification and usability improvements
- » Links between related topics
- » Online interaction in addition to traditional printable format

# Chapters of the Plan

- **Land Use**

This chapter guides growth by establishing the future land uses across the city. The Land Use Map at right guides these permitted land uses (such as are defined in the zoning code).

- **Community Design**

This chapter recognizes the community's desires to retain features that make neighborhoods unique and improve the livability of the built environment as the community grows.

- **Housing**

This chapter contains an analysis of existing housing in Bellingham and policies to support future housing needs. This chapter may be expanded to include human services topics.

- **Multi-modal Transportation**

This chapter includes an analysis of the existing transportation system and projections of future needs including alternative modes, such as walking, bicycling and transit systems.

- **Economic Development**

This chapter highlights the City's commitment to create a vibrant, sustainable economy and identifies the City's role in economic development activity. It includes characteristics of the local economy and employment sectors.

- **Environment**

This chapter implements the vision of Bellingham as a city with treasured natural features. This chapter may be expanded to "Climate and the Environment" or a new Climate Change chapter may be created.

- **Parks, Recreation, and Open Space**

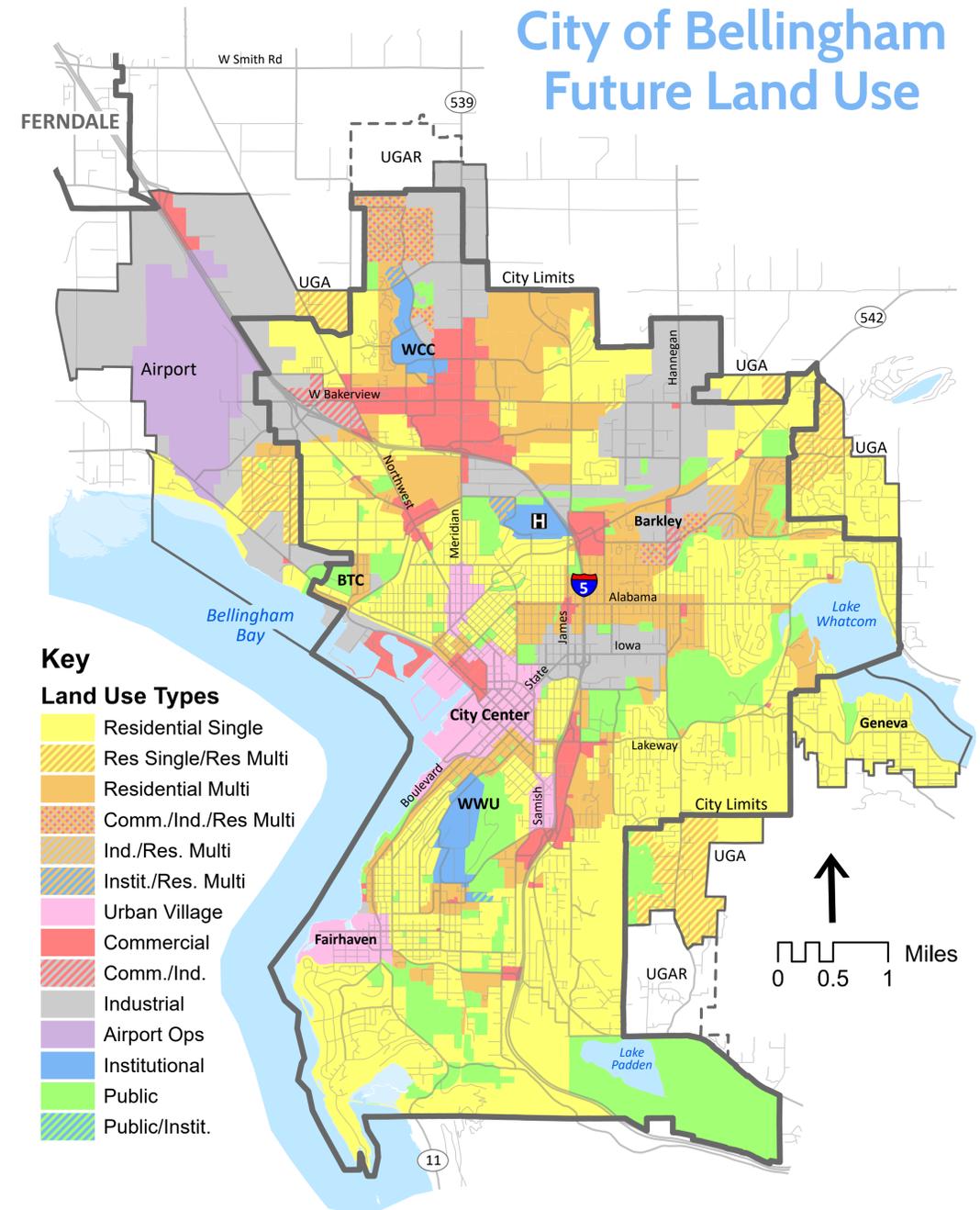
This chapter includes an inventory and level of service standards for existing and proposed facilities, and projections for future needs. This chapter is a functional plan and will be updated shortly after the rest of the plan.

- **Capital Facilities and Utilities**

This chapter contains a description of existing public facilities and services and includes projections of future needs for facilities and services.

***New chapters under consideration:***

- » *Climate Change and Resiliency (or incorporation into Environment Chapter)*
- » *Community/Public Engagement*
- » *Human Services (or incorporation into Housing Chapter)*



» The above map has been simplified from that referenced by the Comprehensive Plan. Additional detail is included in the Neighborhood Land Use Maps available online.

# Project Scope: Cross-topic Themes



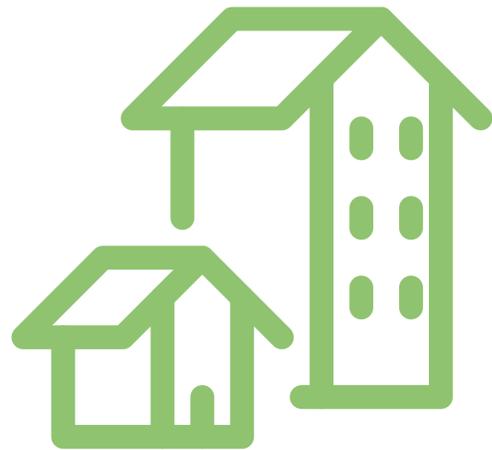
**Accessibility, Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (ADEI)**



**Climate Mitigation & Resilience**



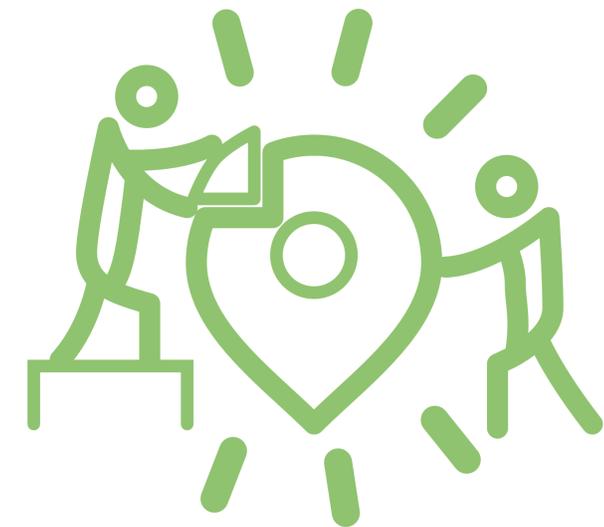
**Economic Vitality**



**Housing Options & Affordability**



**Public Health & Safety**



**Vibrant & Unique Places**

# What's Missing?

What topics aren't covered in the scope? What would you like staff to incorporate or consider in this update?

We need a designated area for homeless campgrounds with zoning protection and port-a-pottos, help provided by residents

Programs to encourage & support small businesses downtown.

Private & Public Partnerships

Partnerships with tribal government

(I am 35 years old, have been born and raised in this) I hope we can take a look at what worked so well to make Bellingham so great (until recent years) in the past. Reflection is needed.

- very unsafe we need to value our law enforcement and let them do their job like it was before.

- We are so worried about housing. This is a democracy which runs on capitalism. Building more housing won't fix anything if you don't have the jobs to go with it. Excessive bureaucracy only affects the poor and states degrades

More value on accessible parks & facilities (handicapped) (wheel chair accessible playgrounds)

Land acknowledgment

Bellingham lack of recognition of human & natural

- Get the tiny houses off of taxpayers access to leisure. For example, Jerry fields parking lot of park when baseball field is a safety issue.

- Kids are our future. We need to invest in them and take a look at if our superintendent has this in mind. Way better in the Steve Clark Era.

- Utilize Federal help to address the obvious federal problem. Federal rings and downtown. And

How we can be using for profit services like Lyft + Instacart to help serve people. These partnerships could save so much that work well - we don't have to invest the wheel

Leverage for sustainable growth

Leadership program needed

I really like having the bike paths downtown - they seemed like they were good at bringing in community of people downtown

Need Community Centers

I feel that comp plans focus too much on building, infrastructure, growth. Let's make this focused on livability & sustainability

SHB1717 Providing for direct participation in Regional Planning with BMA - show school Engage the tribes!

Consideration of the various population groups - Lummi, Hispanic, Black, Asian etc.

Health care + competition for healthcare needed

Ways to attract better / more healthcare providers

Indigenous voices in planning with their land

Rebuild Lake Padden beach for public enjoyment

Lummi is a top employer and set lots of reservation

Need space for VICTORY GARDENS

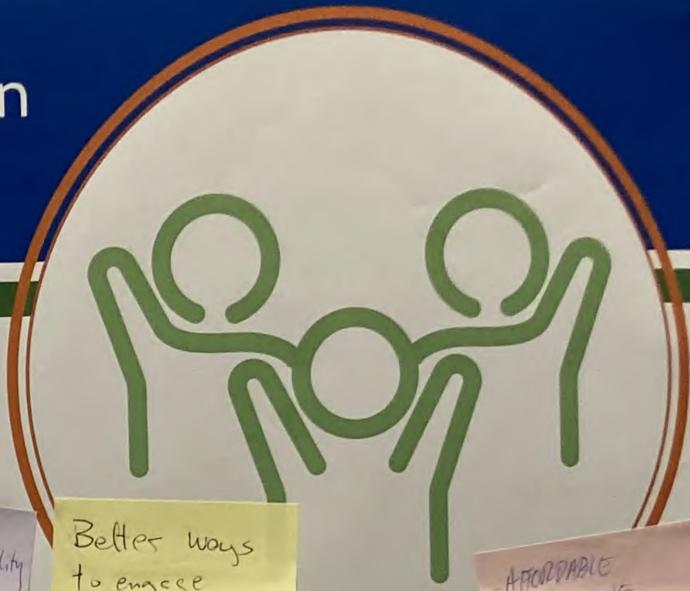
A second new and vibrant public pool. ☺

DISCUSSION ON THE VIABILITY OF HAVING THE PORT OPERATING INDEPENDENTLY OF CITY OWNERS, WHICH OFFER ACTS IN OPPOSITION TO CITY'S OTHER GOALS (HONORING WATERFRONT/HOUSING/ACCESS TO NATURAL AREAS / PROTECTING IN EQUITY)

Transportation We need protected bike lanes.

Support for Fishing Industry

# Accessibility, Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (ADEI)



What do you hope for Bellingham related to this topic?

- Crosswalks w/o potholes (they're hard for wheelchairs)
- More robust paratransit that allows multiple people to go with primary rider
- Mandating sidewalk snow removal in city center
- Reliable transportation options for ALL
- Focused effort to hire BSpoc people on the City staff!!!
- Housing affordability
- Community spaces
- Pedestrianized areas
- Better ways to engage immigrants and other disadvantaged communities
- Affordable Housing
- CAR-LITE CITY
- MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION
- Adaptive recreation opportunities (such as the Parks Volunteer Program's work parties)
- Parking reform
- Housing affordability
- Equal opportunities for all
- MORE JOB OPPORTUNITIES THAT AREN'T JUST TECH!!!
- Having everyone feel accepted and welcome. Reaching out to all these communities to get their input.
- Rental caps based on City & state minimum wage
- LIVE WITH A "HELP YOUR NEIGHBOR" ETHOS
- more job available to people without higher education "service jobs"
- Accessible sidewalks
- more frequent transportation
- Affordable housing
- Back to work loans
- Outreach staff
- Welcome everyone
- Prioritize wheelchair access in infill development
- Making sure folks have access to food gardens & grow beds
- Accessible community food forests open to the public
- also more youth-cultural patches
- different cultures
- community demographics
- ↑ diversity in Bham
- More affordable housing options
- what is funded by the City.
- SUBSIDIZED HOUSING FOR MARGINALIZED GROUPS
- HOUSING 25

What barrier to getting there?

- Adapted housing includes supportive and affordable housing
- Real "supportive" housing not warehousing
- Market prices going berserk
- Making sure everyone has their voice in the city re housing etc.
- Ad policies neighborhood inclusion
- Overly Acceptable in this Area
- Too much Aid with no structure to house
- Greenways
- No ADA
- ESTABLISHED BEST PRACTICES FOR EQUITY ENGAGEMENT
- Not enough funding for affordable housing + supportive services.
- Lack of forward momentum in local city council, etc.
- a city council not rep'ing people (renters & people w/ disabilities)
- Greedy Property Management Companies
- Listening & moving forward with what the immigrant / poc communities need
- TOO MANY PARKING LOTS
- STAGNANT PERMITS
- Fix the Immigration Advisory Board
- LACK OF AFFORDABLE ADA-COMPLIANT HOUSING
- Too few people who utilize wheelchairs have developmental disabilities, + significant mobility challenges involved in planning.

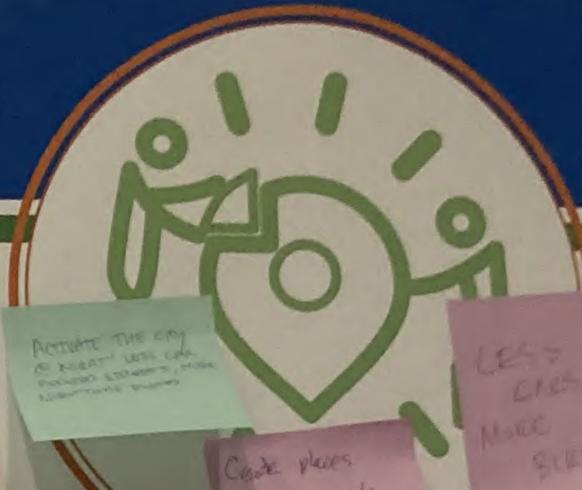








# Vibrant & Unique Places



What do you hope for Bellingham related to this topic?

More community...  
Keep Pump Track...  
CAR FREE SPACES...  
Affordable...  
Create places...  
LESS...  
Creating smaller...  
More...  
Gathering places...  
More community...  
Parks and recreation...  
Consistent family...  
Keep Bham...  
I'd like to see...  
Really - a scrap metal...  
public funding...  
Consequences for...  
Underpaid maintenance...  
Keep Bham green...  
Inefficient city council...  
TOO MANY VEHICLE...  
Bellingham when it comes to enjoying...  
Downtown.

What is the biggest barrier to getting there?

Really - a scrap metal...  
public funding...  
Consequences for...  
Underpaid maintenance...  
Keep Bham green...  
Inefficient city council...  
TOO MANY VEHICLE...  
Bellingham when it comes to enjoying...  
Downtown.

# Growth Management

## We plan for growth because...

People are going to move here. People and jobs are shifting to urban areas all over the world, and Bellingham is particularly appealing to many. When we plan for this growth intentionally:



Natural lands outside the city are protected from increased development, and the required infrastructure and transportation impacts are more efficiently located within the city.



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



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



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

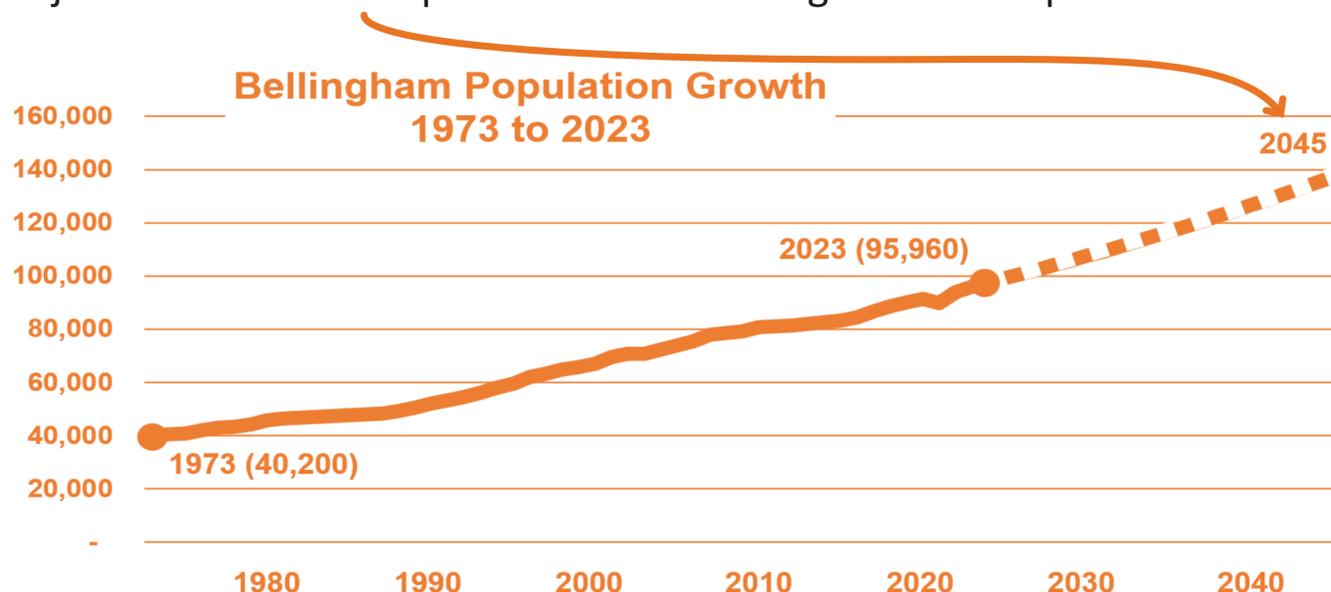


Our vision for Bellingham can be realized.

## Therefore, the State requires growth management.

The process includes several steps to guide planning decisions.

- 1 The State (OFM) continually projects population growth over the next 30 years.
- 2 Ahead of the required Periodic Update, the State distributes the 20-year growth forecast to each County. Whatcom's 2045 forecast is 292,714 people, a similar but slightly increased rate of growth to that seen in the last 20 years.
- 3 The Cities within Whatcom County will collaborate to distribute this anticipated growth between jurisdictions. This represents Whatcom's growth extrapolated to Bellingham.

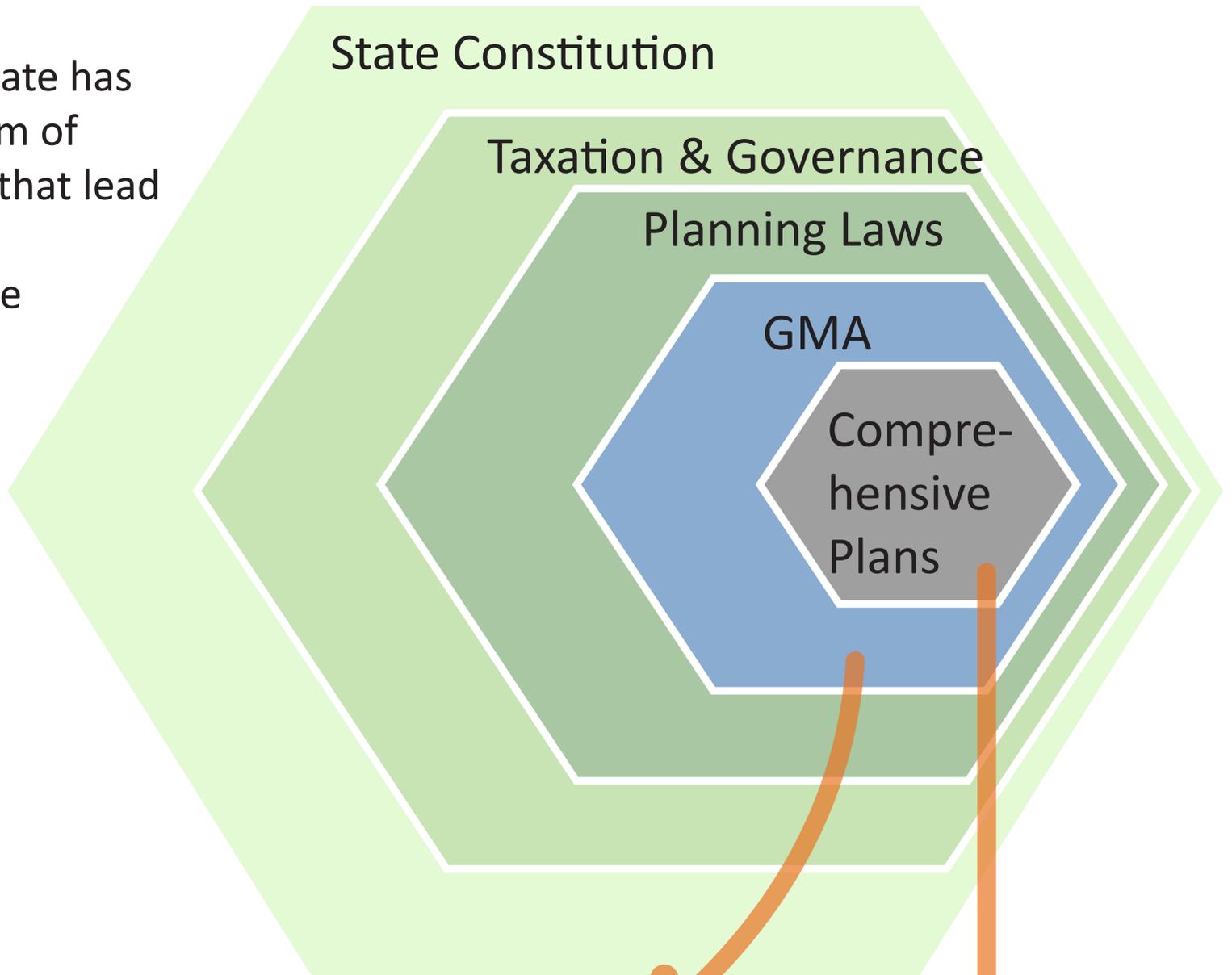


- 4 The Bellingham Plan update will plan for Bellingham's allocated 20-year growth projection.

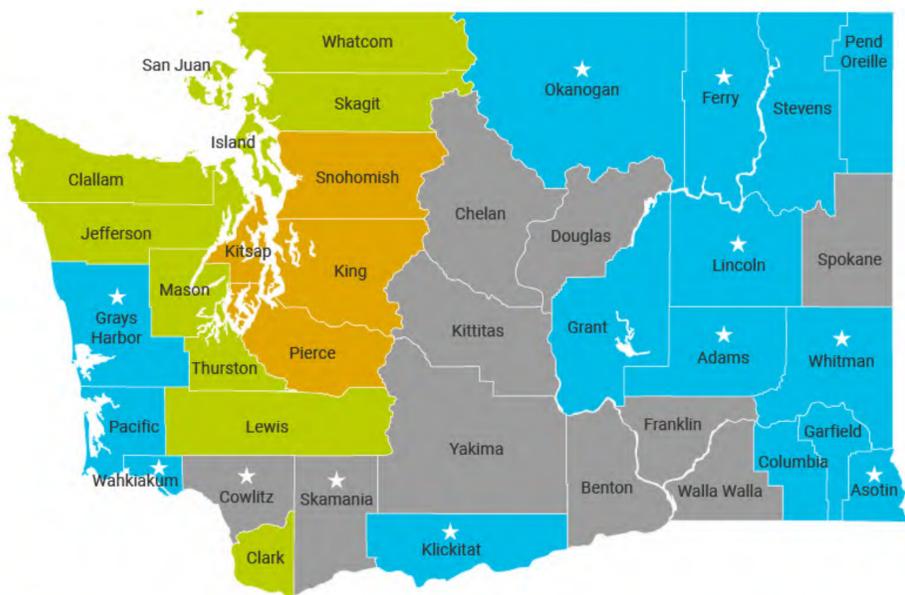
Let's plan together to create a vision for Bellingham's future.

# State Planning Framework

Washington State has a nested system of planning laws that lead to local Comprehensive Plans.



## Growth Management Act (GMA)



2024 Due December 31<sup>st</sup> 2025 Due June 30<sup>th</sup> 2026 Due June 30<sup>th</sup> 2027 Due June 30<sup>th</sup>

★ Starred counties are partially planning under the Growth Management Act

The Periodic Update applies to each area in turn

## The Bellingham Plan

The Bellingham Plan represents the Periodic Update to the City's Comprehensive Plan, which is required every 10 years in the GMA

# Bellingham's Climate Action

The City of Bellingham is committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and increasing the resiliency of our community to prepare for the coming impacts of climate change that we are already experiencing. Our climate work is guided by the city's Climate Action Plan.

## Timeline of Recent Climate-Related Engagement

### 2017 - 2018

Outreach to community interest groups and a public hearing regarding Climate Action Plan update

### 2018 - 2019

Climate Task Force meetings open to the public, with subject specific meetings and a City Council public hearing

### 2019 - 2023

Climate workplan presentations to Council

### 2023

Engaged community members on discussions of three main topic areas: transportation electrification, building electrification, and renewable energy

## Current Workplan Programs Include Approaches To:

- » Increase the use of electric vehicles
- » Reduce emissions in homes and other buildings
- » Plan and respond to extreme heat and wildfires
- » Assess risk for sea level and storm surge
- » Create and buy renewable energy
- » Consider community resilience facilities
- » Coordinate with other stakeholders across all sectors

## How does this relate to "The Bellingham Plan?"

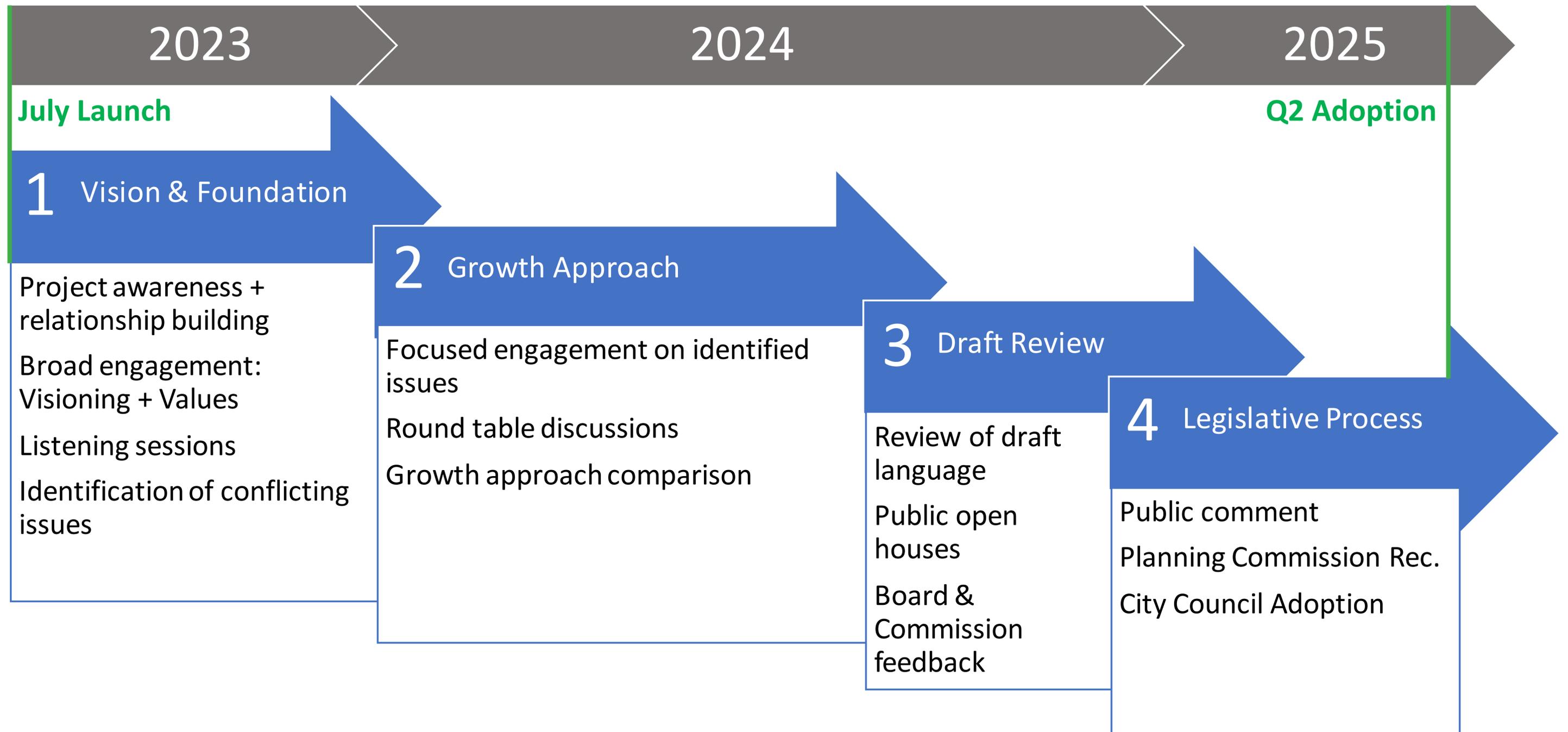
Consistent with House Bill 1181, signed into law in 2023, the City will be updating The Bellingham Plan to include a climate element (the most recently added mandatory element). This climate element will include goals and policies that:

- Focus on resiliency – improving climate preparedness, response, and recovery efforts
- Maximize economic, environmental, and social co-benefits and prioritize environmental justice
- Reduce overall emissions and vehicle miles traveled

*Learn more about the City's Climate Action Plan at [cob.org/climate](https://cob.org/climate)  
Contact Seth Vidaña, Climate and Energy Manager, for additional questions:  
[savidana@cob.org](mailto:savidana@cob.org)*



# Project Schedule: Engagement



# Recent Comprehensive Plan Updates

While the Comprehensive Plan is updated annually in minor ways, the larger Periodic Update occurs once a decade as outlined below. This one is due in mid-2025.

## 2006 Update

### Drivers going in

- » Growing city
- » Constrained land supply
- » Changing economic base
- » Infrastructure challenges



### Changes resulting from it

- » Urban Village framework
- » Neighborhood infill strategy
- » Waterfront Vision incorporation
- » Concurrency Management



## 2016 Update

### Drivers going in

- » Increasing housing costs and disparity
- » Equity and Accountability
- » Active community interest
- » Legibility concerns



### Changes resulting from it

- » Homelessness & housing for unique groups focus
- » Sustainability framework
- » Healthy lifestyle additions
- » Document Accessibility



# State Legislation



*Legislation passed in recent years at the state level impacts the Bellingham Plan. See June 5th City Council presentation for details.*

## **HB 1220 (2021) - “Housing for All”**

This bill changed the way housing planning happens across WA, especially:

- » Redefining housing projections by income band and emergency housing types such as shelters
- » Requiring jurisdictions to plan for and accommodate those projections (62% of Whatcom County’s allocated units fall below 80% of the Area Median Income)
- » Requiring identification and addressing racially disparate impacts of existing housing policies

## **HB 1181 (2023) - Climate**

This bill increased planning requirements related to climate change and resiliency, such as:

- » Adding a climate change element
- » Adding emissions reduction and resiliency sub-elements
- » Increasing requirements related to emissions and vehicles miles traveled (VMT)

## **HB 1110 (2023) - “Middle Housing”**

This bill requires jurisdictions like Bellingham to allow the following:

- » At least four units per lot on residential lots
- » An additional two units per lot if affordable
- » At least six units per lot near transit like the Amtrak station
- » Only administrative design review based on objective standards

## **HB 1337 (2023) - ADUs**

This bill is focused on limiting barriers to accessory dwelling unit (ADU) development. It has already been addressed by recent Bellingham legislation with changes such as:

- » Allowing two attached or detached ADUs per lot
- » Allowing ADUs up to 1000 square feet in size and up to 24’ in height
- » Prohibiting more stringent design review for ADUs than for single family residential structures
- » Prohibiting owner occupancy requirements (not in effect in Bellingham until HB 1337 applies)



# What kind of neighborhood?

Bellingham is home to unique neighborhoods, each with their own distinct character and vibe. As our city grows, what kind of neighborhoods do you want to see more of? Place a dot on your top two or three preferences.



**Urban Core:** A vibrant and convenient hub close to nightlife, restaurants, and shops. Defined by a denser mix of multistory housing above businesses and workplaces. Walkable and close to transit services with less car dependency.



**Neighborhood Residential:** Primarily consisting of housing units on smaller lots; however, you may find a corner store or coffee shop sprinkled throughout, and a neighborhood park or community venue nearby. Expect a quick drive, bus, or bike ride to outside services.



**Urban Pioneer:** A mostly residential area with a core of businesses and mixed-use buildings. Housing units may be attached or detached and consist of existing homes and newer developments. Walkable, convenient access to transit and services with some car dependency.



**Lively and Creative:** Characterized by a mix of creative spaces, businesses and other attractions. May include a mix of co-working spaces, re-purposed buildings, art galleries and performing arts venues supported by residential housing types.



**Retail Core:** Auto-oriented and conveniently anchored by large retail stores serving residential areas nearby. Residential uses are spread out and separate from commercial activity.



**Suburban:** Quieter and more isolated feel with larger, spread-out, residential lots. Access parks, trails, and schools and meet with neighbors for play dates. Farther from city hot-spots, errands and other activities rely on cars.