

Whatcom County

# 2025 Comprehensive Plan and Development Regulations Update & Urban Growth Areas Review

EIS Update | December 4, 2024



# SEPA Process Update

## Existing Conditions

- SEPA required element for baseline evaluation
- Areas of the environment included in the EIS:
  - Earth
  - Air Quality/Climate
  - Water Resources
  - Plants and Animals
  - Land and Shoreline Use
  - Plans and Policies
  - Population, Housing, and Employment
  - Environmental Justice
  - Cultural Resources
  - Transportation
  - Public Services and Utilities
- Input from County departments on existing conditions

## Growth/Land Use Alternatives

- The **No-action Alternative** would assume that the existing Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan and growth projections are carried forward, which represents a **lower growth option** (from 235,800 population in 2023 to 275,450 total County population in 2045).
- **Alternative 1** would use the Washington State Office of Financial Management (OFM) **medium population projection** (292,714 total County population in 2045) and allocate growth to each UGA and the area outside the UGAs based on the same percentage share of growth over the past ten years.
- **Alternative 2** would use a **population projection (303,438 countywide) and allocations** to each UGA and the area outside the UGAs **developed by the cities and County**.
- **Alternative 3** would use a **higher population projection** (321,702 in 2045) than the OFM medium projection, but less than the OFM high projection, and allocate growth to each UGA and the area outside the UGAs based on the same percentage share of growth over the past ten years.

# Next Steps in the EIS Process



Complete impact analysis/comparison of the alternatives and mitigation strategy development.



Publication of the Draft EIS for public comment is anticipated in first quarter of 2025.



Public hearing on the Draft EIS



Publication of the Final EIS is anticipated in the second quarter of 2025.



## EIS and Planning Process

### **Work to Date:**

- Outreach
  - Topic-Specific Citizen Advisory Committees
  - Regional Pop-Ups & Workshops
  - Interactive Community Survey
- Land Capacity Analysis
- Planning Commission & County Council Meetings
- City-County Planner Group Meetings
- EIS Existing Conditions Analysis
- TAZ Modeling/Allocations

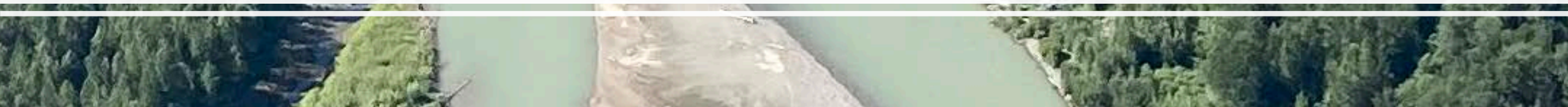
### **Next Steps:**

- Alternatives Analysis
- Publication of the Draft EIS
- Open House & Public Comment Period
- Planning Commission Work Sessions, Hearings, and Recommendations
- Analysis of the Preferred Alternative
- Publication of the Final EIS
- County Council Meetings, Hearing & Adoption





Questions on the Process?





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<https://www.whatcomcounty.us/4218/2025-Comprehensive-Plan-Updates>