



WINTER 2022

INSIDE Bellingham

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Photo by Annika Holland



Climate Actions a Priority in the New Year

By Mayor Seth Fleetwood

As we begin a New Year, significant actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, increase resilience to climate change impacts, and serve vulnerable populations will be at the forefront of our work, including:

- Investing \$5 million in federal American Rescue Plan funds in electric heating, cooling and ventilation systems in municipal buildings, creating places for people to find relief during extreme weather and smoke;
- Requiring that all new housing projects using federal American Rescue Plan funds be fully electric when constructed;

- Championing requirements that new commercial and large multi-family buildings use electricity for space and water heating and take other steps to improve energy efficiency;
- Seeking public feedback about placing a Climate Action Fund initiative before voters, to increase public funding necessary to achieve our ambitious climate goals.

These steps are in addition to other projects already underway.

We're doing the work that every community in the world should be doing. It is an exciting time as we take bold actions to meet our climate goals and continue the important work of building a sustainable, equitable, thriving city.

Learn more, sign up for updates: cob.org/climate



INSIDE

- 2 GARDENVIEW TINY HOUSE VILLAGE OPENS
- 3 NEW LAWS REDUCE SINGLE USE PLASTICS
- 4 WELCOME NEW & RETURNING COUNCIL MEMBERS

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 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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SAFE, SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITY FORMING

Gardenview Tiny House Village Opens

A safe, supportive community is forming at Gardenview Tiny House Village, located on City property near the intersection of Woburn Street and Lakeway Drive. The village serves people experiencing homelessness, emphasizing services for seniors and people who are medically fragile and welcomes individuals, couples, and people with pets.



▲ Gardenview Tiny House Village includes onsite managers and services

This tiny house village joins other new shelter services available in Bellingham this winter, including the Lighthouse Mission Ministry's Base Camp overflow shelter and a young adult winter shelter at Civic Field operated by Northwest Youth Services.

"We have made progress on expanding shelter options that are healthy, safe, and offer services to help people transition into permanent housing," Bellingham Mayor Seth Fleetwood said. "We talk a lot about the continuum of housing and ensuring that the entire community enjoys the benefit and the right to have a home. We value the fact that the way to achieve housing for everybody is by creating permanent housing solutions. But there's a segment of our community that needs this kind of temporary shelter as a first step. We see this village as a critical service in the continuum of housing."

Gardenview Tiny House Village is a partnership between the City of Bellingham and non-profit organizations Low Income Housing Institute (LIHI) and Road2Home. The City is the primary funder for construction and operations, with staffing and services provided by LIHI and Road2Home. The village is staffed 24/7; a site manager ensures the village is safe and well-organized, and a case manager helps residents move as quickly as possible into permanent housing, as well as obtain employment, health care, and other services.

Each of the 30 tiny houses is 8' x 12', insulated, furnished, and has heat, electricity, windows, and a locking door. Twenty were purchased by Whatcom County and manufactured locally, the remainder built on-site by volunteers. The village also includes a community kitchen, hygiene facilities, craft room, staff offices, parking, and a security station at the entrance.

"We are building a community here in the village and enjoying the growth that comes from a stable place to shelter and a place for guests to call their own," Heidi Theisen, Gardenview case manager, said. "A guest shared that having a heated tiny home to return to each night overwhelms her with a sense of safety. Another guest shared that he is forever grateful for the chance to change his life and bring his elderly dog in out of the cold."

Community members are invited to support the village through numerous volunteer and donation opportunities. Contact info@road2home.org or visit road2home.org for details.



▶ Accessible tiny homes at Gardenview Tiny House Village

WINTER IS HERE

Snowfall in Bellingham, where winters are mostly mild, always raises questions about City snow and ice services: When does the City de-ice and plow streets and which ones come first? What responsibility do members of the public have for taking care of snowy sidewalks? Visit the City website for snow and ice related services, tips to help you prepare for winter, and more. cob.org/snow

STILL HAVE QUESTIONS?

AskPW@cob.org or (360) 778-7700

SWITCHING TO MONTHLY UTILITY BILLING

City of Bellingham utility customers will see their bills switch to monthly billing starting in early 2022. Customers will receive one bill per month for their water, wastewater, and stormwater utility, rather than being billed every other month. Benefits to utility customers include consistent billing to help with financial planning and seeing usage more regularly. Utility customers will benefit from consistent monthly billing, to help with financial planning, and from seeing their usage more regularly. Detecting leaks and responding to increased usage faster saves money and helps conserve water.

The transition to monthly billing will begin in early 2022, and will take a couple months to reach all customers.

LEARN MORE:

- **Utility billing:** cob.org/finance or (360) 778-8011 or utilitybilling@cob.org
- **Water conservation:** cob.org/conserve or (360) 778-7700 or AskPW@cob.org.



New laws to reduce single-use plastics

Businesses and consumers saw some changes related to single-use plastics starting in fall 2021, and a few more started in 2022. A local ordinance adopted by the Bellingham City Council and two new state laws aim to reduce the production, consumption and waste of single-use plastics.

- **As of October 1, 2021, the state's new law (Senate Bill 5323) brought some minor changes that build on the existing local plastic bag ban that Bellingham passed in 2012: all retail businesses are now covered – including restaurants. If you wish to purchase a bag (paper or thicker plastic) they will now cost \$.08 each.**
- **On January 1, 2022, a second law went into effect (Senate Bill 5022) which will require customers to request plastic lids, utensils and condiments from food vendors rather**

than vendors automatically supplying these plastic items. The intent of this bill is for consumers to take only what they need or to opt out of single-use plastics entirely.

- **On July 31, 2022, a Bellingham ordinance will go into effect tackling multiple sources of single use plastics in the food service and lodging industries. This ordinance will require food vendors to use durable service ware and utensils when dining in and compostable products for takeout and delivery, as well as ban plastic straws and plastic packaging. Hotels and motels will no longer be able to stock rooms with single-use personal care product bottles.**

These new laws will focus on an education-first approach for enforcement. Learn more at cob.org/plastics.

Parking changes on the way

Strategic changes are planned for parking in downtown Bellingham and the Fairhaven core, after years of work by citizen committees and the City of Bellingham. In an effort to create efficiencies for those driving into Fairhaven and downtown, and to provide parking turnover for businesses in those locations, the Bellingham City Council is considering a series of proposed parking management strategies, including:

MANAGING PARKING SUPPLY-AND-DEMAND VIA:

- **More convenient ways to pay for parking**
- **Altering the time of enforcement**
- **Meter and permit rate increases (the first since 2008)**
- **Appropriate, effective enforcement**

REINVESTMENT OF PAID PARKING REVENUE FOR:

- **Improvement of public off-street parking, including the parking garage and lots**
- **Business district improvements, business and community event support through contracts with Downtown Bellingham Partnership and other organizations.**

Public feedback is an important part of the process. To learn more, ask questions or provide comments visit EngageBellingham.org/parking, call (360) 778-7700 or email AskPW@cob.org.



SINGLE-USE PLASTICS

What are single-use plastics? They are any plastic items used only once before they are thrown away or recycled. Examples include plastic packaging such as water bottles and food packaging, as well as bags, straws, and utensils. Single-use plastics are often unrecyclable and end up in landfills or worse – in our water. According to a Washington State Department of Ecology study, over 400,000 tons of plastic packaging are disposed of each year statewide.



TOP AWARD ANNOUNCEMENT

Kudos to the City's water treatment plant staff for producing some of the best drinking water in the state! The City of Bellingham recently received the TOP Gold Award from the Washington State Department of Health in recognition of ten years of water quality excellence.

COVID-19 UPDATES

In early 2022, City officials are continuing online meetings and services, offering some in-person services, and considering when to resume full in-person services. For the latest updates, visit cob.org/covid.

HOW'S YOUR INTERNET?

We want to know. Internet access is important and we're conducting a survey to help understand existing conditions related to broadband access, equity and affordability to inform future improvements. Take the survey today at cob.org/broadbandsurvey.



NEW YEAR, NEW COUNCIL

Welcome new and returning City Council members

Learn more about the Bellingham City Council at cob.org/council

YOUR 2022 BELLINGHAM CITY COUNCIL:



Kristina Michele Martens, newly elected to the At-Large position



Hannah Stone, continuing to represent the 1st Ward



Hollie Huthman, former At-Large representative, newly elected to represent the 2nd Ward



Daniel Hammill, continuing to represent the 3rd Ward



Edwin H. "Skip" Williams, newly elected to represent the 4th Ward



Lisa Anderson, continuing to represent the 5th Ward



Michael Lilliquist, re-elected to represent the 6th Ward

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE

We said farewell to former City Council members Pinky Vargas and Gene Knutson at the end of 2021. To hear all the kind words spoken and resolutions adopted in their honor, view the December 13, 2021, City Council regular meeting at meetings.cob.org

GENE KNUTSON served 28 years (1994-2021) as 2nd Ward representative, completing his final term in office as the longest-serving City Council member in Bellingham history.

PINKY VARGAS served eight years (2014-2021) as 4th Ward representative.



Lehigh Pier extends over Bellingham Bay at Little Squalicum Park



City acquires portion of pier at Little Squalicum Park

An "incredible asset," the pier will be improved for public use

Long sought after for public access, the City recently accepted the donation of a portion of the Lehigh Pier, which extends over Bellingham Bay at Little Squalicum Park.

"This incredible asset will provide our community with an unprecedented waterfront experience from the north end of Bellingham Bay, including spectacular views of the bay, the City and Mount Baker," said Mayor Seth Fleetwood. "Many of us have championed and supported

this acquisition for a long time. I am thrilled we will be able to preserve and improve this iconic structure and I look forward to the day it opens to the public."

The City negotiated and approved a no-cost transfer of the majority of the former industrial pier from Lehigh Northwest Cement Company. The inner section of the pier transferred to the City is 1,200 feet long and 14 feet wide. Lehigh Northwest Cement Company is retaining and responsible

for demolishing 600 feet of the outer section of the pier and an associated pipe supply line.

Structural and environmental improvements will make the City's portion of the pier accessible to the public, with construction tentatively anticipated in 2023 or 2024.

Improvements are estimated to cost \$4.5 million, expected to be funded by Greenways, park impact fees and grant funds.