

THE YORKER

SEPTEMBER 2026



FROM THE YORK NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION—BRINGING THE YORK COMMUNITY TOGETHER

Come to the York Neighborhood's Annual Picnic!

Saturday, September 19, 2026, at Rock Hill Park, 3–7pm

This is a special party in a few ways:

It's the first time the Annual Picnic has been held at Rock Hill Park since 2011, 15 years ago!

It will be a chance to check out the city's newest playground—designed with lots of input from York neighbors, youth and adults alike! Learn more about this on page 4.

To mark the occasion of the new playground's arrival, we're going to have three live bands playing (not all at once)!

The Bell Peppers ★ Jaguarundi ★ Whisky Minstrels

Bring some food and drink, whether for yourselves or to share, or just show up and sample what's available. Hempler's hot dogs will be grilled courtesy of **Nelson's Market**, with buns thanks to **Avenue Bread**.

This free event, to run from 3pm to 7pm so more people can attend for at least a while, is hosted by the all-volunteer York Neighborhood Association and made possible thanks to our generous sponsors **Edward Jones** and **Nelson's Market** and donations from York neighbors.

As ever, there will be games for kids and a piñata for them to take a swing at (until it's broken open, and then ...dive into the pig-pile!) as well as a talent show. There'll be a porta-potty on site too.

Local organizations, especially nonprofits, are encouraged to set up information tables promoting their services and resources. If your business wants to have a tent on site at the event, a donation of \$25 to the York Neighborhood Association would be appreciated.

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YORK NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

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President's Corner

By Colin Beazley, YNA President

Some of the biggest decisions about York's next twenty years were made this past year—and the most important ones haven't been made yet. That's where we come in.

In December, the City Council adopted the Bellingham Plan, our comprehensive plan guiding growth through 2045. Alongside it, new state law—House Bill 1110—now requires Bellingham to allow at least four homes on residential lots that once held one. For a one-third-square-mile neighborhood of historic homes, tree-lined streets, longtime owners, and the students and renters we've always made room for, this matters.

Here is what is important for York. The plan sets the direction, but the details like design standards, the infill toolkit, parking, and how historic character is protected are still being written. This is the phase where neighborhoods that show up get recognized.

We've already begun. Middle housing and the City Streets Program were on the agenda at our February general meeting, and York has an ongoing seat at the Mayor's Neighborhood Advisory Commission. I'd ask you to use them. Come to a general meeting. Email me at president@yorkneighborhood.org with what you love about York and what you'd hate to lose. Comment when the City opens its infill design standards.

The budget makes our voice more important, not less. The City closed a roughly \$10 million general-fund gap this year, eliminated about 40 positions, and added a new public-safety sales tax, with payroll consuming nearly 70% of the general fund. The amenities we've celebrated in these Yorkers—the Rock Hill Park refresh, our rebuilt bridges, our park work parties—exist because

neighbors organized and the City invested. In leaner years, the squeaky, organized wheel gets the grease.

York borders the downtown core, which alone accounted for about a fifth of the city's police calls last year, much of it tied to homelessness and

mental-health crises, which is exactly why our ongoing work with the Way Station and YWCA-shelter neighbors matters so much.

York is known for making things happen. We have unheralded success partnering with City and local organizations to mobilize benefits for the broader community for nearly fifty years. Let's make sure this chapter is written with us.

Contact me at president@yorkneighborhoodassociation.org to get involved!



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Next steps for the Community Streets Program

by Stefanie Cilinceon, City of Bellingham Public Works Department

The City's Community Streets Program received more than 650 submissions about traffic safety concerns on residential streets during this year's spotlight, which included the York neighborhood. Public Works has completed an initial review and sorted concerns into four main groups:

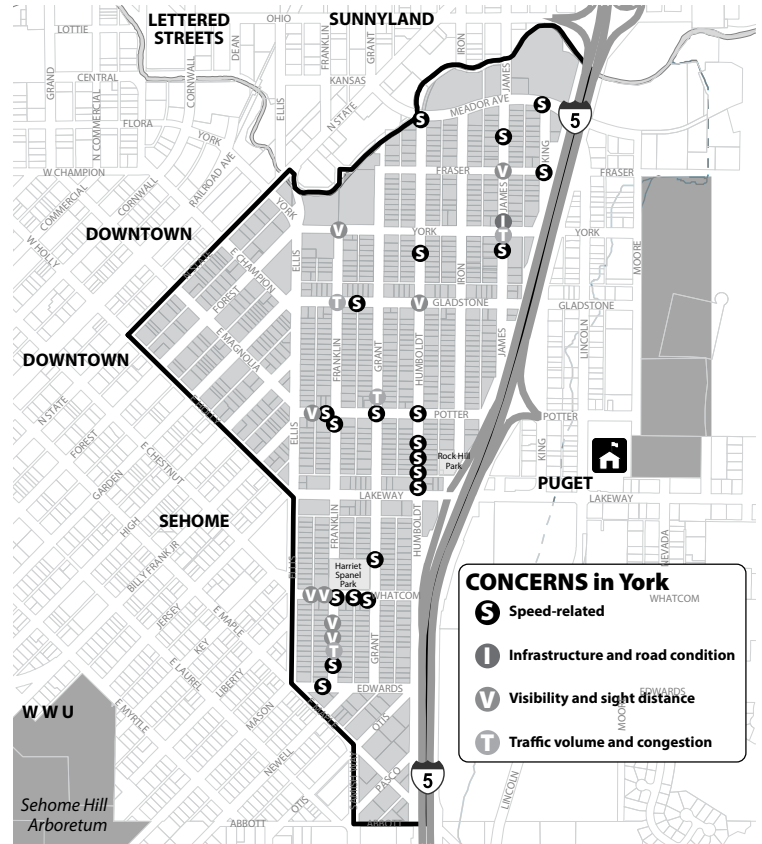
- Checklist items that City staff can address quickly using available resources
- Neighborhood projects suited for community-based solutions such as street murals or new street trees
- Capital projects that require planning and resources beyond the capacity of Community Streets; and
- Location studies where staff will take a closer look and evaluate the need for engineered solutions like speed humps or traffic circles

Crews are now working to complete 21 traffic studies by the end of September that will help identify the highest-need areas in this part of the city. To complete traffic safety studies, Public Works crews use **low-resolution cameras** that collect speed, turning, and pedestrian-crossing data **without capturing personally identifiable information or license plate numbers**. This data helps to augment our review of crash history and roadway characteristics while protecting privacy. We then use this data to rank concerns and identify the most critical needs for engineered solutions. Project selection for this year's Community Streets Program is expected in the fall.



In the coming months, York residents will also see safety improvements along the Maple Street corridor. Two new **rapid-flashing beacons** will be installed at the North Garden Street and North Forest Street intersections. The City will also reconstruct the East Maple, Mason, and Ellis Street intersection to improve safety for all travelers.

To learn more and explore capital projects planned across the city, visit the project map on the City of Bellingham website.



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Rock Hill Park gets its moment

If you've walked past Rock Hill Park lately, you've probably spotted the public-notice signs near the end of Iron Street and behind the playground on the lower level—a small but unmistakable sign that construction on the long-awaited playground refresh is about to begin. The City of Bellingham is replacing the tired 1999-era playground with a brand-new, community-approved, fully accessible play area, funded through Park Impact Fees. Plans call for a play tower with a tall spiral tube slide, climbers, swings, and imagination-play features up near the Iron Street entrance, plus an overhead ladder and climbing wall in a lower area where the current playground sits. The two sections will be geared toward school-age kids and toddlers, respectively, and reflect more than two years of neighborhood input through YNA meetings, design sessions, and Engage Bellingham surveys.

To commemorate this long-awaited improvement, the York Neighborhood Association is planning a “Rock Out at Rock Hill Park” concert with a number of local bands on Saturday, September 19th. Past September events have drawn 200 to 300 neighbors out to enjoy live music, food, drink, and some community spirit. After a summer of work, we'll have every reason to gather and celebrate a play space built to serve the York neighborhood for the next quarter-century.



Installation of the new playground equipment took place this summer, and there's just one more element of the site construction remaining before we can actually play on it... but it's there, so come check it out! It's looking like the work will be finished by the end of September.

We hope that having this big, new playground will encourage more people to come enjoy the upper area of the park and its natural features... such as the ridge that gives the park its name.

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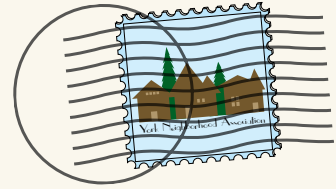
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Darrell Honcoop, 12-year mail deliverer to the York Neighborhood, will be retiring in April 2027, after nearly 13 total years of mail delivery. Darrell says that the York neighborhood is a "wonderful community" and "the people are great."

His retirement plans? Traveling the US with his wife and keep growing veggies and flowers in his garden. The biggest challenge he faced during his time in York was delivering mail during the COVID pandemic; postal workers stayed true to their motto, delivering in all kinds of weather and conditions. Every day he delivers in York, he walks about ten miles—and buys new shoes about every 4 months. His advice to all is "keep growing...veggies and flowers!"



*Rock Hill Park
South end of the 1300 block
of Iron Street
Bellingham, WA 98225*

We hope to see Darrell at the Annual Picnic on September 19, so come congratulate him if you're in town!

York Neighborhood Association Board of Directors

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Green thumbs at Iron and Gladstone...

by our neighbor Darrin Magee

My thumb is not green. In fact, I don't even have a green pinky finger. My attempts at gardening in every place I've lived have been pretty dismal.

"Dismal" could also have described the state of the flower gardens around the low-rise apartment building at **701 Gladstone Street** for much of its recent history.



That's no longer the case. Anyone who has passed by the intersection of Iron and Gladstone recently has likely encountered the gardening force of nature that is **Hadashah**. A guest of a resident of 701, she has worked tirelessly to transform the green space around the building into a vibrant garden overflowing with flowers, stones, hidden pathways, and lots of spaces for squirrels and birds to call home... and maybe a few garden gnomes, as well.

I live across the street from 701. On most days, I bet Hadashah does more mileage than I do in a week, moving a rose plant, repositioning garden hoses, mulching, planting, pruning, plucking, and planting some more. She takes breaks, of course, to chat with passers-by, toss a peanut to the squirrels or crows, or fill a few pots and pans with fresh water, providing little oases for the neighborhood's furry and feathered critters.



The Verna Vista apartment building was built in 1924

"I love doing the flower gardens!" she says. "I love making the place beautiful and festive." In addition to the gardens, Hadashah also puts up seasonal decorations at the building and even spreads Christmas cheer during the long dark season, distributing handmade table-top Christmas trees (complete with lights) to a few of us neighbors.

Green thumbs up for beautifying the neighborhood and spreading some good cheer. We can also use more of that.

...and at Eleanor Apartments' garden!

Downhill to the northwest, the resident-tended garden on the Ellis Street side of **Eleanor Apartments**, at **1510 North State Street**, has been blooming all summer too. Come have a look, neighbors!



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Cooking the Seasons: Quick Kale Pesto

by YNA Board Vice President Erin Vonnahme

Kale has my upmost respect. It’s a workhorse, a consistent grower in our Northwest Washington climate, available easily and locally almost the entire calendar year. Without any gardener effort, kale can overwinter and be ready for spring, vibrant but not making a big deal about it. Kale is cool, confident, and reliable. If you were a classmate, you’d definitely ask it to be part of your group project.

This creamy and fresh sauce maintains that unfussy spirit, requiring no basil (helpful if the aromatic annual is out of season or your price range) and adapting easily to plant-based diets. It’s an easy way to gobble up a pile of greens without realizing it. Maybe you’re shopping bargains. Maybe your neighbor or the food bank had a bumper crop. However you find yourself with a bunch of kale, know that you’re about 1 pot and 15 minutes away from a delicious and nutritious sauce suited for spreading, tossing, or dipping.

- Ingredients:**
1 bunch kale (I prefer lacinato, aka “dinosaur kale” or “Tuscan kale”)

approx. ¼ c. hemp hearts, pine nuts, or crushed walnuts

approx. ¼ c. extra virgin olive oil, plus a little extra for blending as needed

approx. ¼ c. nutritional yeast (aka nooch), more or less to taste

1–2 tbsp. powdered garlic or giant spoonful or two of diced/jarred garlic, to taste

shredded Parmesan, to taste

squeeze or three of lemon juice, to taste

salt, pepper, red pepper flakes/hot sauce, to taste



Instructions:

Start by salting a pot of water for boiling, as if preparing to cook dry pasta.

Next, fill a separate, large bowl with cold water and ice, to create an ice bath. You’ll blanch the kale before blending it with the other ingredients.

While the salted water comes to a boil, destem kale by slicing leaves off the middle spine. Discard/ compost the spines.

Once the water reaches a rolling boil, place all the kale leaves into the water for approximately 45–60 seconds. You’ll see the leaves turn a more vibrant shade of green. Use tongs to ensure all the leaves cook approximately evenly. After a minute, pull the leaves out of the boiling water and place them directly into the ice bath.

If you’re preparing pasta, use the boiling water to begin cooking it while you blend the sauce.

Into your blender/food processor, place the blanched kale and the remaining ingredients. Add the olive oil last to ensure any drier ingredients make their way into the mix easily. After blended, taste and spice-correct as desired.

Serve immediately over pasta or alongside a spread of dippables and crusty bread. Stores well in the fridge in a covered container for 3–5 days (longer if no added dairy).

WORD JUMBLE!

W	B	B	B	U	O	K	M	A	D	N	X
J	M	A	L	O	S	A	A	P	L	A	Y
S	U	N	M	U	O	Q	H	S	K	X	W
H	S	D	P	A	R	K	G	N	F	R	N
O	I	S	K	R	O	Y	N	G	O	E	D
F	C	X	C	I	N	C	I	P	I	M	A
S	D	N	E	I	R	F	L	J	H	M	Y
L	O	O	H	C	S	O	L	Q	O	U	D
N	H	B	K	O	V	L	E	Y	T	S	L
F	Y	C	O	J	L	D	B	V	D	D	Z
T	O	Y	T	I	N	U	M	M	O	C	P
R	B	Q	H	U	G	A	P	N	G	R	X

Find the following words from this issue in the puzzle.
Words can go in any direction.

- BANDS

HILL

PLAY
- BELLINGHAM

HOTDOG

ROCK
- COMMUNITY

MUSIC

SCHOOL
- FRIENDS

PARK

SUMMER
- PICNIC

YORK

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.

September						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			
October						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
November						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Ⓢ 1	2	ELECTION 3 DAY	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat

Calendar of York Events

Labor Day
Monday, September 7

*Bellingham Public Schools—No School
Friday, September 18*

York Neighborhood Annual Picnic
Saturday, September 19—3pm–7pm
Rock Hill Park

*Bellingham Technical College and Whatcom
Community College Fall Quarter Begins
Tuesday, September 22*

*WWU Fall Quarter Begins
Wednesday, September 23*

Columbus Day / Indigenous People's Day
Monday, October 12

*Mayor's Neighborhood Advisory
Commission Meeting (MNAC)*
Wednesday, October 21—6:30pm–8:30pm
City Hall (210 Lottie Street) or via Zoom Webinar

Halloween
Saturday, October 31

*Daylight Saving Time ends
Sunday, November 1*

Election Day
Tuesday, November 3

Veterans Day
Wednesday, November 11

MNAC Meeting
Wednesday, November 18—6:30pm–8:30pm
City Hall (210 Lottie Street) or via Zoom Webinar

Thanksgiving Day
Thursday, November 26

+ OCTOBER SCARECROW CONTEST +

*By popular request, we are once again encouraging York neighbors to decorate their porches with a **scarecrow** this October to bring a little seasonal fun to our streets throughout the 'hood.*

The “Rules:” Have loads of fun! Try not to spend any money.

*We'll feature photos of your efforts on our website
and via social media. Get creative!*



★ *plus: Monday Game Nights at Nelson's—6pm till Close!* ★



Contact

York Neighborhood Association
mailing address:
PO Box 2662
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President@YorkNeighborhood.org

website: www.YorkNeighborhood.org

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