

Bellingham Urban Villages...A Working Definition

Urban Villages are activity centers that provide pleasant living, shopping, and working environments; strong pedestrian accessibility; adequate, well located open spaces; an alternative, well connected street system; and a balance of retail, office, residential and public spaces.

Ten Key Principles of the Urban Village

1. Walkability

Most things are within a 10 minute walk of home and work
Pedestrian friendly street design
Pedestrian streets free of cars in special cases

2. Connectivity

Interconnected street grid network disperses traffic & eases walking
A hierarchy of narrow streets, boulevards, and alleys
High quality pedestrian network and public realm makes walking pleasurable

3. Mixed-Use & Diversity

A mix of shops, offices, services recreational activities, apartments, and homes
Mixed-use within neighborhoods, within blocks, and within buildings
Diversity of people - of ages, income levels, cultures, races and lifestyles

4. Mixed Housing

A range of types, sizes and prices in closer proximity, such as:
Cottages; Single family detached and attached; Multi-family; Accessory; Upper floor rentals over retail; Condominiums

5. Quality Architecture & Urban Design

Emphasis on beauty, aesthetics, human comfort, and creating a sense of place
Special placement of civic uses and sites within community
Human scale architecture & attractive surroundings nourish the human spirit

6. Traditional Neighborhood Structure

Discernable center and edge
Public space at center, and quality public realm
Public open space designed as civic art
Contains a range of uses and densities within 10-minute walk

7. Increased Density

More buildings, residences, shops, and services closer together
New Urbanism design principles are applied at the full range of densities

8. Smart Transportation

A network of high-quality public transit connecting cities, towns, and neighborhoods together
Design that encourages a greater use of bicycles, rollerblades, scooters, and walking as daily transportation

9. Sustainability

Minimal environmental impact of development and its operations
Eco-friendly technologies, respect for ecology and value of natural systems
More efficient use of public infrastructure and services
Energy efficiency
More walking, less driving

10. Quality of Life

Taken together, these principles add up to a high quality of life well worth living, and create places that enrich, uplift, and inspire the human spirit.