

THE YORKER

APRIL 2024



FROM THE YORK NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION—BRINGING THE YORK COMMUNITY TOGETHER

Calling all Sehome and York neighbors!
**COME ONE, COME ALL, TO OUR
 Spring Social!**

**Thursday, May 16 @ Harriet Spanel Park
 4:30–6:30pm**



The Sehome and York neighborhood associations invite all neighbors to a **Spring Social & Information Fair** on May 16, to get to know each other, visit with Board members, and learn about projects with the **City of Bellingham**, including:

- ★ the **Bellingham Comprehensive Plan Update**—Housing and Development ★
- ★ **Emergency preparedness in Bellingham** ★
- ★ the **Rock Hill Park Refresh** (see pages 4–5) ★

The event will be an informal potluck, so please bring a dish (appetizer, dessert, main course) if you can but come anyway if not! There will be some seating available, but bring a chair of your own or a picnic blanket to enjoy the full park. In addition to the City of Bellingham tables, neighbors are invited to set up a table of their own, to promote a business or cause; please reach out to president@yorkneighborhood.org if you'd like to set up a table! *Music is likely!*



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YORK NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

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President's Corner

By Colin Beazley, YNA President

You may not have noticed, but the *Yorker* has printed the **York Neighborhood Association's** guiding principles in every issue for years. A few of those principles are 1. to **reduce isolation among residents**; 2. to **enhance the quality of life in a low- and moderate-income urban neighborhood**; and 3. to **create a sense of community**.

This year, a primary focus for the York Neighborhood is social connection—across all age groups and lifestyles. As recent studies have shown, social connection is an important social determinant of health and community well-being...including population health, community resilience, community safety, economic prosperity, and representative government. A 2022 study found that only 39% of adults in the U.S. said that they felt very connected to others; statistics for children are also declining.

Social connection is more than a personal issue. The structural and social characteristics of the community produce the settings in which people build, maintain, and grow their social networks. The York Neighborhood Association strives to play a critical role in this societal issue... but we need your participation! Attend the **Spring Social** on **May 16** and learn about the issues below, volunteer for our **Parks** or **Historic Preservation** teams, or just hang out in the sun with your neighbors. We can support each other in the change and show the next generations that local community matters.

Get informed! The Bellingham Plan Update—Housing & Development

The community-design section of the **Bellingham Plan** focuses on how the community looks, feels, and functions. It addresses the design of buildings, groups of buildings, spaces and landscapes, open spaces between buildings, streetscapes, and other physical features.



The City is also considering changes to the neighborhood design standards in conjunction with **House Bills 1110 and 1293**. These bills simplify local design review steps and require cities to use “clear and objective” standards for new development. It is important our neighborhoods understand the pending impacts from the Washington State legislature, particularly Bill 1110.

Rock Hill Park Refresh

See pages 4–5 for details about the **Rock Hill Refresh** program, led by myself and fellow Board member and neighbor **Kevin Cussen**, which is off and running with our City of Bellingham Park Landscape Architect, **Jonathan Schilk**. Jonathan recently finished the Cordata project and was also lead for Harriet Spanel Park. We are lucky to have him leading the project. As we work on the project, continue to enjoy healthy and fun activities in **Harriet Spanel Park** and **Rock Hill** this spring and summer!



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Change is coming to the York Farm

The York Farm was founded by longtime York resident **Mary Loquvam** with the original mission of “providing living-wage, résumé-building, meaningful working experience for underserved members of the community.” Mary and her legions of neighborhood volunteers, WWU students, and paid farmhands have since transformed the once unused land into a organic gardeners’ paradise... truly a neighborhood gem.



The next chapter of the York Farm is taking shape as a community garden space where folks from the neighborhood are eligible to become stewards of up to 200 sq ft of designated gardening plots. The newly imagined **York Community Garden (YCG)** will be operated similar to the P-Patches sprinkled throughout neighborhoods in Seattle.

If you’d like to get more information about becoming a member of YCG, please reach out to the YCG leadership team at yorkneighborhoodgarden@gmail.com.

Spring cleaning

by Megan Doyle, YNA Board Member

The days are getting longer, the flowers are blooming, and the sunshine has officially returned; spring has sprung in York, and with the changing of the seasons come new reasons that old homes need extra love.

Get your mind in the gutter: grab a ladder and some gloves, clear debris, and address any leaks. Check downspouts and outdoor faucets for any damage. Your foundation and your flowers will thank you!

Do a quick fit (filter) check; most filters need to be replaced twice a year. Check your furnace, water filter, and dryer vent. The **National Fire Protection Association** estimates 92% of residential fires are caused by clothes dryers; make sure to clean out any lint in both the machine and the vent, and ensure the vent pipe is clean and fits snugly. And while you’re on fire burning through your spring cleaning list, check your smoke alarms too!

Soak up some much-needed vitamin D and tap into your inner suburban dad with some lawn care! Break out the mower, turn on a good podcast, and let the worries of the world fade away. There’s nothing like digging in the dirt after a long winter, and now is the perfect time to prune, plant, and spend time in the sunshine.



The YNA would like to thank the City of Bellingham for the new well-constructed sidewalks on Potter Street, across the heart of our neighborhood. We are grateful for the hard work and dedication to making the York neighborhood accessible to all community members!

York Neighborhood Association Board

2023–24 Officers

President: **Colin Beazley** • Vice President: **Chris Donaldson**
Treasurer: **Opie Knechtel** • Secretary: **Mark Ellis Walker**

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★ College students: please consider joining us as a student rep! ★

Newsletter Production: **Mark Ellis Walker**

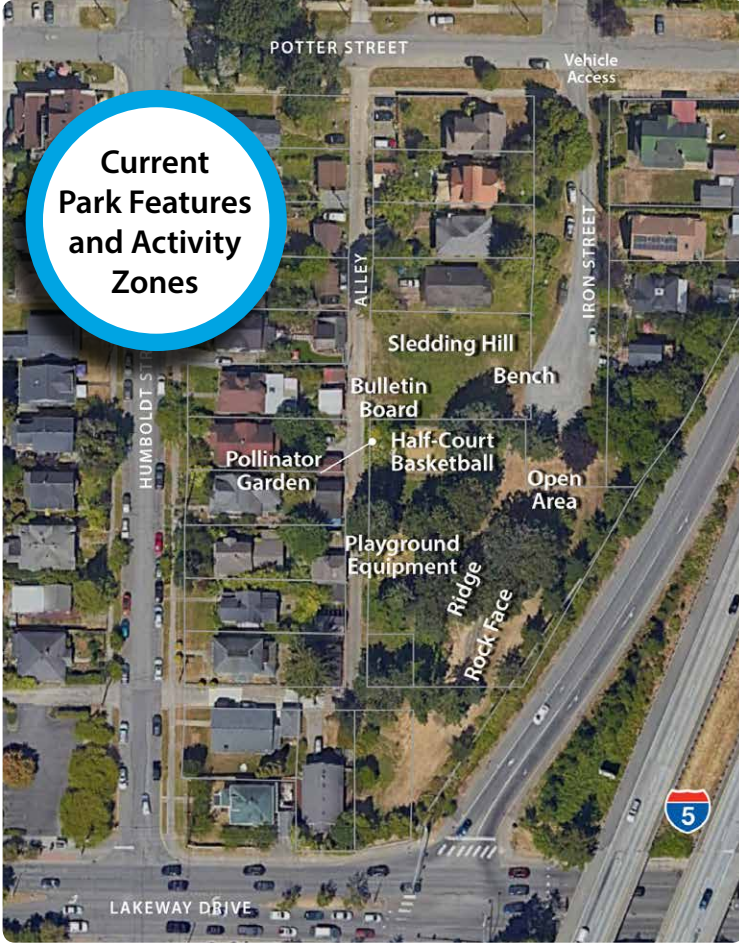
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Revitalizing Rock Hill Park: a community endeavor



Your York Neighborhood Association (YNA) is supporting the City of Bellingham in spearheading an ambitious initiative to transform Rock Hill Park into a vibrant communal space, reflective of the neighborhood’s aspirations and needs. This “renovation plus” project, catalyzed by feedback from a comprehensive neighborhood survey, is poised to upgrade the playground facilities and enhance the park’s overall appeal and utility. The planning and design phases are projected to run until **March 2025**, with construction set to commence in **March 2026**.

Central to the project’s ethos is the principle of community involvement, underscored by plans for multiple neighborhood meetings aimed at soliciting feedback and keeping residents informed. Over the next few months several consultants, ranging from engineers to landscape architects, will play a role in the park’s redesign, with innovative proposals such as integrating unique play structures and considering additions like a fenced dog run and a mini disc-golf course. Emphasizing **safety, accessibility, and inclusivity**, the initiative reflects a holistic vision for a park that serves diverse community groups, from children to dog owners.

For those keen on participating more actively in the park’s renovation process or wishing to contribute ideas, the neighborhood association encourages your involvement. To suggest ideas, to be kept in the loop, or to join the Parks Committee, send an email to rockhillrefresh@gmail.com. This project represents not only a collaborative effort to enhance local green spaces but also a testament to **the power of civic engagement** in shaping the environments we live in.

Work Party at Rock Hill Park
Saturday, May 11 • 9am–Noon
see sign-up details on yorkneighborhood.org



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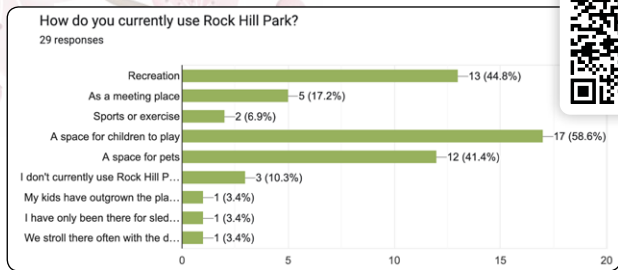
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Community engagement is crucial, with plans for multiple neighborhood meetings to gather input and inform on progress. You can contribute to the project by taking the YNA's **Rock Hill Park Refresh** survey on google.com; use the QR code below this article or find the link to the survey on yorkneighborhood.org under the "Rock Hill Park Refresh" tab.

Using the survey takes approximately three minutes and involves just two questions—"How do you currently use Rock Hill Park?" and "What would you like the park refresh to focus on?"—with multiple-choice options supplied as well as write-ins.

We want to make sure everyone that wants to get involved has a voice. Let us know what's important to you when it comes to updating your neighborhood park! The YNA committee on the park renovation will continue to collect and relay community feedback to the Planning Department, emphasizing the collaborative nature of the renovation project.



The new bulletin-board kiosks at our two parks are for your use. Please do post stuff!

Handwritten notes: CAR WASH, BABYSITTER, YARD SALE, DOG-WALKING

Mission Statement
of the York Neighborhood Association:

- To reduce isolation among residents;
- To enhance the quality of life in a low- and moderate-income urban neighborhood;
- To create a sense of community;
- To reduce or prevent crime; and
- To preserve the historic character of the neighborhood.

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Progress on the York Interactive Walking Tour!

The York Neighborhood Association (YNA), in conjunction with the City of Bellingham's Planning & Community Development Department, is putting together a neighborhood interactive walking tour to encourage residents and visitors to learn more about our area. This walking tour will feature a variety of historic homes, businesses, parks, trees, and other interesting landmarks such as the old streetcar route that once linked York to Downtown. It will be available both online and on mobile devices for people to use and enjoy.



Historic resources at the Whatcom Museum will be consulted for further information on York locations selected for inclusion in the tour, including these terrific old telephone directories!

“The York Neighborhood has always been a very engaged community,” says Katie Franks of the City of Bellingham. “We’re excited about this pilot project and look forward to working with both the community members and the Whatcom Museum to bring this to life.”

There are four phases to this project:

1. The York Historic Committee is currently going through all old photos of the York Neighborhood, also referred to as the “York Addition.”
2. Once locations are identified, the committee will get approval from all homeowners to make sure they want to be included in the tour.

3. When all locations are confirmed, the committee will write up descriptions of each and take current photos. This content will then be posted online for neighborhood review and comments.
4. Once agreed to, this will all be sent to the City, to be integrated into the walking-tour map template they have developed for the Downtown area. To see an example, visit cob.org/services/planning/historic/historic-tours.

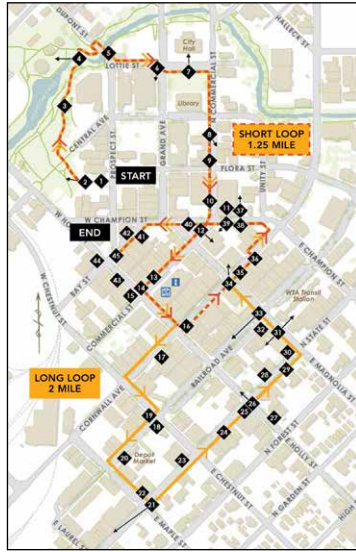
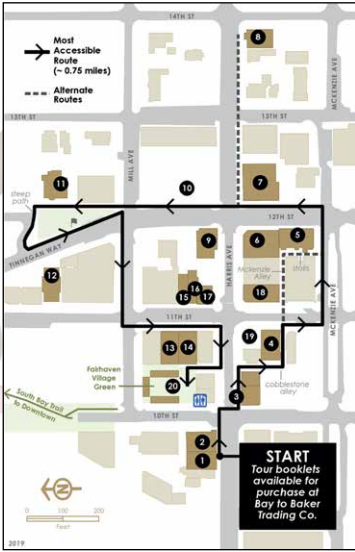
By creating this map, we hope to further support our businesses and the vibrancy that make our neighborhood so special. So if you know of any places you'd like to see on the walking tour, please reach out to Chris Donaldson, vp@yorkneighborhood.org. The goal for completion is 2025. We look forward to any and all feedback.



YNA Board members, including President Colin Beazley (pictured), recently met with the Whatcom Museum's Archivist/Historian Jeff Jewell to discuss the project and its goals and possibilities.

HARDWARE SALES **TOOL FAIR!**
FATHER'S DAY WEEKEND
FRIDAY & SATURDAY
 2034 James St. Bellingham, WA

Join us for the 28th Annual Hardware Sales Tool Fair on Father's Day weekend, June 14th (7am-6pm) and June 15th (8am-4pm), featuring exclusive vendor promotions, raffles, and discounts at Sunnyland businesses when you wear your Tool Fair shirt. Don't miss this community event packed with savings and the latest tools!



The City currently hosts on its website *historic tours with interactive story maps and booklets for Downtown Bellingham, Fairhaven, Old Sehome, and Highway 99 (Pacific Highway 1), as well as the Bellingham Federal Building Tour.*



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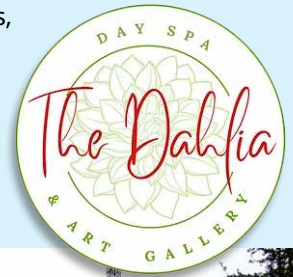
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New faces on south Ellis Street

Long-resident Yorkers of the south end of Ellis Street will have noticed that the former KVOS-TV building across the street has been slowly transforming into a home for a variety of small businesses. Now called **Ellis Station**, the complex at 1151 Ellis hosts chiropractic, vision, dermatology, staffing, and home-attendant nursing services.

The newest addition to the ensemble is **The Dahlia**, a holistic day spa and art gallery. Largely serving the Sehome and York neighborhoods, they offer resort-quality Ayurvedic skin and body care, massage, facials, hair removal, spa parties, and art gatherings... a unique blend of wellness and artistic expression for guests seeking relaxation, rejuvenation, and inspiration.



Ellis Station is the old KVOS-TV building, just south of the "Welcome to York" sign at Loving Space School.

Co-owners **Carrie and Brad Bullock** believe that "wellness is not just about pampering the body but also nurturing the soul. That's why we've created a space that combines the healing power of spa therapies with the inspiration of art."

The Bullocks moved to Bellingham six years ago after living in Kirkland and Spokane, but originally they were high-school prom dates who reconnected at their 30-year class reunion. Local art recently on display at their spa includes an array of photography, acrylic original paintings, and giclée fine-art prints, including by **Gallery West** owner and photographer **Dave Lucas** and silk-painting artist **Stephanie Strong**.

www.thedahlia.com

