



**RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS OF THE
WHATCOM COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
JULY 10, 2025**

Public Hearing and Work Session

1

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Whatcom County Planning Commission Chair, Kelvin Barton at 6:00 p.m.

Roll Call

Present: Kelvin Barton, Suneeta Eisenberg, Rud Browne, Nicholas Greif, Daniel Dunne, Dominic Mocer, Scott Van Dalen

Absent: Jim Hansen, Julie Jefferson

Staff Present: Mark Personius, Rod Lamb, Bennett Knox, Lauren Clemens, Aileen Kogut-Aguon and Jacqui Sullivan

Department Update

Mark Personius, Director of Planning and Development Services (PDS), provided an update on the chapters that are expected to be discussed at the next few meetings. He spoke on the joint meeting with Council that will occur on July 22nd, following with a public hearing on July 24th for Chapter 4: Capital Facilities and the Land Capacity Analysis and Methodologies.

Mr. Personius continued his update highlighting the email he sent out to the Commission, responding to Commissioner Dunne's comment on sequential meetings, and reiterating the importance of getting the chapters finished and sent to the Commission and to Council in a timely manner. He acknowledged that the timeline is ambitious, but hopeful that the update can be done in the timeframe given.

Open Session Public Comment

Kaia Hayes provided public comment.

Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Browne spoke on wanting to make an amendment to the approved minutes from the June 12th meeting. This can occur at the following meeting under "new business".

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Timestamp: 6:10p.m

June 26th meeting minutes will be presented at the following meeting.

2025 Comprehensive Plan Update – Chapter 9: Parks & Recreation

Timestamp: 6:11p.m

Bennett Knox, Whatcom County Parks & Recreation Director, provided an overview on the 2025 Comprehensive Plan Update – Chapter 9: Parks and Recreation. He addressed the proposed changes being made to the chapter, including identifying regional park improvement needs, expanding the discussion of regional trail networks, and increasing intergovernmental coordination.

Mr. Knox continued his overview by addressing the public comments that were sent in via email and some questions the Commissioners had about Comprehensive Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan (CPROS).



**RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS OF THE
WHATCOM COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
JULY 10, 2025**

Public Hearing and Work Session

2

a) Public Hearing

Timestamp: 6:20p.m

Sonja Max provided public comment regarding the development of the multi-use trail corridors that connect population centers.

Todd Elsworth, founder and CEO of Recreation Northwest, provided public comment on the Coast Millennium trail.

Daniel Probst, Project Lead for the Bellingham Mount Baker Trail, provided public comment on the Mount Baker Trail and the proposed Whatcom Loop Trail.

Kathryn Mitchell, Senior Engineer at BP's Cherry Point refinery, provided public comment regarding the proposed update to the Coast Millennium trail that runs through part of BP's property.

Jacob Stewart provided public comment regarding the trails within the chapter.

b) Work Session

Timestamp: 6:40p.m

Commissioner Mocerri asked about the established level of services and whether or not those should be reviewed.

Mr. Knox replied that they did not update those levels primarily because it was in the CPROS plan prior to this update. The next CPROS update will be in 2026 and 2028, which will focus on, if funded, the opportunity to look for revisions based on the analysis of demand in the community.

Rod Lamb, Parks Design and Development Manager for Parks and Recreation, added to Mr. Knox's comment stating, the levels of service have been developed in the late 90s and have been adjusted only a couple of times since then. Population versus facilities essentially is what established those numbers. He said that in the next update, Parks and Recreation wants to do a better analysis of evaluating if those are appropriate levels of service.

Commissioner Mocerri asked about the Bay-to-Baker trail map that was sent in from a member of the public and why it is different than the trail map that was provided by the Parks department.

Mr. Knox stated that the trail map in the Comp plan is conceptual in nature. It gives a basis for some of the implementation actions that the department may pursue.

Commissioner Mocerri stated there should be maps to reflect constructed trails verses proposed ones. All maps should be updated as much as possible.

Mr. Knox stated that the Parks department is comfortable having conceptual routes on the map is sufficient for their purposes at this point in the update.

The Commission discussed issues around property rights, trail routes, and the need to update maps to reflect constructed trails verses proposed ones.

2Commissioner Chair Barton moved to adopt the BP map along the Kickerville as a wide corridor, not a specific line, and remove the Coast Millennium Trail through BP on map 9-2.



**RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS OF THE
WHATCOM COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
JULY 10, 2025**

Public Hearing and Work Session

3

Commissioner Dunne seconded.

Commissioner Greif stated he supports keeping all of the proposed trails in there as written, having to make mild changes.

Commissioner Eisenberg echoed Commissioner Greif's support for a comprehensive planning approach that includes parks and recreation, viewed through multiple lenses such as transportation, land use and climate impacts. She highlighted the importance of multimodal connections, referencing the Cascadia Innovation Corridor in 2022 on high-speed rails. She finished her comment, stating that there needs to be inclusive public input and consultation with private property owners on large or evolving projects.

Commissioner Greif moved to amend the motion to be a direction for staff to evaluate the proposed alternative route, and if they believe it makes sense to add, return it to the Commission at a later date. – **There was no second.**

Mr. Personius asked the Chair to amend the motion to say that the BP map would be an alternate route to the map that is being proposed from the Parks Department.

Commission Chair Barton is not in favor of showing an alternate route because the proposed alternate route presented by staff is not practical. The property owner stated they did not want people crossing their property.

Commissioner Eisenberg asked if the existing property owners that cross the existing proposed line, were consulted on before creating the map.

Roll Call Vote: Ayes- Van Dalen, Browne, Dunne, Barton

Nays- Greif

Abstain- Mocerri, Eisenberg (Ayes- 4; Nays- 1; Abstain- 2). The motion carried.

Timestamp: 7:29p.m

Commissioner Dunne asked what is the budget for current operations maintenance to take care of the current parks the county has, verses the budget for creating new parks.

Mr. Knox stated the main sources of funding for acquisition are primarily conservation futures. The current climate funds are currently under pressure. The department is looking at external sources of grant funds through the transportation and conservation office.

3Commissioner Mocerri moved to move the chapter along to Council.

Commissioner Van Dalen seconded.

**Roll Call Vote: Ayes- Mocerri, Van Dalen, Browne, Dunne, Greif, Barton
(Ayes- 6; Nays- 0; Abstain- 0). The motion carried.**

Timestamp: 7:43p.m

Unfinished Business

Timestamp: 1:45p.m



**RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS OF THE
WHATCOM COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
JULY 10, 2025**

Public Hearing and Work Session

4

Commissioner Dunne asked how the Commissioners feel about continuing the chapters and update through the next year, pass December 2025.

Commissioner Van Dalen commented that he would like to get the update done as soon as possible

Commissioner Mocerri agreed with Commissioner Van Dalen.

4Commissioner Browne moved to have all changes (additions, deletions, and modifications) that receive a majority vote, be accompanied by a sidebar comment explaining the source and reasoning for the change.

Commissioner Mocerri seconded.

Commissioner Dunne asked to clarify what the expectation would be for the sidebar comment.

Aileen Kogut-Aguon, PDS Coordinator, asked where the comments go. She asked if the comments would be in the minutes or the documents that go into the packet to Council.

Commissioner Browne clarified that it would go into the documents that Council will read such as the chapter updates for the Comprehensive Plan.

Ms. Kogut-Aguon stated that the planner in charge of the chapter will add the notes into the document. There are two versions, a mark-up version and a clean version.

Roll Call Vote: Ayes- Mocerri, Van Dalen, Browne, Dunne, Greif, Barton

(Ayes- 6; Nays- 0; Abstain- 0). The motion carried.

Timestamp: 8:02p.m

Adjournment


Timestamp: 8:02p.m

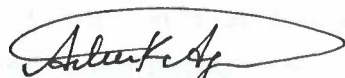
Ms. Kogut-Aguon mentioned the joint meeting with Council on July 22nd at 3p-4:30p. and the potential meeting with them on August 6th. She is waiting on confirmation from the Council Clerk.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:03 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Aileen Kogut-Aguon.

WHATCOM COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION ATTEST:


Kelvin Barton, Chair


Aileen Kogut-Aguon, Secretary