



FALL 2019 & WINTER 2020

INSIDE Bellingham

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Eight years of progress

By Mayor Kelli Linville

In the past eight years, our city has accomplished too many things for me to name them all. But as I finish up my second and last term, a few stick out in my mind.

Protecting Lake Whatcom. We provide clean drinking water for more than 100,000 people in Whatcom County. Along with our partners Whatcom County and the Lake Whatcom Water and Sewer District, we have made great strides in protecting the watershed and improving our drinking water quality.

Renovation of City facilities. We renovated and moved several departments to the then-vacant Federal Building downtown, as well as moved the Parks and Recreation Department to City Hall.

Waterfront redevelopment. Working with the Port of Bellingham, the City has provided the first public access to our central waterfront with the development of Waypoint Park and new streets into the area.

Galbraith Mountain. Preserving Galbraith for conservation and recreation has been a long-term goal for the City. Last year's purchase-and-sale agreement secured the public's use of up to 65 miles of trails on Galbraith Mountain in perpetuity.

Downtown revitalization. Our City Center has grown in the past eight years, including new buildings, new housing, new businesses and a new retail strategy.

Biennial budget. Transitioning from a one-year to a two-year budget means we can be more efficient and strategic with our investments in the community.

Community policing and public health. Our Neighborhood Police Officers, Behavioral Health Officer and Community Paramedics support a new way to look at public safety, through building relationships and proactively addressing the health and safety needs of our community.

Jail alternatives. The City has developed a jail alternatives and diversion program through Municipal Court that incorporates electric home monitoring and other alternatives to reduce incarceration.

Our city and our community have moved forward on so much more than this, from new parks and trails to new water treatment plants – but these are a few of the items I'm most grateful for. As I look forward, I am confident that our great staff and new mayor will continue in the right direction. It has been a privilege to be your mayor.

– Mayor Kelli Linville



▲ Mayor Kelli Linville and the 2019 Awardees

2019 CITY CENTER AWARDS

At the third annual City Center Awards Ceremony, Mayor Kelli Linville honored Cascade Laundry Building, Pickford Film Center and Black Sheep. The awards showcase and acknowledge the incredible accomplishments and exceptional projects that have led to the revitalization of Bellingham's City Center Neighborhood. The City staff also surprised the Mayor with the first ever City Center Champion Award for her support of downtown over the past eight years. For more information, visit www.cob.org/ccaward.

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CENTRAL LIBRARY REMODEL

TO IMPROVE PUBLIC SPACES, INCORPORATE OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCIES

Thanks to capital investments supported by Mayor Kelli Linville and the City Council in the 2019-2020 biennial budget, the Bellingham Public Library and the Public Works department are teaming up to remodel the main floor of the popular and well-used Central Library.

“Our library is one of the most used and loved in the country, and I’m pleased to work with the Library Board of Trustees to make improvements to our downtown library,” Mayor Linville said.

The planned work is in the building’s interior, on the nearly 20,000-square-foot main floor where adult and teen collections and services are located. Changes will include providing additional public spaces and a more open concept, incorporating new, more efficient book-handling technologies, and adding public restrooms.

The Central Library downtown is the largest Bellingham library branch as well as the city library’s administrative and operations center, all housed in a 1950s-era building that saw its last major renovation in 1985. The Central Library welcomed about 630,000 visits last year, with those patrons borrowing 1.2 million items and attending more than 1,000 programs.

The design phase is now underway with construction scheduled to begin in 2020. Project updates are available at www.bellinghampubliclibrary.org.



Why is housing so expensive in Bellingham?

Bellingham median house prices topped \$500,000 for the first time this summer. Our community surveys have stated that housing availability for all income levels is a top concern for many Bellingham residents.

So why is housing so expensive in Bellingham? There are three main reasons: There has been a lag between population growth and home construction, there is a gap between average incomes and housing prices, and Bellingham is a nice place to live.

Housing prices are driven by the regional as well as the local economy. Up and down the I-5 corridor, home values have increased as the region attracted high-paying jobs and subsequent population growth. Bellingham’s growth has been no exception. Since 2010, the state’s population has risen by 12.2% and Bellingham’s population has risen by 11.4%.

The inventory that is affordable to middle-income households is shrinking. Demand is increasing, but wages have not kept pace with housing costs. From 2000 to 2017, the median household income in Bellingham increased by 15% while the median home value increased by 67%. The homes that are being built on the private market continue to serve the needs of higher-income households, but while some buyers are willing to pay more, fewer and fewer units are available within a price range that is affordable to a

median-income family. Our zoning offers only limited areas where more affordable types of homeowner housing (duplexes, condos, and townhomes) can be built.

For lower-income and homeless residents, the City has several programs to help create affordable housing. Through various funding and incentive programs, including the Bellingham Home Fund, assistance is available to produce new homes, preserve existing homes, provide rental assistance and support services, and create new opportunity for first-time homebuyers. The City continues to find ways to improve low-income housing within our community, but there continues to be a strong need.

Ultimately, one of the biggest reasons for housing price increases is that Bellingham is a great place to live. Bellingham residents are extremely positive about the quality of life in Bellingham. About 92% of respondents in the recent Bellingham Residential Survey rated our city’s quality of life either excellent or good. While the City will continue to ensure Bellingham’s quality of life remains high, we are equally committed to providing tools to our community to offer the full range of housing choices appropriate for all income levels.

For more information on Bellingham housing affordability, visit www.cob.org/housingquestions and www.cob.org/homefund.





Q AND A CITY SPOTLIGHT

Terry Bornemann
City Council Member

City Council Member Terry Bornemann is retiring after 19 years of service. He began his position in January 2000 and was elected for five terms.

Why have you stayed on City Council for 19 years? Has your motivation to serve the community changed over the years? And if so why, how?

When I ran, I wanted to be a voice for those who could not speak for themselves. I am motivated by the Bellingham people and the ability to serve, and I have stayed motivated by seeing project results and being able to make a difference in our community. Staying involved and being encouraged to run has been rewarding.

What are some of the changes you've seen in Bellingham and the City Council over the years?

When I was first elected to City Council, Bellingham was a mill town. Georgia Pacific was still one of our biggest employers. I watched the transition of Bellingham from being a mill town to a world-class city. I have watched the City double in size. Bellingham has gone through

tremendous change. When I was first elected, we had almost no waterfront access. Since then, we have built places like Taylor Dock.

During your time serving on City Council, what have been your top three most meaningful projects?

I worked with folks to craft the current music ordinance and create the Art and Music District. We have worked to accommodate growth while still protecting the basic quality and integrity of the individual neighborhoods. I'm also proud of the development of additional parks, trail systems and bike lanes that are connected. We have continued to create greenways and build trail connectors throughout the City.

What have you enjoyed the most in this position?

I have enjoyed getting to know many people in this community. I have also appreciated the collaborative process when working with people at the City toward a common goal. I recognize that I am not doing this alone – we are doing these projects together as a community.

As a Council member, what do you want Bellingham residents to know about City Council?

I think it is important for people to recognize how City Council positions can influence and change the quality of life in this city. It is not enough to vote for someone and get them into office. You need to push them, work with them, and let them know what needs to be done. City Council members are the most responsive of any elected position – or we should be because we are grassroots. We do not go to Olympia or Washington. We get elected and we stay here. We see you in the grocery store and on the soccer fields. It is important to stay involved.

What do you want to tell the Bellingham residents?

Thank you for giving me the chance to serve and work with you over the years. It has been a privilege.

My phone number is (360) 305-0606 and my email is tbornemann@cob.org. For more information, visit www.cob.org/council.

BELLINGHAM POLICE PATROL VEHICLES NOW EQUIPPED WITH AED DEVICES DONATED BY COMMUNITY

The Bellingham Police Department received a \$30,000 donation to provide 21 automated external defibrillators (AED) in marked patrol vehicles. Due to the generous donations from Peoples Bank, Roger Jobs Motors and Bryon Sprague, trained patrol officers can quickly intervene and provide medical attention for someone experiencing a sudden cardiac arrest.

Bryon Sprague, General Manager at Roger Jobs Motors, is a member of the Bellingham Police Chief's Citizens Advisory Council. Although Sprague had introduced the idea of having AEDs in all patrol vehicles, it lacked the necessary funds. Through

private funding for the project and reaching out to Peoples Bank Chairman Charles LeCocq and Roger Jobs Motors Inc. owner Roger Jobs, Sprague secured the financial support. Both businesses matched Sprague's donation of \$10,000 each.

"Having the AEDs in patrol vehicles enhances our officers' abilities to immediately apply advanced life-saving treatment when just a few minutes may mean the difference between life and death to a person experiencing sudden cardiac arrest,"

Bellingham Police Chief David Doll said.

For more information on the story, visit www.cob.org/aed-donation.



Automated External Defibrillator (AED)

Accessible Bellingham is a better Bellingham

If your child's work is on the Art Walk, you want everyone to come see it. If your parents have an issue for City Council, they need to hear and see the meetings. If your neighbor who is deaf experiences something terrible, she should be able to talk to the Police.

Those things can only happen if there are no barriers or limits to their participation. A blocked sidewalk, poor acoustics, or communication challenges are all barriers.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against anyone with disabilities. According to Title II of the ADA, local governments are instructed to remove access barriers. In Bellingham, ADA Coordinator Kim Brown is leading that effort.

"Mobility for All means we want all our citizens to be able to participate fully in civic life," Brown said. "Whether you use a wheelchair or walker, have a child in a stroller, are deaf or have low vision – you should be able to travel around Bellingham to go where you want."

Bellingham is currently evaluating results of a survey to identify problematic sidewalks, curb ramps and crosswalks. Since the City has 5,000 curb ramps and it would take years to fix them all, the next step is to prioritize which barriers to fix first.

The City is also addressing other barriers to full participation.

POLICE ASL TRANSLATOR APP

Bellingham Police now use a smart phone app that allows officers to communicate with someone who is deaf or hard-of-hearing. Using a live video function, a translator uses American Sign Language to interpret between officer and citizen. Both benefit when they can communicate facing each other and "hearing" questions or answers in real time.

CLOSED CAPTIONING ON BTV

In the near future, Bellingham City Council meetings broadcast on BTV will be closed captioned "live" so that viewers can see the text of dialogue they might not otherwise hear.

HEARING LOOP IN COUNCIL CHAMBERS

For those who prefer to attend Council meetings and may be deaf or hard-of-hearing, the City has plans to install a hearing loop. This device provides a radio signal so that sound from microphones is transmitted directly into a person's cochlear implant or hearing aid (once they activate the aid's T-coil.)

"If someone can't hear the whole discussion, they can't participate fully – and the rest of us miss out on what they could have shared," Brown said. "If we don't limit a person's ability to participate, we become a more inclusive community – and a better Bellingham."

For more information on Bellingham's ADA Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan or ADA services, visit www.cob.org/accessibility and search or contact Kim Brown via ada@cob.org or (360) 778-7950.

BPD invests in community safety, mental health

Josh McKissick Neighborhood Police Officer

After serving 12 years as a Bellingham Police Officer, Josh McKissick became a Neighborhood Police Officer (NPO) in June 2019. He is responsible for the 13 neighborhoods north of Whatcom Creek. Josh joins Officer Jon Knutsen who is responsible for the neighborhoods south of Whatcom Creek. They often work as a team coordinating training and site visits.

Josh provides a wide variety of safety-related services such as De-escalation Training, Active Shooter

Response, and Workplace and Personal Safety Training. He says the NPOs are also beginning to provide Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) services, where they consult with businesses or property owners to make their properties less conducive to crime, often through improved lighting or landscaping. He also works with neighborhood groups and neighborhood representatives from the Mayor's Neighborhood Advisory Commission.

Zackery Serad Behavioral Health Officer

Zackery Serad started his career as a patrol officer in the Bellingham Police Department March 2008. As of June 2019, Zackery became a Behavioral Health Officer (BHO) working directly with a Mental Health Liaison, Laura Woods, to assist those suffering from mental health issues. They work together to devise plans and strategies to help individuals and provide them with information for appropriate services. This proactive approach also relieves the amount of 9-1-1 calls, allowing patrol officers to respond to emergent calls.

Zackery also conducts interviews at the jail and meets with other agencies helping with mental health and homelessness. He works to bridge the gap and provide open communication between those agencies and the Bellingham Police Department.

For more information about the Neighborhood Police Officer and Behavioral Health Officer, visit www.cob.org/neighborhoodpoliceofficers and www.cob.org/behavioralpoliceofficers.

