

# ASWWU Local Lobby Day 2019

## Agenda Items \*\*\*COB Draft\*\*\*

### Housing Affordability and Livability

ASWWU recognizes the troubling barriers that students and community members face in obtaining affordable, safe, and quality housing in Bellingham. The housing crisis in Bellingham is complex, but as population in Bellingham continues to grow we must explore sustainable and comprehensive solutions. Rising home and rent costs are outpacing wages. The lack of affordable and quality housing options disproportionately affects marginalized communities: people of color, low-income families, first generation students, and more. These groups bear the worst effects of our housing policy; segregation and lack of access to resources such as, quality education and transportation. We need to improve our housing policy to create a livable, affordable city that benefits all citizens.

#### ASWWU Urges Policymakers to:

- **Repeal Bellingham Municipal Code 20.08.020 language concerning the definitions of “Family” from “not more than three unrelated persons,” to be in accordance with recommended safe occupancy limits.**

As ruled unconstitutional by: *Yoder et al., v. City of Bowling Green, OH et al.*, U.S District Court, Case No. 3:17 CV 2321

- **Pass an ordinance to limit the total amount of non-refundable move-in fees as not to exceed the amount of the first full month’s rent.** Fees include but are not limited to: security deposits, application fees, last month’s rent, and pet deposits.

Model Legislation: Seattle Ordinance No. 125222, upheld in *Rental Housing Association v. City of Seattle*, Superior Court of the State of Washington in and for the County of King, No. 17-2-13662-0

**Allow and incentivize “infill toolkit” homes in all single-detached (single-family) zoned areas and city’s “Urban Villages” as described by the City of Bellingham’s current Comprehensive Plan.**

These forms use less square footage, cost less to build, use less energy, and are more affordable, on average, than single detached homes.

Model Legislation: Redmond, WA PZC 21.20 “Affordable Housing”, Minneapolis 2040 Comp. Plan.

1. **Return to traditional forms of affordable & unsubsidized housing that typically use less square footage, cost less to build, use less energy, and are more affordable, on average, than single detached homes. Allow these Missing Middle housing choices, provided by the Infill Toolkit, in all single-detached (single-family) zoned areas. Forms include: Cottages; Carriage houses over existing garages; Townhouses; Duplexes; Triplexes; Small or smaller lot detached, single-family houses; Detached accessory dwelling units; Courtyard housing; shared or**

garden.// All of these options should be carried out in a manner that enhances rather than detracts from the neighborhood aesthetic (“Smart Infill”). That includes proper scale, complete streets incorporating trees and safe walking and bicycling options, transit access, parks, services (e.g. daycare, libraries, senior centers) that will make neighborhoods both more attractive and functional.

## Equity and Inclusiveness

ASWWU recognizes the injustices many people of marginalized identities face in Bellingham. Bellingham has a long history of white supremacy, from the colonial violence against Coast Salish peoples, to the white mobs and leaders that drove out Chinese families in 1885, Sikhs in 1907, and Japanese in 1942. The present-day racism directed against people of color and city’s denial of racial profiling shows that this is not an issue of the past. We also have a serious issue with too many people in our community experiencing poverty. We support the city’s strategic commitments to ‘Equity and Social Justice’ and encourage the city to innovate robust policy and programs to back them up.

### ASWWU Urges Policymakers to:

- **To address the Birchwood food desert crisis, support an ordinance outlawing Restrictive Covenants that “run with the land,” declaring such negative-use restrictions against public policy, void and unenforceable.**

Model: Madison, Wisconsin: MCO 28.147, “ Negative use restrictions prohibited as against public policy”

- **Implement a Homeless Bill of Rights, one that guarantees the rights of each homeless person to access basic requirements necessary for sustaining life including but not limited to: shelter, sanitation, medical care, clothing, food. Additionally, amend the charge of the Neighborhood Code Compliance Officers to guarantee the right of the homeless to move freely in public places and pursue both secular and non-secular aid alternatives.**

Model: Traverse City, Michigan.

## Public Safety and Criminal Justice Reform

ASWWU recognizes two interconnected issues: our criminal justice system is broken and we have a homelessness crisis in Bellingham. Mass incarceration disproportionately affects people of color, the mentally ill, and low-income people in Whatcom County. We encourage the city to

take actions to reform our broken criminal justice system and protect the most vulnerable in our community.

#### **ASWWU Urges Policymakers to:**

- **Support the ask of the Undocumented Community and their allies in calling for independent civilian police accountability by means of a Civilian Investigative Panel, extraneous of the Police Department with subpoena powers and independent counsel.** Model: Chapter 11.5 of the Code of the City of Miami and Ordinance No. 12188 ("Ordinance").

### **Voting Accessibility**

ASWWU believes that voting is a right and recognizes that many communities do not have the access they need in order for this to be true. We believe the following recommendations will increase the amount of underrepresented communities and young people participating in elections and local governance.

#### **ASWWU Urges Policymakers to:**

- **Pass a resolution in support of statewide endeavors to implement ranked-choice voting for all municipal elections within the City of Bellingham, and enact upon passage.** Model: Washington HB 1722 "Local Options Bill"

### **Environmental Stewardship & Green Jobs**

ASWWU recognizes the people of Whatcom County and our environment are interconnected; each depends on each other for long-term success. As Whatcom County becomes more populated and our economy grows, we recommend innovative solutions for an economy that is compatible with our planet's climate and health. We must transition off of fossil fuels to clean energy, creating new green living wage jobs, especially for new graduates. In addition, we must support policies that protect our prosperity depends on protecting safe and clean drinking water, farmland, salmon and the people who depend on them, and honoring the highest law of the land, treaties with tribal nations.

#### **ASWWU Urges Policymakers to:**

- **Adopt a Net Zero Building Code mandating "carbon neutrality" in all future developments and redevelopments.** Incentivize bonuses for weatherization, lowering energy and utility draws, and other sustainable building practices, in order to achieve the city's 100% renewable energy targets and carbon neutrality before 2050. Model: COB Climate Action Plan Taskforce and the 2018 Climate Action Plan

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**Housing Affordability and Livability**

**ASWWU Urges Policymakers to:**

**Create a regulatory framework that prioritizes inclusionary zoning for developers to build affordable units.** Examples of incentives include expedited developmental review, permits, and financial bonuses.

Model Legislation:

**Equity and Inclusiveness**

**ASWWU Urges Policymakers to:**

- **Secure funding for the proposed Whatcom County “Crisis Recovery Facility” to provide 32-beds for mental health and drug/alcohol treatment. Furthermore, remove the proposed provision for “involuntary treatment.”**

**See here:**

**Public Safety and Criminal Justice Reform**

**ASWWU Urges Policymakers to:**

- **Provide comprehensive sentencing reform to reduce incarceration.** Examples of alternatives to incarceration include: expansion of electronic home monitoring, reduction of bail and pretrial incarceration, and decriminalization of low-level offenses.

Model: Whatcom County Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Taskforce

- **Reject the Whatcom County Sheriff’s proposal to repeal Whatcom County Code 1.28, “Standards for Correctional Facilities.” Instead, create a joint civilian sub-committee to oversee the necessary revisions of WCC 1.28.**

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### ASWWU Urges Policymakers to:

- **Update Whatcom County Code, moving fossil fuel industries, like those at the Cherry Point Urban Growth Area, from permitted use to conditional use.** Such language would strengthen the County’s oversight in accountability assessments and shift the “burden of proof” in detailing risks to public health, safety and the environment from Whatcom County citizens onto the refineries.

- **Reduce the number of housing units planned in rural areas by adopting a Density Credit model. Furthermore, urge Whatcom County cities to adopt interlocal agreements that prioritize the preservation of agricultural and rural land.**

Model: Transfer of Development Rights/ Purchase of Development Rights Work Group recommendations.

- **Implement an adequate stormwater rate fee structure in the Lake Whatcom Stormwater Utility District to provide the necessary funding to preserve and protect the water quality of Lake Whatcom and its watershed.**

**Model: Work group, COB leg.**