

# PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date	Staff Contact	
10/22/09	Nicole Oliver, Communication Coordinator	
<b>Subject:</b>		
Northern Neighborhood Boundary Review Project		
<b>Attachments:</b>		
1. Staff Report		
2. Attachment A – Submittal from Mt. Baker Neighborhood		
3. Attachment B – Submittal from Guide Meridian/Cordata Neighborhood		
4. Attachment C – Map showing new boundary proposal and current zoning		
5. Attachment D – Map showing new boundary proposal and existing neighborhood boundaries		
Meeting Type	Category	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public Hearing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Legislative	
<input type="checkbox"/> Public Meeting	<input type="checkbox"/> Quasi-judicial	
<input type="checkbox"/> Work Session	<input type="checkbox"/> Information Only	
<input type="checkbox"/> Briefing		
Clearances	Initials	Date
Tim Stewart, Director	<i>TWS</i>	10-5-09
Alan Marriner, Legal	<i>AM</i>	10/7/09
Nicole Oliver, Communication Coord	<i>NO</i>	10-5-09
<b>Previous Commission Meeting or Action:</b>		
None.		
<b>Recommended Action:</b>		
Staff recommends conducting a public hearing and providing direction to staff regarding any changes or modifications to the proposal, prior to staff conducting the substantial technical work required to bring forward neighborhood plan and zoning table amendments.		

1 CITY OF BELLINGHAM PLANNING STAFF REPORT

2  
3 **Agenda Topic:** *Northern Neighborhood Boundary Review Project*  
4  
5 **For:** *October 22, 2009 public hearing*  
6  
7 **Staff Contact:** *Nicole Oliver, Department Communications Coordinator*  
8  
9

10  
11  
12  
13 **I. SUMMARY OF PROPOSAL**  
14

15 In response to neighborhood association requests to reduce the size and revise the  
16 boundaries of the Guide Meridian/Cordata and Mount Baker Neighborhoods, staff  
17 evaluated a number of factors to arrive at a proposal to modify those boundaries as well  
18 as surrounding neighborhood boundaries. Factors reviewed included: the size of the  
19 neighborhoods, zoning designations, transportation corridors, environmental features,  
20 the built environment, parks, trails and open space corridors, schools, vacant land for  
21 future development, and the expressed desires on the part of residents and business  
22 people who live and work in the neighborhoods and who desire more manageable  
23 neighborhood areas.

24  
25 The maps attached indicate the proposed boundary changes. A dotted line represents a  
26 modification submitted by the Guide Meridian/Cordata neighborhood to encompass the  
27 built out residential and commercial areas along Bakerview, as well an additional parcel  
28 owned by the Whatcom Community College. Staff supports this modification. The  
29 proposed new boundaries better reflect existing zoning and land use, and create a  
30 regional commercial area in the Meridian Neighborhood, as well as an industrial area in  
31 Irongate. Existing residential uses in Mt. Baker were added to King Mountain as well so  
32 that Irongate would remain entirely industrial.  
33

34  
35 **II. PLANNING COMMISSION ROLE**  
36

37 The proposal before the Commission will be used as the basis for extensive technical  
38 work that will be required to complete these neighborhood amendments, as staff  
39 resources are allocated and available for this project. The public hearing is being held to  
40 help inform staff of any concerns or suggestions that the neighborhoods or the  
41 Commission may have prior to conducting the technical work. At this time, staff has not  
42 prepared an ordinance or Draft Findings of Fact, Conclusions, and Recommendations,  
43 as the actual changes are not before the Commission and staff is not recommending  
44 forwarding a recommendation to the City Council.  
45  
46

1 **III. BACKGROUND**

2  
3 The size of Bellingham's northern neighborhoods have become unwieldy and over-  
4 sized due to successive annexations. Guide Meridian/Cordata and Mount Baker  
5 residents, property owners, business owners, and neighborhood groups have requested  
6 modifications to their neighborhood boundaries in an effort to make it easier to organize  
7 around shared goals and common interests.  
8

9 The Planning Director docketed review of Bellingham's northern neighborhood  
10 boundaries as part of the 2009 Comprehensive Plan/Neighborhood Plan Amendment  
11 Process. The project provides an opportunity to determine more logical neighborhood  
12 boundaries that are intended to result in more manageable neighborhoods. Staff and  
13 resources were dedicated to this project to prioritize the planning efforts for the northern  
14 neighborhoods. Loss of a long-range planning position as of October 1<sup>st</sup> limited the  
15 ability of staff to complete the underlying technical work this year. That work will need  
16 to be phased pending the availability of resources. Meanwhile, the City will continue to  
17 work with these neighborhoods to improve their organizational ability and their shared  
18 issues.  
19

20 **IV. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GOALS AND POLICIES**

21  
22 Adjusting the boundaries of the Guide Meridian/Cordata, Meridian, King Mountain, and  
23 Mount Baker neighborhoods is consistent with, and carries out, the goals and policies of  
24 the City's Comprehensive Plan.  
25

26 **V. ANALYSIS**

27  
28 The potential boundary changes would impact four existing neighborhoods: Guide  
29 Meridian/Cordata, Meridian, King Mountain and Mount Baker. The proposal would  
30 create one new neighborhood by splitting Mount Baker into two neighborhoods,  
31 Irongate and Barkley, based on existing zoning. Guide Meridian/Cordata would be  
32 renamed Cordata, and Meridian and King Mountain boundaries would be adjusted  
33 based on zoning and land use (commercial and residential respectively.) (See  
34 *Attachments C and D.*) The second phase of this project will involve substantial  
35 technical work to develop two new neighborhood plans from existing neighborhood plan  
36 text, the Comprehensive Plan and zoning designations. Each affected neighborhoods  
37 would also require their neighborhood plans and zoning tables be updated to reflect the  
38 changes.  
39

40 **VI. PUBLIC COMMENT**

41  
42 Notice of the Planning Commission hearing was mailed to all of the Mayor's  
43 Neighborhood Advisory Council Members and Neighborhood Association Presidents.  
44 The notice was also sent to and published in the Bellingham Herald. Staff presented  
45 the proposal to the Mayor's Neighborhood Advisory Commission on July 15, 2009.  
46 Staff met with the Guide Meridian/Cordata Neighborhood, the Mount Baker

1 and the King Mt. Neighborhood to present and get feedback on the proposal. Those  
2 neighborhoods each supported the proposed changes. The Guide Meridian/Cordata  
3 Neighborhood requested a slight modification to extend down to Bakerview to include  
4 that developed residential and commercial area within the Cordata Neighborhood. The  
5 Meridian Neighborhood is not represented by a neighborhood association at this time.  
6

7 There has been no written comments to date.  
8  
9

## 10 **VII. STATE ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (SEPA)**

11  
12 A SEPA determination was not required as no code or plan changes are being  
13 submitted at this time.  
14  
15

## 16 **VIII. STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS - OPTIONS**

17  
18 Option 1—Conduct at public hearing and provide direction to staff regarding any  
19 modifications to the proposal. Do not forward a recommendation to City Council at this  
20 time, but direct staff to conduct the underlying technical work in phases pending the  
21 availability of resources.  
22

23 Option 2—Direct staff to create Findings of Fact, Conclusions and Recommendations  
24 and forward to Council.  
25

### 26 **Staff Recommendation - Option 1.**

## 27 28 29 **IX. LIST OF ATTACHMENTS**

- 30  
31 A. Submittal from Mt. Baker Neighborhood.  
32 B. Submittal from Guide Meridian/Cordata Neighborhood  
33 C. Map showing new boundary proposal and current zoning  
34 D. Map showing new boundary proposal and existing neighborhood boundaries.  
35  
36

# Attachment A

RECEIVED

Tim Stewart  
Planning and Community Development  
210 Lottie Street  
Bellingham, WA 98225

AUG 07 2007

City of Bellingham  
Planning

Aug 6, 2007

Dear Tim,

I enjoyed meeting you earlier this year to discuss the Barkley Village urban village. I am writing you today, however, wearing a different hat. I am the current president of the Mount Baker Neighborhood Association. The MBNA was formed late last year, after about a decade of dormancy. Even though there may be something of a conflict of interest here (usually the developer is sitting on the other side of the table from the neighborhood groups), I felt someone had to step forward to re-engage the neighborhood association as we were one of the few, maybe the last, to have an association. My hope is to hand off the reigns to someone else soon, and step down from this position. We do have a few people on our board, but it has been challenging to get people involved.

The MBN is (or will soon be) the largest Bellingham neighborhood by land area, with a very diverse land use base. When the neighborhood designations were made some 30+ years ago, we suspect the MBN was something of a "filler" land delineation, because it had so little residential development at the time. Also, we presume it was named for the Mount Baker Highway, which runs through the area. However, to this day MBN is not a name that anyone commonly recognizes as a neighborhood area. People say they live or work in the "Barkley area" or the "Irongate industrial area", but not Mount Baker Neighborhood. These issues have really hindered us as we try to galvanize neighborhood involvement.

Our hope is that the City would consider splitting the current MBN into a Barkley section and an "Irongate" (or maybe it's called "King Mountain") section. We have met with Kathryn and Pat who recommended initiating such a split as part of a neighborhood plan amendment. This poses a Catch-22 situation for us: We'd first need to create name recognition of the MBN, build up membership to demonstrate "broad-based support", go through the plan amendment process, and then once the neighborhood is split we have to start all over again with two new associations. We feel it would be much simpler for the City to initiate the process itself, otherwise the MBNA may slide back into dormancy.

We realize this is a complicated situation, since the MBN delineation is spread throughout COB's documents and maps. But we feel it's a change that will come sooner or later, particularly as more residential goes into the Barkley core area, and the King Mountain UGA's are incorporated. We'd love to hear any thoughts or advice you may have on the matter.

Best regards,

Stowe Talbot  
Mount Baker Neighborhood Assoc.



Cc: Pat Carmen  
Cc: Kathryn Hanowell  
Cc: MBNA board members

# Attachment B

## GUIDE MERIDIAN/CORDATA NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

Mr. Tim Stewart  
City of Bellingham  
Planning Director  
210 Lottie Street  
Bellingham, Wa. 98225

September 23, 2008

Dear Mr. Stewart:

When you met with several members of our Board on August 13, 2008, one of the topics discussed was the possibility of a boundary change for the Guide Meridian/Cordata Neighborhood. Our Board has considered a number of possibilities and would like to move forward with initiating a boundary change at this time.

As we discussed, the Neighborhood is growing and will continue to grow. A smaller size would be more manageable for future planning. It would be timely to make boundary changes prior to implementing the Urban Infill Toolkit. Since the Planning staff already intends to focus on the land use sections and zoning maps once the legislative review of the Toolkit is completed, we will be in a better position to proceed with infill planning.

We considered just changing the eastern boundary of the neighborhood as it would be the simplest. However, we prefer to plan for the long range rather than a cosmetic boundary change. This proposal, then, is intended to provide for future growth in a manageable area.

We propose the following changes to the Neighborhood boundary:

1. The east boundary would be Meridian street.  
(Areas 24, 24A, 25, 26, & 26A would go to another neighborhood.)
2. The south boundary would be Bakerview road.  
(Add the area from Kellogg Rd. south to Bakerview bounded by Meridian and Cordata Parkway.)  
(Parts of area 13, 16, 19, 20, plus 15 & 15A would go to another neighborhood. This includes the Sterling Street area from Bellis Fair to I-5)

3. The west boundary would extend to Aldrich.
4. The north boundary would be the city limits.

This would square off the boundaries with major arterials being easily identified demarcation lines. Adjacent urban growth areas and future urban growth areas within these lines would become part of the neighborhood when annexed. This growth could probably be absorbed offsetting some of the loss if these changes were made. This neighborhood could likely be called the Cordata Neighborhood.

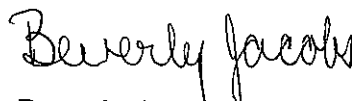
This proposal would result in a more cohesive neighborhood, one with land available for a variety of uses. Development would continue as provided by the zoning designations incorporated into the Neighborhood Plan. A somewhat smaller and more concise neighborhood should help us focus on solving some of the problems of growth.

Please contact Ralph Wenning and Adrienne Lederer, co-chairs of our Neighborhood Plan Committee, for a meeting date when our neighborhood can move forward with this proposed change.

We look forward to working with you and the other affected neighborhoods to adjust boundaries for smaller more manageable neighborhoods.

Sincerely,

  
Julianna Guy

  
Beverly Jacobs

Co-Presidents  
Guide Meridian/Cordata  
Neighborhood Association

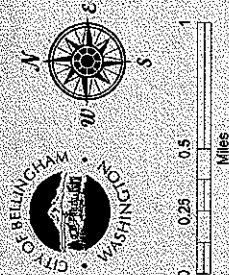
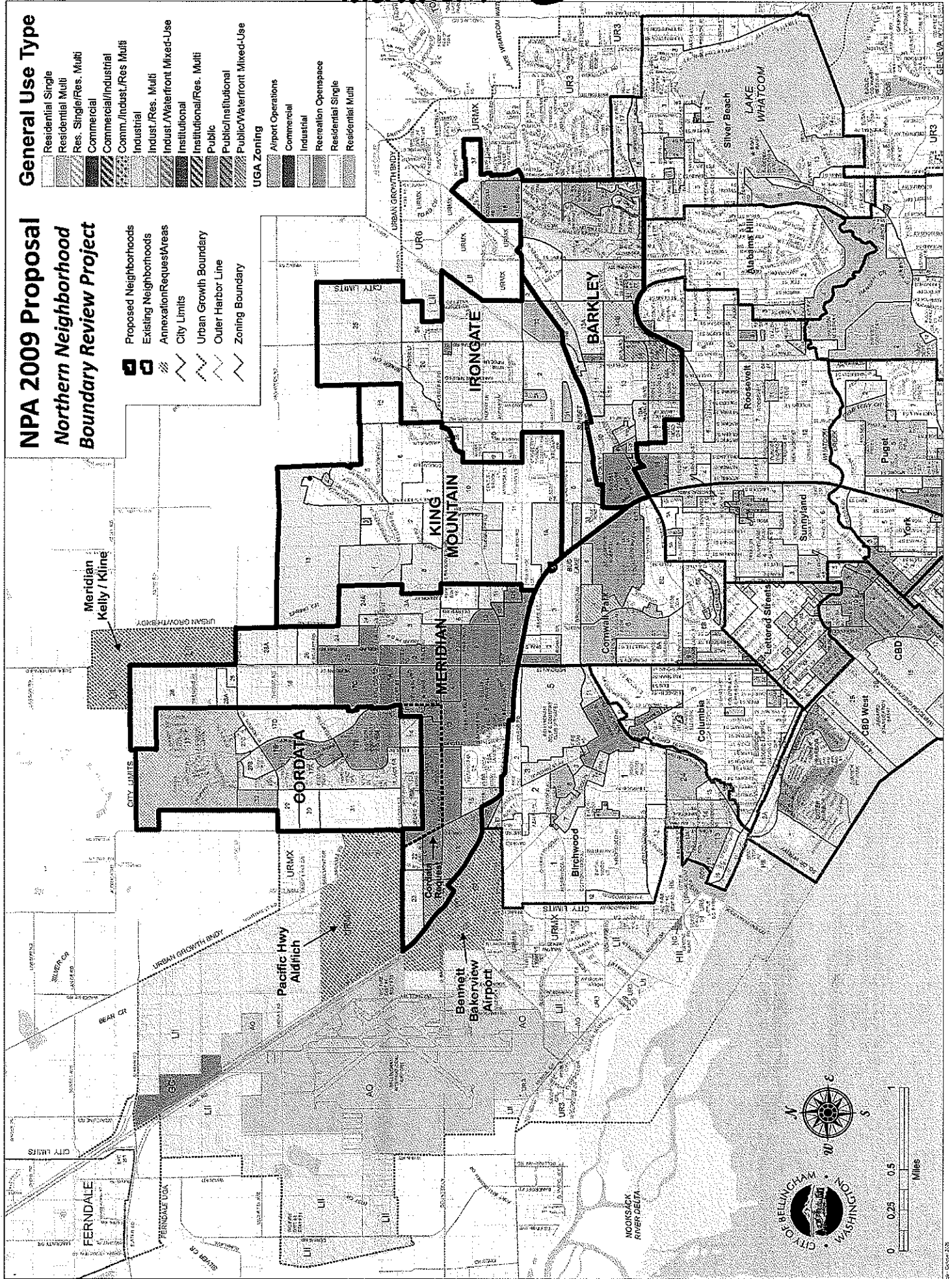
cc: Linda Stewart  
Nicole Oliver  
Jack Weiss  
Planning Commission  
Ralph Wenning  
Adrienne Lederer

## NPA 2009 Proposal Northern Neighborhood Boundary Review Project

**General Use Type**

[Pattern]	Residential Single
[Pattern]	Residential Multi
[Pattern]	Res. Single/Res. Multi
[Pattern]	Commercial
[Pattern]	Commercial/Industrial
[Pattern]	Comm./Indus./Res Multi
[Pattern]	Industrial
[Pattern]	Indus./Res. Multi
[Pattern]	Indus./Waterfront Mixed-Use
[Pattern]	Institutional
[Pattern]	Institutional/Res. Multi
[Pattern]	Public
[Pattern]	Public/Institutional
[Pattern]	Public/Waterfront Mixed-Use
[Pattern]	UGA Zoning
[Pattern]	Airport Operations
[Pattern]	Commercial
[Pattern]	Industrial
[Pattern]	Recreation OpenSpace
[Pattern]	Residential Single
[Pattern]	Residential Multi






[Symbol]	Proposed Neighborhoods
[Symbol]	Existing Neighborhoods
[Symbol]	Annexation Requests Areas
[Symbol]	City Limits
[Symbol]	Urban Growth Boundary
[Symbol]	Outer Harbor Line
[Symbol]	Zoning Boundary



# Attachment D

## NPA 2009 Proposal Northern Neighborhood Boundary Review Project

### Legend

-  Proposed Neighborhoods
-  City Limits
-  Urban Growth Boundary
-  Outer Harbor Line
-  Annexation Request Areas

