

Salish Current

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

News from the *Salish Current* for the week ending July 10, 2020:

[Former Public Market on fast track for refit as emergency shelter](#)



A building with a past — and a future: 1530 Cornwall Avenue in Bellingham has housed grocery stores, an indoor playground, a carpet store and other businesses. Very soon, in its next chapter, it will provide a safe shelter for people experiencing homelessness during the COVID-19 pandemic.

By Max Brunt

— The City of Bellingham, Whatcom County and Lighthouse Mission Ministries are working to meet a July 15 deadline for refurbishing the former Public Market building at 1530 Cornwall Avenue into a "Base Camp" facility that can provide adequate care for area residents needing housing that enables following social distancing guidelines. An estimated 715 residents of Whatcom County are experiencing homelessness, noted Lighthouse Mission Ministries Executive Director Hans Erchinger-Davis ... [Read more](#)

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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 & Safety

- A high-volume, open-to-all, free COVID-19 testing pilot program in Whatcom County debuts Friday and Saturday at Bellingham's Civic Field Complex to gauge local demand.
- As of earlier this week, 21 residents of the Mira Vista Care Center in Mount Vernon had tested positive for COVID-19. ([Skagit Valley Herald/paywall](#))
- The “Safer. Stronger. Together.” campaign launched by the Whatcom County Health Department and the Port of Bellingham's Economic Development Partnership aims to promote customer confidence in businesses following public health guidance for safe business practices. ([Whatcom County Health](#))

Education

- Western Washington University's biology lab and lectures will be held exclusively online this fall. ([Western Front](#))

Government

- The budget revenue downturn has forced Whatcom County government workers to take unpaid leave as cost-cutting measures are now taking hold. ([Bellingham Herald](#))
- State Sen. Liz Lovelett and state Rep. Alex Ramel, both Democrats from the 40th District, are top fundraisers in their respective August 4 primary campaigns. ([Anacortes American/paywall](#))

City of Bellingham

- The Bellingham City Council this week approved placing a measure on the November 3 ballot to extend for 10 years a sales and use tax of two-tenths of one percent (0.002%) to fund projects in the City's adopted Six-Year Transportation Improvement Program. [22686](#)
- Bellingham Municipal Court Judge Debra Lev reported to the Bellingham City Council that court is operating by video conference in criminal cases with the Whatcom

County Jail and telephone hearings, with public access provided. Misdemeanor hearings have been limited to DUI and assault cases. There is a backlog of 350 cases to be filed by the prosecutor and both city courtrooms are operating at full capacity. In-person court is being planned; jury trials are now scheduled to resume September 15. "It's not business as usual," Lev said. "But we're doing our best to ensure that the community has access to justice." ([Watch](#))

- The City Council will meet on July 20. To participate in City of Bellingham Council meetings, [click here](#).

Whatcom County

- The Whatcom County Council on July 7 adopted the 2020-2024 [Lake Whatcom Management Program work plan](#) which coordinates the work of the City of Bellingham, Whatcom County and the Lake Whatcom Water and Sewer District. [AB2020-256](#)
- The Whatcom County Council on July 7 passed a [resolution](#) supporting the county executive's budget goals for 2021-2022. Ayes: Browne, Buchanan, Donovan, and Frazey; Nays: Byrd and Elenbaas; Absent: Kershner [AB2020-234](#)
- On July 21, the Whatcom County Council will hold a public hearing on a [resolution](#) authorizing private negotiations for a 20-year lease to PI Tower Development LLC to build a new communications tower on county-owned property on Lookout Mountain. [AB2020-254](#)
- To participate in Whatcom County Council meetings, [click here](#).

Port of Bellingham

- The Port of Bellingham on July 14 will hold a public hearing on the Comprehensive Scheme of Harbor Improvement for [Fisherman's Pavilion](#) and [Blaine Wharf District](#).
- To participate in Port of Bellingham commission meeting, [click here](#).

Nature

- Staff of local nonprofits, Native American tribes and government agencies are again monitoring water quality, wildlife and plant growth along muddy intertidal shorelines and forested stream sides in Skagit County. ([Skagit Valley Herald](#);/[paywall](#))
- The U.S. Department of the Interior scrapped plans this week to reintroduce grizzly bears to the North Cascades. ([Associated Press](#))

Business

- The San Juan Islands Visitors Bureau suspended all advertising this week due to community concerns for safety. ([Islands Sounder](#))
- The U.S. Labor Department will help laid off Intalco workers with training, job search, relocation allowances, income support and other reemployment services. ([Bellingham Herald](#))

Community

- Black Lives Matter supporters marched peacefully through Lynden last Sunday to City Hall and the police station, heckled by armed counter-protesters, with all of Lynden's police force standing by. ([Lynden Tribune/paywall](#))
- Lynden High School senior Amsa Burke organized last Sunday's 3-mile long Black Lives Matter march so Whatcom County young people — from Lynden, Blaine and Bellingham — can share what "others' lives are like who are people of color," said Burke. ([Lynden Tribune/paywall](#))
- From a series about islanders who've left a mark on the San Juan Islands: Nancy DeVaux was the first director of the Friends of the San Juan and the San Juan Community Home Trust. ([San Juan Islander](#))
- Kulshan Community Land Trust has received surplus land in the Sunnyland neighborhood from the City of Bellingham and will build a permanently affordable, single-family residence intended for a Bellingham family with a disabled child. ([Whatcom Talk](#))

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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 strengthen democratic governance by reporting and curating local news with independence and strict journalistic integrity.

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