

City of Bellingham Candidates

Editor's Note: Local citizens, with expertise in transportation, biking and Lake Whatcom issues, provided these questions. Whatcom Watch conducted the survey. Candidates reviewed their statements before printing. Responses were not edited by Whatcom Watch.

1. Are you willing to make the preservation and restoration of Lake Whatcom one of your top three priorities? Please explain.

2. In November of 2008, the Washington State Department of Ecology released the report Lake Whatcom Watershed Total Phosphorus and Bacteria Total Maximum Daily Loads: Water Quality Study Findings, November 2008 (<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/biblio/0803024.html>).

3. Do you have a plan for funding the needed complex stormwater treatment and other restoration projects in the watershed to comply with state's requirements? Please explain.

Based on its requirements for compliance, what legislation would you implement first to address the study's recommendations, and what can citizens do right now to help protect Lake Whatcom, i.e., how would you integrate citizen volunteers into the city's efforts to preserve and protect the lake?

Bellingham City Council — Ward 6



Catherine Chambers

1. Yes, I will make protecting Lake Whatcom one of my top three priorities. The health of the lake is at a critical state with increased levels of phosphorus. Organic wastes such as leaves, grass clippings and dead plants remove dissolved oxygen from the water. Therefore, it is important to maintain the watershed lands through land acquisition, conservation easements, transferable development rights, purchase of development rights and lot consolidation to mitigate the impact on the lake.

2. Unless there is cooperation with the community regarding lowering phosphorus levels, legislation will not have the desired impact. I have developed a volunteer program called "Adopt the Lake," which includes patrolling and education about the lake. I would support a ban the use of tri-sodium phosphates in the Watershed Areas and develop new ideas related to acquiring land in the watershed to prevent further development such as creating a lakeside buffer area.

3. Restoration projects will be expensive and TDR has not provided much measurable results. One idea is the formation of sub-flood control zone district for Lake Whatcom with additional funding from the existing county-wide flood control zone. New development fees through system development charges and public works trust fund loans may also provide needed revenue as well as federal and state storm water project grants. Continued collaboration of the city, county, water and sewer district is needed.



Michael Lilliquist

1. Yes, protecting our drinking water will be one of my top priorities. With each passing year, water quality declines and the cost of restoration increases. Acting now is both cheaper and wiser. As vice chair of the Watershed Advisory Board and as member of the Lake Whatcom Technical Review Taskforce, I have come to understand the challenges that we face and I'm ready to support solutions that will work.

2. The study tells us that, to comply with federal and state law, the watershed must be restored to a functional state equivalent to a naturally forested condition. This means a comprehensive stormwater control on both public and private lands. The revised Silver Beach ordinance addresses run-off from private residences, and I would advocate for policies to reduce street widths, to create linear rain gardens in city rights-of-way, and to move away from storm vaults.

3. Increasing watershed and utility fees are not the best option in the present economic climate, although that time may come. I would favor a re-organization and re-direction of Public Works to dedicate resources to Lake protection efforts. We can use existing street and stormwater funds to retrofit our roads and rights of way to serve as stormwater control assets. I would also look for funding from the Puget Sound Initiative and federal sources.



Christopher Morrison

1. Yes. My priority is to make sure there is an open dialogue with all stakeholders, especially the county council. I will make sure the city works to prevent road water runoff from entering the lake, and I will also work with residents to help them prevent runoff through measures such as residential drainfields. I will also put together a coalition of residents, businesses and state and local government to provide support and resources to accomplish these goals.

2. The city should be the lead government agency in crafting legislation and work closely with the county and state to devise a framework of collaboration. The city should immediately implement education efforts to help residents reduce use of household products containing phosphorus, with eventual legislation to eliminate phosphorus use in the watershed. The city should also implement citizen outreach focused on alternative pollution prevention methods, such as instream processes that reduces phosphorus loading in tributaries.

3. Currently, Lake Whatcom is included in state funds earmarked to clean up Puget Sound. In crafting a framework, all agencies – state, county and city – will need to contribute and designate funding mechanisms. A component of community outreach should be the dialogue of how the users of the watershed want to fund clean-up and prevention efforts.

Continued from previous page installers, recycling sorters and photovoltaic cell salespeople—along with the businesspersons behind them—can all look forward to bright and potentially lucrative futures.

This view is shared by the Solar Energy Industries Association, which predicts that the stimulus will help create some 119,000 jobs in the American solar sector alone before the end of 2010. Employers from solar cell manufacturers to green building materials retailers to wind farm maintenance firms to recycling haulers to energy auditors will likewise be looking to swell their ranks of employees with relevant skills.

The federal government

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Suggestions for Sustainable Transportation Planning: Bellingham's Waterfront Redevelopment

Editor's Note: The former Georgia-Pacific property was initially called New Whatcom. Since the draft environmental impact statement was issued, the name has been changed from New Whatcom to The Waterfront District.

by Preston L. Schiller

The terms "sustainable" and "sustainability" are much in the public vocabulary these days, although they seem vulnerable to frequent misuse. Those interested in environmental and community sustainability might want to pay attention to how transportation planning proceeds in the proposals to redevelop the former G-P site along Bellingham's downtown waterfront. As the recent *Whatcom Watch* articles by Wes Frysztacki (June 2009, page 4) and Dan Burwell (page 2 of this issue) indicate, waterfront official transportation planning to date, especially on the part of the Port, could be substantially improved in its relation to broader environmental and community access concerns.

Preston L. Schiller is a Bellingham resident who participates in the Bellingham Sustainable Transportation Roundtable. For more information about the Roundtable please contact Wes Frysztacki, wf@weslin.net

If done well, transportation planning could enhance the few remaining historic buildings — to remind present and future generations of local history — promote sustainable modes for travel to, from and within the site, minimize impervious surfaces and connect well to the rest of Bellingham. If done poorly, it will destroy heritage, spread a great deal of asphalt, generate large amounts of polluting traffic, create a disconnected "island" and foil efforts to preserve green space and an enjoyable waterfront accessible to the whole community.

- Priority in transportation planning for Waterfront Redevelopment (former G-P site and related) should be bicycle-pedestrian-transit access and amenity — including safety. It should stress maximum preservation and reuse of historic structures.
- Motor vehicle accommodation (other than transit) should be minimized and carefully managed. This is especially true of space and resource wasters such as parking.
- Streets that are deemed to be essential should be carefully planned with minimal lane widths and generous accommodation of pedestrians and bicyclists. They should be designed for traffic calming and the discouragement of through traffic.
- The main transportation connection to WWU's main campus should

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4. The city of Bellingham and the Port of Bellingham have been in disagreement over street design for the former Georgia-Pacific property site. The port favors larger streets and more parking than the city appears to favor. The port proposes approximately 12,000 parking spaces (more than Bellis Fair, downtown, and WWU combined parking spaces).

What mitigation measures would you propose to reduce the automobile dependence for New Whatcom/The Waterfront District?

5. The Whatcom Smart Trips program is the pre-eminent trip reduction program nationwide and yet the city reduced its funding for the program in 2009 and has not committed to funding the program in 2010.

What is your position on Whatcom Smart Trips?

6. The Cornwall Avenue bike lane project was reduced in length despite strong community support and strong supporting language in the comprehensive plan.

Please explain your position on bike lanes.

Bellingham City Council — Ward 6



Catherine Chambers

4. I support the use of the traditional grid which would require less traffic for trucks to bring in fill and lower the cost of construction. I favor the development of public transportation "small bus" routes which would run in a loop between downtown and the waterfront. I also support using already existing parking areas as park and rides for tourists and possible development of another parking structure if needed.

5. It is unfortunate that funding for this program was reduced. Funding should be returned as the economy improves. The collaboration with business reduces the need for use of vehicles, improves facilities on site and makes smart trips attractive to employees. Benefits to participants include local business discounts and prizes. Currently some of the difficulties with the project include an inability to log more than one trip at a time and leaving out everyone under 18.

6. I support the use of bike lanes as a means to provide safety both for drivers and bicyclists. I am pleased with the compromise that was reached to maintain parking between York and Ohio St. The reduced parking would have seriously impacted local business. When parking is removed it is crucial to provide clear cross walks for pedestrians. I would support funding bike lanes by including the cost into infrastructure repairs.



Michael Lilliquist

4. One key to better transportation is better land use: Create opportunities to live, work, and play within walking distance of each other. This includes mixed-use development, pedestrian, cyclist and transit-oriented design that encourages, without forcing, less reliance on cars, and therefore less need to provide parking on every Waterfront site. By doing so, we can reduce parking requirements. The blueprint for these patterns of development can be made early in the master planning process.

5. Smart Trips is a great program. A recent in-depth study found significant portion of trips taken by Bellingham residents are short enough for walking or bicycling, or can be met with nearby WTA "Go" routes. Two years ago, the City set a goal of reducing our community's car trips by providing convenient and safe opportunities. In my personal experience, I have found it surprisingly easy to add a few non-car trips to my life.

6. I am a strong supporter of marked bike lanes, because not all bike routes are made equal. Some of our bike routes exist more on maps than in reality, and bicycling in the traffic lane can be intimidating for both bicyclists and motorists. I think we also need to look at bike lanes through secondary streets and residential areas, which may be sometimes safer and as effective as putting bike lanes on busy arterials.



Christopher Morrison

4. The downtown business district and the cultural district need to extend to the waterfront, and an integral part of that is the incorporation of pedestrian, bicycle and mass transit alternatives. The transition from Maritime Heritage Park to the former G-P site should include a wide sidewalk, designated bike lanes and accessible mass transit.

5. Smart Trips prevented 255 tons of carbon monoxide from being emitted into our atmosphere in the last four years. We need to find creative solutions to continue funding this important program. I have collaborated with Whatcom Transit Authority and they have done a great job with the new downtown and Cordata bus terminals. Now is the time to promote mass transit. As growth happens in our city, we need to mandate inclusion of all modes of transportation.

6. Within the Central Business District there should not be bike lanes. Outside that district, however, bike lanes should always be included along with good sidewalks. If we are to promote bicycling in our community, we need a commitment to bike lanes, especially when the city is improving streets. It is also important for bicyclists to honor the laws of the downtown business district.

Suggestions for Sustainable Transportation Planning: Bellingham's Waterfront Redevelopment

be for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit - not for personal motor vehicles. There are several interesting transit options, including an electrified trolley bus — possibly powered by a "green" source generated at the redevelopment site. Such an option could address the steep grade issues between the site and the main campus. It might be a significant attraction for other redevelopment site users and visitors as the aerial tram connecting Portland's Health Sciences Center and its waterfront-downtown streetcar line demonstrates.

- The connections between the former G-P site, the CBD (Central Business District), and public amenities to the south must be carefully considered so as to maximize walking, bicycling, and transit use while providing for a smooth transition between the CBD core and its adjacent neighborhoods rather than an isolating discontinuity.
- The city and port of Bellingham should seriously consider, especially after environmental conditions have been thoroughly assessed, dedicating a significant portion of the site (at least 20 acres) to a mixed-use development de-emphasizing personal automobile ownership and access. Such a site could work well with major partners such as WWU as well as providing a live-in clientele for many services and commercial ventures in the existing CBD and the forthcoming redevelopment.

The best example of eco-friendly redevelopment can be found in Freiburg, Germany, the "environmental capital" of Europe (<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/12/science/earth/12suburb.html>). A development influenced by Freiburg's planning is being proposed in Hayward, California, for a site that could serve both the campus of Cal State Hayward and the CBD (<http://www.alternet.org/story/140822/>). Sounds like Bellingham should have a look. **W**



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itself is also in on the recovery effort beyond doling out the money. According to the official Recovery Act website, the General Services Administration's Public Building Service will invest \$5.55 billion in federal building projects, "including \$4.5 billion to transform federal facilities into exemplary high-performance green buildings, \$750 million to renovate and construct new federal offices and courthouses, and \$300 million to construct and renovate border stations." About \$1 billion worth of projects will be undertaken—a boon for everyone in the building industry, including construction workers, electricians, plumbers, air condition-

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