



SPRING 2021

INSIDE Bellingham

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Springtime offers hope and optimism

By Mayor Seth Fleetwood

Springtime this year marks the one-year anniversary of our community's COVID-19 response. Our new reality began with: orders to shelter in place, the halt to all in-person public meetings and gatherings, and the emergence of online meetings and Zoom; the beginning of remote working and learning; requirements for face coverings and social distancing; business, recreation, and travel restrictions; and many other measures that changed our lives in profound ways, some of which we are still discovering.

We did not know the unprecedented challenges that would face our City nor did we imagine the much-anticipated decade of 2020 unfolding as it has, with the compound crises of a pandemic, economic impacts, and social unrest.

What we did know is still true today: we are most successful when we work together. As we emerge from the

pandemic and continue to address City priorities, we are committed to listening and learning. As always, we strive to be thoughtful, collaborative, and compassionate with an inspired and hopeful view towards our future.

With spring in the air and widespread distribution of COVID-19 vaccines now underway, I feel hopeful about the year ahead. We must remain vigilant and cautious about our health, but there are better days ahead. We must be aware and ready to help our neighbors, as many people are still hurting.

Despite our many challenges, I am confident we will emerge from these times with a renewed sense of optimism, ready to continue the important work of building a sustainable, equitable, and thriving city in this monumentally consequential decade.



GET INVOLVED AND INFORMED

There are many ways to learn more and get involved in your City government.

Volunteer on a local board, commission or committee

Volunteer to advise policy makers or provide support to city services. From transportation and greenways committees to library and museum boards, to learn about current vacancies, visit cob.org/bc.

Watch City Council meetings

Presentations, public hearings, deliberations about pending actions, and more: Bellingham City Council meetings are televised live on BTV, available on video, and are an excellent way to tune in to what's happening in your City. Visit meetings.cob.org.

Share your opinions on Engage Bellingham

Engage at the time and place of your choosing on issues like zoning, housing and climate action. Visit EngageBellingham.org.

Submit service requests with SeeClickFix

Be part of the solution. The new browser and smart phone app, SeeClickFix, is a handy way to alert the City to infrastructure needs. Learn more at cob.org/fix.

Sign up to receive City news

From weekly construction reports to breaking news, receive updates when we have news to share. Subscribe at cob.org/news.

Follow us on social media

Follow any or all of our more than two dozen social media sites. See cob.org/social.

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Post Point Wastewater Resource Recovery

The Post Point Resource Recovery project is a defining opportunity for Bellingham to implement its 2018 Climate Action Plan and reduce sewer utility CO2 emissions by 60-80%

PROJECT AT A GLANCE

The City of Bellingham is updating the Post Point Resource Recovery Plant to replace aging, outdated equipment and reduce carbon emissions. Earlier planning phases of the project collected feedback through community workshops. We are replacing the facility's incineration system with a digestion process that transforms wastewater solids into two beneficial and safe reusable resources: biosolids and biogas.



Present: Incineration

Currently at Post Point, wastewater solids are incinerated (burned) using outdated equipment that pollutes the air, is expensive to maintain, difficult to permit, and burns, rather than recovers resources.

Future: Biosolids

Our biosolids will be treated to meet the highest standards set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency so they can be used to create a soil additive, like a fertilizer, for the community's use.



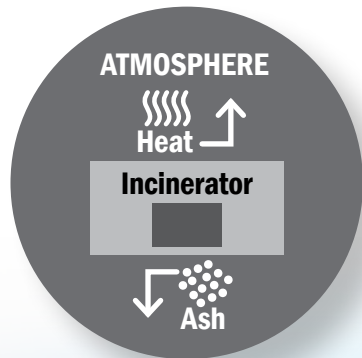
An aerial view of the
Post Point Resource
Recovery Plant

VISIT cob.org AND EngageBellingham.org TO LEARN MORE

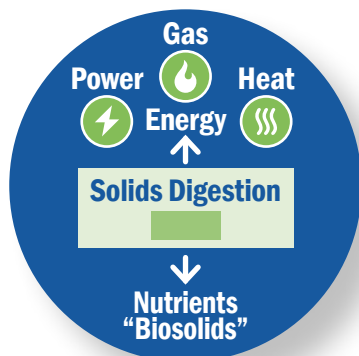
Post Point Wastewater Treatment Plant has been in operation for nearly 45 years. It includes two essential and related treatment processes: liquids and solids. In 2014, the City completed major upgrades to the liquid treatment process to improve performance, meet current regulations, and increase capacity for the future. As part of that project, the City also planned future upgrades to the solid's treatment process.

CURRENT SOLIDS PROCESS

In use since 1972



FUTURE SOLIDS PROCESS



In 2017, the City resumed planning work to determine the best way to update the solids treatment process. The City used an evaluation process that looked at several options and measured the environmental, social, financial, and technical benefits of each option. After gathering input from the community, the City decided on a digestion-based solution. Digestion essentially replicates what your stomach does to food, using microbes and heat to break down solids to produce biosolids and biogas.

LIVING OUR VALUES

The Post Point project supports the City's 2018 Climate Protection Plan by:



Recovering resources

This project will produce Class A biosolids, suitable for beneficial use in a variety of applications such as residential and agricultural fertilizer, mine reclamation and on golf courses.



Producing renewable energy

Biogas, a renewable source of energy, will be injected into a natural gas pipeline to offset the use of fossil fuels in our community.



Responsible land use

Upgrades to the new facility will help improve the air, water, and soil health of the nearby Post Point Lagoon. The lagoon provides habitat to many insects, birds, and fish (including Chinook salmon, bull trout, and steelhead which are listed under the Endangered Species Act).

PROJECT SCHEDULE*

2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025

Planning

Design

Construction



Project planning began in 2019 and is expected to be complete with a fully operational biosolids facility by the end of 2025.

*Schedule updated as of March 2021 and is approximate.

HELPFUL KEY WORDS

BIOSOLIDS: A clean and safe nutrient rich reusable resource made from wastewater solids.

BIOGAS: A methane-rich gas generated through the digestion process that can be used as an energy source.

DIGESTION PROCESS: A way to break down wastewater solids and produce reusable resources such as biogas and biosolids.

INCINERATION: The burning of wastewater solids in a furnace.

WASTEWATER SOLIDS: Solid material removed when treating wastewater.

WASTEWATER TREATMENT: The removal of harmful and unhealthy items and bacteria from human waste so it can be released as clean water into Bellingham Bay.



WORKING WITH YOU

We are interested in hearing your thoughts and feedback on the project, though COVID-19 continues to present challenges to in-person meetings.

WAYS TO STAY INVOLVED

- Fill out our survey and find other ways to provide feedback at EngageBellingham.org.
- Find in-depth information and sign up for email updates at cob.org/ResourceRecovery.
- Email askPW@cob.org or call (360) 778-7800 to request a briefing for your neighborhood or community group, or let us know if there are other ways you would like to stay involved.

Por favor, para información en Español, comunicarse con el Departamento de Obras Públicas al telefono (360) 778-7700. Gracias.

AND SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS.



CLIMATE ACTION UPDATE

With the support of our community, the City is developing and implementing strategies to reduce the impact of government and community activities on our climate. The goal is to create a healthy, vibrant, safe and equitable home for current and future generations, as promised in Bellingham's Legacies and Strategic Commitments.

You can learn more about the City's climate work and sign up for email updates at cob.org/climate. Here are some key updates.

Climate Policy approval process

Since April 2020 staff completed prioritizing the 145 climate actions from the Climate Action Plan and Climate Task Force Report. The result of this work is a 2021 Implementation Plan, presented by staff to City Council on Feb. 8, 2021.

The annual Implementation Plan connects work across all departments and includes tasks such as exploring a policy for electrification of new buildings, developing a Clean Energy Fund to help pay for new programs, enhanced community education and engagement, and much more.

Electric Vehicle infrastructure grant

In January, the City was awarded a \$1.5 million grant from the Washington State Department of Commerce to be used for installation of new electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure across Bellingham. The City will contribute \$500,000 in grant match from the voter-approved Transportation Fund to bring the total investment to \$2 million. Our goal is to install EV charging infrastructure at approximately 27 sites across Bellingham.

Community Solar Program

The City's Water Treatment Plant in Whatcom Falls Park was selected by Puget Sound Energy (PSE) to receive a solar array as part of PSE's Community Solar Program. The program allows customers who are unable to install solar on their own homes to share in the costs and benefits of new solar capacity. The new solar array will be a significant addition to what is already on the roof of the Water Treatment Plant. PSE's Community Solar program will likely be available to the community later in 2021.

Green Direct Program

The City now purchases 100% of its municipal energy from a newly constructed large wind project in Klickitat County through PSE's Green Direct Program. City staff are researching how to provide renewable energy for the whole community.

TO LEARN MORE, VISIT cob.org/climate

Library Remodel Project

Beginning in July 2020, and continuing through late Spring 2021, the Bellingham Public Library Central Branch has undergone a Main Floor Remodel project encompassing 20,000-square-feet under the guidance of Bellingham Public Works, Tiger Construction and RMC Architects. The revisions include improved electrical capacity to support personal digital devices, improved public seating area, new public computer area, new teen area, new study rooms and Skill Share area, new staff work space, new LED lighting, updated public elevator and two public restrooms added on the main floor.

"In addition to improved efficiency for our staff, the impact of the physical remodel with new paint, carpet, furnishings and layout will be an emotional boost to our community, demonstrating the high value we place on reading and learning. This boost is especially important as we come out of this difficult pandemic," said Library Director Rebecca Judd.



Bellingham Public Library ranks extremely high in use per capita compared to the state average. The Central Library was originally built in 1950 and was last remodeled in 1985. In 2019, the Central Library welcomed 630,000 visits with patrons borrowing 1.2 million items and attending more than 1,000 programs.

MORE INFO: bellingshampubliclibrary.org