



Ronald Brown from Edgemoor · 1d ago



Thank you Ann,

The first step to determining the Root Cause is to Define the Problem!  
Many of us have expressed their opinions and identified circumstances that affect themselves.

Fact: "The percentage of individuals at or below poverty level increased from 20.6% to 23.2%. The 2015 Washington State Housing Needs Assessment shows that 20% of Bellingham households are severely cost-burdened, spending more than 50% of their income for housing. Another 18% are cost burdened, spending more than 30% of their income on housing." This is a receipt for disaster that affects against all.

Fact: Employment - "In 2013, Bellingham and its UGA accommodated 48,800 jobs, or 64% of the total employment in Whatcom County. About 42% of these jobs include workers who also live in Bellingham, while about 58% work in Bellingham, but live elsewhere. About 44% of Bellingham's employed residents commute to other places for work. Employment by industry sector can be seen in the figure at right."

I was born and raised in this city notoriously known as a tough place to make a living. Obviously wages have not kept with inflation, and when the property tax structure has quadrupled that rate of inflation: not only is this not fair, one could perceive an income tax has been imposed?

Step 2: Understand the Process. On April 5th the Whatcom County Assessor is coming to the South Hill Neighborhood as a quest speaker, congratulation's to your neighborhood. I would encourage every person contributing to this thread, to all attend this meeting. If there is enough interest, which I believe there is from the numerous amount of neighborhoods weighing in on these problems, perhaps a larger venue is in order.

Thanks



Thank

Jean and Allen thanked Ronald



Anne Sinnott from South Bellingham · 1d ago





Ronald Brown from Edgemoor · 13h ago



For those who want to prepare themselves for Keith Willnauer our County Assessor one must read and understand RCW Title 84.

Why is our property tax called a regressive tax?

" Finally, the tax is considered regressive, because there is no necessary correlation with household incomes. This is particularly true for households with lower or fixed incomes. The senior citizens exemption helps offset the regressive impact for qualified households, but for many other low and moderate income families, particularly those on fixed incomes, the ratio of their property tax to their household income may be significantly higher than for individuals at higher income levels."

Thanks

[Thank](#)

Allen, Sue, and Candy thanked Ronald



Larry Horowitz from Edgemoor · 7h ago



Regarding the meeting with Whatcom County Assessor Keith Willnauer, it's important to understand that the Assessor's office does not establish the total tax amount. The Assessor simply appraises and revalues all real property, allocates value to taxing districts, and calculates levy rates that are applied to each property.

The vast majority (80% or more) of the tax increase for 2017 is the result of three voter approved levies, two school levies and an EMS levy. The Assessor can hardly be blamed for that, and I believe that's what he'll tell you.

Unless the revaluation of your home is unrealistic, I don't believe the Assessor is the one you need to speak with.

Edited 7h ago

[Thank](#)

Miles, Allen, Sue, and 2 others thanked Larry



Ronald Brown from Edgemoor - 1h ago



Larry,

If you look at all of my comments in this thread, I will emphasize the need to hold all our politicians accountable! The property tax code can be found in RCW Title 84, RCW's are wrote by your Legislators. I am sure you are aware of this. Please note, I did suggested to all read and understand the RCW, so the assessor could not simply pass the buck. The fact that the three approved levies are multiplied by the inflated assessed value, add burdens to our tax bills, would you agree with that?

The assessor is only one little fish in the sea of politicians that should be held accountable. Time after time you have mentioned we should not be subsidizing growth, do you have a solution or opinion how to change things? I respect your informational links provided in this link, perhaps I am more opinionated than you. We are not adversaries here, we only have different styles. I do respectfully disagree if you are implying I gave out wrong information.

You deserve praise for your work on Pedestrian Safety, you used a root cause analysis method and offered an action plan to offer corrective actions. I would support you if you wanted to spearhead a neighborhood petition to present recommendations to appropriate Politician's if you want to lead. Until then I will continue to promote vigilance the way I know best. These tax laws are so complicated and complex I wonder if the authors even understand them all. The law has more exemptions to it then "Carter's got pills". People are exploding exemptions for greed, while others remain apathetic.

I am of the opinion these tax codes need attention, politicians with good intentions as good as they may be, can even snowball into devastating results. Politicians say we need affordable housing, yet by definition they are failing badly.

Affordable housing by RWC definition states, that the cost burden of housing including utilities shall not exceed 30%. In pervious thread I included excerpts from the Bellingham Comprehensive Plan, by their own admission: a majority of Bellingham households are burdened much higher level. The wage statistics are even more staggering to me, as a person that has advocated for wage equality my entire life.

Thank

Thank

Sue thanked Ronald

**Biodiesel/Alcohol/Wood Biomass/Anaerobic Digester Fuel Manufacturing Equipment** - Real and Personal Property used in the manufacturing of Alcohol Fuel, Biodiesel Fuel, Biodiesel Feedstock, Wood Biomass Fuel or Fuels from the Operation of an Anaerobic Digester may qualify for a tax exemption. The Assessor's Office administers [applications](#) for this program.

**Historic Property Improvement** - In the City of Bellingham, certain improvements to qualifying Historic Property may be exempted from real property taxation. Contact the City of Bellingham, Planning & Community Development Department, [360-778-8300](#).

**Urban Area Multi-Family Improvement** - In the City of Bellingham, certain multi-family improvements developed in designated urban areas may qualify for exemption from real property taxation. Contact the City of Bellingham, Planning & Community Development Department, [360-778-8300](#).

**Tribally Owned Non-Trust (Fee) Property** - Non-trust status property owned by federally recognized tribes may qualify for property tax exemption. The Department of Revenue administers [applications](#) and qualification for this program.



Larry Horowitz from Edgemoor · 1h ago



Ronald, my comment regarding the meeting with Keith Willnauer was not directed toward you. It was a general response to Ray's notice about the meeting and the general expectations of those who plan to attend. I am not implying in any way that you provided incorrect information. And I applaud your efforts to promote vigilance. You have my support.

Thanks for reminding me of your emphasis for holding all of our politicians accountable. I don't believe the Assessor will "pass the buck," but he will explain to the audience that his job is to fairly assess properties and calculate the levy rates. He has no involvement in the approval of tax increases or new levies. Other than inaccurate revaluations, I don't believe there's much you can hold him personally accountable for.

Regarding your point about levies being multiplied by the inflated value, I believe the mechanics are slightly different than you described. When property values increase, the levy rate typically decreases. For example, the total valuation of properties included in the Bellingham General Fund levy increased by more than \$567 million or 6%. At the same time the levy rate itself decreased by about 5%. The total tax increased by 1.1%, which includes the 1% increase on existing properties plus the tax on new properties. This information is available at the following link:

<http://www.whatcomcounty.us/ArchiveCente...>

That said, I absolutely agree that our elected officials are "failing badly." The fact that we continue to indiscriminately subsidize all new construction, including million dollar homes, is proof alone. Our new City Council president is well aware of this fact, and I have asked him repeatedly to address it. Perhaps he just needs to hear from more people that corrective action is needed.

Edited just now

Thank

Dick and Ronald thanked Larry