



TOWN OF FRIDAY HARBOR  
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## *Mayor's Message*

### *2019 Town Budget*

It is my great pleasure to present the Town Council and Citizens of Friday Harbor with my proposed budget for year 2019. I am ending my first year as Mayor and I am just shocked at how fast the time has gone by! We can now enjoy a quiet(er) autumn and winter on San Juan Island and prepare for the upcoming year.

I am very pleased with the amount of work we have accomplished on many different projects. The Town continues to look better each year and I'm so proud of the Association of Washington Cities Municipal Excellence Award that we received for the Breezeway Pocket Park. The Historic Preservation Department is working on their second art display within that breezeway and we believe this one will be every bit as well received as the first. Two monumental construction projects were completed in 2018, including Tucker Avenue Phase II and the downtown redevelopment on Web, A and Nichols Streets. We were also able to complete the roundabout on Spring Street and it is functioning as promised. We are grateful to the public for exhibiting tremendous patience as we lived with detours in many different areas. And, we are especially grateful to those residents and businesses that had to tirelessly endure construction life at their doorsteps.

When considering a Budget message, it is best to start with the core issues. Because of fiscally conservative management over the last several decades, we continue to be solvent and secure. Kelle' Wilson, Finance Director and elected Treasurer, upholds that same watchful stewardship and maintains our long history of appropriately managing reserves. From all indications, our business community has benefited from another busy tourist season that again produced record sales tax revenues. We have seen a steady growth in our Hotel-Motel tax thanks to our overnight guests and the efforts of the San Juan Islands Visitors Bureau. Our revenues continue to grow as a result of increased construction and a strong sales tax base.

While revenues are strong, we still face issues surrounding affordable worker housing in Friday Harbor. Increasing the housing pool will allow us to keep employees living in Town where they work. With the apparent victory of the County's Low-Income Housing Real Estate Excise Tax, it appears there may be additional tools available to relieve housing pressures in the future.

On the expenditure side of the equation, we continue to focus on repairing our infrastructure and core utility services. With the completion of the Tucker and Web projects we have again tackled aging water and sewer line problems during road repairs to both keep the overall costs down and avoid digging in newly constructed streets.

We have much more on our horizon, as detailed in our proposed 2019 Budget. The first project to go out to bid is a Water System pump station that will solve some of the pressure issues in the Hillcrest area and Peace Island Medical Center.

Early in 2019 we will finish the widening of the sidewalk between Spruce Street and Rose Lane, including a crosswalk for safe passage to the Fairgrounds. The County is partnering with the Town for the project. In the Spring we will start the redesign and reconstruction of Nash Street, which will include realignment of its intersection with Caines Street.

With the assistance of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development program, we have already installed a new Tertiary Filter at the Sewer Plant. Shortly, we will begin construction of a new Headworks at the Plant which will be finished in 2019. We are also determining the feasibility of installing solar energy to offset electricity costs at the Sewer Plant through a Department of Commerce grant program. We will continue with the smoke testing for our Sewer inflow and infiltration study which helps the Town identify the locations and causes of water invading our sewer lines.

We are currently designing improvements for existing and new public amenities. A new art piece, the Ed Warbass sculpture, is commissioned for the downtown core. Thanks to the Friday Harbor Arts Commission's work on this project, the bronze piece will feature Warbass and his dog and function as a public bench. The Sunshine Alley restrooms will be renovated with new plumbing, tile, partitions and energy efficient fixtures. Another pocket park is being designed for First Street near the Court Street staircase to improve aesthetics and accessibility, provide for disabled parking and offer additional picnic seating for the area. Town recently became a Tree City USA partner, and as such, we will be planting and tending to the health of our

street trees. This will include replacement of the sidewalk near Spring Street School to accommodate the root system of that beautiful old Elm.

Like my predecessor, I am proud of the efforts we make as a community to find solutions that we can all rally around, especially during this time of national discord and unrest. We have made many improvements over the last several years and the look and feel of the Town is greatly improved. With that, I have asked for the funding to continue our spectacular flower basket program as well as our colorful banners. I have asked that we continue to contribute towards our Fourth of July Fireworks display in cooperation with the San Juan Island Chamber of Commerce and local sponsors. I have asked that we increase our contribution to the San Juan County Economic Development Council so they may realize their goal of Trades Training and Education.

I would like to sincerely thank our partners in the community that make Friday Harbor such a wonderful place! The Chamber of Commerce under Director Becki Day is an organization that we value, and we are proud to continue our financial support of the Visitor Information Center and the 4<sup>th</sup> of July programs. We need to thank the Visitors Bureau for their great work in promoting the Town and all of the San Juan Islands. We also want to thank the Economic Development Council and Victoria Compton for their ongoing efforts to bring jobs to Friday Harbor. Thank you to Island Rec and the San Juan Island School District for the programs and classes that provide our children with outstanding life experiences. I would like to thank San Juan County once again for their ongoing willingness to partner with the Town on many important issues and projects.

Special thanks are due the USDA and Washington State Transportation Improvement Board (TIB), whose funds have been instrumental in the redevelopment of Capital Facilities, Town Streets and Sidewalks during the last six years. The USDA has consistently provided the necessary loan and grant funding for our larger water and sewer capital projects. The Water Transmission Line and Sewer Plant improvements would not have been possible without their support. In 2018, the TIB funded the sidewalk work on Nichols, the roadway work on A and Web, and contributed towards the construction on Tucker Avenue. It is also important to thank the County Council and their staff for allowing the Town to use Federal STP funding for the construction on Tucker. The project simply would not have happened without the County's cooperation.

Thank you to all of the Town employees who have dedicated themselves to providing the highest quality services to the Citizens, Businesses and Ratepayers in our community.

And finally, thank you to those same Citizens, Businesses and Ratepayers that we serve. There are so many of you that have graciously donated to local programs such as Harbor Life Ring and annual events, volunteered your time on boards and committees, independently sponsored other civic programs for our community, and contributed through other means such as cooperating with the Town during public works projects.

This first year has been an amazing learning experience for me. I am both thrilled and absolutely honored to serve you as Mayor. Let's keep the momentum going for 2019 and remain the best place to live in Washington State!

Respectfully,



Farhad Ghatan, Mayor  
Town of Friday Harbor