

Mayor of Bellingham

Local citizens, with expertise in relevant issues, provided these questions. *Whatcom Watch* conducted the survey.

Candidates reviewed their statements before printing.

Responses were not edited by *Whatcom Watch*.

Background: The passage of the Inflation Reduction Act last fall has environmentalists thrilled to envision a ton of money to fund climate and energy projects that they've long dreamed of and needed. But, many cities and other local governments lack the expertise to identify the programs available or to navigate the usually arduous process of applying for a share of the estimated \$391 billion.

Bellingham has hired a climate director. However, the opportunity and work required to actually identify projects, apply for the money and make the best use of it requires a team.

What types environmental projects will you prioritize with the Inflation Reduction Act money and are you willing to hire staff to help make this work happen?

Background: Bellingham is known as an environmentally conscious community. It received the Governor's Smart Community Award for rapid implementation of the Bicycle Master Plan and the League of American Bicyclists promoted the bicycle friendly community award for Bellingham from silver to gold — one of two in Washington state and one of 34 in the United States. Bellingham is a Green Power Community; it exceeds EPA guidelines for buying clean renewal energy.

List your top five environmental priorities if elected mayor of Bellingham in November 2023.

Background: The vision statement in the city's Bicycle Master Plan identifies steps toward creating a safe, connected network of bicycle facilities and supportive programs to encourage bicycling by all members of our community.

Name specific actions you would support to achieve these goals.



Seth Fleetwood
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I established an Office of Climate to accelerate progress converting our systems to renewable energy. We now have an active federal partner in the work of climate action with the passage of this legislation. I will be proposing in this year's mid year biennial budget process an additional employee to help us prioritize building electrification. We anticipate proposing a grants and data specialist to help us track and pursue opportunities, including under the Inflation Reduction Act. We will prioritize an Energy Efficiency and Conservation block grant to help fund the low and moderate income electrification program in partnership with the Opportunity Council.

1. Accelerating our community's conversion to electrical systems and renewable energy.
2. Continuing our commitment to the preservation of our drinking water source, Lake Whatcom, and ensuring that we build stormwater and wastewater systems that deliver clean and non nutrient rich waters into the Salish Sea.
3. Ensuring adequate water supply and protections for tribal treaty rights and instream flow for salmon.
4. Creating an environmental infrastructure of greenways, parks, trails, habitat restoration, habitat corridors and stormwater systems as our City grows.
5. Implementing the Urban Forestry Management Plan that will be adopted in the early part of next year.

Bellingham's Bicycle Master Plan envisions a robust network of interconnected bicycle lanes. In our hierarchy of needs we prioritize bicycle and pedestrian safety. As Mayor I have created a new Transportation Division within Public Works with dedicated staff who are focused on accelerating the rate at which we build bicycle infrastructure within Bellingham. As a past chair and co-chair of initiative campaigns to create both greenways funding and transportation Improvement funding I have helped create funding to build bicycle infrastructure.



Kim Lund
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The Inflation Reduction Act is an opportunity for Bellingham to accelerate stalled progress toward our identified Climate Action Plan goals and commit to even more ambitious action - including hiring additional city staff to advance this work.

IRA resources can accelerate local deployment of clean energy technologies by removing barriers to, encouraging, and even requiring the installation of renewable energy technologies and efficiency upgrades in homes, commercial and municipal buildings.

Directing money toward modern technology upgrades at the Post Point Wastewater Treatment Plant, including thermal processes and gasification, could be a significant win for both the environment and local taxpayers.

Bellingham has made a significant investment in our Climate Action Plan. This plan outlines the high-level core strategies and outcomes we would all like to achieve. The problem is not identifying priorities. Our problem is execution. As mayor, my most important environmental priority is seeking to understand and eliminate the roadblocks stalling our progress. I'm eager to lend my years of executive competence and team leadership skills toward this end. We need experienced leaders to break down the complexity inherent in tackling the climate crisis, driving implementation tactics, and putting political capital behind these efforts to better resource this work.

More people on bikes make for a better Bellingham – it means less traffic, improved air quality, and it aligns with our Climate Action Plan goals.

Yet, our current bicycle network is not always safe for all ages and abilities, despite our best intentions.

The City's Bicycle Master Plan includes many great recommendations for improving our bike infrastructure, but our implementation can be improved with a focus on the cyclist's experience. Adding a physical separation between bicycles and cars increases safety for everyone. Ideas like bike buses, which are flourishing in other cities, should be a hallmark of Bellingham too.

Kristina Michelle Martens

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Kristina Michelle Martens indicated in a phone conversation with *Whatcom Watch* that she is very busy and answering the questions is not a priority.

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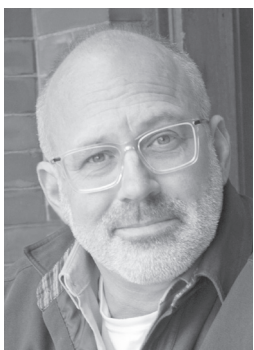
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Mike McAuley

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I think one of the most critical but least attended problems is stormwater runoff. We have an energy program, we have climate goals, important parts of the global effort but we aren't doing enough to clean up the Salish Sea. Washington waters of the Salish are full of things like microplastics and toxics from automobile tire wear that are 100% fatal to salmonids. We must prioritize stormwater management to control extreme toxics far beyond the basics like monitoring fecal coliform and turbidity. The Salish Sea is a national treasure, it should be treated as such. Additional staffing as needed, yes.

1. Stormwater Runoff — Salish Sea protection from toxics
2. Trash cleanup from unhoused encampments
3. Micro-mobility (non-auto) transportation mode-shift
4. Affordable infill housing to reduce travel and pressure on non-urban land
5. Create a fund for home electrification, esp. low income

Replace the Bicycle/Pedestrian program with a Micromobility department within Public Works. Micromobility is "any small, low speed, human or electric-assist transportation device." A senior staff person would be charged with building out a Micro-mobility network based on a proposal I created for the city council and mayor in 2007. The enhanced plan would take the network to a whole new level where Micromobile users would have their own streets, parallel to arterials. This plan includes a tunnel under I-5 on the north end of town, as well as 3 micro-mobility capable bridges over the Guide Meridian. We need Mode-shift now.



Christopher McCoy

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Accessing national funds to generate new living wage jobs in our community while reducing the costs of living for residents would be the primary focus of projects that will be funded by the IRA. I would work closely with the climate director to develop and deploy campaigns educating Bellingham residents on the incentives that they are able to take advantage of as part of the IRA. We would also develop a green business incubator that takes advantage of the incentives in the IRA to jump start R&D into the development of emerging green technologies including clean hydrogen and carbon capture.

1. Ensure environmental accountability for developers and business operators. Making sure that all the planned, permitted and required operational standards around environmental protection are upheld and enforced.
2. Emissions reduction through continued implementation of climate action plan and reduction of fossil fuel use.
3. Encourage and incentivize residents to use alternative transportation, biking, walking, taking public transportation to reduce emissions.
4. Expand environmental cleanup and restoration projects, also engaging residents to get involved.
5. Take full advantage of recent federal programs to create jobs and attract larger scale green investment in our community.

As a daily cyclist I appreciate the bike-ability of Bellingham. The city's Bicycle master plan is almost a decade old and needs to be updated. We need to audit what has and has not worked with the original plan to make sure our residents are getting the maximum return from the last nine years and millions of dollars allocated to these improvements. We need to maintain this asset in a cost effective manner to ensure that the quality of life improvements and access that the bike facilities allow will last long into the future and expand with the city.