

# **Salish Current**

*Independent, fact-based news for Whatcom, San Juan and Skagit counties*

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— Amy Nelson, Publisher, and Mike Sato, Managing Editor

**Salish Current affirms its commitment to work for truth, justice, equality and healing for all people.  
#SayTheirNames #BlackLivesMatter #NoJusticeNoPeace**

## **News from the Salish Current, week of Oct. 3, 2021**

### **'Food hub plus' part of ambitious collaboration to meet housing and food needs**



*A load of Cairnspring Mills flour is headed for the Community Loaves donation project, for which hundreds of volunteer bakers will donate thousands of high-protein sandwich loaves per month to food banks locally, regionally and in Oregon and Idaho.*

**By Lane Morgan** — A complex housing and food resources proposal for the Bellingham waterfront aims to employ a fusion of community and economic development in "a once in a lifetime opportunity" to meet local food supply needs — with the help of local farmers and suppliers. ([Read more.](#))

## Community Voices / Voting is what constructs a democracy: be a voter



*There's no need to dump tea in the harbor these days: American citizens make changes by being informed and exercising the right to vote. Both voting and the preservation of safe voting processes are mainstays in retaining democracy, writes a League of Women Voters commentator.*

**By Robin Bailey** — Voting is what constructs a democracy, and elections have consequences, with decisions made at the local level having direct effects around planning, housing, police, fire, parks, transportation and public works.

People vote to make changes they think are necessary by putting people in office or by voting for or against issues. ([Read more.](#))

## News from around the region

### Health and Safety

As of Sept. 30, Whatcom County had its worst month in number of cases and hospitalizations since the pandemic began with 2,218 confirmed cases, 132 hospitalizations and 18 COVID-related deaths.

([Bellingham Herald/paywall](#))

As of Sept. 27, Skagit County recorded its third-highest number of cases in a month, its second-highest number of deaths in a month and its highest number of hospitalizations since the pandemic reached here in March 2020. ([Anacortes American/paywall](#))

In-person classes at Lynden Christian School were moved to remote learning by its school board for two weeks in an agreement with the Whatcom County Health Department which found that the school has seen uncontrolled disease transmission due to “limited adherence” to state requirements for in-person learning. ([Whatcom County Health Department](#))

Whatcom County 10/1//21 [COVID ActNow](#) Very High risk; 28.5/100K; 68.7% vaccinated

San Juan County 10/1/21 [COVID ActNow](#) Medium risk; 8.1/100K; 77.2% vaccinated

Skagit County 9/24/21 [COVID ActNow](#) Very High risk; 49.0/100K; 63.5% vaccinated

### Government

#### San Juan County

The County Council met on Sept. 28. [Agenda items](#) included:

The Council voted unanimously to adopt the Planning Commission recommendation on the [2021 Docket](#) and deferred on pursuing a build-out analysis.

The Council was briefed on the status of compliant vacation rental permits and the Oct. 15 virtual [public hearing](#) by the Planning Commission on establishing a vacation rental permit cap of 650 permits countywide based on the number of permits compliant as of July 31, 2021.

The Council voted unanimously to approve a \$22,800 contract with consultants Shea, Carr & Jewell, Inc. to conduct comprehensive plan pop-ups and open houses for outreach and public participation.

The Council will meet again on Oct. 5.

### City of Bellingham

The Bellingham City Council met on Sept. 27. [Agenda items](#) included:

After a public hearing, the Council left in place an emergency ordinance renewing and extending a moratorium on the processing of applications for detached single-family development in multi-family zones.

After a public hearing, the Council voted unanimously to direct the Planning Committee to discuss and hold a work session on amendments to the comprehensive plan and municipal code for the residential-multi project.

After a public hearing, the Council voted unanimously to amend the Bellingham Municipal Code to allow for up to three one-year renewals for temporary homeless shelters beyond the currently allowed maximum of two years at any one shelter site.

The Mayor announced that the City of Bellingham recognizes Oct. 11 as Coast Salish Day and will be partnering with local educational institutions to promote a virtual Indigenous People's Day event from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Kurt Nabbefeld, Development Services Manager, reported to the Council that Northwest Youth Services submitted an application to construct a small interim housing unit on 36th Street and, after the necessary review process was completed, a permit was issued for the facility.

The Council unanimously approved giving priority in spending American Rescue Plan funds on housing and food security in homelessness, economic recovery with an emphasis on tourism and childcare, and climate resiliency and carbon reduction.

The Council unanimously approved a resolution affirming that racism is a public health crisis.

The Council voted unanimously to ratify and confirm the [mediated settlement](#) between the City of Bellingham and Judge Debra Lev.

The Council will meet again on Oct. 11.

## Whatcom County

The Whatcom County Council met on Sept. 28. [Agenda items](#) included:

AB2021-414 The ordinance granting Cascade Natural Gas Corporation a franchise for the transportation of natural gas in Whatcom County was withdrawn.

AB2021-359 The Council voted 4-3 (Kershner, Byrd, Elenbaas opposed) to accept the Whatcom County Wildlife Advisory Committee's recommendation to designate the Western Toad (also known as boreal toad) (*Anaxyrus* [formerly *Bufo*] *boreas*), the Coastal Tailed Frog (*Ascaphus truei*), and Townsend's Big-Eared Bat (*Coryrhinus townsendii*) as "Species of Local Importance"

AB2021-513 The Council voted 6-1 (Byrd opposed) to authorize the County Executive to enter into a [transfer option agreement](#) between Whatcom County and Opportunity Council for the property located at Laurel and Forest streets for the appraised amount of \$1,230,000

AB2021-562 The Council voted 4-3 (Kershner, Byrd, Elenbaas opposed) to authorize the County Executive to enter into a [contract amendment](#) between Whatcom County and G6 Hospitality Group to extend the agreement for a quarantine and isolation facility for an additional three months.

AB2021-545 The Council voted 5-2 (Kershner, Elenbaas opposed) to authorize the County Executive to enter into an [Interlocal Grant Agreement](#) between Whatcom County and the Administrative Office of the Courts to reimburse Whatcom County for extraordinary costs associated with the Blake decision in the amount of \$1,790,621

AB2021-209 The Council voted unanimously approving a [resolution](#) regarding permanent affordability of childcare in Whatcom County

AB2021-525 The Council voted unanimously to approve a [request for proposals \(RFP\)](#) for independent review of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic

The Council will meet again on Oct. 12.

## Port of Bellingham

The Oct. 5 meeting of the Bellingham Port Commission is cancelled. The next scheduled meeting is Oct. 19.

Update: On Sept. 30, Mike Hogan, Port public affairs administrator wrote via email: "The Port has received a signed Restated and Amended MDA from Harcourt and we are now working on finalizing one of the last exhibits and will complete a few internal administrative steps to finalize and fully execute the agreement. We expect to have a fully executed agreement in the next week or so and I will make sure to let you know when this happens."

## Elections

Evelyn Hopf of Blaine, Darcy Lynn Hocker of Maple Falls, Joseph Grant of Bellingham and Gig Harbor-based Washington Election Integrity Coalition United (WEiCU) filed suit Sept. 10 in Whatcom County Superior Court alleging that video footage shows an election worker under Whatcom County auditor Diana Bradrick's supervision tampering with ballots and that Bradrick and Whatcom County government committed election fraud during the November 2020 election. ([The Northern Light](#))

The Bellingham-Whatcom County League of Women Voters will host [virtual candidate forums](#) on Oct. 5, Whatcom County Council; Oct. 7, Ferndale City Council and Ferndale School District; and Oct. 8, Bellingham City Council and Bellingham School District.

The Washington State Redistricting Commission released proposed Congressional District maps this week. View the maps as proposed by the legislative caucus appointees and make your comments [here](#). Commissioners — two Democratic and two Republican appointees — just submitted their proposed new voting district lines: What's at stake? ([Crosscut](#))

## Nature

Billions of dollars have been spent in research and habitat restoration to recover threatened Puget Sound chinook, and the state's Salmon Recovery Funding Board this week announced another \$21 million in grant funding for various projects primarily targeting chinook. The state Department of Fish and Wildlife announced an effort to expand upon chinook conservation and restoration plans. ([Skaqit Valley Herald/paywall](#))

The fourth Asian giant hornet nest, found nearly 20 feet up in an alder tree in east Blaine, was eradicated last week by the Washington State Department of Agriculture. ([The Northern Light](#))

If you like to watch: A time-lapse film of the four-month process deconstructing the dam on the Middle Fork of the Nooksack River to restore 16 miles of habitat for threatened salmon and steelhead. ([Outside](#))

## Business

Since Phil Riise, owner of Seaview Boatyard North, spent about \$500,000 to improve his stormwater management system at his Bellingham and Seattle boatyards, pollution levels have been much lower. Stricter rules improve water quality and benefit marine life, but they can also put boatyards out of business, since they have to pay for consulting and equipment, local industry members say. ([Bellingham Herald/paywall](#))

The Olympic Pipe Line Co. proposes to cut out a portion of an existing petroleum product pipeline where erosion has left it exposed where it crosses Colony Creek in Bow and to install a new segment of pipeline 10 feet to the west. ([Skaqit Valley Herald/paywall](#))

The Anacortes City Council unanimously approved the second phase of the clearing and grading of shoreline in Fidalgo Bay east of the Q Avenue roundabout by MJB Properties for an ongoing

development project on 28 acres for townhouses, condos and senior living as well as a hotel and event center on an accessible waterfront. ([Anacortes American/paywall](#))

Following a hot and dry summer, Skagit farmers report smaller yields of cool-weather crops such as potatoes and spinach seed, while many corn and grain crops fared well and Skagit berries were spared from the worst of the heat in part due to cooler, maritime weather. ([Skagit Valley Herald/paywall](#))

## **Community**

The State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration has acknowledged Whatcom County and the level of community support for refugee resettlement by approving in mid-September Whatcom County as one of the first new proposed World Relief sites. ([Whatcom Refugee Project](#))

The Skagit County Board of Commissioners voted unanimously Thursday to implement a sales tax increase applied to the county's towns and unincorporated areas that will generate an estimated \$3.3 million annually for subsidized housing construction, operations, maintenance and homeless services. ([Skagit Valley Herald/paywall](#))

## **Arts and Leisure**

Cascadia International Women's Film Festival presents on Oct. 3 at the Boundary Bay Beer Garden a screening of "The Donut King," a rags-to-riches story of Ted, a refugee escaping Cambodia, who arrived in America in 1975 and built an unlikely multi-million-dollar empire baking America's favorite pastry: the donut. [Admission](#) is by suggested donation of \$10.

Join the 2021 [Whatcom Artist Studio tour](#), a free, self-guided tour Oct. 2-3 and 9-8, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. See sculpture, glass, jewelry, painting and more. Meet the artists and learn more about their inspiration and techniques in creating their works of art.

"Future Artifacts" at the [Museum of Northwest Art](#) features work by Lummi Nation glass artist Dan Friday, who draws from cultural themes and uses modern processes — while still maintaining basic Native American qualities. Through 10/10.

## **Jump in!**

A Bellingham March and Rally for Abortion Justice will be held Oct. 2 at 2 p.m. beginning and ending at Bellingham City Hall. ([Indivisible Bellingham](#))

The Nooksack Tribe hosts a Zoom public climate action forum on Oct. 14 featuring Harriet Morgan from the University of Washington Climate Impacts Group speaking on climate adaptation actions and ways the community can help. Get more information on the [Nooksack Tribe's Climate Adaptation Plan](#) and [register for the forum](#).

Orca Recovery Day is celebrated Oct. 16 with a beach cleanup on Lummi Island hosted by the Lummi Island Heritage Trust, with virtual and "hands-on" restoration events hosted by the San Juan Islands

Conservation District and San Juan County Land Bank, with a riparian restoration on the Samish River hosted by the Skagit Land Trust, and with a planting at Presenting Park hosted by the Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group. ([Better Ground/Puget Sound Conservation Districts](#))

**Nonprofit *Salish Current* is Women and Minority Led.**

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