

CHAPTER 1 – Introduction [Preliminary Planning Commission Version May 22, 2025 \(AB2025-438\)](#)

#	Page	Section/Policy	Proposed Amendment	Sponsor	Meeting
1	1-1	How the Plan was Created	Are the goals set in GMA word for word (1) – (15)? Or can we make small edits? (5) Economic development. Encourage economic development throughout the state that is consistent with adopted comprehensive plans, promote economic opportunity for all residents citizens of this state, especially for unemployed and for disadvantaged persons, promote the retention and expansion of existing businesses and recruitment of new businesses, recognize regional differences impacting economic development opportunities, and encourage growth in areas experiencing insufficient economic growth, all within the capacities of the state's natural resources, public services, and public facilities. (8) Natural resource industries. Maintain and <u>sustainably</u> enhance natural resource-based industries, including productive timber, agricultural, and fisheries industries. Encourage the conservation of productive forest lands and productive agricultural lands, and discourage incompatible uses. (11) Community Citizen participation and coordination. Encourage the involvement of citizens in the planning process, including the participation of vulnerable populations and overburdened communities, and ensure coordination between communities and jurisdictions to reconcile conflicts. (13) Historic preservation. Identify and encourage the preservation of lands, sites, and structures that have historical, <u>cultural</u>, or archaeological significance.	Galloway	
2	1-3	How the Plan was Created	“Third, extensive citizen-community participation was facilitated through meetings, presentations, public hearings, and written comments made throughout this process, <u>consistent with the Public Participation Plan.</u>” Hyperlink Public Participation Plan or add to the appendix: https://www.whatcomcounty.us/DocumentCenter/View/85488/Approved-Public-Participation-Plan-June-4-2024---2025-Update	Galloway	Approved 6/24/25 COTW
3	1-3	Countywide Planning Policies	<u>During the Comprehensive Plan process,</u> The Whatcom County Council, in conjunction with the cities, previously adopted a set of Countywide Planning Policies (see Appendix C). The framework provided by the adopted Countywide Planning Policies ensures that local planning efforts will be consistent with one another and supportive of regional goals.	Donovan	Approved 6/24/25 COTW

4	1-3	Introducing Whatcom County	“Whatcom County lies in the northwest corner of both the State of Washington and the coterminous United States. It is bounded on the north by the Canadian border, on the east by Okanogan County, on the south by Skagit County, and on the west by the Strait of Georgia and Bellingham Bay. These borders enclose large parts of the Mount Baker National Forest and the North Cascades National Park, which take up about two-thirds of Whatcom County's total area. All but a few residents live in the western third of the county. Bellingham is Whatcom County's largest city. Other cities include Blaine, Everson, Ferndale, Lynden, Nooksack, and Sumas, and there are three unincorporated UGAs and several smaller unincorporated communities. Two Indian reservations and associated trust lands are located within Whatcom County's borders. The Lummi Nation reservation is on the Lummi Peninsula and Portage Island on the western side of the county; the Nooksack Tribe reservation and trust lands include parcels along the Nooksack River in the west-central area of the county.” Question: Do we want to add a land acknowledgement? Reference other indigenous populations?	Galloway	
5	1-4	Goal 1A	“Ensure that government activities, regulations and policies are transparent, accountable, <u>accessible</u>, and easy to understand.”	Galloway	Approved 6/24/25 COTW
6	1-8	Population Projections	The County's 2045 population projection of 303,438 is within OFM's range and therefore requires no further justification. The rationale for using this figure, which is above OFM's medium projection, include: ensuring an adequate land supply to accommodate growth, the need to plan for growth, and the need to protect the quality of life and natural resources in Whatcom County	Galloway	Approved 6/24/25 COTW
7	1-8	Population Projections	“The County's 2045 population projection of 303,438 is within OFM's range and therefore requires no further justification. The rationale for using this figure, which is above OFM's medium projection, include: ensuring an adequate land supply to accommodate growth, the need to plan for growth, and the need to protect the quality of life and natural resources in Whatcom County. This population projection is selected for planning purposes. Given past population trends and the requirements of GMA, planning for population growth—whether it occurs or not—is critical for the quality of life, protection of natural resources, and economic health of Whatcom County.” “This population projection is selected for planning purposes.” Question: Need help understanding the budget and policy implications of opting for a projection higher than OFM medium. Given RCW 36.70A.110, what are the County's obligations to designating new UGAs or areas within which urban growth shall be encouraged?	Galloway	

			How do we reconcile what we are hearing from jurisdictions, that infrastructure cost will be a significant financial barrier to accommodating growth even within the UGAs and that the cost of over-planning and building more infrastructure to accommodate a higher projection than actual growth experienced is ultimately passed on to tax payers and residents, and further impacts affordability and cost of living?		
8	1-9	Table 4	Proposed Amendment: Revert to OFM Medium for Birch Bay UGA (2,313 rather than 2,662) and Columbia Valley UGA (988 rather than 1,137)	Galloway	
9	1-10	Employment Projections	Employment <u>Projections</u> <i>The title to this section used to say Employment Projections, in the preliminary planning commission draft, the word projections is removed. Councilmember Donovan moved to preserve the word "projections."</i>	Donovan	Approved 6/24/25 COTW
10	1-10	Employment Projections	Employment allocations were based largely on the local request recognizing the incentives that cities have for larger employment areas (sales tax, property tax). Due to the challenge in designating lands for commercial or industrial development, the allocation of employment allowed for these optimistic scenarios. <u>Most of the employment projections displayed in Table 5 shows the allocation of employment to for the Urban Growth Areas and the area outside UGAs greatly exceed the "high" projections provided in the Technical Analysis (Leland Report).</u>	Donovan	6/24/25 COTW
11	1-10	Employment	Need help understanding this sentence: "Due to the challenge in designating lands for commercial or industrial development, the allocation of employment allowed for these optimistic scenarios."	Galloway	Resolved (sentence was stricken - see above)
12	1-11	Table 5	Question: Most of the employment projections/allocations are OFM high or above high. What are the implications? Are these reasonable? Do we want to consider something more reasonable or closer to OFM medium? Have we engaged Cherry Point industries/landowners to see if these projections are reasonable within their plans for industrial growth? And with these employment allocations being not proportionate to population growth allocations within the UGA, are there unintended consequences we should be tracking such as are we further exacerbating the issues related to increased vehicle miles traveled (VMT) by increasing need for commute to other areas?	Galloway	
13	1-12	Demographics	"The culturally diverse demographic makeup of the county's population has an effect on land use patterns. For example, Whatcom County residents with children may choose different kinds of	Galloway	

			transportation and recreation than retired people. Single-parent families and large extended families need different kinds of housing. Another influence on county demographics is the cyclical influx of seasonal residents, primarily from Canada, who maintain recreational homes in parts of the county. Areas most influenced by seasonal residency include Point Roberts, Birch Bay, and the Foothills Subarea. Table 6 below shows the Whatcom County population in the following generalized categories: school age, college age, working age and retirement age. All categories have seen an absolute increase in population between 2000 and 2020. However, as a percentage of total population, the school age children category has declined, the college and working age categories have remained steady, and the retirement age category has increased. OFM projects that the retirement age population (65 and over) will continue to increase over the planning period.” Question: Should we add reference to college/university student populations?		
14	1-13	Land Use History	“Lummi and Nooksack people inhabited villages near the coast and along the rivers and lakes at strategic fishing locations. The Nooksack Indian people cultivated root crops they had developed along the Nooksack Valley where sub-irrigated meadows were ideal sites for such plants as camas and "Indian carrot." They emphasized the use of root crops, perhaps much more than other native peoples along the Pacific Coast.” Question: Have we consulted with tribes on this language?	Galloway	
15	1-14	Current Land Use	The majority of single-family homes are concentrated in the cities, <u>Urban Growth Areas (UGAs), Limited Areas of More Intense Rural Development (LAMIRDS), and the major urban and intensely developed unincorporated rural portions of the county</u> such as Sudden Valley, Columbia Valley, Glacier, Lake Samish, Lake Whatcom (north end), Cain Lake, Birch Bay, <u>and</u> Sandy Point, and Lummi Island. Lower density residential development is scattered throughout the rural areas of the County. As may be expected, single-family homes are also located along the valley floors of the three forks of the Nooksack. The Cherry Point industrial area, the agriculturally dominated area north of Lynden and the forested foothills in the eastern part of the county have very low to zero residential density.	Galloway	Approved 6/24/25 COTW
16	1-14	Current Land Use	A prominent characteristic of Whatcom County housing is the high number of vacation, resort, and second-home units found throughout the county. In 2020, approximately 50% of the "vacant" units were occupied part of the year for seasonal, recreational or occasional use (2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B25004). <u>Over 1000 single-family housing units in the unincorporated areas are used as short-term vacation rentals (cite the study PDS provided Council).</u>	Donovan	Approved 6/24/25 COTW

CHAPTER 2 – Land Use Preliminary Planning Commission Version -----, 2025 (AB2025-----)

#	Page	Section/Policy	Proposed Amendment	Sponsor	Meeting

CHAPTER 3 – Housing Preliminary Planning Commission Version -----, 2025 (AB2025-----)

#	Page	Section/Policy	Proposed Amendment	Sponsor	Meeting

CHAPTER 4 – Capital Facilities [Preliminary Planning Commission Version](#) July 24, 2025 (AB2025-552)

#	Page	Section/Policy	Proposed Amendment	Sponsor	Meeting
1	4-2	Policy 4A-2	“Provide County facilities and services in a manner that supports future urban growth in urban growth areas (UGAs) <u>and facilitates potential city annexation.</u> ”	Galloway	Approved 9/9/25 COTW
2	4-3	Goal 4D	“Goal 4D: Develop and implement a coordinated program of facility improvements and/or expansion for the departments and agencies which together carry out the county's law enforcement and corrections functions.” Question: Are the law enforcement/jail facilities related goal/policies consistent with the Justice Project?	Galloway	
3	4-4	Policy 4F-2	Seek non-capital opportunities to acquire, enhance and maintain park lands, trails, and other recreational facilities. Consider partnering with <u>tribes</u> , cities, school districts, park & recreation districts, <u>non-profit stakeholders</u> , and others when planning and implementing park and trail projects. <u>Make a good faith effort to consult with Lummi Nation and Nooksack Indian Tribe on relevant land acquisitions and the development of new trails and other recreational facilities that may have an impact on their cultural resources.</u>	Galloway	Approved 9/9/25 COTW
4	4-4	Goal 4G	Potential Amendment: “Coordinate with non-county facility providers such as cities, <u>tribes</u> , school districts, <u>fire districts</u> , and other special purpose districts...”	Galloway	Approved 10/7/25 COTW

5	4-6	Policy 4J-2	Potential Amendment: Policy 4J-2: Projects selected for the Six-Year Capital Improvement Program shall not degrade habitat for threatened and endangered species. <u>Where feasible, develop a strategy to mitigate harmful impacts and aim to achieve net ecological gain of salmon and other aquatic species habitat for all public projects and a voluntary incentive driven strategy for private projects.</u>	Galloway	
6	4-6	Add new policy	Potential Amendment: <u>Policy 4J-X: Develop an updated culvert inventory and prioritized list and proposed schedule for the removal of county owned fish passage barrier culverts (reference MOU with Tribes). Work with the cities, state, federal and tribal governments, and private landowners, to support investment in removal of fish passage barriers and installation of fish-friendly culverts and bridges.</u>	Galloway	
7	4-6	Goal 4K	Goal 4K: Enable school districts and fire districts to receive mitigation fees or impact fees to fund a proportionate share of system improvements reasonably related to new development by adopting into this plan their capital facilities plans. Notwithstanding the above, recognize the mitigation and impact fees will only apply to new construction and will result in new homes becoming even less affordable. <i>The Planning Commission voted to add the following sentence to Goal 4K on 7/24/25: "...notwithstanding the above, recognize the mitigation and impact fees will only apply to new construction and will result in new homes becoming even less affordable." Council voted to remove this sentence, restoring the original language.</i>	Donovan	9/9/25 COTW
8	4-6	Goal 4K	Potential Amendment: Goal 4K: Enable school districts and fire districts to receive mitigation fees or impact fees to fund a proportionate share of system improvements reasonably related to new development by adopting into this plan their capital facilities plans. Notwithstanding the above, recognize the mitigation and impact fees will only apply to new construction and will result in new homes becoming even less affordable. <u>Establishing mitigation fees or impact fees must carefully balance the need to mitigate against the impacts of new development and fund critical capital facilities and infrastructure with the need for housing that is affordable to all economic segments of the community.</u> <i>The Planning Commission voted to add the following sentence to Goal 4K on 7/24/25: "...notwithstanding the above, recognize the mitigation and impact fees will only apply to new construction and will result in new homes becoming even less affordable." This sentence was removed by Council on 9/9/25 (see above). This amendment seeks to reword the sentence the Planning Commission added instead of just deleting it.</i>	Galloway	

CHAPTER 5 – Utilities [Preliminary Planning Commission Version](#) October 10, 2025 (AB2025-733)

#	Page	Section/Policy	Proposed Amendment	Sponsor	Meeting
1	5-1 5-6	Purpose Electric Power... Policy 5C-10, 11	Scrivener in nature: Replace few references to “broadband” with “internet” <i>Rationale:</i> Internet is a broader term that encompasses technologies including but not limited to broadband and is more consistent with RES 2024-019 In Support of Expanding Access to Affordable and Reliable Internet for All Residents of Whatcom County.	Galloway	
2	5-4	Locational Criteria	Proposed Amendment It is the County’s preference that utility corridors must be located in areas of least impact to the public and environment as measured by proximity to populous and environmentally sensitive areas. <u>Furthermore, any construction activities within utility corridors should be done with proper notification and coordination.</u>	Galloway	
3	5-4	Goal 5A	Proposed Amendment Specify a clear process for determining appropriate locations <u>and coordinating construction activities</u> for future needed utility facilities.	Galloway	
4	5-4	Policy 5A-1	Proposed Amendment Use existing permitting and environmental review processes to evaluate and determine the suitability of proposed locations for any new utility facilities <u>not under exclusive EFSEC jurisdiction or</u> above the distribution level.	Galloway	
5	5-4	Policy 5A-2	Proposed Amendment When expansion or improvements of utility systems <u>or generation facilities</u> are being considered, Whatcom County prefers the following in the order provided: • upgrading of existing facilities in existing corridors; • <u>parcels where generation is currently sited, or in already disturbed sites;</u> • replacing facilities in existing corridors where appropriate; • sharing existing corridors.	Galloway	
6	5-4	Add new Policy as 5A-2, adjust other numbers	Proposed Amendment <u>Policy 5A-2: Any new construction, expansion, or improvements of utility systems located within the County’s Rights-of-Way should be done with proper notification to and coordination with Whatcom County Public Works, any co-located utility providers, and area businesses and residents, as applicable.</u>	Galloway	

7	5-5	Policy 5B-1	Proposed Amendment Facilitate the use of new technologies by allowing flexibility in regulations and policies affecting utility facilities when it can be shown that a net benefit, <u>including net reliability benefits</u> , to the public is likely to result.	Galloway	
8	5-5	Electric Power, Natural Gas, Petroleum, and Telecommunication	Scrivener in nature: Acronym for Department of Labor and Industries (DLI) is more commonly <u>L&I</u>	Galloway	
9	5-6	Policy 5C-11	Proposed Amendment Encourage utility purveyors to <u>coordinate their construction activities and</u> consider underground installation and co-location of broadband facilities <u>as a way to minimize ground disturbance and improve overall resiliency of utility infrastructure.</u>	Galloway	
10	5-7	Permitting Process Efficiency	Proposed Amendment Time required for permitting processes can increase development costs and can impede the timely provision of electric power and other utilities to residential, commercial, and business users. Any new utility installation requires precisely designed and selected components to complete and bring a facility on line. Careful planning is necessary to ensure the proper components are available as needed. Delays in obtaining permits can disrupt planning cycles and can result in utility services not being available when needed. Local permit processing should not interfere with or cause long delays for the provision of utilities to residents, industry, or business. <u>However, permitting processes should also consider impacts to human and environmental health and facilitate mitigation measures when feasible.</u>	Galloway	
11	5-7	Policy 5D-1	Proposed Amendment Maintain streamlined and simplified permitting processes relating to installation of utility facilities designed to serve existing or approved development, <u>while mitigating against associated harms to human health and environment.</u>	Galloway	
12	5-7		Question: need help understanding and differentiating Goals 5D and 5E and their policies. Goal 5E seems very broad and its policies don't seem related.	Galloway	
13	5-7	Policy 5E-3	Scrivener in nature: Utility companies shall provide notification of proposed projects to abutting landowners consistent with by County code.	Galloway	

14	5-7	Policy 5F-1	Proposed Amendment Periodically review existing regulations to identify <u>regulatory gaps</u> and <u>to</u> eliminate unintended or unreasonable constraints on the provision of necessary utilities as defined in this section.	Galloway	
15	5-7/8	Add new Policy to 5F (or as new 5C-3?)	Proposed Amendment <u>Review and update Whatcom County Code to align with current state law RCW 80.50 Energy Facilities – Site Locations.</u> Note: For example, WCC 20.68.060 is out of alignment with RCW 80.50.020 as it pertains to generating capacity thresholds for thermal power plants.	Galloway	
16	5-8	Policy 5G-5	Proposed Amendment The County shall <u>should work with utility providers and</u> consider funding opportunities for coordinated public education and outreach and promoting energy education services in order to inform the public about energy efficiency and renewable energy sources.	Galloway	
17	5-8/9	Policy 5H-2	Proposed Amendment Encourage and support the development of renewable energy projects and technologies, such as anaerobic digesters, solar, battery energy storage systems, wind energy, and geothermal, <u>fusion</u>, and green hydrogen where applicable.	Galloway	
18	5-10	Add policy to 5K	Proposed Amendment <u>Policy 5K-X: Coordinate with Cities on the development, expansion, or improvement of energy and utilities infrastructure within city adjacent UGAs in effort to accommodate future growth and maximize potential benefits.</u>	Galloway	
19	5-10	Natural Gas and Hazardous Liquid Transmission Pipelines	Proposed Amendment Natural Gas and Hazardous Liquid Transmission Pipelines Transmission of hazardous liquids and gases by pipeline is an efficient and convenient transportation mode for transporting these products. However, pipelines pose a risk of ruptures and uncontrolled leaks of products which that are highly flammable, explosive, or toxic and therefore require careful consideration of pipeline siting, nearby land uses, and protection of pipelines from excavation damage. <u>The goal is to protect the health, safety and welfare of County residents, to provide predictability for future pipeline siting, and to encourage communication and coordination with pipeline operators, landowners, and county, state and federal agencies.</u> The County is not able to control all issues regarding pipelines, as there are other agencies with jurisdictional authority (such as the Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission), as well as demand from areas outside of Whatcom County, which preclude the County from having the ultimate authority. Nonetheless, goals and policies for the County are appropriate and incorporated herein.	Galloway	

			The following goals and policies shall apply to all natural gas and hazardous liquid transmission pipelines as defined by state and federal regulations. The goals and policies presented herein should be interpreted in conjunction with the general utility policies of this chapter where applicable, with priority and deference given to these policies which are specific to natural gas and hazardous liquid pipelines where they appear contradictory. The Natural Gas and Hazardous Liquid Pipelines Background Report, Oct 2001, contains more detailed information regarding pipelines and related issues. Map 5-2 indicates a notification area of 1,000 feet (500 feet from each side of the pipeline) for natural gas and hazardous liquid transmission pipelines, which may be of value to the public. <i>Note: striking “natural” allows a broader application such as hydrogen, CO2, butane, and propane.</i>		
20	5-11	Policy 5M-2	Proposed Amendment Carefully scrutinize new or updated franchise agreements. Review and evaluate model franchise agreements, if available, for provisions to be incorporated into negotiations regarding proposed provisions <u>and mitigations</u> in future franchise agreements. Consider the adoption of a franchise agreement ordinance for consistency and guidance if multiple new agreements are anticipated.	Galloway	
21	5-12	Policy 5M-7	Proposed Amendment Monitor transmission pipeline construction to ensure pipelines are installed in accordance with all applicable County, <u>state, and federal</u> regulations	Galloway	
22	5-20, 5-21	Policies 5S-5, 5S-6, 5S-7	Strike policies 5S-5, 5S-6, 5S-7	Donovan	Approved 10/21/25 COTW
23	5-23	Goal 5V	Proposed Amendment Support waste prevention for both solid waste, <u>including food waste</u>, and hazardous waste as a primary focus prior to waste management.	Galloway	
24	5-23	Policy 5V-1	Proposed Amendment Support solid waste source reduction activities, including <u>countywide</u> conservation education programs, source reduction technical assistance for small quantity generators through the Pollution Prevention Assistance Program, and home composting, and education and commercial waste reduction, <u>including reducing the volume of nonrecyclable single-use items and product packaging materials</u>.	Galloway	
25	5-23	Policy 5V-2	The County’s waste diversion goal is to increase source-separated recycling, with additional diversion potentially available through waste processing of non-source-separated recyclables.	Galloway	

			Question: didn't we amend code to transition away from source-separated recycling to single stream?		
26	5-23	Policy 5W-1	Proposed Amendment Reduce Whatcom County's share of food waste sent to landfills by 50%, consistent with the Use Food Well Washington Plan, <u>Whatcom County Food Systems Plan</u> , <u>Whatcom County Climate Action Plan</u> , and Comprehensive Solid and Hazardous Waste Management Plan.	Galloway	

CHAPTER 6 – <u>Transportation Preliminary Planning Commission Version July 2, 2025 (AB2025-563)</u>					
#	Page	Section/Policy	Proposed Amendment	Sponsor	Meeting
1	6-4	MMLOS	Scrivener – add a period “...concurrency under GMA. It is, however...”	Galloway	Approved 10/7/25 COTW
2	6-4	Goal 6A	Proposed Amendment – (from the Climate Impact Advisory Committee) Goal 6A: Provide for the <u>long-term</u> safe and efficient movement of people and goods, <u>taking into consideration mitigation of climate impacts and natural hazards</u> , by establishing and maintaining multimodal level of service (MMLOS) standards for motor vehicle traffic volumes compared to roadway capacity (Maps 6-5, 6-6, and 6-10) and for Active Transportation Network (ATN) completeness (Maps 6-2, 6-7, and 6-8).	Galloway	
3	6-6	Policy 6A-7	Question –Should incorporated and unincorporated UGAs have the same standards? (They already are for Policy 6A-8)? Proposed Amendment – Policy 6A-7: Pedestrian LOS Standards on the countywide Active Transportation Network are listed below, subject to available funding: a) Incorporated UGA: Urban standard sidewalks both sides or shared two-way multiuse pathway one side. b) Unincorporated UGA: Urban standard sidewalk one <u>both</u> sides or shared two-way multiuse pathway one side. c) Rural County: 5-foot-wide shoulder on roadway Green = Complete Network Link, meets County standards Yellow = Incomplete Network, doesn't meet County standards Red = Missing Network Link, doesn't meet County standards	Galloway	

4	6-8	Planning and Design	Scrivener – should it be Chapter <u>6</u> Transportation?	Galloway	Approved 10/7/25 COTW
5	6-9	Policy 6B-3	Proposed Amendment - add federal and tribal agencies and CIAC amendments Policy 6B-3: Increase the resilience of the transportation system against <u>climate impacts, natural hazards, and</u> disaster, develop prevention and recovery strategies, and plan for coordinated responses with <u>relevant federal</u> , state, regional, and local, <u>and tribal</u> agencies.”	Galloway	
6	6-10	Policy 6C-8	“Policy 6C-8: Work with WSDOT to improve highway problems caused by truck traffic on county and state roads by adding this issue to the Council of Governments work plan, lobby WSDOT officials, and considering lower speed limits and improvements during discussions in the county six-year road program.” Question – Would there be any need to add reference to federal transportation agencies?	Galloway	
7	6-10	Policy 6D-2	Proposed Amendment – Climate Impact Advisory Committee “Promote land use strategies and transportation investments that reduce single occupant vehicle trips and vehicle miles traveled while discouraging transportation <u>investments improvements</u> that would trigger development that is premature or not consistent with applicable comprehensive plans, policies, or zoning.”	Galloway	
8	6-11	Policy 6D-6	Proposed Amendment – Climate Impact Advisory Committee Policy 6D-6: Prioritize transportation investments and new housing developments to be located in urban growth areas to help provide a sense of community and safe, active transportation to community facilities and public transit nodes. <u>Locate new housing developments in urban growth areas to foster a sense of community, and provide safe, efficient transportation to community facilities and public transit nodes.</u>	Galloway	
9	6-11	Multimodal Approach	“Whatcom County’s transportation facilities must accommodate a variety of transportation modes including automobiles, bicycles, pedestrians, buses, ferries, emergency vehicles, commercial vehicles, and agricultural equipment. In the planning, design, and construction of these facilities, the County must balance the needs of all users in all modes, and make the improvements appropriate to the context of the area, as well as the amount of funding available.” Question – Do we need to add reference to air travel in intro paragraph? Given public and private airports? (Airplanes are also later referenced in policy 6E-1)	Galloway	

10	6-13/14	Policy 6F-4	Proposed Amendment – Climate Impact Advisory Committee Policy 6F-4: Coordinate design and implementation of multimodal transportation system improvements with cities, WTA, local community organizations, associations, or other governing structures. Collect and use the best available data to identify, analyze, and prioritize multimodal transportation projects based on the following criteria: • safety improvements are needed • serves a residential or relatively high density rural or urban population area • serves a location frequently traveled by seniors, children, or people with disabilities • leads to a school or is part of a school route • provides access to a recreational facility or park • functions as a key network link for the regional active transportation network • offers economic development potential for an underserved area • ease of implementation due to low cost, public ownership, or other feature • <u>increases public safety and resilience to climate impacts and natural hazards</u>	Galloway	
11	6-14	Policy 6F-5	Proposed Amendment – Climate Impact Advisory Committee Policy 6F-5: Update the existing (2011) Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan to be included in the Active Transportation Network (Map 6-2) improvement planning that identifies and prioritizes future pedestrian and bicycle facilities. Give priority to construction of pedestrian and bicycle facilities on streets within and between urban growth areas and rural communities where practical, <u>and not at risk from climate impacts or natural hazards</u>, and give priority to walkways and crosswalks along roadways within a one-mile radius of schools.	Galloway	
12	6-15	Policy 6G-2	“Policy 6G-2 Freight and Goods Transport System (See Map 6-XX) – Invest in all-weather road improvements for the countywide Freight and Goods Transportation System (FGTS). Coordinate with WSDOT to designate portions of the County road system as truck routes.” Question – how can we ensure designation of truck routes is considering nearby land uses?	Galloway	
13	6-15	Policy 6G-3	“Policy 6G-3 Provide roads structurally adequate to handle anticipated commercial traffic demand, particularly on the FGTS.” Question – should we consider truck size and weight?	Galloway	
14	6-15	Intergovernmental Coordination	“Transportation planning is done in a regional context, involving many agencies and jurisdictions at the federal, state, tribal, and local levels. The Whatcom Council of Governments (WCOG), the region’s Regional Transportation Planning Organization, publishes the Whatcom Transportation	Galloway	

		and Implementation	Plan. That plan is a combined Metropolitan and Regional Plan required by federal and state law, and was most recently adopted by the WCOG Whatcom Transportation Policy Board in 20122. It is a multimodal plan setting general policies and establishing a regional Transportation Improvement Program, while referencing the transportation plans of local jurisdictions. The seven incorporated cities of Whatcom County, as well as the Lummi Nation, each have transportation elements in their comprehensive plans. The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) owns, plans, and maintains state highways. The Whatcom Transportation Authority (WTA) and Port of Bellingham are also public entities that adopt plans influencing transportation in the region. Whatcom County Council Members are part of the WCOG's Whatcom Transportation Policy Board and the WTA Board of Directors. The Whatcom County Health and Community Services and Parks and Recreation Departments are also a participant in transportation planning, as transportation issues affect the health and safety of the community." Question – Add reference to Whatcom County Public Works? Any need to reference Federal agencies?		
15	6-18	Goal 6J	Proposed Amendment - Goal 6J: Construction and operation of transportation systems should seek to avoid, <u>or mitigate against</u>, adverse environmental impacts, including impacts to wildlife, water quality, and to adjacent residential areas while also balancing the need acknowledging unavoidable (but mitigatable) impacts will likely occur in order to provide an appropriate level of service.	Galloway	
16	6-20	Policy 6K-5	Proposed Amendment – Climate Impact Advisory Committee Policy 6K-5: Support multimodal use by encouraging, for example, provision of secure bicycle storage facilities at park-and-ride lots and other transit facilities, and allowing providing for the transporting transportation of bicycles on public transit vehicles.	Galloway	
17	6-20	Policy 6K-9	Question – Does rapid charging include Level 2 and Level 3? All EVs allow L2, only some allow L3. So, we may want to consider language that ensures both L2 and L3 charging is allowed. Proposed Amendment – strike "rapid" Policy 6K-9: Encourage the development and installation of a comprehensive electric vehicle rapid charging network, including the following opportunities: • Allow rapid-charging stations in commercial parking lots and other convenient locations; • Provide a streamlined and expedited permitting process for rapid-charging stations; • Provide incentives to developers, employers, and organizations that provide rapid-charging stations; • Consider requirements to include infrastructure for rapid-charging stations in multifamily and commercial developments; and	Galloway	

			Pursue partnerships with Puget Sound Energy to consider voluntary development of rapid charging stations to reduce costs.		
18	6-21	Policy 6L-3	Proposed Amendment – Retain language as recommended by staff (“Adopt” rather than “Consider”) <u>Adopt a transportation</u> Consider establishing impact fees <u>ordinance requiring new development</u> to fund a proportionate share of the costs of <u>multimodal</u> transportation system improvements that benefit and are reasonably related to new development.	Galloway	Approved 10/7/25 COTW
19	6-21	Funding	“GMA requires an analysis of funding capability to judge needs against probable funding resources, and a multiyear financing plan based on the needs identified in the plan. The Capital Facilities Plan, Appendix E of this plan contains the funding analysis and the current 20-year list of transportation projects. The County also has a six-year Transportation Improvement Program, which is updated annually, and programs funding for specific projects over the next six years. In addition, GMA authorizes counties to impose impact fees that fund a proportionate share of transportation system improvements made necessary by planned growth. In the event that Whatcom County enacts a transportation impact fee system, it would need to identify future system improvements eligible for impact fee funding (projects that are reasonably related to and reasonably benefit the planned growth).” Question – There has been concern that bike/ped infrastructure improvements are contingent on funding availability (e.g. “subject to funding availability” referenced in 6A policies), yet there is nothing that dedicates any percentage of the TIP to those projects. Should we set a goal for a minimum % of TIP to fund bike/ped? How can we set multimodal/MMLOS as a priority and not adequately fund projects that help us achieve it?	Galloway	
20	NA	General	Questions – Can we further discuss the strategy for building out the active transportation network and connecting county communities? How can we plan for low-stress active transportation corridors between population centers, small cities, and urban centers (as recommended by BPAC) rather than high-stress alternatives? Should we consider high-stress as complete? Can we review the changes to and public concern over the trail corridors? Should we add a policy for prioritizing projects that can use Public ROWs for developing active transportation connections?	Galloway	

CHAPTER 7 – [Economic Development Preliminary Planning Commission Version](#) August 28, 2025 (AB2025-632)

#	Page	Section/Policy	Proposed Amendment	Sponsor	Meeting
1	7-1	GMA Goals...	Scrivener in nature Replace “citizen” with “resident”	Galloway	Approved 10/7/25 COTW
2	7-1	GMA Goals...	Scrivener in nature Introduce the acronym “BR&E” then don’t consistently use it. Would recommend removing the acronym and spelling out “business retention and retention” throughout the chapter.	Galloway	Approved 10/7/25 COTW
3	7-5	Background Summary	Question – re construction job growth: do we have data for county funding leveraged to support construction jobs?	Galloway	
4	7-9	Current County Economic Development Activities	Scrivener in nature Whatcom County delegated job creation activities to the Port of Bellingham, which serves as the County’s “Associate Development Organization” (ADO). The Port of Bellingham was designated as the Associate Development Organization (ADO) in Whatcom County by the County Executive in 2012. An ADO is intended to serve as a point of contact for local economic development activities by supporting business retention, expansion of existing businesses, and new business development. ADOs are also the local arm of the Washington State Department of Commerce and are supported by a small financial contract with quarterly and annual deliverable requirements related but not limited to: BR&E, recruitment , startup assistance, and export assistance.	Galloway	Approved 10/7/25 COTW
5	7-10	Issues, Goals, and Policies	Scrivener in nature Established domestic businesses that offer living wages (or better), recruit skilled graduates from local educational institutions (such as cyber security and CNC (spell this out) technicians). However, due to limited affordable workforce housing and a shortage of developable industrial land, these businesses typically relocate these new hires to other counties where such resources are more accessible. Traditionally, as skilled professionals advance in their careers, some choose to establish startup enterprises, with a portion achieving success as living-wage employers for future generations. Similarly, certain graduates from our (clarify who) programs go on to serve as educational mentors, instructors, or venture capital investors.	Galloway	Approved 10/7/25 COTW

6	7-11	Policy 7A-3	Proposed Amendment: Policy 7A-3: Foster a diverse, private-sector job base <u>including those that contract with government, as well as facilitate public sector jobs</u> , which will provide living wage jobs at the state median income level or greater, and facilitate the retention and expansion of existing businesses.	Galloway	
7	7-11	Policy 7A-5	Proposed Amendment: Policy 7A-5: In addition to stimulating living wage employment and jobs in diverse sectors including <u>renewable energy and green industry and</u> infrastructure, ensure we retain entry level and service-related jobs such as those necessary to support tourism, recreation, retailing, <u>manufacturing</u> , and other industries.	Galloway	
8	7-11/12	Policy 7A-6	Proposed Amendment: Policy 7A-6: Support public-private partnerships to develop training and technology solutions relevant to current industry needs with local education resource providers to develop an educated and skilled work force as a key factor for economic success. Such partnerships should include Western Washington University, Whatcom Community College, Bellingham Technical College, Northwest Indian College, Northwest Workforce Council, <u>Northwest Career and Technical Academy, career and technical education programs in K-12 schools, apprenticeship programs</u> , and businesses and industries.	Galloway	
9	7-12	Policy 7A-7	Proposed Amendment: Policy 7A-7: <u>Partner with the Western Washington University Small Business Development Center, Port of Bellingham, Chambers of Commerce, and other stakeholders to</u> support business start-up operations and entrepreneurship to facilitate growth of businesses.	Galloway	
10	7-12	Policy 7A-11	Proposed Amendment: Policy 7A-11: Establish a competitiveness review of <u>county</u> policies, <u>regulations</u> , taxes/fees, <u>and other</u> processes, <u>to help promote affordable</u> housing that is affordable , child care, <u>high-speed internet, modern infrastructure</u> , and other influences that impact county businesses.	Galloway	
11	7-11	Add policy to Goal 7A	Proposed Amendment (New Policy): <u>Policy 7A-X: Long term prosperity in Whatcom County depends on reliable access to water and fiscally responsible management of local resources. While adjudication may ultimately clarify legal rights, experience from other basins demonstrates that multi decade litigation creates uncertainty and imposes significant costs not only on water users but also on County government. A proactive, negotiated settlement approach can achieve water certainty faster, protect the economy, and relieve unnecessary strain on the County's justice system and taxpayers.</u>	Elenbaas	

12	7-11	Add policy to Goal 7A	Proposed Amendment (New Policy): <u>Policy 7A-X: Whatcom County shall actively pursue and support a negotiated or mediated settlement process among all major water use sectors - agricultural, municipal, industrial, tribal, and environmental - as an alternative to a protracted adjudication. The County should provide leadership, facilitation, and technical support to help all parties reach consensus on allocation, mitigation, and conservation measures that sustain the county's economic base while protecting ecological resources.</u>	Elenbaas	
13	7-11	Add policy to Goal 7A	Proposed Amendment (New Policy): <u>Policy 7A-X: The County shall evaluate both the economic and fiscal costs of adjudication, including impacts on agricultural production, housing investment, and County government operations. Analyses should compare the long term financial obligations of supporting additional courtroom facilities, staffing, and judicial appointments against the potential savings achieved through a negotiated settlement process.</u>	Elenbaas	
14	7-11	Add policy to Goal 7A	Proposed Amendment (New Policy): <u>Policy 7A-X: Recognizing that the State initiated the adjudication but does not fully fund its implementation, the County shall advocate for state reimbursement of adjudication-related costs. Including courtroom expansion, judicial staffing, and administrative expenses - while simultaneously pursuing settlement strategies that can reduce or eliminate the need for these ongoing expenditures.</u>	Elenbaas	
15	7-11	Add policy to Goal 7A	Proposed Amendment (New Policy): <u>Policy 7A-X: A negotiated settlement should be used as a vehicle to invest in local economic infrastructure such as water storage, conveyance efficiency, and mitigation banking that benefits multiple sectors and offsets the costs of prolonged litigation. The County shall seek state and federal partnership funding to implement such projects as part of any basin-wide agreement.</u>	Elenbaas	
16	7-11	Add policy to Goal 7A	Proposed Amendment (New Policy): <u>Policy 7A-X: Ensure that settlement frameworks explicitly address the water needs of both agriculture and housing, acknowledging that stable water supply supports job creation, food security, and housing affordability. The County's facilitative efforts should aim to preserve the viability of existing farms while ensuring sufficient water resources for urban and rural housing consistent with Comprehensive Plan goals.</u>	Elenbaas	
17	7-13	Public/Private Partnerships	Current Planning Commission Proposed language: "The ability of Whatcom County to bring living wage jobs to the community depends on leveraging the significant expertise of our business community and our willingness to eliminate the significant barriers we have created to building affordable new homes and establishing "shovel ready"	Galloway	

			industrial land which are preventing our other economic development initiatives from having a meaningful impact.” Galloway Proposed Amendment: “Collaboration between public and private entities can help promote and prioritize responsible industry that balances both the need for living wage jobs and protection of our environment and natural resources. Whatcom County should craft policy and allocate resources that support local economic and workforce development initiatives, an adequate industrial lands base, and the sustainable development of affordable housing in the Cities and UGAs.” <i>The Planning Commission language would be stricken and replaced with Galloway’s proposed language.</i>		
18	7-13/14	Add policy to Goal 7B	Proposed Amendment (New Policy): <u>Policy 7B-X: Facilitate opportunities for government entities to stimulate the local economy including leveraging public funding to create local, living wage jobs for local workers and workforce development opportunities such as apprenticeship utilization in public work.</u>	Galloway	
19	7-13	Add policy to Goal 7B	Proposed Amendment (New Policy): <u>Policy 7B-X: Preserving farmland alone is not sufficient to sustain Whatcom County’s agricultural economy. County policy shall ensure that agricultural lands remain not only physically preserved but also economically productive, infrastructure-ready, and supplied with the water necessary for continued production. Agriculture must be treated as the highest and best use of designated agricultural lands.</u>	Elenbaas	
20	7-13	Add policy to Goal 7B	Proposed Amendment (New Policy): <u>Policy 7B-X: Land-use regulations, conservation easements, and preservation tools shall be implemented in a manner that supports active agricultural production and farm business viability. The County shall evaluate existing agricultural zoning, easement terms, and critical area provisions to ensure they do not unnecessarily restrict agricultural infrastructure or operational flexibility.</u>	Elenbaas	
21	7-13	Add policy to Goal 7B	Proposed Amendment (New Policy): <u>Policy 7B-X: A viable agricultural economy cannot exist without reliable access to water. The County shall ensure that agricultural water use is prioritized and protected in all aspects of land-use, resource management, and economic planning. Water management policies shall explicitly support ongoing and future agricultural operations as a critical component of Whatcom County’s economy.</u>	Elenbaas	

22	7-13	Add policy to Goal 7B	Proposed Amendment (New Policy): <u>Policy 7B-X: The County shall recognize agricultural production as a cornerstone of the local economy and shall integrate farm viability into its economic development strategies. Planning efforts shall emphasize infrastructure investments, workforce development, and financing mechanisms that enable continued agricultural production.</u>	Elenbaas	
23	7-13	Add policy to Goal 7B	Proposed Amendment (New Policy): <u>Policy 7B-X: To sustain a viable agricultural economy, the County shall support the development of processing, storage, distribution, and marketing facilities as permitted or accessory uses in the Agriculture Zone. The County shall review zoning and permitting processes to remove unnecessary barriers to small and medium scale “value added” operations, including processing, storage, and on farm retail.</u>	Elenbaas	
24	7-13	Add policy to Goal 7B	Proposed Amendment (New Policy): <u>Policy 7B-X: Conservation easements and Transfer of Development Rights programs shall be designed to protect both the land base and the ability to farm it. Easement terms shall permit necessary agricultural buildings, farmworker housing, and resource improvements essential for modern and sustainable farming.</u>	Elenbaas	
25	7-13	Add policy to Goal 7B	Proposed Amendment (New Policy): <u>Policy 7B-X: The County shall review Title 20.40 (Agriculture District) to ensure that the regulations reflect current agricultural practices and market realities. This review should evaluate minimum lot sizes, accessory use definitions, and conditional use procedures to promote economically viable farm operations while maintaining environmental protections.</u>	Elenbaas	
26	7-13	Add policy to Goal 7B	Proposed Amendment (New Policy): <u>Policy 7B-X: All future amendments to agricultural land policy shall consider data on farm income, product diversification, infrastructure capacity, and generational land transfer trends to ensure that preservation measures enhance rather than constrain long-term viability.</u>	Elenbaas	
27	7-17	Policy 7D-1	Proposed Amendment: Policy 7D-1: Work with state, and federal, <u>and tribal</u> agencies to coordinate and streamline environmental review.	Galloway	
28	7-17	Policy 7D-2	Proposed Amendment: Policy 7D-2: Consider conducting in-depth environmental analysis for comprehensive plans and subarea plans to limit the need for future analysis by the private sector to a few issues that are unique to a specific project and cannot be reasonably analyzed at a subarea level.	Galloway	

29	7-18	Policy 7D-3/ Policy 7D-4	“Policy 7D-3: Integrate, streamline, and simplify regulations to make them more understandable and user-friendly and facilitate planned development.” “Policy 7D-4: Utilize graphic illustrations to explain choices that cannot be clearly conveyed in a few words.” <i>Consider combining policies 7D-3 and 7D-4 and clarifying intent</i> Proposed Amendment: Integrate, streamline, and simplify regulations to make them more understandable and user-friendly and in an effort to facilitate planned development. Utilize <u>accessible language and</u> graphic illustrations to explain choices-land-use and development codes and regulations which that cannot be clearly conveyed in a few words.	Galloway	
30	7-20	Business Retention and Expansion	Proposed Amendment: Businesses create jobs, supply needed goods and services, and enhance economic opportunities for the residents of the County. Businesses <u>support the local community and economy by paying taxes (property, sales, and B&O), often reinvesting profits into business and infrastructure improvements and expansion, investing in philanthropic endeavors,</u> and paying wages <u>enabling workers to live, learn, work and play in Whatcom County</u>the local community. A local company with national or international interests, or a national firm with major local investment, can provide substantial support to local causes, educational and cultural activities, and the tax base. Local businesses use local banks and other support services, which help keep dollars cycling through the local economy. Therefore, business retention and expansion are important elements that support the economic well-being of the community. Business retention and expansion for existing businesses in Whatcom County has been identified as a top priority in the Whatcom County CEDS 2022-2026.	Galloway	
31	7-20	Policy 7F-3	Proposed Amendment: Policy 7F-3: Encourage firms to contribute financially as partners with the public <u>and non-profit</u> sectors in sharing costs for civic, and cultural, <u>and philanthropic</u> needs of the community-at-large.	Galloway	
32	7-20	Policy 7F-4	Proposed Amendment: Policy 7F-4: Enhance opportunities for <u>increased-sustainable</u> resource-based (agricultural, forest, fisheries, and mining products) value added industries.	Galloway	

33	7-20	Economic Growth and Environmental Quality	Proposed Amendment: Often economic development and environmental protection are viewed as opposing interests because growth can increase pressure on critical areas and resource lands. However, both economic vitality and environmental quality are interrelated and are extremely important to the community. Economic development requires adequate water supply as a fundamental need. The fishing and shell fishing industries are particularly dependent on water quantity, good water quality, and habitat. The tourism industry relies on these same attributes, as well as having naturally beautiful vistas, <u>trails</u>, and shorelines for recreation. Quality of life and the amazing natural environment are also reasons that businesses <u>and employees</u> are attracted to Whatcom County in the first place. Thus, a commitment to preserving and enhancing the natural environment is actually an economic development strategy for Whatcom County. Additionally, a strong economy that provides living wage jobs allows the leisure time and additional resources to focus on environmental stewardship and protection.	Galloway	
34	7-21	Policy 7G-3	Proposed Amendment: Policy 7G-3: Provide support to Whatcom County's tourism industry to maintain, <u>promote</u>, and enhance <u>responsible tourism and recreation, which should a</u>-balance between the economic benefits of tourism and <u>protection of</u> the local <u>environment, natural resources, and</u> quality of life.	Galloway	
35	7-21	Policy 7G-5	Question: Should we clarify who is coordinating? Proposed Amendment: Policy 7G-5: Coordinate environmental and economic planning efforts <u>with Port of Bellingham, cities, county, state, federal, and tribal governments and business, industry, and tourism stakeholders.</u>	Galloway	
36	7-21	Policy 7G-7	Proposed Amendment: Policy 7G-7: Support <u>living wage</u> job opportunities <u>that are sustainable, responsible, and meet the future needs of the community and economy. This could include the clean-renewable energy and renewable</u> industries <u>(including such as</u> manufacturing hardware <u>(such as for</u> solar panels, batteries, and heat pumps, <u>biofuels, and hydrogen)</u>, professional services, <u>and biofuels, technology, alternative transportation, green infrastructure, and affordable housing, childcare, and health care. by e</u>Ensuring there is adequate <u>affordable workforce housing and “shovel ready” retail, commercial, and</u> industrial land to support investment in <u>local business and workforce</u>these industries to be located within Whatcom County.	Galloway	
37	7-23	Policy 7H-2	Proposed Amendment: Policy 7H-2: Work with state and federal agencies, Tribal governments, and other groups to improve the condition of <u>the tribal treaty protected fishing rights and</u> fishery resources, including	Galloway	

			<u>water quality and quantity</u> , habitat maintenance, <u>restoration</u> , and enhancement, especially for <u>estuaries, riparian areas, and other</u> habitats utilized by threatened and endangered fish species, <u>and removal of fish passage barriers</u> .		
38	7-23	Policy 7H-3	Proposed Amendment: Policy 7H-3: Maintain the commercial forestland base of Whatcom County to assure the industry's continued economic viability and sustainable harvest. <u>Whatcom County should continue to work with state and federal agencies, Tribes, private timber industry, and other relevant stakeholders to balance the economic interest with climate resilience and managing forestland for multiple benefits including jobs, wood products, recreation, carbon capture and sequestration, ecosystem services, and wildfire resilience. In an effort to protect Lake Whatcom, the drinking water source for nearly half of Whatcom County's population, public and private management of forestland in the watershed should follow more stringent regulations, forest practice rules, and compliance monitoring to ensure consistency with the Lake Whatcom Management Program and compliance with the Landscape Plan, Clean Water Act, forest management plans, and other relevant state and federal laws.</u>	Galloway	
39	7-23	Policy 7H-4	Proposed Amendment: Policy 7H-4: As part of a broad-based economy, foster productive timber, agriculture, and fisheries industries in a sustainable manner that aligns with County Comprehensive Plan Climate chapter, <u>Climate Action Plan, Forest Resilience Plan, Lake Whatcom Management Program Work Plan, Comprehensive Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan, WRIA 1 Salmon Recovery Plan, forest management plans, and other relevant county plans.</u>	Galloway	
40	7-23	Policy 7H-5	Proposed Amendment: Policy 7H-5: Support <u>sustainable mining operations</u> , which is compatible with other land use and environmental policies, including surface mining of sand, gravel, and rock and subsurface mining of other minerals found in Whatcom County, such as gold and silver.	Galloway	
41	7-26	Policy 7J-3	Proposed Amendment: Policy 7J-3: Focus on absorbing and retraining displaced and discouraged workers and addressing the skills gap through grants, training by the Northwest Workforce Council, <u>Western Washington University</u> , Bellingham Technical College, Whatcom Community College, Northwest Indian College, <u>apprenticeship programs</u> , and other opportunities.	Galloway	
42	7-27	Geographic Diversity	“A final issue with the local economy is the location of the majority of jobs in the westernmost portion of the lowlands area of Whatcom County. This is where the majority of the population lives and works, the infrastructure is available, and where most of the jobs should continue to be located. People from smaller communities located throughout the County generally have longer	Galloway	

			commutes, creating greater impacts on the road system and environment. It also creates additional need for more income for travel costs. These and other area-specific issues have spurred three communities to focus efforts on economic development: Point Roberts; Birch Bay; and East County. Each has successfully developed an area Economic Development Plan and has a subarea plan. The ongoing work of these groups is crucial to addressing the most urgent and long-range planning needs in these areas such as loss of living wage jobs and tax base revenues and increased demand for services by a growing residential population.” Question: Regarding economic development in East County, there elements of the East Whatcom Health Equity Zone work we should be including here?		
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CHAPTER 8 – Resource Lands Preliminary Planning Commission Version -----, 2025 (AB2025-----)					
#	Page	Section/Policy	Proposed Amendment	Sponsor	Meeting

CHAPTER 9 – Parks and Recreation Preliminary Planning Commission Version July 10, 2025 (AB2025-601)					
#	Page	Section/Policy	Proposed Amendment	Sponsor	Meeting
1	TBD	New Section/Tribal Consultation	Add new section before “Issues, Goals, and Policies”, that outlines commitment to tribal consultation across this whole chapter. Alternative is to add a standalone goal or incorporate tribal consultation throughout the chapter (particularly Trails and Pathway Systems and Shoreline Access Areas). Rationale: many parks and recreation issues overlap with tribal treaty rights, their role as co-manager of public lands, and potential impact to cultural resources and areas of cultural significance.	Galloway	
2	9-10	Policy 9C-4	Proposed Amendment Policy 9C-4: The wet climate of Whatcom County may preclude <u>development, expansion, and/or</u> extensive multi-use of some trails or require seasonal limitations. <u>Development, expansion, and use of Trails routes</u> should consider soil conditions, steep terrain, surface drainage, <u>watershed health, natural and cultural resources</u>, and other physical limitations that could <u>negatively</u> impact the area <u>environments from overuse</u>.	Galloway	
3	9-10	Policy 9C-11	Spell out Army Corp of Engineers rather than ACOE	Galloway	Scrivener

4	9-13	Policy 9C-28	“Ensure adequate education and enforcement of County regulations to minimize activities such as illegal trail building, off-leash dogs in on-leash areas, and improper disposal of pet waste, <u>and incompatible uses that damage the environment.</u> ”	Galloway	Approved 9/9/25 COTW
5	9-14/15	ORV Riding Areas	Proposed Amendment: Recognizing that it is better to <u>The County should</u> regulate and manage where off-road vehicle (ORV) riding may occur, <u>prioritizing community and user safety and the protection of property, environment, and natural and cultural resources.</u> The County twice attempted to develop an area for exclusive ORV use, but -B both proposals were met with controversy and not pursued. However <u>Unfortunately</u> , ORV riding still occurs and in many instances on land not suitable for that use and without the owner's permission. The end result is that ORV riding is impacting neighbors, and harming the land <u>and environment</u> in which riding occurs, and is in general creating a problem for conflict with less intrusive recreational activities.”	Galloway	
6	9-15	Goal 9F	Proposed Amendment: Goal 9F: Coordinate with Federal, and State, <u>and Tribal</u> agencies to evaluate the feasibility of providing <u>additional</u> ORV opportunities in Whatcom County <u>that are safe to various user groups and do not damage the land, environment, and natural and cultural resources.</u> ”	Galloway	
7	9-15	Policy 9F-1	Proposed Amendment: Policy 9F-1: Recognizing that there will continue to be a demand for ORV riding, the County should, as resources allow, coordinate with federal, and state, <u>and tribal</u> agencies to better <u>educate user groups</u> , enforce existing ORV restrictions, and evaluate the feasibility of providing <u>safe and appropriate</u> ORV opportunities in Whatcom County.	Galloway	
8	9-16	Policy 9G-4	Proposed Amendment: Policy 9G-4: In light of lead contamination at the Plantation Rifle Range engage the public and relevant stakeholders, including law enforcement, to develop a plan for future use of the facility that protects the environment, meets community expectations for <u>safe</u> recreation, and provides for an acceptable level of cost recovery for operations.	Galloway	
9	9-18	Policy 9H-7	Proposed Amendment: Policy 9H-7: Continue to plan for full use of existing senior/community centers and explore partnerships to help <u>expand and</u> absorb future need.	Galloway	
10	9-18	Policy 9H-10	Proposed Amendment: Policy 9H-10: In collaboration with <u>cities, county, state, federal, and tribal governments, Tribes, County Agencies</u> , and stakeholders, develop long-term forest management plans to meet community management goals, protect the County’s financial interest, and foster responsible	Galloway	

			recreation within the Lake Whatcom Watershed, Stewart Mountain Community Forest, and Canyon Lake Community Forest. <u>Forest management goals should balance the County's interest in supporting a sustainable local timber economy and safe recreation opportunities with enhancing carbon sequestration, ecosystem services, wildlife habitat, watershed health, forest health, climate resilience and reducing risks from wildfire and other natural hazards.</u>		
11	9-19	Policy 9I-6	Proposed Amendment: Policy 9I-6: Experiment with novel public-private partnerships to provide facilities that will provide a quality experience to draw tourists to Whatcom County's parks. Some examples could be privately operated adventure tourism and locally sourced goods and services (e.g. farm tours, farmers market, Nordic Fest , etc.). Part or all of the "rent" provided could be by the provision of privately funded public use facilities such as toilets and shuttle buses used to service these private facilities.	Galloway	
12	9-20	Policy 9J-1	Proposed Amendment: Policy 9J-1: Designate high-value greenspaces and greenways for acquisition, conservation easements, or other reservation programs to enhance carbon sequestration and provide community benefits. Prioritize areas that provide co-benefits such as biodiversity, <u>watershed health, climate resilience</u> , recreation, and connectivity between habitats.	Galloway	

CHAPTER 10 – Environment Preliminary Planning Commission Version -----, 2025 (AB2025-----)					
#	Page	Section/Policy	Proposed Amendment	Sponsor	Meeting

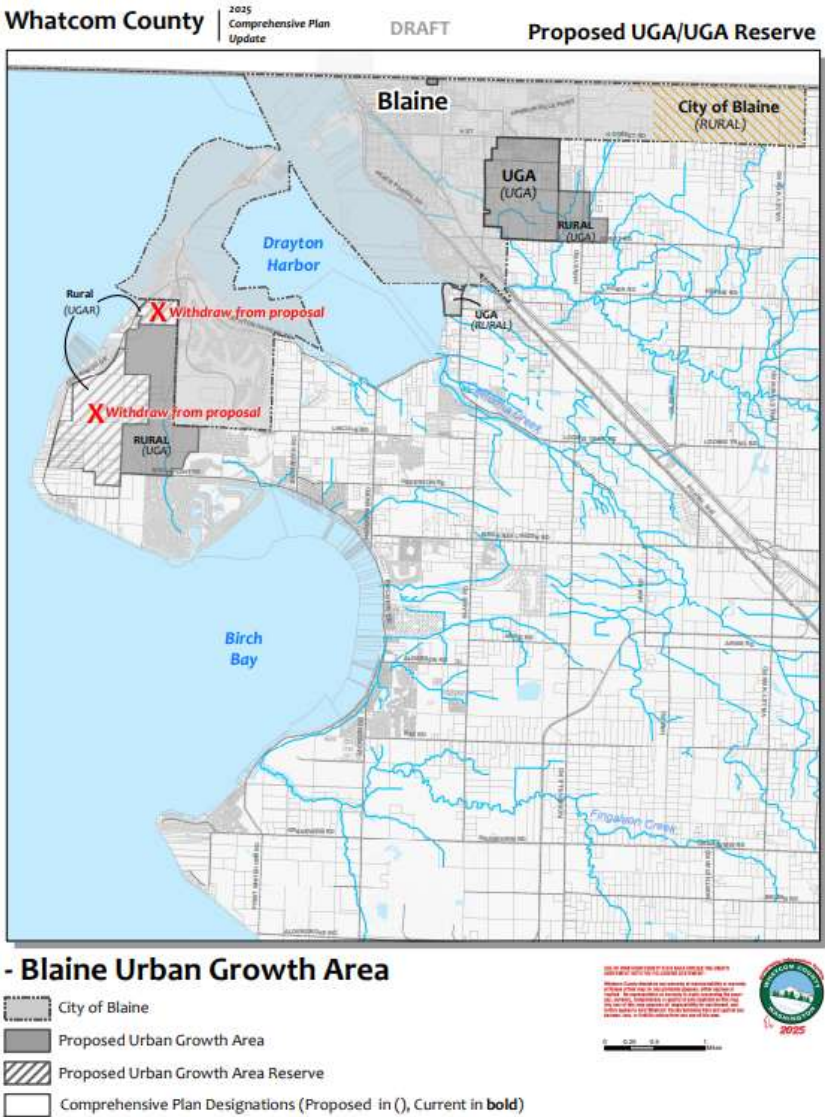
CHAPTER 12 – Climate Environment Preliminary Planning Commission Version -----, 2025 (AB2025-----)					
#	Page	Section/Policy	Proposed Amendment	Sponsor	Meeting
1	12-1	Purpose	Scrivener/Style Amendment The Climate Element is a -required element of comprehensive plans under RCW 36.70A.020, <u>which RCW 36.70A.020</u> requires cities and counties to use their comprehensive plan to build resilience and reduce greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change. The update to the <u>Growth Management Act (GMA)</u> passed in HB 1181 integrates climate planning into the Growth Management Act (GMA) ...	Galloway	Approved 10/7/25 COTW

2	12-5	Add policy to Goal 12.2	Proposed Amendment: Policy 12.2.X: <u>Review bidding and procurement policies to prioritize lower-carbon building processes, sustainable and/or reclaimed building materials, energy efficiency, renewable energy, and alternative and active transportation infrastructure (such as EV charging and bicycle storage) in County funded capital projects.</u> <i>Note:</i> similar to Policy 12.8.15, which focuses on transportation	Galloway	
3	12-7	Policy 12.4.1	Scrivener/Style Amendment Assist property owners regulated under the Clean Buildings Performance Standard <u>in accessing</u> incentives to reduce building energy use and meet early compliance deadlines for Tier 1 and 2 buildings.	Galloway	Approved 10/7/25 COTW
4	12-8	Policy 12.4.8	Proposed Amendment: Policy 12.4.8: Partner with Western Washington University, Whatcom Community College, Bellingham Technical College, Northwest Indian College, <u>K-12 schools and skills centers</u> , Northwest Workforce Council, the Port of Bellingham, the Whatcom Working Waterfront Coalition, cities, <u>unions and apprenticeship programs</u> , and local businesses to address workforce skill gaps in emerging sectors that support climate action.	Galloway	
5	12-8	Ecosystems	Proposed Amendment: Ecosystems play a vital role in mitigating climate change by capturing and storing carbon. Protecting, enhancing, and restoring forests, wetlands, aquatic ecosystems, and green space contributes to a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions through carbon sequestration. These nature-based solutions to greenhouse gas reduction can also <u>build resilience by mitigating against natural hazards and climate impacts</u> , protect ing biodiversity <u>and fish and wildlife habitat</u> , and improv ing e water and air quality.	Galloway	
6	12-8	Policy 12.5.5	Proposed Amendment: Policy 12.5.5: Discourage the conversion of forests, <u>agricultural land</u> , grasslands, <u>wetlands, critical areas, riparian areas, estuaries</u> , and other high carbon storage areas for uses that are incompatible with habitat preservation and carbon sequestration goals.	Galloway	
7	12-9	Policy 12.7.2	Proposed Amendment: Policy 12.7.2: Prioritize investments to reduce vehicle emissions <u>and miles travelled</u> in neighborhoods disproportionately affected by air <u>and water</u> pollution. <i>Note:</i> 6PPD-q is a highly toxic byproduct from tires that contaminate waterways through stormwater runoff.	Galloway	

8	12-9	Transportation	Proposed Amendment: Greenhouse gas emission reduction strategies for the transportation sector include electrification, switching to lower carbon fuels, and reducing travel demand, <u>and promoting alternative multimodal transportation and infrastructure</u>. To lower transportation emissions, Whatcom County is evaluating land use planning practices to lower per capita VMT, promote taking fewer trips and assessing regional investments in public transit and multimodal transportation. Improving <u>active</u> transportation options and multimodal connectivity for all residents reduces emissions, <u>improves public health</u> and advances equity.	Galloway	
9	12-10	Policy 12.8.3	Proposed Amendment: Policy 12.8.3: Coordinate with WSDOT, Whatcom Council of Governments, <u>tribes</u>, and cities to update the regional transportation plan to estimate and track transportation related greenhouse gas emissions by jurisdiction in Whatcom County.	Galloway	
10	12-11	Policy 12.8.15	Proposed Amendment: Policy 12.8.15: Review bidding and procurement policies to prioritize lower-carbon materials and processes in County funded transportation <u>and infrastructure</u> projects.	Galloway	
11	12-13	Policy 12.11.4	Proposed Amendment: Policy 12.11.4: Review Whatcom County code for opportunities to discourage conversion of forestland for non-forestry uses <u>and agriculture land for non-agriculture uses</u>.	Galloway	
12	12-13	Add policy to Goal 12.11	Proposed Amendment: Policy 12.11.X: <u>Work with the State and tribes to evaluate a framework and strategy for achieving net ecological gain of salmon and other aquatic species habitat for all public projects and a voluntary incentive driven framework and strategy for private projects.</u> Note: consistent with RES2022-036	Galloway	
13	12-14	Ag and Food Systems	Proposed Amendment: Higher air temperatures, more days with extreme heat, flooding, and drought are expected to disrupt water availability and intensify stress on crops and livestock, undermining sustainability and reducing yields. More extreme precipitation and shifts in snowpack and stream flows will alter seasonal water availability for irrigation and drive changes to agricultural practices. As <u>weather becomes less predictable, and</u> suitable seasonal windows for planting and cultivation shift, producers may need to adopt climate-adaptive agricultural practices, including regenerative agriculture, modified crop and livestock selection, soil carbon enhancement, and water conservation.	Galloway	

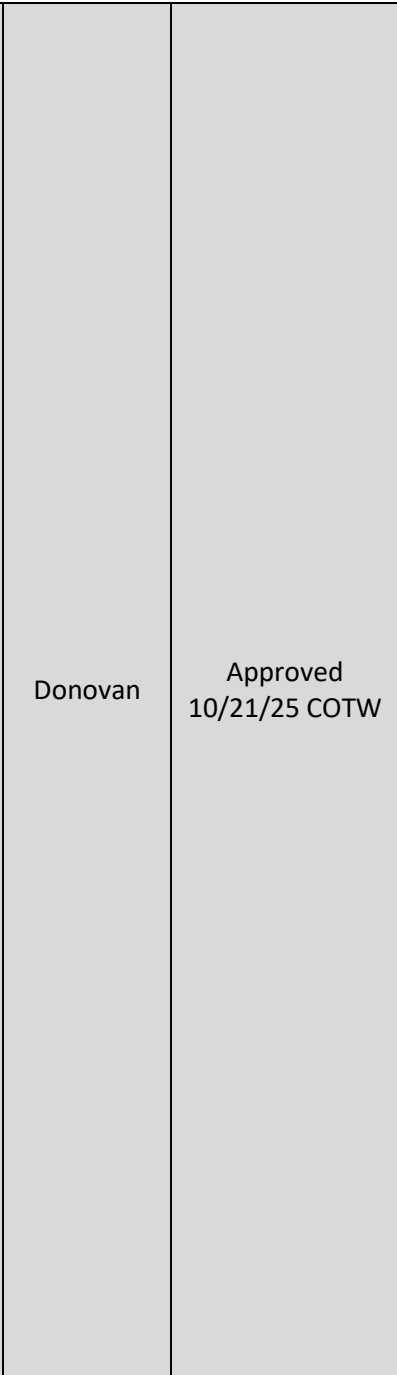
14	12-17	Policy 12.13.8	Proposed Amendment: Policy 12.13.8: Prioritize <u>relocation</u> or retrofitting of essential infrastructure, including undergrounding <u>utilities such as</u> electrical lines, <u>communication cables, water pipelines</u> , and gas pipelines, in high-risk wildfire zones to enhance safety and recovery capabilities.	Galloway	
15	12-18	Policy 12.14.4	Scrivener in nature Evaluate the vulnerability and sensitivity of culturally significant roads, trails, and landscape features <u>prone</u> to damage or alteration from climate change.	Galloway	Approved 10/7/25 COTW
16	12-19	Economic Development	Proposed Amendment: Due to climate change, the regional economy risks employment disruption, <u>supply chain challenges</u> , and decreased productivity in key sectors such as the <u>manufacturing, construction, transportation, energy</u> , maritime, tourism, agriculture, and forestry sectors, and reduced recreation opportunities. Whatcom County is expected to experience increasing costs related to relocation and damage to property and infrastructure due to coastal and riverine flooding, in addition to <u>production</u> losses due to extreme heat, drought, wildfire, and ocean acidification. There is expected to be increasing price volatility for business inputs, loss of operational continuity, <u>shifts in resource availability, shipping-transportation</u> disruptions, and increased unavailability of insurance in some areas.	Galloway	
17	12-19	Policy 12.15.7	Proposed Amendment: Policy 12.15.7: Develop economic innovation strategies to minimize workforce displacement <u>and supply chain disruptions</u> caused by climate-related impacts on key industries.	Galloway	
18	12-20	Policy 12.16.8	Proposed Amendment: Policy 12.16.8: Promote ecosystem restoration and protection projects that prioritize the recovery of habitats for critical endangered, threatened, and priority <u>fish and wildlife</u> species.	Galloway	
19	12-21	Emergency Management	Proposed Amendment: Climate hazards such as drought, extreme <u>weather events</u> temperature fluctuations , wildfire, and flooding are expected to increase costs and demands for emergency preparedness, response, and recovery services, and could strain or overwhelm local emergency response capacity. These climate risks include increased demand for shelter, <u>damaged buildings and infrastructure</u> , additional pressure on energy grids <u>and communications systems</u> , and disruption to emergency management facilities, medical services, and critical <u>equipment and</u> supplies due to impossible or unsafe travel conditions and the potential magnitude of emergency events.	Galloway	

20	12-21	Policy 12.17.7	Proposed Amendment: Policy 12.17.7: Increase community awareness and preparedness for climate-related emergencies by conducting regular tests of evacuation and other emergency alerts and providing accessible public information, <u>including in multiple languages.</u>	Galloway	
21	12-22	Add new policy to Goal 12.17	Proposed Amendment: <u>Policy 12.17.14- Assess potential ferry service disruptions and create plans to maintain ferry reliability during extreme weather events.</u>	Galloway	
22	12-22	Add new policy to Goal 12.17	Proposed Amendment: <u>Policy 12.17.XX- Coordinate with Fire Departments, Fire Districts, Search and Rescue, Law Enforcement, and other first responders to ensure timely and unified emergency response, minimize disruption of services, and support workplace safety and volunteer and professional workforce protection.</u>	Galloway	
23	12-23	Policy 12.18.6	Proposed Amendment: Policy 12.18.6: Establish contingency plans and train to execute them with community partners for maintaining critical health services, including mobile health units, and telemedicine, <u>and Fire/EMS response and transport,</u> during extreme weather events and infrastructure failures.	Galloway	
24	12-23	Transportation	Scrivener in nature Climate change is expected to adversely impact transportation infrastructure, including increased road surface damage from higher temperatures, <u>and</u> additional maintenance requirements for roadside vegetation and infrastructure damage from rain, freeze, and thaw cycles. Increasing temperatures and flooding may cause road closures, delays in ferry, transit, and air travel delays , and risks to routes, roads, bridges, sidewalks, trails, rail, and airport infrastructure.	Galloway	Approved 10/7/25 COTW

URBAN GROWTH AREAS (UGA)				
#	UGA	Proposed Amendment	Sponsor	Meeting
1	Blaine	Provide guidance that Blaine's UGA shall not include expansions in Birch Point (the two areas marked with a red "x" and the area marked as "Rural (UGA)" between them on the Blaine UGA Proposal as discussed on 10.21.25). 	Donovan	Approved 10/21/25 COTW

Bellingham

Provide guidance that the Council accepts Bellingham's UGA Proposal, as represented on the Map UGA-2 (page 9) of the [Bellingham UGA Proposal](#).

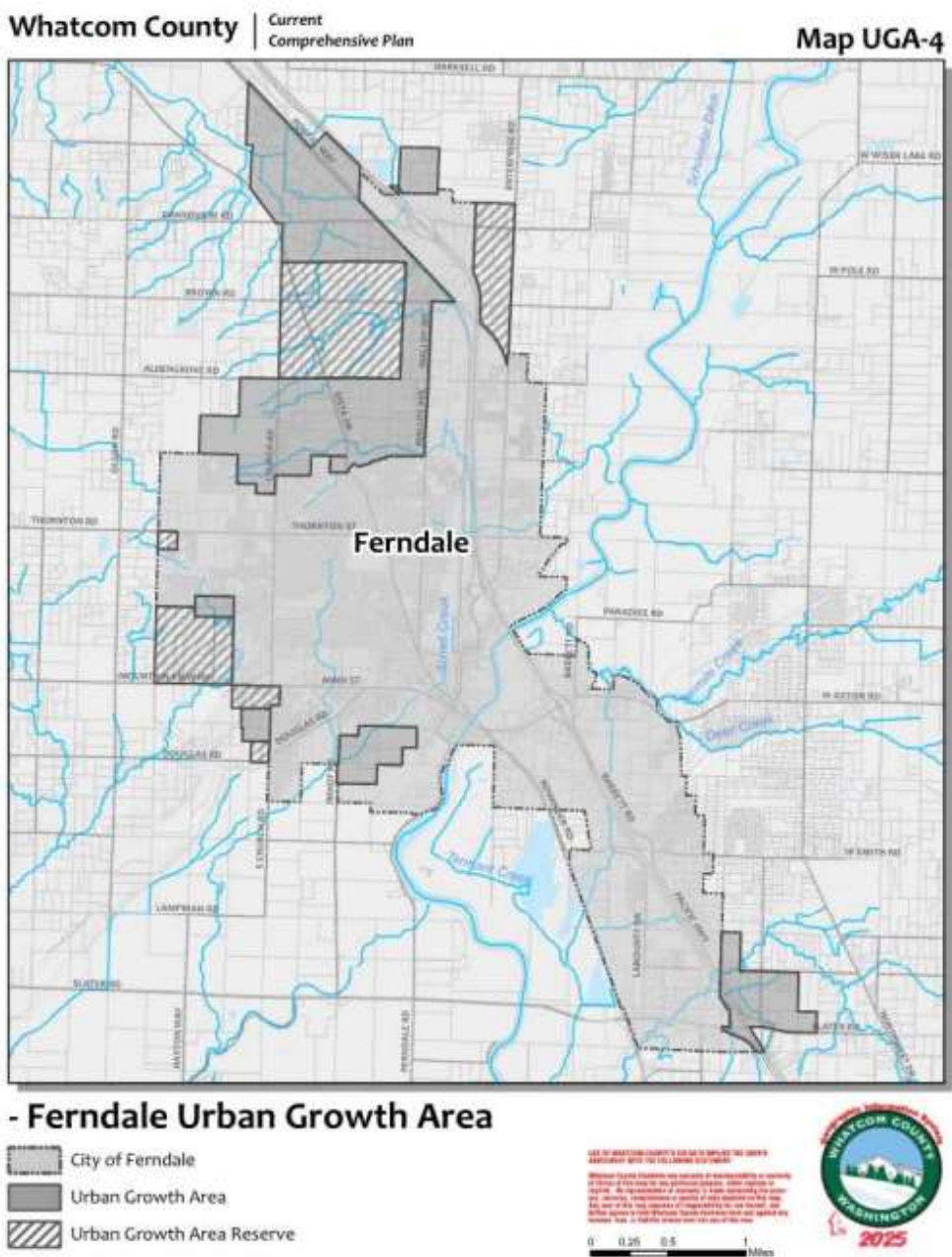


Approved
10/21/25 COTW

Provide guidance that the Council approves to retain Ferndale's 2016 map as proposed (Map UGA-4) on page 4 of the [Ferndale UGA Proposal](#).

3

Ferndale



Donovan

Approved
10/21/25 COTW

Provide guidance that the Council accepts Lynden's proposal as shown on Map UGA-5 on page 5 of [Lynden UGA Proposal](#).

