



Memorandum

April 16, 2021

TO: The Honorable Satpal Sidhu, Whatcom County Executive
The Honorable Whatcom County Council

FROM: Matt Aamot, Senior Planner

THROUGH: Mark Personius, Director

RE: Draft Public Participation Plan

The Growth Management Act (GMA) requires counties to develop public participation programs for comprehensive plan and development regulation amendments. The Whatcom County Council approved the 2020 Public Participation Plan last October, after review by the Planning Commission (the Plan was updated a little later last year because of the COVID-19 meeting restrictions earlier in the year).

The Public Participation Plan identifies statutory requirements (GMA provisions) and lists docketed comprehensive plan and development regulation amendments that have been initiated for further review by the County Council.

The Plan classifies proposed comprehensive plan and development regulation amendments as level 1, 2 or 3 projects for determining the public participation approach. The process for each level is summarized below:

Level 1 – Requires a staff report, notice in the newspaper, posting the proposal on the website, and sending it to the County’s e-mail list. Planning Commission holds a public hearing and issues a recommendation. County Council holds a public hearing and makes final decision.

Level 2 – Requires all Level 1 processes, plus developing alternatives (when appropriate) and review by an advisory committee, County department, City, or agency.

Level 3 – Requires all Level 2 processes, plus a town hall meeting.

Proposed changes from last year's Public Participation Plan include:

1. Inserting New Docketed Amendments - Inserting the new comprehensive plan and development regulation amendments that the County Council initiated for review in 2021 (Resolution 2021-007).
2. Removing Amendments - Deleting amendments that were previously initiated but have completed the review process or were withdrawn.

Notice of the Planning Commission hearing was published in the Bellingham Herald on March 25, 2021, sent to the County's e-mail list on March 26, 2021, and posted on the County website on March 26, 2021.

The Planning Commission held a public hearing and recommended approval of the draft Public Participation Plan on April 8, 2021.

Thank you for your review and consideration of the proposal. We look forward to discussing it with you.