

September 27, 2022

TO: Whatcom County Planning Commission

FROM: Doralee Booth, Birch Bay Chamber Director - County Liaison
Danielle Gaughen, Executive Director, Birch Bay Chamber

We would like to address the Planning Commission regarding the proposed Six-Year Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for Whatcom County Facilities 2023-2028. We are aware of the importance of the “6-year CIP to have a positive impact on the Counties ability to provide public facilities by planning ahead for such facilities.”

Birch Bay is designated as an Urban Growth Area (UGA) by Whatcom County. The resort, recreation and residential community has a population of over 10,115 residents. If incorporated Birch Bay would be the fourth largest city in Whatcom County. Our economy is based on tourism and our population more than doubles in the summer months.

We have no essential public restrooms to accommodate the needs of tourists and visitors who come to visit and recreate along the central/resort-commercial shoreline of Birch Bay. The need is becoming critical. The 4-acre Birch Bay Beach Park along Birch Bay Drive was purchased by Whatcom County in 2014. The public planning for the development of the Park was adopted in 2017. The need for essential public restrooms was urgent then and is critical now! The CIP lists Birch Bay Beach funding for 2028. Capital project funds will be needed much sooner to develop the first phase of the Beach Park which will provide the needed essential public restrooms.

(See Birch Bay Beach Park Master Planning)

<https://www.whatcomcounty.us/1809/Birch-Bay-Community-Park-Master-Planning>

