

WHY IS RENT SO HIGH IN BELLINGHAM?

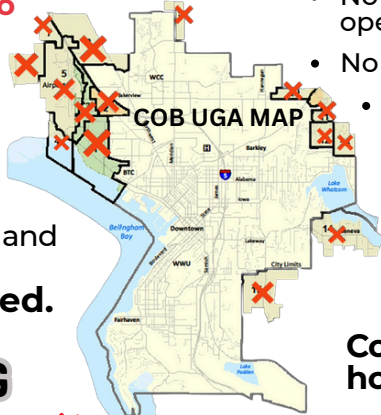
It's not as complicated as you think. It's several **predictable factors** stacked together.



HIGH RENT AND LACK OF OPTIONS IS NOT AN ACCIDENT

REGULATORY LAND SCARCITY 1

- The physical size of the city is nearly the same as **20 years ago**
- Promised annexations and land availability **did not occur**
- Population growth has been **35%** since 2005



X = FAILED ANNEXATIONS

When land supply is fixed and demand grows:
Rent rises — guaranteed.

OPEN SPACE – W/O A TARGET 4

- Land is continually removed from housing use
- No defined public goal for “how much open space is enough”
- No offsetting expansion of housing land
- City of Bellingham has **SHRUNK** its size by **1200 acres** in the newest comprehensive plan but continues to buy land for “open space”

**PERMANENT SCARCITY →
HIGHER LAND PRICES →
HIGHER RENTS → REPEAT**

Continued (un)affordability for housing becomes the new normal.

WHAT'S NEXT?

REALITY: HOUSING COSTS ARE NOT GOING DOWN

Scan the code on front to learn more and be prepared! (or go to)

WWW.RENTINGHAM.COM

WANT UPDATES OR HAVE QUESTIONS?



**REAL
HOUSING REFORM
INITIATIVE**

**360-820-3794 CALL/TEXT
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@REALISSUESPODCAST



2 RESTRICT HOUSING PRODUCTION

- Limits on where apartments can be built & who gets to build them
- Height, parking, and unit-count restrictions
- Long, costly permitting timelines

Less housing reaches the market even as demand grows. Rents rise.

3 PRICES NEED WAGES TO MATCH

- Housing costs rose faster than local wages
- Job growth did not scale with prices
- Service-heavy economy can't support rising rents

RENT BURDENS INCREASE, WORKERS GET PUSHED OUT



You're told it's a...

**MARKET
PROBLEM**

...but its not.

WHY RENT IN BELLINGHAM IS HIGH?

- The city didn't grow outward
- Housing production was restricted
- Wages didn't keep pace



**There is no real fix.
It's only going to get
worse for renters!**

**Scan for more information on
what is in store for renters
going forward!**

WWW.RENTINGHAM.COM

REALISTIC RENTAL OPTIONS

KEEP NEIGHBORHOODS SAFE

PRESERVE HOMEOWNERSHIP

A LOWER STANDARD, SOLD AS PROGRESS

Renters are being asked to accept fewer options, less space, and worse outcomes — without the land, jobs, or wages needed to make it affordable.

Housing should support different stages of life — not lock people into one.



THE BROKEN HOUSING LADDER

HOUSING SHOULD CHANGE AS YOUR LIFE CHANGES

1 RENTERS PAY THE HIGHEST PRICE PER SQ FT

Apartments are often the most expensive housing type per square foot for renters.

Renters typically get:

- Less space for higher monthly cost
- Shared walls, floors, and open space
- Limited storage and parking is not guarantee

Renters pay more for less flexibility — with no equity or exit.

"NO PARKING" RESTRICTS MOVEMENT – IT DOES NOT REDUCE COST 2

Density could not scale without eliminating parking requirements. What this means for renters:

- Reliance on already-crowded public streets
- Reduced flexibility for work, caregiving, and emergencies
- Fewer options for visitors, family, and daily life.

Parking removal doesn't eliminate cost. It shifts inconvenience, risk, and more restrictions onto renters.

3 RENTERS HAVE NO VOICE

Renters have limited control over:

- Parking rules
- Property changes or maintenance priorities
- Rent increases and lease terms

Decisions are made **FOR** renters — not **WITH** them. Renters have the least amount of influence.



FIND YOUR VOICE!

Scan for info on what programs are available to help you as a renter stay informed and know your all your options!

HOUSING COSTS ROSE – JOBS AND INCOME DIDN'T 4

In Bellingham housing costs increased at a much higher rate, while wage supporting job growth didn't happen.

Much of the economy depends on:

- Service work and seasonal jobs
- Of the top 6 biggest employers in Whatcom county, 5 are public.

Employers can't hire people if housing is so expensive that they cannot pay them.

Affordable employee housing is essential but that style isn't scaling with rising rents—public employers can't take slack in the numbers needed to fill openings.

There are stages in a person's life:

- Times when smaller spaces work with fewer belongings: apartment living makes sense.
- There are times when needs become more space and privacy, storage and outdoor areas, more room for partners, kids, or caregiving.

A healthy housing system provides lots of options for these different steps:

Apartment → small rental home
Rental home → ownership option
Ownership → long-term stability

BELLINGHAM'S LADDER IS BROKEN

In Bellingham **apartments dominate new housing**. Family-sized rentals are rare, unaffordable and **top \$3,000 mo.**

The reality: Young renters age out of apartments as their needs are expand.

Families can't find affordable rental homes, and schools lose students.

That's a housing system designed for one life stage only.

THE REAL LOSS IS CHOICE

Not everyone wants to buy - and that's fine, but people should be able to:

- Change housing as life changes
- Move from renting to owning if they choose
- Stay in their community long-term

When those steps disappear, so does the future of residents.

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