

**Mayor Dan Pike City Club Speech**  
*February 27, 2008*

Good day, members of City Club.

It is a great pleasure for me to come to you today to speak to you, as Mayor of Bellingham, to share with you the story of my first 100 Days in office. As many of you know, at my swearing-in ceremony last November, I outlined a set of goals, which I called my 100 Day Plan. This 100 Day Plan consisted of five major objectives, with a number of associated action steps under each. The five broad objectives were:

1. Protect Lake Whatcom Reservoir
2. Promote Green Bellingham
3. Create a Healthy Waterfront
4. Support Neighborhoods
5. Streamline Permitting Process

These objectives were based on the values and needs of this community, as they were expressed to me – on doorsteps, and forums, and living rooms – over the course of the past year. Obviously, none of these issues was going to be completed within 100 Days – with one exception, the streamlining of the permitting process, which I will return to in a minute. However, despite the complexity and enormity of these issues, I took it as a personal challenge to drive some steps forward – to show some real, meaningful progress toward these core goals – in my first 100 Days as Mayor.

I am delighted to report that we did it. March 6 marks my hundredth day, and, next week, on March 3, I will be giving my official “Mayor’s Report” on the 100 Day Plan to City Council. In that presentation I will report on each action step, so today I will not go into detail, but rather will tell you about some specific achievements, ideas, and related initiatives.

Let me begin by answering the question that many City staff asked me when I first took office: What exactly is the 100 Day Plan?

The last time I spoke to City Club, I was on the campaign trail. Campaigns are about strategies, and tactics, and messaging. That is what a campaign should be. The 100 Day Plan is the polar opposite of a campaign document. It is about the unglamorous business of elbow grease and hard work that literally involves hundreds of city staff who aren’t up here beside me to bask in the limelight. At its essence, I think of the 100 Day Plan as an act of good faith to the people of the community.

You articulated your priorities and I hit the ground running, to drive real, concrete steps toward those goals. As such, I told staff that if the original action steps, authored by a man who had not yet actually become Mayor, did not make sense, then they should be revised, in favor of action steps that would bring us closer to achieving our intended goals. Good, sound, smart policy is the most important thing.

Let me give you a concrete example: the "Create a Healthy Waterfront" objective. One action step originally was to "Initiate an economic benefit analysis of redevelopment alternatives in collaboration with agencies and institutions of higher education." Too much time in academia can lead to this kind of phrasing. Regardless, as I took office, it became pretty clear that devoting resources to yet another analysis was not necessary right now. On the other hand, the creation of a public development authority, which could nimbly and elegantly begin to implement the City's vision on the waterfront, made a lot of sense. In this case, I am happy to tell you that on Monday night the City Council voted to direct staff to prepare an ordinance and develop a business plan to advance the formation of a Public Development Authority.

In that same vein, after I took office, I found that some of the steps I proposed dovetailed with initiatives already underway before I took office. In those cases, I specifically instructed staff that it was not necessary or appropriate to "repackage" those as new initiatives. The point of the 100 Day Plan is to honor commitments made to the community. Let me give you another example. Under the first objective, "Protect Lake Whatcom Reservoir," I had originally written "Establish a Quality Retention Initiative to encourage on-site storm water management of households within city limits." Well, shortly after I took office, on February 12, the Dept of Ecology awarded Public Works a \$189 thousand dollar grant to distribute rain barrels to watershed households. These are specially fitted rain barrels that meter storm flows to the surrounding ground, decreasing, if not eliminating run-off into the lake. This is just one of a number of strategies the City will roll out this year to aggressively protect our drinking water reservoir.

And that brings me to a second function of the 100 Day Plan, one that I completely did not anticipate when I put it together in November. I already knew, back then, that we are a smart, green, innovative community. In the last hundred days, I have learned that we have a smart, green, innovative City Hall. I want to use the occasion of the 100 Day Plan report to share with the community some of the tremendous, visionary, smart work their City is doing. Let me give you some examples of what I've learned in my first 100 Days. Did you know that Bellingham is

the most successful community *in the country* to be designated a Green Power Community by the EPA? Did you know, that in 2008, the City is partnering with Sustainable Connections in its "Toward Zero Waste" challenge? Among our efforts, Parks is launching a Toward Zero Waste pilot campaign at Civic Stadium, with the goal of diverting 50% of current solid waste away from landfill. Did you know, that in 2008 the City will implement conservation measures that are expected to save the City thousands – if not close to a hundred thousand – dollars annually on energy?

I understand that we have a lot of important work to do, but I also believe this community deserves to know the reality of what is healthy and successful about the City Hall/community partnership. I deeply want that to be another outcome of the 100 Day Plan. For example, our permitting agencies have completely overhauled its permitting process, and will be going live next week with a streamlined process that is predictable and efficient, and provides outstanding customer service – whether you're a developer working on a LEED-standard affordable housing building, or a mom wanting to fence her backyard for her kids.

There is much more I could say about the 100 Day Plan. There is an upcoming Planning Academy series of workshops that I am very excited about, that will educate us about real, applicable strategies that we as a community can use to manage our growth with environmental best practices, while preserving – if not enhancing – the unique character of our neighborhoods.

I will save these details for next week, because I am running out of time, and I want to talk a little about the Waterfront, which is also a part of the 100 Day Plan. The action step in the 100 Day Plan read: "Identify a list of 'early adoption projects' in partnership with the Port of Bellingham." In the last few weeks the Port and City have had a number of disagreements, which is not unexpected in a project of this complexity and magnitude. The truth of the matter is, although we have some critical areas we have to reach consensus on, we are in agreement on the bulk of the project.

We are in agreement that the Port wants to put a marina up here, north of the waterway, and that transportation and access issues have to be carefully managed. We are in agreement that the City has a compelling interest here, south of the Waterway. Let me tell you a little about the City's vision. First, we are absolutely focused on the relationship of the waterfront and downtown, so that downtown doesn't become a ghost town, as the waterfront gets developed. That is why we want to see waterfront development start here (map) and move outward. We want to

see Western on the waterfront, and a working waterfront for NOAA. We imagine mixed use redevelopment at the foot of Cornwall. (map) We envision at least 33 acres of parks, trails, open space, and cleaned-up wildlife habitat, to reinforce our essential relationship with the natural world. You may read the words “preferred alternative” in the newspaper. It is *this* vision, founded on what the public has been saying for years, and fleshed out with practical infrastructural and access strategies, that is the template for what we the City are calling “the preferred alternative.” We believe that it is important to identify a preferred alternative, so that we move ahead efficiently and logically, before critical windows close, and the millions of dollars the federal government is offering us, now, is given away elsewhere instead.

Since I have become Mayor, I have had many fascinating conversations with a lot of smart visionary people. “What if?” we’ve been asking. “What if we went LEEDs platinum on the entire waterfront, setting the bar for the world for environmental excellence?” “What if the waterfront was scaled for people, not cars?” “What if, in the way that eastern Washington has agriculture and Seattle has medicine and Microsoft, Bellingham becomes a regional center for green industry and sustainability, providing a solid economic base for our children and their families?” It is inspiring and intellectually challenging to have these conversations. The reality will be worked out on the ground, thanks to the strong, vibrant partnerships between the City, Port and community.

It is an honor, a privilege, and a tremendous responsibility to lead the community in this moment in our history. However, the success of the 100 Day Plan tells me one thing. No matter how complex our challenges, the coalition between the community and the City government is pretty powerful. With our mutual intelligence, vision and fundamental goodwill – and a lot of plain old hard work – I am deeply optimistic about the future of our community.