

**PLANNING ACADEMY II** SESSION 1: OVERVIEW, CONTEXT & PURPOSE  
30 APRIL 2008  
POST-TEST COMMENTS

**Question 4: What was the most useful information you gained from the presentation(s)?**

Program Content

- Importance of design standards for infill
- What the 1/3, 1/3, 1/3 planning plan is
- Consensus of concern about poor design as well as need for Whatcom Co. to protect agricultural lands
- Amazing increase in common understanding of GMA
- Need and desires and benefits of urban forms
- Understanding how similar all the responses to positive and negative impacts of infill
- The variety of infill options
- Fewer codes – focus more on development standards
- Bellingham’s code and zoning don’t permit some of the more creative, smaller housing
- The demographics
- Viewpoints
- Evaluation of demographics
- Things are changing rapidly in US for alternative living
- Amount of controversies but agreement on range of choices
- Change in what people are looking for in a home
- Time to re-think how we have done things in the past, look to the future for unique and different ways
- People appear to agree on major issues and goals, but disagree on how to respond
- That sometimes trashing current zoning regulations and starting over can be a good thing for some cities
- Confirmation that we are headed in the right direction
- The interconnection of planning for infill
- Infill positive and minuses are very close
- US demographic household change; Zoning codes – restriction of good urban design by laws
- City is willing to “push the envelope” of what currently exists
- Different infill opportunities
- Actual demographics of change on housing stock
- I think the housing options help people understand alternative housing types
- Relative agreement on benefits and fears about infill

Speakers and Presentations

- Mark’s visual presentation on True Urbanism
- Example of successful types
- 4 S’s: Singles, Single parents, Seniors, “Stakeholders”
- Mark Hinshaw – hearing from an optimistic brave visionary is refreshing!
- Mark Hinshaw
- Mark Hinshaw was fabulous and informative
- Hinshaw’s talk on possibilities
- Mark Hinshaw’s examples of people spaces
- Mark Hinshaw’s speech was great, but not necessarily applicable to Bellingham
- Mark Hinshaw – slideshow, statistics, examples
- The final speaker – the examples of where urban infill has worked
- Presentation by Mark Hinshaw
- Mark Hinshaw
- Mark Hinshaw’s perspective – a little extreme in some points, but overall interesting to consider
- Mark Hinshaw’s talk
- Mark Hinshaw’s presentation – Facts and trends supporting diverse housing and visual examples of housing types
- Mark Hinshaw saying “you must bring parks, squares, and plazas with higher density”
- I really enjoyed the presentation from the planner
- Nice examples of alternative housing type
- Presentation on infill strategies
- Mark’s presentation
- Enlightening to see successful urban infill in presentation
- Demographic trends presented by Hinshaw

- A couple snippets regarding successes in a few other cities
- Mark did an excellent job of providing an overview
- Pictures of infill housing and other cities use of space
- Notes on changing demographics – but, frankly, I felt lectured and shut down a bit after the very long redevelopment speaker
- Some of Hinshaw’s stats
- Mark Hinshaw’s presentation

#### Table and Group Interaction

- Meeting the folks at my table
- It was great to be at tables mixed with different neighborhoods/people
- Table forum on pluses and minuses of infill
- Realizing most people at my table seem opposed to infill
- Got to know more Bellingham people – neighborhood, city, builders
- Table conversation
- Hearing other ideas on positive/negative aspects of infill
- Listening to others at my table
- Interaction with table mates regarding presentation perspectives
- The names of the people at the table
- Getting to know participants
- Questions and answers around table – good and bad
- Different perspectives

#### Miscellaneous

- The same “old new stuff”
- It was helpful that we started with basics and are going slow
- A sense of hope
- Possibility of code change
- Not much – no real new information
- Re-enforced beliefs
- That the city is listening!
- If the trend is now is shifting to centers – what do we do to interpret what the next shift is and design that instead of the now shift; 10 years ago everyone wanted to live in the country and raise their kids in a safe healthy environment, what if it switches back?
- Open mind
- One size does not fit all

**Question 5: What topics or issues would you have liked to see discussed in more depth or detail?**

#### Program Content

- Application of how the various types of higher density can fit in actual Bellingham neighborhoods; How about a zone charrette for application to a particular neighborhoods?
- The detail of codes simplified in other cities to allow for innovation
- Types of infill specific types, small project plans
- Perceived “obstacles” in our existing code to infill
- How the city government (permitting, etc.) is going to learn to be more visionary, flexible, and encouraging
- Code changes and consequences
- Building code – how to develop new codes
- Cities support of direct strategies to support the shared common things like parks, row improvements, public/private partnerships – tax incentives
- Design standards and how they will be addressed; Redevelopment of badly designed infill
- How to handle the cars
- Environmental impacts/mitigation of infill
- Focus on more design and less on code
- Use of term “infill” and GMA
- Economic development; Streets as public spaces; Connectivity for walking, transit access
- Incorporation of natural open space into design standards and examples thereof
- Constraints on growth of water supply
- How to integrate new housing examples while coexisting with current
- How do we get to our goal of infill, i.e. code changes
- Where will all of this be located? All examples are from very large metro areas

- More options – ways to balance loss of quality of life with infill incentives
- The rationale for strong neighborhood plans
- Zoning changes to allow these innovative housing types
- More specific codes or design elements and how implemented – more details
- How infill can happen differently in neighborhoods vs. urban villages vs. edge areas
- Actual discussions of how-to on code and character and on design standards and codes that are enforceable
- Different types of “pocket” and larger infill strategies and infrastructure support
- Changing code for zoning; How and where the need requires
- Zoning issues; Defining character
- The economic ability to redevelop downtown or in any neighborhood
- How code actually shapes building design, see into the works
- The pros and cons of rezoning
- Building code – how to develop new codes
- Pros/cons of different types of housing – requirements, amenities needed, etc.
- How can we control the rate of infill – prevent twenty years worth of dwelling units in 5 years
- Public works; impacts
- Regulations which prevents creativity
- Code, Comprehensive plan
- Historic building preservation – adaptive reuse
- How to revise the code to facilitate infill choices
- Different forms of housing; More conversation of infill integrated into established neighborhoods
- People spaces and adding to neighborhood character
- Zoning
- Economic impacts of restricting growth boundaries on lot prices
- Neighborhood summaries (zones, vacant, for sale, etc.)How can we actually start finding out what different designs are available

#### Speakers and Presentations

- Mark Hinshaw’s ideas
- Examples of specific housing types and the code changes needed to allow them
- Good vs. bad infill; Health dept issues, i.e. compost toilets, street food vendors
- Environmental impact – there was a lot of concrete in Hinshaw’s examples – cost
- Bellingham appropriate examples of developments in other areas; What has been successful and how it has been successful
- Definitions of alternative styles – not just pictures discussion of what “design standards” would include – how in-depth can we get?

#### Table and Group Interaction

- Step by step examination of all neighborhoods, group discussion
- More time to discuss our topic
- Rather than asking for top 3 – I would have preferred each table adding new ideas – we would have heard more varied ideas

#### Miscellaneous

- We need help with our #9 challenge question
- How do we move forward?
- Hard to say in the first meeting, looking forward to what’s to come
- Please define “urban village”; Please explain how and when Public Works will participate and consider detention, storm water, street width, etc.
- Good start
- How to educate the “masses” about how infill can enhance Bellingham
- Businesses in “urban villages” – how to make affordable to local business use NOT chains/fast food and a bank on every corner; NO more Starbucks
- The group needs to understand that in order to get this done will require a total rewrite of all neighborhood plans and zoning text

#### **Question 6: Other comments about Session 1?**

### Program Content

- Varied discussion on infill
- Disappointed that it was more in doctrinal rather than educational
- Too packed agenda
- I need to know the real reason for infill
- Better clarification of F.A.R. for participants; better clarification about current neighborhoods land areas – prime arterials and current dwellings per acre (with maps) – this will tell where opportunities lie
- This first session was okay for orientation, however we need to get much more specific
- Content-wise session is weak on specifics and too broad
- Avoid Bellingham looking like all other cities by allowing sameness in building design
- Shorter agenda
- Make shorter agendas
- The pre-test and post-test questions were pointless, since no information was provided to influence in this one session, maybe more meaningful survey after all sessions OR a specific presentation to clarify role of...
- Need agendas for everyone

### Speakers and Presentations

- More with table, less Hinshaw; Examples could go quicker
- Not very valuable; Speaker had too much personal agenda and not enough real material to work with
- Mark Hinshaw was great
- Over-scheduled, good energy until the pride-full speaker took way too much time
- I think speaker misspoke when describing people of low-income as undesirable

### Tables and Group Interaction

- The tables need to be moved further apart for ease of hearing
- Very interesting, need more time to be interact with others
- Bigger font on name tags
- Can't hear at our table during break sessions, sound is terrible in this space
- Move the tables farther apart
- Good group discussion, more time in-session, shorter agenda
- Help tables focus discussion with so many different agendas
- Too loud

### Miscellaneous

- Good start!
- Excited for next session
- Don't know what was accomplished
- We the "little people" truly hope the "big people" of the bureaucratic planning world can be leaders of these philosophies
- Please make a short statement about why we are here
- Enjoyed it
- Appreciate the opportunity to participate
- Loved it
- Tim does a fabulous job!
- Too general
- Stimulating
- Too much for the time allowed but moved along well and very interesting
- Good job
- Good energy
- Well done trul