



Multi-family Zoning: Achieving Intended Densities

MNAC

October 21, 2020



Comprehensive Plan Focus Areas

HOUSING – options and affordability

URBAN VILLAGES – walkable, mixed use areas

INNOVATION – innovative solutions to reach our goals

HEALTH – transportation options, parks and recreation

SUSTAINABILITY – healthy people, environment and economy



Benefits of Compact Growth



Responds to changing demographics and housing needs



Makes transit more effective



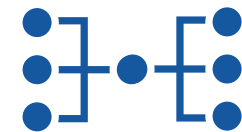
Protects agricultural land and open space



Fosters equitable and healthy neighborhoods

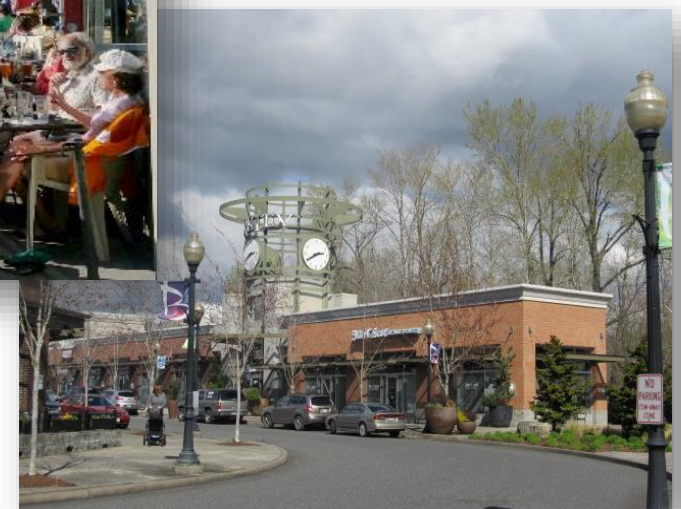


Decreases auto dependency



Reduces public infrastructure & service costs

Implementation: Urban Villages



Implementation: Infill Housing Toolkit



Implementation: Accessory Dwelling Units



Examples of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)

ADUs in blue; main residence in white

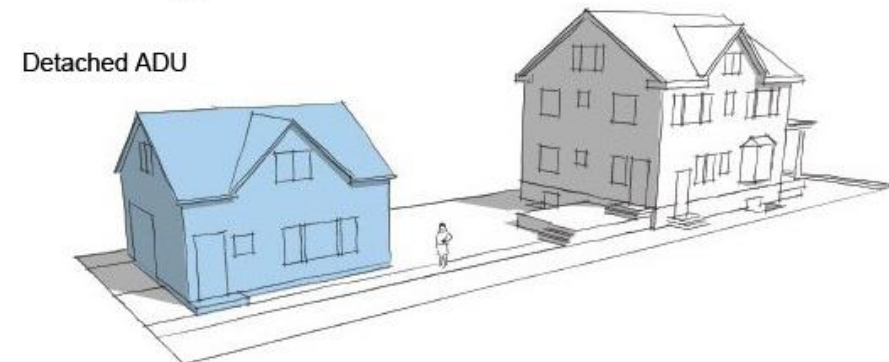
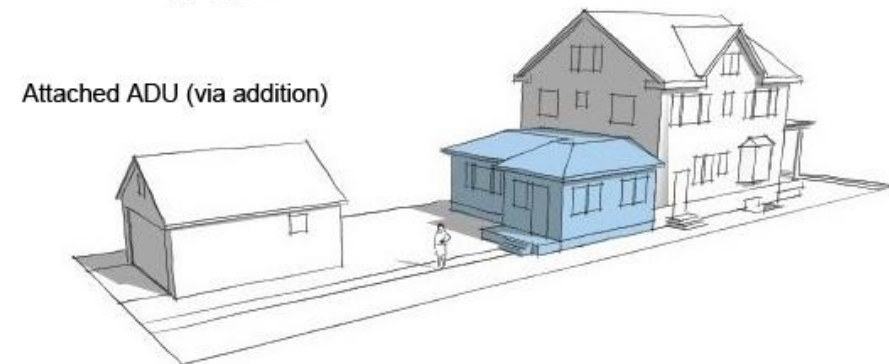
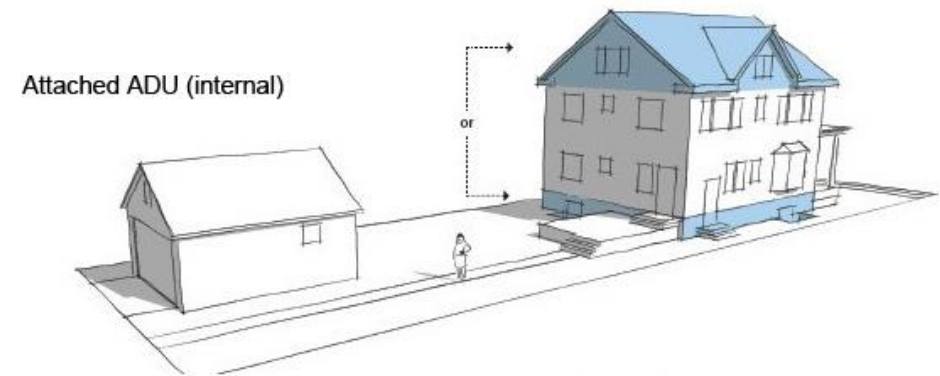
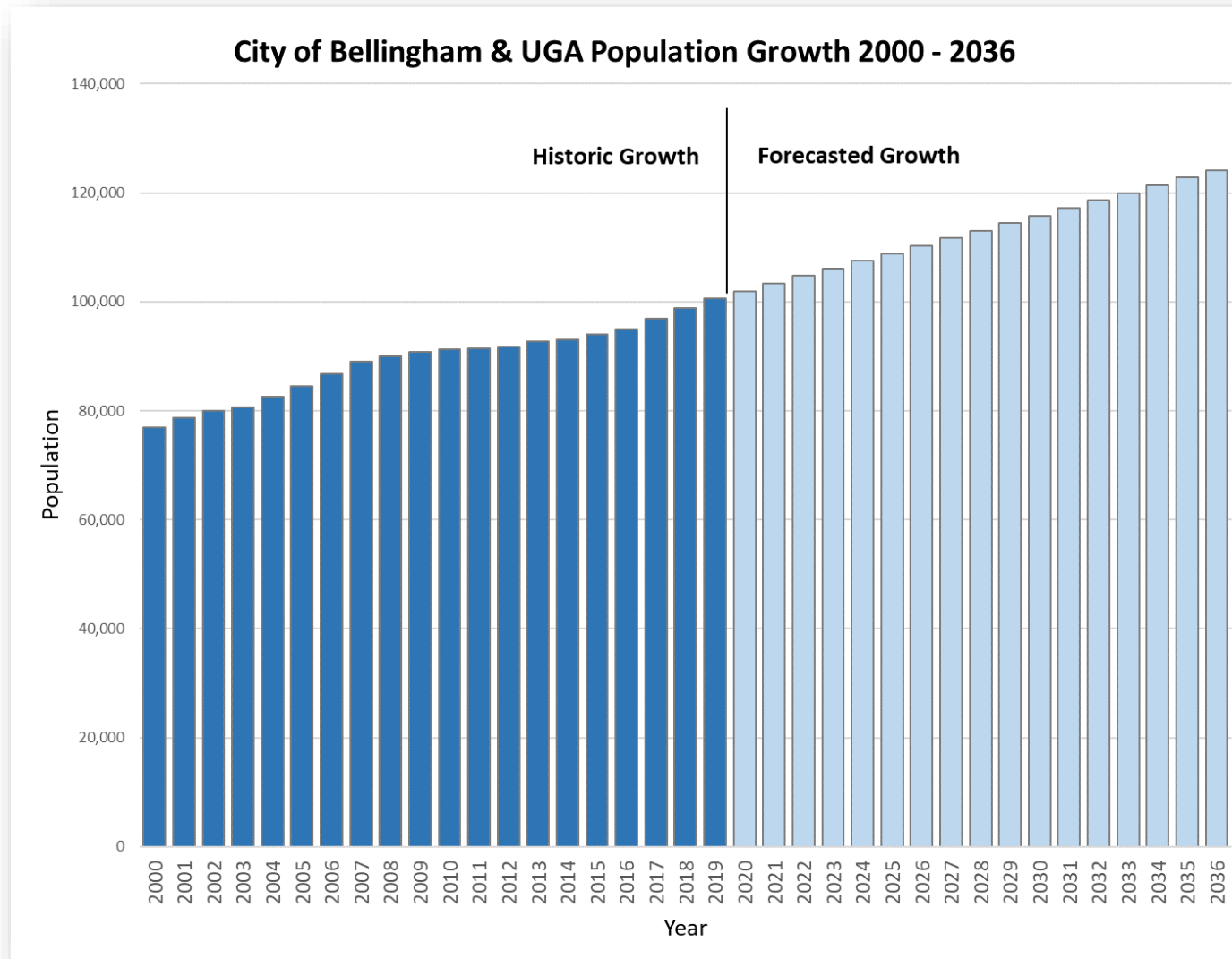


Image credit: City of Saint Paul, MN

Implementation: Residential Multi Project



Population Growth



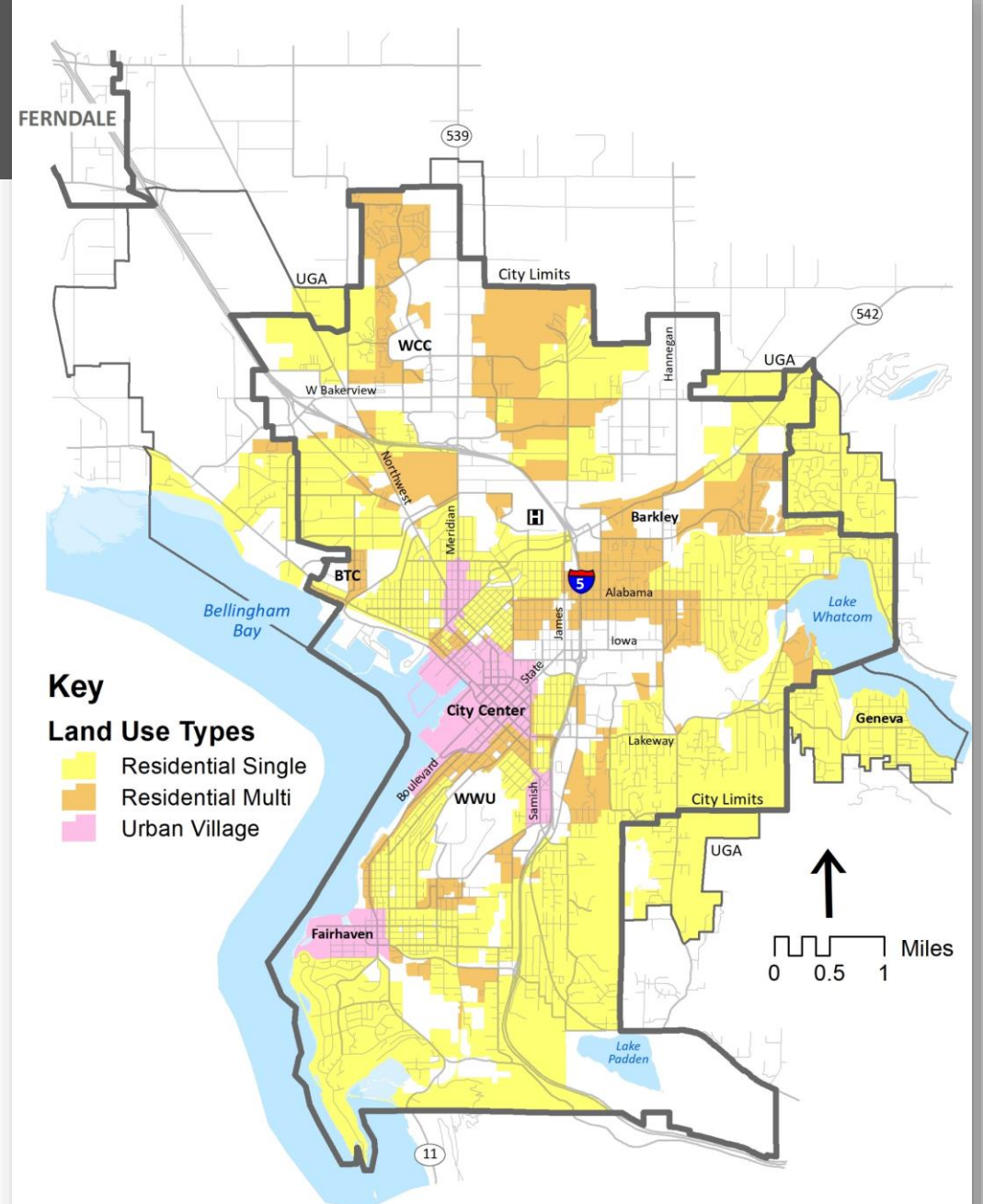
Growth Capacity

20-year
growth

Residential Single 1/3

Residential Multi 1/3

Urban Villages 1/3

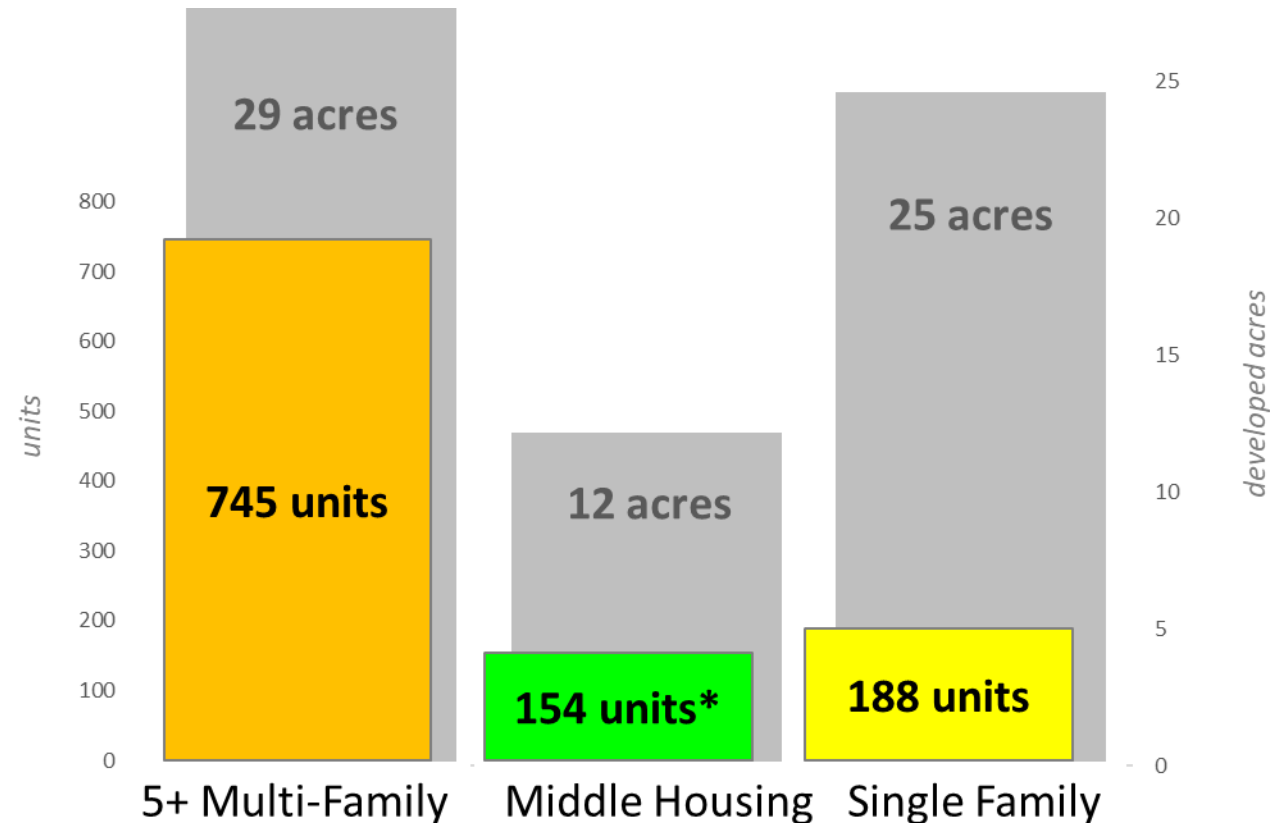


Units in RM Zones

Housing Types and Land Consumption in RM Zones

Since 2016

as of September 2020



**Middle housing forms include all Infill Toolkit forms, SF attached, SF with ADUs, duplex, triplex and fourplexes. 64 units of the 154 units are Infill Toolkit units*

Project Purpose and Benefits



The Comp Plan's
intent for RM zones



Healthy environment
and open space



Housing
options



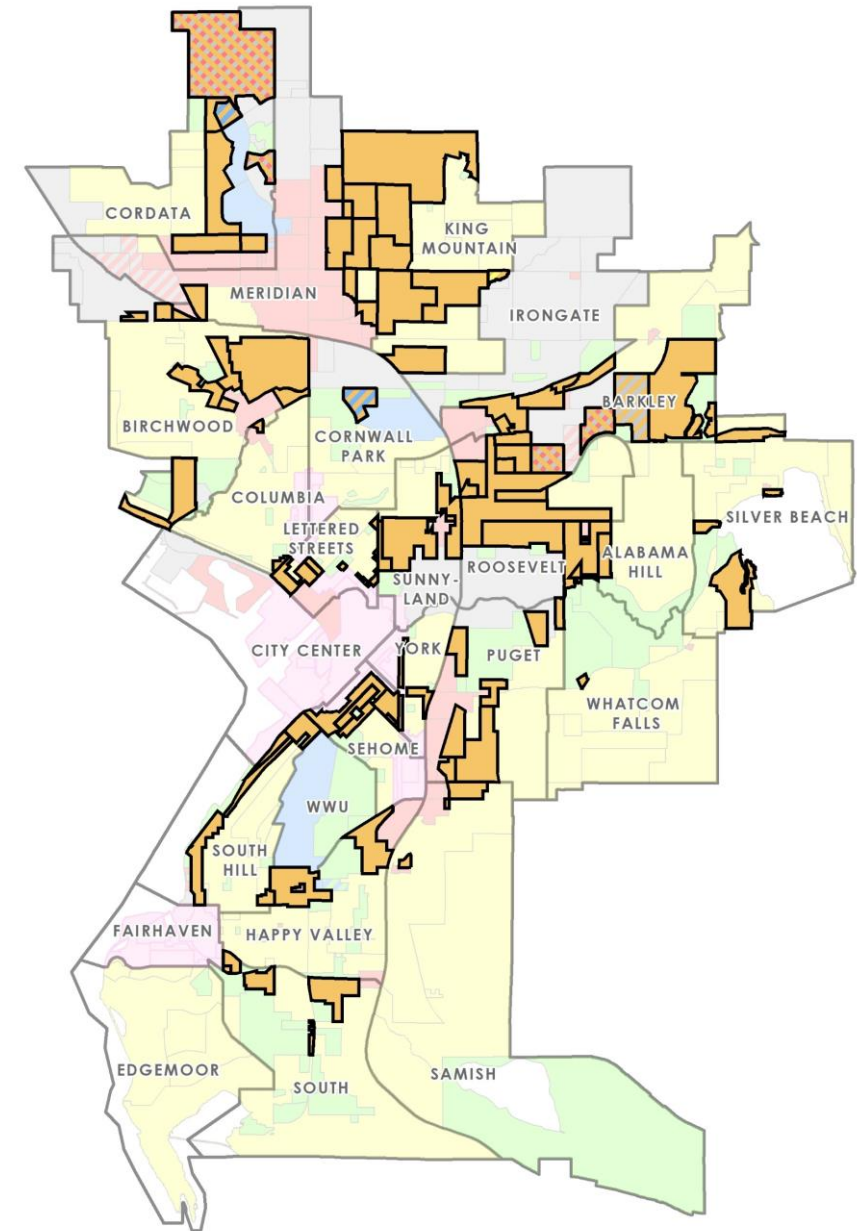
Walkable, bikeable,
transit-friendly
neighborhoods



Context-sensitive
design

Project Scope

- ① Ranged Zoning
- ② Density Bonus
- ③ Infill Housing Toolkit
- ④ Minimum Densities



Project Scope

1

Ranged Zoning

Goals and Policies (Comprehensive Plan)

Bellingham Comprehensive Plan 2016 Land Use Chapter

III. Goals and Policies

Residential Development

Policy LU-2 The Multi-Family Residential designation is intended for areas that are able to support higher concentrations of people, while encouraging a desirable living environment within and adjacent to these districts. This zoning also provides a compatible mixture of residential housing types, typical accessory uses, public and semi-public uses, office uses and limited neighborhood commercial uses in appropriate areas.

Policy LU-3 Residential densities are permitted as follows:

Residential, Low Density – 7,201 or more square feet per dwelling unit (5 or less units per acre). The Low-Density Residential designation should be used for land that is not suited for more intense urban development because of environmentally-sensitive areas and/or public facility ~~or utility capacity limitations.~~

Residential, Medium Density – 3,600 to 7,200 square feet per dwelling unit (6 to 12 units per acre). The Medium-Density Residential designation should be used for land that is suitable for moderate density development.

Residential, High Density – 0 to 3,599 square feet per dwelling unit (more than 12 units per acre). The high-density residential designation should be used for land near existing or potential high-frequency transit service and/or adjacent to or near employment and commercial areas.

Regulations (Bellingham Municipal Code, Title 20)

Area	Zoning	Use Qualifier	Density	Special Conditions	Prerequisite Considerations	Special Regulations
4	Residential Multi	Planned	4,000 sq. ft. per unit Medium	Buffer from I-5; maintain open space corridor along Railroad Trail	Access to the nearest neighborhood collector should be developed.	None

EXAMPLE:

4,000 sqft/unit falls within the “MEDIUM” range. Under the proposal, development could occur at a density between 3,600 sqft/unit and 7,200 sqft/unit.

Project Scope

1

Ranged Zoning

Low, medium, high Comp Plan densities for RM zones



2 units on 8,000 sf lot
4,000 sf/unit = 11 units/acre
MEDIUM Density

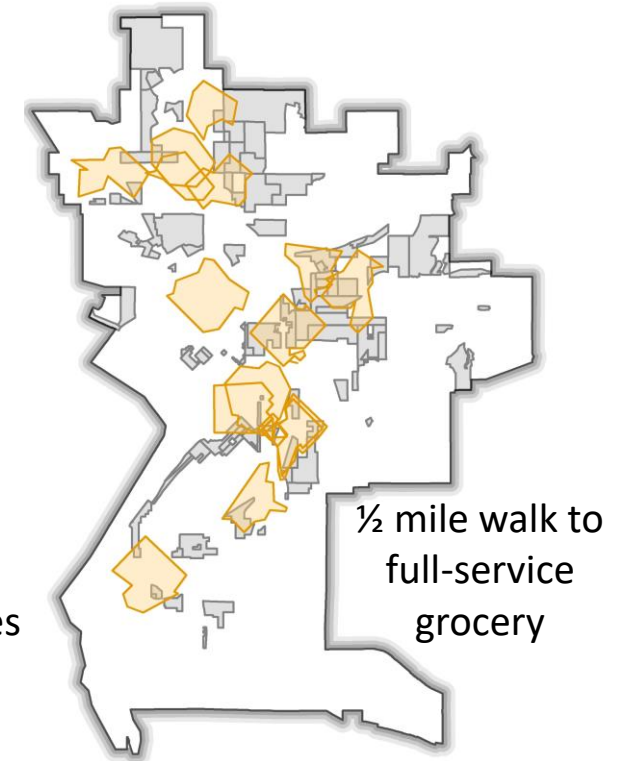
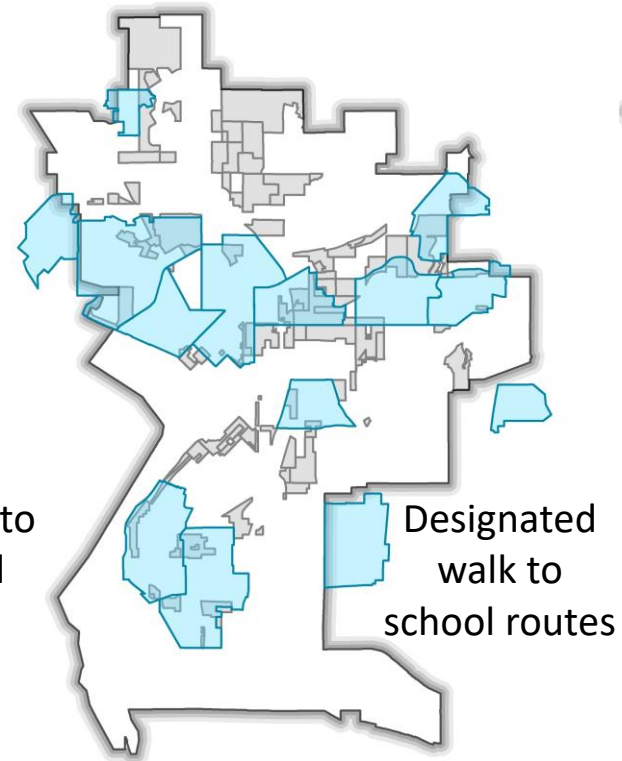
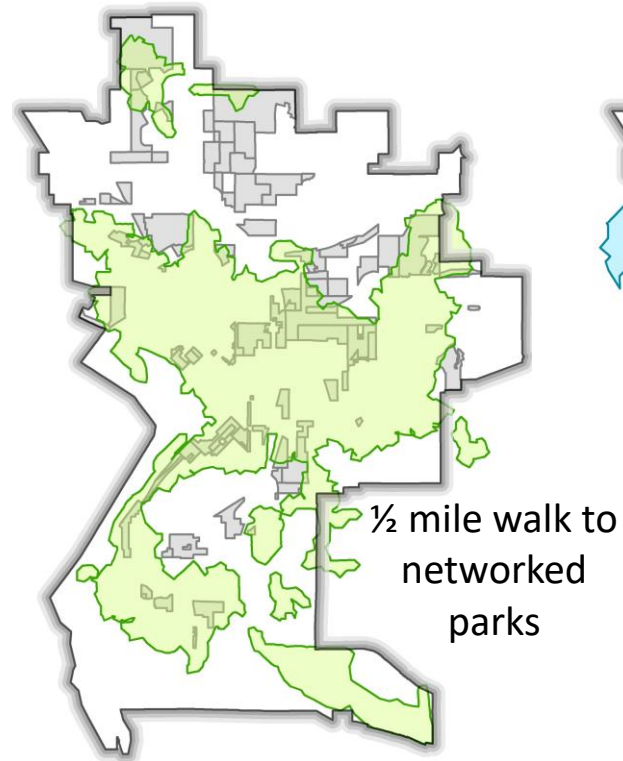
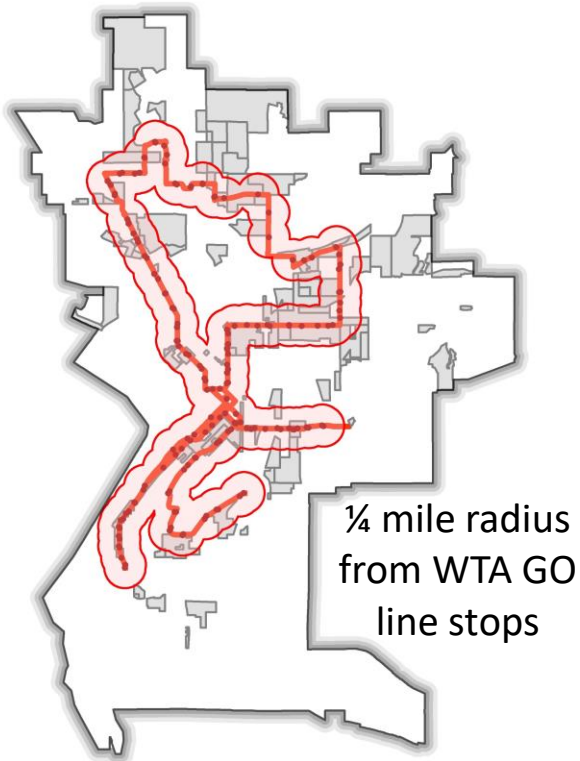


6 units on 15,000 sf lot
2,500 sf/unit = 17 units/acre
HIGH Density



20 units on 20,669 sf lot
1,033 sf/unit = 43 units/acre
HIGH Density

Density bonuses for RM properties that meet location efficient criteria



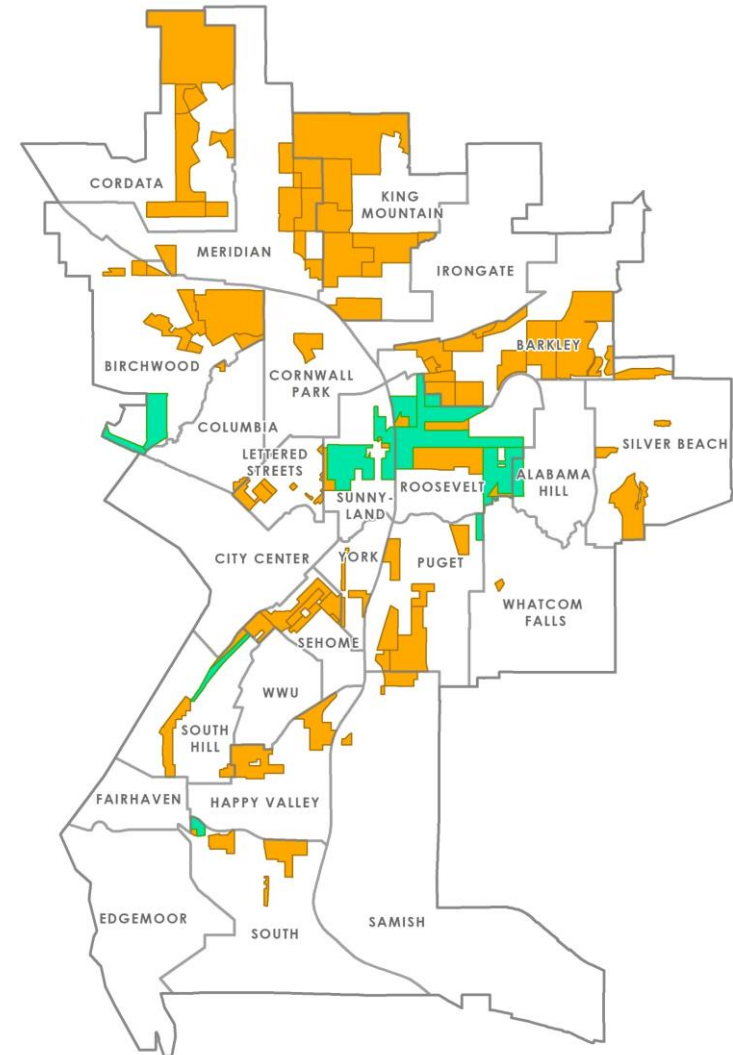
All Toolkit forms in all RM zones

ALL TOOLKIT FORMS

Small Lot
Smaller Lot
Cottages
Duplex

Only these forms
are currently
allowed in RM
Duplex zones

Triplex
Shared Courtyard
Garden Courtyard
Townhouse



Minimum densities in certain (or all) RM zones

Comprehensive Plan Residential Densities (Policy LU-3):

RANGE

Low Density	7,201	To	No minimum	(<5 units/acre)
Medium Density	3,600	To	7,200 sf/unit	(6 - 12 units/acre)
High Density	0	To	3,599 sf/unit	(>12 units/acre)

Maximum Density
(must not build higher
than this density unless
through bonus systems)

Minimum Density
(must build at least
to this density)

Key Issues from Open House

- Single-family homes
- Housing options
- Ownership options
- Non-conformities
- Unintended consequences
- Rising housing costs

Next Steps

- **Planning Commission** work sessions and public hearing
- **City Council** work sessions and public hearing
- **City Council** adoption

More Opportunities!

- Visit Engage Bellingham
engagebellingham.org
- Visit the project webpage
cob.org/RMproject
- Send comments/questions
RMproject@cob.org

Thank You!

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