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## **Cathy Lehman to run for Bellingham City Council**

Bellingham, WA – Nonprofit director and sustainability advocate, Cathy Lehman, today announced her campaign to represent Ward 3 on the Bellingham City Council. Lehman pledges to strengthen economic development downtown, promote liveable neighborhoods, and protect Lake Whatcom water quality.

Former city councilperson, Barbara Ryan, shares, “Cathy Lehman brings a passion for liveable neighborhoods to her candidacy for Bellingham City Council. She has a fresh perspective and a formidable resume of community involvement.”

A graduate of Western Washington University and resident of downtown, Lehman holds a certificate in Sustainable Business from Bainbridge Graduate Institute, and worked 5 years for Sustainable Connections as Sustainable Business Development manager. She has been a longtime advocate for the Central Business District and understands that a thriving urban center is critical to our city’s economic development.

“The urban core of Bellingham is one of the most overlooked economic opportunities we have available, and we can’t afford to let it languish any longer. It is one of the only places guaranteed to function better with more capacity, and is the ultimate urban village for every Bellingham resident. If planned for and invested in properly, it could become an economic driver for the entire city. We need to raise it up with the attention it deserves,” Lehman says.

Having lived in a number of neighborhoods city-wide and now enjoying an urban life downtown, Lehman asserts that the city needs to plan for more residential capacity downtown before asking neighborhoods to accommodate urban infill. She has been a driving force in efforts to get the city to direct resources toward downtown planning instead of additional outlying urban villages in 2011-2012.

“Downtown Bellingham is a beautiful jewel we have to offer all our citizens, and we need to turn our attention back to it and put reinvestment there where it can multiply exponentially to benefit everyone city-wide. We can keep our uniqueness without compromising affordability and character, and spur more employment, residential choices, and cultural arts. We can embrace the 24-hour economy by supporting a thriving daytime business district and a colorful evening nightlife.”

And she takes a no-nonsense approach to delivering results.

“There really are things we can do now to fill empty storefronts, recruit living-wage employers, and solve parking concerns, and it’s time to do them,” she declares. She also wants to see an increased focus on affordable residential options for working professionals within walking distance of downtown, an incentive package that attracts high wage jobs to the city, and an aggressive recruitment strategy for redevelopment opportunities and commercial investments in the central business district.

She also wants to make progress on protection of Lake Whatcom.

“Lake Whatcom needs our attention now,” Lehman says. “I bring new energy to the city’s long-standing commitments to protect the lake, and I’m dedicated to taking tangible steps right away toward making sure we have clean drinking water for the future.”

Lehman is currently Whatcom County Chapter Director of Futurewise, and advocates at the county level to manage growth and prevent sprawl on farmland. She explains, “Bellingham operates within a larger context of planning and growth management that ultimately rests on the policies county level government is implementing. I think the citizens of Bellingham could benefit from having a representative with first hand information about overarching growth decisions that shape our future within our own city.”

Lehman also manages weekend swing shifts at the Lighthouse Mission’s Agape Home, a transitional housing shelter for women and children. She served for 3 years on the board of Downtown Bellingham Partnership, and has also served on boards for Whatcom Conservation Voters, Girls on the Run of Northwest Washington, and Wellspring Community School. At Sustainable Connections her project, ‘Green Power Community Challenge,’ saw Bellingham become the largest Green Power Community in the nation.

“I love Bellingham, deeply,” said Lehman. “And I’m ready to serve my community further by stepping up to City Council. I offer new energy and a fresh perspective. I think we have an incredible future ahead.”

Chuck Robinson, co-owner of Fairhaven’s Village Books and Paper Dreams, agrees. “Cathy Lehman is whip smart and deeply passionate about the future of Bellingham and Whatcom County. When I look at Bellingham, I believe Cathy IS the future. She certainly has my support.”

Additional information on Cathy Lehman and her campaign for city council can be found at [www.votecathylehman.com](http://www.votecathylehman.com), on Facebook, and by calling 360-303-1430.

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