



Bellingham Housing Statistics

Planning and Community Development Department

City of Bellingham, WA

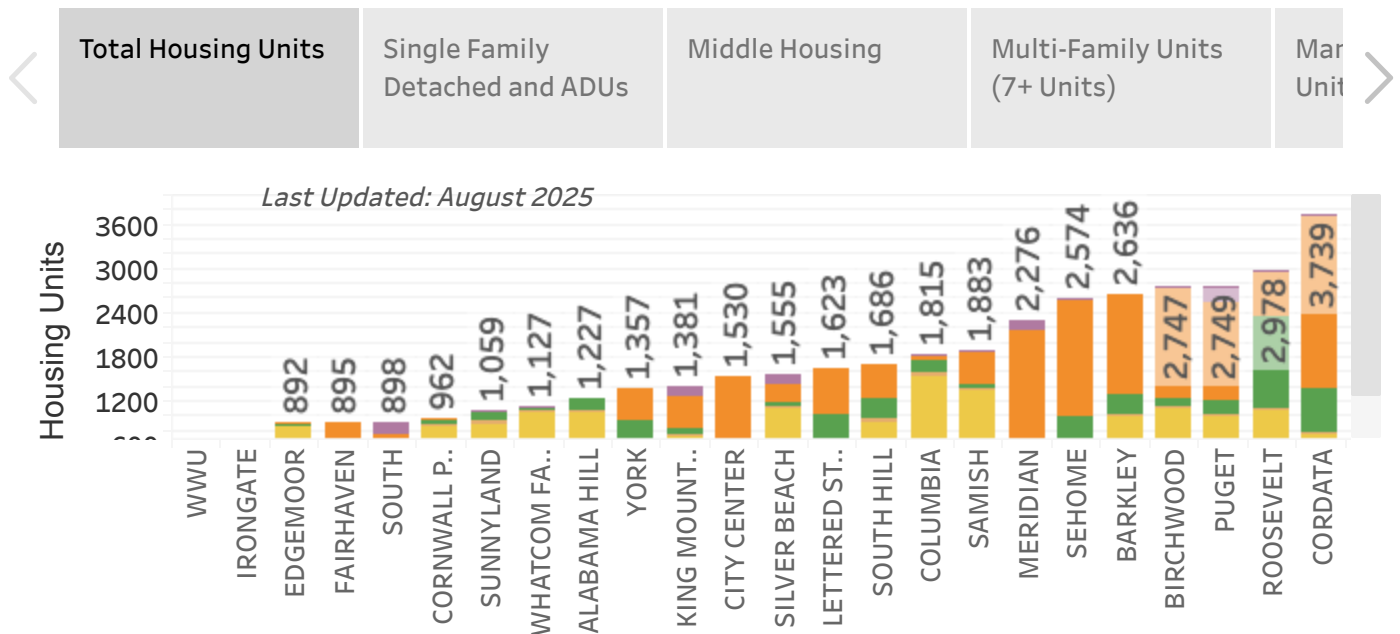


Housing is a "hot" topic right now. This story map aims to provide central and authoritative information about current housing statistics in the City of Bellingham. The maps, graphs, and supporting text explore housing types, occupancy, tenure, and their distribution across the City's neighborhoods.

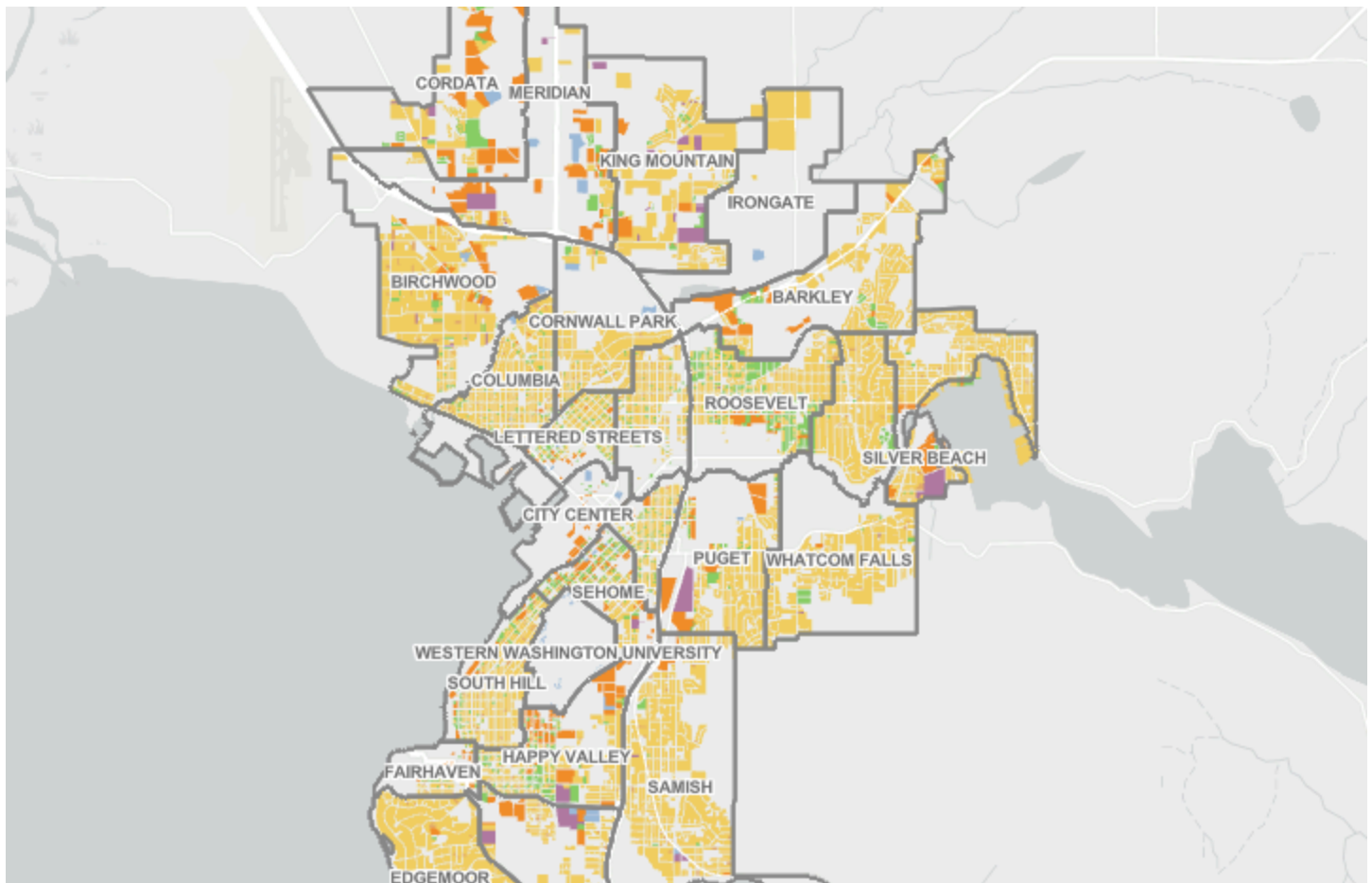
*Most of the graphs and maps found below are interactive.
Zoom/Pan and click on features for more information.*

Housing Types

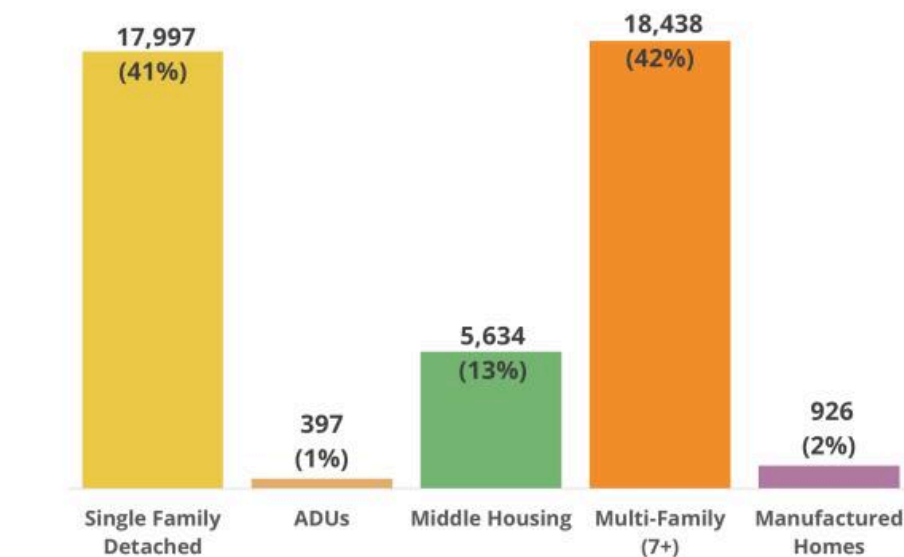
Bellingham accommodates growth through a variety of housing types. For statistical purposes, we have broken down the type and number of housing units into a few main categories.



Housing Statistics By Neighborhood



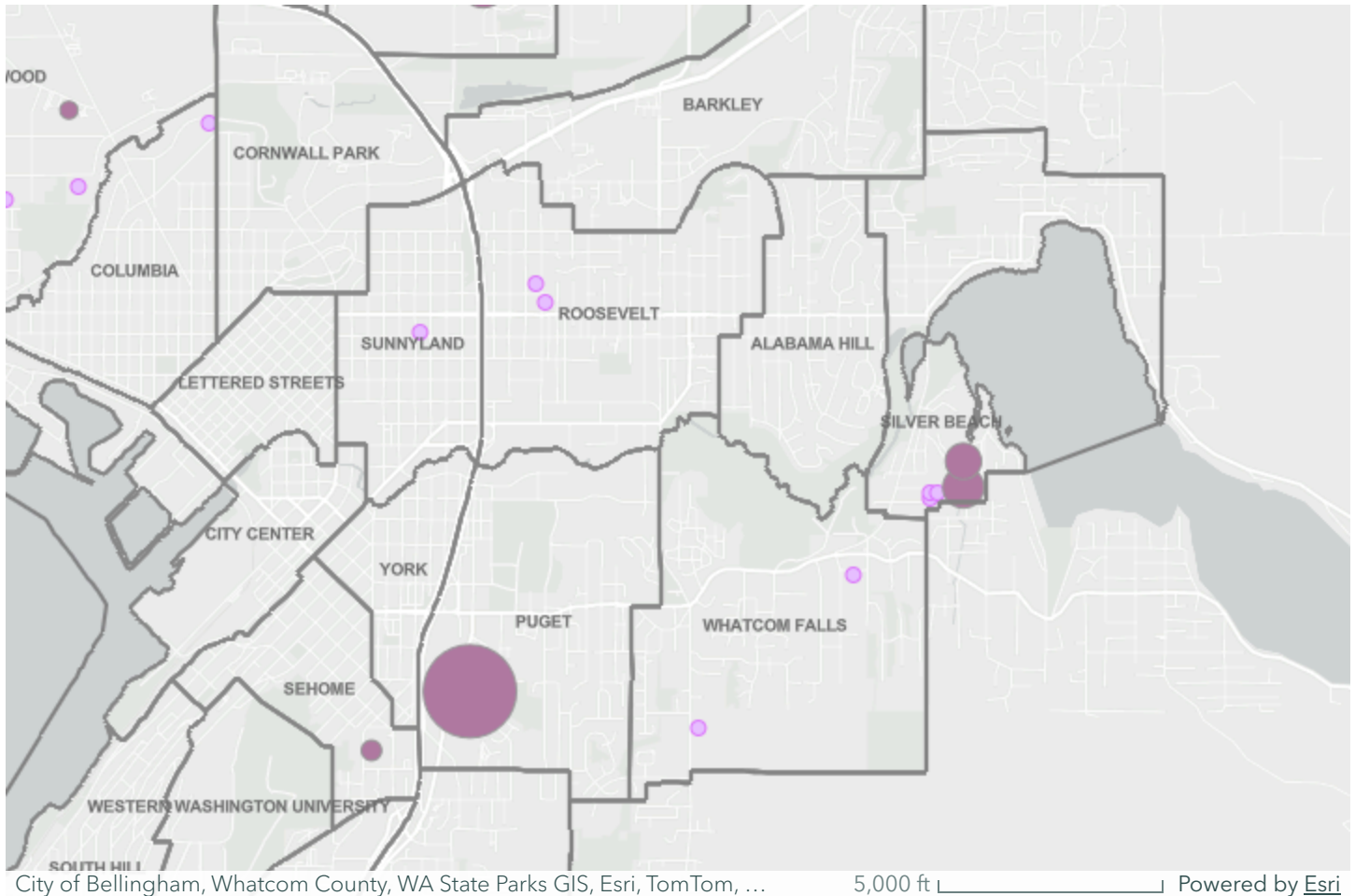
TOTAL HOUSING UNITS BY TYPE



**percentages are based on total housing units excluding group housing*

Click on a neighborhood in the map to view housing units by neighborhood.

Group housing facilities are shown in blue and expressed in terms of population in the neighborhood pop-ups.



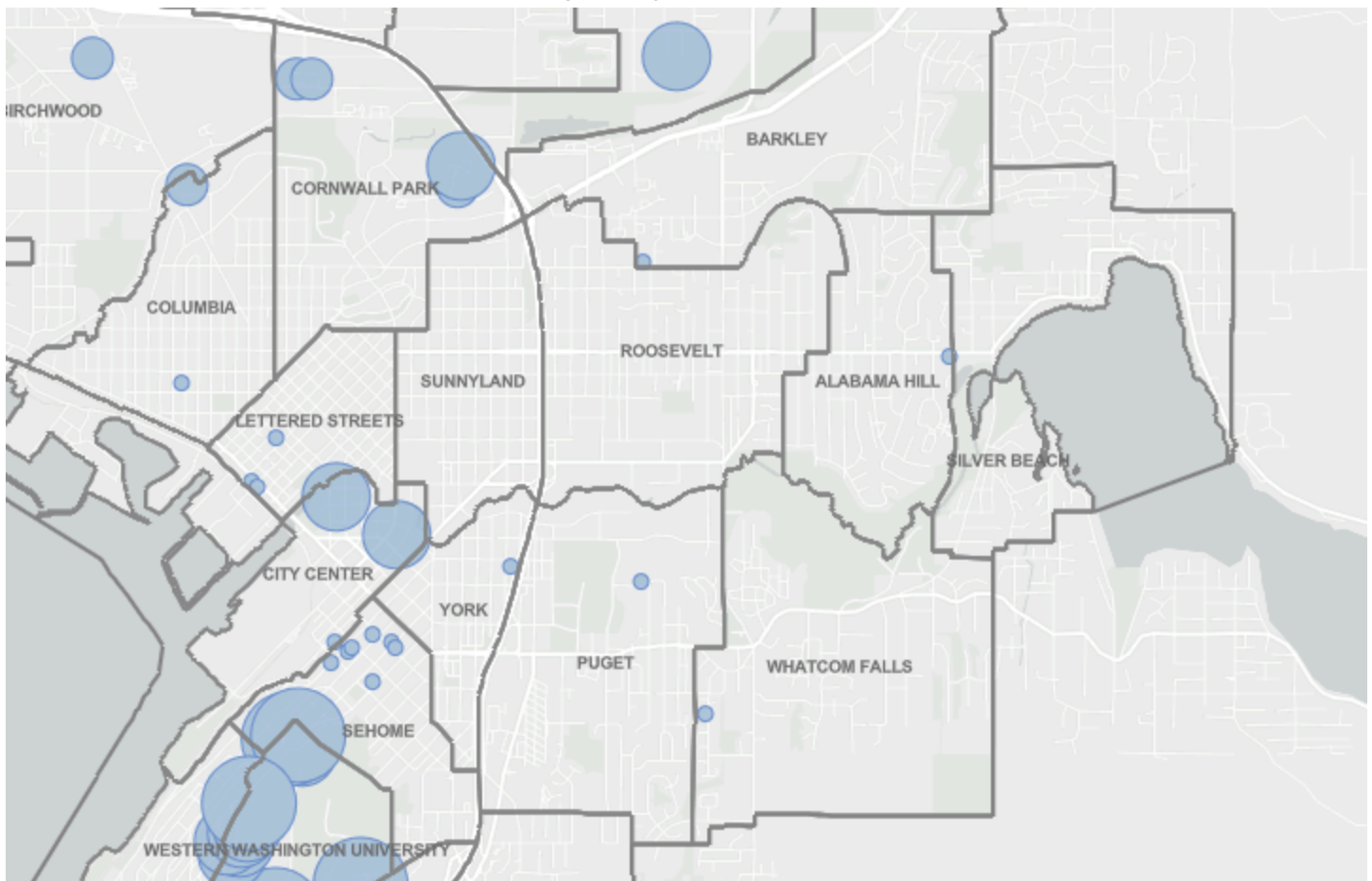
MANUFACTURED HOME PARKS BY NUMBER OF UNITS

Manufactured (or mobile) home parks and **manufactured homes on individual lots** make up a small but important portion of the housing stock in the City of Bellingham. They are about 2.5% of the total housing stock, but represent 16% of the affordable housing.

Source: City of Bellingham Estimated Population and Housing Unit Model



Lakeway Manufactured Home Park



City of Bellingham, Whatcom County, WA State Parks GIS, Esri, TomTom, ...

5,000 ft Powered by Esri

GROUP HOUSING BY POPULATION

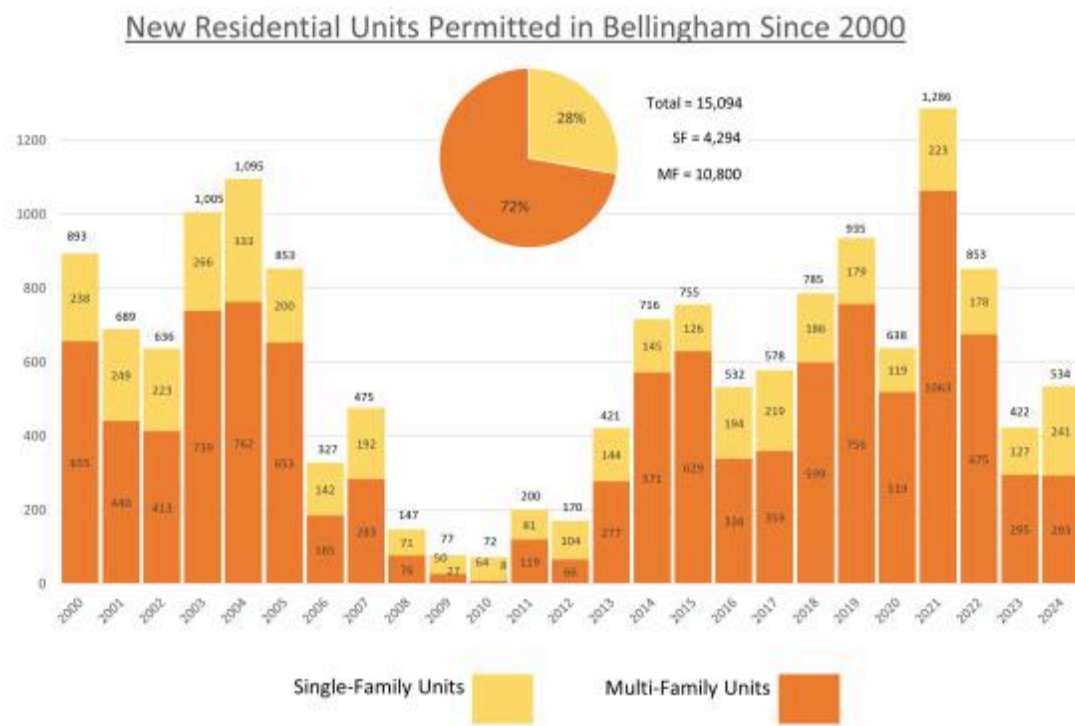
Group Housing includes elderly homes, dormitories, convalescent care, shelters, correctional facilities, and other group type facilities. Group Housing is expressed in terms of

population instead of housing units. This is due to the unique persons per unit ratio usually found in these housing types.



Mathes Hall Dorm, Western Washington University (Photo courtesy of WWU)

Source: City of Bellingham Estimated Population and Housing Unit Model

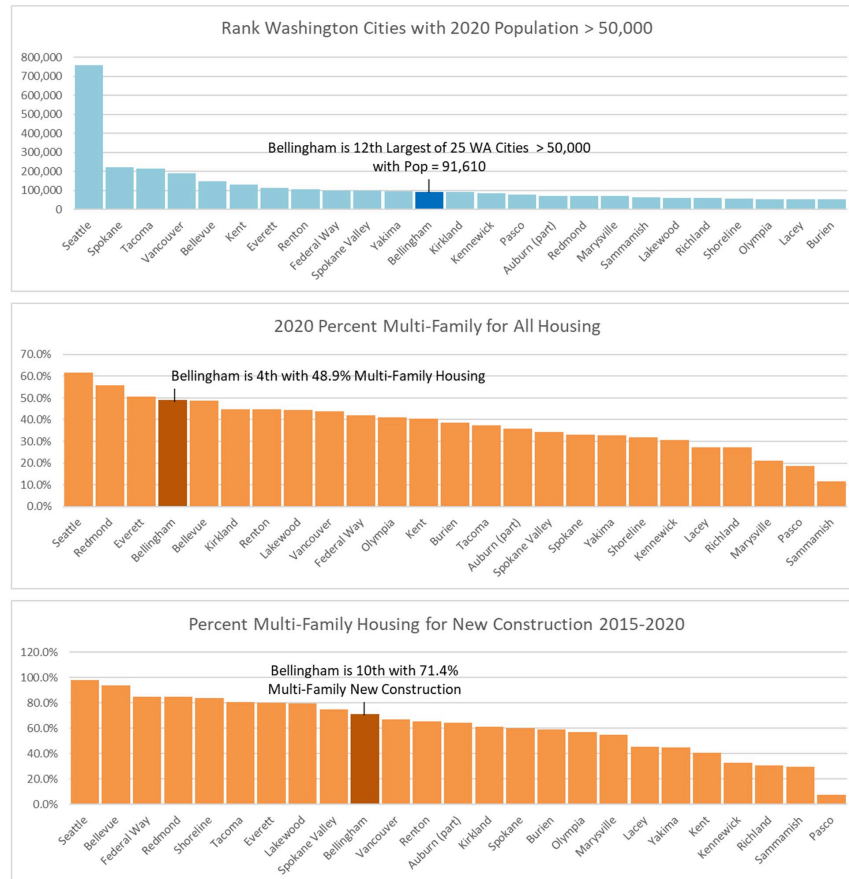


For more information, visit our [Permit Activity](#) webpage.

How does Bellingham's percentage of multi-family housing compare with other

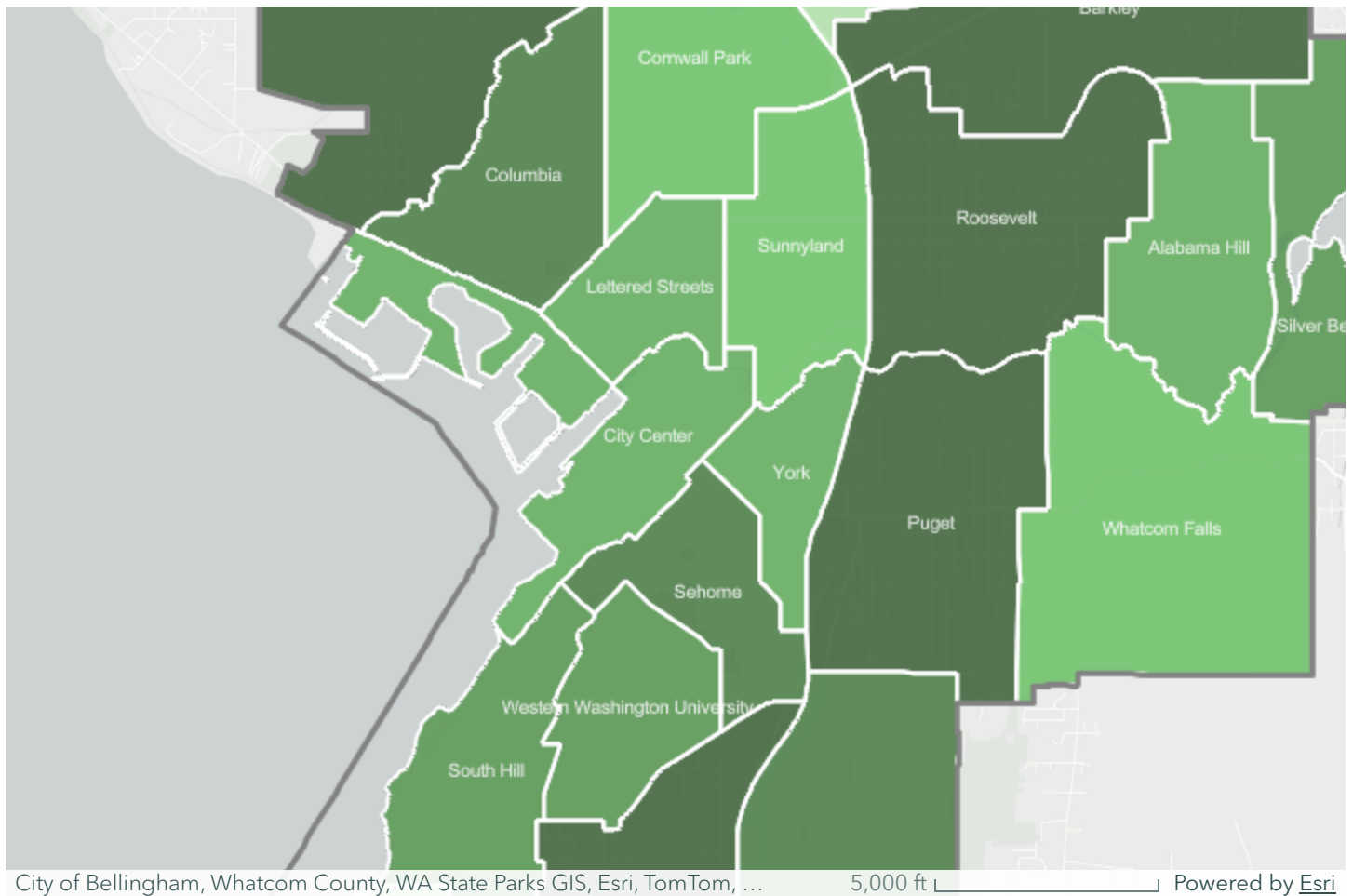
cities?

These charts compare Bellingham's total population and percentage of multi-family housing with other Washington cities > 50,000 people.



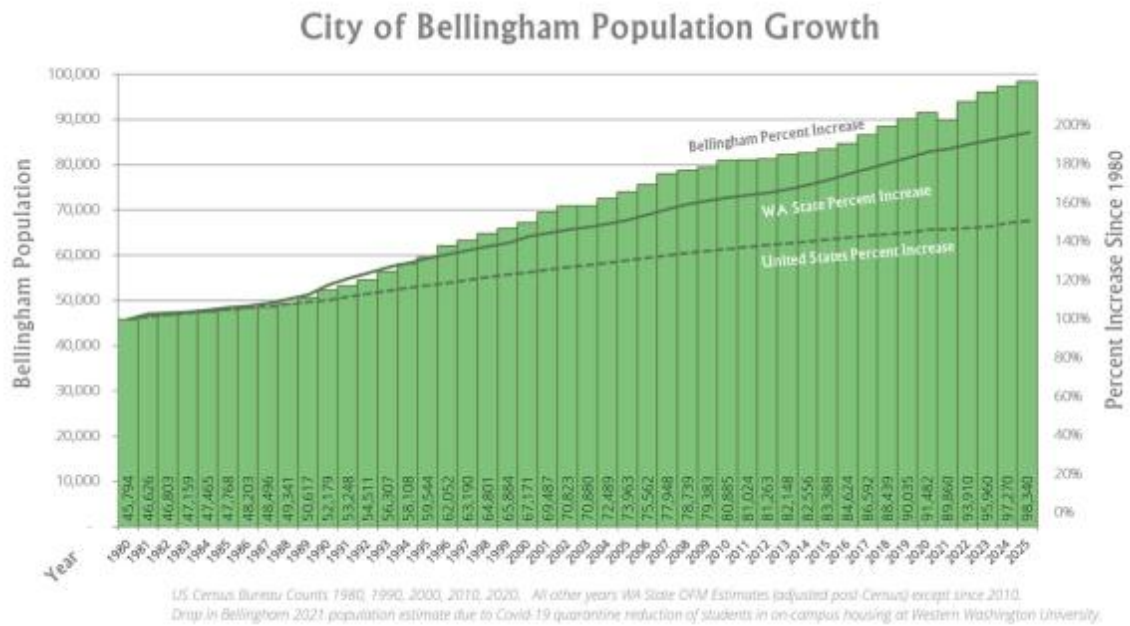
Source: WA State OFM

Population & Density

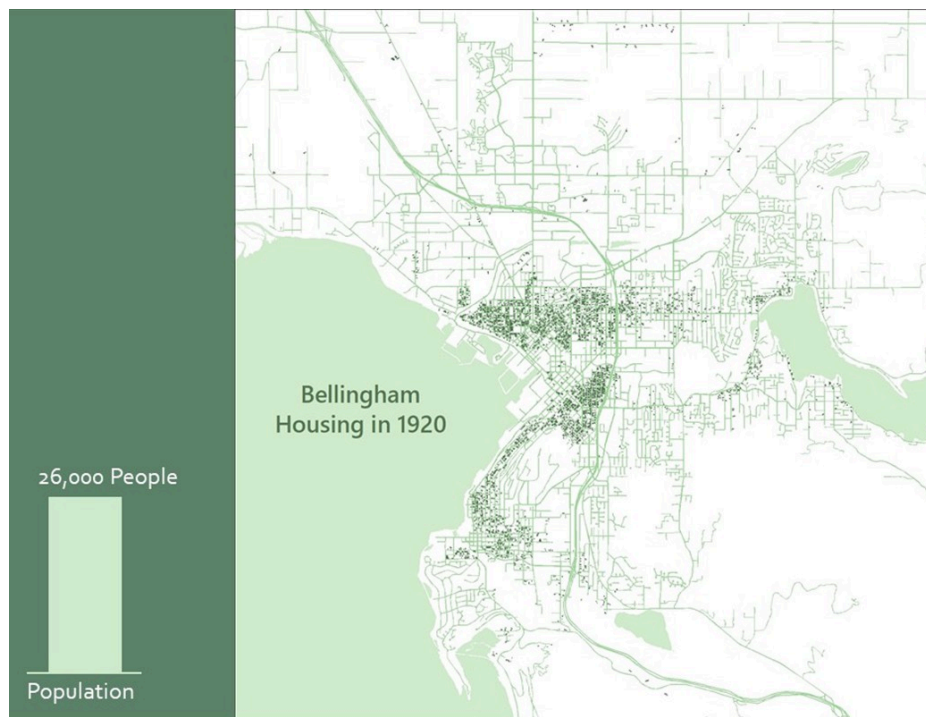


Over the past 20 years, annual population increase for Bellingham has averaged 1,400 people per year and the adopted **20-year growth forecast is for an average of 1,350 people per year** (WA State OFM Small Area Estimates, and Bellingham Comprehensive Plan).

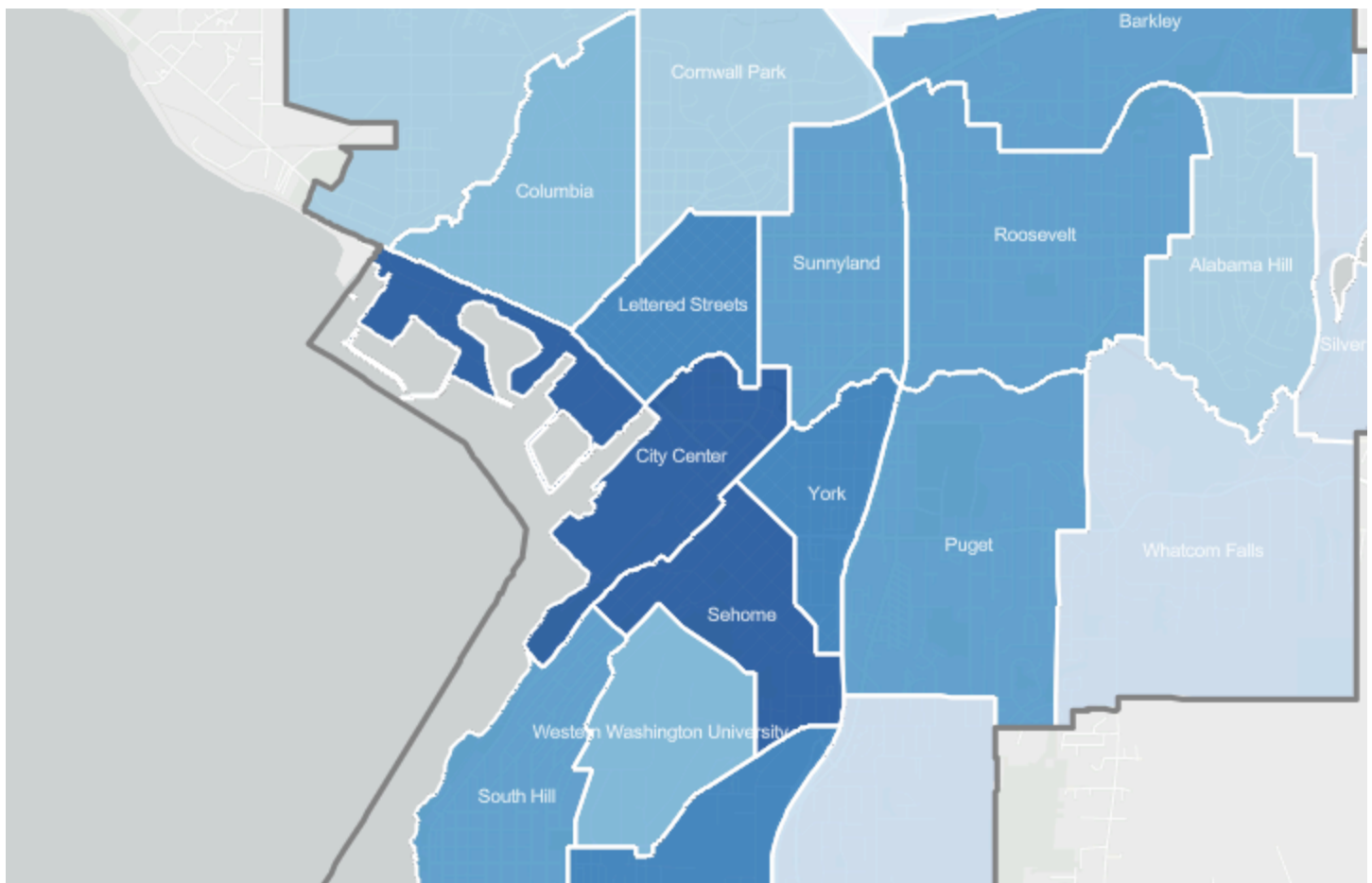
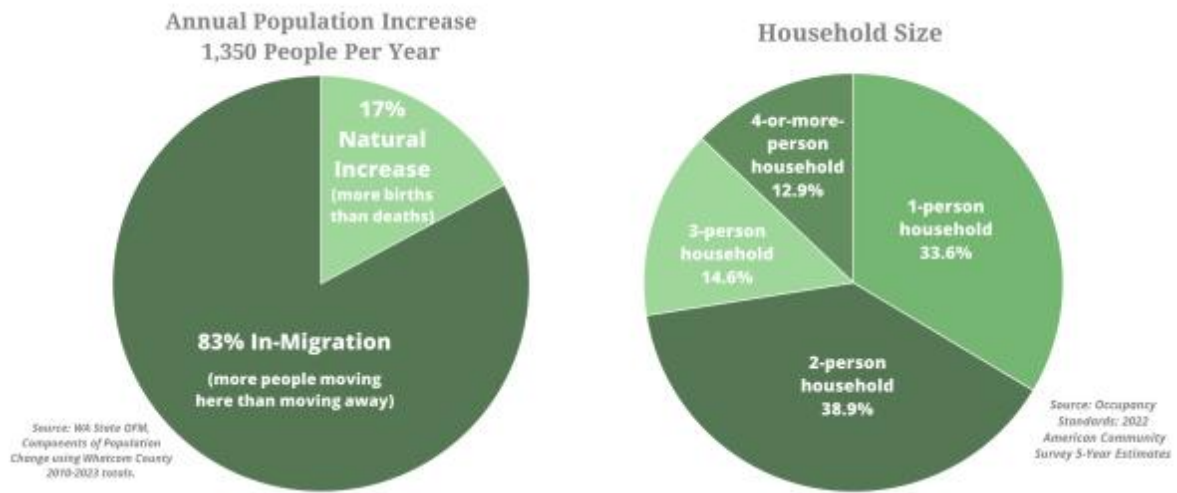
(Map Data Source: City of Bellingham Estimated Population and Housing Unit Model)



Bellingham Housing Construction 1900 - 2020



Images show housing by year of construction. Structures converted to non-residential uses, or that have been demolished are not shown. Building footprints are from City of Bellingham GIS; year of construction information from WC Assessor; Population estimates are from WA State OFM.



City of Bellingham, Whatcom County, WA State Parks GIS, Esri Canada, Es...

5,000 ft

Powered by Esri

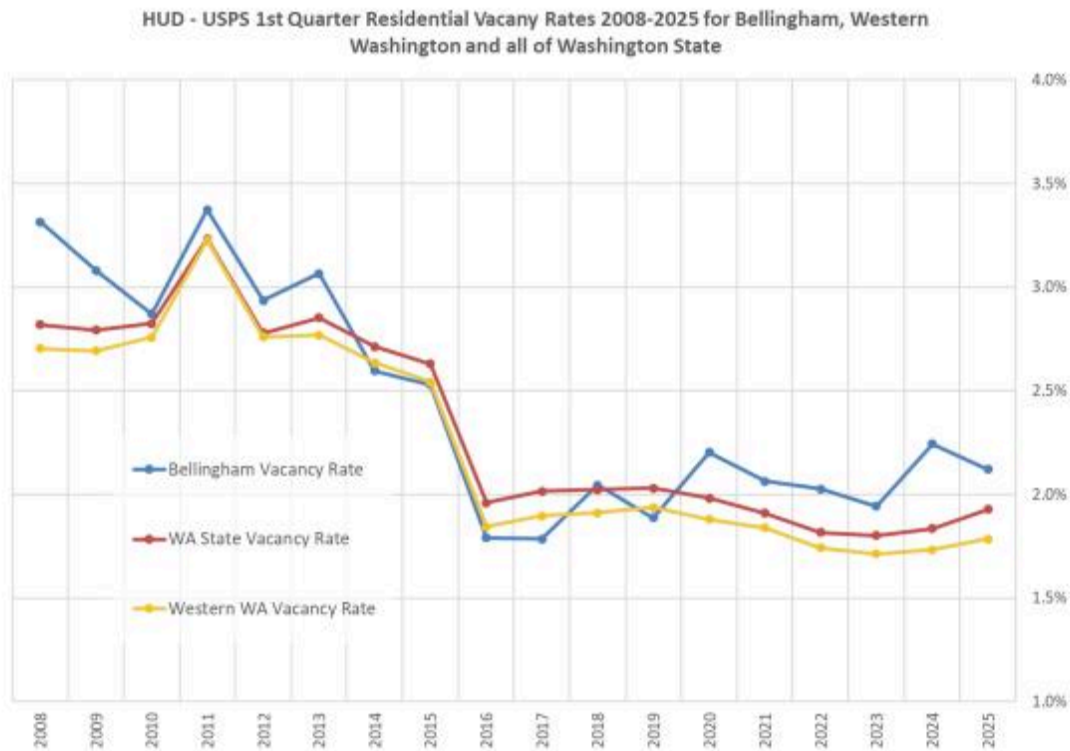
Residential density is the ratio of homes to land area, usually expressed as **housing units per acre**. Neighborhood density as shown on this map is calculated by dividing the total existing housing units by the number of developed residential acres (excludes vacant and non-residential land). For WWU the density figure just includes on-campus student

dormitories and their associated developed residential land area (i.e. not academic, administrative, or sports facilities).

City-wide residential density is 6.3 units per acre

(Map Data Source: City of Bellingham Estimated Population and Housing Unit Model)

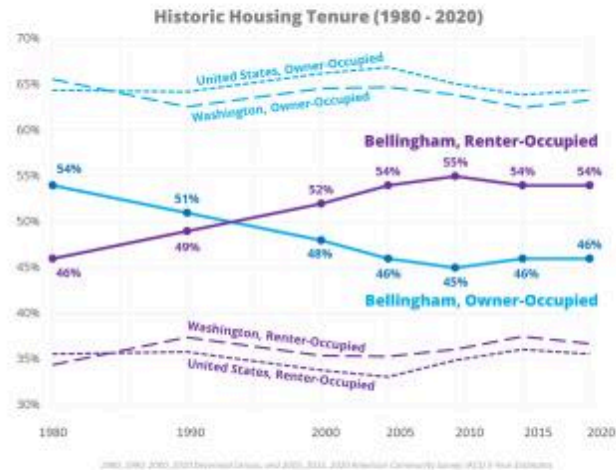
After a recession-triggered drop between 2010-2016, Bellingham's vacancy rate has been recovering as housing construction catches up with population growth.



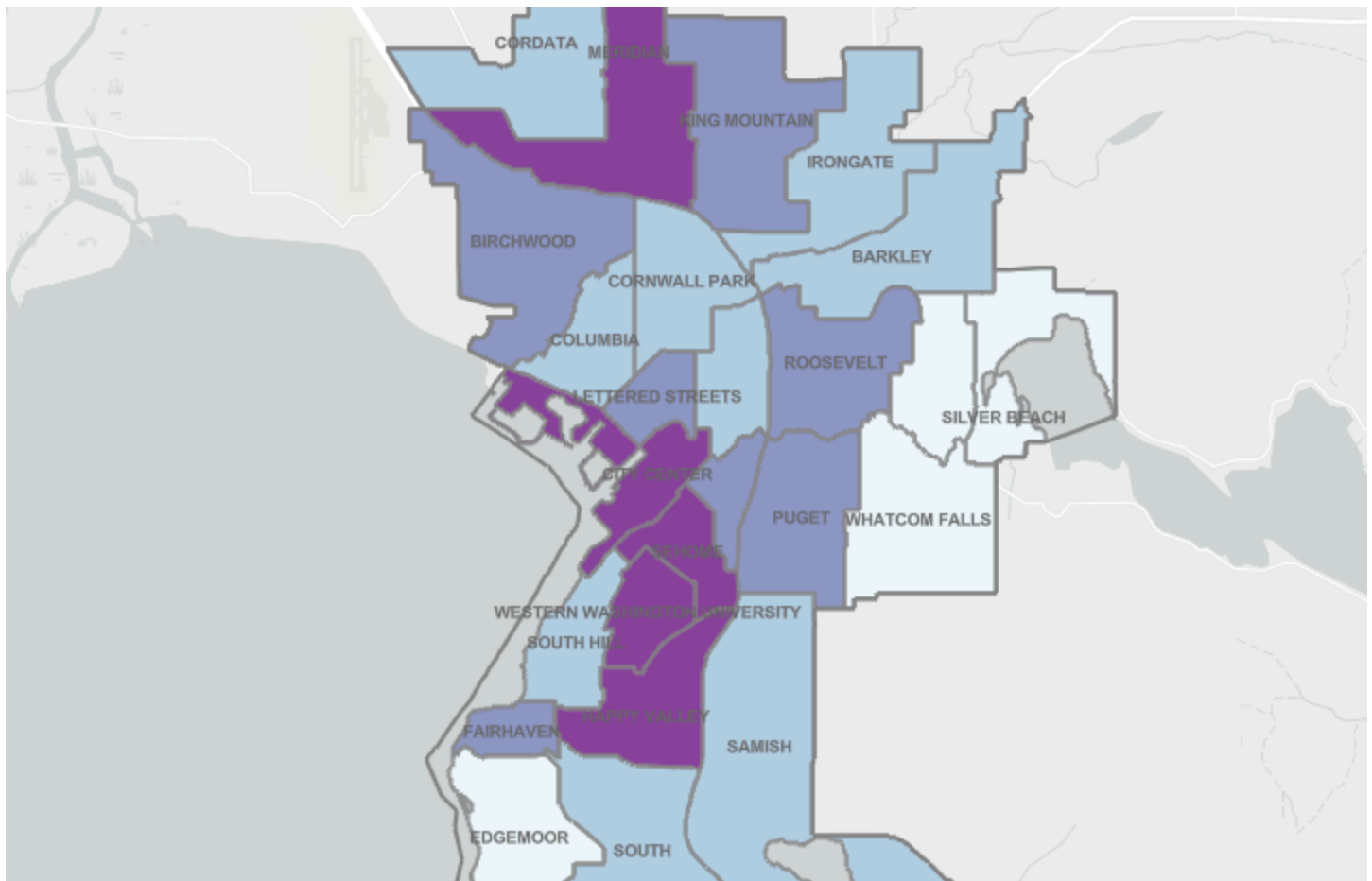
About the HUD - USPS Vacancy Rate Data

Housing Tenure

According to the 2016-2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, more than half of the housing units in the City of Bellingham are rental units.



In March of 2015, the Bellingham City Council approved the **Rental Registration & Safety Inspection Program (RR&SIP)**. The program requires all residential rental properties (apartments, condos, single-family homes, duplexes, ADUs, etc.) within Bellingham city limits be registered. The program is designed to ensure that all rental housing units comply with specific life & fire safety standards and are providing a safe place for tenants to live.

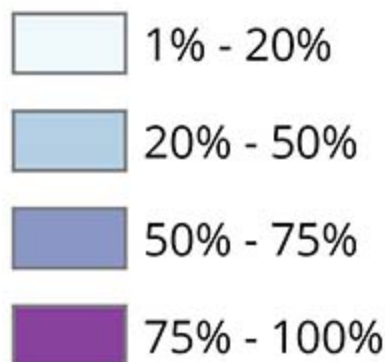


City of Bellingham, Whatcom County, WA State Parks GIS, Esri, TomTom, ...

2 mi

Powered by Esri

2024 Rental Percent by Neighborhood



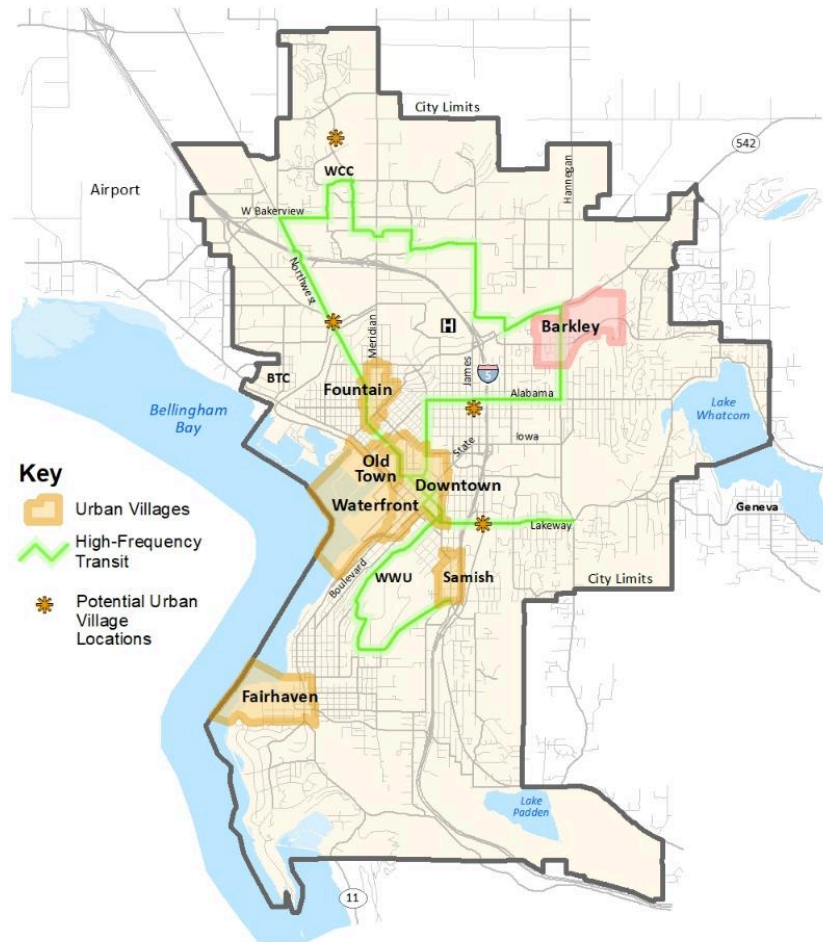
Source: 2024 City of Bellingham Rental Registration & Safety Program

Urban Villages

Urban villages are activity centers that provide pleasant living, shopping and working environments; strong

pedestrian accessibility; well-located public spaces; a connected street system; and a balance of retail, office, and residential uses.

Bellingham's urban villages, which are planned to accommodate much of the City's higher-density mixed-use development, are key to preserving neighborhood character while taking advantage of existing infrastructure.



Since adoption of the 2006 Comprehensive Plan, master plans, design standards, and regulations have been developed for six urban villages:

- **Downtown**
- **Waterfront**
- **Fairhaven**
- **Fountain**

- **Samish Way**
- **Old Town District**

A formal urban village plan has not been adopted for the **Barkley District**, which functions as an urban village in many ways and is identified as an urban development center in the Barkley Neighborhood Plan.

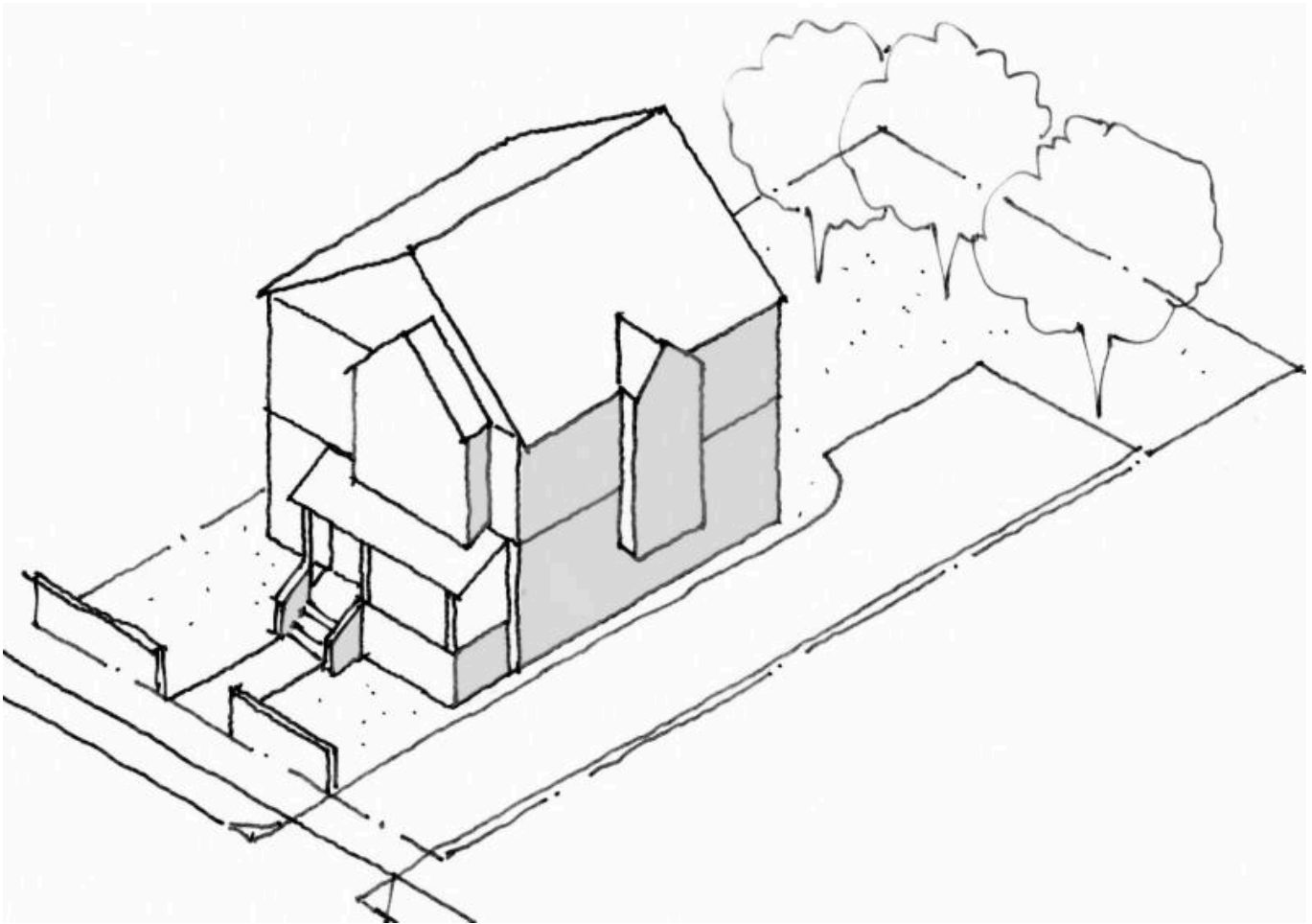
Visit the [Urban Village Dashboard](#) for current statistical information on housing, employment and commercial development for each urban village.

Infill Housing

The [adoption](#) of the Infill Toolkit is intended to implement comprehensive plan goals and policies encouraging infill development and more efficient use of the remaining developable land. This type of housing focuses on vacant or underused land in urban areas, and helps to reduce sprawl, while encouraging long-term sustainability and housing options for all types of individuals and families.

The [Infill Toolkit](#) includes **eight traditional housing types** that use a limited amount of residential space. Design features are built-in to promote privacy, cohesiveness with the surrounding neighborhood, and interaction with the street.

Scroll through the Infill Toolkit housing types below to learn more.

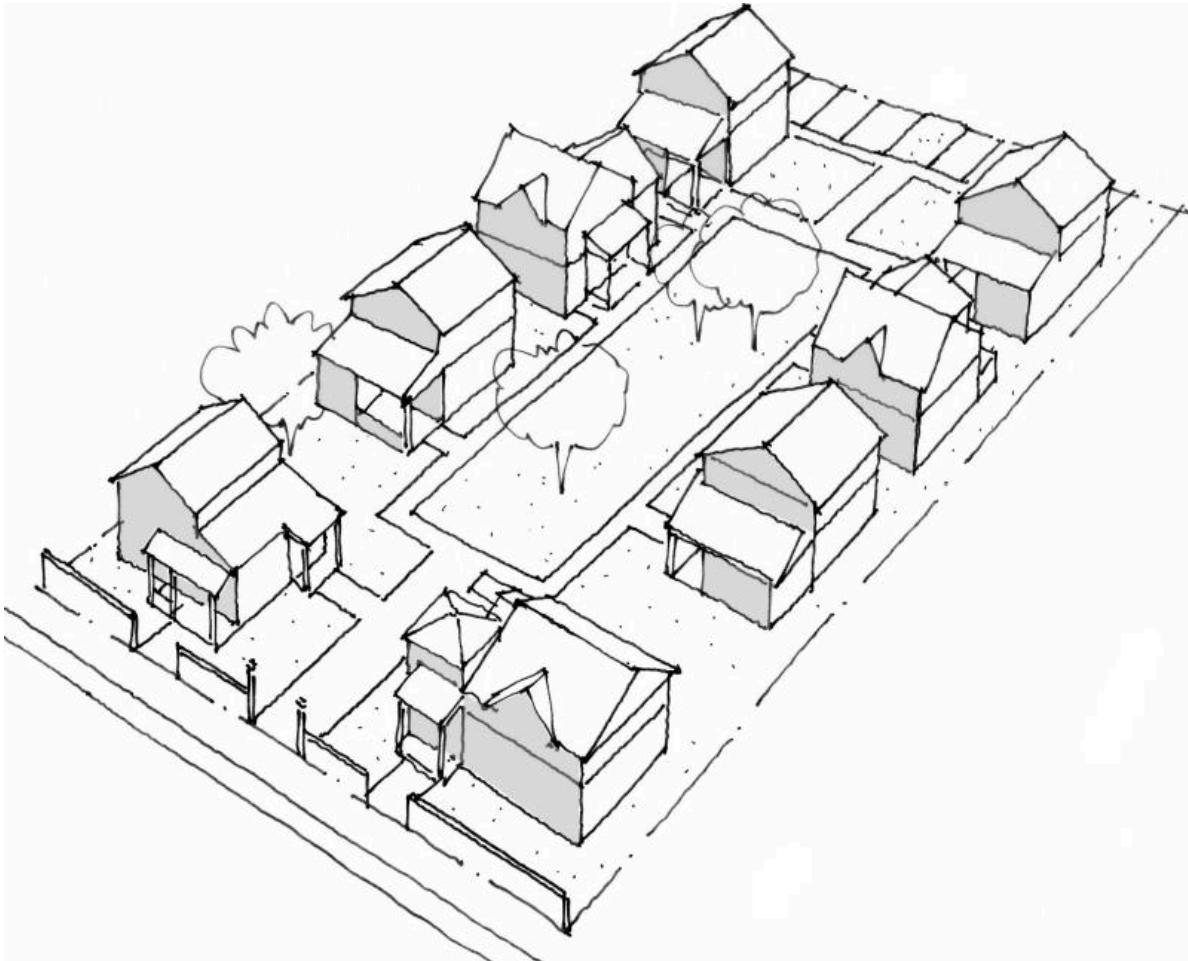


Small Lot

Allows for affordable, detached single family development at greater density than typical single family zones.

- Lot Sizes: Less than or equal to 5,000 sq. ft.
- Max Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 0.35 or 1,200 sq. ft., whichever is greater.
- Min 40% Open Space required.
- Min 0.3 Green Factor Landscaping score
- 1 parking stall required for units under 1,000 sq.ft., larger units require 2 stalls.

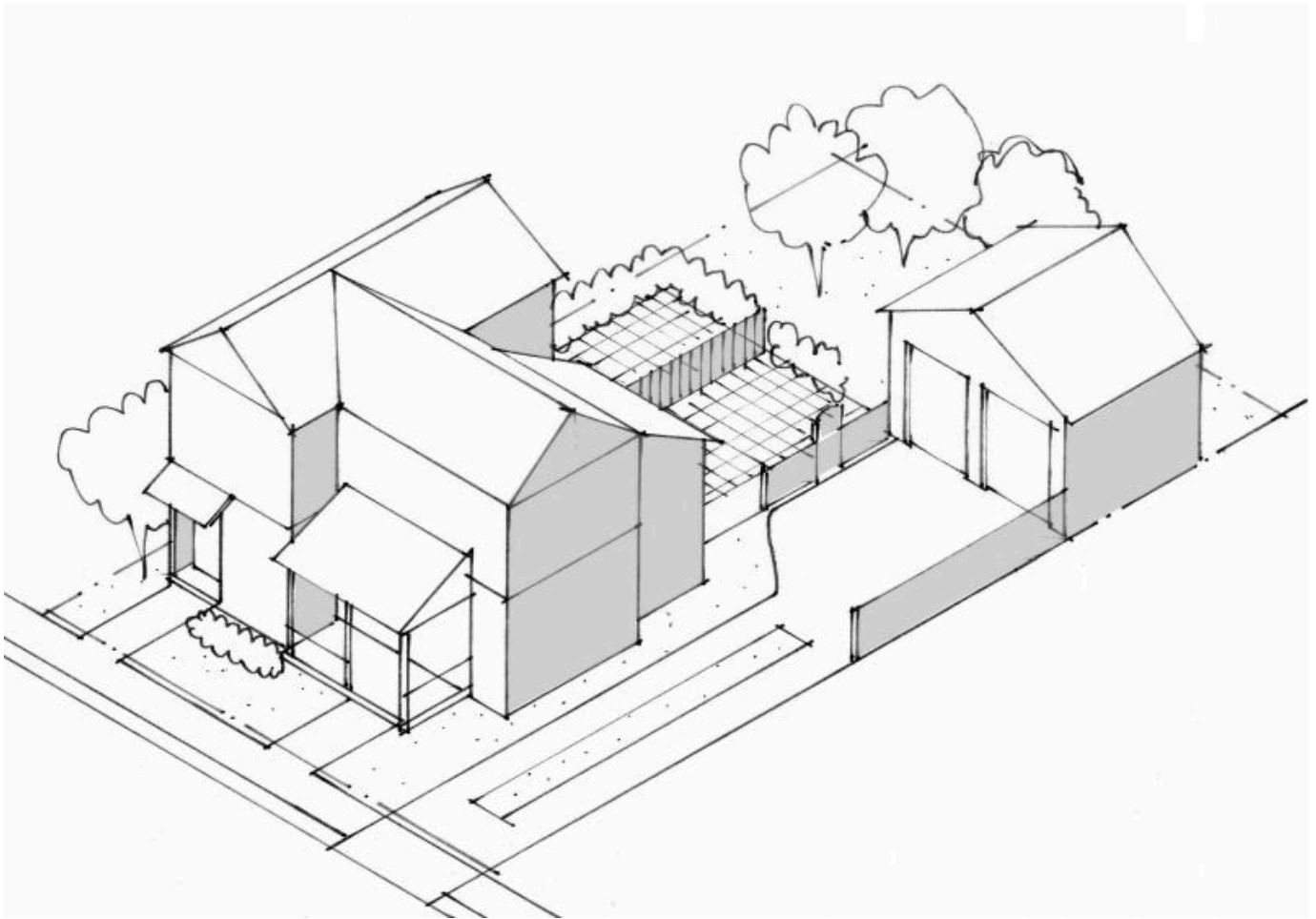
Smaller House consolidated into Small Lot (Ord. 2022-01-002)



Cottages

4 to 8 smaller detached units clustered around shared open space.

- 1,200 sq. ft. max per unit
- Max Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 0.6
- Min 40% Open Space required.
- Min 0.3 Green Factor Landscaping score
- 1 parking stall required for units under 1,000 sq.ft., larger units require 2 stalls.
- Each unit has a main entrance on the courtyard

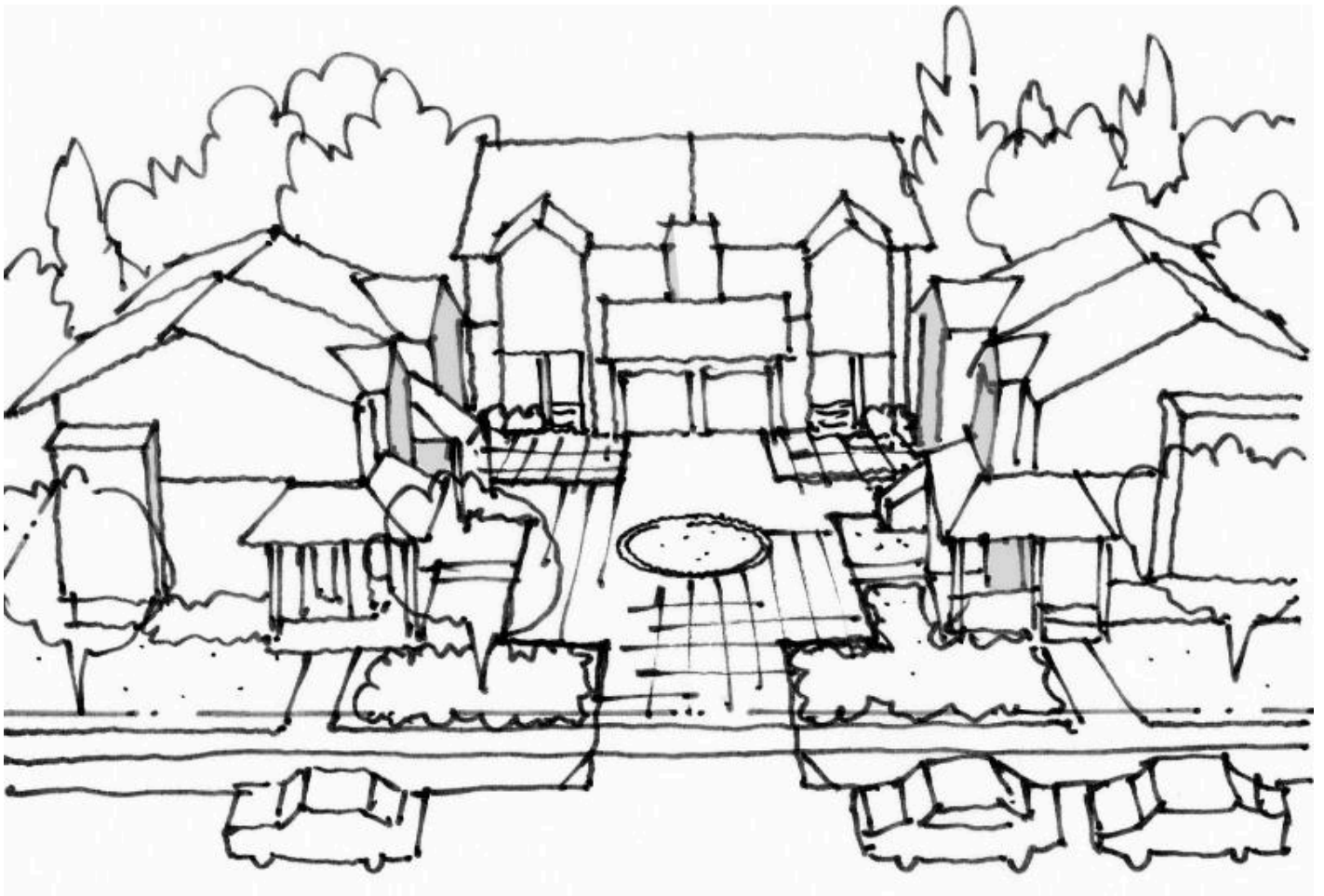


Duplex, Triplex and Fourplex

A building containing 2, 3 or 4 dwelling units on a single lot.

- Max Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 0.6
- Min 30% Open Space required.
- Min 0.4 Green Factor Landscaping score
- 1 parking stall required for units under 1,000 sq.ft., larger units require 2 stalls.

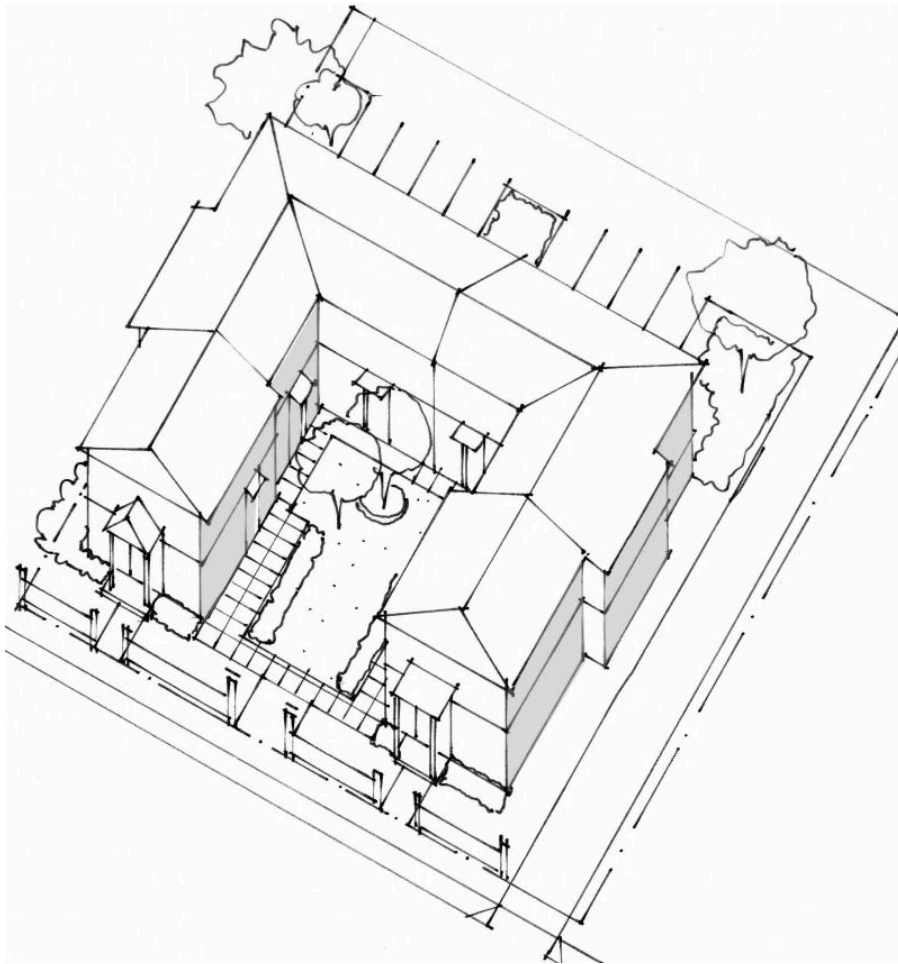
(Duplex shown at right)



Shared Courtyard

4 to 6 dwelling units (separate or attached) arranged around a common driveway/courtyard.

- Max Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 0.6
- Min 30% Open Space required.
- Min 0.4 Green Factor Landscaping score
- 1 parking stall required for units under 1,000 sq.ft., larger units require 2 stalls.
- Each unit has a main entrance on the courtyard.



Garden Courtyard

4 to 8 dwelling units (separate or attached) arranged around a common garden courtyard.

- 2,000 sq.ft. max per unit
- Max Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 0.6
- Min 40% Open Space required.
- Min 0.5 Green Factor Landscaping score
- 1 parking stall required for units under 1,000 sq.ft., larger units require 2 stalls.
- Each unit has a main entrance on the courtyard.

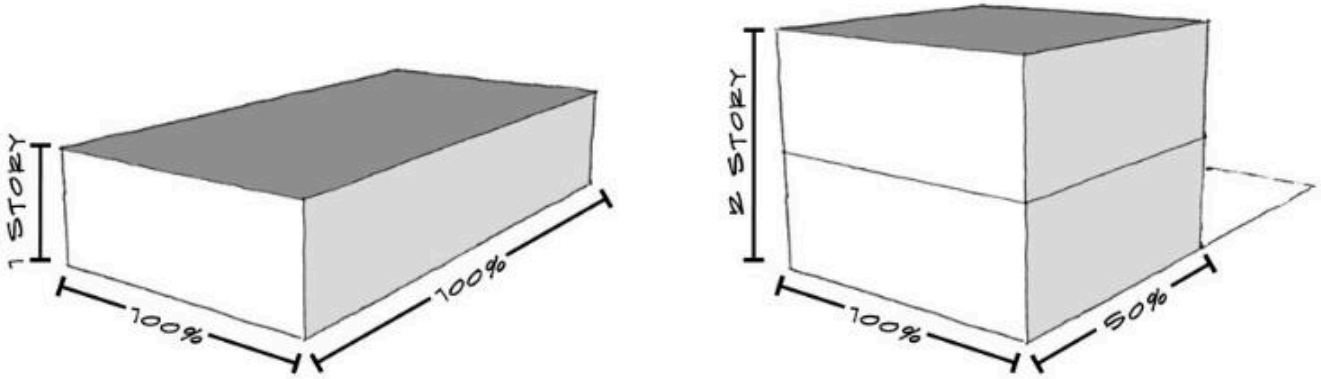


Townhouse

A home in a row of attached homes. Intended to include the best amenities of a single family home in a denser alternative

- Max Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 0.75
- Min 30% Open Space required.
- Min 0.4 Green Factor Landscaping score
- 1 parking stall required for units under 1,000 sq.ft., larger units require 2 stalls.
- Architecturally compatible design required when within established neighborhoods.

Two different forms of a 1.0 FAR Building

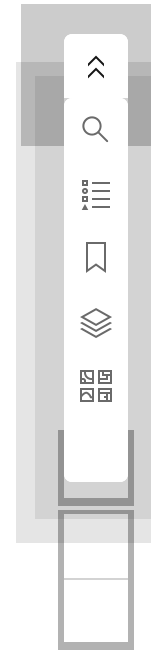


What is Floor Area Ratio (FAR)?

FAR is the gross square footage of a building(s) divided by the square footage of the site

Explore Infill Toolkit projects below:

Click on project markers in



Map Legend:

**Infill Toolkit
Projects in
Pre-
Application**



**Areas that
allow Infill
Toolkit:**

**Commercial
(excluding
Neighborhood
Commercial**

Number of units by Toolkit housing type	
TOWNHOUSE...	648
COTTAGE (ITK)	44
SMALL HOUS...	32
Total units	823

City of Bellingham, Whatcom County, W... Powered by Esri

Statistics for projects that are in for building permits are updated

Please share this information!

The best way to solve complex problems is through education, dialogue, and innovation. Please use the information presented here in your efforts to educate yourself and others, and to facilitate community conversations about housing, housing affordability, and where Bellingham is headed next.



Questions? Email us
at planning@cob.org

All data contained in this storymap is subject to the
City's [Policies and Disclaimers](#).

Neither the City, nor any department, officer, or employee of the
City warrants the accuracy, reliability, or timeliness of any
information published by this system, nor endorses any content,

viewpoints, products, or services linked from this system, and shall not be held liable for any losses caused by reliance on the accuracy, reliability or timeliness of such information. The City has collected this information for its own purposes from different agencies, businesses, and other sources throughout the City and region. Portions of such information may be incorrect or not current. Any person or entity that relies on any information obtained from this system does so at their own risk.

Additional Information:

Bellingham Housing Statistics Story Map	Content Index
City of Bellingham Estimated Population and Housing Unit Model	Data set compiled through an automated script (updated monthly) that uses a combination of Whatcom County Assessor Land Use Codes and Permit data to obtain unit counts. This data set is continually being refined to best reflect the most accurate data. Population estimates are calculated using persons/household and vacancy rates from the current Office of Financial Management (OFM) annual estimates.
2019-2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates	Web Page Link

Office of Financial Management - April 1 Official Population Estimates	Web Page Link
City of Bellingham Rental Registration & Safety Inspection Program	Web Page Link
City of Bellingham Urban Village Information	Web Page Link
City of Bellingham Urban Village Status Dashboard	Web Page Link
City of Bellingham Infill Toolkit	Web Page Link
City of Bellingham Permit Activity	Web Page Link
City of Bellingham Development Dashboard	Web Page Link
City of Bellingham Comprehensive Plan	Web Page Link
City of Bellingham Housing and Human Services	Web Page Link
Housing FAQs	Web Page Link
Current Neighborhood Statistics Summary Table	Download PDF
Policies & Disclaimers	Web Page Link