



FALL 2015

# INSIDE Bellingham

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## City employees making Bellingham great place to live, work, play

By Mayor Kelli Linville

The City of Bellingham is hopping. Whether it's keeping our neighborhoods safe, planning for our future, or creating and maintaining great open spaces, our focus is to make our city a great place to live, work and play. Because we have so much going on, we've started this twice-yearly newsletter to help you, our residents and business community, keep up-to-date with what's happening in our great city.

In this issue, we have information on our new fireboat, a tour of our newest trail along the waterfront, a feature on the Squalicum Creek Re-route project, information on our Downtown and Samish Way urban villages, a Q&A with the planning department on rental registration, information on the Georgetown University Energy Prize, and lots of statistics on trails and open space.

As Mayor, I have the honor to watch how hard our talented and dedicated staff work to bring us great services. I recently had the opportunity to take a tour on our new fireboat, and the picture below is from that demonstration near Boulevard Park. I also had the opportunity in July to thank our employees who have worked closely with the Department of Ecology and the Port of Bellingham to open the new trail along the waterfront.

These are just a few examples of the great work our City employees are doing. We'll have another newsletter in the spring, and as always, to get the most up-to-date information on the City, visit our website at [www.cob.org](http://www.cob.org).

~ Mayor Kelli



▲ Plant trees along Squalicum Creek's newly restored channel on Make a Difference Day in October.

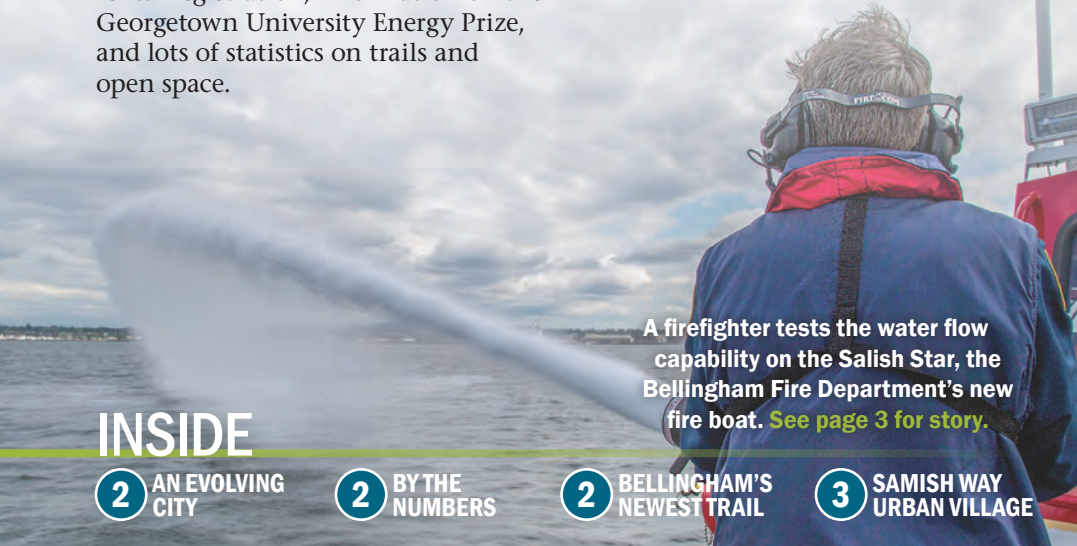
## RESTORING SQUALICUM CREEK

Bellingham Public Works is re-routing Squalicum Creek out of the warm, stagnant waters of Sunset Pond, returning the creek to its natural floodplain. The project also eliminates a fish passage blockage under I-5, opening over 22 miles of salmon habitat. This major restoration project will improve water quality and habitat in Squalicum Creek, benefitting people, salmon, and wildlife.

Join the effort to restore Squalicum Creek by planting native trees along the new stream channel. Public Works Natural Resources is hosting a planting party and site tour, along with Bellingham Parks and Recreation and Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association. Volunteers will receive a thank-you gift of their choice, such as a native plant coupon, a car wash coupon, or a dog bag dispenser.

Watch a short video about the project at [www.cob.org/squalicum](http://www.cob.org/squalicum).

**JOIN THE PLANTING PARTY**  
ON MAKE A DIFFERENCE DAY,  
SATURDAY, OCT. 24, 9AM-NOON.  
PARK IN THE KMART LOT ON JAMES  
STREET RD. SHUTTLES TO THE SITE  
WILL RUN THROUGHOUT THE EVENT.



A firefighter tests the water flow capability on the Salish Star, the Bellingham Fire Department's new fire boat. See page 3 for story.

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# AN EVOLVING CITY

## Ten changes coming to City Center this season

**WATERFRONT CLEANUP:** In August, the Whatcom Waterway cleanup process began, clearing out contamination to make way for future waterfront development. Look out for construction equipment near the Granary Building.

**FEDERAL BUILDING:** The building, located on Magnolia Street, is being updated and repaired to accommodate city government offices, including the City's Public Works Department.



**MARITIME HERITAGE PARK:** Situated in the convergence of the Waterfront, Old Town and Downtown, this park has had a busy summer full of concerts and events. This season, Bellingham Parks and Recreation is continuing to seek community partners interested in offering activities and events at Maritime Heritage Park.

**PAY-BY-SMARTPHONE METERS:** Starting this fall, you'll be able to pay for parking downtown and add more time to your meter using an app on your phone.

**WESTERN'S NEW OFFICE:** Western Washington University recently opened a downtown welcome center, located on State Street in the historic Herald Building.

**PARKADE IMPROVEMENTS:** New signs, enhanced public space, lighting and painting improvements will redefine the downtown parking structure.

**NIGHT MARKET:** The Commercial Street Night Market will be open from 6 to 10 p.m. every Friday from Sept. 4 through Oct. 2 in the plaza next to the Parkade at 1300 Commerical St. The evening market idea was one of the winning concepts from Sustainable Connections' KAPOW! design competition.

**SOAP BOX:** Another KAPOW! design competition idea, the soapbox will be a public spot for artists and performers to express their creativity.

**HOLLY STREET:** In 2016, one of downtown's most central streets will be improved with pavement repairs and landscaping.

**DOWNTOWN BELLINGHAM PARTNERSHIP AND VISITOR'S CENTER:** Visit Downtown Bellingham Partnership located on Commercial Street and Whatcom County Tourism to learn more about the incredible variety of activities Bellingham has to offer.



▲ One of Bellingham's newest trails provides spectacular views of Bellingham Bay and the surrounding islands.

## NEW WATERFRONT TRAIL

One of Bellingham's newest trails offers spectacular views of the San Juan Islands and Bellingham Bay. The trail is about a third of a mile long, stretching from near Squalicum Harbor to the breakwater formerly owned by Georgia Pacific. The trail starts at Bellwether Way near the Coast Guard Building and runs southeast by the end of the I and J Waterway, crosses Hilton Avenue, where there is a new trailhead parking lot, and heads out on the breakwater.

## BELLINGHAM BY THE NUMBERS:

### MILES OF BIKE FACILITIES

2005  
**38.4**  
2014  
**61.1**

### MILES OF TRAILS

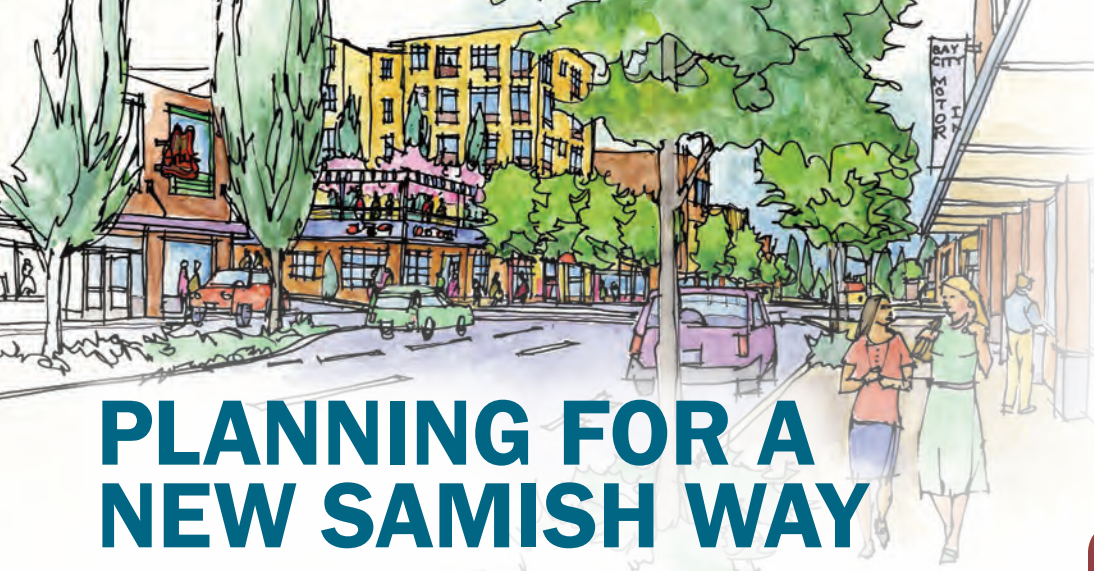
2005  
**64.1**  
2014  
**68.7**

### ACRES OF OPEN NATURAL SPACE (PER 1000 PEOPLE)

2007  
**18.9**  
2014  
**20.7**

### NUMBER OF PERSONS EMPLOYED IN WHATCOM COUNTY (ROUNDED)

2009  
**80,200**  
2014  
**88,600**



# PLANNING FOR A NEW SAMISH WAY

What will Samish Way look like in the future?



The City is working with business owners, implementing incentives, and encouraging investment to continue the evolution of Samish Way into a vibrant neighborhood with a mix of local business and residential development.

So what is the vision for Samish Way?

As visitors exit I-5 coming north, they will be greeted by a tree-lined street with generous sidewalks alongside rows of cafes and shops. Taller apartment buildings will taper down to meet with the surrounding neighborhoods of historic homes.

In September 2015, the City acquired the Aloha Motel on Samish Way due

to high levels of criminal activity and drug contamination at the motel in recent years. By the end of the year, the motel will be demolished and a Request for Proposals will be released, calling developers to submit their plans for the property.

Samish Way is designated an “urban village,” an activity center that provides pleasant living, shopping, and working environments. To promote urban villages, City Council has provided incentives that encourage new businesses to flourish. Along Samish Way, these incentives are expedited permitting and B&O tax credits for new businesses, which will be in place at the beginning of 2016.



◀ An artist's rendering depicts what Samish Way might look like in years to come: a tree-lined street with generous, pedestrian-friendly sidewalks.

**STORY INSET:** Samish Way was once a part of the old Highway 99, the main route between the southern and northern U.S. borders until the mid-20th century. Today, it is home to businesses such as restaurants and motels.



▲ The Bellingham Fire Department logo is brandished on the side of the Salish Star, the department's new fire boat.

## FIREBOAT

The Bellingham Fire Department would like to announce the arrival of the Fire Boat Salish Star to Bellingham. The Salish Star will replace the decommissioned Fire Belle, which provided more than 30 years of service to the citizens of Bellingham and Whatcom County.

Built by Moose Boats, Inc. of Petaluma, California, the boat provides a stable firefighting platform on the water in addition to enhanced emergency response and rescue capabilities.

The Salish Star is moored at Squalicum Harbor Marina and staffed by the crew from Fire Station 5. The boat arrived in Bellingham on Monday, June 22 and was commissioned on Wednesday, August 5. Since July, firefighters have been training and running trials on the boat.

The new boat was purchased with a Port Security grant from the Department of Homeland Security along with matching funds from the City of Bellingham and the Port of Bellingham.

**62%**  
PERCENTAGE  
OF WHATCOM  
COUNTY  
POPULATION  
RESIDING IN  
CITIES

**3,632**  
HOURS PER  
YEAR WHATCOM  
MUSEUM IS  
OPEN TO THE  
PUBLIC

**\$31,736**  
MEDIAN  
INCOME FOR  
BELLINGHAM  
POPULATION  
25 YEARS AND  
OLDER

**4,216**  
TOTAL NUMBER  
OF LOW-INCOME  
HOUSING UNITS



# Q<sup>AND</sup>A

## STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Emma Burnfield, Rental Registration Specialist

Emma Burnfield is the program specialist for the recently implemented Rental Registration and Safety Inspection Program. Emma began working for the City after three years in property management. Here, Emma answers some commonly asked questions regarding rental registration.



▲ **Energy-efficient LED lights illuminate Old City Hall for the holidays. The City will convert 3,600 City-owned streetlights to LED by the end of 2015.**

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Bellingham is among 50 cities in the Georgetown University Energy Prize competition. Energy used in residences, schools and city buildings through 2016 will be measured, and the community with the best energy-saving performance will win the \$5 million prize.

To win, we need your participation. Do simple things like turn off lights in an empty room or power down devices. Sign up for one of these programs for incentives and rebates:

**Community Energy Challenge:** a whole-house energy assessment

**PSE's Homeprint:** free LED lights and energy-saving tips

**Bellingham's Water Use Efficiency Project:** rebates for toilets, clothes washers

To learn more, visit [cob.org/energyprize](http://cob.org/energyprize) or [facebook.com/guepbellingham](https://facebook.com/guepbellingham).

### What is rental registration?

**A:** Rental registration is a new program enacted by City Council requiring all properties within Bellingham city limits to register with the city. Registered properties will be inspected for basic health and safety criteria once every three years.

### How can I check to see if my unit is registered?

**A:** You can view a list of registered properties on the program website, or get in touch with me by phone or email.

### How can I register my property?

**A:** You can register online, by mail, or come in person to the Permit Center in City Hall at 210 Lottie St.

### What will happen during inspections?

**A:** Properties will be inspected once every three years. You have the choice to use a city inspector or a private inspector, who will look at basic health and safety. An inspector will come in with the checklist and walk through the house. All they're looking at is what's on the checklist. Inspections are currently planned to start in 2016.

### Why was this program created?

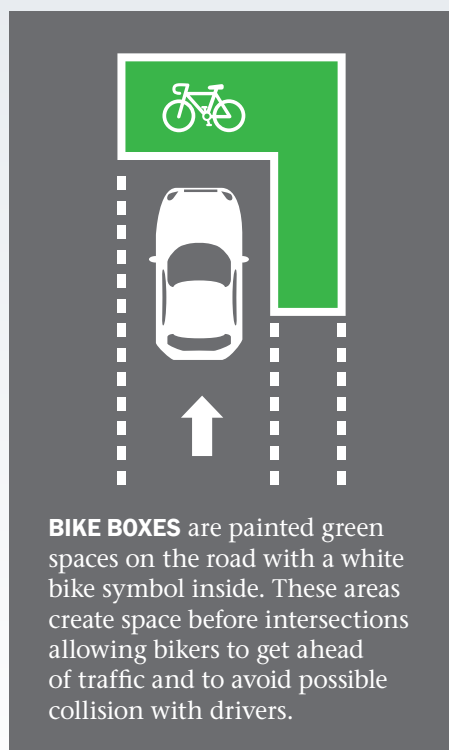
**A:** City Council wanted to ensure that all rental housing in Bellingham provides a safe place for tenants to live. An estimated half of Bellingham's population rents, and we want to create safe and healthy environment for that community.

**Still have questions for Emma?** Contact her at [rentals@cob.org](mailto:rentals@cob.org) or 360-778-8361. Learn more about the program at [www.cob.org/rentals](http://www.cob.org/rentals).

## BIKES Painting the town green

### LEARN WHAT GREEN MEANS

New green street markings, such as bike boxes and green shared lane markings, make Bellingham a safer place to commute — either by bike or by car.



**BIKE BOXES** are painted green spaces on the road with a white bike symbol inside. These areas create space before intersections allowing bikers to get ahead of traffic and to avoid possible collision with drivers.



**GREEN PAVEMENT** marks where bicyclists and motorists frequently cross paths, alerting everyone on the road to pay extra attention to what's around them.



**BIKE DETECTORS** in the pavement, marked by a white bike symbol, sense when a bicyclist is waiting for the light to turn green. This triggers the traffic signal to turn green more quickly.



**SHARED LANE MARKINGS**, or "sharrows," mark the safest route for bicyclists and alert motorists to share the lane with bikes on the road.

For more information, visit [www.cob.org/bike](http://www.cob.org/bike)