

# **Whatcom County Council Committee of the Whole**

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



## **Action Summary**

**Tuesday, June 24, 2025**

**1:35 PM**

**Hybrid Meeting - Council Chambers**

**HYBRID MEETING - ADJOURNS BY 4:30 P.M. (PARTICIPATE IN-PERSON, SEE  
REMOTE JOIN INSTRUCTIONS AT [www.whatcomcounty.us/joinvirtualcouncil](http://www.whatcomcounty.us/joinvirtualcouncil), OR  
CALL 360.778.5010)**

### **COUNCILMEMBERS**

Barry Buchanan  
Tyler Byrd  
Todd Donovan  
Ben Elenbaas  
Kaylee Galloway  
Jon Scanlon  
Mark Stremmler

### **CLERK OF THE COUNCIL**

Cathy Halka, AICP, CMC

**Call To Order****Roll Call**

**Present:** 7 - Barry Buchanan, Tyler Byrd, Todd Donovan, Ben Elenbaas, Kaylee Galloway, Jon Scanlon, and Mark Stremmer

**Announcements****Special Presentation**

1. [AB2025-368](#) Presentation on the independent study of the countywide fire and EMS system by Rick Harrison, Mission Critical Partners

**PRESENTED**

2. [AB2025-478](#) Update on the EMS budget and related programming

**PRESENTED**

**Committee Discussion**

1. [AB2025-438](#) Discussion relating to preliminary Planning Commission recommendations on Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan Chapter 1 (Introduction and Growth Projections) associated with the 2025 Comprehensive Plan Update

**DISCUSSED AND MOTION(S) APPROVED**

**MOTION 1**

Motion approved to amend the section “How the Plan was Created,” at the top of page 1-3 of the “Chapter 1 - Council Proposed Amendments” to change “citizen” to “community” and to add “consistent with the Public Participation Plan” at the end so that it reads:

Third, extensive community participation was facilitated through meetings, presentations, public hearings, and written comments made throughout this process, consistent with the Public Participation Plan.

**MOTION 2**

Motion approved to amend the first sentence in the section “Countywide Planning Policies” on page 1-3 so that it reads:

During the Comprehensive Plan process, the Whatcom County Council, in conjunction with the cities, adopted a set of Countywide Planning Policies (see Appendix C).

**MOTION 3**

Motion approved to amend Goal 1A (page 1-4) to add “accessible,” after “accountable” so that it reads:

Ensure that government activities, regulations and policies are transparent, accountable, accessible, and easy to understand.

**MOTION 4**

Motion approved to amend the first sentence of the third paragraph under section “Population Projections” (page 1-8) to strike “and therefore requires no further justification” so that the first sentence reads:

The County's 2045 population projection of 303,438 is within OFM's range.

**MOTION 5**

Motion approved to amend section “Employment Projections” (page 1-10) to preserve the word “Projections” so that the section is titled “Employment Projections” as opposed to “Employment” and to amend the third paragraph under that section (page 1-10) so that it reads:

Employment allocations were based largely on the local request recognizing the incentives that cities have for larger employment areas (sales tax, property tax). Most of the employment projections displayed in Table 5 for the Urban Growth Areas and the area outside UGAs greatly exceed the “high” projections provided in the Technical Analysis (Leland Report).

**MOTION 6**

Motion approved to amend the fourth paragraph under section “Current Land Use” (page 1-14) so that it reads:

The majority of single-family homes are concentrated in the cities, Urban Growth Areas (UGAs), Limited Areas of More Intense Rural Development (LAMIRDS), such as Sudden Valley, Columbia Valley, Glacier, Lake Samish, Lake Whatcom (north end), Cain Lake, Birch Bay, and Sandy Point.

**MOTION 7**

Motion approved to amend the fifth paragraph under section “Current Land Use” (page 1-14) to add a sentence to the end so that the paragraph reads:

A prominent characteristic of Whatcom County housing is the high number of vacation, resort, and second-home units found throughout the county. In 2020, approximately 50% of the "vacant" units were occupied part of the year for seasonal, recreational or occasional use (2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B25004). Over 1,000 single-family housing units in the unincorporated areas are used as short-term vacation rentals (cite the study PDS provided Council).

2. [AB2025-480](#) Discussion on Ferry System fares

**DISCUSSED**

**Items Added by Revision****Other Business****Adjournment**