

CHAPTER 2 – Land Use					
#	Page	Section/Policy	Proposed Amendment	Sponsor	Meeting
1	2-1	*** VISION ***	Whatcom County is a place where urban growth is concentrated in urban areas, where there is a distinct boundary between urban and rural uses, where agricultural use is encouraged, and where resource lands and water resources are protected. Rural areas are peaceful and quiet with less traffic and congestion than in urban areas, and there is low-density development with open spaces allowing for privacy. A sense of community is retained and local input is considered in land use decisions.	Boyle	
2	2-2	GMA Goals	The Citizen Participation goal of the Growth Management Act and the Public Involvement Countywide Planning Policies have been addressed in the development of this chapter through citizen committee <u>County Advisory Groups</u> participation, workshops, and public hearings. Also, specific goals and policies give direction for property owner notification and the establishment of on-going citizen committee input.	Galloway	
3	2-4	Background Summary	The goal of growth management is to provide sufficient land area with adequate facilities and utilities either presently available or economically feasible to accommodate future growth. This means having an adequate distribution of land to provide housing, services, jobs, and resource land for the expected population <u>and housing</u> . Question <i>“and housing” is noted to be added in red. What is the purpose of this addition? It seems like it’s either duplicative or needs to be better worded.</i>	Boyle	
4	2-5	Background	All of this needs to be done in light of those aspects of the county which are most valued: water quality, productive agricultural <u>and forest</u> land, economic development in rural areas, distinct boundaries between rural and urban areas, and predictability in land use plans.	Galloway	
5	2-5	Accommodating Growth	This allows for efficient provision of services, <u>transportation, and infrastructure</u> , conservation of resource lands, and preservation of rural areas as quiet, open spaces where development pressures are not such that extraordinary regulations must be imposed.	Galloway	
6	2-6	NEW Policy 2A-8	<u>Policy 2A-8: Retain existing light and heavy industrial zoning and identify additional industrial sites as recommended by the July 2025 Whatcom County Industrial Lands Study to ensure the county can meet future demand.</u>	Galloway	

		Re-number subsequent policies			
7	2-9	Goal 2C	Channel growth to areas where adequate services <u>and infrastructure</u> can be provided.	Galloway	
8	2-10	NEW Policy 2C-7	<u>Policy 2C-7: To partially defray the costs of infrastructure and service improvements required by development in areas under county jurisdiction, Construction Impact Fees, will be levied as per state law.</u>	Galloway	
9	2-10	Policy 2D-4	Coordinate permitting requirements among jurisdictions to <u>improve consistency and</u> minimize duplication and delays.	Galloway	
10	2-12	NEW Policy 2D-11. Re-number subsequent policies	<u>Policy 2D-11: Consider requiring disclosure of potential impacts from lawful maritime and industrial activity to people who are buying or obtaining a permit on property within one mile of industrial-zoned lands.</u>	Galloway	
11	2-12	Policy 2E-1 Policy 2F-2 Policy 2Q-4 Policy 2Q-5 Goal 2ZZ	Change citizen to resident: Policy 2E-1: Provide education on the assets of the community and offer incentives for individual <u>residents</u> citizens to take responsibility to protect those assets. Policy 2F-2: Base incentive programs on suggestions from citizens <u>residents</u> , government officials, and experts in the field. Policy 2Q-4: Provide planning assistance to <u>the residents</u> citizens of the Birch Bay and Columbia Valley Urban Growth Areas for the purpose of developing and implementing Subarea or Community Plans to further define future uses and facilitate orderly urban development Policy 2Q-5: Encourage and assist the <u>residents</u> citizens of Birch Bay and Columbia Valley Urban Growth Areas with incorporation when appropriate. Goal 2ZZ: Provide for broad participation in the siting process by affected agencies, <u>residents</u> citizens and any other interested parties.	Boyle	
12	2-12	Policy 2F-2	Base incentive programs on suggestions from citizens <u>residents</u> , government officials, and experts in the field.	Galloway	
13	2-13	Goal 2H	Preserve private property rights while recognizing the importance of the rights of the community <u>and tribal treaty rights</u> , including protecting the natural environment and conserving resources.	Galloway	

14	2-14	Diverse Cultural Composition and Environmental Justice	Whatcom County <u>strives to cultivate a safe and inclusive community that respects the civil and human rights and dignity of all Whatcom County residents regardless of identity, citizenship status, or geography. Whatcom County is also committed to equal protection and provision of county services to all who call this place home. Whatcom County</u> is becoming more diverse and accepting this diversity is important.	Galloway	
15	2-15	Flooding	Flooding of rivers and streams in Whatcom County is a natural event due to the combination of climate, geology, and topography present in the region. The first measured flood by the USGS occurred on January 25, 1935. Additional major floods along the Nooksack River occurred in 1951, 1975, 1989, 1990, 1997, 1999, 2004, 2006, 2009, 2020, and 2021 , <u>and 2025</u> . While the February 2020 “Super Bowl” flood was large and overtopped the Nooksack River’s north bank at Everson and caused flood damage northward to Sumas and into lower British Columbia, the subsequent November 2021 floods were larger and created more devastating damages in Whatcom County, including the displacement of thousands of families, damage to transportation infrastructure, and a tragic loss of life. Both the 2020 and 2021 floods were declared as presidential disasters. Damages in British Columbia were significantly higher, as floodwaters in the Sumas River in the West Sumas Prairie could not discharge during several days of elevated high Fraser River levels. <u>The December 2025 floods were similarly damaging. The County estimates nearly 1300 households were flooded in communities along the Nooksack River and damage to business and government infrastructure alone has surpassed \$23 million. Total damage may end up surpassing the estimated \$150 million in damage from the 2021 flood.</u>	Galloway	
16	2-15/16	Goal 2K	Discourage development in areas prone to flooding. <u>If development must occur in the flood plain, then the County should coordinate with adjacent cities to implement mitigation measures sufficient to keep people and their property out of harm’s way.</u>	Galloway	
17	2-15/16	Policy 2K-1	Limit lands in one-hundred year floodplains (<u>using most current flood maps and projections</u>) to low-intensity land uses such as open space corridors or agriculture.	Galloway	
18	2-18/19	Fish and Wildlife	<u>Chapter 8: Resource Lands and</u> Chapter 10: Environment, contains additional discussion of fish and wildlife issues, as well as goals and policies regarding fish and wildlife habitat protection and management.	Galloway	
19	2-18/19	Goal 2M	Protect and encourage restoration <u>and enhancement</u> of habitat for fish and wildlife populations including adequate instream flows.	Galloway	
20	2-18/19	Policy 2M-3	Develop educational tools and incentives to encourage existing land uses to restore <u>and enhance</u> degraded habitat to properly functioning conditions, especially for threatened and endangered species.	Galloway	

21	2-18/20	NEW Policy 2M-8	<u>Policy 2M-8: Explore voluntary, incentive driven, non-regulatory frameworks to encourage net ecological gain and the restoration and enhancement of riparian areas.</u>	Galloway	
22	2-19/20	Purpose	The purpose of this section is to establish areas within the County where growth will be directed. The boundaries, as defined, are an attempt to concentrate growth and provide urban areas in accordance with expected growth needs while ensuring the county's identified values to preserve private property rights, and reduce unnecessary regulations, <u>and reduce residents' risk of harm from climate impacted natural hazards like flooding, sea level rise, and wildfires.</u>	Galloway	
23	2-19/22	Process	Planning staff worked with representatives from each city to develop the methodologies, policies, forecasts and allocations for each urban area. Each city was asked to submit a proposed Urban Growth Area, along with growth allocation requests, for the County to consider. Following receipt of those requests, the County Council held <u>various committee presentations, discussions, public comments, and</u> a public hearing before developing a response to city proposals and final action.	Galloway	
24	2-20/21	Background	Such variables as average population per household, occupancy, residential and employment densities, infrastructure requirements, natural systems and critical areas constraints, <u>flood impacted or adjacent areas</u> , ownership and development trends, and appropriate market factors to assure adequate supply and affordable housing were considered.	Galloway	
25	2-20/21	Issues, Goals, and Policies Overall	<p>Modifications have been incorporated into this plan during the UGA review based upon several criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need to assure logical service boundaries, • The need to avoid isolated pockets or abnormally irregular boundaries, • Consideration of land capacity analysis of residential, commercial and industrial needs within urban areas, and • Identification of special needs with respect to unique non-city industrial sites (Cherry Point), and County areas for which the County will actively support incorporation as appropriate (Birch Bay or Columbia Valley),; • <u>Access to services and infrastructure, and</u> • <u>Floodplain or adjacent based on most current flood maps and future projections.</u> 	Galloway	
26	2-20/22	Issues, Goals, and Policies	Countywide Planning Policies set guidelines for designating city urban growth areas including:	Galloway	

		Overall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small cities' UGAs shall be of an adequate size to allow them to become viable economic centers. • The size of cities' UGAs shall be consistent with their ability to provide services, <u>utilities, and infrastructure.</u> • UGAs shall include contiguous areas that are suitable for urban growth as set forth in the GMA. • Sufficient land capacity shall be provided within UGAs to accommodate the 20-year urban growth projection, plus a reasonable land supply market factor. <p>Setting of UGAs shall minimize impacts on agricultural land, forestry, mineral resources, watersheds, water resources, and critical areas. Cities should accommodate additional housing at appropriate urban densities before expanding into areas where growth would adversely impact critical areas or resource lands <u>or be at risk of flooding or other natural hazards.</u></p>		
27	2-21/23	Policy 2N-1	Establish urban growth areas for cities, first, by determining the <u>land and zoning</u> capacity of the existing UGA to accommodate growth in the 20 year planning period. If it is determined that additional land <u>or density</u> is needed to accommodate the projected allocated growth, or to meet other goals of the GMA, then include contiguous areas which have urban characteristics; and, finally, by including other suitable areas that demonstrate the ability to provide adequate public facilities and services at urban levels of service to accommodate growth	Galloway	
28	2-22/23	Policy 2N-3	Consider development incentives, such as <u>expedited permitting or</u> density bonuses, in UGAs in association with the density credit program. <u>Work with the cities to coordinate permitting processes and</u> Encourage cities to consider development incentives in association with a cooperative City-County density credit program.	Galloway	
29	2-22/23	Policy 2N-6	Encourage provision of serviced industrial sites by cities. <u>Within urban growth areas, preserve existing zoning designations for properties with operating industries and protect existing industrial and maritime developments and industrially zoned areas from encroachment by incompatible uses and developments on adjacent lands. Protective measures should include but may not be limited to the adoption of notice of disclosure requirements.</u>	Galloway	
30	2-22/23	Policy 2N-7	Consider mixed-use zoning, where appropriate, to encourage walkability <u>and reduced vehicle miles travelled.</u>	Galloway	
31	2-22/24	Goal 2P	Goal 2P: Whatcom County seeks to support and encourage the cities and unincorporated UGAs in efforts to increase residential densities within their jurisdictions throughout the planning period, as a way to increase vitality, reduce the cost of services, promote physical activities, manage outward growth, and protect the environment. The County encourages cities to achieve citywide	Galloway	

			<p>average net densities for new developments as shown below, while respecting unique characteristics of each city:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bellingham – six to 43 units per net acre; • Ferndale – six to 10 units per net acre; • Lynden – six to 10 units per net acre; • Blaine – six to 10 units per net acre; • Everson – four to six units per net acre; • Nooksack – four to six units per net acre; and • Sumas – four to six units per net acre. <p>The County should achieve overall average net densities for new developments as shown below, while respecting unique characteristics of each community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Birch Bay – five to ten units per net acre; and • Columbia Valley – four to six units per net acre. <p>Question: <i>Are these sufficient densities? Do we have the option to allow for more density?</i></p>		
32	2-23/25	Policy 2P-1	Encourage cities to adopt and implement policies and development regulations that promote urban densities. <u>Coordinate with cities on policies and development regulations in the city adjacent UGAs for consistency.</u>	Galloway	
33	2-23/25	Policy 2P-4	Encourage housing to develop with the greatest possible mix of household incomes by utilizing such techniques as lot clustering, varied lot sizes, small scale multifamily dwellings, <u>inclusionary zoning, permanent affordability covenants</u> , and responsible reductions in infrastructure requirements for subdivisions.	Galloway	
34	2-23/25	Policy 2Q-3	<u>Support the Birth Bay Community Advisory Committee and E</u> ncourage the establishment of an advisory committee for the Birch Bay and Columbia Valley Urban Growth Areas to provide a mechanism to interface with the County regarding their respective community development issues.	Galloway	

35	2-24/26	Policy 2Q-4	Provide planning assistance to citizens <u>the residents</u> of the Birch Bay and Columbia Valley Urban Growth Areas for the purpose of developing and implementing Subarea or Community Plans to further define future uses and facilitate orderly urban development.	Galloway	
36	2-24/26	Policy 2Q-5	Encourage and assist the citizens <u>Consider incorporation</u> of Birch Bay and Columbia Valley Urban Growth Areas with incorporation when <u>feasible and</u> appropriate.	Galloway	
37	2-24/26	Policy 2R-4	Limit development within urban growth areas with no municipal sewer and water service through zoning at a density no greater than one unit <u>and two ADUs</u> per parcel <u>ten acres so long as the development meets all applicable building and construction, development and land use, and health codes.</u> <i>Note: If passed, will need to change subsequent references.</i>	Galloway	
38	2-25/27	NEW Policy 2S-6	<u>Policy 2S-6: Coordinate with cities to plan for designated Urban Growth Area Reserve areas, including long-range capital facility, utility, and service needs and an evaluation of costs associated with potential future annexation. Where UGA Reserves are identified, the County and city shall establish a work program and schedule, through an interlocal agreement, to complete such planning prior to the next Buildable Lands Analysis. Coordination does not presume annexation, zoning changes, development approval, or capital funding commitments.</u>	Galloway	
39	2-28/30	Policy 2U-6	Whatcom County and Bellingham should continue to coordinate protection and development within the its eight <u>Wwatersheds including Lake Whatcom, Whatcom Creek, Squalicum Creek, Padden Creek, Chuckanut Creek, Silver Creek, Little Squalicum Creek, and Bellingham Bay.</u>	Galloway	
40	2-28/31	Policy 2U-9	<u>Prior to considering rezoning industrial lands within the Bellingham UGA, the County will first support the City of Bellingham's completion of an annexation plan that retains existing light and heavy industrial zoned areas and evaluates potential measures to mitigate for conflicts between existing, incompatible land uses.</u> Coordinate with the City of Bellingham in evaluating benefits and costs of existing or proposed industrial zoning in the Bellingham UGA and seek additional industrial zoning sites countywide in coordination with the <i>Whatcom County Industrial Lands Study</i> (July 2025).	Galloway	
41	2-28	Policy 2U-9	Coordinate with the City of Bellingham in evaluating benefits and costs of existing or proposed industrial zoning in the Bellingham UGA and seek additional industrial zoning sites countywide in coordination with the Whatcom County Industrial Lands Study (July 2025).	Stremler	

42	2-37/40	Policy 2W-1	Work with Everson to adopt measures to limit development in floodplains. <u>Development that does occur should take mitigative measures like elevation to reduce risk of harm and damage from flooding.</u>	Galloway	
43	2-50/53	Policy 2Z-1	Work with Nooksack to adopt measures to limit development in floodplains. <u>Development that does occur should take mitigative measures like elevation to reduce risk of harm and damage from flooding.</u>	Galloway	
44	2-54/57	Sumas	The 2021 <u>and 2025</u> Nooksack River flood events devastated Sumas, causing approximately 80% of structures to be damaged. Sumas emphasizes the new urban growth area as a means to <u>relocate current residents and</u> direct new population out of the path of the flood.	Galloway	
45	2-55/58	Policy 2AA-2	Work with Sumas to adopt measures to limit development in floodplains. <u>Development that does occur should take mitigative measures like elevation to reduce risk of harm and damage from flooding.</u>	Galloway	
46	2-73/77	Policy 2CC-16	...The County Administration should provide the County Council, <u>Lummi Nation, and Nooksack Indian Tribe</u> written notice of all known preapplication correspondence or permit application submittals and notices, federal, state, or local that involve activity with the potential to expand “Fossil Fuel Refinery, Renewable Fuel Refinery, Fossil Fuel Transshipment Facility, or Renewable Fuel Transshipment Facility,” as defined in the Whatcom County Code (Chapter 20.97).	Galloway	
47	2-78/81	Rural Character and Lifestyle	<p>... While rural property owners do not expect to be provided with urban-level services, they enjoy a quality of life and sense of self-sufficiency not ordinarily found in the urban areas.</p> <p><u>It is also important to note that rural lifestyle is not sustainable for everyone in an ever-increasing population given land and resource scarcity and that it comes at a cost and inequity to residents. Rural areas lack sufficient services and infrastructure, often creating food, health care, child care, and employment deserts. The services that are provided are minimal and expensive. Furthermore, rural development is disproportionately vulnerable to climate impacts. Whatcom County should intentionally not drive growth to rural areas, especially housing intended for lower incomes that is more appropriate in areas with urban levels of services and infrastructure.</u></p> <p>In the rural element of this chapter, Whatcom County establishes policy consistent with the findings of the legislature and with the above vision of rural character and lifestyle that will...</p>	Galloway	
48	2-80/84	Policy 2DD-2 (A) New #4	Policy 2DD-2: Protect the character of the rural area through the County’s development regulations. In addition to the policies of this plan that provide measures governing rural development, the following County’s key development regulations are incorporated into this plan by reference to assure that the plan contains measures to protect rural character:	Galloway	

			<p>...</p> <p>A. Measures to contain or otherwise control rural development and reduce the inappropriate conversion of undeveloped land into sprawling, low-density development:</p> <p>...</p> <p><u>4. Consider pathways for code-compliant, sustainable, low-impact, off-grid housing in an effort to accommodate housing consistent with rural character and development.</u></p>		
49	2-83/86	Policy 2DD-2 (C)(8)	<p>Policy 2DD-2: Protect the character of the rural area through the County’s development regulations. In addition to the policies of this plan that provide measures governing rural development, the following County’s key development regulations are incorporated into this plan by reference to assure that the plan contains measures to protect rural character:</p> <p>...</p> <p>C. Measures to protect critical areas and surface and groundwater resources:</p> <p>...</p> <p>8. Require evidence of an adequate <u>and legal</u> water supply prior to issuance of any building permit, per WCC 24.11.060, adopted herein by reference.</p>	Galloway	
50	2-83/87	Policy 2DD-2 (C)(10)	<p>Policy 2DD-2: Protect the character of the rural area through the County’s development regulations. In addition to the policies of this plan that provide measures governing rural development, the following County’s key development regulations are incorporated into this plan by reference to assure that the plan contains measures to protect rural character:</p> <p>...</p> <p>C. Measures to protect critical areas and surface and groundwater resources:</p> <p>...</p> <p>10. Limit phosphorus entering Lake Whatcom through WCC 20.51 Lake Whatcom Watershed Overlay District and Lake Whatcom and Lake Samish due to the application of commercial fertilizers to residential laws and public properties through WCC 16.32, adopted herein by reference. <u>Implement the goals and objectives of the Lake Whatcom Management Program Work Plan.</u></p>	Galloway	
51	2-85/88	Policy 2DD-2 Add NEW (E)	<p>Policy 2DD-2: Protect the character of the rural area through the County’s development regulations. In addition to the policies of this plan that provide measures governing rural development, the following County’s key development regulations are incorporated into this plan by reference to assure that the plan contains measures to protect rural character:</p>	Galloway	

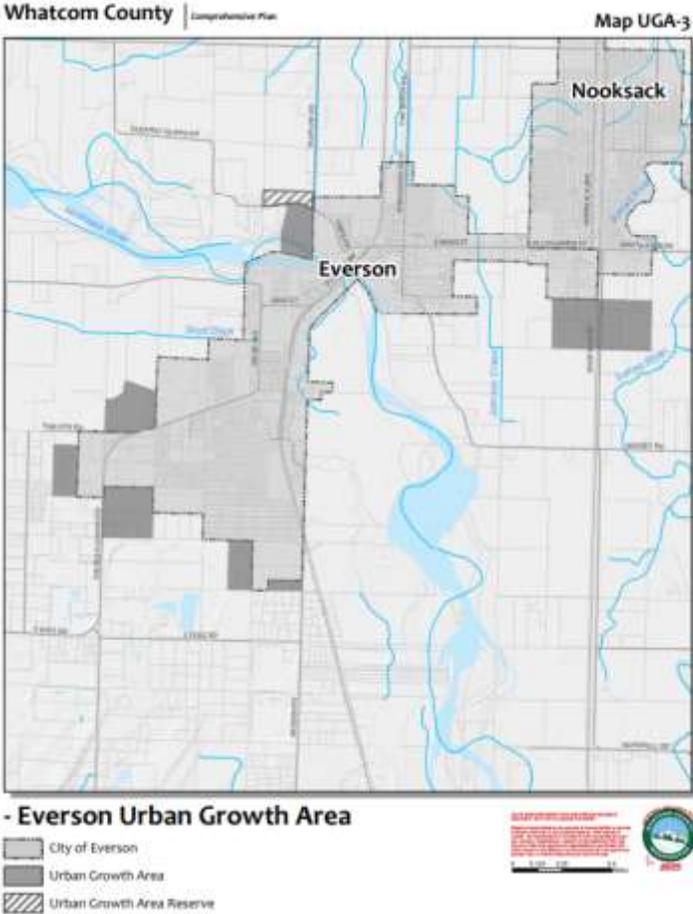
			<p>...</p> <p><u>E. Measures to protect against climate impacted natural hazards.</u></p> <p><u>1. Explore establishing a Climate Overlay District that would consider special development regulations and mitigation measures to protect people, property, and infrastructure from natural hazards including flood, rising sea levels, and wildfires. Use best available science and most current maps and projections.</u></p>		
52	2-89/93	LAMIRDS Type III	<p><u>Galloway Amendment- Scrivener</u></p> <p>Change reference to cottage industries to <u>home-based businesses</u></p>	Galloway	
53	2-96/10 1	Policy 2LL-1	<p><u>Galloway Amendment- Scrivener</u></p> <p>Change reference to cottage industries to <u>home-based businesses</u></p>	Galloway	
54	2-103/1 07	NEW Policy 2NN-5 Re-number subsequent policies	<p><u>Policy 2NN-5: Work with the City of Bellingham to acquire and preserve lands in the Lake Whatcom Watershed pursuant to the goals and objectives of the Lake Whatcom Management Program Work Plan.</u></p>	Galloway	
55	2-103/1 07	Policy 2NN-5/6	<p>If vacant lots in the Lake Whatcom watershed come available due to a tax foreclosure the County may<u>should</u> acquire them, remove the developments rights and then place them back on the market through the public auction process to recover any residual value.</p>	Galloway	
56	2-103/1 08	NEW Policy 2NN-8	<p><u>Policy 2NN-8: Whatcom County should work with Sudden Valley landowners to help them inspect and maintain their private stormwater systems.</u></p>	Galloway	
57	2-103/1 08	Policy 2NN-7/9	<p>Work with all parties to maintain, and appropriately plan for infrastructure, public services, and stormwater retention so that Sudden Valley can develop <u>and mitigate</u> appropriately.</p>	Galloway	
58	2-103/1 08	NEW Policy 2PP-2	<p><u>Policy 2PP-2: Recognize and mitigate against the risk of wildfire for residences adjacent to or surrounded by federal forested lands.</u></p>	Galloway	
59	2-104/1 09	NEW Policy 2QQ-3	<p><u>Policy 2QQ-3: Consider land back opportunities in an effort to return land, stewardship, and sovereignty back to Indigenous peoples, restoring ancestral lands to Lummi Nation and Nooksack</u></p>	Galloway	

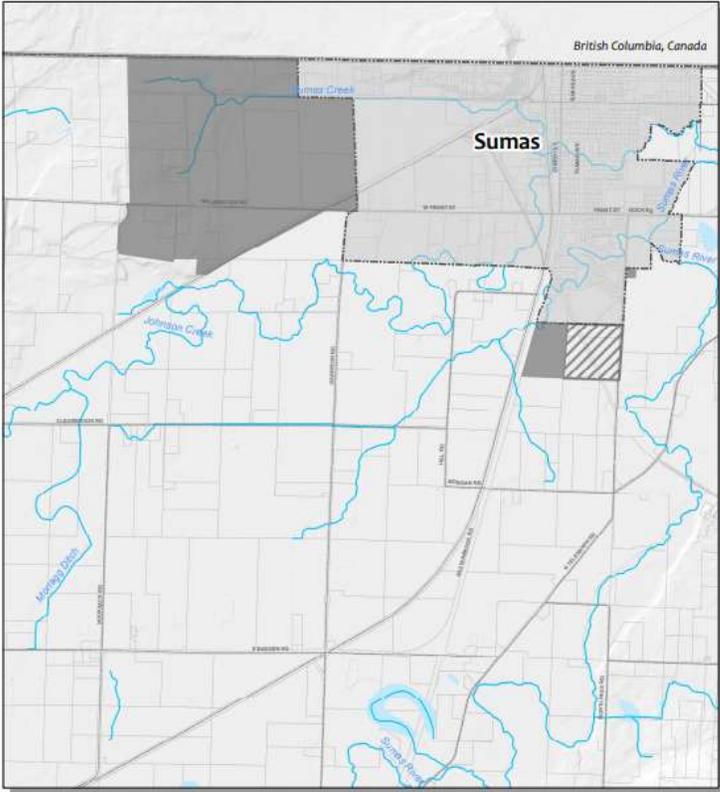
			<u>Indian Tribe, strengthening tribal self-determination, and managing natural resources through traditional practices.</u>		
60	2-110/115	Open Space Areas	Whatcom County residents consider open space and the conservation of farm and timber forest land to be essential to the quality of life in Whatcom County. As urban growth pressures increase, open space, farms, forests, and shorelines are becoming more valuable to the residents of the county. Loss of open space is perceived by the people of Whatcom County as an adverse impact to the quality of life <u>and local economy.</u>	Galloway	
61	2-110/116	Policy 2RR-5	Promote conservation principles by example or by offering educational opportunities <u>to residents and visitors.</u>	Galloway	
62	2-110/116	Policy 2RR-7	Enhance <u>responsible</u> recreation opportunities <u>that keep people safe and don't damage the environment.</u>	Galloway	
63	2-110/116	Policy 2RR-8	Preserve scenic vistas, historic, <u>cultural</u> , and archaeological sites.	Galloway	
64	2-111/116	Open Space Corridors	<u>Galloway Amendment – Scrivener</u> Goal <u>2SS</u> Policy <u>2SS-1</u>	Galloway	
65	2-111/116	Policy 2SS-1	Identify marine, riverine, and other riparian corridors as essential elements of open space corridors <u>and fish and wildlife habitat.</u>	Galloway	
66	2-111/116	Policy 2SS-2	Identify contiguous <u>agriculture and</u> forested landscapes as essential elements of open space corridors. Utilize the Conservation Easement Program to protect working <u>agriculture and</u> forestlands to achieve numerous benefits, including the preservation of the working <u>forestlands</u> base, recreation opportunities, watershed health, and wildlife habitat.	Galloway	
67	2-111/117	Policy 2SS-7	Identify open space corridors in areas highly susceptible to climate change impacts. <u>Recognize the benefits of restored and enhanced riparian habitats for flood risk reduction.</u>	Galloway	

68	2-111/117	Goal 2TT	Promote coordination among the county, cities, Port of Bellingham, <u>Tribes</u> , and other appropriate jurisdictions in order to protect linked greenbelts, parks, and open spaces.	Galloway	
69	2-113/118	NEW Policy 2UU-13 Re-number subsequent policies	<u>Policy 2UU-13 Support opportunities to do on- and off-site mitigation and mitigation banking as a way to support open and green space and habitat restoration and enhancement.</u>	Galloway	
70	2-113/119	Policy 2UU-14/15	Consider an update to <i>Whatcom County Open Space Policies and Criteria and Public Benefit Rating System</i> (as amended in 1995 under Ord. No. 1995-040) to further incentivize voluntary public access, fish and wildlife habitat enhancement and protection on privately owned lands, <u>forests</u> , and shorelines. <u>Consider benefits to climate resilience and ecosystem services. Updating policies, criteria, and rating system may require advocating for State legislation.</u>	Galloway	
71	2-115/121	Essential Public Facilities	<p><u>Galloway Amendment – Scrivener / non-substantive</u></p> <p>Process</p> <p>This section was prepared with consideration of information and procedures adopted by other jurisdictions. An Essential Public Facilities Advisory Committee composed of <u>citizencommunity members</u>, business, health care and government representatives met in 2001-2002 and recommended modifications to this chapter to refine the process for siting essential public facilities. The original essential public facilities ordinance was adopted in 2004 and has since been amended.</p> <p>GMA Goals and Countywide Planning Policies</p> <p>The GMA goal of encouraging <u>citizencommunity</u> participation and coordination is served by this section. This section has been prepared to satisfy that goal while also meeting the intent of the Countywide Planning Policies (CWPPs). The CWPPs require identification of appropriate land for public facilities, a cooperative and structured process to consider siting of essential public facilities of a regional or statewide nature. Adoption of this section and implementation of its goals and policies satisfies Growth Management goals and Countywide Planning Policies.</p>	Galloway	

			<p>GMA Requirements</p> <p>RCW 36.70A.200 requires that each county include a process for identifying and siting essential public facilities. The RCW defines essential public facilities as those facilities that are typically difficult to site and provides a list of such facilities.</p> <p>Background Summary</p> <p>Essential public facilities include those facilities considered difficult to site because of potential adverse effects related to size, bulk, hazardous characteristics, noise, or public health and safety.</p> <p>The Growth Management Act (RCW 36.70A.200) and the Washington Administrative Code (WAC 365-196-550) indicate that essential public facilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are typically difficult to site <u>because of potential adverse effects related to size, bulk, hazardous characteristics, noise, or public health and safety;</u> • Provides a public service, including a local service; and • Are provided, substantially funded or contracted for by government or subject to public service obligations. 		
72	2-117/123	Policy 2XX-3	<p>The Growth Management Act identifies certain essential public facilities and the County Council has taken legislative action, with the assistance of an essential public facilities advisory committee, to identify additional essential public facilities. A proponent or government agency shall apply for a comprehensive plan amendment to add a particular land use to the adopted list of essential public facilities. In order to be added to the list of essential public facilities, the applicant must demonstrate that the facility:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is typically difficult to site; • Provides a public service, which may be a local service; and • Is provided, substantially funded or contracted for by government or subject to public service obligations. 	Galloway	
73	2-118/123	Policy 2XX-4	<p>If significant amendments to the essential public facility siting process are proposed in the future, an essential public facilities committee consisting of citizen<u>community members</u>, business, health care, and government representatives, as appropriate, will be appointed by the County Executive, and confirmed by the County Council, to make recommendations relating to the proposed amendments.</p>	Galloway	
74	2-119/124	Policy 2YY-4	<p>... Highways and railroad tracks that qualify as essential public facilities should be sited in accordance with all of the following principles. These facilities should be located:</p>	Galloway	

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In a manner that minimizes or mitigates noise <u>and other</u> impacts to surrounding residential areas. 		
75	2-128/134	Policy 2YY-15	If significant amendments to the essential public facility siting criteria are proposed in the future, an essential public facilities committee consisting of citizen community members , business, health care, and government representatives, as appropriate, will be appointed by the County Executive, <u>and confirmed by the County Council</u> , to make recommendations relating to the proposed amendments.	Galloway	
76	2-128/134	Goal 2ZZ	Provide for broad participation in the siting process by affected <u>local, state, federal, and tribal</u> agencies, citizens community members , and any other interested parties.	Galloway	
77	2-130/136	Goal 2CCC	Recognize Whatcom County's historical and archeological attributes and identify and encourage the preservation of lands, sites, and structures that have historic or archeological significance. <u>Ensure engagement and coordination with Lummi Nation and Nooksack Indian Tribe.</u>	Galloway	
78	2-123/138	Policy 2CCC-12	The County shall continue to cooperate with <u>the Tribes and</u> cultural groups and their organized representatives of the tourism industry to promote <u>respectful and appropriate</u> cultural tourism and ensure that cultural tourism projects remain eligible for funding assistance through its hotel/motel from the lodging tax funds and grants program.	Galloway	
79	2-132/138	VMT per Capita	The GMA requires the County to address reductions in per capita vehicle miles traveled in the Land Use Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan. A variety of measures may be used, including encouraging more development in UGAs where adequate public facilities and services exist or can be provided in an efficient manner. <u>Achieving our vehicle miles travelled reduction goals will require strong coordination and collaboration with city, state, federal, and tribal governments, Whatcom Transportation Authority, and local businesses.</u>	Galloway	
80	2-133/139	Policy 2DDD-4	Coordinate with cities <u>and employers</u> to plan for housing development <u>of housing, services, alternative transportation, and infrastructure in</u> proximity ate to employment to reduce employment-based vehicle miles traveled.	Galloway	
81	2-133/139	Goal 2EEE	Reduce and mitigate the risk to lives and property posed by wildfires by using land use planning <u>and building code</u> tools to reduce wildfire risk. Reduce wildfire risks to residential development in high risk areas and the wildland urban interface area, separating human development from wildfire prone landscapes, and protecting existing residential development and infrastructure through community wildfire preparedness and fire adaptation measures.	Galloway	

82	2-133/139	NEW Policy 2EEE-3	<p><u>Policy 2EEE-3: Continue to invest County resources into wildfire resilience programs like FireWise and those administered by the Whatcom Conservation District.</u></p>	Galloway	
83			<p>Overall note: Will need to update Maps, UGAs and UGARs depending on Council’s amendments</p>	Galloway	
84	2-38	Everson UGA Proposal	<p>Replace Everson UGA map with the below map reflecting Council’s direction on 2/10/26 (NOTE: this amendment is not reflected in “Chapter 2 – Preliminary Council Draft for 3.3.2026”)</p>  <p>The map, titled 'Map UGA-3' and 'Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan', shows the Everson Urban Growth Area (UGA) and the Nooksack area. The legend indicates three categories: City of Everson (light gray), Urban Growth Area (dark gray), and Urban Growth Area Reserve (hatched). The map shows the City of Everson and the UGA Reserve area, with the UGA area extending to the Nooksack. A scale bar and north arrow are also present.</p>		

85	2-56	Sumas UGA Proposal	<p>Replace Sumas UGA map with the below map reflecting Council’s direction on 2/10/26 (NOTE: this amendment is not reflected in “Chapter 2 – Preliminary Council Draft for 3.3.2026”)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan Map UGA-7</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">- Sumas Urban Growth Area</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> City of Sumas Urban Growth Area Urban Growth Area Reserve 		
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ADDITIONAL AMENDMENTS AFTER 3/3

86	2-5	Background Summary	<p>...All of this needs to be done in light of those aspects of the county which are most valued: <u>treaty natural and cultural resources</u>, water quality, productive agricultural land, economic development in rural areas, distinct boundaries between rural and urban areas, and predictability in land use plans.</p>	Galloway	
87	2-18	Fish and Wildlife	<p>Whatcom County has historically enjoyed abundant and diverse fish and wildlife populations. Maintaining healthy fish and wildlife populations is a vital goal in maintaining the quality of life <u>and protecting treaty natural resources</u> in Whatcom County. Chapter 10: Environment, contains</p>	Galloway	

			additional discussion of fish and wildlife issues, as well as goals and policies regarding fish and wildlife habitat protection and management.		
88	2-20	Issues, Goals, and Policies	<p>Countywide Planning Policies set guidelines for designating city urban growth areas including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small cities' UGAs shall be of an adequate size to allow them to become viable <u>maintain viability as economic centers with a balance of jobs, housing, and quality of life.</u> 	Galloway	
89	2-22	Policy 2N-5	<p>Policy 2N-5: Protect resource lands by controlling or buffering adjacent uses and encouraging increased densities within existing city boundaries before expanding into county resource lands.</p> <p><u>Policy 2N-5: Urban Growth Areas should be established in a way that preserves agricultural land, forestry, mineral resources, treaty natural resources (e.g. salmon, wildlife, traditional foods), tribal cultural resources, water resources, and critical areas.</u></p> <p><u>Policy 2N-6: Urban growth shall maintain proper buffers from natural resource areas to minimize conflicts with natural resources and industries based on them.</u></p> <p><u>Policy 2N-7: Encourage increased densities within existing city boundaries before expanding into county resource lands.</u></p> <p><i>Note: new language from Countywide Planning Policies</i></p>	Galloway	