



News from the *Salish Current* for the week ending Jan. 22, 2021:

## [The future arrives on the Bellingham Bay waterfront](#)



The preliminary site plan in a [Dec. 8 presentation by the developer](#) to the port commission shows the planned layout of the buildings. The first three to be built will be the waterfront condos, at the top of the image.

By *Alex Meacham* — After more than a decade of discussion, planning and cleanup of an industrial waste site, the city’s partnership with the port and a contract with a Dublin-based company are putting the waterfront’s future on the ground. First will come high-end waterfront condos, then multi-generation housing, hotel, restaurants, and recreation and office facilities. Meet your future, City of Subdued Excitement. [\(read more here\)](#)

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## [Oil train derailment in Whatcom County drives home transport risk concerns](#)



Fires continued into the night when 10 cars of a 108-car train carrying Bakken crude oil derailed in northern Whatcom County near the Cherry Point refineries on Dec. 22. State, tribal and county leaders are among those expressing concerns about accountability as well as future risks. (Washington State Department of Ecology photo)

By *Kimberly Cauvel* — When an oil train derailed in a fiery crash in Custer in December, about 29,000 gallons of the cargo was spilled. Some of it burned, some of it was vacuumed onto container trucks along with firefighting

foam and water, and some of it settled into the soil. Up to about 8,000 gallons remain unaccounted for, according to numbers the state Department of Ecology released Tuesday, three weeks after the incident. ([read more here](#))

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## **Community Voices:**

### **Cascadia's media ecosystem connects our cross-border bioregion**



*By Derek Moscato* — A recent report calling for continued investment in high-speed rail between Oregon and British Columbia reminds us that innovative thinking for the Cascadia corridor can potentially meet regional livability needs and address long-term carbon emission targets. ([read more here](#))

*The views expressed in the essays, analyses and opinions as Community Voices are those of the author exclusively and not those of Salish Current.*

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## **Letters to the Editor:**

- "McClatchy journalist thanks"
- "Declaiming the big lie"

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

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## **News from around the region:**

### **Health and Safety**

- Whatcom County residents this week have jammed the phone lines of local providers for hours in response to the broadening of vaccination eligibility. ([Bellingham Herald](#))

### **Education**

- Western Washington University has extended online learning through spring and summer 2021 for the majority of classes. Only research and experiential classes will take place on-site. ([Western Front](#))
- The San Juan School District's Food for Thought food distribution program provides nutritional meals to all San Juan Island children between ages 1-18 whether or not they are enrolled in the district. ([San Juan Journal](#))

## Government

- Skagit County is finally on a timeline to adopt an updated Shoreline Master Plan that's as old as 1976. ([Skagit Scoop](#)) Online public meetings scheduled for Feb. 11, March 11 and April 8 at 6 p.m. Register at [skagitcountysmp.squarespace.com](http://skagitcountysmp.squarespace.com)
- San Juan County completed its periodic review of its Shoreline Master Plan and adopted amendments which were approved by the state Department of Ecology. The changes go into offer Feb. 4. ([San Juan County/San Juan Update](#))

## Bellingham

- The Bellingham City Council will meet on Jan. 25 at 7 p.m. Items [on its agenda](#) include:
- WWU Presentation on [2020 City Residential Survey](#) Read: [Residential Survey Executive Summary](#)

## Whatcom County

- The Whatcom County Council will meet on Jan. 26 at 6 p.m. Items [on its agenda](#) include:
- [\[AB2021-029\]](#) Resolution affirming the PDR Oversight Committee ranking and authorizing Whatcom County Purchase and Development Rights Program Administrator and Whatcom County Executive to proceed with the acquisition of conservation easements on the Lakeland Foundation, Jones-Bishop, Martin, VanderWerff, Kiera-Duffy Forestry, and Kiera-Duffy Ecological applications
- [\[AB2021-068\]](#) Council appointment to fill vacancies on the Child and Family Well-Being Task Force - Applicant(s): Debbie Ahl, Jenifer Barcott, Chris Cochran, Clara Cunningham, Jen Curlett, Ray Deck III, Jamie Desmul, Tilda Doughty, Mike Ford, Urvasi Graham, Anne Granberg, Jodi Greene, Alicia Hanning, Melissa Isenhardt, Julee Johnson, Mara Kelley, Sarah Kidd, Monika Mahal, Tamara Mattson, Jean McMahan, Brian Nelson, Katherine Orłowski, Pauline Owen, Elizabeth Page, Rosalva Santos-Guzman, Abby Smith, Erin Smith, Alisha Spencer, Liz Stuart, Tess Tessler, Ann M. Welch

## Port of Bellingham

- Port of Bellingham Commissioners met [on Jan. 19](#):
  - Executive Director Rob Fix said they are working on getting a brewery, food trucks, and a stage on the waterfront by summer 2021.
  - The port has added the state's [vaccine phase finder website link](#) to the port's website.

## Nature

- Last week's high tide and strong winds threw some driftwood and beach rock onto Birch Bay Drive and the parking spots near Bay Breeze Restaurant and Bar, but according to Whatcom County Public Works, the berm protected the roadway from a storm similar to one in 2018 that caused major damage. ([The Northern Light](#))

## Business

- According to real estate broker Merri Ann Simonsen, the 2020 year-end sales dollar volume for the real estate market in San Juan County per the Northwest Multiple Listing Service was \$466,709,745 a 55% increase over 2019's \$299,854,773 volume. The county closed an average of 55 transactions per month which is a 48% increase over last year. ([San Juan Update](#))
- COVID-19 has forced cancellation of the Skagit River Eagle Festival for the first time in its history. ([Skagit Valley Herald/paywall](#))
- Save the Shaw Store, a newly formed nonprofit, is raising money to purchase the property and ensure it continues on as a community benefit in perpetuity. ([Save the Shaw Store Board of Directors](#))
- Aramark, the company which is contacted for dining services at Western Washington University, will begin on March 15 to lay off 183 employees. ([Bellingham Herald](#))

## Community

- Over a dozen young people held Green New Deal banners and social justice signs on the Railroad Trail Pedestrian Bridge over I-5 in Bellingham Thursday afternoon as part of the Sunrise National Day of Action. The local strike was organized by the Bellingham Chapter (Hub) of the Sunrise Youth Climate Movement. (Photo: Ben Beckle)
- Protesters on Friday blocked Bellingham city efforts to clean up the city hall grounds where temporary camps have been erected. The protests included harassment of journalists and others not to film, take photographs or document the protest on public property.
- Local author and activist Clyde Ford leads a discussion, "Let's Talk about Race," on Jan. 25 from 6-7 p.m. with the goal of gaining tools to engage in honest, transparent and meaningful conversations about race. Register at <https://wcls.libcal.com/event/7219208>.
- Storming the Sound, a conference for environmental educators in the north Puget Sound region, will be held online on Jan. 25 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Teachers, environmental organizations and students are welcome to attend. Register at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/storming-the-sound-tickets-132112926319>
- The 19th annual Wings Over Water Northwest Birding Festival will be online with live webinars, prerecorded presentations and fieldtrips from March 19 to March 20 focused on birds in the Blaine area. ([The Northern Light](#))

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*Salish Current is a nonpartisan, nonprofit, online local news organization serving Whatcom, San Juan and Skagit Counties. Salish Current exists to protect and improve democratic governance by reporting and curating local news with independence and strict journalistic integrity.*

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