



FALL 2022

INSIDE Bellingham

AN INFORMATIONAL SOURCE FOR CITY NEWS cob.org



Addressing public safety needs

By Mayor Seth Fleetwood

Like so many organizations locally and across the country, our City is experiencing staffing shortages. We have especially critical needs for police officers and law enforcement dispatchers.

Joining the City as an officer or dispatcher means being a part of a team of highly trained, capable, compassionate professionals whose commitment to community shines every day. We have the best police department in the state and I am proud of those who have dedicated their careers to this noble profession.

Please help us spread the word that the City is hiring for these positions and many others.

While we address law enforcement staffing shortages, we've prioritized responses to 9-1-1 calls so that threats to public safety and crime investigations are the first priority. We've also added online tools to accept non-emergency reports so that property and other non-violent crimes are addressed.

Staffing shortages, an inadequate jail, court backlogs, legislative changes and other factors contribute to community members expressing concerns about safety. I assure you we are working diligently to address these concerns, including:

- Targeted, effective employee recruiting and retention strategies.
- Filling vacancies, funding new positions and committing to funding more when those are filled.
- Supplementing law enforcement services with: new community service officers, downtown safety ambassadors and downtown security patrols; litter, graffiti and junk vehicle removal programs; and other initiatives that allow police personnel to focus on law enforcement.

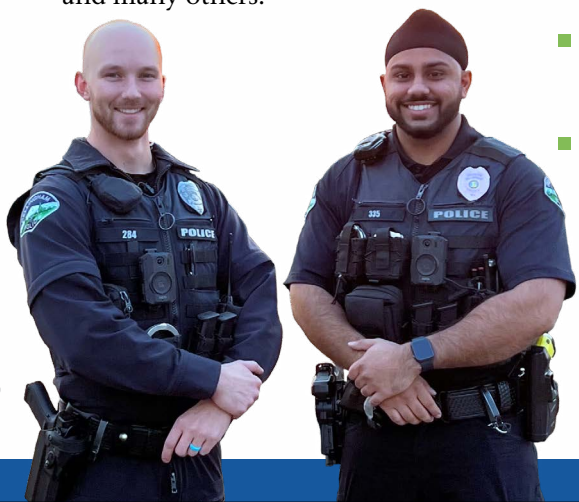


911 Dispatcher

- Collaborating with partners on unique approaches to address complex problems in certain locations.
- Alternative response systems to help people in need, providing appropriate aid to people experiencing extreme poverty, substance abuse issues, mental health crises, and other special needs.
- Active efforts to reduce incarceration, identify reforms and other strategies to reduce the jail population.

We welcome your perspective as we address these and other complex issues. Throughout our organization, dedicated and talented employees are delivering quality public services and stepping up every day to address the challenges and opportunities of our growing community. Together with our active, engaged residents, we're doing the important work of building a sustainable, equitable and thriving city.

Mayor Seth Fleetwood



WE'RE HIRING. SEE cob.org/jobs

PRRST STD
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
BELLINGHAM, WA
PERMIT # 114

*****ECRWSS*****
Postal Customer

City of Bellingham
210 Lottie Street
Bellingham, WA 98225



Winter weather is here

Bellingham experienced historic rainfall in November 2021, followed a few weeks later by significant freezing and snow, weather events that impacted transportation systems, homes, schools, businesses and more. And already this year we've seen heavy rain and freezing temperatures. These are reminders for us all to be prepared for severe weather this time of year.

City crews have been preparing for inclement weather; it's important you do, too.



RAIN AND FLOODING

Fall is famous for blustery winds and rainstorms that strip leaves from trees and clog stormwater drains. Street sweepers can use your help keeping drains clear. If it's safe to do so, remove leaves you see accumulating at drains. And while you're raking your

yard, don't deposit your leaves into the street. Let us know if you see large branches down and blocking traffic.

When streets have flooded, do not drive through standing water. Find other routes even if a "road closed" sign has not yet been posted. It may be deeper than you think and road damage may not be visible through the water.

STREET CREWS READY FOR SNOW AND ICE

City crews prepare streets when cold temperatures and snow are in the forecast, with a focus first on arterials and routes essential for first responders and busses, as well as safety concerns and major hazard areas. Five large plows, three small plows and two de-icing trucks are ready for around-the-clock use. Advanced preparations like applying de-icing brine before the snow and ice arrive make it much easier and more effective to plow.

Once snow and ice are on the streets, crews use a salt-sand mixture to help with traction on the roads. In the downtown corridor and around Lake Whatcom, only salt is used to avoid sand washing into critical habitats. Regardless of the location, when the weather changes, all that sand must be swept up by street sweepers.



HOW CAN YOU PREPARE?

While City crews tend to streets and public infrastructure, individuals should prepare themselves, their families, homes and vehicles for inclement weather. Tips to get you started:

AT HOME:

- Close and cover all outdoor vents and spigots.
- Be ready for power outages with flashlights, batteries, backup power for devices.
- Stock up on non-perishable foods that don't require cooking, water, and prescription medications for each member of the household.
- Never use charcoal or generators indoors and only use camp stoves outdoors for cooking.
- Know your neighbors and check in on each other.

IN YOUR CAR:

- Prepare your vehicle for delays, detours or being stranded.
- Carry water, food, warm clothes, gloves, flashlight, device charger, safety flares, jumper cables and a small shovel.
- Keep your fuel tank full and devices fully charged.
- Practice putting chains on your car.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information on winter preparations and safety, visit cob.org/snow



Photo by Erica Holland

Protecting Bellingham's Trees

Stay tuned! The City is in the process of creating its first Urban Forestry Management Plan (UFMP), a strategic plan informed by public feedback and community values to help us maintain a healthy and desirable urban forest. Public feedback on the first UFMP draft is anticipated for Spring 2023. Please visit cob.org/UFMP to learn more about our urban forest and sign up for email updates.



CLEANING UP

As our community continues to grow, some of our problems grow too, and the City works to provide additional services to meet those challenges. One example is addressing sanitation and solid waste needs. In response to public feedback and requests for action on litter, illegal dumping and related concerns, a new team was created in early 2022 to address these issues. Since June, they have focused hundreds of hours on removing litter in public spaces, especially in the areas around local creeks.

Within the first four months of operations the team removed nearly 90 tons of waste -- that's more than the combined weight of 20 orca whales! This work is essential to protecting public health and safety, preserving the beauty of Bellingham and caring for the natural resources that support local fish and wildlife. Learn more about the Sanitation and Solid Waste team at cob.org/solidwaste

WE SCOOP

Do you have a dog at home? If so, please remember picking up pet waste is an essential responsibility, especially during the rainy months. Pet waste contains disease-causing bacteria and viruses which can spread from dog-to-dog, dog-to-human and wash into our local streams and lakes; help keep your family healthy by regularly picking up pet waste at home and every time on walks and at parks.

During the dark months, grab a flashlight to help locate pet waste that needs to be picked up. Take the We Scoop pledge at cob.org/ScoopPoop, receive free scooping tools and join hundreds of Bellingham residents in pledging to scoop poop to keep our community healthy.



Our bicycle and pedestrian planning processes carefully examine transportation and mobility options for all users.

PLANNING FOR PEDESTRIANS AND BICYCLES

Updates are coming to City-wide plans used to prioritize street improvement projects throughout Bellingham to better serve all modes of transportation including walking and bicycling.

This past summer, community input helped shape the draft Pedestrian Master Plan update, which will be available for feedback on Engage Bellingham through the end of 2022.

In early 2023, we will be looking for input on bicycle improvements, such as where you would like to see better bike infrastructure, important bike connections you would like to see improved, the type of bicycle facilities you feel comfortable using, and more. Stay tuned to provide public input in-person and online: engagebellingham.org/pedbikeplans or BikePedPlans@cob.org.

REPORT flooded streets, clogged stormwater drains, downed trees, and other issues on Bellingham streets at cob.org/fix, on your SeeClickFix app, or by calling (360) 778-7700.



KEEPING WALKWAYS SAFE FOR ALL

DID YOU KNOW? Abutting property owners and/or tenants are responsible for snow and ice removal for sidewalks and other public walkways. The City does not provide this service. Equip yourself before winter weather sets in to carry out this important safety responsibility. Consider teaming up with neighbors to help maintain safe walkways for everyone.



City Council offers in-person and remote access to Council meetings

The Bellingham City Council recently resumed in-person meetings, after 2.5 years of remote meetings due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Council meetings now offer in-person and remote access for City Council members, City staff and the public.

"We are pleased to greet community members who join us in City Council Chambers at City Hall, and we continue to invite people to attend meetings virtually through remote access as needed," City Council President Hannah Stone said.

The City Council Chambers is located on the second floor of City Hall, 210 Lottie Street in Bellingham.

For information about how to participate in City Council meetings in person or via remote access, and for upcoming meeting agendas visit meetings.cob.org, call the City Council Office at (360) 778-8200 or email: ccmail@cob.org.

COUNCIL MEMBERS WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

There are many ways to communicate with the City Council, Stone said, including:

- Provide live testimony during public hearings scheduled on specific topics. Live testimony can be provided in person at City Council Chambers or via remote access during the scheduled hearing. Visit meetings.cob.org for upcoming meeting agendas.
- For public hearings, written testimony on specific topics can be provided online. See cob.org/publichearing for details.
- Provide general written comments on any topic, view others' comments, and share comments on social media, using the City's Engage Bellingham public engagement platform, available at engagebellingham.org
- Mail or deliver correspondence to the City Council at Bellingham City Hall, 210 Lottie Street, Bellingham, WA 98225.
- Contact the full City Council or individual Council members directly
 - Email all City Council at ccmail@cob.org
 - Call the City Council at (360) 778-8200
 - Contact individual Council members using the contact information provided at cob.org/contacts-bios



Teaching our next generation



Every year hundreds of 5th grade students, teachers and chaperons learn about our water system through the City's Water School program. During two classroom visits and a field trip, students study the relationship between human activity and the City's water system. City educators lead students through hands-on learning experiences focusing on watersheds, the progression of water in the City water system, and stormwater pollution.

Students explore individual and community responsibilities to ensure access to clean water, use models to discover where and how water flows over the land and develop engineering designs to treat water samples drawn from Lake Whatcom.

While traversing from the source of our drinking water, Lake Whatcom, to the Water Treatment Plant in Whatcom Falls Park, students discuss common water pollutants, brainstorm what they can all do to help and develop solutions to pollution problems. At



the Water Treatment Plant, they discover how the City cleans an average of 8 million gallons of drinking water for over 100,000 people every day. That's enough water to fill approximately 555 school busses! Supplied with shower timers and water conservation kits, students take what they learned home, encouraged to reflect on their own water use.

YOU CAN LEARN, TOO!

Find lessons and videos online cob.org/5th-grade