

9 Local Politicians Talk About Leading for the Greater Good



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Leadership Eastside (LE) kicked off its *Adaptive Community Leadership* 10-month program this month with the *Eastside Mayor's Lunch*. As a graduate of the same program, I go every year. Half of the time is spent hearing mayors (many are LE grads) talk candidly about challenges, conflict, and how they collaborate on regional public works projects.

Sponsored by EvergreenHealth and the Cascade Water Alliance, the event was hosted by Cascadia College on its beautiful campus in Bothell, WA.



Moderator Dr. Ettore Palazzo and guest panel, left to right: Bellevue Deputy Mayor Dave Hamilton, Mayor Mason Thompson of Bothell, Mayor Mark Mullet of Issaquah, Mayor Nigel Herbig of Kenmore, Mayor Kelli Curtis of Kirkland, Mayor Mary Miller of North Bend, Mayor Angela Birney of Redmond, Mayor James Mayhew of Snoqualmie, and Mayor Sarah Arndt of Woodinville.

True Leaders Work Together to Plan a Future They May Never See

Moderator Dr. Ettore Palazzo asked guests to respond to the event's theme: *"The true meaning of life is to plant trees, under whose shade you do not expect to sit."* Water and transportation were cited as topics that require long-term planning and collaboration. They spoke about senior citizens who raised awareness for public projects that take 20+ years to complete and making safer roads for cyclists across jurisdictions.

Housing affordability was big. A few mayors noted the frustration of watching families (including their own) get priced out of neighborhoods where they'd lived for generations. Some are working on equitable policies that create a mix of housing options and reduce commute times and costs for working families.

Building Trust is More Important than Agreeing

When asked how they deal with angry constituents and conflict, their advice was remarkably similar:

1. Be realistic — it's impossible to please everyone — it's how you disagree that matters.
2. Lead from your heart- so that you can look at yourself in the mirror
3. Build relationships and trust with people and eventually they will disagree with you less

I help leaders navigate culture, conflict, and change. Call me if your organization or team is struggling with unresolved conflict that's compromising your mission, vision, or goals.

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