



Neighborhood Plan Revisions Resource Kit 2007

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I. Overview

The City of Bellingham hopes the enclosed information helps neighborhood associations accomplish the work of revising their neighborhood plans. We recognize that this work demands both significant time and thoughtful effort by many neighborhood leaders and other volunteers. Such efforts represent a high commitment to community, demonstrating how civic action has helped make Bellingham a community valued by those who live here and admired by those who don't.

We are confident that your good efforts will yield proposed changes to your neighborhood's plan which represent the values and priorities of your neighborhood but at the same time are consistent with the City's Comprehensive Plan. Thank you in advance for this work.

The anticipated outcome of this process is for participating neighborhood associations to file proposed plan amendments with the City's Planning and Community Development Department on or before December 1, 2007. The Planning Director will initiate (recommend for docketing by the City Council) those proposals that:

- a. Are consistent with Bellingham's Comprehensive Plan;
- b. Would not result in a significant reduction in the number of housing units that can be accommodated in the neighborhood; and,
- c. Demonstrate strong support and consensus within the neighborhood following an inclusive process of significant outreach and neighborhood discussion.

In order for you to accomplish your work, Planning Academy Grants have been made available for 2007. Information on the allowable uses and processes for reimbursement of expenses are explained again in this packet.

Thank you and good luck.

II. Technical Assistance

A. Staff contacts

Staff Assistance Allocation: Each neighborhood is allotted 5 hours of technical assistance from staff at no charge. This time must be scheduled in advance with Cheri Gleichman (cgleichmann@cob.org) or with the staff person assigned to your neighborhood. After 5 hours, staff time will be charged to the neighborhood at \$100 per hour from the \$2500 Planning Grant. ***It is advisable that questions be submitted in writing in advance to make the five hours of staff time most productive.***

Greg Aucutt, gaucutt@cob.org, is the lead planner for all neighborhood-initiated plan amendments. Cheri Gleichmann (cgleichmann@cob.org) will provide administrative support to this process. Planning and Community Development Department staff phone number: **676-6982**.

The City has been divided into 4 sectors with one Planner assigned to the neighborhoods in each sector.

Sector: North

Neighborhoods: Guide Meridian, Meridian and Mt. Baker

Assigned Planner: Pat Carman, pcarman@cob.org

Sector: West

Neighborhoods: Birchwood, Cornwall Park, Columbia, Lettered Streets, Sunnyland, York, Central Business District, and Sehome

Assigned Planner: Chris Koch, ckoch@cob.org

Sector: East

Neighborhoods: Roosevelt, Alabama, Silver Beach, Puget, Whatcom Falls, and Samish

Assigned Planner: Kurt Nabbefeld, knabbefeld@cob.org

Sector: South

Neighborhoods: WWU, South Hill, Fairhaven, Happy Valley, Edgemoor and South

Assigned Planner: Jackie Lynch, jlynch@cob.org

Requests for reimbursement for costs: Submit these to Kathryn Hanowell, (khanowell@cob.org, 676-6855, X305) under the terms specified in the Financial Resource Assistance Agreement (see the section below on Planning Academy Grants).

B. Plan Revision Workshops

Two Question & Answer sessions will be scheduled during the year with city staff from Planning, Parks and Public Works to provide an efficient and informative venue for asking and answering questions. This is not charged as part of the 5 hours of one-on-one staff time.

Workshop 1: Tuesday, April 3, 4 PM to 6:30 PM (snacks provided). Fireplace Room, Halleck and C Streets (enter through the Halleck Street side).

Workshop 2: To be scheduled for early September

Please contact Nicole Oliver (noliver@cob.org, 676-6982) for ideas or with questions you wish to have answered in the session so that we can make sure the help you need is available.

C. Consultants

Neighborhoods may be interested in using the assistance of paid consultants as allowed under the Planning Grant. In addition to professional consultants who may be available in our area, we suggest that an inexpensive consultant resource may be available from advanced students from Western Washington University's program in Planning and Environmental Studies by contacting:

- Katie Lynd, Planning Student at WWU at kt.lynd@gmail.com, (360) 927-4687, or
- Matt Kenny, Planning Student at WWU with a GIS minor at matthewkenny@gmail.com, (360) 319-3407

D. Maps and References

The following maps were distributed to the Planning Academy participants last Fall:

Current Zoning Map

Current Land Use Map

Basemap (streets, buildings, lakes, streams, parks, trails, etc.)

Circulation Map (auto, transit, bike, pedestrian, etc.)

Air Photo (2004)

These maps can be produced in the same format by Planning GIS Staff with a few days notice (call 676-6982)

Current Land Supply - Based on January 2007 assessor's data including existing housing by type, commercial, industrial, public, quasi-public, port, and vacant lands with gross acreage.

Environmental Features - Including wetlands, topography, floodplains, fish habitat, etc.

Utilities - Including water, sewer, storm, power, and gas.

- All maps are formatted for 11 x 17 inch paper and can be downloaded from the City's web site as Adobe PDF documents.
<http://www.cob.org/gis/maps/neighborhoods.htm>
- For purchase from the City: Maps can be printed on 11 x 17 inch paper for \$2.00 per map or at 24 x 36 inch poster-size for \$12.00 per map. Call or email Chris Behee at 676 6982 X 257; cbehee@cob.org.

III. Neighborhood Plan Revision Tools

A. *Guidance from the Comprehensive Plan*

The City's Comprehensive Plan provides guidance on the significance of neighborhood planning. <http://www.cob.org/pcd/planning/growth/comp-update.htm> Each section of most Neighborhood Plans has a corresponding section in the Comprehensive Plan. For example, if you are examining changes to transportation within your neighborhood, make sure to refer to the Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan.

The Comprehensive Plan goal below reflects key neighborhood-specific policies and should be used as a guide for all neighborhood plan updates.

FPP 1 - Establish a collaborative neighborhood planning process that reflects the City's commitment to neighborhood planning. Updating neighborhood plans should be guided by the goals and policies in this plan to ensure that:

- Neighborhood character is maintained as new development occurs.
- Both neighborhood specific and City-wide goals and policies are considered.
- Representatives of both the City and the neighborhood are working together in partnership.

The City will use a number of techniques to encourage participation in the neighborhood planning process, including but not limited to:

- Public hearings and work sessions
- Open houses and community forums
- Polls and other mass mailings
- Advisory and working committees
- Newspaper articles and inserts
- Radio and television

As the neighborhood plans are updated, important characteristics, priorities, and issues should be identified. In general, neighborhood plans should address issues such as:

- Housing densities sufficient to accommodate the forecasted population growth.
- Narrow, tree lined streets with sidewalks arranged in a modified grid pattern to make walking, bicycling and transit use easy and interesting.
- A coordinated system of open space, parks and trails, with a neighborhood park within walking distance or a short transit ride away.
- A prioritized list of infrastructure needs (such as sidewalks, parks, streets, schools, etc.).
- A readily accessible elementary school.
- Design and development policies for urban centers that are within walking distance or a short transit ride away.
- Diverse housing types that accommodate varying income levels, household sizes, and lifestyles.
- Sufficient housing densities to enable frequent transit service and sustain neighborhood businesses.
- Identified view corridors from public spaces such as parks and trails.
- Important historical or cultural resources.

B. Sample Neighborhood Plan Outline
(Revised from ABN's Neighborhood Plan Revision Kit)

Introduction with Mission Statement

Chapter 1 Framework and Goals (General in nature)

- Part 1 Vision statement
- Part 2 Past and Present
 - Neighborhood character
 - Development patterns
 - Strengths and weaknesses
- Part 3 Broad Goal Statements for Future

Chapter 2 Land Use and Maps

- Part 1 Sub-area descriptions
- Part 2 Zoning regulation cross reference
- Part 3 Analysis and Objectives for land use
- Part 4 Prioritized implementation strategy

Chapter 3 Transportation

- Part 1 Existing Streets, pedestrian and bicycling routes
- Part 2 Analysis and Objectives for circulation and transportation
- Part 3 Prioritized implementation strategy

Chapter 4 Housing

- Part 1 Existing Stock
- Part 2 Analysis and Objectives for housing
- Part 3 Prioritized implementation strategy

Chapter 5 Capital Facilities

- Part 1 Existing facilities
- Part 2 Analysis and Objectives for public facilities
- Part 3 Prioritized implementation strategy

Chapter 6 Utilities and Service

- Part 1 Facilities and services in existence
- Part 2 Analysis and Objectives for utilities and services
- Part 3 Prioritized implementation strategy

Chapter 7 Neighborhood Design

- Part 1 Neighborhood Character
- Part 2 Neighborhood Design Goals
- Part 3 Prioritized implementation strategy

Chapter 8 Parks, Recreation and Open Space

- Part 1 Existing (to include critical and natural areas)
- Part 2 Analysis and Objectives for parks and open space
- Part 3 Prioritized implementation strategy

Appendices (as needed)

Note: A “Prioritized Implementation Strategy” is like an Action Plan. This will be an essential guide for the city in the future as we allocate resources and prioritize work plans. Take special care in building consensus and ensuring consistency with the Comprehensive Plan as you refine your implementation strategy.

C. In-fill Requirements

City of Bellingham Neighborhoods, Urban Centers & UGA Planning Areas - Residential Land Supply S Summary of Table LU-16c of Bellingham Comprehensive Plan dated 4/25/06		
<p>The tables below depict the estimated new housing units and new population per neighborhood, urban center and total UGA per the Bellingham Comp Plan. These estimates are calculated based on available vacant or redevelopable land, and include reductions for critical areas, stormwater and right-of-way, public facilities, land availability, and a safety factor.</p> <p>These numbers can be viewed as minimums required to meet the projected population increase as adopted in the Comprehensive Plan and should not be used as a way to discourage compatible infill opportunities that preserve existing neighborhood character and reduce low density sprawl.</p>		
City Neighborhoods	Net New Housing Units	Net New Population
Alabama Hill	51	107
Birchwood	101	206
CBD (see Downtown & Waterfront Urban Center totals for addt'l capacity)	0	0
Columbia	18	46
Cornwall Park	71	118
Edgemoor	46	113
Fairhaven (see Fairhaven Urban Center total for additional capacity)	12	23
Guide Meridian (see NW/Bakerview Urban Center total for addt'l capacity)	1,295	2,513
Happy Valley	180	336
Lettered Streets (see Old Town Urban Center total for addt'l capacity)	39	55
Meridian	318	603
Mount Baker (see Barkley & Sunset Urban Center totals for addt'l capacity)	316	660

Puget (see Lakeway Urban Center total for additional capacity)	107	236
Roosevelt	97	187
Samish	360	868
Sehome	52	84
Silver Beach	67	172
South	691	1,536
South Hill	50	93
Sunnyland	17	28
Western Washington University	0	0
Whatcom Falls	163	389
York	11	16
City Neighborhood Totals	4,063	8,389

Urban Centers	Net New Housing Units	Net New Population
Downtown Core	1321	2354
Barkley District	1057	2024
Central Waterfront District	1225	2183
Fairhaven District	195	347
Oldtown District	488	895
Sunset Square/James Street District	163	342
Lakeway Neighborhood	98	207
NW/Bakerview Neighborhood	117	164
Urban Center Totals	4663	8516

UGA Planning Areas	2498	5797
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D. Process Requirements for Annual Amendments to the Comprehensive Plan

Proposed neighborhood plan revisions are due December 1, 2007. The information below explains the process the revisions follow for action by City Council under the Growth Management Act.

1. The State Growth Management Act (GMA) allows amendments to the comprehensive plan only once a year. Bellingham's 23 neighborhood plans are a component of our comprehensive plan, and are therefore subject to the once a year amendment limitation. The GMA also requires neighborhood plan amendments to be consistent with, and implement the comprehensive plan.
2. Bellingham Municipal Code (BMC) requirements for amendments to neighborhood plans:
 - Group A type proposed amendments – may be initiated by the Planning Director, Planning Commission or City Council if they meet the following three criteria:
 1. The proposed amendment is consistent with Bellingham's Comprehensive Plan;
 2. The proposed amendment cannot result in a significant reduction in the number of housing units that can be accommodated in the neighborhood; and
 3. The proposed amendment has strong support within the neighborhood following an inclusive process.

Public Review Process - Once initiated by the Director, Commission or Council, the amendment must follow the process outlined in BMC 21.10.150. This process includes:

1. A neighborhood meeting (if one has was not held as part of the development of the proposed amendment);
2. At least one Planning Commission public hearing, probably in spring/summer;
3. A City Council public hearing, in summer/fall.

The City Council has the ultimate authority to approve or deny proposed Group A type neighborhood plan amendments. In evaluating these proposals the Planning Commission and Council will use the factors and criteria found in BMC 20.20.060.

- Group B type proposed amendments – a property owner or an authorized representative can request initiation of a site specific neighborhood plan amendment. The City Council screens these proposals after review by city staff and the Planning Commission. The Council can decide to include these proposals in the annual amendment process or to require the proposal to wait for a time when the full neighborhood plan is being updated.

Once initiated by the City Council, the public review process and review criteria for Group B proposals is the same as for Group A proposals.

See <http://www.cob.org/pcd/planning/2007NeighborhoodPlanAmendments.htm> for public comment tracker and details on 2007 amendment proposals.

IV. Planning Grant

A. *Description & Uses*

Most neighborhoods have requested and received a planning grant of \$2,500 for use in accomplishing your plan revision work. Use of these city funds must be in strict accordance with our policy on Recognizing and Supporting Neighborhood Associations and may only be used as outlined in the grant:

We will **reimburse** your treasury for the following types of expenses:

- Fees paid to consultants and facilitators for assistance with the neighborhood plan review, conflict resolution, and consensus building process
- Workshops or trainings to improve neighborhood organizations (leadership training, conflict resolution, skill building, etc.) to effectively manage public involvement in updating the neighborhood plan
- Preparation of documents and copies related to updating the neighborhood plan
- Printing and mailing of notices to all residents
- Rental of space and equipment for neighborhood meetings specific to this activity
- References and other materials for which the City would normally charge the recipient
- Mediation services to resolve disputes between neighborhood residents, stakeholders, property owners, and neighborhood associations on planning, zoning, and other City service related issues to the extent authorized by law
- Other expenses directly related to the association's work on the amendment proposal (Because the use of public money is governed by state regulations, if a question arises on use of the funding, we will ask our Legal Department to advise us.)

Please make sure you submit original copies of paid invoices and use the VOUCHER REIMBURSEMENT REQUEST FORM attached. Submit it to the Neighborhood Services Coordinator.

Make sure you have a W-9 form on file with the City of Bellingham that has your association's tax payer ID number and an authorized signature. We have information for obtaining this number, if needed. Contact Kathryn Hanowell for questions – khanowell@cob.org, 676-6855, X305.

B. **Voucher Reimbursement Request Form (attached)**

V. Outreach

Because participation by all stakeholders in your neighborhood is an important part of developing your revisions, we hope the following information will assist you in your outreach efforts. **Keep in mind that if your proposal is initiated by the City, the City will be responsible for all REQUIRED public notice.**

A. *Mailing Lists*

Our Planning Department GIS staff has produced address lists for all properties within a neighborhood's boundaries. These are in the form of an Excel spreadsheet which can be used to produce mailing labels. These lists will be updated quarterly, and the Neighborhood Services Coordinator will email these to each neighborhood association shortly after updating.

Some important things to note about the data:

The data is pulled from the Whatcom County Assessor's Office's property data base and an experienced Excel user is needed to manipulate the spreadsheet and produce the labels. A "Read Me" file is included to explain the spreadsheet's data.

Care must be taken in editing the data so that only one mailing goes to an owner of multiple properties in the neighborhood, and that owner-occupied properties are mailed to the name and address of the homeowner. Otherwise, mailing to "resident" is appropriate. Such careful use of the spread sheets should result in a better response and less cost in mailings.

It is important that the user understands apartment addresses will only include the primary address of each apartment complex (i.e. the land owner). Individual apartment addresses are not included. Condominium addresses are included because the Assessor mails condo owners an individual tax statement. Mobile home addresses are included when the mobile home park is treated as a "condominium" development, but are not included when each space is rented like an apartment.

Make sure to add to this list those business owners within your neighborhood.

B. *Bulk Mailing Rules*

Bulk Mailing - there are numerous local Mailing Services listed in the Yellow Pages that offer assistance with printing and bulk mailing. This can save time and money. The U.S. Postal Service also has information on bulk mail discounts, but certain restrictions apply regarding how the mail is sized and addressed. This information is readily available at your nearest post office, or by the internet at <http://www.usps.com/businessmail101/getstarted/bulkMail.htm>.

Also, the USPS offers an online service for mailing flyers and post cards. To learn more: <http://www.usps.com/netpost/welcome.htm?from=0001home&page=0129netpostservices>

C. City Website Use

The City is offering each neighborhood an opportunity for outreach using the City's website. Each neighborhood may submit one document in PDF format that they create and update to be posted on the specific neighborhood's web page. In this document we ask that you:

- Provide specific details on proposal progress, including meeting dates and times and neighborhood association contacts (include phone and email)
- Send electronically to Nicole Oliver (noliver@cob.org).
- ***It is very important that you regularly update this information by sending deletions, additions, etc. to Nicole so that information is current and correct.***

The City reserves the right to refuse posting of information that does not adhere to City website policy guidelines.

D. Tool Kit – Publicizing Meetings in the Media

Tips for getting your meeting announcements published or broadcast:

- Name your Association
- Include date, time, place of meeting activity
- Include your meeting purpose (monthly board meeting, quarterly membership meeting, special meeting on neighborhood plan, etc.) Highlight special speakers or activities of broad public interest
- Summarize agenda items and topics for discussion
- List contact information (name/phone/fax/email)
- Give the media outlet your contact information if different than the above (They may need further clarification of your information or are interested in doing an article on your work)
- Consider a concise description of your mission statement: "Dogwood Neighborhood Association is open to all residents of the Dogwood neighborhood and works to preserve and enhance neighborhood and community involvement and quality of life for all residents."

Media Contacts:

BELLINGHAM HERALD:

Contact: Peter Rolstad compiles the community almanac, which runs daily, and the civic agenda calendar, which runs on Sundays. Send announcements to calendar@bellinghamherald.com, or newsroom@bellinghamherald.com.

Sunday CIVIC AGENDA: To be included in the civic agenda on the Sunday before a meeting, announcements need to get to Peter by the NOON THURSDAY prior to that Sunday, at the latest.

Daily WHATCOM COUNTY ALMANAC: *Event listings are due one week prior to publication.* Peter sometimes receives notices of neighborhood association meetings too late to be included in civic agenda on Sunday. ***In those cases, he will put the notice in the daily Community Almanac, so the public can still read the information.***

NEWS BRIEFS: A neighborhood event may be featured as a "news brief" on the Neighbors page, depending on the nature of the event or meeting. Contact Neighbors Editor Dean Kahn about special and newsworthy events or activities, human interest stories, etc. He may do an article that will help publicize your neighborhood association's work. **Contact:** Dean Kahn, dean.kahn@bellinghamherald.com, or call Dean at 715-2291.

CASCADIA WEEKLY: Notices are published in the "Community" section under the Weekly's CALENDAR. Email your announcement to calendar@cascadiaweekly.com. Deadline is Thursday for the next Wednesday's edition. They also may be interested in a news story.

WHATCOM INDEPENDENT: Email your meeting announcement and agenda highlights to editor@whatcomindy.com. Deadline is MONDAY NOON for the next Thursday's edition. The Independent may also be interested in doing a story on an activity or event of interest as described above under NEWS BRIEFS.

RADIO:

KGMI/KPUG/KISM: PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS

Notices must include all pertinent information (who, where, what, when, etc.) + a contact name and number. Fax: 360-733-4551. Email: events@KGMI.com Deadline – 1 week prior to event at least. Will run for 1-2 days.

E. Tool kit – Getting Residents to Attend Your Meetings.

- Send out a newsletter at the beginning of the year advertising meeting dates for the whole year
- Choose one key topic of interest to residents to advertise the meeting, such as:
 - ✓ An application for a new development; a traffic concern; neighborhood planning; etc.
- Send out an e-mail reminder notice the week before the meeting
- Use your meeting sign-in sheets to create a telephone tree to remind your membership to attend the meeting.
- Put up bright colored posters at your local businesses: grocery, drug, hardware stores, cleaners, library, etc. advertising your meetings with a brief summary of the meeting agenda
- Use large sandwich boards set out at strategic locations to capture traffic traveling through your neighborhood

- Send out notices from your schools to go home in the backpacks of students
- Inventory all the businesses within your neighborhoods – ask them to post meeting notices
- Provide the churches in your neighborhood with a paragraph to include in their church bulletin inviting members of the congregation to attend your meetings
- Organize a Saturday “Flyer the Neighborhood” Party
- Schedule your meetings at schools, churches, libraries or fire stations with large meeting rooms, good lighting and adequate seating
- Call the newspapers and request they advertise your meeting in the community news section:
- Make your meetings FUN and FOLKS FEEL WELCOMED!
 - ✓ Welcome with light refreshments (coffee, tea, cookies)
 - ✓ Assign someone to greet people as they arrive
 - ✓ Have everyone introduce themselves and tell where in the neighborhood they live (this reminds them about the geography of the neighborhood and helps people connect)
 - ✓ Provide each attendee with an agenda
 - ✓ Use a sign-in sheet
 - ✓ Provide enough seating for everyone
 - ✓ Always have a poster sized map of the neighborhood visible
 - ✓ Use a flip chart to capture group discussion
 - ✓ Take minutes
 - ✓ Encourage all to speak
 - ✓ HAVE FUN!

F. Surveying neighbors

Surveys can provide an inclusive way for those working on the neighborhood plan revisions to ensure that the plan reflects the ideas of the neighborhood residents.

Last Spring, each neighborhood did a simple survey asking three basic questions: What do you value about your neighborhood, what do you want to preserve, and what do you want to change. These were compiled by the Neighborhood Services Coordinator and provided to the City’s Planning and Community Development Director as well as to each neighborhood representative on MNAC. They were also included in the Planning Academy notebooks. The results of these surveys should be helpful in shaping proposals.

Individual neighborhoods have conducted more extensive surveys of residents. These serve dual purposes: They provide important information to the plan revision committee and they also are another method for outreach...they show the residents that you are at work for their benefit and may interest them in assisting the efforts.

Some basic principles are:

- Get professional help to design your questions so the results are truly useful
- Offer to all residents, otherwise, develop a way to ensure it is representative
- Allow for anonymity
- Ask for basic demographic information
- Be sure to provide clear instructions on completing and returning the survey (who to mail to and by when)
- Keep it short (limit the number of questions to 10-15) for a better return rate
- Make sure it includes basic information about your neighborhood association—how often you meet, how to contact the association
- Be sure to include a “Thank You for Participating”

For an example of the City of Bellingham’s bi annual citizen survey see our website at:
<http://www.cob.org/documents/mayor/2006-customer-satisfaction-survey.pdf>