



For Immediate Release – July 21, 2020

## **City and County Leaders Host Listening Series on Race and Justice**

***The series is intended to inform change and create public record of community voices***

Bellingham and Whatcom County officials are hosting a listening series on race and justice, an opportunity for community members to share their experiences and their ideas for how leaders can make meaningful, effective changes.

Four sessions are scheduled for:

- 7:00-9:00 p.m., Tuesday, July 28
- 6:00-8:00 p.m., Monday, August 10
- 11:00 a.m.- 1:00 p.m., Saturday, August 15
- 5:00-7:00 p.m., Tuesday, August 18



All sessions will be held via Zoom due to COVID-19 restrictions on in-person meetings. All sessions are open to the public, with options to log in via computer or smartphone or dial in via a telephone number. All meetings will be aired live on [BTV](#) and the [City's YouTube channel](#).

"We intend this to be the beginning step in a continuum that includes joining communities nationwide in doing the hard work of identifying how we dismantle structural racism in our organizations and our community," Bellingham Mayor Seth Fleetwood, who helped initiate the series, said.

He said the purpose of the series is to provide the public with opportunities to share while following COVID-19 restrictions, to inform commitments to effective change, to create a public, historic record of people's ideas and experiences, and to elevate the importance of these issues and ensure accountability for addressing them.

The series is sponsored by and will be attended by area elected and appointed leaders – all who have committed to listening and learning – from the City of Bellingham, Whatcom County, Lummi Nation, Western Washington University, Whatcom County Prosecuting Attorney's Office, Whatcom County Sheriff's Office and the Bellingham Police Department.

The series is supported by various community partners, including Stand Speak Listen, Bellingham Unity Committee, Community to Community Development (C2C), Opportunity Council, Guru Nanak Gursikh Temple, and other prominent local cultural organizations.

Mayor Fleetwood said sponsors would like most to hear from people of color about their experiences with racial inequities and injustice in our community.

"We wish to hear from our neighbors whose lives have an element of fear and anxiety simply because of the color of their skin," he said. "We are committed to listening, promoting awareness, facilitating dialogue, and taking actions that make the safety, dignity and humanity of all people our priority."

Whatcom County Executive Satpal Sidhu said community leaders are receiving many requests for action. "We intend this listening series to be the first step in a process of understanding our community's experiences with racism and injustice and taking steps to effectively address these issues," he said. "It is the beginning of a dialogue that will result in necessary changes."

## How to participate

### Comment via Zoom

Anyone wishing to speak at any of the scheduled meetings may do so by joining at the following links:

<b>DATE</b>	<b>URL TO REGISTER</b>	<b>MEETING ID</b>	<b>PASSWORD</b>
July 28	<a href="http://www.cob.org/listen0728">www.cob.org/listen0728</a>	958 0522 4763	123
August 10	<a href="http://www.cob.org/listen0810">www.cob.org/listen0810</a>	997 6322 7294	123
August 15	<a href="http://www.cob.org/listen0815">www.cob.org/listen0815</a>	962 2738 1401	123
August 18	<a href="http://www.cob.org/listen0818">www.cob.org/listen0818</a>	977 0880 4687	123

These links can be used before each meeting to pre-register or used during each meeting to register and immediately join the meeting. Pre-registration is encouraged, as we will invite speakers in order of sign-in. Full name not required for registration; you may use any identifier you wish. We only need a way to call upon you when it is your turn.

### Comment or listen by telephone

Those who would like to comment or listen in by phone can do so using any of the following phone numbers:

- (253) 215-8782
- (346) 248-7799
- (669) 900-6833
- (301) 715-8592
- (312) 626-6799
- (929) 205-6099

<b>DATE</b>	<b>MEETING ID</b>	<b>PASSWORD</b>
July 28	958 0522 4763	123
August 10	997 6322 7294	123
August 15	962 2738 1401	123
August 18	977 0880 4687	123

**WHATCOM COUNTY  
EXECUTIVE'S OFFICE**  
County Courthouse  
311 Grand Ave. Suite #108  
Bellingham, WA 98225

**Satpal Singh Sidhu**  
County Executive

### **Watch or listen only**

If you wish to watch or listen to any meetings but not speak, meetings will be aired live on [BTV](#) and on the [City's YouTube channel](#). (Comcast channels 10 and 321)

### **Guidelines for commenting**

We invite all to speak – passionately if that's how you best express yourself. Please limit your comments to 3-5 minutes so that everyone has a chance. We may interrupt comments that involve:

- Name-calling or personal attacks.
- Obscene or indecent remarks.
- Advertising or promoting the sale of products, services, or private enterprise.
- Promoting any contest or lottery.
- Promoting candidates for public office or upcoming ballot measures.

### **Media Contacts**

Janice Keller, Communications Director  
City of Bellingham  
[jkeller@cob.org](mailto:jkeller@cob.org) or (360) 201-9500

Jed Holmes, Community Outreach Facilitator  
Whatcom County  
[jholmes@co.whatcom.wa.us](mailto:jholmes@co.whatcom.wa.us) or (360) 778-5209

###