



Suggestions/Comments/Ideas/Questions

Community Input

Neighborhood Meeting No. 1: August 9, 2004

Columbia, Lettered Streets, Cornwall Park, Birchwood Neighborhoods
St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 7:30 – 9:30 pm

(Note: The following are paraphrased comments from meeting attendees, transcribed from notes and audio taped minutes. Key numbers following each comment indicate policy category(s) assigned for report analysis, see key legend below. Further questions or comments may be addressed to Mr. Greg Aucutt, Senior Planner, City of Bellingham, 360-676-6982, e-mail address: gaucutt@cob.org)

Comments:

- "Infill compatibility is very important. New development must mesh with what is already in the area." ①②
- "Only two alternatives have been offered to accommodating growth: infill or sprawl. What about different solutions, such as creating new villages in Whatcom County that are based on New Urbanism principles?" ④
- "Can we fight population growth? Have any other counties successfully implemented policies that amend parts of the GMA?" ④
- "Infill is a euphemism for blight. Example: Apartments in the Birchwood Neighborhood." ②
- "Can we implement a 'growth freeze' or a moratorium on building?" ④
- "There are good and bad ways to do infill. The City needs to have a flexible zoning code that allows for progressive forms of housing such as cottage housing, etc. that could not be constructed due to the rigid nature of our current codes." ②
- "Services must be near density. Neighborhood grocery stores and other services should be allowed for in the zoning code so that opportunities abound for everyday needs of the City's residents." ①②
- "Neighborhood should be treated equally with zoning changes that may increase density. Neighborhoods such as Edgemoor and South Hill should not be free from the consequences of infill." ①②
- "Speculative housing is being built instead of people building their own homes. We need to see a reversal in this trend." ④
- "We need to address the implications of low-rise vs. high rise development, especially traffic issues." ①
- "High-rise development in West Vancouver is a good example of how this type of development can produce a safe, vibrant streetscape; traffic is slowed because so much is going on in the area. Perceived traffic risk is high while resulting speeds are low." ①②

- “We need to look more closely at how we finance infrastructure.” ②
- “We have seen some of the implications of increasing density already: overcrowding and apartments.” ①②
- “Make sure that bike paths are safe for families including children. Cyclists cruising by at high speeds does not allow for trail usage inclusive to all age groups.” ①
- “There should be no parking subsidy. We need to have impact fees for parking lots.” ②
- “(Drivers should have to) pay to park @ Costco, etc. Park & Rides should be located outside of the City. Private lots should be rented out when they are not in use so that commuters can park there in mini Park & Rides where buses can bring them into the City.” ③
- “More Density – how does American congestion work?” ①②③
- “The average per household is 2.25 persons. This means that 13,000 new units are needed to accommodate the adopted population projection in Bellingham.” ①
- “(WTA Park & Ride at Civic Field) This site is an opportunity to provide parking outside of the core of the City. It should be taken advantage of as it goes largely unused throughout most of the day.” ①
- “Public Transit is vital in providing transportation options. Make sure that it is effective and provides a viable alternative to driving.” ①③
- “Traffic calming should be emphasized as a means of slowing traffic in neighborhoods and providing a safer street network.” ②
- “Is there a way that we can keep Bellingham the way it is presently?” ④
- “Are there enough jobs here for the people who will be moving here?” ①
- “Where is WTA at this meeting? They should be more of an active participant in this process than we see today.” ③
- “Regarding Transferable Development Rights and Purchase of Development Rights programs, we need to look at the UGA as an opportunity to become a receiving area.” ③
- “Costs need to be addressed including the supply of land and affordability of land and housing.” ①③
- “Growth needs to be balanced with density and affordability.” ①②③
- “How much growth can our water supply support? Shouldn’t that act as a development ceiling down the road?” ③
- “The City of Boulder, Colorado is a wonderful example of an urban area surrounded by a green belt. We need to preserve all the natural area we have in the City so citizens can at least live as close to nature as they do now. Infill would eliminate much of the undeveloped land that can be valued in a many ways including aesthetic.” ①③
- “What is the UGA amendment frequency?” ③
- “The County does not have a ultra-long range vision for population growth. We cannot grow continuously forever. Shouldn’t our planning be of a longer range than 20 years down the road?” ③
- “What is the influence of WWU on this process? The school will undoubtedly expand and bring more people to the area.” ①

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 pm.

Key legend:

The following categories were formulated following review of public input to aid analysis and guide policy recommendations for client agencies. See associated comments from all neighborhood meetings, Drop-in Center, and Planning Fair, tabulated results document in Forum report appendix:

- ① = **“Building Community”** - *Comments related to improved or new civic infrastructure, supporting community values*
- ② = **“Development and Design Control”** - *Comments related to regulating new development in accord with community values*
- ③ = **“Inter-organizational Coordination”** - *Comments related to civic and regulatory agency coordination, affecting growth and development*
- ④ = **Other** - *Comments unrelated to primary categories*