# Whatcom County Business and Commerce Committee Summary Notes with Discussion Transcript August 16, 2021

**Voting Members Present**: Debbie Ahl, Ryan Allsop, Paul Burrill, Pete Dawson, Casey Diggs, Andrew Gamble, Troy Muljat, Sarah Rothenbuhler

Voting Members Not Present: Clark Campbell (Committee Chair), Brad Rader

**Nonvoting members present:** Rud Browne, Seth Fleetwood, Michael Jones, Eva Schulte, CJ Seitz, Satpal Sidhu

Nonvoting members not present: Don Goldberg, Jennifer Noveck

**Public present:** Cara Buckingham, Mauri Ingram, Pamela Jons, Erika Lautenbach, Derek Long, John Michener, Guy Occhiogrosso, Michael Shepard, Katie Stanford, Sandy Ward

#### Call to Order

**Roll Call and Introductions** 

#### **Administrative Business**

Approved July minutes.

#### **Announcements**

# Open positions on the committee

- Sarah Rothenbuhler (SDR): Two positions open for manufacturing and food processing, a 4year term. If you think you know someone, you can send them the link and they can apply. It's a good reminder for me too. There are a good people to reach out to.
- Paul Burrill (PB): Trying to push one guy, Paul Sanga, he's part of the Sikh community, great guy, big operation. I know he would be a great addition. He's a really, big active business member in the community.

## **Water Sub-Committee**

- SDR: Paul, we've got you on that next topic too proposal to form a sub-committee on water adjudication.
- PB: I would be willing to do whatever, I think Brad Rader would be good too. He's more knowledgeable than me, but I would be more than willing to head that up if necessary or push on it so, I think it's an important one and sort of a baseline thing for even development. If we have water issues, nothing kind of moves ahead. That's sort of a basic human need is water and access to water. Fish are kind of important to me
- SDR: It would be awfully nice to see summary of those two cases in Washington of the successfully negotiated settlements.
- Debbie Ahl (DA): And Paul, I just wanted to say, thanks for heading up that task force. I think that's great and I'm really looking forward to something that works for everybody in our county.
- PB: Absolutely. I've talked to a lot of tribal members and that's a big thing. They want to find something that works for everybody, not just from the top down or one group, and I think that's the catch. We have to really work through the issue, and that's where I think we'll make it fly, but we've gotta work through it slowly and there are some good solutions out there, so we hope to find some of those.

**Presentation:** Community Health Impact Assessment Report, Kate Stafford / Erika Lautenbach – Whatcom County Health Dept

Key Points

# Kate Stanford (KS)

- My name is Katie Stanford. I'm with the Whatcom County Health Department in our health information and assessment division, and Erika our director will be here shortly. We're giving this presentation at what I feel is an unfortunate time. We certainly were starting off these presentations in a more positive manner, really thinking about recovery, and as we're in this most current surge, we're really weighing a lot of things both infection as well as other covid impacts that we're going to go over today.
- Since couldn't study everything impacted by Covid in early report, limited the assessment to the
  priority areas for two main reasons, because there is ample evidence that 1) these are key
  determinants of community health and 2) we recognized by community as important local issues
  with persistent challenges. Also need to study other areas like social isolation for older adults,
  family / domestic violence, and food insecurity. So, these are the areas that we did examine.
  - Whatcom County data on 5 key determinates of social and economic health
    - Kindergarten readiness indicator of family and child well being
    - Childcare economic opportunity
    - Housing security ability to obtain and retain safe and stable housing examined as distinct from homelessness
    - Homelessness
    - Behavioral health mental health outcomes and substance use behavior
- Covid exposed already fragile systems we already knew were broken. Can't stress enough that Covid 19 exposed and increased persistent health inequities in all systems.
- Some positives community caring for people, businesses quickly tested and implemented new
  models. Examples include curbside pick-up and delivery of prescriptions, telehealth options for
  behavioral health, and food bank deliveries, remote work and flexible hours, collaborations to try
  to address community needs more wholistically

# Erika Lautenbach (EL):

- I think the assessment will be a useful document for the community. What this isn't is a look specifically on direct impacts of Covid such as hospitalizations, stats, etc. related to Covid specifically. There will be and Councilmember Brown was one of our sponsors of this -- there will be a commission that will look at the response itself and all of the impacts associated with the response.
- What it also is not, is a look at, truly a look at economic impacts on businesses, how many businesses closed, how many opened, what the impacts were on business owners and staff associated with the economy. We partnered closely with Don and Jennifer on any of the areas where there might be a connection.
- So, there are other opportunities to have some of these data to come forward. Put a link to the full
  document in the chat box so can look at as well https://whatcomcounty.us/covidimpact

Paul Burrill (PB): In the presentation you said Childcare is more expensive than college education on average now. Can we take some of the models that higher education uses and create sustainable, privately run childcare center instead of...I know there's been a lot of talk about creating a city or county run childcare provider, but I've never been a big advocate of government getting into all aspects of the business.

EL: Thanks for that. I also know that Mauri, I see Mauri in the meeting, and know that the Whatcom Community Foundation is looking at different models. It's important to make the distinction that not only is

childcare more expensive, but when young people go to college, there might be more loan options, so they don't have to pay for everything up front as they go. That's not the case for childcare. Not only is it more expensive, but it's also pay as you go, um, there aren't a lot of opportunities for families who can't afford the high cost. I know Mauri is working on this and, Rud has been a champion of this as well.

Rud Browne (RB) – When you look at the numbers, the university system is heavily subsidized by the state, so the price you pay as a family is not the actual cost.

DB: When look at parents of young children, typically not at the place in their career where they have higher incomes, and college kids get more help from parents as well. What Rud and Carol proposal – not govt run but to use ARPA funds to create sustainability for childcare facilities and taking capital costs out of equation certainly helps. Other portion of that is the conversations that Mauri and I are having with the City of Bellingham is the huge challenge have is the shortage of childcare workers. WorkSource describes childcare as a dead-end job that no-one respects. That's a great recruitment slogan for young people.

PB: Rud, with this ARPA Funds, is it possible to prioritize it, because this is a really important issue to me with age group of my children and seeing some of my kids' friends with childcare and whether or not people are going back to work. We need people to get back to work. I've seen a lot of outcry for this money to go elsewhere. Now this is social media and off the wall comments, but I worry that its getting pushed and pulled. Is it possible to sidetrack this money for this or is going to be a hurdle and pushed to other aeras?

RB: I could smell the blood on the water early on so, that's why Carol and I got the council to pass a resolution that said at least half the money was going to go to childcare. No, the county executive last week gave is a proposal that allocates 20% of the money to childcare and twice that amount to public infrastructure which I believe could be funded by other means. If I've got one message to re-enforce with the committee is to push back and tell the exec and council – both city and county -- that this is the number 1 priority.

Casey Diggs (CD): Erika, thanks for keeping a level head during this new surge. Are you working with local fire dept and law enforcement with mental health and behavioral health officers with paramedics? I was downtown picking up garbage this morning all over around the brewery. These folks are battling mental health. Police can't do much but if we could focus more energy with paramedics who're talking with these people weekly, making sure that they're on the right medications and things like that. Has there been any talk about that?

EL: Bad news after bad news. Behavioral health provider crisis is bad as well. They are telling us loud and clear – finding people with right credentials is really challenging. Some of our providers are hiring folks who the starting salary is \$17-\$18/hour. They can't afford to live here. They are not attractive jobs and finding a mass exodus to private practice. Need to continue to work through this to make sure those systems don't continue to break.

Follow Up / Action items

Committee members follow up with response to council on childcare funding/ARPA funding

**Presentation:** Financial and operational impact of 'People's First Bellingham' Initiative to Bellingham based businesses, Guy Occhiogrosso – Bellingham Chamber of Commerce

Key Points

Initiative #4

- Secure/predictive/restrictive scheduling. This is simply promising and guaranteeing a two-week schedule for all employees, primarily hourly employees. This is not a new concept. The City of Seattle instituted it. There are a couple of concerns – 1) lack of flexibility it offers. 2) Additionally, if compare with Seattle, Seattle has carved out for union negotiations. This initiative has not, so this could blow up existing agreements.
  - i. 1) if adjust an hourly employee's scheduled shift or increase hours there will be a 1-hour penalty pay. Not sure how most of payroll systems will be able to account for that.
  - ii. Reduction of hours: If schedule someone for 6 hours and cut by two hours, have to pay time and a half for every hour cut.
  - iii. Hazard pay Every hourly employee in City of Bellingham will get \$4/hour hazard pay for any declared state of emergency that covers jurisdiction of City of Bellingham (clearly pandemic. Also, drought and wildfires the state is going through), and there is no exclusion of any hourly rate or type of employee. For City of Bellingham, rough numbers would be \$125k a week just for the City of Bellingham.
  - b. There is a 'fewer than 30-employee count' exclusion that says would only have to do for 2 weeks. Could help some small employers and non-profits, but what seeing for current hazard pay for grocery store workers, you're having non-grocery workers moving to grocery jobs causing increased issues in other sectors.
- 2) That's just one of the initiatives. I have concerns for our business community. Thank Sarah for stepping up. She was one of the only people that responded to my email, so got a 'no committee' formed and got information into the ballot guide. Found out this weekend that the Whatcom Dems endorsed all four initiatives this weekend.

SDR: Thank you Guy. Thank you for bringing this to our attention. We're struggling with affordability issues already in the City of Bellingham as it is. I jumped in. We work side by side with our employees creating schedules, and we really work hard to schedule multiple months out. Our scheduling flexibility is one of the things our employees appreciate most. When we poll our co-workers at Birch Equipment, flexibility of scheduling comes up so much, because we work 4/10 schedules. A lot of times we're open 6 and 7 days a week and sometimes 24 hours. A lot of time, its children's events employees didn't know were coming -- sporting events, school events, a sick child, vacation opportunities. It's such a lovely culture to be able to support. This would be very difficult to continue to support with the hazard pay and scheduling. We never shut down and our teams work together so well, and we're 80 people. We're even closer than we ever were, and these initiatives would be devastating for us.

CJ Seitz: I can offer some information as work with small businesses in the community. Everybody appreciates the intents. Everyone cares about their employees and want them to be happy and healthy. But imagine if running on fairly thin margins and run into this scheduling to deal with and the financial impacts...

GO: At this point, knowledge is power. There is work going on to determine if this is even feasible. I don't know if I would write a check to try to defeat this, since the Whatcom Dems have endorsed. Just the City of Bellingham residents will be voting on this. This is a citizen initiative, so there is nothing anyone can do except general advocacy. Talk to your employees.

Satpal Sidhu (SS): This is seeking micro answers to a macro problem. Not possible. We can't solve it in one city with 100k people. It shows the frustration citizens have about our general state of the country. Every little thing, we just want to beat it to death and not solve the issue.

Seth Fleetwood (SF): In this instance, the resolution by them (Whatcom Dems) expressing support for the 4 initiatives does not comport with the position taken by the city administration or any of the council members. We all expressed very real concerns for multiple reasons about these initiatives.

RB: One of more effective messages is that between the city and county (because most of county employees work in Bellingham), it would roughly cost \$10m/year of taxpayer money just to provide for this. So, either going to have to raise taxes or cut other programs.

SDR: I think the group would love that. Is it possible for the city to come out and speak out against this and for the county to come out and speak out against it?

SF: Councilmembers are always free to pass resolutions expressing the sentiments on a range of topics, so the answer to that is yes.

Casey Diggs (CD): I wasn't even going to talk about my side of the business. Does it impact a construction company just doing work in the city limits of Bellingham?

GO: I don't know that answer. The policy is written so poorly that there most likely a legal leg that you could challenge that it is something the company would have to pay for. When look at Seattle, there is a dept of labor standards at the city tasked with mandating these rules, particularly scheduling rules. There is no carve out for this initiative to force or mandate the city (Bellingham) to create this. So not only no policy enforcement, but it is also going to cost the city to enforce its own rules. Creates a litigious environment.

### Follow Up / Action items

- Guy will send info on upcoming meetings to the committee for those interested.
- Keep the initiatives on topic for September meeting

# County Council Update: Councilor Rud Browne

Affordable Child Care proposal

RB: Covered childcare earlier. I don't have much to add but asking committee to follow up and reinforce to the council and the county to reinforce how money will be used. If don't find a way to come up with how to use the money, it will be reallocated in other ways. A lot of the members while dedicated to the issue, members don't have a lot of experience dedicating capital expenditures. If anyone wants to step up and get involved let me know.

EL: May I add as relates to childcare and ARPA. I know the council is thinking about how to use the money in best and effective way – it is term limited to 3 years. Not a mechanism that can provide ongoing funds.

RB: Exactly right – why I am pushing to have it cover capital infrastructure not ongoing operational.

SDR: If there are meeting times or is there anything to include in the notes in case people want to get involved.

RB: If want to get involved, send me an email and make sure in the subject, it's related to childcare. We have to strategize as to how to broaden the group to get to the right answer. Would help to know who wants to participate.

SDR: What comes to mind for probably all of us is who can we get behind, how can we help support? Housing such an issue, childcare, early education. Those are all things feel so strongly about and if there are any organizations that are really making an impact -- we're all paying taxes, so feel like we're dishing a lot of money to pay to the government for that but are there any organizations really help moving the needle that we can get behind. Does anyone else feel that way?

EL: Will follow up with a fuller response with what's happening and what anticipate in the next few months with some more granular programmatic and policy recommendations.

Follow Up / Action Items

Committee members interested in participating in conversation about funding for childcare, contact Rud.

Cherry Point Agreement

SDR: Rud, do you mind giving us that Cherry Point Update?

RB: The update is simple. We have a special council meeting to repeal the moratorium and voted to replace with legislation changing use out there for 60 years. Received basically unanimous approval from environment, industry, and labor. Managed to thread that needle somehow. So, everybody's happy.

Follow Up / Action Items

None

#### Close

**Next meeting:** Date/Time of September 2021 meeting pending results of survey.

Planned Presentation: Salmon recovery proposal - Rich Focht - San Juan Area Sea Life

Topic for discussion: People's First Bellingham Initiative #4

Potential Future Meeting Topics:

- All Sectors: Near term business impacts of the on-going labor shortage (brief update from 4 sectors with +40 employees)
- Water Rights in Whatcom County Presentation from PUD
- American Rescue Plan relief dollars in Whatcom County
- Status of Permanent Affordability of Child Care in Whatcom County
- Status of Affordable Housing in Whatcom County
  - Related to annexations, Buildable Lands, EDI program, COB Planning Director search
- Status of Worker Housing in Whatcom County Updates from POB Economic Development
- Presentation on Bellis Fair Mall Repurpose/Redevelopment
- Updates on County financials and budgets, economic resiliency of the County

### **Full Discussion, Presentation and Other Business Transcript**

#### **Announcements**

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Paul Burrill (PB): Yeah, Sarah, I've trying to push one guy, Paul Sanga, he's part of the Sikh community, great guy, big operation. I know he would be a great addition. He's a really, big active business member in the community.

SDR: Anything can do to get application filled out

PB: I think there is some fear about the time commitment, and I told him the time commitment – as long as not chair or vice chair – it's pretty low. As long as we don't try to push him into a position like that, that'd probably be the best thing.

SDR: Perfect. That sounds really good. Anything else from anyone? Alright. Paul, we've got you on that next topic too – proposal to form a sub-committee on water adjudication.

PB: I would be willing to do whatever, I think Brad Rader would be a good to. Is he here today? Brad's more knowledgeable than me but I would be more than willing to head that up if necessary or push on it so, I think it's an important one and sort of a baseline thing for even development. If we have water issues, nothing kind of moves ahead. That's sort of a basic human need is water and access to water. Fish are kind of important to me

SDR: Affects all of us, so thank you. If everyone agrees, let's move forward on getting you two heading up that sub-committee. So then to my understanding we have two sub committees, the Housing sub-committee headed up by Troy and water headed up by you two, Paul.

PB: I'll probably reach out. I have some pretty good resources with that through some of the ag guys I know who are much more knowledgeable than me, but if I don't know, I'll find somebody that knows.

SDR: It would be awfully nice to see summary of those two cases in Washington of the successfully negotiated settlements.

PB: Ok. I'll reach out. I'll get that for you Sarah.

SDR: OK. Hi Seth. It's great to see our mayor here. That's awesome. And Satpal, Good to see you here. Good to see everybody.

Debbie Ahl (DA): And Paul, I just wanted to say, thanks for heading up that task force. I think that's great and um, I'm really looking forward to something that works for everybody in our county.

PB: Absolutely. I've talked to a lot of tribal members and that's a big thing. They want to find something that works for everybody, not just from the top down or one group, and I think that's the catch. We have to really work through the issue, and that's where I think we'll make it fly, but we've got to work through it slowly and there are some good solutions out there, so we hope to find some of those.

DA: And it's also a long-term relationship, you know, cause other issues to come up. You're a great person to lead this, and I appreciate you being there.

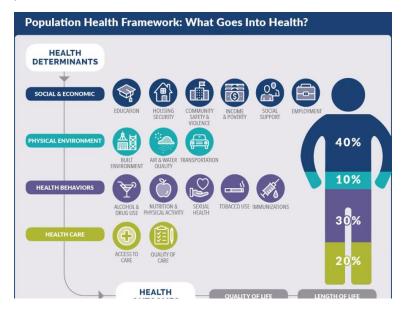
SDR: Well said, Debbie. Thank you. Our next topic is by the Whatcom County Health Department and Kate and Erika, have you down for a 20-minute presentation and then 15-minute Q&A or after, if you want to get it rolling.

**Presentation:** Community Health Impact Assessment Report: Kate Stanford / Erika Lautenbach – Whatcom County Health Dept

Kate Stanford (KS): I'll get us started for today. My name is Katie Stanford. I'm with the Whatcom County Health Department in our health information and assessment division, and Erika our director will be here shortly. We're giving this presentation at what I feel is an unfortunate time. We certainly were starting off these presentations in a more positive manner, really thinking about recovery and as we're in this most current surge, we're really weighing a lot of things both infection as well as other covid impacts that we're going to go over today.

Erika Lautenbach (EL): I'm sorry folks, my internet has been glitchy this morning, so I'll give my remarks after you're done Katie.

KS: Erika, I mentioned we were hoping, that we were really focused on recovery and not on a current surge, but none-the-less, here we are. We have spent a lot of time really researching on what are the impacts of Covid beyond just the disease burden. We've all heard numerous stories about many ways that our lives have been upended. We certainly have experienced this ourselves. To understand more comprehensively how the pandemic has affected community health, we've conducted this impact assessment to study the changes that effect even the foundations of health and well-being in our county. I believe that Jennifer shared that this is an update to the 2018 community health assessment. That report's available online and we used, went back, and looked at some of the initial data sources to see what's changed since 2018 and after we've gone through some of these very significant pandemic impacts for a long time now. It's important to acknowledged that the pandemic occurred during a broader context of social, political, economic, and environmental turmoil. This all shaped our response to the pandemic.



Clear from this context that social and economic factors that account for about 40% of a community's health.

Since couldn't study everything impacted by Covid in early report, limited the assessment to the priority areas for two main reasons, because there is ample evidence that 1) these are key determinants of community health and 2) we recognized by community as important local issues with persistent challenges. Also need to study other areas like social isolation for older adults, family / domestic violence, and food insecurity. So, these are the areas that we did examine.

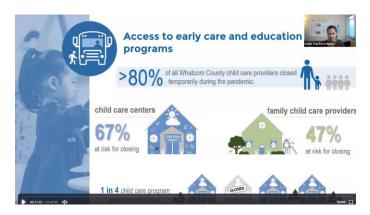
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  - Homelessness
  - Behavioral health mental health outcomes and substance use behavior

What you'll see in in report is a compilation of quantitative data – statistics and graphs and qualitative data – interviews and focus groups that we synthesized to describe how Covid 19 has impacted these five community areas.

We expanded our reach, because we know there's not a lot of quantitative data yet, because it just been such a short period time in terms of data and research. So, we really leaned into our local experts and interviews and focus groups to find additional information to really understand how we put the pieces of this puzzle together.

What we learned and you likely won't be surprised by is that the pandemic negatively affected basic drivers of health and had impacts on behavioral health.

- Kindergarten readiness indicator of family and child well being
  - Important indicator of community progress toward supporting the conditions that promote family and child well-being. They also act as a revealing gauge of inequities. Key findings in this priority area are not surprising and include reduced access to early care and education programs.



- Reduced access in early care/education programs. Over 80% of programs closed temporarily and other are concerned about staying open. Prior to pandemic, Whatcom County called a childcare desert these closures make it harder to find and afford care.
- Local educators have reported bigger disparities and inequities of access to early childcare, K-readiness for Hispanic, Black, American Indian & Alaska Native students are lower than Asian and White students in Whatcom County. Reveals how our systems are failing our kiddos.
- Screenings, intervention, and well-child visits were disrupted and often deferred during the pandemic. There was a 17% decline in referrals for Whatcom County children with suspected special needs between 2019 and 2020 with sharpest decrease early in the pandemic when non-essential health visits were discouraged or canceled. Children with developmental delays weren't identified as soon as possible.
- Continued delayed access has been worse.
- Loss of specialty care providers since the pandemic.
- Childcare Quality childcare and early learning opportunities set children on their best trajectory for good long-term health but in addition to that affordable, high-quality childcare opens up economic and educational opportunities for parents and caregivers that allow them to provide the basics for their families. Looked at how childcare affected the health and wellbeing of families.
  - Permanent and temporary closures worsening previously existing shortages

 Concerned the gap between needed and available spots that has widened during the pandemic will persist and worsen if there aren't significant efforts made to expand the options for working families.

# Closures of child care facilities are worse previously-existing shortages of child care

The amount of **currently available child care for kids under age 5** will need to triple I the year 2025 in order to meet Whatcom County's anticipated child care needs.



- Options need to triple by 2025 for kids under age 5. Means that two of every three kids you know will not have childcare available to them.
- Lack of childcare workers compounds lack of childcare availability. It has
  increased operating costs and imposed financial hardship on existing
  childcare operators. This has added to the challenges of providers to be able
  to offer consistent childcare to families.
- Reduced options and high cost of childcare at a time when incomes may have been reduced threatened family budget stability, especially for families on the edge. Showed a chart showing childcare costs for kids under 5 are more expensive than annual cost of college at WWU and WCC.
- Childcare facility closures had a direct impact on families' incomes, housing, mental health. Chart shows parents rates largest challenge was balancing work and caring for children, increased mental/behavioral health, household income reduced, job loss, housing at risk, had to move, Covid-positive.
- Housing security safe and affordable housing is an essential component of healthy communities. Housing conditions and affordability have implications for well-being and economic opportunities. In areas where housing costs are high, people may have to select sub-standard living conditions, make cuts to other parts of their budget, or make longer commutes to their jobs and school. Can affect quality of life and add stress to daily life – can affect mental health and basic health needs.
  - WC has had a lack of affordable housing for rent or purchase both persistent and worsening. Median sale price gone up by 68% between 2016 and 2021, comparable with median HH income going up by only 34%. Becoming nearly impossible to buy or rent in Bellingham and other communities due to extremely low vacancy rate. Applications for rental housing can be \$30 to \$75 and often people can be required to submit multiple applications before they can find a home. Potential renters undergo credit to income verification and often need to meet particular ratios that can be challenging given high and increasing rental costs.

- Price of building materials rose dramatically that could hamper new affordable housing going forward.
- Eviction programs are due to end. In June 2021, 14% WA residents reported being behind on rent, equates to 4,655 HH at risk of eviction. Despite eviction protection, people have accumulated large debts due to unpaid bills like car payments, medical expenses, and student loans not covered by federal relief funds.

#### Homelessness

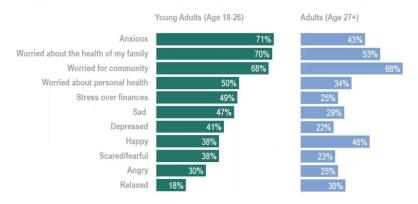
- Safe, stable home basic foundation to build a healthy life. Individuals experiencing homelessness more likely to have broad range of acute illnesses such as hypertension, diabetes, and behavioral health issues. And they are more likely to have substance use and mental health concerns which a lack of housing makes treating those things all the more challenging.
- Covid 19 revealed how tenuous many peoples' living arrangement really have been. WC families with children waiting for housing support increased by 77% between March 2020 – 2021. More families with children became homeless, because they may have been previously stayed with friends and family but needed new distancing living arrangements due to Covid or they've lost employment and were unable to contribute to housing costs.
- 22% increase in people experiencing homelessness highest count since 2008.
- Pandemic intensified inadequate supply of emergency and temporary housing.

  Housing programs and services forced to shift. Emergency shelter moved for social distancing, homeless outreach staff couldn't help with transportation and some dropin services simply weren't able to operate or were greatly reduced.
- Behavioral health Stable housing, positive social connections, financial stability are among the foundations that support a healthy family.
  - Disruptions to these can leave impact on mental health and substance use and have a major impact on entire families.
  - Uncertainty and trauma from pandemic have increased need for behavioral health services
  - Before pandemic, average increased by 75% of crisis services needed
  - More and more severe behavioral health issues in young adults. Top 3are anxiety, worry for family and worry for community.

# More - and more severe - behavioral health issues

Katie Stanford He

A survey taken during the pandemic found that **young adults in Whatcom County** report feeling anxiety and depression more frequently than their **adult counterparts**.



# Cross cutting challenges - all of the above are interrelated

"...The story lines in our data are rooted in longstanding challenges that American families with young children faced prior to the pandemic. The pandemic did not cause these issues to arise, but rather has pressurized and thrown them into relief in a way that commands the attention of the general public and its policy makers."

A Year in the Life of a Pandemic, UOregon CTN RAPID-EC Project

Covid exposed already fragile systems we already knew were broken. Can't stress enough that Covid 19 exposed and increased persistent health inequities in all systems.

Some positives – community caring for people, businesses quickly tested and implemented new models. Examples include curbside pick-up and delivery of prescriptions, telehealth options for behavioral health, and food bank deliveries, remote work and flexible hours, collaborations to try to address community needs more wholistically.

Erika Lautenbach (EL): Wanted to credit incredible team, including Katie, for pulling this information together.

# Many thanks to representatives from the following organizations for taking the time to be interviewed for this assessment.

Arc of Whatcom County

Behavioral Health Advisory Committee

Bellingham Academy of Arts for Youth

Bellingham Schools - Multiple district leaders and support service providers

Blaine Schools Family Resource Coordinator Catholic Community Services

Child & Family Well-being Task Force

Chuckanut Health Foundation

City of Bellingham Housing

Ferndale Schools Family Resource Coordinator

Food Security Task Force

Generations Forward Family Council and Policy, Advocacy, & Funding Team Healthy Whatcom

Lighthouse Mission

Lummi Public Health

Lynden Schools Family Resource Coordinator

Max Higbee Center

Meridian Schools Family Resource Coordinator

Mount Baker Schools Family Resource Coordinator

Nooksack Medical Clinic

Nooksack Valley Schools Family Resource Coordinator North Sound Accountable Community of Health

North Sound Behavioral Health Administrative Services Organization

Northwest Washington Indian Health Board

Northwest Youth Services

Opportunity Council (OC) (multiple divisions)

PeaceHealth

Perinatal Mental Health Task Force and providers

Port of Bellingham's Regional Economic Partnership

Public Health Advisory Board Racial Equity Commission

Sea Mar - Rehavioral health care

The Whatcom Dream

Unity Care Northwest

WA State Dept. of Children, Youth, and Families

Whatcom Asset Building Coalition (OC)

Whatcom Child Care Coalition

Whatcom County Health Department (WCHD) (multiple divisions)

Whatcom County Housing Advisory Committee

Whatcom Early Learning Alliance

Whatcom Infants and Children's Council

Whatcom Prevention Coalition (WCHD)

Whatcom Taking Action

Whatcom Youth Behavioral Health Stakeholders Gathering

WWU Professors

I think the assessment will be a useful document for the community. What this isn't is a look specifically on direct impacts of Covid such as hospitalizations, stats related to Covid specifically. There will be – and Councilmember Brown was one of our sponsors of this -- there will be a commission that will look at the response itself and all of the impacts associated with the response.

What it also is not, is a look at, truly a look at economic impacts on businesses, how many businesses closed, how many opened, what the impacts were on business owners and staff associated with the economy. We partnered closely with Don and Jennifer on any of the areas where there might be a connection and I want to thank them for their work for their help pulling information together. They were really incredible partners, and the port is lucky to have them.

So, there are other opportunities to have some of these data to come forward. Put a link to the full document in the chat box so can look at as well - https://whatcomcounty.us/covidimpact.

Want to acknowledge that this is really heavy information. Lots of people suffered a lot in this community. I have the opportunity to provide the hope for the community moving forward, because there is a lot of work happening in these areas, and we appreciate the business community specifically addressing childcare and thinking about that and showing leadership. There are other groups like our Healthy Whatcom Community Coalition and our Children and Family Well Being Task Force that will provide more granular recommendations. These are systemic long-term problems that we have had in our community that Covid has worsened, but they are not intractable. We can impact these areas. We also have the opportunity through various funding sources like ARPA funding and other sources to put resources and dedicate funding and support and political support toward these issues, so we can have an impact long term and really see these things change. Important to be able to have a successful business and have a healthy community.

I also just want to state that a lot of you have never interacted with the health dept before Covid. Maybe you know us as the regulator. But truly, this work, the assessment work, the community coalition work, the high-level policy problem solving is the work of public health. This is our bread and butter just as much as conducting inspections. This is an awkward time to discuss recovery and moving forward as we enter a devastating new surge in the pandemic, but it's also a good time to start gathering our resources and momentum and support around these issues, so we can quickly put transition and provide a catalyst to move forward as we get out of what we know of this surge and move forward to potentially what would be more routine for the health department.

Katie is good at everything. She's a data person and good presenter. Great at putting the information together to share with community. Would love to engage with you on where you see the business community engaging in these topics; what strikes you and surprises or doesn't surprise; and how you might be willing to engage in this work. So, I'll just stop there and open it up for any thoughts or reflections.

PB: Erika this is Paul. I have one question for you. In the presentation you said Childcare is more expensive than college education on average now. Can we take some of the models that higher education uses and create sustainable, privately run childcare center instead of...I know there's been a lot of talk about creating a city or county run childcare provider, but I've never been a big advocate of government getting into all aspects of the business. Because there's different parts of our community and sometimes when you talk about inclusion, it makes it hard on the children – if you have any young children at home, which I do – if they are forced into a one sized fit all box which public companies typically have. In order to get the funding, they have to subscribe to a certain way of doing things. That may create an uncomfortable situation for children if their English as a second language, we have a lot of great people in this community that are important to the community for jobs that may, their children might feel uncomfortable there because of socio-economic, environmental or they might look different. I was one of them. I had a hard time with school and so I was always on the outside. I may look the same, but I was affected identically like they were. Can we take these funds and somehow push private operators in – If its that expensive, you know I am fortunate enough that my wife can stay home – and so it was kind of a surprise to see that. If a college can prosper, why can't a childcare provider, is kind of how I look at it.

EL: Thanks for that. I also know that Mauri, I see Mauri in the meeting, and know that the Whatcom Community Foundation is looking at different models. It's important to make the distinction that not only is childcare more expensive, but when young people go to college, there might be more loan options, so they don't have to pay for everything up front as they go. That's not the case for childcare. Not only is it more expensive, but it's also a pay as you go, um, there aren't a lot of opportunities for families who can't afford the high cost. I know Mauri is working on this and, Rud has been a champion of this as well.

Rud Browne (RB) – When you look at the numbers, the university system is heavily subsidized by the state, so the price you pay as a family is not the actual cost.

DB: When look at parents of young children, typically not at the place in their career where they have higher incomes, and college kids get more help from parents as well. Some of you may remember when I presented on a childcare business model that economic model for a family with toddlers / infants not sustainable because cost of childcare losing \$10k/year. Also presented that a business model for a large childcare center, which is only one of the options that we need to have available, that one of the things that didn't work, cost of the facilities.

What Rud and Carol proposal – not govt run but to use ARPA funds to create sustainability for childcare facilities and taking capital costs out of equation certainly helps. Other portion of that is the conversations that Mauri and I are having with the City of Bellingham is the huge challenge have is the shortage of childcare workers. Work Source describes childcare as a dead-end job that no-one respects. That's a great recruitment slogan for young people.

Part of the problem with childcare worker staff is the older childcare workers have left during Covid. See employment stats that employers are looking for people, so childcare workers have more places to go. Childcare facilities would love to increase the pay for workers, but parents can't afford it. Kudos for the one-time capital fund proposal but also knowing that there is the issue of childcare workers. Need sustainability to licensed in-home because most of in fact care will go to those homes. Along with Whatcom Community Foundation and Mount Baker Foundation -- which I am also involved with -- is a part of that. Love that this group is open and interested in this issue because can't separate health of business and economy from health of the community.

PB: Rud, with this ARPA Funds, is it possible to prioritize it, because this is a really important issue to me with age group of my children and seeing some of my kids' friends with childcare and whether or not people are going back to work. We need people to get back to work. I've seen a lot of outcry for this money to go elsewhere. Now this is social media and off the wall comments, but I worry that its getting pushed and pulled. Is it possible to sidetrack this money for this or is going to be a hurdle and pushed to other aeras?

RB: I could smell the blood on the water early on so, that's why Carol and I got the council to pass a resolution that said at least half the money was going to go to childcare. No, the county executive last week gave is a proposal that allocates 20% of the money to childcare and twice that amount to public infrastructure which I believe could be funded by other means. If I've got one message to re-enforce with the committee is to push back and tell the exec and council – both city and county -- that this is the number 1 priority. Also, comparing to university there is a fundamental difference between the university and public school system verses childcare in that when look at the cost, already paid for the capital infrastructure. Haven't done with that with childcare. Need to do that.

SDR: Thank you Rud. We've got about two more minutes for discussion and Casey, you had something you wanted to say.

Casey Diggs (CD): Erika, thanks for keeping a level head during this new surge. Are you working with local fire dept and law enforcement with mental health and behavioral health officers with paramedics? I was downtown picking up garbage this morning all over around the brewery. These folks are battling mental health. Police can't do much but if we could focus more energy with paramedics who're talking with these people weekly, making sure that they're on the right medications and things like that. Has there been any talk about that?

EL: Bad news after bad news. Behavioral health provider crisis is bad as well. They are telling us loud and clear – finding people with right credentials is really challenging. Some of our providers are hiring folks who the starting salary is \$17-\$18/hour. They can't afford to live here. They are not attractive jobs

and finding a mass exodus to private practice. Need to continue to work through this to make sure those systems don't continue to break.

SDR: Thanks Erika. If everyone is in agreement, we have Guy who will be presenting for 25 minutes and then we can circle back to some of these topics during Councilor Rud Brown's update where he will be updating us on affordable childcare. Does that sound good if we table all of the good thoughts and good notes here in the chat and let Guy talk, and then we'll circle back.

EL: If you'd like Katie and I to stick around for that, I'm happy to.

RB: Let me yield my time because the main issue I want to talk about is childcare and we already covered a lot of that already, so I am happy to yield to Erika or anybody else.

SDR: Alright.

Guy Occhiogrosso (GO): First and foremost, I want to thank Erika who has done an amazing job to help the community. Been a privilege and honor to work alongside her and her team from the business response to the pandemic, she has been supportive of business the entire way. As much support the business community can give to the health department, even though sometimes that's a unique opportunity per the restaurant guideline/restriction piece of normal, they are doing a great job and I think it needs to be said louder and more often.

Now, I don't have a presentation. I'm thinking more 5-minute update. Show of hands from those on camera. How many are familiar with People First Bellingham Initiatives, particularly #4? How many have read, looked at it?

I started raising the alarm. All of you should have gotten the email that I sent to this group. I have concerns – particularly #4. For those that don't anything about it, there are three components of most concern to me.

- 3) Secure/predictive/restrictive scheduling heard the three terms used interchangeably. This is simply promising and guaranteeing a two-week schedule for all employees, primarily hourly employees. This is not a new concept. The City of Seattle instituted it. There are a couple of concerns 1) lack of flexibility it offers. 2) Additionally, if compare with Seattle Seattle has carved out for union negotiations. This initiative has not, so this could blow up existing agreements.
  - a. A subpoint is the employer penalty
    - i. 1) if adjust an hourly employee's scheduled shift or increase hours there will be a 1-hour penalty pay. Not sure how most of payroll systems will be able to account for that. That's one of the structural concerns as well as punishing the employer for, sometimes in situations completely out of their control. Once of things saw in Seattle when pandemic hit, businesses had to pay employees when they weren't able to be open those two weeks.
    - ii. Reduction of hours: If schedule someone for 6 hours and cut by two hours, have to pay time and a half for every hour cut. Most employers won't cut the hours at that point and will find some menial work to keep employee around and not pay time and a half.
    - iii. Hazard pay when look at the ordinance. Secure scheduling piece takes 7 pages. The hazard pay piece is 2 to 3 sentences long. Every hourly employee in City of Bellingham will get \$4/hour hazard pay for any declared state of emergency that covers jurisdiction of City of Bellingham (clearly pandemic. Also, drought and wildfires the state is going through), and there is no exclusion of any hourly rate or type of employee. Can have someone working in office, no engagement with public still mandated to get the hazard pay. Can't fully comprehend the ramifications. For City of Bellingham, rough numbers would be \$125k a week just for the City of Bellingham. The city is one of our largest employers.

- b. What that said, there is a 'fewer than 30-employee count' exclusion that says would only have to do for 2 weeks. Could help some small employers and non-profits but what seeing for current hazard pay for grocery store workers, you're having non-grocery workers moving to grocery jobs causing increased issues in other sectors. Could see this mirroring itself with smaller employers. The Chamber has 5 employees. Chamber would have to pay hourly employees more, because could probably find a job that pays more elsewhere.
- 4) That's just one of the initiatives. I have concerns for our business community. Thank Sarah for stepping up. She was one of the only people that responded to my email, so got a 'no committee' formed and got information into the ballot guide. Found out this weekend that the Whatcom Dems endorsed all four initiatives this weekend. Makes this battle really tough to defeat these. I just have concerns with policies themselves proposed. Lack of foresight and sever lack of knowledge of the full impacts that these will make.

RB: Quickly add to Guy's comments – one of the reasons why I am frustrated with being in politics.

SDR: Thank you Guy. That was a great presentation or whatever you'd like to call it. Thank you for bringing this to out attention. We're struggling with affordability issues already in the City of Bellingham as it is. I jumped in. I really appreciate -- we work side by side with our employees creating schedules, and we really work hard to schedule multiple months out. Our scheduling flexibility is one of the things our employees appreciate most -- when we poll our co-workers at Birch Equipment, flexibility of scheduling comes up so much, because we work 4/10 schedules. A lot of times we're open 6 and 7 days a week and sometimes 24 hours. A lot of time, its children's events employees didn't know were coming --sporting events, school events, a sick child, vacation opportunities. Its such a lovely culture be able to support. This would be very difficult to continue to support with the hazard pay and scheduling. We never shut down and our teams work together so well, and we're 80 people. We're even closer than we ever were, and these initiatives would be devastating for us.

CJ Seitz: I can offer some information as work with small businesses in the community. As you could imagine, I've heard a whole bunch of feedback from local businesses. Everybody appreciates the intents. Everyone cares about their employees and want them to be happy and healthy. But imagine if running on fairly thin margins and run into this scheduling to deal with and the financial impacts...might be more open to this if came with software developed by an industry professional and training. Suggest need funding on implementation front.

GO: At this point, knowledge is power. There is work going on to determine if this is even feasible. I don't know if I would write a check to try to defeat this, since the Whatcom Dems have endorsed. Just the City of Bellingham residents will be voting on this. This is a citizen initiative, so there is nothing anyone can do except general advocacy. Talk to your employees.

Not putting SBDC hat on by WWU hat on, be valuable to say will cost WWU \$300k/week just in hazard pay piece. Good to ping on the mayor to truly assess what this will cost knowing that the pandemic alone, let alone all of the other crisis being declared would be state of emergency for federal relief funds. It feels a little disingenuous to me using that declaration without any condition of a public health crisis. So having WWU and the city and county come to the table to say, "this is what it will cost".

Satpal Sidhu (SS)I: If I may, have to go to another meeting. This is seeking micro answers to a macro problem. Not possible. We can't solve it in one city with 100k people. It shows the frustration citizens have about our general state of the country. Every little thing, we just want to beat it to death and not solve the issue.

Ryan Allsop: Sounds like kick them while they're down for the service sector. Service industry don't have as much foresight or planning. Doesn't seem to make any logical sense, especially right now.

Seth Fleetwood (SF): In response to Guy, you mentioned the politics in Bellingham. They are often reflected accurately by positions taken by the Whatcom County Democrats. In this instance, the resolution by them expressing support for the 4 initiatives does not comport with the position taken by the city administration or any of the council members. We all expressed very real concerns for multiple reasons about these initiatives. If the conclusion reaching is there should be reluctance to engage in a no campaign, not sure the right position to take. Would find greater support than might think.

GO: Certainly not advocating for not doing it. Simply saying to your point, historically, Whatcom Dems support means success. To your point, would also agree that no single councilmember indicated any support for any of these.

RA: Can they speak to that publicly? Seth, could you say something? More powerful than the business community saying it.

SF: What I'll check in on -- considerable discussion at a recent meeting regarding who will draft con statement. Refresh my memory as to who was selected for that.

GO: Sarah was one. Keri from Lombardi's and Chelsea from Grocery Outlet as well.

SDR: It came so fast. It's a shame. There's a lot of support around the committee – disappointing not a larger group.

RB: One of more effective messages is that between the city and county (because most of county employees work in Bellingham), it would roughly cost \$10m/year of taxpayer money just to provide for this. So, either going to have to raise taxes or cut other programs.

GO: Can we clip this recording and get you to say that?

RB: Happy to put on the record because its simple math.

CJ Seitz: Guy. I haven't dug into this as much as you have, but I am googling state of emergency, Bellingham, Washington, and there was a drought state of emergency across Whatcom County including Whatcom County currently.

SDR: Guy pointed out last 17 months, we would have been in a state of emergency.

GO: Under three right now. Some argument, whether or not Asian Hornets is also a state of emergency, because its for federal funding, not hazardous working conditions.

CJ: So, there's no specificity anywhere?

GO: Read the section on Hazard pay. Two sentences. That second bullet point, going to tell me you're going to work for chamber of commerce making minimum wage.

SDR: Have a few minutes more for discussion. Sorry Guy – and Derek Long brought up a great point in the chat. Have Bellingham's attorneys provided legal perspective?

SF: Our attorneys looked at extensively. They wrote memorandums to describe the impact. Hard to give a summary because each initiative has multiple parts flagged. There are lots and lots of provisions in all initiatives that are troublesome. Happy to have legal staff pull up and share with this group.

SDR: I think the group would love that. Is it possible for the city to come out and speak out against this and for the county to come out and speak out against it?

SF: Councilmembers are always free to pass resolutions expressing the sentiments on a range of topics, so the answer to that is yes.

GO: Want to make sure get to Casey – as service sector, his voice is important. But then I have two points to make quickly.

Casey Diggs (CD): I wasn't even going to talk about my side of the business. Does it impact a construction company just doing work in the city limits of Bellingham?

GO: I don't know that answer. The policy is written so poorly that there most likely a legal leg that you could challenge that it is something the company would have to pay for. When look at Seattle, there is a dept of labor standards at the city tasked with mandating these rules, particularly scheduling rules. There is no carve out for this initiative to force or mandate the city (Bellingham) to create this. So not only no policy enforcement, its also going to cost the city to enforce its own rules. Creates a litigious environment. Important to clarify, I don't see the city, particularly individuals speaking out against this, because can look at Seth. Lisa and Holly, who were accosted during the whole Camp 210 scenario by the same organizers who are involved in this process.

Pete Dawson (PD): From construction industry, if figure labor about half cost of project – you figure \$40/hour is an average wage, you add \$4/hour – increasing cost of labor 10% to project, increasing cost of a of housing project in round numbers by 5% for whatever that's worth.

SDR: And that would compound because of subs and materials.

PD: Maybe 5 – 10% rough estimate of cost of construction.

SDR: We are at the point where should table this. Does anyone have quick last minute. We had some deadlines we have to get no response for voter's pamphlet very quickly. If there are any other informational meetings coming up, I will extend the invitation if anyone is interested. Rud Brown are you ready.

RB: Don't have a lot to add, In recess. What to reinforce every good thing been said about Erika and her team. Very competent and appreciate you work hard.

Erika had mentioned the commission that we're doing. The purpose is to say what can we learn. Our emergency response system is built off the back on what occurred during 911. Designed to create a unified response to an emergency. Better than it was but weakness that emerged is the national response is built on "if you are in trouble your neighbor can help you". System never based on 'what happens if everyone is in trouble?'. Can't go elsewhere to get resiliency. Have to build it locally. So have to say, what do to build the local resiliency – using WCBCC members and the business community to set up logistics, make hand sanitizer, setting up drive through donation center for PPE. What could get us there is simply another pandemic, but more likely it is going to be a widespread cyber security attack. It will either shut down communications or our power grid. Think – what would it have been like if couldn't have talked to anyone, turned the lights on or pumped gas?

SF: I could benefit from clarification. The agenda item, affordable childcare proposal. Is childcare proposal setting up a commission?

RB: No. Nothing to do with that. I'm responding to Erika's earlier comment about response to Covid.

Eva Shulte (ES): Would welcome to have a deeper dive on Cyber security – interested in offering area of businesses and partnerships to the committee. Sarah happy to follow up with you offline if there is interest.

SDR: Would be excellent. Thank you.

RB: Blessed to have one of the best colleges in the country on cyber security and helping respond if a devastating attack.

SDR: We'll follow up on that and get into childcare and Cherry Point Updates.

RB: Covered childcare earlier. I don't have much to add but asking committee to follow up and reinforce to the council and the county to reinforce how money will be used. If don't find a way to come up with how to use the money, it will be reallocated in other ways. A lot of the members while dedicated to the issue, members don't have a lot of experience dedicating capital expenditures. If anyone wants to step up and get involved let me know.

EL: May I add as relates to childcare and ARPA. I know the council is thinking about how to use the money in best and effective way – it is term limited to 3 years. Not a mechanism that can provide ongoing funds.

RB: Exactly right – why I am pushing to have it cover capital infrastructure not ongoing operational.

SDR: If there are meeting times or is there anything to include in the notes in case people want to get involved.

RB: If want to get involved, send me an email, and make sure in the subject, it's related to childcare. We have to strategize as to how to broaden the group to get to the right answer. Would help to know who wants to participate.

SDR: Is there a deadline to submit for those funds?

RB: Get to spend over a three-year period

SF: Before December of 2024

SDR: You have up to three years to spend the funds or have three years to submit for the funds?

RB: Check has to clear the bank.

SF: By end of 2024.

SDR: Any other comments. Otherwise. we can move to the Cheery Point Update.

RB: Going to find the link to the Executive's proposed use for county ARPA funds.

SDR: Did you have something Pete?

PD: Related to the community health and childcare? First, thank health department for great work and time. In looking at the health assessment. As a businessperson and aal the businesspeople here, will tend to think 'what are the one or two things could do to improve things?'. How does health department improve – best move the dial. As I'm looking at it – I think in construction terms. Is affordable housing the best thing to move the dial for county health – if had more affordable housing, more parents stay home verses work, improved child readiness, creates jobs, reduces homelessness. Would affordable housing help move the dial on all health issues? To me, regulatory environment makes it tough to build.

EL: Appreciate the question and thoughtfulness. There is a both / and strategy. Working with executive to add affordable housing strategist to work with regulators and other departments. We have funding for it. There are some immediate strategies. It's a balance of immediate strategies and long-term strategies that

We could spend a bunch on homeless shelters and for 2 years, problem would be temporarily solved. The goal is to get out of hamster wheel of fixes that then need to be fixed again. That's why Kindergarten readiness is so important. Drives HS graduations rates, job attainment, education attainment. So, I think immediate solutions – what's the furthest forward can get so can see systems. Really committed to all 5 of these.

PD: What I heard there was if had a perfect situation on kindergarten readiness then all of these upstream or downstream would be much better. So how best improve Kindergarten readiness.

SDR: Before you respond. Thank you both of you with such good information and questions. Debbie, I see you have something you wanted to comment, and we still need a Cherry Point Update. We're one minute before the meeting ends. Rud, do you mind giving us that Cherry Point Update and then anyone that wants to stay... John – if we can keep the meeting going extra 10 minutes? Is that ok with everyone? Erika, Pete, Debbie, if you can hold your excellent thoughts and we can let Rud give an update on Cherry Point.

RB: The update is simple. We have a special council meeting to repeal the moratorium and voted to replace with legislation changing use out there for 60 years. Received basically unanimous approval from environment, industry, and labor. Managed to thread that needle somehow. So, everybody's happy.

SDR: Now at 12:30p. Whoever would like to stay, give another 10 minutes, and do a formal wrap. I think Erika, you were going to respond to Pete's question.

EL: Because Debbie also working on this. Curious Debbie were you going to respond to Pete's question.

DA: I have a hard stop, so I will put notes in chat and be happy to be a resource at any time.

EL: And Pete, I would be happy to have a follow up call with you Pete as I would with any of you.

SDR: What comes to mind for probably all of us is who can we get behind, how can we help support? Housing such an issue, childcare, early education. Those are all things feel so strongly about and if there are any organizations that are really making an impact -- we're all paying taxes, so feel like we're dishing a lot of money to pay to the government for that but are there any organizations really help moving the needle that we can get behind. Does anyone else feel that way?

EL: Will follow up with a fuller response with what's happening and what anticipate in the next few months with some more granular programmatic and policy recommendations.

SDR: That sounds good, and we'll include in the notes. Does anyone else have any comments?

SF: I have a hard stop as well. Thanks for having me.

SDR: How's everybody doing? Are we at a good ending place here? Does that sound good?

PB: Can I make one last comment, Sarah? I really like what Pete said. A house is a big part of the family – and family best unit to create Kindergarten preparedness. Its so expensive to live here and get anything done. Thank you for working on housing development.

RA: Can we, at the next meeting, get a get a report from the Port regarding project with Harcourt. Know we've heard some griping about progress or lack of progress. In Erika's case – the homeless discussion. I happened to drive by and see Casey out there cleaning up around and below his buildings. It's gotten to the point where I won't send my 13-year-old to the pump track without specific directions on what streets to take. Never felt unsafe in Bellingham until this last year. Sat inside at La Fiamma Burger, because doesn't feel good out there. There has to be some compassionate clean up.

My absolutely most liberal friends don't feel safe anymore. There needs to be some discussion from business community on the negative impacts. Would you walk down Cornwall Ave. right now? Housing and childcare super important. Health of the downtown is really important. What can we look at that's been done by cities that have cleaned up compassionately as well as enforce it?

SDR: Ryan – you brought up other examples of affordable childcare and early learning.

CJS: I sent a link on childcare. I'm not best person on childcare topic. Refer back to Debbie Ahl. She's got better examples.

SDR: Thanks CJ. We'll reach out to Debbie and see if there is some information we can add in the notes. Got a lot of good, not good but heavy topics on the table. See some notes come out in the next few days here. We do have salmon recovery proposal on deck for the September meeting. Probably better keep the initiatives on topic for September meeting. See what most prepared to talk about at the next meeting. Sounds good for everyone?

Meeting adjourned 12:38pm

**Presentation:** Financial and operational impact of 'People's First Bellingham' Initiative to Bellingham based businesses, Guy Occhiogrosso – Bellingham Chamber of Commerce

County Council Update: Councilor Rud Browne

- Affordable Child Care proposal
- Cherry Point Agreement