

THE YORKER

MARCH 2026



FROM THE YORK NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION—BRINGING THE YORK COMMUNITY TOGETHER

Rock Hill Park's new playground is coming!

Park Operations Manager **Jonathan Schilk** has some heads-up advice for York neighbors, especially those who live near and/or make use of Rock Hill Park:

“The anticipated start of construction is mid to late April, depending on weather and soil conditions; it may be later than that. The Iron Street cul-de-sac may be congested with construction equipment at time during construction. And there will be construction noises during the day that some people may find tiresome... but in the end, the park will get an awesome playground and experience the play of giddy children.”



Work on the new playground, which will be in the upper half of the park just south of the lamppost, is expected to be complete by the end of August—possibly even sooner.



The YNA Board of Directors intends to inaugurate this new phase of the park's life by hosting the neighborhood's Annual Picnic there in conjunction with a concert of live bands, tentatively scheduled for Saturday the 19th of September.

York neighborhood rental safety inspections

As part of the City of Bellingham's Rental Registration and Safety Inspection program, York Neighborhood rental properties registered with the program will undergo safety inspections **between April 1 and June 30, 2026** (this had previously been reported as starting in July 2026). Landlords and property managers who have not opted to use private inspectors will receive notices from the City with the date and time of their scheduled inspection soon,

if they haven't already. Tenants must be provided written notification of the inspection at least 48 hours in advance of the inspection date/time assigned.

More information can be found on the City's website, on the page cob.org/services/permits/rentals/safety-inspections; scroll to the “Find Your Inspection Zone” dropdown. Questions can be sent to rentals@cob.org.

IN THIS ISSUE

President's Corner	2
Is your green thumb itching?	3
Harriet Spanel Park work party	4
Community Streets opportunity	5
Annual Holiday Party recap	6
Kids' sticker art contest	6
New interpretive signage at parks	7
Calendar of events	8
Contact info	8

Safer residential streets

Are there traffic issues on a residential street near you?

The City's **Community Streets** program works directly with residents to address traffic safety concerns on nonarterial residential streets. **Submit your ideas by March 31, 2026.** Your input helps the Public Works team prioritize improvements where small changes can make a big impact on neighborhood safety. See page 5 for a lot more information about this opportunity to make York's streets safer.

Prefer to read the *Yorker* in digital format?

Get it here:
yorkneighborhood.org/newsletters



YORK NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

PO Box 2662, Bellingham WA 98227-2662

www.yorkneighborhood.org • President@yorkneighborhood.org • [#YorkNeighborhood](https://www.facebook.com/YorkNeighborhood)



President's Corner

By Colin Beazley, YNA President

York at the Heart of the 2045 Vision: Our Voice, Our Future

I'm feeling more energized than ever about our neighborhood in 2026. We are currently at a unique crossroads: the City recently adopted the **Bellingham Plan**, a 20-year guide that will shape our streets, parks, and homes until 2045—check out the Bellingham Plan website at engagebellingham.org/bellinghamplan. While the Mayor and I agree that neighborhood associations are more critical than ever, I know many of us are wondering: where does a neighborhood actually fit into these big city- and nationwide visions?

York's Influence Matters

With the adoption of this plan, the City is shifting toward a unified framework to simplify growth and development. But high-level goals like Complete Neighborhoods (where you can walk to your favorite corner store) only become real when applied to our specific blocks.

The City has explicitly stated that community priorities are what drive these goals. The Mayor and Council rely on the YNA to tell them exactly what "safety" looks like on Ellis Street or how

"vibrancy" feels at Nelson's Market. We are the experts on our own streets, and it's our job to ensure citywide policies respect York's unique history and social fabric, so we can continue to support long-term prosperity for everyone who lives here.



York's 2026 Action Agenda

To ensure the 2045 vision works for York and Bellingham, we're focusing on three major "human-scale" priorities this year:

- **Social Infrastructure & Rock Hill Park:** The Plan emphasizes creating gathering spaces that reduce loneliness and build connection. We call that **social infrastructure**. With construction at Rock Hill Park starting this April, we'll be working closely with the Parks Department to ensure this hub serves every Yorker.
- **Safe, Multimodal Streets:** York is officially in Phase 2 of the Community Streets Program. This is our chance to advocate for **Complete Streets**—designs that make walking, rolling, and biking just as easy as driving. We want safe routes for all ages and abilities, especially on our nonarterial streets.

- **York's Helpers & Smart Growth:** We are launching a "**Helpers of York**" section in the *Yorker* to celebrate our volunteers, aligning with the Plan's focus on Community Well-being—you can nominate your neighbors! We also want to lead the conversation on **middle housing**—like duplexes and cottage courts—ensuring these options are added in a way that enhances our neighborhood character rather than diminishing it.

Join the YNA Team!

We can't do this without a diverse set of voices. We need a robust Board of Directors leadership team and are currently seeking a **Vice President**, **Treasurer**, and **Secretary** for our March elections. Whether you want to design our next waterproof sticker, help with our new Instagram page, or just share your thoughts over fries at Nelson's, **your voice matters**.

Let's keep our social fabric intact and ensure York remains the best neighborhood in town. Reach out to me at president@yorkneighborhoodassociation.com to get involved!

www.CRAZY SOCKS.com

CUTE BUT CRAZY

1323 CORNWALL, BELLINGHAM
1% of sales support mental health.

A.A. Anderson Co., Inc.
Heating • A.C. • Electrical • Sheet Metal
360-734-7710

1409 N. FOREST STREET
BELLINGHAM, WA 98225

Family Owned and
Operated since 1948

A new season for Reed's Seeds & Stella's Starts

by YNA Board Member Élan Engel

Whether you're planning your spring garden or just want to help cheer on two hardworking neighborhood kids who are learning entrepreneurship and what it means to build something of their own, this is the perfect time to swing by the **1400 block of Iron Street** to see what they've been working on.

What began as a casual summer project has grown into York Neighborhood's newest kid-run business, **Reed's Seeds**. In 2024, **Reed** gathered seeds from the gardens of family and friends. He was excited about starting a business, so he packaged the seeds, designed labels, and launched **Reed's Seeds**. Not long after, his sister **Stella** added her own touch with **Stella's Starts**, offering young plants she had collected with just as much care.

After a busy summer of collecting and drying even more seeds, the Reed's Seeds stand is officially open again for the 2026 season—and it's stocked better than ever with over 35 varieties rotating through. As a bonus: you'll find a joke in every pack! Stella's Starts will be returning as the weather warms up.



Reed's Seeds



The **Wine & Roses Garden Club**, an informal group that meets for social and gardening gatherings throughout the year, has some upcoming free events you can check out. These are open to all attendees and do not require registration or reservations; they are also listed on the Calendar of York Events on page 8.

April 16: Yard Analyzing. Like to have your yard analyzed? We will gather at your home and talk about your yard and give you ideas on landscape design and thoughts from everyone there.

April 16–19: Annual Plant Exchange in front of Nelson's Market. Please ID plants with the variety.

May 14: Planter Design. Bring your ideas and information on your design work for planters—types of containers, plants you use, and soil you prefer.

And if you are a York neighborhood artist interested in participating in an evening **Art Walk on Thursday June 18**, please contact **Dondena Scott** at Dondena@on-sitecomputer.com.



\$3 OFF

Chicken 'n' Waffle

for everyone in your party!

Dine-in only. No split checks. Must surrender coupon. Expires 12/31/2026.



BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER
8 A.M.–10 P.M. DAILY
514 POTTER ST. (360) 734-2448
www.nelsonsmarket.com



Binyon Vision Center

thorough eye care, fantastic eyewear

thankful to be a York neighbor since 1993!

411 E Magnolia St

360-647-2020

www.binyonvision.com



A wet but successful January park work party

We're very grateful to all of the 57 volunteers who came out on Saturday, January 31, amidst the morning rain showers to help to help Parks Department staff at the Community Work Party at Harriet Spanel Park! Together, they removed 9 cubic yards of invasive weeds, spread 5 cubic yards of mulch, and planted 35 native shrubs.



photos courtesy of Ryan Robie

Thank you so much to Woods Coffee for their warm and delicious coffee donation. A special shout-out goes to Abby Franklin from the nearby Loving Space preschool for bringing families from the school to help out.

Stay Involved

- The invasive species removed, including Himalayan blackberry, English holly, spurge laurel, and English ivy, can be found on the Whatcom County Noxious Weed List. Check out their fact sheets at whatcomcounty.us/930/Noxious-Weed-Fact-Sheets.
- If you'd like to learn more about the native plants that were planted and protected at the work party, check out the great online resource Native Plants PNW—An Encyclopedia of the Cultural and Natural History of Northwest Native Plants at nativeplantspnw.com.



- Need tips on growing a healthy landscape without herbicides? Visit the City's Manage Weeds Naturally page at cob.org/services/environment/stormwater/reduce-pollution/weeds.
- If you're interested in continuing this important work in your own backyard, please explore the City's Backyard Habitat page at cob.org/gov/public/volunteer/parks-volunteer/backyard-habitat.
- Explore ways to support native pollinators on the City's Bee City USA page at cob.org/services/environment/bee-city-usa.



"They are honest, of high integrity... The result is a beautiful home that is framed to stand the test of time."

—Whatcom County Client

FIVE QUARTER CONSTRUCTION

Walker Diebolt

FiveQuarterWA@gmail.com

360-815-6189

Bellingham, WA

fivequarter.co

Let us help!

- New Construction
- Kitchen & Bathroom Remodels
- Additions & ADUs
- Seismic Retrofits

Planned Parenthood
Care. No matter what.

Planned Parenthood of Greater Washington and North Idaho

**YOUR HEALTH,
OUR PRIORITY.**

866.904.7721
ppgwni.org

**Bellingham
Friday Harbor
Mount Vernon**

Public Works wants to hear from you about York's streets

Hailey Sanders, the City of Bellingham's Public Works Education & Outreach Specialist, spoke at the York Neighborhood Association's General Membership meeting on February 26 about their **Community Streets Program**, in which basically the City is asking its residents where we feel less safe on our streets. This is specifically regarding **nonarterial** streets, which most of York's streets are, but obviously there are safety concerns with overlaps between those and arterials such as Lakeway Drive and Ellis Avenue. Also, this has to do with streets and not alleys.

This program began last year with a focus on the north and northeast parts of town, and in the first three months of 2026 it's the turn of the middle belt south of it—York, Downtown, Lettered Streets, Sunnyland, etc., as well as the northwest edge; its goal is to have residential neighborhoods used and enjoyed more by people. The results of the first part of the study indicated that by far the biggest street-safety concern expressed

by residents was about **speeding**, and around 20 projects for improving street safety were initiated by the Public Works project team via the concerns reported. Those projects were summarized on a table Hailey showed that indicated a lot of very interesting information including the ranking of projects' priority and how more easily achievable and lower-costing projects could increase their ranking.

The project team groups the public feedback into four response pathways:

- 1. Checklist Actions** (quick fixes for straightforward, immediate issues),
- 2. Capital Projects** (which are bigger and need funding as well as involving higher rankings),
- 3. Location Studies** (which will require the gathering of data such as traffic counts, leading to treatment plans), and
- 4. Neighborhood Projects** (for which Public Works can provide

tools to help neighborhoods address their concerns at a more grassroots level such as planting street trees, creating street murals as traffic-calming elements, and hosting block parties).

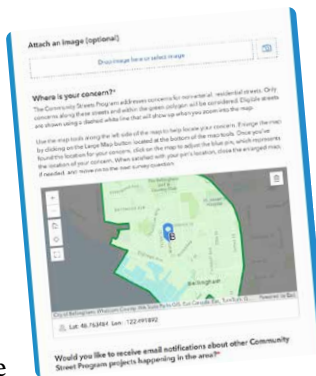
The vehicle for providing feedback about street safety is a page on the City's website (cob.org/services/community-streets), where there's a link to an arcgis.com survey that can be used *until the end of March* if concerns are to be included in the study. Concerns about arterials can be submitted but won't be considered within the purview of this program because its funding limits its focus to nonarterials. Hailey advised that multiple reporting of specific locations as concerns does not necessarily increase

their ranking or assure that they'll get more attention; once they're reported as a concern, they're on the Public Works' radar for full consideration.



For those more-immediate concerns about specific street-related problems such as abandoned vehicles and physically unsafe roads and sidewalks as well as alleys, residents should continue to use the City's online **SeeClickFix** service; this also includes parking enforcement, which is largely not handled by the Police Department as some assume and even within Public Works is handled by just four staff members responsible for this entire city of nearly 100,000 residents.

Visit cob.org/services/community-streets/how-community-streets-works for more information about this program, which will involve project design up to the end of 2026 with construction of projects envisioned for summer of 2027. Again, smaller projects are more likely to get implemented.



York Neighborhood Association Board of Directors

2023-25 Officers

President: **Colin Beazley** • Vice President: **Chris Donaldson**
 Treasurer: **Opie Knechtel** • Secretary: **Mark Ellis Walker**

Members-at-Large

Élan Engel • **Erin Vonnahme** • **Jeremy Ferrera** • **John DeOrio**
Kevin Cussen • **Megan Doyle** • **Paul D'Agnolo**
Todd Kleinbrook • **Tom Scott**
Lilli Kihlstrom, Student Representative

★ *College students: please consider joining us as a student rep!* ★

Newsletter Production: **Mark Ellis Walker**



Jane Richardson PT, SEd, OCS, COMT

360-738-4300
 FAX: 360-738-8010

1408 N. Garden Street
 Bellingham, WA 98225

www.skyline-physicaltherapy.com

Good times at December's Annual Holiday Party

Attendance was great and the mood both festive and generous at Nelson's Market on Saturday December 13th, as Yorkers from throughout the neighborhood gathered for the 19th annual Holiday Party. In addition to the treats we brought for each other to share, we also collectively brought **nearly 70 pounds of food** and **over \$260 in online donations** for the **Bellingham Food Bank**.

But **Ben Shacklee** of Nelson's had more to tell us about how cool an event it was:



"Nelson's even had a number of off-duty staff come to hang for the entirety of the party, just to revel with their neighborhood friends and customers. Our collective neighborhood and sense of community contributes to Nelson's being more than just a workplace for many. Thanks for putting this on and for making it special."



He also reported that both the traditional band **Steeplechase** and the pep band **the Bell Peppers** had fun and are likely to return next year. Plus which, "the hot-case quick-bites kept the hangries at bay while



waiting for wagon rides, and beers outside were popular. Nelson's sold enough stuff across the evening to pay for the extra staffing needed to host a crowd like that, so thank you all for the support there!"

Edward Jones > edwardjones.com | Member SIPC

Is your financial advisor an 800 number?
Come talk to a person.

Jeremy Ferrera
Financial Advisor
1801 Roeder Ave Suite 156
Bellingham, WA 98225
360-671-0850

MKT-58940-A-A1 AECSPAD 23706101

★ NEIGHBORHOOD KIDS' STICKER ART CONTEST

The York Neighborhood Association is inviting local young artists to submit original artwork for our **2026 Sticker Contest!** Selected designs will be printed as stickers and sold to support neighborhood events, including the annual picnic and winter caroling party.

Artwork should reflect themes connected to Bellingham and the York Neighborhood, be simple enough for clear reproduction on a small sticker (such as one used on a water bottle), and convey a sense of fun. By submitting artwork, participants grant the York Neighborhood Association permission to use the design for fundraising purposes.

Submissions may be sent to YorkerEditor@YorkNeighborhood.org.

♥

Learn of York's legacy of neighborhood activism at our parks

If you've visited York's two charming little parks in the past month, you probably noticed that there's something new at both of them to tell you more about our neighborhood's history than you may have been aware of before.

When the YNA Board applied for a City of Bellingham "Small and Simple" grant three years ago to have built and installed the handsome and sturdy bulletin-board kiosks at Harriet Spanel Park and Rock Hill Park, as counterparts to the little one out in front of Nelson's Market for neighbors to post flyers, help-wanted notices, yard-sale announcements, and everything else a neighborhood hub could share, part of what won us the initial grant was our intention to apply for a later grant to fund the creation of interpretive panels to occupy part of one side of the boards, telling about each park's origins. This January, that original goal was achieved with the installation of those panels by the Parks Department ... but the signage was created by the York Neighborhood Association's Board of Directors independently, just as the parks themselves were created by local neighbors and activists.

The parks have very different history spans behind their genesis and development, and on these new panels you can read the story of each park's origins backed by a rich timeline of context—city, state, and country-level milestones alongside those of the park's own. In the case of Harriet Spanel Park, that story goes back to the founding of Seattle in 1851 and continues through the US Civil War to the Vietnam War and right up to today. Rock Hill Park's is more recent but involves the arrival of I-5 in 1960 shearing off a couple of blocks of its full eastern length and eliminating that whole section of this neighborhood that dates back to the 1880s.



These panels, funded as the original kiosks were by a "Small and Simple" grant the YNA Board applied for to improve the neighborhood and its amenities, were designed and produced by local graphic designer and Board member Mark Ellis Walker, who also produces this newsletter. "I created timelines for each of the panels to provide visitors with the bigger picture of what was also going on in history. Some milestones had to be left out, due to space constraints, that would have further enriched understanding of why Bellingham's even here at all. But I strove to include all I could that would give you more appreciation now of what you see around you at the parks."



YNA Board President Colin Beazley, whose home office overlooks Rock Hill Park, says that, right from the panels' installation, passers-by and park users have been stopping to read the stories and see how the park they were in came to be. Be sure to come check out these story-rich panels yourself; you might even spot yourself in one of the historic photos on them!

Big thanks to the City of Bellingham for the grant that made these signs possible, to Jonathan Schilk and the Parks Department for their suggestions and for installing the panels, to longtime York volunteer and activist Anne Mackie for writing of the parks' history and answering questions that arose in updating it, and to the Whatcom Museum's photo archivist Jeff Jewell for help dating its photos and milestones. And in future issues of the Yorker, we'll be providing some additional history Jeff shared about this little neighborhood's convoluted origins.



NW native plants
...help nature and you feel better

In the York Neighborhood

315 E. Champion St.
Bellingham, WA 98225
360-715-9655

Open Tuesday, Friday and Saturday 10AM-3PM



Over 150 species available online:
www.plantasnativa.com

Mission Statement of the York Neighborhood Association:

To reduce isolation among residents;
to enhance the quality of life in a low- and moderate-income urban neighborhood;
to create a sense of community; to reduce or prevent crime; and to preserve the historic character of the neighborhood.

