THE BELLINGHAM PLAN





Parks and Recreation Advisory Board February 12, 2025

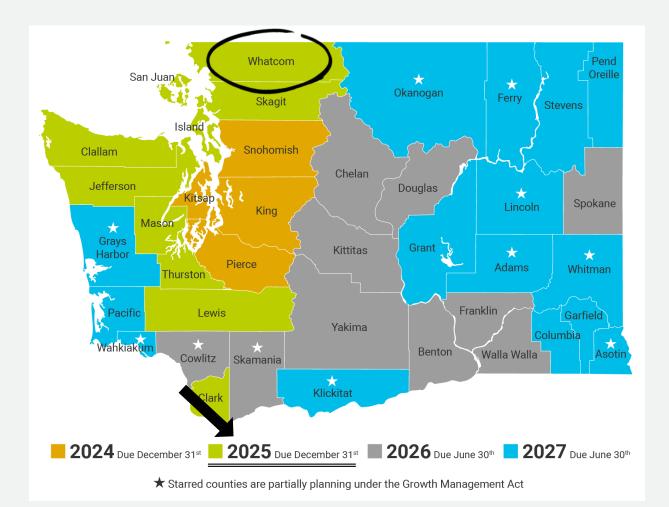
What is a Comprehensive Plan?

- Required by Growth Management Act (GMA)
- Long-range plan (20 years), updated every 10 years
- Variety of topics in different chapters
- Policies set framework for later actions
- Anticipate, plan for, and accommodate growth



State Requirements

- GMA first adopted in 1990
- GMA requires periodic updates
- Codified in Revised Code of Washington (RCW)
- 15 goals as basis for all comprehensive plans
- Office of Financial Management (OFM) population projections
- Whatcom County 2045 population projection: ~293,000



Recent State Legislation

Housing Related:

- HB 1110 Middle Housing (2023)
- HB 1220 Housing Affordability for All Income Levels (2021)
- HB 1998 Allowing Co-Housing (2024)
- HB 1293 Streamlining Design Review (2023)

(Link to More Housing Legislation)

Other:

HB 1181 – Climate Action (Link to Learn More)



Bellingham Plan Project Schedule



Past Engagement: The Numbers

» 8,992 Total Survey Responses

- » 4,287 Community Vision Survey responses
- » 1,475 Housing Preference Survey responses
- » 3,230 Growth Survey responses

» 14 Open Houses

- » 980+ total participants
- » Engage Bellingham Online Engagement
 - » 750+ Engaged participants
 - » 9,880+ site visits



THE BELLINGHAM PLAN PHASE 1 SUMMARY REPOR FEBRUARY 2024

The key to the Bellingham Plan is community feedback. Phase 1 included a robust public engagement and outreach effort the second half of 2023. This summary presents a high level overview of the audience demographics, key findings, and important questions that Phase 2 will attempt to answer.

OVERVIEW + PURPOSE

What is the Bellingham Plan?

The Bellingham Plan is the City's Comprehensive Plan that addresses important topics, such as housing, transportation, and climate resilience, which will guide development, capital investments, city programs, and other actions for the next 20 years.





THE BELLINGHAM PLAN PHASE 2 SUMMARY REPORT OCTOBER 2024

We have been listening to your feedback to shape the direction of the Bellingham Plan. Building on the community convestations and feedback started in 2023, Phase 2 community engagement sought to gain depending the twistion and direction from Plane 1–a 14 which will inform the goals, policies, and implementation direction of the Plan. This brief presents the key insights and themse we head highlights the main takeways, and presents the questions that will help as regime our exterps.

Your input is crucial as we move forward, ensuring the plan reflects the unique needs and hopes of everyor in Bellingham. Thank you for being with us along the way!

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THE COMMUNITY ENVISIONS A FUTURE WHERE

Bellingham's recreation, healthy environment, and public open spaces continue to be our strength.	We have gained enough housing, making it easier to find options that suit everyone's needs.	The community integrates consideration for climate change into our habits and choices.
Housing affordability is in alignment with local wages.	Housing growth is balanced with trees, nature, and greenery to ensure both thrive	Human-scale streetscapes make it pleasant to get around the city.
Transit connects our Urban Villages with frequent service.	All areas of the city need to be part of equitable change.	Neighborhoods across the city have choices for everyone, with a variety of housing types and places to eather
People have safe options for getting around, especially on foot or by bike.	People feel connected to their community and have many	and shop nearby. Utilities and services have expanded
Cultural differences are celebrated and seen as a strength in the	opportunities to gather.	to meet our growth.
community.	A healthy mix of businesses and job opportunities are supported.	People of all ages feel supported, especially seniors and youth.



THE BELLINGHAM PLAN PHASE 3 SUMMARY REPORT JANUARY 2025

Over the past few months, we have been building on the foundation laid in Phases 1 and 2 to shape the future of Bellinghum through the Comprehensive Plan ("The Bellinghum Plan"). In this phase, we presented the dark materials to the public for feedback. This included as summary document and outlines for each chapter, which were all informed by State Requirements and community feedback. We provided opportunities for inputs tool nonline and at Im-preson open houses.

THANK YOU TO ALL WHO PARTICIPATED!

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THE BELLINGHAM PLAN | PHASE 3 SUMMARY REPORT

Under-represented groups we made specific efforts to reach:

- Latine and/or Hispanic people
- 18-24 age and/or students



Past Engagement: What We Heard (all chapters)

Every neighborhood needs to do its part to provide housing choices for everyone. We care about the outdoor and public realm, too. We want private usable space, walkways, street trees, and defined outdoor spaces. Transit is not a convenient option for me. It makes more sense to drive instead of waiting for the bus. Please increase the frequency of transit!

I wish it was easier to understand how everything the City is working on relates.

Transportation, housing, and land use are intertwined with climate. We need to consider them holistically. We need to plan sustainably, with efficient use of facilities and avoiding sprawl. There are all kinds of ways that we like to use public recreation spaces and facilities.

Some small businesses would be great in our residential neighborhoods, but we are worried about parking and noise impacts.

In 20 years, we want to see our city be healthy, clean, green, and sustainable.

Future high-speed rail is an opportunity for better connectivity throughout the region. A connected community is a stronger more resilient one. We want more way to connect with each other.

What the Community Said

These descriptions summarize the most common opinions we heard relevant to the Parks Chapter.

Most of us feel that recreational opportunities, a healthy natural environment, and public open spaces are the top three strengths of Bellingham.

There are all kinds of ways that we like to use public recreation spaces and facilities.

Public parks, recreation opportunities, and open spaces are some of the most important community assets.

We have lots of ideas for how to make our parks, trails, and recreation facilities more accessible and inclusive. There are all kinds of ways that we like to use public recreation spaces and facilities.

11 Chapters



*3 New Chapters (In Blue)

Plan Chapters by Theme

More Housing Choice

Sustainable Growth



* 3 New Chapters

Proposed Process & Schedule for 2025

1. Staff drafts Plan (underway)

2. Planning Commission reviews drafted material (February – May)

3. Planning Commission public hearing and recommendation to City Council (July – August)

4. City Council public hearing,discussion, and final plan approval (September – November) Other Boards and Commissions provide feedback on relevant drafted material to Planning Commission between Steps 1 and 2.

Growth Allocations

Countywide growth 2023-2045 is projected to be between about:

- 57,000 and 86,000 people
- 31,000 and 44,000 housing units
- 24,000 and 38,000 jobs



Bellingham's preliminary proposal

accommodates:

- **30,310 people** (35% to 53% of countywide)
- 18,390 housing units (42% to 59% of countywide)
- 19,384 jobs (51% to 80% of countywide)

Assumes annual **Bellingham** growth of about 1,378 people per year which aligns well with actual 2014-2024 growth of 1,334 people per year.

Planning Documents

BELLENGHAM

Bellingham Pedestrian Master Plan

20-year Visioning Document

Implementation Documents (Ex: Pedestrian Master Plan)

- Adopted by reference
- Updated infrequently



Data Accompanying Bellingham Plan

- Supporting information
- Updated as needed



Other Implementation Documents (Ex: TRAM)

- NOT adopted by reference
- Updated frequently, such as annually





Goals and Policies (Transportation Example)

Comprehensive Plan



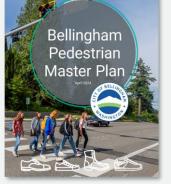
Ex: Transportation Goal:

Provide a transportation system that prioritizes safety, comfort, and reliability for all ages and abilities.

Ex: Transportation Policy:

Reduce and enforce vehicle speeds through traffic calming measures, especially in school zones.

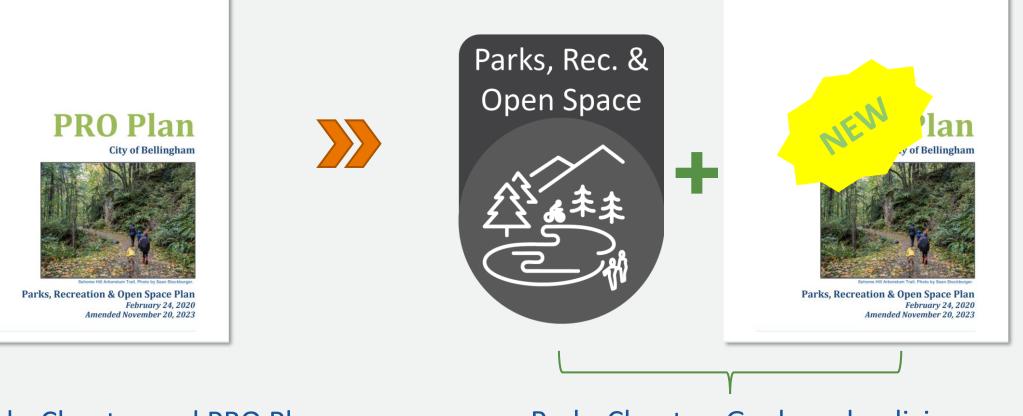
Implementation Plan



Ex: Transportation Programmatic Action:

Conducting a citywide speed study to assess what changes are needed to achieve lower vehicle speeds.

Parks Chapter and PROS Plan



 Parks Chapter and PRO Plan: One document

- Parks Chapter: Goals and policies
- PROS Plan: Separate implementation document, adopted by reference

Other Parks-Related Goals and Policies

Land Use and Community Design

- Preservation, activation, access and integration of natural areas and open space
- Recreation opportunities
- Preserving historic and cultural resources

Environment and Climate

- Aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems
- Coordinated natural resource management
- Supporting human health and wellbeing
- Equity
- Mitigation and adaptation
- Economic Development
 - Supporting recreational amenities



Other Parks-Related Goals and Policies

• Capital Facilities and Transportation

- Fiscal sustainability to provide parks as we grow
- Provision of parks and trails
- Trails as transportation routes, connectivity
- Community Wellbeing and Civic Practice
 - Promoting different forms of health
 - Food systems
 - Community connectedness
 - Tribal relations and cultural resources
 - Inclusive, equitable, and accessible government





Thank you!

Questions & Discussion

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