

# Mukilteo Beacon

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## BEACON COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

### Local area real estate market still favors sellers

BY DAVID PAN

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Besides lower temperatures and an abundance of leaves in need of raking, the arrival of fall often means potential homeowners become a little more serious about finding a place to call home.

The lazy days of July and August give way to a sense of urgency to find a home and get settled well before the holidays.

#### Buyers face challenges in competitive environment

But the red-hot Puget Sound real estate market continues to make life difficult for buyers, as the Seattle area market ranked third nationally for year-over-year price increases, according to

For a spotlight on area schools dealing with COVID, see [page 3](#)

the June 2021 S&P CoreLogic Case-Shiller U.S. National Home Price NSA Index. The

Seattle area reported a 25% increase, just behind Phoenix (29.3%) and San Diego (27.1%). The 10-city composition posted a 19.1% gain, up from 17.1% in the previous month.

There may be a slight glimmer of hope for potential homeowners wishing the local

housing market would take a breather.

While she is by no means seeing a softening in the market, Windermere real estate agent Wendy Kondo said even though activity has picked up in September, she is noticing some potential changes.

"We've seen some things staying on the market a little longer," said Kondo, who has more than 35 years of experience and

see [REAL ESTATE SPOTLIGHT page 16](#)

## Racing for lung cancer research

The fourth annual Lungbuster 5K run/walk returns Sunday, both in-person and virtually

BY DAVID PAN

REPORTER@YOURBEACON.NET

Amie Parker was stunned when her doctor told her the news.

For months, the mother of two and Mukilteo School District teacher was battling a persistent cough that seemed to defy diagnosis and treatment.

But after being referred to a lung specialist, Parker was informed she had stage 4 lung cancer.

More than four years later, Parker continues to fight the disease and to raise funds for lung cancer research through the annual Lungbuster 5K race. Parker was a nonsmoker and wasn't around second-hand smoke. She was a healthy 44-year-old active runner.

"I was young. Nobody thought it was going to be cancer," Parker said. "Most people think you get lung cancer only if you have a history of smoking."

Parker researched the disease, and discovered one of the fastest growing segments is young women without a history of smoking.

"We don't know why that demographic is getting it," Parker said. "That's part of the reason we try to raise money to fund research. ... They really don't know why it's growing so fast."

Some researchers point to radon as a possible reason for the increase. Parker had her house tested and it came back negative. In general, people today are exposed to more things, including chemicals, than previous generations, she added.



Amie Parker, with husband Tony and sons Luke and Noah, participated in the 2019 Lungbuster race.

Photo courtesy of Lisa Wilson

Parker talked to her oncologist about the weeks and weeks of unsuccessful treatments until the eventual diagnosis of lung cancer, wondering if the delay made a difference.

"No. He said, 'Let it go,'" Parker recalled. "One of the things is you try to make sense of it. There really isn't any sense to be made."

Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer-related deaths in the United States with more than 230,000 new cases and 155,000 deaths per year. Yet, lung cancer receives little funding for research.

Parker noted lung cancer kills more people than the next three cancer killers combined – breast, colorectal, and prostate. The other three cancers receive much more funding spent per life lost.

"Each one of those cancers gets more dollars," Parker said.

Parker, her friends, family, and supporters

see [LUNGBUSTER page 12](#)

## Homeless man shot in apparent robbery attempt

BY DAVID PAN

REPORTER@YOURBEACON.NET

A homeless man living out of his vehicle was shot during an apparent robbery attempt in the parking lot of the Extended Stay America Suites.

The victim told Mukilteo Police he was asleep in his vehicle in the Extended Stay parking lot, at 3917 Harbour Pointe Road, around 2 a.m. Sunday, Sept. 19, when he was woken by someone entering the vehicle, reportedly with the intention of stealing it.

An altercation took place outside the vehicle, and the victim was shot twice in the leg, Mukilteo Special Operations Sergeant Andy Illyn said.

The victim, in his early 30s, told police two suspects were involved.

911 dispatch received multiple reports

from hotel guests saying they heard gunshots and screaming.

When Mukilteo Police and Snohomish County Sheriff officers arrived, they initially only found a couple of rifle shell casings on the ground and no victim.

"Later, officers were notified there was a victim at Swedish Mill Creek with gunshot wounds," Illyn said.

A guest from the hotel drove the victim to Swedish Mill Creek. The victim later was transferred to Swedish Edmonds, and a Mukilteo detective talked with him there about the shooting. The victim was in the hospital for three days before being released.

Illyn said the victim provided some descriptive information about the suspects, and is scheduled to come in for a fol-

see [HOMELESS MAN SHOT page 2](#)



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BRANDY

► from **REAL ESTATE SPOTLIGHT** page 1

is based out of the Alderwood office.

It still is a seller's market, though. But the buying frenzy that may have scared away many potential homeowners may be lessening.

"Instead of 20 offers, you might have five really good ones," Kondo said. "It looks like it's kind of shifting. But it's too soon to really tell."

John L. Scott Real Estate managing broker and regional manager Frank Wilson noted there was a dip in some open house traffic.

"We are seeing homes stay on the market slightly longer, and more instances of sellers overpricing their properties," he said.

Craig Purfeerst, a Windermere real agent who has been in the business for 47 years, said he sees many buyers and sellers bucking the historic patterns. The housing market has been uniformly strong throughout months when a slowdown would have been expected.

"The last two years, it's been so unpredictable," said Purfeerst, who works mainly in Edmonds. "The strength of the market has been strong all the way through the year, through the holidays in November and December."

Purfeerst noted fewer homes are on the market the closer it gets to the holidays, but he added there are still buyers out there.

One of the major factors driving the market is low interest rates. The average 30-year fixed mortgage rate recently rose to 3.05%, up 2 basis points from a week ago, according to Bankrate.com. The 15-year fixed mortgage rate rose to 2.3%, up 1 basis point.

Purfeerst remembers a long time ago talking with a co-worker who said they would never see single-digit rates in their lifetime. At the time, 12% was considered a decent rate.

The south Snohomish County market, especially Edmonds, also is seeing an influx of residents from Seattle, as some people are turned off by the city's strife and are priced out of the market there.

"You have people selling their homes for a high price, buying another house, and



Beacon photo by David Pan

**This three bedroom, 1.75 bathroom Mukilteo house, at 1502 W. Horizon Drive, is listed at \$695,000.**

putting the rest of the equity in the bank," Purfeerst added.

Unless those people are downsizing, some actually might not realize what the cost of housing is in the south Snohomish County market.

"There are certain expectations some city clients have in moving north," Purfeerst said. "They are rather surprised they would be selling at about the same price moving north, close to the (Edmonds) Bowl in a view house."

Mukilteo and Mill Creek also are extremely desirable areas for those looking north, Purfeerst said. Mukilteo is right next to Paine Field, and Mill Creek's town center is a draw for new homeowners. Those who commute to the eastside also find Mill Creek to be conveniently located.

James Young, director of the Washington Center for Real Estate Research at the University of Washington, has noticed a movement from urban areas.

"It's not just a return to the suburbs," he said. "It's a continued return to the country as people continue to work from home."

The median price for a single-family home in Edmonds is \$867,000, based on multi-

ple listing data for homes sold in August. The median price in Mukilteo is \$825,000, and for Mill Creek, it's \$983,000. For sales Jan. 1 through June 30, the average prices were \$837,000 for Edmonds, \$823,000 for Mukilteo, and \$838,000 for Mill Creek.

Prices, though lower for condominiums, still might be eye-opening for many potential home buyers.

The average price for an Edmonds condo is \$418,000, based on August 2021 sales. For Mukilteo, the price is \$344,000, and for Mill Creek it's \$567,000. The data for Mukilteo, however, is based on sales of only three condos. In July, the median price of the nine condos sold in Mukilteo was \$580,000, and for the four units sold in June, it was \$495,000. For Edmonds, the median price was \$496,000 in July and \$458,000 in June. In Mill Creek, the median price was \$513,000 in July and \$540,000 in June.

Overall, home sales in Snohomish County increased 42.4% from second quarter 2020 to second quarter 2021. Prices were up 30%, lower than San Juan County (57.2%) and ahead of Cowlitz County (23.7%).

Purfeerst isn't in the business of making

predictions, but given what he described as the astronomical increases in prices in recent years, he would not be surprised if prices started to stabilize.

Matthew Gardner, chief economist at Windermere Real Estate, also sees price relief in sight.

Gardner said he believes "we are hitting a price ceiling and that the (rapid) pace of home price appreciation will continue to cool as we move through the rest of the year."

Homes in Snohomish County were on the market the least number of days of all the counties in the state – seven days. So potential home buyers need to act fast and have all their paperwork completed.

Prospective home buyers can put themselves in a better position by having a large down payment, Kondo said.

"The biggest thing sometimes is having to compete with cash buyers," she added. "We haven't seen as much of that."

Kondo also advises people to go beyond just being pre-approved by a lender. She suggests getting totally underwritten with written documentation.

"You're not just prequalified," Kondo said. "All the employment, credit, and everything is verified."

A concession some buyers are offering is allowing the seller to occupy the home 30 days after the sale, Purfeerst said. One practice – he does not recommend – is that some buyers are waiving inspections.

Creativity and the ability to express their emotions also have played a role in some successful transactions for Purfeerst.

Depending on the circumstances of the sale, a buyer might write what Purfeerst describes as a love letter to the seller about their desire to purchase a home. The owner usually has a sentimental attachment to the home.

"You have to be very careful," Purfeerst said. "It is very common to have people expressing their desire."

*This is the first of a two-part series on housing affordability. In next week's issue, The Beacon will look at potential solutions cities are contemplating in order to make housing more affordable for residents.*



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# Mukilteo Beacon

YOUR HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER

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## BEACON COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

### Cities looking for ways to encourage more affordable housing

BY DAVID PAN

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*Editor's note: This is the second in a two-part series on real estate in Snohomish County, with a focus this week on the need for affordable housing.*

The steady rise in housing prices impacts just about every resident in one way or another.

First-time homebuyers often find themselves priced out of the market, and are forced to consider locating further and further away from their employers. Older

adults, living on fixed incomes, struggle to pay their property taxes and upkeep on their dwellings.

Restaurant workers and others in the service industry often end up paying a high percentage of their incomes for housing, leaving less for the necessities of life. College graduates, wishing to come home and settle down, find they simply can't afford to buy a house.

Few would dispute that people wishing to own a home in Snohomish County face

significant challenges.

The median prices for a house in Edmonds, Mill Creek, and Mukilteo in August ranged from \$825,000 in Mukilteo, \$867,000 in Edmonds, to a jaw-dropping \$983,000 in Mill Creek. The average prices for condominiums were from \$450,000 to \$540,000 in all three cities this summer.

Mill Creek Councilmember John Steckler moved to Mill Creek in 1998, and has watched in amazement at the soaring real

estate market.

"Mill Creek is facing a huge price increase," said Steckler, an independent business consultant appointed to the council in 2018. "Housing is incredibly expensive. It's gone up astronomically."

Prices for homes in Snohomish County increased 30% in just a year, about the middle of the pack among the different counties in the state.

The impact of the hot real estate market obviously hits a certain segment of the pop-

see **REAL ESTATE SPOTLIGHT** page 5 ▶

## Mayoral candidates clash on 2022 budget

*Councilmember Marine says he won't vote for a budget that includes a tax increase*

BY DAVID PAN

REPORTER@YOURBEACON.NET

A potential clash between the two candidates for mayor appears to be brewing over the 2022 budget.

At Monday's City Council meeting, Mayor Jennifer Gregerson unveiled her 2022 preliminary budget. Gregerson, running for a third term, gave a short address, outlining the highlights of the budget before Finance Director Shawn Hunstock began a more detailed presentation.



Jennifer Gregerson

During a discussion of how property tax rates were calculated, Councilmember Joe Marine asked Hunstock, "Why are we recommending the 1% this year?" in reference to 1% increase in property taxes, the highest amount allowable by law.



Joe Marine

"That is what the budget is based off of," Hunstock said. "Council can decide to adopt or not. So it is built into the budget."

Marine, a former mayor running against Gregerson, said he understood that, adding, "Who's asking for 1%? Is that the mayor or Shawn?"

"By law, I'm delivering the budget," Gregerson responded.

Marine noted earlier in the meeting that the City had a projected ending fund balance of 31.3% of expenditures, or just under \$5 million for 2022. The city's policy is to have a 16.67% minimum.

Gregerson said the ending fund balance is a one-time bucket of money, and property taxes help ensure the city is prepared for the future.

The council had some conversations about how to use the reserves for one-time

see **CANDIDATES CLASH** page 11 ▶



Photos courtesy of Shelle Brihn

Kamiak's Jimmy Yinger and Kaylin Nguyen paddle their Fiber One boat across the pool during the second annual Kamiak Regatta Monday, Sept. 27.

## Paddling their way to first place

**Engineering students dive into the 2nd annual Kamiak Regatta**

BY DAVID PAN

REPORTER@YOURBEACON.NET

The stands at the Kamiak pool were packed with cheering spectators.

The competitors were intent on performing to the best of their abilities.

But instead of a group of swimmers poised on the starting block or a diver on the edge of the springboard, 12 second-year Kamiak engineering students were the focal point at the second annual Kamiak Regatta Monday, Sept. 27.

As part of a hands-on project for their Engineering Design II class, the students spent the last two and a half weeks designing and then building boats out of cardboard and duct tape.

The objective was to paddle their boats across the Kamiak pool. Two people were in each boat, and whoever had the fastest time was declared the winner. The field included four boats – each designed by a three-person team.

Mark Holcomb, Kaylin Nguyen, and Jimmy Yinger of the Fiber One team had the only boat to successfully navigate the entire length of the pool, and were awarded the first-place trophy.

This year was the second time the engineering class has taken over the pool for the boat race. Career and Technical Education teacher Myola Shanholtzer and her students first



Kamiak's Asher Hadnott and Nazareth Rajala-Jofre of the Plan B team try to keep their boat from sinking.

christened the pool in 2018.

"It was a blast," Shanholtzer said. "I got to get into a couple of the boats this time."

The class includes seniors, juniors, and sophomores, all of whom

see **KAMIAK REGATTA** page 8 ▶

# MUKILTEO SCHOOLS

## Well-being support efforts for students, families and staff

With one month of school under our belts, students are settling into their school routines. We introduced several new strategies at the start of this school year to better support students as most returned to in-person learning. In addition to over 1,200 students completing summer school, the highest summer school participation our district has ever had, it was heartening to see the positive influence of our high school students expanding their leadership skills through teaching free football and tennis camps this summer for the benefit of so many younger students.

### MUKILTEO SCHOOLS



BY ALISON BRYNELSON  
SUPERINTENDENT

Younger students in summer school had opportunities to build their English language arts and math skills. They also participated in library reading time and checked out nearly 900 books during just eight weeks! That dedication and interest in reading is important in keeping students' reading and comprehension skills up during the summer. We also provided a Jump Start program for nearly 600 kindergarten and first grade students to support their readiness for elementary school. We've received positive feedback from families. One parent shared about their daughter, "She was able to visit, understand where to go and how to behave on the bus and at the school before the school season

when everything will be overwhelming for a first-time student. Jump Start is a great program!"

Teachers saw the value in the Jump Start program too. One teacher wrote, "It was very helpful for student to learn the basics of arrival, dismissal, lunchroom ... and recess procedures ... Teachers who taught were able to get some insight on students' needs (academically and socially)."

Elementary school families conferenced with teachers the first two days of school to establish positive relationships and learn about students' specific needs to have a successful learning experience. To give you an idea of the scope of this effort, over 6,000 conferences occurred either in person, by phone or by Zoom. Of those conferences, 856 included interpreters of many different languages. When we asked families for feedback about the conferences, we received a 93 percent positive response rate! One parent shared, "I felt like the conference al-

see **BRYNELSON** page 10 ▶

# DARNWRIGHT

## A faithful Mexican-Texan soldier

I was at Fort Sam Houston, San Antonio, Texas, about 50 years ago for my Army Combat Medic Training when three peers and I visited the Alamo. I was taken aback and extremely disappointed as we entered the very small remaining section of that sacred ground. Literally, right when we crossed under the entrance arch, we were greeted by a large mural of John Wayne as he was portrayed in his 1960 movie "The Alamo." What a disgrace!

### DARN WRIGHT



BY CHUCK WRIGHT  
LICENSED MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL AND CERTIFIED TRAUMATIC STRESS SPECIALIST

Through the various Hollywood outlets, books, and history classes, most of us know something about William B. Travis, James Bowie, and the "King of the wild frontier," Davy Crockett. But how many of us know what a Spanish-Tejano did to help establish the independence of Texas? I am going to guess probably 95% cannot answer this historical, trivia(?) question.

Due to the fact that Sept. 15 through Oct. 15 is Hispanic Heritage Month, let's reflect on the contribution of a Hispanic-American who added greatly to our nation's history. This person, who was a compatriot of the above well-known Alamo martyrs, should also become a household name. Do you know this man, a Spanish-Tejano (a Texan of Mexican descent), who helped establish the independence of Texas?

Well, I didn't either. That is until this year when I was channel surfing and came across a documentary on the Alamo, which focused on the contributions of Juan Nepomuceno Seguin (si-GEEN) (1806-1890) a soldier who was inside the mission during most of the 13-day battle for the Alamo.

Juan Seguin and his volunteers were Texas Tejano Mexican, or "Rancheros," who joined the Texans' fight against Mexico in the Texas Revolution of 1835-1836. In January 1836, Seguin was commissioned as a captain in the regular Texas army, and in that capacity, Seguin joined William B. Travis on Feb. 23 in the Battle for the Alamo. Although he did not actually participate in the 13-day final battle. But in its latter days, he did assist his peers by using his skills, language, and terrain knowledge to carry the Alamo message, through enemy lines, that the Texans "shall never surrender or retreat." Seguin fulfilled his duty and returned with men to reinforce the Alamo, but it had already fallen to Santa Anna's army.

The legend of the Alamo is another American tale run amok. The ac-

see **WRIGHT** page 12 ▶

# TRAVEL SKETCHER

## On the road again in Utah

Greetings from Utah. We spent the last 10 days visiting national parks in Utah. We're so glad to be back traveling. This is

### TRAVEL SKETCHER



TERRY - THE TRAVELSKETCHER  
MUKILTEO RESIDENT AND ARTIST

Broken Arch at Arches National Park. Hope you are getting out and seeing the world again. As always I love to hear about your journeys.

Terry - the Travelsketcher is a Mukilteo resident, who sketches anything interesting that catches his eye. To see more of Terry's sketches, visit [peninkandpaint.com](http://peninkandpaint.com) or follow him on Instagram at "thetravelsketcher." Email Terry at [thetravelsketcher@gmail.com](mailto:thetravelsketcher@gmail.com).



▶ from **ALEXANDER** page 4

things to hide them. This can contribute to the overheating.

### Throw rugs

Speaking of throw rugs, they feel good under your feet and cover up whatever needs to be covered. They are also excellent at creating trip hazards for those with limited mobility. The harder it is for them to lift their feet when walking, the easier it will be to trip over the edge of the rug and fall. These ground-level falls can have devastating consequences for those with brittle bones. Take the throw rugs out of the walking paths in the house to make it safer.

### Stuff

Know that great collection of

keepsakes from 1960? How about all the books and newspapers and magazines and discarded containers? Keeping them may bring you comfort, but they can also put you in danger.

When there is just too much stuff to keep it picked up and put away, when the floor space is reduced to a walking path from the recliner to the bed to the bathroom to the kitchen, or when the discarded containers still have food to attract pests, it is dangerous.

Tripping and falling are common consequences of all this stuff. Now is a great time to take a hard look at what you are using (not what you think you'll need someday) and discarding the rest.

### Vaccinations

Wait! What are vaccinations do-

ing in a prevention column? Vaccinations ARE prevention. They prevent you from getting sick. Maybe not 100% of the time, but they give our bodies a fighting chance. They can also create a safe environment for those who can't be vaccinated. Much like we protect babies until they can get their shots at 2 months old, we should be protecting those around us. Lest this become only about COVID-19 vaccinations, know that it also includes annual flu shots, pneumonia vaccinations after a certain age, shingles vaccinations, and current tetanus vaccinations as well as making sure kids get all their vaccinations.

Keep yourself and those you love safe by taking these simple prevention measures today.

▶ from **REAL ESTATE SPOTLIGHT** page 1

ulation more than others.

"The issue with affordability is definitely weighing heavily on people with lower incomes," said Edmonds Associate Planner Brad Shipley. "Most of our industry is restaurant and retail, with some car sales and hospital workers. I definitely think restaurant and retail workers are struggling to find places that are affordable to them."

Edmonds Planning Manager Rob

Chave agrees the current housing environment is tough.

"Sometimes it can be difficult to stay in the community where you've grown up," Chave said. "There's been a huge increase in home values. That's great if you're in a house. But if you're not, it makes it more difficult to move in."

The issue of finding affordable housing seems to impact people at the opposite ends of the spectrum, according to Mukilteo Mayor Jen-

nifer Gregerson.

"Housing is super tight," she said. "Finding a place that can fit the different needs in people's lives can be challenging."

Gregerson is concerned about kids graduating from college or moving out of their parents' homes for the first time. Then there are the parents who, after raising their children, are ready to move on to a new stage of their

see **AFFORDABLE HOMES** page 16 ▶

▶ from **CRAWFORD** page 4

The preliminary budget includes revenues from a 1% allowable property tax increase and revenues that reflect normal community center operations. Council will now have the opportunity to ask further and detailed questions, deliberate and discuss the need of the items that are presented in this preliminary budget. The process also includes public participation in form of a public hearing, where residents can comment and give council feedback. We encourage you to take part in the budget process with us.

There are many ways you can get involved in the 2022 budget process. You can attend our meet-

ings on Monday nights. This can be done by Zoom or Facebook - all information is found on the city website. You can give public comment on specific items or the entire budget. This can be done by calling in via zoom. Familiarize

yourself with budget documents by visiting the budget site <https://mukilteowa.gov/2022-preliminary-budget/>.

And as always you can email your council members at [elect-ed@mukiltowa.gov](mailto:elect-ed@mukiltowa.gov).

### Sudoku solution

4	7	1	3	2	8	6	5	9
3	2	9	6	4	5	8	1	7
8	6	5	7	1	9	4	3	2
9	4	8	1	6	2	3	7	5
7	3	2	5	9	4	1	6	8
5	1	6	8	3	7	9	2	4
6	9	7	4	5	3	2	8	1
2	8	3	9	7	1	5	4	6
1	5	4	2	8	6	7	9	3

11	W	H	O	13	C	O	I	L	15	P	E	A	
14	H	I	D	16	O	N	C	E	18	R	A	G	
17	A	G	Q	19	B	E	E	F	21	O	R	E	
24	T	H	R	E	W	27	T	A	N	29	A	T	
37	C	A	P	A	B	L	E	39	S	U	C	H	
41	O	I	L	S	43	S	E	V	45	E	N	T	Y
48	T	R	E	E	51	O	P	E	N	53			
56	A	S	H	58			S	T	60	O	L	E	
62	H	A	S	64	U	S	E	S	66	B	A	N	
68	O	W	E	70	M	E	R	E	72	E	N	D	
75	W	E	D	77	S	E	A	L	79	Y	E	S	



### News Tips

The Beacon invites readers to share story tips and ideas. If you see or know of some news deserving of coverage, email Editor David Pan at [mukilteoeditor@yourbeacon.net](mailto:mukilteoeditor@yourbeacon.net) or call the newsroom at 425-347-5634 ext. 238.

► from **AFFORDABLE HOMES** page 5

lives with different housing.

"The house they raised their families in doesn't fit their needs anymore," Gregerson said. "They are looking for options."

The market in Mukilteo is extremely tight, though.

"There's not that much for sale," Gregerson said. "The cost of what else is available can be out of reach."

Two of the three strategies of Mukilteo's recently passed Housing Action Plan (HAP) address older residents and their housing. Under the HAP, the City is trying to educate residents about programs to stay in their homes and to expand senior housing options. The third strategy of the HAP is to review comprehensive plan language.

Steckler noted many older residents might not be aware of tax breaks offered by Snohomish County. Depending on their age and income level, residents could receive assistance with their property taxes.

If older residents are struggling to pay their tax bills, Steckler urges them to go to the Snohomish County Treasurer's office and ask what the County can do to help.

But some are opposed to any government involvement in encouraging affordable housing. Their argument is that housing prices are based on the market – what homebuyers are willing or are not willing to pay.

Chave disagrees with this viewpoint.

"Government does have a role. Government regulates land use," he said. "It regulates building codes and how construction goes. ... The City doesn't control the market, so it has a limited impact on affordability."

An example is the new housing developments planned along Highway 99 in Edmonds. After outreach to residents and the community, the City changed its zoning to facilitate multifamily housing.

"In the past, you could do multifamily development, but you had to have commercial as part of it," Chave said. "That was difficult. The updated zoning rules allow you to do strictly housing as a development type."

Chave added the change doesn't mean the



**Two parts of Mukilteo's Housing Action Plan are to educate residents about programs to keep them in their homes and to expand senior housing options.**

City will be losing the potential to develop businesses along the corridor.

"Commercial uses are still going to be there," Chave said. "We're opening the door to housing. It will help the commercial operations."

Edmonds also is attempting to address the City's housing issues through its Citizens Housing Commission. In its final report, the commission submitted 15 recommendations. Shipley emphasized the commission's report is a set of recommendations for the City to consider or not consider. It is not a plan or a blueprint for the City, as some in the public have misconstrued.

"It's a starting point for conversations," Chave added.

The Edmonds City Council approved one of the 15 policy recommendations – an inter-local agreement with the Housing Authority of Snohomish County (HASCO), a public agency that oversees various types of housing vouchers and owns and operates various types of housing.

Many of the other policy recommendations, including potential zoning changes, already have generated spirited discussion in the community, and likely will face increased scrutiny from residents and City Council.

Some policy recommendations include developing design requirements and zoning changes that allow for homeownership of two attached single-family homes (duplex

or two-unit townhouses) – what is described as "missing middle" housing – in single-family residential areas, and are compatible with those neighborhoods.

The commission also recommended the City develop incentives to allow homeownership of missing middle housing for those at or below the average median family income.

Snohomish County's household median income for 2020 is \$113,300. Median income means half in the county earn more and half less.

Another recommendation is to establish a new zoning type of single-family housing that allows for the construction of zero-lot line duplexes, triplexes, and quadruplexes of only 1- or 2-story height, located in specified areas of Edmonds that are contiguous to or along high-volume transit routes, sited next to neighborhood business zoning districts, or close to schools or medical complexes.

The commission recommended the City add cluster/cottage housing as an option within single-family or multi-family housing. Another policy recommendation is to allow either one attached or detached accessory unit on a property in single-family residential areas with clear and definite development requirements, such as size, ownership, and parking.

The commission recommended requiring new developments above a certain size to provide a percentage of affordable housing units or require in lieu of fees that will go towards funding affordable housing elsewhere in the City.

### Housing confusion

The public often seems to confuse affordable housing with low-income housing, Steckler said. The two are not the same.

"Affordable housing provides housing for people whose income does not meet 60% of the median income," he said.

Many in the service sector would qualify for affordable housing, he noted.

The Farm by Vintage in Mill Creek opened this summer, and offered affordable housing/apartments for residents earning 60% of the county's median income. Across the street is a similar complex, The Vintage at Mill Creek, a 55 and older community.

Though many in Mill Creek voiced their op-

position to more apartments in the city, Steckler said the Farm generally fits well with the community, and is pleased with the project.

Mill Creek addresses housing affordability in the housing element section of the comprehensive plan adopted in 2015. An update, including the housing element, is scheduled to be completed by 2024.

Strategies include participating in regional discussions on how to plan for adequate affordable housing for very, very low, moderate, and middle incomes consistent with the countywide planning policies; to continue to consider zoning mechanisms and development standards that can increase density in appropriate areas.

In addition, the strategies include continuing to include provisions in the zoning code to implement strategies that encourage affordable housing and provide housing for special needs populations, such as mixed-use development, congregate care facilities, retirement homes, accessory dwelling units, and inclusionary zoning; and keeping costs of new housing to a minimum by reviewing the permit process regularly to ensure that it is efficient and does not add significantly to development costs.

The final draft of the Mukilteo Housing Action Plan also included a number of policy recommendations similar to what was proposed in Edmonds, such as reviewing specific regulations related to accessory dwelling units, duplexes, cottage housing, townhouses, mixed-use development, and subdivision procedures.

The council instead chose to narrow the focus to three policy recommendations – keeping residents in their homes, expanding senior housing options, and reviewing comprehensive plan language. The latter seemed to generate the most concern from residents and some councilmembers, who have concerns about zoning changes.

The potential for changes in zoning is a hot-button issue for many residents.

Many of the zoning codes were written 70 to 80 years ago, Chave noted.

"We do need to think about what we want the future to look like," he said. "There are going to be lots of opportunities for people to participate in the discussion."

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