

Local Lobby Day 22 Agenda

Shelter

- Shelter policies (low-barrier/no-barrier)
- Look into base camp
- Ask for partnership with non-religious group

Shelter is essential for each member of our community to thrive, and Western students want this to be a priority. In our 2022 Legislative Priorities Survey, 76% of participants marked Housing Affordability and Accessibility as one of their highest priorities. While we recognize that the city has little control over rent protections and similar policies, protecting members of our community from losing whatever shelter they have found access to is a first step.

- 1. Institute a permanent ban on sweeps of encampments and redirect funds to mental health resources and no-barrier housing for people experiencing homelessness in Bellingham, and eliminate the complaint-driven model**
 - a. On January 28th, 2021, the city of Bellingham [spent nearly \\$75,000](#) to remove an encampment at City Hall and [\\$27,000 to clear the ensuing encampment](#) at Geri Fields on March 16th.
 - b. Currently, the city of Bellingham completes street “clean ups” on a complaint-driven basis. Based on the model of [Services Not Sweeps](#), WWU urges you to eliminate this model and instead clean public spaces on a regular schedule to address health concerns. Complaint-driven cleanups allow people experiencing homelessness to be profiled and placed in potentially dangerous situations and is alienating due to being policed by community members.

Basic Needs

Existing program at Bellingham Farmers Market, expansion?

WWU wants to prioritize meeting everyone’s most basic needs because it is essential to feel healthy, safe, and nourished.

- 1. Create an incentive program that will provide access to fresh food for people who are low-income**
 - a. Based on the [Produce Perks](#) program in Cincinnati, wherein those who use EBT cards would receive 10 incentive “tokens” if they were to go to a farmers market. They can be used as a dollar-for-dollar match to purchase fruits and vegetables up to \$10.

- b. It is becoming increasingly important to support our local agriculture as we begin to face difficulties in our agricultural economy along with the effects of climate change. Changing climates are affecting our local farms more and more by the year (as is outlined in [this Bellingham Herald article](#)), and the support this program would provide for local produce is especially important due to this.

Diversity, Equity, Justice

Western students value equity and preventing injustices from occurring in our community. ASWWU asks you to create, support, and pass legislation that protects and benefits people of color, the queer community, people with disabilities, and our undocumented community members.

1. **Establish Bellingham as a sanctuary city to protect our undocumented community** **Look into benefits/limitations**
 - a. Every member of our community deserves to feel safe. Over half of the students who filled out the Legislative Priorities Survey marked that legislation protecting our undocumented community as one of their highest priorities
 - b. Although Whatcom County has stated that it would [not enforce federal immigration laws](#), the threat of legal intervention is an overwhelming one to those who are undocumented

Racial Equity

Gender/sexual discrimination

Disability discrimination

Indigenous sovereignty and reconciliation

<https://bellingham.municipal.codes/BMC/10.24.070>

Environment

ASWWU believes that protecting and maintaining the environment is essential to living sustainable, healthy lives.

1. **Establish a Pay-As-You-Throw program, wherein residents would only pay for as much garbage as they dispose of.**

- a. This encourages people to recycle more, promotes waste reduction and supports the purchasing of recyclable items.
- b. [The EPA cites these types of programs as a source of environmental sustainability, economic sustainability, and equity.](#)

Indigenous-led Environmental initiatives

Safety

- 1. Create a community police oversight board to allow for civilian oversight of law enforcement.**
 - a. [A presentation was delivered to Bellingham City Council in June 2021](#) laying out the options for a community review board, and ASWWU urges you to establish a council with both review and audit functions.
- 2. Supplement Anti-Racist and Anti-Bias training for police officers once a year, and require the curriculum to have been crafted by and include literature by Black, Indigenous, and People of Color**
 - a. Bellingham Police Officers are currently set to receive refreshers regarding anti-bias and anti-racist training [every 5 years](#).
 - b. According to multiple sources, including [this Harvard article](#), anti-bias training is not effective if only administered once, or with large periods of time in between. Structural racism is complicated and long-standing and requires more frequent attention to unpack bias.
 - c. According to the [Whatcom Civil Rights Project](#), in Whatcom County in 2013, 18% of arrests were of Indigenous people, compared to taking up only 3.2% of the population. Black people accounted for 5% of arrests, compared to being only 1.2% of the population. 67% of Whatcom County Jail inmates were white, compared to being 87.6% of the population. Steps must continue to be taken to address this imbalance.

Non-police community response alternatives: look into new security for downtown, what training have they received?

Health

Mental health resources
Support for survivors of sexual assault

Transportation

Expansion of bus options