Fountain District Urban Village Public Input Workshops

Meeting #4

Summary of Public Input & Discussion of Alternatives

May 6th, 2009

City of Bellingham, Washington
4 Public Meetings

- **April 1**: Introduction, Character and Boundary Study Areas
- **April 15**: Public Realm: Streets, Neighborhood Connections & Public Spaces
- **April 22**: Development Character: Permitted Uses, Design, Scale and Transitions
- **May 6**: Input Summary Discussion of Alternatives
- Residents from all three neighborhoods
- Business and commercial property owners
- Public agencies, nonprofits, and other interested groups and individuals
Purpose of tonight’s meeting

- Summarize and review public input gathered from previous meetings
- Opportunity to ask questions and comment on preliminary findings
- Identify areas that need further study
- Recruit Focus Group participants
### Fountain District Urban Village Project Timeline

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* Opportunity for public comment

**Note:** Exact dates to be posted as they are scheduled

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**We are HERE**

**Focus Groups meet to study topic areas**
Tonight’s AGENDA

6:00 – 6:45    Introduction and Overview
               What we’ve heard

6:45 – 7:45    Break-out Sessions
               Q & A with Staff

7:45 – 8:00    Final Comments
               Next steps
               Focus Groups sign up
Remember...

- The alternatives being presented tonight are a baseline for further study and refinement.

- *These alternatives may change based on the results of additional studies* and input from Focus Groups.
Tonight’s Focus

- Area Strengths and Challenges
- Neighborhood Connections
- Preliminary District Boundary and Zones
10 Principles of Urban Village Design

- Sustainable
- Variety of Housing Options
- Population to Support Businesses and Services
- Walkable
- Connectivity
- Quality Design & Materials
- Supports Multiple Travel Modes
- Mix of Uses
- Defined Center and Edge
- Quality of Life
What We Heard: AREA STRENGTHS

Diverse Business Mix - Some Thematic
What We Heard: AREA STRENGTHS

Unique identity -- adaptive reuse of former homes as businesses
What We Heard: AREA STRENGTHS

- Good Residential and Business Mix
Long-term Investment and locally-owned businesses
What We Heard: AREA STRENGTHS

Centrally located. Close to amenities, services, downtown, parks, waterfront
What We Heard: AREA STRENGTHS

Strong Sense of Community
Good Grid System for walking and biking opportunities
What We Heard: AREA STRENGTHS

Sense of history, historic district, architectural character
What We Heard: AREA STRENGTHS

Good Quality of Life
What We Heard: AREA STRENGTHS

Fountain Plaza Park: a Gateway
“Already have an urban village”
What We Heard:
AREA CHALLENGES

- Meridian difficult to cross, too fast to be “livable”
- Need safe crossing for bikes and pedestrians
Area feels “run-down”
Unsightly utility poles and lines
Poor drainage in some areas
Need more on-street parking

Need more street trees

Need more retail, restaurants – reasons to linger
Fountain Plaza Park need some TLC
Calm traffic on arterials

Improve pedestrian safety – add CROSSWALKS and continuous sidewalks

Improve bike safety – bike lanes or alternate routes

Add street trees and more greenscape

Encourage transit use
ALTERNATIVE # 1:
Wide Sidewalks, No Bike Lanes
Alternative #1 / No Bike Lanes:
Would require Kulshan, Peabody and/or Vallette identified as potential alternatives to Meridian Street
ALTERNATIVE # 2:
Bike Lanes, New Building Setback
ALTERNATIVE # 2: Plan View

Bike Lanes, New Building Setback, Bulb-outs
Alternative #2 / Bike Lanes:
Would require new development to set building back from property line to allow for wider sidewalks and street trees. Could plant in bulbout crossings.
ALTERNATIVE # 3:
Sharrow Bike Lanes, New Building Setback

Existing Building

Sidewalk
Parking Lane
Sharrow Lane
Sharrow Lane
Parking Lane
Sidewalk

60' ROW

Setback

NEW Building

Meridian Street
What We Heard: Neighborhood Connections

Alternative #3 / “Sharrow”:
Wider vehicle lane allows for bikes to share the lane. Marking provides visual cue to drivers.
What We Heard: District Boundary Discussion

- Existing zoning in commercial core works well
- Potential for increased height at either end of the district core
- Keep traffic off local streets
- Preserve historic character of existing homes and buildings
- Maintain current quality of life for residents adjacent to commercial areas
- “more information is needed about the Commercial and Residential Transition areas”
Preliminary Proposed District Boundaries
Fountain District Boundaries: Commercial Core

Generally defined as:

- Highest concentration of employment and housing
- Direct access to transit
- Wide range of land uses including retail, office, residential, recreation, public facilities
- Pedestrian environment is emphasized

**Preliminary Boundary Recommendation:**
Due to adjacent residential neighborhood character, the Core should be limited to the Meridian corridor, the Haggen’s site, and the Broadway / Girard intersection.
**Preliminary Land Use Recommendation:**

**Uses:** Allow a variety of commercial as seen today. Encourage upper story residential uses. Currently, a great mix of businesses to build from Bakery and Bookstore would be a great start.

**Height:** While many differing opinions, a lower-scaled 3 story building form should be considered for most of the Core – study up to 4 stories if set back from alleys, height only to be exceeded in red areas “*” up to 5 stories.
Preliminary Design Recommendations:

Employ Urban Village Design Standards and design review process

Require ground floor pedestrian oriented commercial uses along Meridian.

Unique design issues for further study:

- Building design along alley ways
- Surface Parking
- Adaptive Reuse (of houses)
- Setbacks for increased pedestrian ways
- Others? Please let us know!
Fountain District Boundaries: Commercial Transition

**Generally defined as:**

Less concentration of commercial uses – avoid commercial uses with noise and vehicular impacts

Ground floor residential allowed but interface with the street is still important for pedestrian experience

Lowering height limits may be appropriate to lessen the impact on the adjacent residential areas
Fountain District Boundaries: Commercial Transition

**Preliminary Boundary Recommendation:**

Support the current land use pattern, southern portion of the Core area and the WTA Go-line by allowing appropriate residential and commercial uses along Bay and Broadway.

In addition, the Commercial Transition area should be used to lessen the intensity between the taller Core buildings and the residential uses to the east.
Fountain District Land Use: Commercial Transition

Preliminary Land Use Recommendation:

**Uses:** Offices and services. You help us define.

**Height:** A 2 to 3 story building form should be considered for most of the Commercial Transition area – particularly along Elm and Monroe Streets – study up to 4 stories along Broadway
Columbia Neighborhood Plan Area 10: This small area on either side of Elm Street between Washington and Monroe Streets is platted into 5,000 square foot lots. A number of the existing single-family homes along Elm Street have been converted to offices. The high traffic counts on Elm Street make it suitable for medium density residential or office uses.
Fountain District Design Character: Commercial Transition / ELM STREET

Columbia Neighborhood Plan Area 3 and 3A: Most of the housing is older, including many houses of historical significance. The homes should be encouraged through flexibility in the Land Use and Development Code for repair and replacement of historic features.
Fountain District Design: Commercial Transition

**Preliminary Design Recommendations:**

This area will be studied further in order to develop design standards that when implemented will reinforce the historic character through adaptive re-use of existing buildings as well as new construction.
Fountain District Boundaries: Residential Transition

DEFINITION:
The Residential Transition Area is immediately adjacent commercial areas.

A mix of Single Family and additional residential housing types can be selected from *BMC 20.28 Infill Housing* designed to fit into existing and historic neighborhoods by providing quality housing choices for people of various incomes, abilities and ages.
Will work with Focus Groups to determine which Toolkit housing types might be appropriate:

- Small and Smaller
- Carriage House
- Detached ADU
- Duplex
Residential Transition Housing:
Small & Smaller Lot
Residential Transition Housing: Small and Smaller Lot

Maximize opportunities for private outdoor space

shared vehicular access possible

30’-50’
Residential Transition Housing: Detached Accessory Dwelling
Residential Transition Housing: Detached Accessory Dwelling

- Alley access for parking
- Architecturally consistent with primary residence
- Addresses and connects to the street
- ADU located behind primary residence
Residential Transition Housing: Duplex
Residential Transition Housing: Duplex

- Locate parking in rear (via alley)
- Entries accessible to street
- Opportunities for private / shared outdoor space
Residential Transition Housing: Carriage House
Residential Transition Housing: Carriage House

Located in the side or rear of property for auto access

Associated with single family residential

Pedestrian entrance access to main street
Break-out Sessions (20 minutes each)

- **TABLE 1: Neighborhood Connections**
  Staff facilitator will host review and comment on Public Realm and Bike / Pedestrian safety

- **TABLE 2: Commercial Core and Transition Zones**
  Staff facilitator will host review and comment on Commercial Core and Commercial Transition Zone uses and development character

- **TABLE 3: Residential Transition Zones**
  Staff facilitator will host review and comment session on which toolkit housing types should be allowed in Residential Transition Zones
Final Comments

www.cob.org – Search “Fountain District Urban Village”

Katie Franks, Development Specialist II: email kfranks@cob.org
Focus Area Groups – Sign Up

- Peabody and Vallette Street Residential Transition Zone
- Kulshan Street Residential Transition Zone
- Commercial Transition Zones – allowable uses and design standards
- Fountain Plaza Park Use Planning