

THE YORKER



York Neighborhood Association • www.yorkneighborhood.org • Spring 2008

York Neighborhood Survey Results

By Anne Mackie, Planning Committee Chair

Over a period of several months, the York Neighborhood Association Planning Committee conducted a survey to gather input for the York Neighborhood Plan Update project. Printed surveys were distributed to every home and business in the neighborhood; responses could be submitted online or on paper. 162 responses were received.

York Neighborhood Association
General Membership Meeting
May 28, Wednesday, 7:00 pm
Garden St. Methodist Church

The survey gathered neighbors' opinions to help guide our planning for the future. *(Keep in mind that several questions allowed more than one answer, so percentages can add up to more than 100% for some questions.)*

Respondents were 56% home owners; 34% renters; 10% business owners; 9% landlords.

Top reasons given to live in York: like the area; close to downtown; affordable.

Neighborhood conditions were rated by the majority as "average" for walkway lighting; parks/recreational areas/trails/open space; parking; sidewalks; traffic control; and property upkeep.

Problems Rated	Big Problem	Small Problem	Not a Problem	Other
Crime	18%	52%	26%	4%
Dilapidated houses or buildings	16%	54%	27%	3%
Parking	23%	47%	28%	2%
Party houses/noise	22%	48%	24%	5%
Poor upkeep of properties	22%	53%	22%	2%
Traffic speed/congestion	23%	41%	34%	2%
Transients and homeless	11%	53%	30%	7%

Enforcement of City Municipal Codes for noise, property maintenance, garbage, housing rules, zoning, etc.:

- Not adequately enforced = 40%
- Well enforced = 32%
- No opinion = 28%

Integrating and reconnecting the neighborhood's geographic divisions ranked "very" or "somewhat" important in the following order:

- Add a pedestrian crossing on Lakeway between I-5 and Ellis/Holly intersection (91%)
- Improve trails/open space/parks (88%)
- Better street lighting (83%)
- Crosswalks and/or bike paths on arterials (83%)
- Sidewalks on all blocks (79%)
- More neighborhood businesses to serve pedestrian traffic (66%)

York Neighborhood Survey Results (cont.)

York’s historic character ranked as “strongly” or “somewhat” agree:

- York should become an Historic District (92%)
- Protect historic homes from bulldozers (92%)
- New construction should have design standards to fit in with historic character (91%)
- Historic character is not important (10%)

To best accommodate future population growth, York should consider:

	Support	Oppose
Rooming houses	40%	60%
Single-family homes	90%	10%
Affordable housing	82%	18%
Apartments	23%	77%
Attached Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)	53%	47%
Detached ADUs	47%	53%
Condos	18%	82%
Cooperative housing	56%	44%
Cottage housing	66%	34%
Townhouses	35%	34%
Urban villages	56%	45%

What will make York a better place to live:

- Planned parks, open spaces and trails (93%)
- Pedestrian crossings and other safety features (88%)
- Bike paths on arterial roads (78%)
- Enforcement of City codes for noise, garbage, housing, zoning (76%)
- Devices to slow traffic (69%)
- Encourage a mix of housing and businesses (51%)
- Parking for residents only (43%)
- More businesses throughout the neighborhood (33%)

Proactive planning by neighborhood stakeholders is important; 70% strongly agreed.

93% thought York a “neighborly” neighborhood!

Thanks to everyone who participated in the survey. A more detailed report of the survey will be available on the York website at www.yorkneighborhood.org. If you are interested in helping on the York Neighborhood Plan Update project, contact Anne Mackie, 738-0542.

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Upcoming York Planning Meetings

April 1, 7:00 p.m.	Planning Committee	Garden St. Methodist Church
May 6, 7:00 p.m.	Planning Committee	Garden St. Methodist Church
May 28, 7:00 p.m.	York General Membership <i>Neighborhood Plan Update</i>	Garden St. Methodist Church
June 3, 7:00 p.m.	Planning Committee	Garden St. Methodist Church
July 1, 7:00 p.m.	Planning Committee	Garden St. Methodist Church
Aug. 5, 7:00 p.m.	Planning Committee	Garden St. Methodist Church
Aug. 27, 7:00 p.m.	York General Membership <i>2nd Review Neighborhood Plan Update</i>	Garden St. Methodist Church
Sept. 2, 7:00 p.m.	Planning Committee	Garden St. Methodist Church
Oct. 22, 7:00 p.m.	York General Membership <i>Final Review Neighborhood Plan Update</i>	Garden St. United Methodist Church
Nov. 28	York Plan DUE to City	

What is Neighborhood Design?

by Lynn Gobush

Neighborhood Design (ND) is a way of understanding the physical environment we live in. According to The New Longview Design Charrette (www.NewLongview.com), two types of settlement are evident in America -- the traditional neighborhood and suburban sprawl. While Yorkers may be quite sure they know our neighborhood isn't sprawl, they may not be able to describe their "traditional" neighborhood very well.

What are the main features of a traditional neighborhood?

1. Streets are laid out in a network, often a grid, so that there are alternate routes to destinations.
2. There are a variety of dwelling types – houses, apartments, townhouses, etc. – so that different demographics can live together; including young and old, singles and families, and both the wealthy and those with moderate income.

3. There is a range of parks throughout the neighborhood – village greens, tot-lots, greenbelts.
4. The streets are used for parking. Garages and parking lots are relegated to the rear of the lot and accessed by alleys.
5. The needs of daily life are within a mile – stores, transportation connections, community events, and leisure opportunities. The young and the elderly, especially, can move about independently.

The continuity and evolution of human society are evident in the preservation and renewal of historic buildings, and are reflected in design that promotes local climate, building practice, and history. York Neighborhood exhibits all these qualities and future neighborhood planning should aim to build on an already strong pattern.

Brooks Manufacturing Will Cease to Smell

by Jim Kling

Some York neighborhood residents have been affected by a stench produced by Brooks Manufacturing's wood treatment process. Earlier this month, Brooks announced that by March 31, it will change its chemical process to a method that should eliminate the odor. So, by the time you read this, York neighborhood should be odor free. Let's hope it stays that way. For more information, see <http://www.brooksresponds.com>.



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York Tree Planting Grant

by Nick Hartrich

The York Neighborhood has received a Small and Simple Grant from the City of Bellingham to cover half the cost of planting 37 trees. The trees are scheduled to be delivered on Friday, April 11. There will be a neighborhood planting day on April 12. If you would like to purchase a tree, they are \$25. Availability is on a first come first serve basis.

We're thankful to have secured this grant from the City of Bellingham – now make nice and grab your shovels for some good old-fashioned neighborhood beautification. Help your neighborhood by planting and caring for a tree!

Four steps to acquiring a tree:

1. Select a location. Trees will be planted in the City's right-of-way between the curb and the sidewalk.
2. Decide which type of tree you would like (list available on request).
3. Contact Nick at 927-2565 for the number of trees you and your neighbors would like
4. Be ready for tree delivery on April 11, with help from a planting crew on April 12.

For more information, contact Nick at 927-2565.

Preserve America Grant

by Barbara Davenport and Lynn Gobush

YNA's Historic Preservation Committee is participating in a 2-year Historic Resource Survey and Inventory Project, funded in part by a federal grant from Preserve America. The \$150,000 grant was recently awarded to Bellingham's Planning Department to assist the York, South Hill, and Lettered Streets neighborhoods in documenting their history, buildings, and landscapes. The neighborhoods were selected to participate in the survey with the goal of at least some areas of each neighborhood applying for a National Historic District designation. York was selected because we've demonstrated a great interest in preserving the historic character of our neighborhood.

Neighbors, students, volunteers, city staff, and professional preservation consultants will document York neighborhood properties such as age, style, history and character-defining features. Various volunteer opportunities exist, including researching your own house, taking photographs, and conducting oral history interviews. You may observe participants walking the streets, photographing buildings and making notes on architectural details. Information will be entered into a database, available to the general public, and will be used for neighborhood planning, defining neighborhood character, and assisting in the potential nomination of a National Historic District in York neighborhood.

To find out more about this outstanding opportunity to get to know your neighborhood, contact Barbara Davenport, coordinator for the York Neighborhood Preserve America Grant (733-4883, bcdaven@earthlink.net) or Lynn Gobush, Historic Preservation Committee chair (rgo9932@msn.com). For more information about the project check out the web site: <http://www.hp-nw.com/bellingham.htm>. The Historic Preservation Committee meets on the third Tuesday of every month, 7:00 pm, at Nelson's Market.



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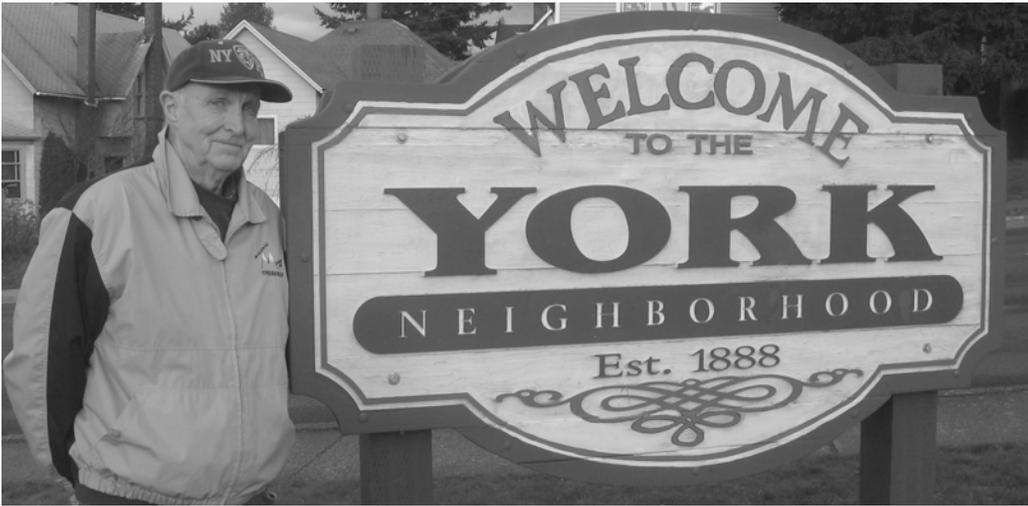
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The York Neighborhood thanks Walter Turpin, who hosts our "Welcome Sign" in his yard at 607 E. Magnolia, for repairs he made to the sign after it was vandalized.

Cyclists and walkers needed for assessment

by Jeff Bates

Do you bike to work or school? Do you like the short walk to downtown, Sehome Hill or Whatcom Creek? Maybe you enjoy a simple walk around the block daily. If you live in York and enjoy traveling on foot or by bike, we need your input to make your life even better!

Part of the update for our Neighborhood Plan will include recommendations for pedestrian and bicycling routes through the neighborhood. These routes may link to other trail systems and bike routes, create connectivity between parks, provide safer and more scenic pathways, and help to establish York as the most bike and pedestrian friendly neighborhood in Bellingham. YNA is looking for people who walk, bike, stroll, and scoot in and around the Neighborhood to participate in a survey. This assessment will help shape the transportation goals of York for the next twenty years.

To participate in this important survey, please contact Helen Jackson at hjaxon817@yahoo.com, or by phone at 656-5467.

Grant Funds Would Expand York's Green Infrastructure

by Helen Jackson

An ecological barn-raising has been taking place around Franklin Park. This is the third year of this neighborhood volunteer effort, and now it's time to turn the Street Island Project in the 1200 block of Franklin Street into a beautiful open space. There is little doubt that we need natural systems to survive, physically and biologically, and we need them for our emotional, psychological and spiritual health. With native plantings, and access made possible by a trail from Lakeway Drive to Whatcom Street, we hope present and future generations will feel enlivened by this neighborhood sanctuary.

The York Neighborhood Association applied for a Small and Simple Grant of \$2500 to create landscaping, set stone benches, put up signs, and complete removal of unhealthy trees and invasive plants. The completed winding trail will have a gravel base. The trail will provide foot travelers with a westerly view of the city to the bay, and Mount Baker to the east. Fourth of July fireworks on the bay and at Civic Field can be viewed from this vantage point, so plan to join neighbors in this urban greenscape for holidays to come.

If you would like to lend a hand in this project, work parties are held the second Saturday of every month, from 9am-12pm, except April and October. These will be held on April 19, Earth Day, and October 25, Make a Difference Day.

For questions, contact Helen Jackson at hjaxon817@yahoo.com.



York Centenarian Passes Away

by Anne Mackie

Long time York resident Sophia Gilbertson, age 100, passed away in Bellingham on March 2. Sophia, a well-loved member of the York family, lived at 1300 Humboldt St. for many years. She worked at the Pleez-U Market, 600 Lakeway Drive, until it closed in the seventies. She was an active member of the Woman's Democratic Party and worked at the polls, counted ballots after the elections, and helped to raise money by crocheting pan scrapers and selling them at bazaars and meetings and to relatives back in Minnesota. Sophia was very active until the last few years and was often seen out mowing her lawn well into her nineties. She was preceded in death by her husband Chester in 1961.



Sophia Gilbertson (left) pictured with her boss, Bernie, at the Pleez-U Market, 600 Lakeway Dr.

Neighborhood Policing: Sergeants Johnston and Lanham Assigned to York

by Lynn Gobush

The City of Bellingham (COB) Neighborhood Newsletter has recently announced assignments of specific Bellingham Police sergeants to various neighborhoods. This is a step in implementing "Community Oriented Policing", an effort to combine traditional policing with community problem solving. Sergeants Johnston and Lanham have been assigned to the York Neighborhood, as well as the CBD, Puget, Samish, and Whatcom Falls neighborhoods. Sergeant Johnston can be reached at 778-8687, and Sergeant Lanham at 778-8694.

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YNA Committee Reports for March 2008

Disaster Preparedness

by Libby Stark, Co-Chair

There were 4 homeowners from the 1600 and 1700 blocks of Grant Street in attendance at the first Map Your Neighborhood (MYN) session. Co-Chair Carol Dixon will work with Lynn G. from the 1300 block of Franklin to begin MYN on this block. The committee's goal is to provide MYN training to one block per month. Block captains are still needed.

The committee also heard a recap of the City of Bellingham (COB) meeting. For each block participating in MYN, the neighbors will receive a goody bag filled with a hard hat, flashlight, 3-way tool and other items that may come in handy during a disaster. The COB meeting will be held on the second Tuesday of every other month.

The next Disaster Preparedness Committee meeting will be April 8, Tuesday, 7:30 pm. Contact disasterplanning@yorkneighborhood.org for location.

Garden Club

Upcoming meetings of the Wine and Roses Garden Club will be held on March 26 and April 23, 6:30 pm. Contact dixoncarol@comcast.net for locations. Up for consideration are how the club can support Franklin Park and Rock Hill Park.

Historic Preservation

by Lynn Gobush, Chair

The committee met on March 18. Kolby Labree, of the Preserve America Historic Resource Survey and Inventory Project, was a guest. The meeting focused on this grant project and how it is going. It is not too late to participate, whether you wish to research your own house, or help research data in the York neighborhood. Barbara Davenport (733-4883, bcdaven@earthlink.net) is coordinating the effort in our neighborhood.

We also talked about using the data for our own purposes, such as developing a neighborhood history booklet (expanding on the brochure we already have) and interviewing the older residents who showed up at the Franklin School reunion last fall.

The next Historic Preservation Committee meeting is April 8, Tuesday, 7:00 pm, Nelson's Market. The regular meeting date is the second Tuesday of the month, 7:00 p.m.

Planning

by Anne Mackie, Chair

The Planning Survey was completed in January. The committee met in January, February, and March. All the subgroups are meeting regularly, with the exception of Land Use, which will start up this month. Subsections of the York Neighborhood Plan are being drafted by the subgroups.

A letter drafted by Nick Hartrich, and reviewed by the Planning Committee, was submitted to the City regarding development possibilities for the Wilsons' Motors property. No response has been received as of March 18.

Chris Koch (City Planner) will meet with the board April 16 to present information on Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs). The Planning Committee felt that a presentation to the whole board was better than just to the committee.

The next Planning Committee meeting is April 1, Tuesday, 7:00 pm, Garden St. Methodist Church.

Quality Improvement

by Lesley Keenholts, Chair

This month's meeting hosted guest Richard Conoboy, "the zonemaven". Dick shared with the group his ideas on enforcement of the "no more than three" rule in single-family zoning. Dick is willing to come back and present at a future Quality Improvement Committee meeting or a YNA Board meeting if asked.

The committee briefly discussed the privately owned "bus" that had been parked on the 1300 block of Humboldt Street. This bus is no longer parked on Humboldt Street due to a complaint to the Police department concerning safety (visual).

The next Quality Improvement Committee meeting will be April 13, Sunday, 7:00 pm, Nelson's Market.

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A big thank you to Garden Street United Methodist Church for their continued support of the York Neighborhood Association!

Thanks to the wonderful volunteers who made our annual picnic and Franklin and Lincoln Schools reunion a huge success:

Musicians Dave and Kevin and The Honeybees.

Holiday Caroling Cookie Contributors

Many thanks go to the fabulous bakers in our neighborhood who donated a batch, or multiple batches, of delicious cookies for our 3rd Annual Holiday Caroling Party. All the carolers appreciated their baking talent and generosity. Thank you!

Lucy Autumn and Family

Jeff and Sarah Bates

Kirsti Charlton

Matt Charlton

Meredith Charlton

Anne Mackie

Carolyn Milling and John Wiley

Carolyn Mulder, Eric Baumgarten and Ava

Jeremy and Jennifer Nunnikhoven

Marissa Rosatti

Tom Scott

Elisabeth Stark

Thank you to the businesses that sponsored the carriage ride with Rainbow Ranch:

Nelson's Market—Jon Ostby

Signs By Tomorrow—Teresa and David Wiggins

And especially Tom Scott at On-Site Computer for their generosity!

A warm thank you to the local businesses who generously donated coffee, tea and snacks for the Franklin Park Projects Work Parties:

Starbucks at Sehome Village

Rocket Donuts

The Bagelry

Many thanks to the neighbors who donated to the York Neighborhood Association:

Wilfred Albans

Sarah Campbell and Dan O'Neil

Fred and Kirsti Charlton

Carol Dixon

Marion Ebergson

George Liepart

Alan and Kirsten Shore

David Smith

Elisabeth and Evan Stark

A special thank you to the wonderful landlords who have continuously and generously donated to support the YNA:

Judy Frane and David Chicovsky

And, of course, to the businesses who graciously contributed to the YNA:

A. A. Anderson, Co

Lena Bagwell of Coldwell Banker

Louis Auto Glass

Signs Plus

Stan's Auto Body

Sweet Art

Your donations contribute to neighborhood activities and create opportunities for Yorkers to come together and build community. Thank you for your support!

Mission Statement of the York Neighborhood Association

The mission of the York Neighborhood Association is to reduce isolation among residents, enhance the quality of life in a low and moderate income urban neighborhood, create a sense of community, reduce or prevent crime, and preserve the historic character of the neighborhood.

York Neighborhood Association Donation

Thanks for your support!

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Upcoming Events

York Neighborhood Association General Membership Meeting

May 28, Wednesday, 7:00 pm, Garden St. United Methodist Church.

York Neighborhood Association Board meeting

April 16, Wednesday, 7:00 pm, Garden St. Methodist Church.

Disaster Preparedness Committee meeting

April 8, Tuesday, 7:30 pm. Contact disasterplanning@yorkneighborhood.org for location.

Franklin Park Projects Work Parties

Saturday, April 19, Earth Day, 9:00 am-12:00 noon, on the Franklin Street Island. With Park Department Volunteers from Western.

Saturday, May 10, 9:00 am-12:00 noon, on the hillside above Franklin Park.

Saturday, June 14, 9:00 am-12:00 noon, on the Franklin Street Island.

Contact hjaxon817@yahoo.com for details.

Garden Club meeting

April 23, Wednesday, 6:30 pm. Contact dixoncarol@comcast.net for location.

Historic Preservation Committee meeting

April 8, Tuesday, 7:00 pm, Nelson's Market.

Mayor's Neighborhood Advisory Council meeting

April 9, Wednesday. Contact president@yorkneighborhood.org for details.

Parks Update Work Group meeting

April 23, Wednesday, 5:30-6:45 pm. Contact hjaxon817@yahoo.com for details.

Planning Committee meeting

April 1, Tuesday, 7:00 pm, Garden St. Methodist Church.

Quality Improvement Committee meeting

April 13, Sunday, 7:00 pm, Nelson's Market.

Recycle and Trash Society of YNA (RATS)

March 29, April 12, April 26 (Saturday). 8:30 am in front of Nelson's Market. The York RATS pick up litter and cans to keep our neighborhood clean! Join us every other Saturday at 8:30 am in front of Nelson's Market.

Tree Planting

April 5, Saturday. Contact nick_hartrich@hotmail.com for details.



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In the Spring a Young Man's Fancy Lightly Turns to Thoughts of... Landscaping

by Jim Kling

If you have passed along the north end of Grant Street, you will have noticed the small mountain of mulch in our front yard. It's Spring, which means it's landscaping season. Though we just bought the house last June, one growing season was enough to convince us that we didn't want to keep mowing our hillside lawn.

So we decided to replace the lawn with a native plant landscape. Why native plants? Ease of maintenance is one good reason. Properly placed, native northwest plants will require comparatively little watering. That isn't to suggest that native plants don't require any care at all – like any landscape, a native one requires some nurturing, especially before it has become established.

Native plants bring another element to the landscape – native fauna. We want to attract birds and other wildlife to our yard. But to attract the visible animals, we must also attract the invisible – insects and their larvae – because they are key food sources for the birds whose presence we enjoy. Exotic ornamental plants can attract native insects, too, but native plants and insects evolved together, so native plants provide a more functional habitat.

The benefits are more than esthetic. As development eats away at the natural landscape that surrounds our city, native plants are crowded out. Invasive species get a foothold and cause further degradation. Native insects and birds that rely on these resources must cope with shrinking ranges. Urban gardens can ease some of that pressure, if enough homeowners embrace native plants.

Or consider the bees. We've all heard about the recent die-offs of European honey bees. But there are lots of species of native bees found in the US, and many of them are capable of pollinating the same crops that honey bees do. If you plant native wildflowers and look closely, you might catch a glimpse of one of our native bees performing its spring ritual.

And finally, if you worry about global warming and wonder what you can do about it – consider including native plants in your garden. Ecologists warn that changing climate will require native species to migrate to new ranges. Plant populations can become isolated by new development. So-called 'green corridors' can solve that problem by providing a conduit for native plants, linking one population to another, and improving their chances of extending their ranges to adapt to the changing global climates. Urban and suburban gardens can contribute to those corridors, bolstering native populations and the natural and artificial corridors that link them.

When hiking, I occasionally spot plants that I have growing at home, and it always sparks a little thrill to know that the drooping, pink urn-shaped flowers of a Pacific Bleeding Heart or the red, crown-shaped flowers of a Red Columbine have counterparts in the modest ecosystem of my own yard. And in my yard, as I peer at the new growth of Salal and Salmonberry and the green shoots of native bulbs ascending into the gathering spring sunlight, it reminds me of my connection to the natural world that is otherwise only visible in the distant hills and mountains.

To learn more about native plant gardening, I highly recommend that you stop by the Plantas Nativa (<http://plantasnativa.com/>) nursery on the corner of Laurel and State Street

(open Fri-Sun, 12-5), and talk to Bay Renaud, who does native plant landscaping for commercial clients. Other resources include the King County Native Plant Landscape Guide (<http://dnr.metrokc.gov/wlr/pi/go-native/>) and the Encyclopedia of Northwest Native Plants for Gardens and Landscapes (2008, Timber Press).



Nodding Onion. Thomas G. Barnes @ USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database / Barnes, T.G., and S.W. Francis. 2004. Wildflowers and ferns of Kentucky. University Press of Kentucky.

Would you like to contribute illustrations or photos to the Yorker? Contact Jim Kling at jkling@gmail.com.