



Memorandum

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

FROM: Lucas Clark, Planner II

THROUGH: Mark Personius, Director

DATE: February 26, 2026

SUBJECT: Docketing Comp Plan & Development Regulation Amendments

Pursuant to State and local law, proposed Comprehensive Plan and development regulation amendments are docketed for further review by the County Council each year. This year, there are fifteen (15) new applications and a number of previous applications (initiated in past years) on the proposed docket.

New Applications

Whatcom County has submitted or received fifteen (15) new proposals relating to the following topics for consideration of adding to the annual docket of potential Comprehensive Plan and/or development regulation amendments in 2026:

1. 2026-2032 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Update
2. Meat Processing Code Amendment (from Agricultural Advisory Committee)
3. Marijuana Social Equity Retail Code Amendment
4. Outdoor Music Festivals
5. Review proposed City and County UGA Reserves and/or UGA Reserve study areas or overlays
6. Wells Serving APO Clustered Lots
7. Review Mineral Resource Land (MRL) Designation and ADM Revision Standards for Surface Mines
8. 2026 Critical Areas Ordinance (CAO) Update
9. Whatcom County Code Amendments- allows annual code amendments and GMA compliance-type items necessary throughout the year
10. Lynden School District Impact Fees
11. Ferndale School District Impact Fees

12. 2025 Comprehensive Plan, Development Regulation, UGA Update, and Zoning Map Amendments – Including Chapter 3 (Housing) Related Zoning Code Text Amendments
13. Review Public Benefit Rating System
14. Puget Sound Energy (PSE) Code Amendment
15. 4656 Bay Road Urban Growth Area (UGA) Expansion

Brief descriptions of these proposed amendments are included in the attached draft Exhibit A—Docket.

A fee waiver has not been requested for either the privately initiated Birch Bay UGA Expansion or the Puget Sound Energy (PSE) Code Amendments. If the Council chooses to docket either of the privately initiated Comprehensive Plan amendments, they will be added to the Docket once the approximately \$10,000 in fees have been paid. If the fees are not paid within 30 days of docketing, the department shall close the application and remove it from the docket per the process outlined in WCC 22.10.020.

The Council should determine which of the above proposals to docket for further review. Docketed amendments, as required and appropriate, will be submitted for SEPA review, evaluated by the Planning Department, and go to a public hearing before the Planning Commission prior to returning to the County Council for a final decision. If an amendment is not docketed by the Council, it will not go forward for further review.

Completed Items Removed from the Docket

PDS completed review of six (6) items from last year's docket.

- ✓ Birch Bay UGA Expansion, 4.77 Acres (7850 Blaine Road). Privately initiated.
Completed with Comprehensive Plan updates
- ✓ Birch Bay UGA Expansion, 37.66 Acres (Koehn Road Area). Privately initiated.
Completed with Comprehensive Plan updates
- ✓ Impervious Surface Code Amendments-
Wade King Elementary School proposed an amendment that removes impervious surface limitations within certain watersheds as they apply to public schools.
- ✓ 2025-2031 Capital Facilities Planning- Yearly amendments to the capital facilities element of the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan. Appendix F. It was determined to delay this update until the 2026-2032 cycle.
- ✓ 2025 Whatcom County Code Amendments
- ✓ 2025 Comprehensive Plan, Development Regulation, & UGA Update.

Previous Docket Items

In addition to the new proposed docket items, the following projects were previously docketed for review. They remain active docket items and are included in the proposed resolution, as review is still on-going:

- Lake Whatcom Watershed Phosphorus Neutral Development Code

Status: In progress.

- Agricultural Storage Use Code Amendment

- *Status: In progress.*

- Clean Energy Code Amendments

Status: In progress.

- Mineral Resource Lands Expansion – Breckenridge Rd.

Status: In progress.

- Mineral Resource Lands – County-wide Designation Process

Status: In progress.

- Code Enforcement Amendments

Status: In Progress

- Agricultural Strategic Plan Implementation

Status: In progress.

- Mineral Resource Lands Expansion – North Star Rd.

Status: In progress.

Thank you for considering the proposed resolution. We look forward to discussing it with you.