



OUR MISSION

The Downtown Bellingham Partnership is a nonprofit that champions the health and vitality of our community through inspiring commerce, culture and celebration.

OUR VISION

The Downtown Bellingham Partnership envisions Bellingham as everyone's neighborhood – a growing and evolving center for businesses, residents and visitors that is vibrant, welcoming, clean and safe. It is easy to get to access by all modes of transportation and it is Whatcom County's center for innovation, culture and entertainment. Downtown is a collection of unique shops, restaurants and other businesses that reflect the authentic character and sense of community of downtown. Together they create an active and diverse downtown neighborhood, offering something for everyone.

OUR VALUES

We value teamwork, engagement and collaboration

We value successful small independent businesses that are vital to a thriving downtown

We value a caring, compassionate, collaborative community

We believe in creating a safe atmosphere/environment for businesses, residents and visitors

We believe in creating cultural community vibrancy and quality of life

We believe in having fun, being creative and open-minded

We are committed to acting as a catalyst for forward motion in our community

We believe in continually growing and learning as an organization and individuals

About DBP

The Downtown Bellingham Partnership (DBP) originally started in 2000 as the Downtown Renaissance Network with the mission of growing the downtown core through economic vitality and community. Since then we have accomplished great things including becoming a nonprofit organization and a Washington State Main Street community in 2014. One of our biggest successes through the years has been the creation of one of Bellingham's premier summer events, Downtown Sounds, which brings top quality musical talent to town for the entire community to enjoy on warm summer evenings. In addition, our monthly Art Walks have become a staple in Downtown Bellingham, bringing hundreds into the city center every month to enjoy art, patron our restaurants and shop in our stores.

Over the past 20+ years, the Downtown Bellingham Partnership has worked to create and maintain a vibrant city center in Bellingham to make it a prime location for businesses, residents, and visitors. It has focused on creating a clean, beautiful, safe, and friendly district for all. As the designated neighborhood association, the Partnership acts as a strong voice for downtown and an effective liaison between downtown stakeholders and local decision-makers. As a central source for information and discussion on downtown issues, the Partnership is uniquely situated to respond appropriately and immediately to downtown's economic development needs.

CURRENT DBP COMMITTEES

Executive: Chaired by the Board President (currently Elie Samuel). Composed of the officers of the organization. Functions include strategic leadership, planning the annual meeting, working with the Executive Director, and making emergency/critical decisions.

Finance: Currently chaired by Treasurer, Skip Williamson. Works with the Executive Director and DBP Assistant Director in planning the annual budget, periodically reviews internal controls regarding financial matters, takes responsibility for financial oversight of the organization.

Fundraising: An ad-hoc committee that works with the Executive Director and PFC staff the committee develops, recommends, and reviews fundraising strategies and plans.

Promotion: Currently chaired by our Events Director, Lindsey Payne Johnstone, and Rhiannon Troutman. This committee supports DBP staff in reviewing, producing, and evaluating the organization's events and retail promotions.

Design: Currently chaired by Lindsey and Kristen Winn. Plays a key role in shaping the physical image of downtown by educating others about good design and taking the lead in placemaking projects.

Economic Vitality: Currently chaired by DBP Executive Director, Alice Clark, and Don Goldberg from the Port of Bellingham. This committee monitors downtown's current economic condition and identifies opportunities for market growth, works to strengthen existing businesses and recruit new ones.



Main Street Overview

In 2014 the Downtown Bellingham Partnership became an officially Main Street community, proudly representing one of the 35+ Main Street communities in Washington State. Since 1984, the Washington State Main Street Program has been helping communities revitalize the economy, appearance, and image of their downtown commercial districts using the successful Main Street Four-Point Approach®. Main Street is a comprehensive, incremental approach to revitalization built around a community's unique heritage and attributes. Using local resources and initiative, the state program helps communities develop their own strategies to stimulate long term economic growth and pride in the heart of the community- downtown.

In 2010 the Main Street Program was moved from the Department of Commerce to the Department of Archaeology & Historic Preservation. The program is managed (under contract) by the Washington Trust for Historic Preservation.

The Main Street Four-Point Approach® is a unique preservation-based economic development tool that enables communities to revitalize downtown and neighborhood business districts by leveraging local assets - from historic, cultural, and architectural resources to local enterprises and community pride. It is a comprehensive strategy that addresses the variety of issues and problems that challenge traditional commercial districts.

Since its founding in 1980, Main Street has been the leader of a coast-to-coast network now encompassing more than 2,000 programs and leaders who use the Main Street Approach® to rebuild the places and enterprises that create sustainable, vibrant communities. This approach has been implemented in over 1,200 cities and towns in 40 states across the nation with the help of the National Main Street Center and statewide downtown revitalization programs.

The success of the Main Street Approach® is based on its comprehensive nature. By carefully integrating four points into a practical downtown management strategy, a local Main Street program will produce fundamental changes in a community's economy.

The four points and eight guiding principles of the Main Street approach work together to build a sustainable and complete community revitalization effort.

Organization involves building a Main Street framework that is well represented by business and property owners, bankers, citizens, historic preservationists, entrepreneurs, public officials, chambers of commerce, and other local economic development organizations. Everyone must work together to renew downtown. A strong organization provides the structure and stability to build and maintain a long-term effort.

Promotion creates excitement and vibrancy downtown. Street festivals, parades, retail events, and image development campaigns are some of the ways Main Street provides education on what's downtown and encourages customer traffic. Promotion involves marketing an enticing image to shoppers, investors, and visitors.

Design enhances the look and feel of the commercial district. Historic building rehabilitation, street and alley clean-up, landscaping, street furniture, signage, visual merchandising and lighting all improve the physical image of the downtown as a quality place to shop, work, walk, invest in, and live. Design improvements result in a reinvestment of public and private dollars to downtown.

Economic Restructuring involves analyzing current market forces to develop long-term solutions. Recruiting new businesses, creatively converting unused space for new uses, and sharpening the competitiveness of Main Street's traditional merchants are examples of economic restructuring activities.

The Eight Guiding Principles

- **Comprehensive.** A single project cannot revitalize a downtown or commercial neighborhood. An ongoing series of initiatives is vital to build community support and create lasting progress.
- **Incremental.** Small projects make a big difference. They demonstrate that “things are happening” on Main Street and hone the skills and confidence the program will need to tackle more complex projects.
- **Self-Help.** The state can provide valuable direction and technical assistance, but only local leadership can breed long-term success by fostering and demonstrating community involvement and commitment to the revitalization effort.
- **Public/Private Partnership.** Every local Main Street program needs the support and expertise of both the public and private sectors. For an effective partnership, each must recognize the strengths and weaknesses of the other.
- **Identifying and Capitalizing on Existing Assets.** Unique offerings and local assets provide the solid foundation for a successful Main Street initiative.
- **Quality.** From storefront design to promotional campaigns to special events, quality must be instilled in the organization.
- **Change.** Changing community attitudes and habits is essential to bring about a commercial district renaissance. A carefully planned Main Street program will help shift public perceptions and practices to support and sustain the revitalization process.
- **Action Oriented.** Frequent visible changes in the look and activities of the commercial district will reinforce the perception of positive change. Small, but dramatic, improvements early in the process will remind the community that the revitalization effort is underway



DBP BOARD OF DIRECTORS

ELIE SAMUEL

Board President – Downtown Business Investor (bio to come)

LIZ PURDY

Vice President – Puget Sound Energy

A western WA native, Liz landed in Bellingham in 2018 after a decade spent checking out a lot of other wonderful places (Vermont, Alaska, Montana) that didn't have quite the magic that Bellingham offers. Liz spent over ten years working for nonprofits in social service, environmental conservation, and outreach. Today, she is thrilled to bring together her passion for sustainability and local partnerships in her role at Puget Sound Energy as Sr. Community Engagement Representative for Whatcom County. Liz has a Masters in Sustainable Development and loves contributing to the collaborative efforts that bring communities together and keeps them thriving. When not sipping a cocktail with friends downtown, you'll likely find her enjoying Bellingham Bay, skiing Mt. Baker, or reading in her hammock with her husband, Cyrus, nearby.

DISKIN YOUNG

Secretary – Bellwether Real Estate

Diskin Young is a real estate Managing Broker, investor, mentor and entrepreneur. Diskin has lived in Whatcom County his whole life, going to high school at Ferndale HS and then graduating from WWU with a degree in economics. In 2015 Diskin co-founded Bellwether Real Estate and in 2019 Diskin was named "Top 30 Under 30" in real estate by Realtor Magazine. Diskin has a vested interest in seeing downtown Bellingham thrive and knows what a positive impact that can have on the community and culture for this wonderful city. He is excited to have a hand in the great things the Downtown Bellingham Partnership does. Diskin enjoys walking around the water or trails in Bellingham, playing tennis at the Bellingham Tennis Club, playing basketball and enjoying all the restaurants downtown.

SKIP WILLIAMSON

Treasurer – Carnal + Accomplice

Skip Williamson grew up in Gig Harbor, attended Seattle University and UW, then spent two years on Wall Street. Skip moved back to the area in the early 90s to launch a coffee house with a record label called Will Records in the backroom. The record label built a strong reputation releasing west-coast indie rock. After a few years Skip was approached by a soon to be film production company called Lakeshore Entertainment in Hollywood. Skip joined the new company as a partner, the record label became Lakeshore Records which was an outlet for their soundtracks. Skip spent 15 years leading Lakeshore records as it became the world's top soundtrack label and along the way Skip produced twelve films, three of which opened #1 at the box office. Skip and his wife Alexis moved to Bellingham in 2017 to raise their young family and has opened a restaurant and jerky company called Carnal in a building they own downtown. Skip is now dedicated full-time to Carnal, could not be more enthused about downtown and is pumped to help carry on the tradition of DBP as Bellingham continues its evolution.

CRAIG JEWELL

Wild Buffalo

Craig Jewell was born in Puyallup, WA and moved up to Bellingham in 2004 to attend Western Washington University. He studied Vocal Performance, Japanese, and ended up getting a degree in Communications with a Minor in International Business in 2008. In that same year, Craig became part-owner of the Wild Buffalo House of Music, a music venue in Downtown Bellingham. Over the years he has been a member of multiple regional bands, became a part-owner of Bellingham engraving, was hired to book the talent at the Summer Meltdown Festival in Darrington, WA, and has thrown dozens of benefit shows for various regional charities. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Craig co-created two non-profit organizations—WANMA (Washington Nightlife and Music Association, an advocacy and lobbying group for the live music ecosystem) and KML (Keep Music Live, a fundraising campaign for live music venues in Washington State. “Other than family and music, there is nothing else that I am more passionate about than a thriving downtown Bellingham.” - Craig Jewell

CHRIS ROSSELI

Western Washington University

Chris Roselli is the Director of Community Relations at WWU where he fosters positive relationships by serving as the liaison between the community and the university. Chris has lived in Bellingham since 1995 and is actively engaged with many community organizations including the Bellingham Regional Chamber of Commerce, Mayor’s Neighborhood Advisory Commission, Domestic Violence Commission, Bellingham Whatcom County Tourism, and City Club. Chris is devoted to supporting the growth of downtown’s vibrant community and is excited to create more opportunities that bridge the WWU community to Downtown Bellingham. You can find Chris spending time with his wife and two daughters at many of downtown’s shops and restaurants including Boundary Bay Brewery & Bistro, Mt. Bakery, Cosmos Bistro, Fringe, Pure Bliss, the Co-op, Pie Hole, Horseshoe Café, Café Rumba, and many more.

RHIANNON TROUTMAN

Fringe Boutique

Rhiannon was born in Bellingham the year Bellis Fair Mall was built. Because of this, she grew up in a downtown with a lot of large vacancies and a lackluster spirit. But a move to Portland for school made her to realize just how special Bellingham is, and how uniquely supportive our community is of small businesses of every kind. She loves that almost every business in our downtown core is locally owned – from herb & spice shops to pet stores, and cider houses to music venues. She decided to move back to Bellingham for this very reason, and opened Fringe Boutique in an historical downtown building in 2015. She loves connecting with the creative community of Whatcom County, and is excited to be a part of a new generation shaping the City of Renewed Excitement through vibrant businesses, engaging events, and a beautiful landscape.

KRISTEN WINN

Secretary – Freelance Marketing Manager

After 19 years of calling Seattle home and experiencing it's exponential growth, Kristen seized an opportunity to move to Bellingham in 2017, knowing the vibrant, small city had much to offer. With a background in Communications and Event Management, she currently is working as an independent freelancer. Kristen has been on the Board or a member of several art organizations throughout the years, as well as a supporter of Environment Washington and the Washington Trails Association. She has volunteered for Willing Workers on Organic Farms and, most recently, WorkAway Cultural Exchange. With a strong desire to build community and a frequent supporter of downtown retailers, restaurants, and events, joining the Downtown Bellingham Partnership Board was a natural next

step. Apart from the office, you'll find Kristen exploring trails, checking out local art or catching some live music. And traveling. Always traveling!

Ex-Officio Members

DARBY COWLES
City of Bellingham

DON GOLDBERG
Port of Bellingham

HOLLIE HUTHMAN
Bellingham City Council

DBP STAFF

DBP Executive Director, Alice Clark, has been involved in the local nonprofit world of Bellingham for close to 20 years and is most noted for her tenure at the Pickford Film Center, which she cofounded and acted as Executive Director for 12 years. She has been the ED since January 2016.

Our Event Director, Lindsey Payne Johnstone, is a familiar face downtown as she has been producing events for the DBP for over ten years.

Jenny Hagemann is the DBP Marketing and Communications Manager and she started working for the DBP at the end of 2021. She brings a wealth of experience in marketing and entrepreneurship.

Jennifer Walters, our Retail Advocate, was hired in March 2018 and is key in implementing the Retail Strategy for Downtown Bellingham that was co-produced by the City and DBP.

Melissa Sorinsin, DBP Office Manager, has earned an A.S. in Accounting from Whatcom Community College and comes to us with a wealth of experience as a bookkeeper and office administrator.

Kenny Austin, Downtown Landscaping and Cleaning Supervisor, joined the DBP team in August 2019. He has two part-time team members on his crew, Jake Diedrick and Alec Howard.

Nathalie Wagler, our latest team member, is our Events and Promotions Coordinator and assists both Lindsey and Jenny in creating and promoting our events and programs.