

## **Bellingham City Council Town Hall June 13, 2017, Bellingham High School**

This document responds to comments received during the Town Hall, or received by Council office via e-mail or other means.

| Number                                  | Question or statement  | Staff response   |
|---|--|--|
| <i>General Questions or Statements:</i> |  |  |
| 1.                                      | Do we want to have an economically diverse community?  | <p>The City of Bellingham has adopted numerous policies and programs that support a diverse and healthy community. The City Council has established an “Equity and Social Justice” legacy goal, which includes supporting the creation of safe, affordable housing; funding support services for low income residents; and working to increase living wage employment. Housing is a critical part of the equity goal. Housing policies and programs include administering a voter-approved housing levy; programs to support homeownership; rental support programs; low-income home weatherization; etc. City infill policies encourage creation of smaller more affordable units near transit and/or urban villages. The City supports programs that facilitate rapid rehousing of homeless people, including establishing a new low-barrier shelter. The City has adopted incentives to encourage more housing production, including <a href="#">property tax reductions</a> for residential units downtown, and <a href="#">reduced fees for new units in urban villages</a>. The Comprehensive Plan <a href="#">Housing Chapter</a>, Policy H-2, calls for the City to Foster housing that is safe, healthy, livable, and affordable for all income levels in all neighborhoods.</p> <p>In the current high-cost, high-inflation housing market, existing policies are proving insufficient to move the needle in reducing pressure on Bellingham residents who need affordable housing. Currently the Council is examining other measures for possible adoption, including an income non-discrimination ordinance, as well as additional changes to spur private housing production.</p> |
| 2.                                      | In our conversations around housing how do we make sure to include people who have less access to the process? | <p>The City has used traditional involvement methods such as published notices, public hearings, press releases, and neighborhood meetings to solicit input. However, it is clear that alternative approaches need to be employed to "get the message out." The City also uses social media, such as Facebook and Twitter, to publicize meetings and gather feedback. Planning staff have also experimented with online community forums such as mySidewalk to supplement in-person meetings. Additionally, City staff have started augmenting traditional means of engagement with more directed outreach at neighborhood locations and events, such as churches, civic group meetings or school cafeterias. Staff is committed to going wherever they are needed to provide information and answer questions. These are some ways to reach those not typically involved in City processes, but staff is exploring new, innovative engagement techniques to reach even more people.</p>   |

| Number   | Question or statement   | Staff response  |
|--|---|---|
| <i>Housing Affordability/Accessibility, General:</i> |   |   |
| 3.   | The Council should work with the Port to ensure that affordable housing is part of the discussion in economic development, and to develop new waterfront units in the mixed income and affordable category. | The City and the Port entered into a Development Agreement where the Port agreed to ensure that at least 10% of the total residential units are affordable, as a condition of the City's investment in a major bridge connection that will be built when development proceeds past a certain square footage. See the <a href="#">Interlocal Agreement for Facilities</a> between the Port of Bellingham and the City of Bellingham.   |
| 4.   | Is the city willing to work with affordable housing developers to sell or give away its land for affordable housing projects?   | The City would be a willing seller if properties are suitable. As an example, the City recently sold a surplus property located at 315 N. Samish Way to the Bellingham Whatcom County Housing Authority. Rather than receiving money for the property, the City loaned the value of the property to ensure a mix of incomes will be served in this 150 unit redevelopment project.  |
| 5.   | Does the city have any plans for learning from the ways other municipalities are addressing the need for affordable housing?  | City of Bellingham staff and its elected leaders are always searching for creative and innovative solutions to affordable housing issues, and this necessarily involves looking at what has worked elsewhere. For every policy or program examined, staff regularly scan for promising models in other Washington cities, other US cities, or even other counties. When these appear well-designed and could help solve local problems, they may be considered for adoption. For example, when looking at possible solutions to rental issues, City staff are looking at policies adopted by Vancouver, WA, Seattle, and Auburn.  |
| 6.   | We need to pass a resolution saying affordable housing is a human right.  | The City Council is aware of this idea. Resolutions are the purview of the City Council. Those who advocate resolutions are free to contact the Council with their ideas.   |
| <i>Rental Barriers and Concerns:</i>                 |   |   |
| 7.   | What can we do to prohibit discrimination against people who hold vouchers or other forms of housing assistance?  | The City Council has recently held three work sessions of its Planning Committee where this issue was discussed. (See <a href="#">May 22, 2017 Planning Committee</a> ; <a href="#">June 5, 2017 Planning Committee</a> ; <a href="#">June 19, 2017 Planning Committee</a> ). City staff are gathering information on how measures that prohibit discrimination by source of income work in other cities, and are identifying elements that would best fit Bellingham. In this process the Council and City staff are consulting with local renter advocates, housing and social service non-profits, and rental management companies to ensure that any program that might be adopted would work well locally. |
| 8.   | We need more incentives for local people to own and provide rentals in or near downtown, including rehabbing existing buildings.  | The <a href="#">Multifamily Tax Exemption Program</a> is a program enabled by the State (RCW 84.14) and first adopted by Bellingham in 1999. It provides a limited tax exemption for certain multifamily dwelling units in targeted urban centers. This program encourages the development of additional multifamily housing, including affordable housing. New, rehabilitated, or converted multi-unit housing projects in those residential areas are eligible for the exemption. The property tax exemption may be applied to new housing construction and to the increased  |

| Number | Question or statement  | Staff response  |
|--------|--|---|
|        |  | value of a residential building due to rehabilitation. The exemption does not apply to the land or the non-housing related improvements. Other <a href="#">incentives</a> are available in urban villages including reductions in permit fees, development charges, and impact fees. A federal rehabilitation tax credit may also be available for certain projects.  |
| 9.     | We need more rigorous rental inspections with teeth  | The <a href="#">Rental Registration and Safety Inspection Program</a> was initiated to ensure that rental housing meets <b>specific health and safety standards</b> and to promote compliance with these standards. The City's interest is to ensure that the health and safety of tenants is not jeopardized. The City has conducted 2,751 inspections to date. Additionally, private inspectors have completed 964 more. Since the initiation of the inspection program in June last year, only one complaint has been submitted regarding an inspected property not meeting adopted standards. That complaint is currently being investigated.   |
| 10.    | We should encourage the private market to build more student housing to reduce pressure on the rental market | Two large purpose-built projects ( <i>Northwest Crossing - NWX</i> - off of Lincoln Street and <i>Gather</i> between Forest and State Streets) were recently established. The City's role is to ensure that there are adequate areas zoned to accommodate student housing units of this type. A review of available lands indicates that there are many locations - several undeveloped - that can meet anticipated needs.  |
| 11.    | Have you considered rent control or a way of limiting increases?   | Under current State Law, local governments in Washington are prohibited from enacting rent control measures. According to <a href="#">RCW 35.21.830</a> , "No city or town of any class may enact, maintain, or enforce ordinances or other provisions which regulate the amount of rent to be charged for single-family or multiple-unit residential rental structures or sites other than properties in public ownership, under public management, or properties providing low-income rental housing under joint public-private agreements for the financing or provision of such low-income rental housing." Some forms of rent control have backfired by suppressing rent levels such that new housing production was impaired. While it may be possible to design a program that does not have this effect, under current law this is not an option in Washington. |
| 12.    | The City should work with the Tenants Union to support renter's rights.                                      | The Council has invited the Tenants union, along with other community organizations and business organizations, to participate in its discussions of measures to increase tenant access to local rentals, and to solve other problems renters are currently facing.   |
| 13.    | Why doesn't the City of Bellingham become a builder and landlord to affordable housing?                      | Cities are not legally structured to directly construct and manage housing. Cities rely on housing authorities, public development authorities, and not-for-profit corporations to fulfill this role. Although the City does not directly provide or manage affordable housing, it does offer financial assistance to develop and operate low- to very-low income housing through the Housing Levy that Bellingham voters approved in 2012, federal funds received through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and the City's General Fund. For   |

| Number                 | Question or statement  | Staff response  |
|------------------------|--|---|
|                        |  | information on programs that support affordable housing, see City of Bellingham <a href="#">Funding Opportunities</a> .   |
| 14.                    | Why is it necessary to check all rentals? The City should target land owners and especially the property management firms that seem to be the source of so many of the complaints. | Without a rational basis, such as a history of documented and substantiated complaints, the City cannot selectively enforce its rules. As such, inspections need to be uniform and apply to all subject properties. However, if a pattern of violations emerge, the City may conclude that a specific site warrants additional inspection.  |
| 15.                    | Audit WWU and find out how short they are on providing housing for students. They should be accountable for building more units depending how many students are enrolled.          | The City of Bellingham cannot directly compel another governmental entity to build new housing. However, some cities have established agreements with local colleges that include goals or negotiated requirements that a certain percentage of students overall, or of incoming students, are in university housing. For example, Santa Cruz, California executed an <a href="#">agreement</a> with UC Santa Cruz that requires the university to provide housing for approximately 50% of undergraduates and 25% of its graduate students, or to limit its enrollment. The City of Boston has developed a " <a href="#">Student Housing</a> " chapter of its general housing plan that calls for the City to work with local universities to "establish firm commitments to house a greater percentage of their student bodies on-campus." Western Washington University is taking some steps to reduce the off-campus impact of student enrollment, and is currently planning a new residence hall in its south campus. The City also works with private developers where appropriate to increase the supply of private sector housing for students. |
| 16.                    | Why can't currently empty buildings such as the former Albertson's building or the Saint Joseph south building be purchased and converted to housing?                              | The City solicits proposals for affordable and subsidized projects that will be funded through the Housing Levy or from other sources. Applicants propose these projects which are then competitively evaluated based on adopted criteria. While some sites are very appealing, they require both a willing seller and a proponent to evaluate and submit a proposal. In the case of the St. Luke's site, PeaceHealth has recently indicated that they are not interested in selling or leasing the property.   |
| <i>Home Ownership:</i> |  |   |
| 17.                    | The Section 8 mortgage subsidy program should be brought back.   | <p>Housing Authorities have an option to run a homeownership program designed to assist families residing in homes purchased and owned by the family. There are two forms of assistance: monthly homeownership assistance payments, and single down payment assistance grants. HUD recently removed the ability of local housing authorities to provide down payment assistance unless Congress allocates funding, which it has not done.</p> <p>The Bellingham Whatcom Housing Authority administered a homeownership program until February 17, 2015. According to the Housing Authority, this program was discontinued due to</p>  |

| Number | Question or statement   | Staff response  |
|--------|---|---|
|        |   | excessive administrative burden, inadequate funding, and lack of success. There are currently 4 participants in the program who were grandfathered in. The Housing Authority does not intend to reinstate the program at this time due to the program's excessive regulatory burden and insufficient funding.   |
| 18.    | What incentives can a city provide for condominiums (market rate & affordable).                           | New condominium construction is currently very slow in Washington State, even in the red-hot Seattle market. Many real estate analysts believe that the shortage is due to the high number of quality projects involved in lawsuits or arbitration. To many, the core of the issue is the Washington Condominium Act. There are provisions of the act that require certain warranties that a developer must comply with within four years. This makes condo development very expensive, and for many, it is simply not worth it. Matthew Gardner, chief economist for Windermere Real Estate has stated "Basically, it comes down to the fact that anyone who builds a condo will face some form of legal action. So, in order to offset that fact, another layer of costs goes onto building condos," Gardner says developers feel compelled to buy insurance against a lawsuit. "That's why for the last several years, I've been told by contractors, 'Why build condos when you can build apartments?'" |
| 19.    | Another levy should support for-sale housing. If a revolving fund was created it could get paid back.     | Bellingham citizens, with City Council support, worked to place the current housing levy on the ballot. The levy, which passed in 2012, currently funds construction of affordable housing, programs to encourage homeownership, and housing support services. The <a href="#">Administrative and Financial Plan</a> lays out current investment priorities. Before the current levy expires, we expect that supporters of local housing programs will work to develop a new levy to continue the work started in 2012. All Bellingham residents are welcome to get involved in this effort, and to help influence the plan that a levy would support. This could include additional programs to support for-sale housing.  |
| 20.    | We need incentives for homeownership downtown.  | The City Council adopted a number of incentives for investing in downtown development, including a property tax exemption for a period of 8 to 12 years for new multi-family residential (rental or homeownership). In addition, for projects that meet density thresholds, the City will reduce permit and system development charges up to 50%.   |
| 21.    | We need to expand land trust properties   | The City is supportive of land trusts and their expressed public purpose. While the City welcomes the opportunity to work with such entities, their establishment is outside of the scope of municipal government. Depending of project specifications, Land Trust projects may be eligible for certain forms of City assistance funded by federal or local sources.  |
| 22.    | What is the city of Bellingham doing to help working families get into homeownership? These could include | The City is supportive of the provision of housing for working families and seeks to facilitate this by allowing for a variety of more affordable housing options through zoning, and working with community partners (land trusts, etc.) to provide housing. Urban village <a href="#">incentives</a> may facilitate the construction of more affordable forms of housing. In regards to providing loans or  |

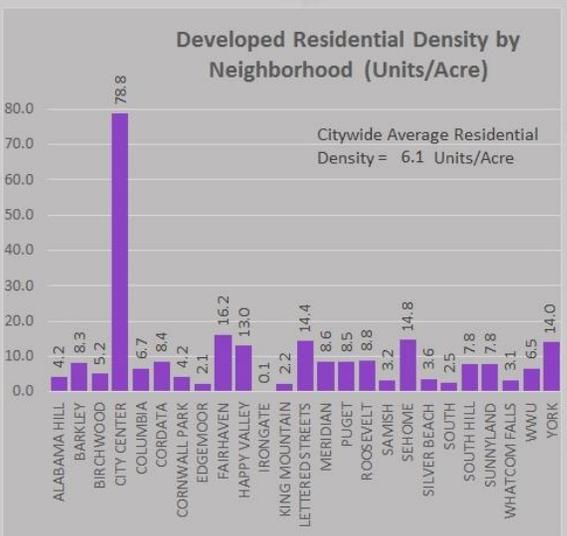
| Number   | Question or statement  | Staff response  |
|--|--|---|
|  | incentives tied to City funding, loans or subsidies, etc.  | subsidies, excepting for certain protected classes (low-income, seniors, etc.) the City is not permitted by the Washington State Constitution to gift funds or lend its credit to private parties.  |
| <i>General Planning/Growth Management Questions:</i> |  |   |
| 23.  | How do we know that more housing equals affordable housing?  | <p>Development of new housing units should, over time, either reduce rents or slow the rate of rent increases. The same is true for prices of for-sale housing. This may occur even when new supply is skewed toward top earners: when higher-income buyers or renters vacate existing units, more supply in the middle of the spectrum could become available. However, in areas with fast population growth, or rapid growth in new high-income residents, new supply may slow down price growth but not close the affordability gap.</p> <p>There are a number of caveats to the supply and demand relationship. For example, if a significant portion of new housing units were marketed primarily to out-of-area buyers (or renters) who would otherwise not be present in the local market, these units would produce little or no new downward pressure on prices. Similarly, if lower-priced buildings are torn down (or remodeled) and replaced with the same number of more expensive units, this process would represent a swapping of different income level households without any net new units.</p> <p>Factors other than new construction also affect the housing supply in the for-sale market. Currently, the market of houses for sale is highly constrained in many areas because the supply of <u>existing</u> homes for sale has dropped precipitously, particularly in the “trade-up” and first-time buyer categories. According to a <a href="#">nationwide analysis</a> by real estate sales and data firm Trulia, “Rising prices is causing homebuyer gridlock. The growing price spread between premium homes and trade-up homes in some markets is highly correlated with fewer trade-up homes coming onto market.” As affluent buyers bid up the price of premium homes, owners at the lower and middle portions of the spectrum may be reluctant to put their houses on the market because the cost of a new “move-up” home mortgage may exceed their budget. For example, according to <a href="#">a study</a> by real estate firm Zillow, buyers in “hot coastal markets” could expect to pay an additional \$500-\$1000 per month for a mortgage when moving from a 2 to a 3 bedroom home.</p> |
| 24.  | How can we get more transit-oriented development along transit lines, to include missing middle housing forms? | Transit-oriented development (TOD) is a mixed-use residential and commercial corridor designed to maximize access to public transportation, and often incorporates features to encourage transit ridership. Policy LU-19 in the City's <a href="#">Comprehensive Plan</a> calls for the development of integrated transportation-land use plans along Whatcom Transportation  |

| Number | Question or statement  | Staff response  |
|--------|--|---|
|        |  | <p>Authority's (WTA) GO Lines connecting urban villages, where appropriate. The City's urban villages are designed to support transit-oriented development, and some are already functioning in this manner. Although not currently scheduled on the Planning and Community Development Department's 2016-17 work plan, efforts to explore new TOD opportunities are anticipated in the near term (next 5 years).</p>   |
| 25.    | <p>We need more land supply or we will end up with long commutes</p>   | <p>The City currently has the capacity for 17,123 more housing units (5,889 single-family detached and 11,234 multi-family units). This capacity includes deductions in available land for roads, infrastructure and critical areas. In addition, a substantial market factor has been included to reflect that some undeveloped or underdeveloped land will not be available for sale. Adding additional land outside of current service areas adds significant additional cost to the general public as it is more than 2 times more expensive to provide public services in outlying areas. Potential development in rural areas will not cover all of the costs associated with expansion and growth. Although the City is not seeking significant outward expansion, Bellingham is looking at ways to reduce barriers to annexation in areas already designated as urban growth areas. This could add additional land for new residential development.</p> |
| 26.    | <p>Developers have to pay for on-site facilities within a development such as streets and street lights and this raises the costs of housing. The burden should not all be placed on private developers.</p> | <p>Developers pay their fair share of infrastructure costs associated with their projects. If all of these cost were to be borne by the community, everyone would pay. This would in effect provide a subsidy for private development at the cost of all taxpayers.</p>   |
| 27.    | <p>Why would legal counsel for the City suggest that the cost of development falls to the developer when the GMA specifically mandates that it is a responsibility of the local government?</p>              | <p>The GMA does not require the City to provide infrastructure at its sole expense. As noted above, developers are required to pay their fair share of infrastructure costs. This typically includes the provision by developers of all on-site and fronting infrastructure as well as a fair share contribution to the cost of off-site infrastructure that is needed to support both pre-existing and proposed development. Cities provide planning and facilitate the construction of that off-site infrastructure to meet current and anticipated needs from the subject project and other projects in the area. Historically, development pays its fair share of the cost of growth in Washington. If all developments costs were shifted to the public, significant new funding sources would have to be identified to pay for this.</p>  |
| 28.    | <p>What are the public health and safety impacts that are associated with density – such as traffic fumes, wood smoke, increases in noise and light, and loss of privacy?</p>                                | <p>Density has a number of characteristics that can result in both positive and negative outcomes. Regarding traffic fumes, the most congested transportation corridors are those that lead into and out of the City during peak commute times. Conversely, sufficient density along with proper road design creates a market for mass transit that can reduce single occupancy vehicle trips. Mixed-use density, or different uses in close proximity, such as in urban villages, allows</p>   |

| Number                          | Question or statement | Staff response   |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------|--|
|                                 |                       | <p>for multiple activities and services to be located in a relatively small area, supporting car alternatives such as walking and bicycling. Moderately dense housing forms in mixed-use areas have been shown repeatedly in traffic studies to generate fewer car trips than a similar number of units that are widely dispersed. Adding public parks helps maintain green spaces to counterbalance increased human activity in areas with greater density.</p> <p>Regarding wood smoke, few urban homeowners are likely to rely on wood stoves, although the potential population affected could be greater given proximity. Wood smoke can also be a problem in less dense areas depending on geography and weather patterns. Regulations to require clean burning stoves help mitigate wood smoke issues.</p> <p>Negative effects of density could include light pollution and noise – although heavy commuting corridors in low density areas can have similar problems. Proper design of lighting, and other measures such as sign regulation, can help mitigate this problem. Similarly, buildings designed to dampen noise, or to increase privacy, can counteract the impact of higher population densities to some degree. Ultimately, the degree of privacy any individual desires is a matter of personal preference, helping to determine whether a person decides to live in a city center, a dense suburb, a low density suburb, or a rural area.</p> |
| <i>Zoning/Infill Questions:</i> |                       |  |
| 29.                             | We need tiny homes    | <p>Current State Building Code regulations make it difficult for tiny homes to become dwelling units and all but impossible for the "do-it-yourselfer" to build a tiny home and live in it permanently.</p> <p>It is a long and involved process for a tiny home to be approved as a dwelling unit:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A person would need to submit engineered plans to the <a href="#">Factory Assembled Structure Program</a> of the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries (L&amp;I) for the construction of a “modular building” (or to the local building department for a <b>site-built</b> tiny house).</li> <li>2. Those plans would be reviewed under the specific Washington State Administrative Code (<a href="#">WAC 296-150F</a>) for conformance with the requirements of the IRC.</li> <li>3. Once approved, the builder would request inspections during the construction process until final approval had been obtained.</li> <li>4. After final approval, the L&amp;I inspector would attach the “Modular Gold Label Insignia” to the unit and a notice would be sent to the local building department, letting them know that the factory assembled modular unit is being transported to the intended end user site.</li> </ol>   |

| Number | Question or statement   | Staff response   |
|--------|---|--|
|        |   | <p>5. Permits from the local building department would be required, and they would need to approve the foundation and installation of the tiny home.</p> <p>6. The local jurisdiction will typically instruct the owner of the modular unit to provide design engineering for foundation and anchoring attachments from a licensed Washington State engineer <i>or</i> require an L&amp;I-approved general design for attaching the tiny home structure to a permanent foundation.</p> <p>All utilities (water, sewer, and electric) for a permanent tiny home would need to be connected in the same manner as a typical single family house; use of extension cords and garden hoses would not be allowed.</p> <p>However, there is interest at the State level to change these regulations and procedures. The City is monitoring these efforts and will consider amending our local codes if the regulations are revised.</p>                              |
| 30.    | We need more infill; or, we need to expand the infill toolkit into single family areas  | <p>The City is supportive of well-designed infill development in appropriate areas. Bellingham plans to accommodate growth primarily through compact development within the City limits, including infill development in areas served by existing infrastructure and services, and mixed-use urban villages (or "centers") that are connected by transit corridors.</p> <p>The City has adopted specific regulations that encourage and support infill development. These regulations can be found in Chapter 20.28 - Infill Housing of the <a href="#">Bellingham Municipal Code</a>. In certain areas, the City permits small and smaller houses, cottages, carriage houses, Detached Accessory Dwelling Units (D-ADU), duplex and triplexes, shared and garden court developments, and townhouses. See this <a href="#">map</a> of areas currently allowing the infill toolkit. Expanding the toolkit to other zones would require City Council action.</p> |
| 31.    | The City needs to look at reducing the minimum lot size, or do away with that entirely. | Changing lot minimums in different parts of Bellingham would require a legislative process, including review by the Bellingham Planning Commission, followed by a vote of the City Council. The Planning Department is currently undertaking a <a href="#">review of the subdivision ordinance</a> that could reduce some of the barriers to lot creation under existing zoning.   |
| 32.    | Accessory dwelling units are needed.  | Detached accessory dwelling units are allowed in <a href="#">areas</a> that allow the infill toolkit. These include residential areas not zoned multifamily or neighborhood commercial, and certain areas in north Bellingham that inherited County zoning provisions. The ADU ordinance is currently being <a href="#">updated</a> and changes could result that would facilitate additional ADU development.   |
| 33.    | The City should do away with boarding house restrictions.                               | Boarding houses are allowed as a conditional use in residential low-rise areas and commercial zones.   |

| Number | Question or statement  | Staff response  |
|--------|--|---|
| 34.    | Why is it impossible to build duplexes?  | Duplexes are currently permitted in many zoning areas of the City, including commercial, residential multiple, residential duplex, and single family mixed areas annexed after 1995. See the linked <a href="#">map</a> . Expanding the parts of the City that allow duplexes would require a legislative process and a City Council vote in support of this change.  |
| 35.    | Please try everything you can to increase all type of housing units, including allowing different lot configurations.  | The proposed <a href="#">review of the subdivision regulations</a> Subdivision regulations (Title 18, Subdivision, Bellingham Municipal Code) that is currently under review by the City's Planning Commission includes the ability to establish different lot configurations and sizes compared to what is currently permitted. The <a href="#">infill toolkit</a> is designed to facilitate a wide range of housing types.  |
| 36.    | We need to enact inclusionary zoning.  | <p>Inclusionary zoning is an affordable housing tool that links the production of affordable housing to the production of market-rate housing. Inclusionary policies either require or encourage new residential developments to make a certain percentage of the housing units affordable to low- or moderate- income residents.</p> <p>In order to be effective, market demand for units as well as their sales price needs to support the costs to the developer of providing the affordable units. If the sales price and demand is not high enough, the costs passed on to the other units will be too great for projects to proceed and mandatory inclusionary zoning actually can hinder the construction of new units.</p> <p>Bellingham engaged a consultant (Property Counselors) in 2011 to evaluate if the local housing market would support inclusionary zoning in areas planned for upzones in north Bellingham. The conclusion reached was that Bellingham would not, at that time, sustain successful use of this technique.</p> |
| 37.    | Do we have data that shows us where the infill toolkit is currently being applied in Bellingham, and what housing density looks like in different neighborhoods? | This <a href="#">map</a> indicates areas currently allowing the infill toolkit. The following table depicts housing density by neighborhood in Bellingham:  |

| Number                                   | Question or statement  | Staff response   |              |                      |              |     |         |     |           |     |             |      |          |     |         |     |               |     |          |     |           |      |              |      |          |     |               |     |                  |      |          |     |       |     |           |     |        |     |        |      |              |     |       |     |            |     |           |     |               |     |     |     |      |      |
|--|--|--|--------------|----------------------|--------------|-----|---------|-----|-----------|-----|-------------|------|----------|-----|---------|-----|---------------|-----|----------|-----|-----------|------|--------------|------|----------|-----|---------------|-----|------------------|------|----------|-----|-------|-----|-----------|-----|--------|-----|--------|------|--------------|-----|-------|-----|------------|-----|-----------|-----|---------------|-----|-----|-----|------|------|
|  |  |  <p><b>Developed Residential Density by Neighborhood (Units/Acre)</b></p> <p>Citywide Average Residential Density = 6.1 Units/Acre</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Neighborhood</th> <th>Density (Units/Acre)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>ALABAMA HILL</td><td>4.2</td></tr> <tr><td>BARKLEY</td><td>8.3</td></tr> <tr><td>BIRCHWOOD</td><td>5.2</td></tr> <tr><td>CITY CENTER</td><td>78.8</td></tr> <tr><td>COLUMBIA</td><td>6.7</td></tr> <tr><td>CORDATA</td><td>8.4</td></tr> <tr><td>CORNWALL PARK</td><td>4.2</td></tr> <tr><td>EDGEWOOD</td><td>2.1</td></tr> <tr><td>FAIRHAVEN</td><td>16.2</td></tr> <tr><td>HAPPY VALLEY</td><td>13.0</td></tr> <tr><td>IRONGATE</td><td>0.1</td></tr> <tr><td>KING MOUNTAIN</td><td>2.2</td></tr> <tr><td>LETTERED STREETS</td><td>14.4</td></tr> <tr><td>MERIDIAN</td><td>8.6</td></tr> <tr><td>PUGET</td><td>8.5</td></tr> <tr><td>ROOSEVELT</td><td>8.8</td></tr> <tr><td>SAMISH</td><td>3.2</td></tr> <tr><td>SEHOME</td><td>14.8</td></tr> <tr><td>SILVER BEACH</td><td>3.6</td></tr> <tr><td>SOUTH</td><td>2.5</td></tr> <tr><td>SOUTH HILL</td><td>7.8</td></tr> <tr><td>SUNNYLAND</td><td>7.8</td></tr> <tr><td>WHATCOM FALLS</td><td>3.1</td></tr> <tr><td>WWU</td><td>6.5</td></tr> <tr><td>YORK</td><td>14.0</td></tr> </tbody> </table> | Neighborhood | Density (Units/Acre) | ALABAMA HILL | 4.2 | BARKLEY | 8.3 | BIRCHWOOD | 5.2 | CITY CENTER | 78.8 | COLUMBIA | 6.7 | CORDATA | 8.4 | CORNWALL PARK | 4.2 | EDGEWOOD | 2.1 | FAIRHAVEN | 16.2 | HAPPY VALLEY | 13.0 | IRONGATE | 0.1 | KING MOUNTAIN | 2.2 | LETTERED STREETS | 14.4 | MERIDIAN | 8.6 | PUGET | 8.5 | ROOSEVELT | 8.8 | SAMISH | 3.2 | SEHOME | 14.8 | SILVER BEACH | 3.6 | SOUTH | 2.5 | SOUTH HILL | 7.8 | SUNNYLAND | 7.8 | WHATCOM FALLS | 3.1 | WWU | 6.5 | YORK | 14.0 |
| Neighborhood                             | Density (Units/Acre)   |  |              |                      |              |     |         |     |           |     |             |      |          |     |         |     |               |     |          |     |           |      |              |      |          |     |               |     |                  |      |          |     |       |     |           |     |        |     |        |      |              |     |       |     |            |     |           |     |               |     |     |     |      |      |
| ALABAMA HILL                             | 4.2  |  |              |                      |              |     |         |     |           |     |             |      |          |     |         |     |               |     |          |     |           |      |              |      |          |     |               |     |                  |      |          |     |       |     |           |     |        |     |        |      |              |     |       |     |            |     |           |     |               |     |     |     |      |      |
| BARKLEY                                  | 8.3  |  |              |                      |              |     |         |     |           |     |             |      |          |     |         |     |               |     |          |     |           |      |              |      |          |     |               |     |                  |      |          |     |       |     |           |     |        |     |        |      |              |     |       |     |            |     |           |     |               |     |     |     |      |      |
| BIRCHWOOD                                | 5.2  |  |              |                      |              |     |         |     |           |     |             |      |          |     |         |     |               |     |          |     |           |      |              |      |          |     |               |     |                  |      |          |     |       |     |           |     |        |     |        |      |              |     |       |     |            |     |           |     |               |     |     |     |      |      |
| CITY CENTER                              | 78.8   |  |              |                      |              |     |         |     |           |     |             |      |          |     |         |     |               |     |          |     |           |      |              |      |          |     |               |     |                  |      |          |     |       |     |           |     |        |     |        |      |              |     |       |     |            |     |           |     |               |     |     |     |      |      |
| COLUMBIA                                 | 6.7  |  |              |                      |              |     |         |     |           |     |             |      |          |     |         |     |               |     |          |     |           |      |              |      |          |     |               |     |                  |      |          |     |       |     |           |     |        |     |        |      |              |     |       |     |            |     |           |     |               |     |     |     |      |      |
| CORDATA                                  | 8.4  |  |              |                      |              |     |         |     |           |     |             |      |          |     |         |     |               |     |          |     |           |      |              |      |          |     |               |     |                  |      |          |     |       |     |           |     |        |     |        |      |              |     |       |     |            |     |           |     |               |     |     |     |      |      |
| CORNWALL PARK                            | 4.2  |  |              |                      |              |     |         |     |           |     |             |      |          |     |         |     |               |     |          |     |           |      |              |      |          |     |               |     |                  |      |          |     |       |     |           |     |        |     |        |      |              |     |       |     |            |     |           |     |               |     |     |     |      |      |
| EDGEWOOD                                 | 2.1  |  |              |                      |              |     |         |     |           |     |             |      |          |     |         |     |               |     |          |     |           |      |              |      |          |     |               |     |                  |      |          |     |       |     |           |     |        |     |        |      |              |     |       |     |            |     |           |     |               |     |     |     |      |      |
| FAIRHAVEN                                | 16.2   |  |              |                      |              |     |         |     |           |     |             |      |          |     |         |     |               |     |          |     |           |      |              |      |          |     |               |     |                  |      |          |     |       |     |           |     |        |     |        |      |              |     |       |     |            |     |           |     |               |     |     |     |      |      |
| HAPPY VALLEY                             | 13.0   |  |              |                      |              |     |         |     |           |     |             |      |          |     |         |     |               |     |          |     |           |      |              |      |          |     |               |     |                  |      |          |     |       |     |           |     |        |     |        |      |              |     |       |     |            |     |           |     |               |     |     |     |      |      |
| IRONGATE                                 | 0.1  |  |              |                      |              |     |         |     |           |     |             |      |          |     |         |     |               |     |          |     |           |      |              |      |          |     |               |     |                  |      |          |     |       |     |           |     |        |     |        |      |              |     |       |     |            |     |           |     |               |     |     |     |      |      |
| KING MOUNTAIN                            | 2.2  |  |              |                      |              |     |         |     |           |     |             |      |          |     |         |     |               |     |          |     |           |      |              |      |          |     |               |     |                  |      |          |     |       |     |           |     |        |     |        |      |              |     |       |     |            |     |           |     |               |     |     |     |      |      |
| LETTERED STREETS                         | 14.4   |  |              |                      |              |     |         |     |           |     |             |      |          |     |         |     |               |     |          |     |           |      |              |      |          |     |               |     |                  |      |          |     |       |     |           |     |        |     |        |      |              |     |       |     |            |     |           |     |               |     |     |     |      |      |
| MERIDIAN                                 | 8.6  |  |              |                      |              |     |         |     |           |     |             |      |          |     |         |     |               |     |          |     |           |      |              |      |          |     |               |     |                  |      |          |     |       |     |           |     |        |     |        |      |              |     |       |     |            |     |           |     |               |     |     |     |      |      |
| PUGET                                    | 8.5  |  |              |                      |              |     |         |     |           |     |             |      |          |     |         |     |               |     |          |     |           |      |              |      |          |     |               |     |                  |      |          |     |       |     |           |     |        |     |        |      |              |     |       |     |            |     |           |     |               |     |     |     |      |      |
| ROOSEVELT                                | 8.8  |  |              |                      |              |     |         |     |           |     |             |      |          |     |         |     |               |     |          |     |           |      |              |      |          |     |               |     |                  |      |          |     |       |     |           |     |        |     |        |      |              |     |       |     |            |     |           |     |               |     |     |     |      |      |
| SAMISH                                   | 3.2  |  |              |                      |              |     |         |     |           |     |             |      |          |     |         |     |               |     |          |     |           |      |              |      |          |     |               |     |                  |      |          |     |       |     |           |     |        |     |        |      |              |     |       |     |            |     |           |     |               |     |     |     |      |      |
| SEHOME                                   | 14.8   |  |              |                      |              |     |         |     |           |     |             |      |          |     |         |     |               |     |          |     |           |      |              |      |          |     |               |     |                  |      |          |     |       |     |           |     |        |     |        |      |              |     |       |     |            |     |           |     |               |     |     |     |      |      |
| SILVER BEACH                             | 3.6  |  |              |                      |              |     |         |     |           |     |             |      |          |     |         |     |               |     |          |     |           |      |              |      |          |     |               |     |                  |      |          |     |       |     |           |     |        |     |        |      |              |     |       |     |            |     |           |     |               |     |     |     |      |      |
| SOUTH                                    | 2.5  |  |              |                      |              |     |         |     |           |     |             |      |          |     |         |     |               |     |          |     |           |      |              |      |          |     |               |     |                  |      |          |     |       |     |           |     |        |     |        |      |              |     |       |     |            |     |           |     |               |     |     |     |      |      |
| SOUTH HILL                               | 7.8  |  |              |                      |              |     |         |     |           |     |             |      |          |     |         |     |               |     |          |     |           |      |              |      |          |     |               |     |                  |      |          |     |       |     |           |     |        |     |        |      |              |     |       |     |            |     |           |     |               |     |     |     |      |      |
| SUNNYLAND                                | 7.8  |  |              |                      |              |     |         |     |           |     |             |      |          |     |         |     |               |     |          |     |           |      |              |      |          |     |               |     |                  |      |          |     |       |     |           |     |        |     |        |      |              |     |       |     |            |     |           |     |               |     |     |     |      |      |
| WHATCOM FALLS                            | 3.1  |  |              |                      |              |     |         |     |           |     |             |      |          |     |         |     |               |     |          |     |           |      |              |      |          |     |               |     |                  |      |          |     |       |     |           |     |        |     |        |      |              |     |       |     |            |     |           |     |               |     |     |     |      |      |
| WWU                                      | 6.5  |  |              |                      |              |     |         |     |           |     |             |      |          |     |         |     |               |     |          |     |           |      |              |      |          |     |               |     |                  |      |          |     |       |     |           |     |        |     |        |      |              |     |       |     |            |     |           |     |               |     |     |     |      |      |
| YORK                                     | 14.0   |  |              |                      |              |     |         |     |           |     |             |      |          |     |         |     |               |     |          |     |           |      |              |      |          |     |               |     |                  |      |          |     |       |     |           |     |        |     |        |      |              |     |       |     |            |     |           |     |               |     |     |     |      |      |
| <i>Regulation/Education/Enforcement:</i> |  |  |              |                      |              |     |         |     |           |     |             |      |          |     |         |     |               |     |          |     |           |      |              |      |          |     |               |     |                  |      |          |     |       |     |           |     |        |     |        |      |              |     |       |     |            |     |           |     |               |     |     |     |      |      |
| 38.                                      | We need less regulation and permits, and more incentives to increase housing supply and lower costs. | <p>Regulations are adopted to achieve an agreed-upon community goal or meet an expressed public value. Regulations are vetted through a public process and subject to close scrutiny before adoption. Additionally, cumulative effects are considered. In addition, some regulations are required by state or federal governments to protect the public. Should regulations be found ineffective, counter-productive or unnecessary, changes can be made through the legislative process. While it is easy to generalize that less regulations can increase housing opportunities, it is unclear at what cost to the environment, community and individual residents. Should specific measures be identified, they can be evaluated thoughtfully so that there are not unintended consequences.</p>  |              |                      |              |     |         |     |           |     |             |      |          |     |         |     |               |     |          |     |           |      |              |      |          |     |               |     |                  |      |          |     |       |     |           |     |        |     |        |      |              |     |       |     |            |     |           |     |               |     |     |     |      |      |
| 39.                                      | How will the City increase its enforcement programs?   | <p>In general, land use regulations are predicated on voluntary compliance. The City adopts zoning and the vast majority of community-members comply with those regulations. For those who do not, Bellingham, like most cities, addresses complaints on a case-by-case basis. Each complaint is investigated by staff. Enforcement is difficult in that no fact pattern associated with an asserted violation is the same (although we do see some similarities).</p> <p>In facilitating enforcement, the City is required (as it should be) to act on facts not on conjecture or assumptions. The burden of proof is on the City and parties are innocent until proven guilty - which is an essential precept of our American legal system. Although many</p>  |              |                      |              |     |         |     |           |     |             |      |          |     |         |     |               |     |          |     |           |      |              |      |          |     |               |     |                  |      |          |     |       |     |           |     |        |     |        |      |              |     |       |     |            |     |           |     |               |     |     |     |      |      |

| Number | Question or statement  | Staff response   |
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|        |  | <p>assert that the facts are obvious and the City should take immediate action, we cannot cite parties if they merely appear guilty. We need to establish the facts and act when they are conclusive.</p> <p>Lights on after dark, curtains in the windows, repeated sightings of individuals or parked vehicles are not actionable and conclusive in themselves. Each requires detailed investigations and research. Additionally, there are relatively simple steps that can be used to evade a complete accounting of the number of residents, for example. In short, it is very time-intensive and expensive to determine conclusively who is actually resident on-site. Despite these challenges, the City is strengthening its enforcement capacity and has hired a new staff member to follow up on possible violations. (See also answer to Question 41, below).</p>   |
| 40.    | How is the City working with WWU to educate its students about <u>their</u> responsibility to NOT participate in violation of the existing housing laws?     | <p>WWU and the City have developed a joint strategy to address some of the common challenges faced by university towns, commonly referred to as Town &amp; Gown initiatives. The strategy contains specific actions to address housing-related issues. WWU has a coordinator position that works closely with students, a variety of community stakeholders and the City to broadly disseminate information regarding off-campus housing and applicable regulations (<a href="http://www.wvu.edu/offcampusliving/">http://www.wvu.edu/offcampusliving/</a>).</p>   |
| 41.    | How can the City intervene to stop the conversion of single-family homes into illegal rooming houses, and enforce the no more than 3 unrelated persons rule? | <p>The City is currently taking a number of steps that will increase the tools available to address illegal units and occupancy. These actions include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Providing a dedicated resource in a full time planner to do the detailed research necessary to investigate complaints.</li> <li>2. Use new data and technology to identify potential illegal units and make an inquiry.</li> <li>3. Require the number of bedrooms to be indicated on the Rental Registration applications and in-unit posted certificate.</li> <li>4. Implementing the Town &amp; Gown program (with WWU) which focuses on education about our adopted regulations and expectations in our neighborhoods (additionally, the program also addresses behaviors such as loud parties, parking impacts and litter.)</li> </ol> <p>An implementing step of the Town &amp; Gown program is the consideration of an Ordinance that would require the number of bedrooms and occupancy limits to be indicated on advertisements and listings.</p> |
| 42.    | How does the City plan to safeguard the character of single-family neighborhoods, as mandated by the Growth Management Act?                                  | <p>The Growth Management Act calls for "A housing element ensuring the vitality and character of established residential neighborhoods..." (RCW 36.70A.070(2)). The City's 25 distinct neighborhoods include residential districts that are differentiated by housing density, age, size, architectural style, condition and other features. These neighborhoods, each with their own</p>  |

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|                                 |   | <p>unique character, offer a variety of housing and lifestyle opportunities. Residents value the preservation and enhancement of their homes and neighborhoods and derive a sense of place from them. Some community members are concerned about the potential impacts of infill projects on existing neighborhoods, while others support well-designed infill as a strategy to preserve undeveloped land in rural areas and foster transit, better amenities and housing affordability. Regulations that implement policy recommendations outlined in the Comprehensive Plan strive to balance these concerns and opportunities and ensure the vitality and character of established neighborhoods. Historical preservation programs, administered by the City or other levels of government, also encourage the retention of neighborhood character.</p>   |
| 43.                             | <p>Because individuals are afraid to file Code Enforcement Complaints to identify illegal use of homes as rooming houses or illegal ADU units, can the York Neighborhood Association be allowed to file the complaints?</p> | <p>The City acknowledges that neighbors may be hesitant to file land-use related complaints with the Planning and Community Development Department (PCDD) due to fear of reprisal. However, it has been our experience that neighborhood solutions occur best when neighbors talk directly to neighbors about issues. If these discussions do not address the issue, please contact the City. However, there may be circumstances where these conversations have occurred without resolution and a group or individual does not feel comfortable submitting a complaint. In these cases, PCDD will accept and investigate complaints submitted by a Neighborhood Association.</p> <p>In general, when the person(s) filing the complaint indicates that they prefer their name(s) to remain confidential, the City will refrain from disclosing the name(s) to the extent allowed by law. However, complaints submitted by Neighborhood Associations would by their very nature serve to protect the identity of the individual who brought the concern forward. Additionally, all parties (both the person(s) who raised the concern and the subject of the complaint) are represented by the Neighborhood Association. In these cases, the City will disclose (if asked) that the Neighborhood Association submitted the complaint.</p> <p>In some cases, it may be necessary for successful prosecution and enforcement for the complainant and witnesses to be identified and to testify in court.</p> |
| <i>Energy/Design Questions:</i> |   |  |
| 44.                             | <p>How can we use our housing policy to combat climate change?</p>  | <p>City policies and <a href="#">green building incentives</a> encourage energy efficient construction, and also encourage infill developments, which tend to be smaller and often have shared walls, attributes that assist in achieving higher levels of energy efficiency. Local efforts are enhanced by State energy codes that are increasingly stringent, allowing for very high levels of efficiency</p>  |

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|                                 |   | <p>with relatively minor additional investment. Sufficient housing density also supports mass transit and alternatives to single occupancy vehicles, which also reduces greenhouse gases.</p> <p>The City has a number of policies that support green building or renewables. The City encourages individuals and businesses to tap into available local <a href="#">energy saving programs and incentives</a> whenever possible for their building project. Many City-supported new affordable housing projects are required to be built to the Evergreen Sustainability Standards, which encourages a high level of efficiency. The City has also developed methods for <a href="#">streamlining permitting</a> of residential solar and other renewable energy installations.</p>                 |
| 45.                             | Better building design and construction, including performance-based standards such as Zero Energy Ready and Passivhaus, can contribute to reducing operating costs and decreasing health problems. | Current <a href="#">green building incentives</a> encourage adoption of higher level design standards. The City is working with community groups to examine ways in which existing incentives can be expanded or improved to encourage people to adopt net zero energy construction.   |
| 46.                             | Green, smaller, creative homes are needed.  | City policies encouraging infill can lead to the creation of smaller homes. The <a href="#">infill toolkit</a> , allowed in some areas of the City, allows for smaller lots which would also likely support smaller houses. A current <a href="#">review of the City's subdivision ordinance</a> could assist in the creation of new smaller lots in some circumstances.   |
| <i>Miscellaneous Questions:</i> |   |  |
| 47.                             | What is the best way to bring jobs into Bellingham that will keep our educated young people from leaving town?  | The <a href="#">Port of Bellingham</a> works to strengthen and grow existing businesses in a number of sectors that support higher wages. These include maritime trades, advanced manufacturing, and clean technology. A <a href="#">Choose Whatcom</a> web portal, developed by a partnership including the City, contains links to all economic development resources in the area, and a list of local sectors that support higher wage jobs. City land use policies seek to retain sufficient industrial and commercial land to support new jobs and the expansion of existing businesses. The City helps fund a number of the organizations that help business locate or expand in Bellingham. The City's <a href="#">Economic Development Strategic Action Plan</a> details these city efforts. |
| 48.                             | How do we make sure our housing policy ensures that every kid in Bellingham has an equal opportunity at a quality education, instead of having 'good' schools and 'bad' schools?                    | The School District's <a href="#">Bellingham Promise</a> is designed to support quality schools regardless of location. The District also supports a "one schoolhouse" practice that guides decisions to help ensure that opportunities are distributed equally through the district. According to Bellingham Schools Superintendent Greg Baker, "Although we have 22 school campuses and Central Services to support them all, functioning as One Schoolhouse helps provide a consistent, high-quality educational experience for each child, regardless of zip code or other circumstance."  |