

ANNUAL REPORT 2018



City Council

A Letter from the Council President

2018 was a pivotal year for Bellingham.

After years of negotiations, the Bellingham City Council unanimously voted to purchase the conservation and recreation easements on Galbraith Mountain - protecting 2,182 acres of wildland with 1,023 of those acres inside the Lake Whatcom watershed. The agreement secures the public's recreational use of up to 65 miles of trails considered to have the best mountain biking in Washington. Council also formed a Climate Action Plan Task Force made up of local stakeholders to forge a pathway for our community to achieve 100% renewable energy by 2035.

The City is committed to doing its part - in 2019 we will begin the process of converting our solid waste facility at Post Point in Fairhaven from incineration to anaerobic digesters, greatly reducing the largest carbon footprint in our community.

2018 was also a year of change.

After four years on the Bellingham City Council, Roxanne Murphy became the assistant city manager for Valdez, Alaska. Among over 20 applicants, the Council appointed Hannah Stone as our at-large councilmember. We wish Roxanne good luck and welcome Hannah. We are honored to have had the opportunity to serve with both councilmembers.

Council continues to commit to equity in the City's park system, both in location and quality. Bellingham added Waypoint Park at the waterfront and Cordata Park in the Cordata neighborhood, which is currently under construction and due to open early 2020. We will add pump tracks to the new Cordata Park - a popular amenity that the public has requested after using the one at Whatcom Falls for two years.

Through the City's ongoing commitment to reform our criminal justice system, taxpayers have saved over \$2 million in jail costs. The City's three-year-old Electronic Home Monitoring program is now being replicated by Whatcom County and other small cities.

Bellingham continues to be a leader on the Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force and has been awarded a MacArthur Foundation grant together with Whatcom County for its work on criminal justice reform.

A Letter from the Council President

We continue to lead the way, but more needs to happen for those who are battling substance abuse or experiencing mental health illness. In summer 2019, Whatcom County will break ground on a 32-bed inpatient facility, giving our officers and first responders another alternative to jail or the emergency room.

The City is committed to prevention, intervention, treatment and aftercare for those experiencing substance use disorder or mental health illness. We believe that addressing social determinants of health is the way to help vulnerable and marginalized people to experience opportunities and success versus trauma and suffering. Bellingham invests over \$5 million every year in our community's excellent nonprofit organizations, which provide our community with a safety net. We have a breadth of leadership in our nonprofits and they need our support to face the challenges of growing income disparities, housing unaffordability, and inequity.

In April 2018, Council began the process of buying the long defunct JCPenney building on Cornwall Avenue. When complete, this will reactivate a key part of downtown - increasing the vibrancy and revitalization of our City's Center. Further down Holly street, the Council voted to enter a development agreement with Northwest Recycling (Parberry's) to begin the process that will eventually yield about 1,000 units of housing and up to 400,000 square feet of commercial space. Consider a vibrant Cornwall Avenue, a new Waterfront neighborhood, and a newly activated Old Town neighborhood. That's Bellingham in 5 years.

It is an honor to serve as your Council president. Thank you.

Daniel Hammill

COUNCIL PRESIDENT



Legacies and Strategic Commitments

..... 2018 Highlights



Clean, Safe Drinking Water



Continued to hold Lake Whatcom Water Quality as a priority through improved water treatment and continued support of the Aquatic Invasive Species Program

The Homeowner Incentive Program (HIP) had 64 properties participate, providing technical assistance and financial incentives to property owners in the Lake Whatcom Watershed

Completed construction of the Water Pretreatment Plant, which uses dissolved air flotation (DAF) to complement existing long-term strategies for watershed protection



Sense of Place



Worked with community members to organize the 2018 Martin Luther King Jr. Day celebration

Entered into a public-private partnership to redevelop 1314 Cornwall Ave.

Entered into a development agreement to relocate Northwest Recycling out of Old Town, transitioning the area from light industrial to an urban village



Healthy Environment



Continued improvement for storm water reduction

Created a Climate Action Plan Task Force to accelerate achievement of the City's Climate Action goals

Sponsored a forum with Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife to educate the public on the wildlife feeding ordinance

Completed the engineering design work for three new stormwater quality treatment facilities

Set some of the most aggressive climate targets in the nation because of the inclusion of an ambitious transportation goal



Safe and Prepared Community



Began discussion of a Safe Spaces Report in partnership with the Whatcom Dispute Resolution Center to provide residents with a safe space to voice their concerns

Passed the City's 2019-2020 Biennial Budget, prioritizing public safety

Legacies and Strategic Commitments

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2018 Highlights



Vibrant Sustainable Economy

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Supported economic development throughout the City



Equity & Social Justice

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Held a series of conversations with community organizations to inform the content of a Neighborhood Equity Assessment

Passed a resolution placing the Home Fund levy on the ballot and supported this successful measure that will provide \$4 million annually for housing investments

Continued efforts on incarceration reduction via the City's electronic home monitoring program, saving taxpayers \$2.2 million

Continued work to address homelessness including passage of regulations to allow homeless camps and supported the opening of the Winter Haven tent encampment on City property

Participated in the County's Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force (IPRTF) and its committees. Council staff drafted the Task Force's 2018 Annual Report on activities to reduce incarceration



Quality, Responsive City Services

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Supported initiation of the GRACE Program to help individuals who have frequent contact with the criminal justice and emergency response systems

Continued to serve on community boards and commissions

Considered and passed major land use related measures including a new commercial code and a new subdivision ordinance

Passed an ordinance allowing short-term rentals in Bellingham while protecting residential areas from commercial rentals

Expanded areas of the city where detached Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) can be built and reduced or eliminated Impact Fees for ADUs

Approved annexations in the Bennett/Bakerview and Mt. Baker Highway/Britton Road areas, adding 250 acres of developable land to the City

Building permit costs have not increased since 2009

Legacies and Strategic Commitments

..... 2018 Highlights



Mobility & Connectivity Options



Authorized the creation of a bike lane on Puget Street, and a protected bike lane on Roeder Avenue

Completed Granary Avenue and Laurel Street construction at the waterfront



Access to Quality of Life Amenities



Supported infrastructure for Whatcom Community College's international student housing

Purchased the recreation easement for Galbraith Mountain

Updated the waterfront plan and authorized construction of Waypoint Park and the first major streets for the waterfront redevelopment

Passed an ordinance accepting donation of real property for Cordata Community Park



**Welcome
Councilmember
Hannah Stone! She
began her term on
October 1, 2018**



2018 City Council: Michael Lilliquist, Terry Bornemann, Daniel Hammill, Roxanne Murphy, Pinky Vargas, Gene Knutson, April Barker