



Whatcom County

COUNTY COURTHOUSE
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Bellingham, WA 98225-4038
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Agenda Bill Master Report

File Number: AB2025-638

File ID:	AB2025-638	Version:	2	Status:	Approved
File Created:	09/04/2025	Entered by:	KOos@co.whatcom.wa.us		
Department:	Council Office	File Type:	Resolution		
Assigned to:	Council Committee of the Whole			Final Action:	09/09/2025
Agenda Date:	09/09/2025			Enactment #:	RES 2025-027
Related Files:					

Primary Contact Email: koos@co.whatcom.wa.us

TITLE FOR AGENDA ITEM:

Resolution amending Resolution 2025-013 to docket an additional comprehensive plan and zoning amendment related to related to Whatcom County Code Chapter 20.40 to include agriculture storage as a primary permitted use

SUMMARY STATEMENT OR LEGAL NOTICE LANGUAGE:

See attached

HISTORY OF LEGISLATIVE FILE

Date:	Acting Body:	Action:	Sent To:
09/09/2025	Council Committee of the Whole	RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL	
	Aye: 7	Buchanan, Byrd, Donovan, Elenbaas, Galloway, Scanlon, and Stremier	
	Nay: 0		
09/09/2025	Council	APPROVED	
	Aye: 7	Buchanan, Byrd, Donovan, Elenbaas, Galloway, Scanlon, and Stremier	
	Nay: 0		

Attachments: Proposed Resolution, Draft Ordinance for discussion

PROPOSED BY: ELENBAAS
INTRODUCED: SEPTEMBER 9, 2025

RESOLUTION NO. 2025-027

AMENDING RESOLUTION 2025-013 TO DOCKET AN ADDITIONAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND ZONING AMENDMENT RELATED TO WHATCOM COUNTY CODE CHAPTER 20.40 TO INCLUDE AGRICULTURE STORAGE AS A PRIMARY PERMITTED USE

WHEREAS, agriculture is a cornerstone of Whatcom County's economy and culture, with 100,000 acres of productive farmland across the county generating over \$500 million in market value from agriculture production (Whatcom County); and

WHEREAS, the state Growth Management Act requires Whatcom County to designate agricultural lands "that have long-term significance for the commercial production of food or other agricultural products" (RCW 36.70A.170) and to adopt development regulations to assure the conservation of agricultural and other natural resource lands (RCW 36.70A.060); and

WHEREAS, the current Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan (Chapter 8, Resource Lands) calls for to county to "conserve and enhance Whatcom County's agricultural land base for the continued production of food and fiber" (Goal 8A) and to "... maintain and enhance the economic viability of the agricultural industry in the county over the long term" (Policy 8A-3); and

WHEREAS, agricultural operations depend on adequate facilities for storing crops, feed, seed, harvested products, farm machinery, and equipment; and

WHEREAS, areas within Whatcom County are particularly vulnerable to flooding, necessitating the storage of crops and equipment outside of the floodplain to increase food system resilience; and

WHEREAS, under current code interpretation, agricultural storage is often treated as an accessory use, creating a barrier for farmers wishing to build barns, silos, grain bins, cold storage, or equipment sheds in an offsite location outside of the floodplain; and

WHEREAS, designating agricultural storage as a primary permitted use within the Agricultural Zone provides certainty to farmers, reduces unnecessary permitting conflicts, and supports a functional agriculture economy; and

WHEREAS, permitting agriculture storage under WCC 20.40.50 will also allow agriculture storage as a permitted use under WCC 20.38 Agriculture Protection Overlay.

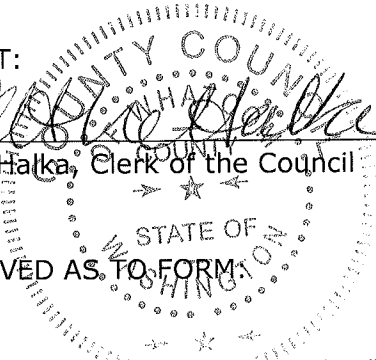
NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Whatcom County Council hereby docket for formal review the amendment shown on the attached Exhibit A.

APPROVED this 19th day of September, 2025.

ATTEST:


Cathy Halka, Clerk of the Council

APPROVED AS TO FORM:


Kimberly Thulin (by email 9/4/25/ko)
Civil Deputy Prosecutor

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WASHINGTON

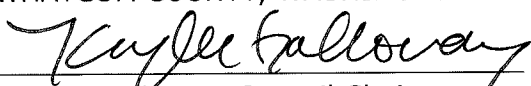

Kaylee Galloway, Council Chair

Exhibit A — Docket

File #	File Name	Applicant	Description	Location	Fee Waiver Granted?
PLN2025-00001	Birch Bay UGA Expansion (7850 Blaine Road)	Arnie Properties LP	To designate a 4.77-acre parcel as Birch Bay Urban Growth Area. The parcel is currently designated Birch Bay Urban Growth Area-Reserve.	7850 Blaine Road	No
PLN2025-00002	Birch Bay UGA Expansion (Koehn Road Area)	Calluna Properties LLP	To designate six parcels in total 37.66 acre, as Birch Bay Urban Growth Area. The parcels are currently designated R5A.	3951111285570000, 3951111285340000, 3951111285470000, 3951111415220000, 3951111415100000, 3951111455010000	No
PLN2025-00003	Impervious Surface Code Amendments (Bellingham School District Application)	Bellingham School District #501	The Bellingham School District (District) is requesting a Development Regulation Amendment that exempts public schools from the limitation of impervious surfaces in the Water Resource Protection Overlay District.	Countywide	Yes
PLN2025-00004	Whatcom County Code Amendments	Whatcom County	Review and revise the Whatcom County Zoning Code and other sections of the County Code to implement Comprehensive Plan policies and/or address issues identified in the administration of the codes. Revisions needed to achieve consistency with the Growth Management Act may also be considered.	Countywide	N/A
PLN2025-00005	CIP Capital Facilities Planning	Whatcom County	Amend the capital facilities element of the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan, including the Seven Year Capital Facilities Program Appendix F.	Countywide	N/A
<u>PLN2025-00006</u>	<u>Agriculture Storage</u>	<u>Whatcom County Council</u>	<u>Amend WCC Chapter 20.40 Agriculture (AG) District to include agriculture storage as a primary permitted use.</u>	<u>Agriculture Zone</u>	<u>N/A</u>

PLN2024-00005	Clean Energy Code Amendments	Whatcom County Council	Amendments to the Whatcom County Code to support solar energy, geothermal energy, and hydrogen energy in accordance with Resolution 2023-044.	Countywide	N/A
PLN2023-00001	2025 Comprehensive Plan, Development Regulation, and UGA Update	Whatcom County	Review and revise the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan and development regulations to ensure compliance with the requirements of RCW 36.70A. Review urban growth areas and densities permitted within urban growth areas in conjunction with the Cities. If necessary, revise urban growth areas and/or associated development regulations to accommodate the urban growth projected for the succeeding twenty-year period.	Countywide	N/A
PLN2019-00002	MRL Expansion - Breckenridge Rd.	Concrete Nor' West	Amend the comprehensive plan designation from Rural to Mineral Resource Lands (MRL) and amend the zoning map to expand a MRL overlay zone on approximately 22.8 acres off Breckenridge Rd., east of Nooksack. The underlying zoning is Rural one dwelling/five acres (R5A).	Parcel # 400428 165430 and a portion of parcel #400428 254460; Within the NW ¼ and NE ¼ of section 28, T40N, R4E, W.M.	No
PLN2017-00004	MRL County-wide Designation Process	Whatcom County	Through a county-led countywide assessment, seek to identify and designate potential commercially significant mineral resource lands, to meet future demand, compatible with water resources, agricultural lands, forest lands and other GMA goals pursuant to Comprehensive Plan Policy 8R-1.	Countywide	N/A
PLN2015-00003	Code Enforcement Amendments	Whatcom County	Create a new Whatcom County Code (WCC) Chapter 22.15, called "Code Compliance Procedures" to establish an efficient system to address enforcement of building, critical areas and zoning codes. The proposal would consolidate the existing code enforcement provisions from WCC 15, 16.16, and 20 into a new WCC 22.15.	N/A	N/A

PLN2012-00007	Agricultural Strategic Plan Implementation	Whatcom County	Resolution 2018-027 was approved by the County Council on 8/8/2018 declaring support for the updated Whatcom County Agricultural Strategic Plan. Immediate priorities in this plan include reviewing designation of Agricultural Lands of Long-term Commercial Significance and the agricultural zoning code. Reviewing the Rural Study Areas as listed in the 2007 Rural Land Study and making recommendations for possible changes in accordance with Resolution 2009-040 (100,000 acre target), Resolution 2018-027 (Updated Agricultural Strategic Plan) and RCW 36.70A.170 and .177 will be included. Other short-term and medium-term priorities in this plan include development of policies and regulations that provide for protection of the best agricultural areas while supporting development at zoned densities and continued work on development of the Natural Resource Marketplace. These activities may lead to proposed changes to the agricultural portions of the Comprehensive Plan and zoning regulations.	Proposal relates to Agricultural and Rural lands	N/A
PLN2012-00009	MRL Expansion — North Star Rd.	Ferndale Ready Mix & Gravel	Amend the comprehensive plan designation from Rural to Mineral Resource Lands (MRL) and amend the zoning map to expand a MRL overlay zone on approximately 19.7 acres on the west side of North Star Rd., south of Brown Rd. The underlying zoning is Rural one dwelling/five acres (R5A).	Parcel #390110 212100; Within the SW ¼ of section 10, T39N, R1E, W.M.	N/A