

Whatcom County Council Special Committee of the Whole

**COUNTY COURTHOUSE
311 Grand Avenue, Ste #105
Bellingham, WA 98225-4038
(360) 778-5010**



Committee Minutes - Draft Minutes

Tuesday, June 16, 2026

9 AM

Hybrid Meeting - Council Chambers

**HYBRID MEETING - RECESS FOR LUNCH FROM 12:00 P.M. TO 1:00 P.M. -
ADJOURNS BY 4:30 P.M. (PARTICIPATE IN-PERSON, SEE REMOTE JOIN
INSTRUCTIONS AT www.whatcomcounty.us/joinvirtualcouncil, OR CALL
360.778.5010)**

COUNCILMEMBERS

Elizabeth Boyle
Barry Buchanan
Ben Elenbaas
Kaylee Galloway
Jessica Rienstra
Jon Scanlon
Mark Stremmler

CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Cathy Halka, AICP, CMC

Call To Order

Council Chair Kaylee Galloway called the meeting to order at 9:12 a.m. in a hybrid meeting.

Galloway stated that, due to technical difficulties, they would recess until 9:27 a.m.

The meeting recessed at 9:12 a.m. until 9:27 a.m.

Roll Call

Present: 7 - Elizabeth Boyle, Barry Buchanan, Ben Elenbaas, Kaylee Galloway, Jessica Rienstra, Jon Scanlon, and Mark Stremmer

Announcements**Public Comments (Comprehensive Plan)**

1. [AB2026-422](#) Public comments on all items related to the draft Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan

The following people spoke:

- Bridget Bryck
- John Lehman
- Ryan Bowman
- Lisa Adam
- Bill Craven
- Peter Condyles
- David Parsons
- Kaia Hayes
- Heather Witzel Lakin
- Charlie Brown
- Bill Geyer
- Brian Gass
- Perry Eskridge
- Charles Burgess
- Dwayne Engelsman
- Coleman Hoyt
- Alan Chapman
- Andrea Doyle
- Seth Newsome

- Scott Rockwell
- Susan Hutton
- Darcy Jones
- Pamela Brady
- Lance Calloway

Hearing no one else, Galloway closed public comment.

This agenda item was RECEIVED.

Committee Discussion (Comprehensive Plan)

1. [AB2026-185](#) Discussion and preliminary Council direction on Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan Chapter 1, Introduction and Growth Projections

Galloway introduced discussion of Comprehensive Plan Chapter 1 Introduction. She stated that councilmembers can choose to make motions to amend the draft.

Elenbaas moved to amend Chapter 1 - Council Draft as Amended 5.19.2026 to include Items 20-26 as shown in the Chart of Proposed Council Changes for 6.16.2026.

Stremmler seconded the motion.

Elenbaas provided information about his proposed amendments. He stated that the Business Coalition's comments repeatedly raised several connected implementation concerns such as predictable permitting, clear timelines, etc. He said his amendments create a broad implementation goal and a small set of supporting policies that apply consistently across the plan.

Scanlon asked where the new goal and policies should be placed within the chapter. He suggested adding them as a new goal 1B and associated policies.

Elenbaas accepted the suggestion as a friendly amendment.

Rienstra asked if staff had comments on the proposal.

Mark Personius, Planning and Development Services (PDS) Director, stated that the department does not have comments.

Elenbaas amended his motion to replace "shall" statements with "should" except in Policy 1B.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Boyle, Buchanan, Galloway, Rienstra, Scanlon, Elenbaas, and
Stremmler

Nay: 0

Buchanan moved to request staff to prepare Chapter 1 as amended
6.16.2026 for introduction and public hearing at a future meeting.

Scanlon seconded the motion.

Scanlon clarified that the goal is to prepare the chapters for introduction on
June 23 and a public hearing on July 14.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Boyle, Buchanan, Galloway, Rienstra, Scanlon, Elenbaas, and
Stremmler

Nay: 0

This agenda item was DISCUSSED AND MOTION(S) APPROVED.

MOTION 1:

Motion approved to amend Chapter 1 - Council Draft as Amended 5.19.2026 to include Items 20-26 as shown in
the Chart of Proposed Council Changes for 6.16.2026 as Goal 1B and policies 1B-1 through 1B-6, with the word
“shall” in 1B-3 changed to “should.”

MOTION 2:

Motion approved to request staff to prepare Chapter 1 as amended 6.16.2026 for introduction and public hearing at
a future meeting.

2. [AB2026-186](#) Discussion and preliminary Council direction on Whatcom County Comprehensive
Plan Chapter 2, Land Use

Galloway introduced discussion of Comprehensive Plan Chapter 2 Land
Use.

Scanlon moved to begin review of Chapter 2 using the attachment Chapter 2
- Preliminary Council Draft for 6.16.2026, which is the current version of
the chapter with Planning Commission recommendations from January
2026 and additional edits proposed and motions passed by councilmembers
as listed in the Chapter 2 - Chart of Proposed Council Changes for
6.16.2026.

Rienstra seconded the motion.

Galloway clarified that the chapter under discussion includes the proposed amendments, so councilmembers will need to make a motion and vote to remove any unwanted amendments.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Boyle, Buchanan, Galloway, Rienstra, Scanlon, Elenbaas, and Stremmler

Nay: 0

Galloway turned discussion to Item 173 in the Chapter 2 Chart of Proposed Council Changes for 6.16.2026, which amends Policy 2A-8.

Councilmembers discussed the proposed amendment.

Galloway turned discussion to Item 174, which amends Policy 2A-9.

Councilmembers discussed the proposed amendment.

Boyle asked about the inclusion of language regarding "expansion of industrial uses."

Elenbaas stated that he sees the policy as encouraging the use of the county's current industrial lands.

Scanlon questioned the use of the word "ensuring."

Elenbaas suggested changing "ensuring" to "encouraging."

Stremmler stated he agrees with the change.

Councilmembers continued to discuss the amendment.

Galloway moved to amend Item 174 so that it reads "...while encouraging continued viability of industrial uses within designated industrial zones."

Rienstra seconded the motion.

Councilmembers discussed the motion.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 5 - Boyle, Buchanan, Galloway, Rienstra, and Scanlon

Nay: 2 - Stremmler and Elenbaas

Galloway turned discussion to Item 175, amending Goal 2H.

Stremmler stated that the amendment is intended to bring clarity to Goal 2H.

Councilmembers discussed the proposed amendment.

Scanlon moved to strike the proposed language in Item 175.

Boyle seconded the motion.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Boyle, Buchanan, Galloway, Rienstra, Scanlon, Elenbaas, and Stremmler

Nay: 0

Galloway turned discussion to Item 176, which amends Policy 2N-8.

Boyle provided information about the proposed amendment, stating that she believes it fairly represents the interests of both industry and community.

Councilmembers discussed the proposed amendment.

Boyle asked if staff have concerns about the proposal.

Mark Personius, Planning and Development Services (PDS) Director, stated that the department is fully supportive of the wording changes.

Galloway turned discussion to Items 177-179.

Boyle provided information about proposed amendments in Items 177 and 178, which make changes to language in Policy 2CC-20 and 2CC-21 respectively.

Councilmembers discussed the proposed amendments.

Scanlon provided information about his proposed amendment in Item 179, which is to revert to the original language as approved by the Planning Commission for Goal 2CC and all related policies and delete all subsequent amendments.

Elenbaas directed attention to resolutions (on file) from the Blaine and Ferndale School Districts in support of economic development and industrial activity at Cherry Point, as well as a letter (on file) from the City

of Ferndale regarding the Cherry Point UGA.

Scanlon moved to adopt Item 179.

Rienstra seconded the motion.

Councilmembers discussed the motion.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 5 - Boyle, Buchanan, Galloway, Rienstra, and Scanlon

Nay: 2 - Stremmler and Elenbaas

Galloway turned discussion to Lummi Nation's comments on Chapter 2.

Galloway moved to include the "Tribal Participation in Whatcom County Comprehensive Planning" as proposed by Lummi Nation into the GMA requirements section of Chapter 2.

Rienstra seconded the motion.

Scanlon asked where the amendment would appear in the text.

Galloway stated that the amendment would appear on page 2-4 under the GMA Requirements heading. She said it would create a new subheading with subsections (a) through (c).

Councilmembers discussed the motion.

Scanlon suggested simply referring to the RCW rather than restating the entire code.

Rienstra suggested removing the subsections and replacing them with "Tribal participation in Whatcom County comprehensive planning continues to follow RCW 36.70A.040(8).

Galloway amended her motion to state under a new Tribal Participation in Whatcom County Comprehensive Planning section: Section 36.70A.040(8) of the Growth Management Act provides for Tribal participation in Whatcom County comprehensive planning.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 5 - Boyle, Buchanan, Galloway, Rienstra, and Scanlon

Nay: 2 - Stremmler and Elenbaas

Galloway turned discussion to Lummi Nation's comments on Goal 2B. She said the first recommendation was to add a comment about master plan resort communities. She suggested adding the comment to the background paragraph.

Galloway moved to add "Master Planned Resort Communities have historically been located on sacred, historic and cultural sites that are significant to Tribes in Whatcom County. These resorts have caused irreversible damage to Tribes' sacred, culturally sensitive areas, cultural properties, and/or have made it difficult to practice treaty-protected rights, gather traditional foods and medicines, to protect and connect with sacred places" to the background information regarding master plan resort communities and amend Policy 2B-9 (as proposed by Lummi Nation) to include the following final sentence: "Master Planned Resorts should not be located on a Tribe's traditional cultural site and/or usual and accustomed treaty fishing, hunting, and gathering sites."

Boyle seconded the motion.

Councilmembers discussed the motion.

Galloway amended her motion to say: "Engage the Tribes to avoid locating Master Planned Resorts on a Tribe's traditional cultural site and/or usual and accustomed treaty fishing, hunting and gathering sites."

Councilmembers continued to discuss the motion.

Galloway amended her motion to only address the background statement and not 2B-9.

Scanlon asked if legal could weigh in on the proposed amendment.

Rienstra asked if legal review would be provided for all amendments.

Galloway withdrew her motion.

Scanlon asked a question about a proposed amendment that includes an RCW citation.

Kimberly Thulin, Prosecuting Attorney, stated that withdrawal of the proposed amendment is probably appropriate. She added that there will be legal review as to form of proposed changes to the Comprehensive Plan.

Galloway asked if councilmembers are interested in adding Lummi Nation's suggested policy regarding flood infrastructure.

Galloway moved to include new Policy 2K-7 as requested by Lummi Nation with the addition of Nooksack Tribe and cities of Nooksack, Everson, Ferndale, Lynden, and Sumas so that the policy reads as follows:

Policy 2K-7 Upgrade and strengthen infrastructure to protect against flooding.

1. Continue the Floodplain Integrated Planning (FLIP) team process for floodplain management planning and prioritization of actions that protect against flooding.
2. Implement infrastructure improvements recommended by FLIP Team through partnerships with the Cities of Nooksack, Everson, Ferndale, Lynden, and Sumas and the Lummi Nation and Nooksack Indian Tribe.
3. Prioritize and implement transportation improvements that can help prevent flooding (i.e. Partner with the Lummi Nation on Slater Road Elevation).

Boyle seconded the motion.

Scanlon suggested striking the reference to Slater Road.

Galloway accepted the suggestion as a friendly amendment.

Councilmembers discussed the motion.

Scanlon moved to amend Policy 2K-7 to strike the first sentence and number 1 and begin renumbering after that.

Rienstra seconded the motion.

Councilmembers discussed the motion.

Scanlon withdrew his amendment.

Rienstra suggested striking two and adding "strengthen infrastructure that protects against."

Galloway accepted the suggestion as a friendly amendment so that the policy reads as follows:

Policy 2K-7 Upgrade and strengthen infrastructure that protects against flooding.

1. Continue the Floodplain Integrated Planning (FLIP) team process for floodplain management planning and prioritization of actions that protect against flooding.
2. Implement infrastructure improvements recommended by FLIP Team through partnerships with Cities of Nooksack, Everson, Ferndale, Lynden, and Sumas and the Lummi Nation and Nooksack Indian Tribe.
3. Prioritize and implement transportation improvements that can help prevent flooding.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 6 - Boyle, Buchanan, Galloway, Rienstra, Elenbaas, and Stremmer
Nay: 1 - Scanlon

Galloway moved to request staff to prepare Chapter 2 as amended today for introduction and public hearing at a future meeting.

Boyle seconded the motion.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 5 - Boyle, Buchanan, Galloway, Rienstra, and Scanlon,
Nay: 2 - Elenbaas and Stremmer

Council recessed for lunch until 1:15 p.m.

This agenda item was DISCUSSED AND MOTION(S) APPROVED.

MOTION 1:

Motion approved to begin review of Chapter 2 using the attachment Chapter 2 - Preliminary Council Draft for 6.16.2026, which is the current version of the chapter with Planning Commission recommendations from January 2026 and additional edits proposed and motions passed by councilmembers as listed in the Chapter 2 - Chart of Proposed Council Changes for 6.16.2026.

MOTION 2:

Motion approved to amend Item 174 (from Chapter 2 - Chart of Proposed Council Changes for 6.16.2026) to read "...while encouraging continued viability of industrial uses within designated industrial zones."

MOTION 3:

Motion approved to strike the proposed language in Item 175 (from Chapter 2 - Chart of Proposed Council Changes for 6.16.2026).

MOTION 4:

Motion approved to adopt Item 179 (from Chapter 2 - Chart of Proposed Council Changes for 6.16.2026).

MOTION 5:

Motion approved to include a new "Tribal Participation in Whatcom County Comprehensive Planning" subsection on page 2-4 under the GMA Requirements heading with a new subsection that reads as follows:

"Section 36.70A.040(8) of the Growth Management Act provides for Tribal participation in Whatcom County comprehensive planning."

MOTION 6:

Motion approved to include new Policy 2K-7 as requested by Lummi Nation with the addition of Nooksack Tribe and cities of Nooksack, Everson, Ferndale, Lynden, and Sumas and the removal of the reference to "Slater Road" so that the policy reads as follows:

"Policy 2K-7 Upgrade and strengthen infrastructure that protects against flooding.

1. Continue the Floodplain Integrated Planning (FLIP) team process for floodplain management planning and prioritization of actions that protect against flooding.
2. Implement infrastructure improvements recommended by FLIP Team through partnerships with Cities of Nooksack, Everson, Ferndale, Lynden, and Sumas and the Lummi Nation and Nooksack Indian Tribe.
3. Prioritize and implement transportation improvements that can help prevent flooding."

MOTION 7:

Motion approved to request staff to prepare Chapter 2 as amended 6.16.2026 for introduction and public hearing at a future meeting.

3. [AB2026-188](#) Discussion and preliminary Council direction on Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan Chapter 3, Housing

Galloway introduced discussion of Comprehensive Plan Chapter 3 Housing.

Scanlon moved to begin review of Chapter 3 using the attachment Chapter 3 - Council Draft for 6.16.2026, which is the current version of the chapter with Planning Commission recommendations from January 2026 and additional edits proposed and motions passed by councilmembers as listed in the Chapter 3 - Chart of Proposed Council Changes for 6.16.2026.

Boyle seconded the motion.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Boyle, Buchanan, Galloway, Rienstra, Scanlon, Elenbaas, and Stremler

Nay: 0

Elenbaas moved to amend Items 58-60 (from Chapter 3 - Chart of Proposed Council Changes for 6.16.2026) to replace "shall" with "should" per Planning and Development Services' recommendation.

Stremler seconded the motion.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Boyle, Buchanan, Galloway, Rienstra, Scanlon, Elenbaas, and Stremler

Nay: 0

Boyle turned discussion to Item 56, which she said may have already been addressed in Chapter 1 amendments.

Galloway moved to amend Item 56 to replace "shall" with "should."

Boyle seconded the motion.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Boyle, Buchanan, Galloway, Rienstra, Scanlon, Elenbaas, and Stremler

Nay: 0

Galloway turned discussion to Items 61-62.

Boyle provided information about the proposed amendments, which separate Policy 3A-1 into two policies and amends the last sentence.

Kimberly Thulin, Prosecuting Attorney's Office, stated that the use of "clear" could be problematic because it is subjective.

Boyle moved to strike the amended language in Item 61.

Scanlon seconded the motion.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Boyle, Buchanan, Galloway, Rienstra, Scanlon, Elenbaas, and

Stremmer
Nay: 0

Galloway turned discussion to Item 63.

Matt Aamot, Planning and Development Services (PDS), requested that "ensure" be changed to "facilitate" in Policy 3A-2.

Galloway moved to change "ensure" to "facilitate" in Policy 3A-2.

Boyle seconded the motion.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Boyle, Buchanan, Galloway, Rienstra, Scanlon, Elenbaas, and Stremmer
Nay: 0

Boyle pointed out that "facilitate" is used twice in Policy 3A-2.

Galloway moved to amend Policy 3A-2 to change "facilitate annexation" to "support annexation."

Scanlon seconded the motion.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Boyle, Buchanan, Galloway, Rienstra, Scanlon, Elenbaas, and Stremmer
Nay: 0

Elenbaas turned discussion to tenant protections in Policy 3K-2, which were referenced in public comment.

Scanlon moved to amend Policy 3K-2 to strike "adopt" and replace it with "consider."

Galloway seconded the motion.

Councilmembers discussed the motion.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 6 - Boyle, Buchanan, Galloway, Scanlon, Elenbaas, and Stremmer
Nay: 1 - Rienstra

Elenbaas turned discussion to Policy 3K-3.

Councilmembers discussed the policy.

Scanlon moved to request staff to prepare Chapter 3 as amended 6.16.2026 for introduction and public hearing at a future meeting.

Elenbaas stated he still wants to make a motion.

Scanlon withdrew his motion.

Elenbaas moved to delete Policy 3K-3.

Stremmler seconded the motion.

The motion failed by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Buchanan, Elenbaas, and Stremmler

Nay: 4 - Galloway, Scanlon, Rienstra, and Boyle

Scanlon moved to request staff to prepare Chapter 3 as amended 6.16.2026 for introduction and public hearing at a future meeting.

Rienstra seconded the motion.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 5 - Boyle, Rienstra, Buchanan, Galloway, and Scanlon

Nay: 2 - Elenbaas and Stremmler

This agenda item was DISCUSSED AND MOTION(S) APPROVED.

MOTION 1:

Motion approved to begin review of Chapter 3 using the attachment Chapter 3 - Council Draft for 6.16.2026, which is the current version of the chapter with Planning Commission recommendations from January 2026 and additional edits proposed and motions passed by councilmembers as listed in the Chapter 3 - Chart of Proposed Council Changes for 6.16.2026.

MOTION 2:

Motion approved to amend Items 58-60 (from Chapter 3 - Chart of Proposed Council Changes for 6.16.2026) to replace "shall" with "should" per Planning and Development Services' recommendation.

MOTION 3:

Motion approved to amend Item 56 (from Chapter 3 - Chart of Proposed Council Changes for 6.16.2026) to replace "shall" with "should."

MOTION 4:

Motion approved to strike the amended language in Item 61 (from Chapter 3 - Chart of Proposed Council Changes for 6.16.2026).

MOTION 5:

Motion approved to change "ensure" to "facilitate" in Policy 3A-2.

MOTION 6:

Motion approved to amend Policy 3A-2 to change "facilitate annexation" to "support annexation."

MOTION 7:

Motion approved to amend Policy 3K-2 to strike "adopt" and replace it with "consider."

MOTION 8:

Motion approved to request staff to prepare Chapter 3 as amended 6.16.2026 for introduction and public hearing at a future meeting.

4. [AB2026-216](#) Discussion and preliminary Council direction on Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan Chapter 4, Capital Facilities

Galloway introduced discussion of Comprehensive Plan Chapter 4 Capital Facilities.

Galloway asked about the motion needed to amend Chapter 4.

Cathy Halka, Clerk of the Council, stated that they could move to begin review of the current version of the chapter.

Scanlon moved to request that staff prepare Chapter 4, Preliminary Council Draft for 6.16.2026 including PDS amendment Item 18 in the Chart of Proposed Council Changes for 6.16.2026 for inclusion in a future agenda bill file for Council introduction and public hearing.

Rienstra seconded the motion.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 5 - Boyle, Buchanan, Galloway, Rienstra, and Scanlon

Nay: 2 - Elenbaas and Stremmler

This agenda item was DISCUSSED AND MOTION(S) APPROVED.

MOTION 1:

Motion approved to request that staff prepare Chapter 4, Preliminary Council Draft for 6.16.2026 including PDS amendment Item 18 in the Chart of Proposed Council Changes for 6.16.2026, for inclusion in a future agenda bill file for Council introduction and public hearing.

5. [AB2026-217](#) Discussion and preliminary Council direction on Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan Chapter 5, Utilities

Galloway introduced discussion of Comprehensive Plan Chapter 5 Utilities, which does not have any new amendments.

Elenbaas asked if geothermal information was added to Chapter 5.

Scanlon stated that it was included.

This agenda item was DISCUSSED.

6. [AB2026-218](#) Discussion and preliminary Council direction on Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan Chapter 6, Transportation

Galloway introduced discussion of Comprehensive Plan Chapter 6 Transportation.

Elenbaas stated that he wanted to sponsor all of the proposed language from the Whatcom Business Coalition recommendations, which included amendments to Chapter 6. He turned discussion to proposed amendments to Policies 6A-1 and 6A-4.

Kiana Oos, Council Staff, stated that she does not have any current proposals for Chapter 6, as some that were received were withdrawn.

Lance Calloway stated that the amendments to Chapter 6 were withdrawn.

This agenda item was DISCUSSED.

7. [AB2026-231](#) Discussion and preliminary Council direction on Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan Chapter 7, Economic Development

Galloway introduced discussion of Comprehensive Plan Chapter 7 Economic Development.

Boyle moved to begin review of Chapter 7 using the attachment Chapter 7- Council Draft for 6.16.2026, which is the current version of the chapter with Planning Commission recommendations from January 2026 and additional edits proposed and motions passed by councilmembers as listed in the Chapter 7 - Chart of Proposed Council Changes for 6.16.2026.

Scanlon seconded the motion.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Boyle, Buchanan, Galloway, Rienstra, Scanlon, Elenbaas, and Stremmler

Nay: 0

Galloway moved to retain Policy 7B-16.

Buchanan seconded the motion.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 5 - Boyle, Buchanan, Galloway, Rienstra, and Scanlon

Nay: 2 - Elenbaas and Stremmler

Galloway moved to amend Policy 7I-2 to strike the language "without imposing additional regulatory conditions, mandates, or costs on private development beyond existing law."

Rienstra seconded the motion.

Galloway provided information about the intent of her proposed amendment.

Councilmembers discussed the motion.

Galloway asked Planning and Development Services (PDS) staff to weigh in on the policy.

Mark Personius, PDS Director, stated that he does not see the policy having an impact on land use regulations.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 5 - Boyle, Buchanan, Galloway, Rienstra, and Scanlon

Nay: 2 - Elenbaas and Stremmler

Boyle moved to amend Policy 7G-7 to add "Plan for adequate provision of fully serviced, shovel-ready, and permit ready..."

Rienstra seconded the motion.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Boyle, Buchanan, Galloway, Rienstra, Scanlon, Elenbaas, and Stremmler

Nay: 0

Scanlon moved to request staff to prepare Chapter 7 as amended 6.16.2026 for introduction and public hearing at a future meeting.

Rienstra seconded the motion.

Elenbaas asked about Policy 7D-9 regarding developing a countywide wetland mitigation bank.

Galloway stated that Policy 7D-9 is already incorporated in the draft.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 5 - Boyle, Buchanan, Galloway, Rienstra, and Scanlon

Nay: 2 - Elenbaas and Stremmler

This agenda item was DISCUSSED AND MOTION(S) APPROVED.

MOTION 1:

Motion approved to begin review of Chapter 7 using the attachment Chapter 7- Council Draft for 6.16.2026, which is the current version of the chapter with Planning Commission recommendations from January 2026 and additional edits proposed and motions passed by councilmembers as listed in the Chapter 7 - Chart of Proposed Council Changes for 6.16.2026.

MOTION 2:

Motion approved to amend to retain Policy 7B-16.

MOTION 3:

Motion approved to amend Policy 7I-2 to strike the language "without imposing additional regulatory conditions, mandates, or costs on private development beyond existing law."

MOTION 4:

Motion approved to amend Policy 7G-7 to add "Plan for adequate provision of fully serviced, shovel-ready, and permit ready..."

MOTION 5:

Motion approved to request staff to prepare Chapter 7 as amended 6.16.2026 for introduction and public hearing at a future meeting.

8. [AB2026-250](#) Discussion and preliminary Council direction on Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan Chapter 8, Resource Lands

Galloway introduced discussion of Comprehensive Plan Chapter 8 Resource Lands.

Boyle moved to begin review of Chapter 8 using the attachment Chapter 8 - Preliminary Council Draft for 6.16.2026, which is the current version of the chapter with Planning Commission recommendations from January 2026 and additional edits proposed and motions passed by councilmembers as listed in the Chapter 8 - Chart of Proposed Council Changes for

6.16.2026.

Scanlon seconded the motion.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Boyle, Buchanan, Galloway, Rienstra, Scanlon, Elenbaas, and Stremler

Nay: 0

Galloway turned discussion to Item 103, which amends the section on Reducing Land Use Impacts.

Rienstra asked Councilmember Stremler to explain the proposed amendment.

Stremler stated that Tribal treaty rights are already addressed elsewhere in the Comprehensive Plan.

Councilmembers discussed the proposed amendment.

Rienstra moved to remove Item 103 and retain the language about treaty rights.

Galloway seconded the motion.

Councilmembers discussed the motion.

Scanlon suggested rephrasing to state: "Above all else, treaties shall be honored and upheld as the supreme law of the land."

Rienstra accepted the suggestion as a friendly amendment.

Galloway suggested stating, "It is also important to honor and uphold treaties as the supreme law of the land."

Rienstra accepted the suggestion as a friendly amendment.

Rienstra amended her motion to add "pursuant to the US Constitution," so the sentence reads as follows:

It is also important to honor and uphold treaties as the supreme law of the land, pursuant to the US Constitution.

Councilmembers discussed the motion.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 5 - Boyle, Buchanan, Galloway, Rienstra, and Scanlon,

Nay: 2 - Elenbaas and Stremmer

Scanlon turned discussion to Planning and Development Services' (PDS) comments on Policies 8A-2, 8A-15, and 8A-16.

Mark Personius, PDS Director, stated that Carmichael Clark submitted some revised proposed language for Policy 8A-2 yesterday.

Elenbaas stated that he would support Carmichael's language.

Personius stated that PDS' recommendation is to keep the existing language to retain "should include" rather than "may."

Councilmembers discussed the proposal.

Elenbaas moved to accept the revised policy language suggested in the Carmichael Clark document from 6.15.2026 for Policy 8A-2.

Stremmer seconded the motion.

Councilmembers discussed the motion.

Personius stated that PDS is comfortable with the language on screen.

Galloway moved to amend to change "may" to "should" in Policy 8A-2.

Rienstra seconded the motion.

Buchanan asked for Galloway to provide an explanation of how she sees "may" differing from "should."

Galloway stated that there are definitions in code, but "should" provides more emphasis than "may."

Councilmembers continued to discuss the policy.

The motion to amend carried by the following vote:

Aye: 5 - Boyle, Buchanan, Galloway, Rienstra, and Scanlon,

Nay: 2 - Elenbaas and Stremmer

Rienstra moved to amend Policy 8A-2 to strike "has been" and replace with "is."

Galloway seconded the motion.

Councilmembers discussed the motion.

Personius stated that the last agriculture census stated that there were over 100,000 acres in use, though there are only about 88,000 acres zoned as agriculture.

The motion to amend carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Boyle, Buchanan, Galloway, Rienstra, Scanlon, Elenbaas, and Stremmler

Nay: 0

The main motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Boyle, Buchanan, Galloway, Rienstra, Scanlon, Elenbaas, and Stremmler

Nay: 0

Elenbaas asked about Policy 8A-15.

Personius stated that PDS recommends removing the insertion in Policy 8A-15, as the policy relates to agricultural mitigation. He said that both the Rural Land Study and the agricultural land assessments are living documents, which change as conditions change.

Kiana Oos, Council Staff, provided an overview of the options for Policy 8A-15.

Elenbaas moved to amend Policy 8A-15 to reflect the 6.15.2026 version (recommended by Caitac).

Stremmler seconded the motion.

Councilmembers discussed the motion.

Personius stated that PDS does not recommend the addition of the new sentence.

Galloway asked if PDS has concerns about the language as presented on

screen.

Personius stated that the policy should read as follows:

The County shall require mitigation when lands designated as agricultural resource lands of long-term commercial significance under RCW 36.70A.170 are de-designated and converted to urban growth areas/urban growth area reserve, as applicable, on the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map that result in an overall net loss of agricultural designated lands.

Councilmembers continued to discuss the policy.

The motion failed by the following vote:

Aye: 2 - Stremmler and Elenbaas

Nay: 5 - Boyle, Buchanan, Galloway, Rienstra, and Scanlon

Galloway moved the PDS-recommended version of Policy 8A-15, which strikes language and amends subsection 8A-15(B), so that the policy reads as follows:

The County shall require mitigation when lands designated as agricultural resource lands of long-term commercial significance under RCW 36.70A.170 are de-designated and converted to urban growth areas/urban growth area reserve, as applicable, on the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map that result in an overall net loss of agricultural designated lands.

The mitigation requirements shall include:

A. ...

B. For each property designated as agricultural resource land (ARL) at the time of adoption of this Comprehensive Plan, a mitigation agreement memorialized by covenant between the affected property owner(s), city and the county shall be required and filed with the County Auditor within:

- ...

Rienstra seconded the motion.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 4 - Boyle, Buchanan, Galloway, and Rienstra

Nay: 2 - Stremmler and Scanlon

Abstain: 1 - Elenbaas

Personius stated that Council has a remaining amendment for Policy 8A-16 to consider.

Scanlon moved to approve the PDS version of Policy 8A-16.

Boyle seconded the motion.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Boyle, Buchanan, Galloway, Rienstra, Scanlon, Elenbaas, and Stremmler

Nay: 0

Elenbaas asked about the creation of small-lot ag zones in 40-acre zones.

Personius stated that the Rural Land Study focuses on 10-zoned areas.

Scanlon moved to request staff to prepare Chapter 8 as amended for introduction and public hearing at a future meeting.

Rienstra seconded the motion.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 5 - Boyle, Buchanan, Galloway, Rienstra, and Scanlon

Nay: 2 - Stremmler and Elenbaas

This agenda item was DISCUSSED AND MOTION(S) APPROVED.

MOTION 1:

Motion approved to begin review of Chapter 8 using the attachment Chapter 8 - Preliminary Council Draft for 6.16.2026, which is the current version of the chapter with Planning Commission recommendations from January 2026 and additional edits proposed and motions passed by councilmembers as listed in the Chapter 8 - Chart of Proposed Council Changes for 6.16.2026.

MOTION 2:

Motion approved to remove Item 103 (from the Chart of Proposed Council Changes for 6.16.2026) and retain the language about treaty rights as amended so that the final sentence of the "Reducing Land Use Impacts" section reads as follows:

"It is also important to honor and uphold treaties as the supreme law of the land, pursuant to the US Constitution."

MOTION 3:

Motion approved to amend Carmichael Clark's Policy 8A-2 to change "may" to "should."

MOTION 4:

Motion approved to amend Carmichael Clark's Policy 8A-2 to change "has been" to "is."

MOTION 5:

Motion approved to accept the revised policy language suggested in the Carmichael Clark document from 6.15.2026 for Policy 8A-2, as amended so that the policy reads as follows:

"Maintain a working agricultural land base sufficient to support a viable local agricultural industry by considering the impacts to farmers, farmworkers and other food chain workers and agricultural lands as apart of the legislative decision making process. The County's longstanding goal is to maintain a minimum of 100,000 acres of agricultural land to support a healthy agricultural industry. To support working farms and maintain the agricultural land base the County should:

- Maintain a voluntary density credit program where development incentives are offered in cities and/or UGAs if density credits are purchased by the developer. Funds from the density credit program shall supplement the Conservation Easement Program..."

MOTION 6:

Motion approved to accept the PDS-recommended version of Policy 8A-15, which strikes language and amends subsection 8A-15(B) so that the policy reads as follows:

"The County shall require mitigation when lands designated as agricultural resource lands of long-term commercial significance under RCW 36.70A.170 are de-designated and converted to urban growth areas/urban growth area reserve, as applicable, on the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map that result in an overall net loss of agricultural designated lands.

The mitigation requirements shall include:

A....

B. For each property designated as agricultural resource land (ARL) at the time of adoption of this Comprehensive Plan, a mitigation agreement memorialized by covenant between the affected property owner(s), city and the county shall be required and filed with the County Auditor within:..."

MOTION 7:

Motion approved to approve the PDS version of Policy 8A-16.

MOTION 8:

Motion approved to request staff to prepare Chapter 8 as amended for introduction and public hearing at a future meeting.

9. [AB2026-251](#) Discussion and preliminary Council direction on Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan Chapter 9, Parks and Recreation

Galloway stated that there are no additional proposed amendments to Comprehensive Plan Chapter 9 Parks and Recreation.

This agenda item was DISCUSSED.

10. [AB2026-261](#) Discussion and preliminary Council direction on Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan Chapter 10, Environment

Galloway introduced discussion of Comprehensive Plan Chapter 10 Environment.

Scanlon moved to begin review of Chapter 10 using the attachment Chapter 10 - Preliminary Council Draft for 6.16.2026, which is the current version of the chapter with Planning Commission recommendations from January 2026 and additional edits proposed and motions passed by councilmembers as listed in the Chapter 10 - Chart of Proposed Council Changes for 6.16.2026.

Boyle seconded the motion.

The motion failed by the following vote:

Aye: 2 - Elenbaas and Stremmler

Nay: 5 - Boyle, Buchanan, Galloway, Rienstra, and Scanlon

Galloway moved to request staff to prepare Chapter 10 as amended on 6.2.2026 for introduction and public hearing at a future meeting.

Scanlon seconded the motion.

Elenbaas stated that he was going to move recommended edits from AGC to Chapter 10.

Scanlon stated that he felt a lot of the proposed amendments were duplicative or would require additional stakeholder work.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 5 - Boyle, Buchanan, Galloway, Rienstra, and Scanlon,

Nay: 2 - Elenbaas and Stremmler

This agenda item was DISCUSSED AND MOTION(S) APPROVED.

MOTION 1:

Motion approved to request staff to prepare Chapter 10 as amended on 6.2.2026 for introduction and public hearing at a future meeting.

11. [AB2026-262](#) Discussion and preliminary Council direction on Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan Chapter 12, Climate

Galloway introduced discussion of Comprehensive Plan Chapter 12 Climate.

Lauren Clemens, Public Works, stated that she would like to respond to stakeholder comments regarding how emissions targets are calculated. Clemens shared proposed draft language on screen clarifying the relationship between the GMA planning requirements and existing state and federal regulations. She stated that the language might be important to add specifically as it relates to emissions tracking over time.

Galloway moved to amend Chapter 12 - Preliminary Council Draft as amended 5.19.2026 to include the new section titled “Relationship to Federal, State, and Regional Regulations” as presented on screen.

Boyle seconded the motion.

Councilmembers discussed the proposed addition with Clemens.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 6 - Boyle, Buchanan, Galloway, Rienstra, Elenbaas, and Scanlon

Nay: 1 - Stremmler

Boyle moved to request staff to prepare Chapter 12 as amended 6.16.2026 for introduction and public hearing at a future meeting.

Scanlon seconded the motion.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 5 - Boyle, Buchanan, Galloway, Rienstra, and Scanlon

Nay: 2 - Stremmler and Elenbaas

This agenda item was DISCUSSED AND MOTION(S) APPROVED.

MOTION 1:

Motion approved to amend Chapter 12 – Preliminary Council Draft as amended 5.19.2026 to include the new section, Relationship to Federal, State, and Regional Regulations, as presented on screen.

MOTION 2:

Motion approved to request staff to prepare Chapter 12 as amended 6.16.2026 for introduction and public hearing at a future meeting.

12. [AB2026-263](#) Discussion and preliminary Council direction on Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan Appendices (Appendix A: Glossary, Appendix B: Acronyms, Appendix D: Bibliography, Appendix E: 20-Year Capital Facilities Plan, Appendix G: Airport Overlay Zones, Appendix H: Airport Imaginary Surfaces, Appendix I: Housing Needs Analysis, Appendix J: Subsidized Housing Needs and Funding) and Foothills Subarea Plan Amendments

Galloway introduced discussion of the Comprehensive Plan Appendices.

Scanlon moved to approve the new version of Appendix D: Bibliography for 6.16.2026.

Boyle seconded the motion.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 5 - Boyle, Buchanan, Galloway, Rienstra, and Scanlon

Nay: 2 - Elenbaas and Stremmler

Scanlon moved to approve the new version of Appendix E: 20-year capital facilities plan for 6.16.2026.

Buchanan seconded the motion.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 5 - Boyle, Buchanan, Galloway, Rienstra, and Scanlon

Nay: 2 - Elenbaas and Stremmler

Galloway asked if there are any other amendments.

Personius stated there are not.

Boyle moved to request staff to prepare the Appendices A, B, D, E, G, H, I, J, and the Foothills Subarea Plan as amended for introduction and public hearing at a future meeting.

Scanlon seconded the motion.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 5 - Boyle, Buchanan, Galloway, Rienstra, and Scanlon

Nay: 2 - Elenbaas and Stremmler

This agenda item was DISCUSSED AND MOTION(S) APPROVED.

MOTION 1:

Motion approved to approve the new version of Appendix D: Bibliography for 6.16.2026.

MOTION 2:

Motion approved to approve the new version of Appendix E: 20-Year Capital Facilities Plan for 6.16.2026.

MOTION 3:

Motion approved to request staff to prepare the Appendices A, B, D, E, G, H, I, J, and the Foothills Subarea Plan as amended for introduction and public hearing at a future meeting.

13. [AB2026-473](#) Discussion and preliminary Council direction on Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan Appendix L: Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Subelement, Washington State Department of Commerce Approval

Galloway introduced discussion of Comprehensive Plan Appendix L.

Lauren Clemens, Public Works, stated that Council approved a resolution stating their plan to submit the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Subelement for state review and approval. Within that review process, the county needs to provide a policy index that specifically states which policies are within the scope. She said the appendix will be submitted as supporting documentation in the approval process. She added that Cherry Point amendments removed earlier today will be taken out of the chart since they do not have preliminary Council approval. She noted that, in the future, Council can use discretion about whether or not to resubmit the items for approval; otherwise, items will go through the regular 60-day-notice period.

Boyle moved to request staff to prepare Appendix L - Greenhouse Gas Reduction Subelement for introduction and public hearing at a future meeting.

Scanlon seconded the motion.

Galloway moved to amend Appendix L to strike reference to 2CC-19 through 2CC-21.

Boyle seconded the motion.

The motion to amend carried by the following vote:

Aye: 5 - Boyle, Buchanan, Galloway, Rienstra, and Scanlon,

Nay: 2 - Elenbaas and Stremmler

The main motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 5 - Boyle, Buchanan, Galloway, Rienstra, and Scanlon,

Nay: 2 - Elenbaas and Stremmler

Elenbaas asked about the 2CC policies.

Clemens stated that the state is only reviewing new amendments.

This agenda item was DISCUSSED AND MOTION(S) APPROVED.

MOTION 1:

Motion approved to amend Appendix L to strike reference to 2CC-19 through 2CC-21.

MOTION 2:

Motion approved to request staff to prepare Appendix L - Greenhouse Gas Reduction Subelement as amended for introduction and public hearing at a future meeting.

14. [AB2026-249](#) Discussion regarding schedule for Council review of the comprehensive plan update

Galloway introduced discussion of the updated schedule for Comprehensive Plan review. She stated that Council plans to introduce ordinances adopting all Comprehensive Plan-related items on June 23. A public hearing and final action is planned for the Council meeting on July 14.

Kimberly Thulin, Prosecuting Attorney's Office, stated that the turnaround time for legal review is not realistic. She said her preference would be to delay introduction until July 14, but it is Council's call.

Galloway stated they could stick with the current schedule and plan to re-introduce if legal finds any issues. She asked whether there has been discussion about the implementation of an memorandum of agreement (MOA) received from Nooksack.

Mark Personius, Planning and Development Services (PDS) Director, stated that the MOA was received very recently, so it is currently being reviewed by legal and conversations are ongoing. Personius added that PDS does not have concerns about pushing introduction of the Comprehensive Plan ordinances to July 14.

Kiana Oos, Council Staff, stated that the Comprehensive Plan ordinances will not be available until later in the week (around June 18).

This agenda item was DISCUSSED.

Items Added by Revision

There were no agenda items added by revision.

Other Business

Scanlon moved that Council supports including evaluation of potential industrial lands reserve study areas or overlays as part of the UGAR study that has been docketed under PLN2026-00011, including consideration of up to 500 acres countywide for potential future industrial land.

Rienstra seconded the motion.

Scanlon provided information about the purpose of the motion.

Councilmembers discussed the motion.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 5 - Boyle, Buchanan, Galloway, Rienstra, Scanlon, and Stremmer

Nay: 1 - Elenbaas

Out of Meeting: 1 - Buchanan

MOTION 1:

Motion approved that Council supports including evaluation of potential industrial lands reserve study areas or overlays as part of the UGAR study that has been docketed under PLN2026-00011, including consideration of up to 500 acres countywide for potential future industrial land.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:15 p.m.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WA

Cathy Halka, Council Clerk

Kaylee Galloway, Council Chair

Meeting Minutes prepared by Jenna Gernand