

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, May 19, 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 9:03 a.m. in a hybrid meeting.

Roll Call

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

Announcements

Public Comment (Comprehensive Plan)

1. [AB2026-395](#) Public comments on all chapters of the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan

The following people spoke:

- Peter Condyles
- Lisa Adams
- Charlie Brown
- Bill Geyer
- Dwayne Engelsman
- Darcy Jones
- Brian Gass
- Alex Wenger

Hearing no one else, Galloway closed public comment.

This agenda item was RECEIVED.

Committee Discussion

1. [AB2026-273](#) Discussion and preliminary Council direction on the Preface to the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan

Galloway introduced discussion of the Comprehensive Plan Preface. She stated that Council preliminarily approved the Land Acknowledgement in the Preface, but still needed to approve the labor acknowledgement.

Elenbaas moved to approve the alternate Labor Acknowledgement (Item 5 in the Chart of Proposed Council Changes for 5.19.2026).

Stremler seconded the motion.

Councilmembers discussed the motion.

Galloway explained that, if the motion is approved, it would replace the originally proposed labor acknowledgement.

The motion carried by the following vote:

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

Nay: 1 - Rienstra

Scanlon moved to request staff prepare the Preface - Preliminary Council Draft for 5.19.2026 as amended - for inclusion in a future agenda bill file for Council introduction and public hearing.

Boyle seconded the motion.

The motion carried by the following vote:

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

Nay: 0

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

MOTION 1:

Motion approved to approve the alternate Labor Acknowledgement (Item 5 in the Chart of Proposed Council Changes for 5.19.2026).

MOTION 2:

Motion approved to request staff prepare the Preface – Preliminary Council Draft as amended – for inclusion in a future agenda bill file for Council introduction and public hearing.

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. She stated that Council had worked through all proposed amendments at the last meeting, so the only things left are a couple of amendments from Planning and Development Services (PDS) and some amendments to UGAs.

Rienstra moved to begin review of Chapter 2 using the Preliminary Council Draft as dated 5.19.2026, which is the current version of the chapter with Planning Commission recommendations from January 2026 and additional edits proposed by councilmembers as listed in the Chart of Proposed Council Changes for 5.19.2026.

Scanlon seconded the motion.

The motion carried by the following vote:

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

Galloway stated that the preliminary draft for 5.19.2026 includes proposed amendments from PDS.

Matt Aamot, PDS, stated that they don't know when the annexation of East Blaine will occur, so the amendments just note that on the Comprehensive Plan map.

Galloway stated that Council may go into an executive session to discuss potential litigation risk related to the Comprehensive Plan Update pursuant to RCW 42.30.110(1)(i) for litigation risk discussion, which will conclude no later than 10:00 a.m. If the meeting extends beyond the stated conclusion time, the Council chair will make a public announcement. The attorney present will be Kimberly Thulin.

Scanlon moved to go into Executive Session until no later than 10:00 a.m. to discuss the agenda item pursuant to the RCW citation(s) as announced by the Council Chair.

Rienstra seconded the motion.

The motion carried by the following vote:

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

Councilmembers entered Executive Session at 9:30 a.m.

At 10:00 a.m., Galloway announced that Executive Session would extend to no later than 10:15 a.m.

At 10:15 a.m., Galloway announced that Executive Session would extend to no later than 10:30 a.m.

At 10:31 a.m., Galloway announced that Executive Session was concluded.

Galloway introduced discussion of a memo from PDS regarding the Dakota Creek UGA (on file), which presents three possible options for Council consideration.

Scanlon moved to support option three as presented in the memo from PDS on the Dakota Creek UGA for 5.19.2026.

Boyle seconded the motion.

Councilmembers discussed the motion.

Scanlon asked about the Future Shorelines report, which shows that there is potential for sea level rise along Dakota Creek.

Mark Personius, PDS, said that under current zoning the remaining sewer shares would be allocated only to the parcel south of Shipyard Road, not to any parcels to the north on the creek, so there wouldn't be any additional urban development on those parcels on the creek.

The motion carried by the following vote:

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

Nay: 0

Galloway turned discussion to a map (on file) of Birch Bay UGAR properties for consideration on 5.19.2026.

Galloway moved that the Council supports including the parcels as outlined in red on the Birch Bay Properties map for inclusion in the UGAR study that has been docketed.

Boyle seconded the motion.

Councilmembers discussed the motion.

The motion carried by the following vote:

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

Nay: 0

Elenbaas stated that he has prepared some additional amendments for Chapter 2 regarding Cherry Point and site-specific renewable energy. He provided an overview of the proposed amendments to Section 2CC related to regulatory certainty for existing facilities, logistical infrastructure, and an orderly energy transition. He also explained additional proposed amendments related to proposed renewable energy generation projects. He stated that he has additional amendments he would like to propose for

Chapter 5 as well.

Councilmembers discussed the proposed amendments.

Galloway moved to hold open Chapter 2 until the June 2 Special Committee of the Whole meeting.

Scanlon seconded the motion.

The motion carried by the following vote:

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

Nay: 0

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

MOTION 1:

Motion approved to begin review of Chapter 2 using the Preliminary Council Draft dated 5.19.2026, which is the current version of the chapter with Planning Commission recommendations from January 2026 and additional edits proposed by councilmembers as listed in the Chart of Proposed Council Changes for 5.19.2026.

MOTION 2:

Motion approved to go into executive session until no later than 10:00 a.m. to discuss potential litigation risk related to the Comprehensive Plan Update pursuant to RCW 42.30.110(1)(i) as announced by the Council Chair.

MOTION 3:

Motion approved to support option three as presented in the Memo from PDS on the Dakota Creek UGA for 5.19.2026, which reads as follows:

Retain a Portion of the Lots within the Area, with Development Potential, in the UGA.

a. WCPDS has attached an aerial of the UGA, with annotations showing where development potential exists, up to an additional 11 dwelling units as the subject area already contains five single-family residences. The yellow area represents the portion of the UGA with development potential.

MOTION 4:

Motion approved that Council supports including the parcels as outlined in red on the Birch Bay Properties map (on screen) for inclusion in the UGAR study that has been docketed.

MOTION 5:

Motion approved to hold open Chapter 2 until the June 2 Special Committee of the Whole meeting.

3. [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. She stated that her preference would be to not include the

remaining amendments in the Chart of Proposed Council Changes for 5.19.2026.

Galloway moved to begin review of Chapter 8 using the Preliminary Council Draft dated 4.28.2026, which is the current version of the chapter with Planning Commission recommendations from January 2026 and additional edits proposed by councilmembers as listed in the Chart of Proposed Council Changes for 4.28.2026.

Rienstra seconded the motion.

The motion carried by the following vote:

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

Nay: 0

Galloway moved to strike the edits highlighted in yellow in the Preliminary Council Draft for 4.28.2026 and listed in the Chart of Proposed Council Changes as Items 91, 92, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98).

Boyle seconded the motion.

Councilmembers discussed the motion.

The motion carried by the following vote:

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

Nay: 0

Elenbaas stated that he has additional proposed amendments for Chapter 8 regarding the siting of renewable energy facilities on resource lands.

Elenbaas moved to include the amendment to Chapter 8 Resource Lands as presented on screen, allowing staff discretion on where the amendment is placed. The proposed amendments reads as follows:

The County may consider limited siting of renewable energy facilities or associated infrastructure on or near designated resource lands when:

- The location is dependent upon the underlying resource,
- No feasible alternative location exists,
- Impacts to long-term commercial resource use are minimized,

- Environmental impacts are mitigated,
- And the proposal is consistent with applicable state and federal law.

Stremler seconded the motion.

Scanlon moved to hold the item (Elenbaas' proposed amendment to Chapter 8 Resource Lands) until the June 2 Special Committee of the Whole meeting.

Rienstra seconded the motion.

Councilmembers discussed the motion.

The motion carried by the following vote:

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

Nay: 2 - Galloway and Elenbaas

Scanlon moved to hold Chapter 8 open until June 2.

Boyle seconded the motion.

The motion carried by the following vote:

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

Nay: 1 - Galloway

Mark Personius, Planning and Development Services (PDS), stated that they are working with several of the small cities on amendments to Policy 8A-15, which they intend to bring to Council on June 2.

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

MOTION 1:

Motion approved to begin review of Chapter 8 using the Preliminary Council Draft dated 4.28.2026, which is the current version of the chapter with Planning Commission recommendations from January 2026 and additional edits proposed by councilmembers as listed in the Chart of Proposed Council Changes for 4.28.2026.

MOTION 2:

Motion approved to strike the edits highlighted in yellow in the Preliminary Council Draft for 4.28.2026 and listed in the Chart of Proposed Council Changes (Items 91, 92, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98).

MOTION 3:

Motion approved to hold Elenbaas' proposed amendment to Chapter 8 Resource Lands until the June 2 Special Committee of the Whole meeting.

MOTION 4:

Motion approved to hold Chapter 8 open until June 2.

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

Galloway introduced discussion of Comprehensive Plan Chapter 10 Environment.

Rienstra moved to begin review of Chapter 10 Environment using the Preliminary Council Draft dated 5.19.2026, which is the current version of the chapter with Planning Commission recommendations from January 2026 and additional edits proposed by councilmembers as listed in the Chart of Proposed Council Changes for 5.19.2026.

Scanlon seconded the motion.

The motion carried by the following vote:

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

Nay: 0

Galloway turned discussion to proposed new policy 10N-8 (Item 70 in the Chart of Proposed Council Changes for 5.19.2026). She said that staff pointed out that the county only has jurisdiction over derelict vessels located on county-owned or managed aquatic lands, and staff recommended specifying that in the policy.

Councilmembers discussed the proposed amendment.

Galloway moved to amend the proposed new policy to add "on county-owned or managed aquatic lands" after "derelict vessels" so that the policy reads as follows:

Address the issue of derelict vessels on County-owned or managed aquatic lands and change the current language in code to hold owners more accountable. Ensure that resources are available to fund established policies designed to address this issue.

Elenbaas seconded the motion.

Councilmembers discussed the motion.

Galloway amended her motion to change the final sentence of the policy as

follows:

Pursue state resources to fund established policies designed to address this issue.

Councilmembers discussed the motion.

Stremler stated that there is a program that addresses derelict vessels, and he asked how the policy would build upon that program.

Scanlon said that he wants to know more about what the amendment's proposer, the Marine Resource Committee (MRC), wants to see fixed in the code.

Galloway said that this amendment may be a policy directive for the MRC to recommend a code update.

Councilmembers continued to discuss the motion.

Galloway amended her motion so that the policy reads as follows:

Address the issue of derelict vessels on County-owned or managed aquatic lands by updating code to hold owners more accountable.
Pursue state resources to fund established policies designed to address this issue.

Scanlon moved to hold Item 70 (in the Chart of Proposed Council Changes for 5.19.2026) as amended until after lunch.

Rienstra seconded the motion.

The motion carried by the following vote:

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

Nay: 1 - Elenbaas

Galloway turned discussion to Item 71, which proposes a new policy 10N-9. She noted that staff stated there is no funding for this policy.

Galloway moved to strike Item 71 (as presented in the Chart of Proposed Council Changes for 5.19.2026).

Elenbaas seconded the motion.

The motion carried by the following vote:

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

Nay: 0

Stremler turned discussion to Items 75 through 82, providing a brief overview of proposed changes.

Councilmembers discussed Item 78.

Elenbaas moved to amend Item 78 (in the Chart of Proposed Council Changes for 5.19.2026) so that it reads as follows:

Ensure the design and development of land avoids or minimizes disturbance to rivers, streams, floodplains, and functioning riparian areas as outlined in Chapter 11 Shorelines.

Galloway seconded the motion.

The motion carried by the following vote:

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

Nay: 0

Stremler turned discussion to Item 79.

Councilmembers discussed the amendment.

Stremler turned discussion to Item 80.

Councilmembers discussed the amendment.

Galloway moved to amend Item 80 (in the Chart of Proposed Council Changes for 5.19.2026) so that the policy reads as follows:

Shoreline armoring falls under the Shoreline Management Program (SMP) and is allowed in very limited circumstances. New hard armoring should be consistent with Chapter 11 and the SMP and encourage soft shore techniques or other less impactful solutions or new development and when armor is degraded and in need of replacement.

Stremler seconded the motion.

Scanlon asked whether the policy would prevent infrastructure investment related to flood management.

Mark Personius, Planning and Development Services (PDS), stated that the flood wall concept is a temporary use, so it wouldn't fall under the designation of the SMP. He added that the Department of Ecology is updating Washington Administrative Code (WAC) for the next round of SMP updates, which will be due in 2028 or 2029.

Scanlon asked whether there is anything that they are doing that would prevent a good technique for flood management.

Personius stated that there is a process built in with the SMP that would be consistent with the policy.

The motion carried by the following vote:

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

Nay: 1 - Scanlon

Galloway turned discussion to Items 81 and 82 in the Chart of Proposed Council Changes for 5.19.2026, which strike Policy 10L-7 and 10L-8. She stated that the staff note says that the policies are already covered in Chapter 12.

Lauren Clemens, Public Works, stated that the policies are not included in Chapter 12.

Elenbaas stated that the Chart of Proposed Council Changes is mistaken and the policies are covered in Chapter 11 rather than Chapter 12.

Councilmembers returned to discussion of Item 80.

Scanlon moved to hold Chapter 10 open until June 2.

Boyle seconded the motion.

Councilmembers discussed the motion.

The motion carried by the following vote:

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

Nay: 2 - Galloway and Stremmer

At 12:07 p.m., councilmembers recessed for lunch until 1:15 p.m.

At 1:16, councilmembers resumed following their lunch recess.

Galloway stated that Council still needs to address an amendment that would add a new policy 10N-8 (Item 70 in the Chart of Proposed Council Changes for 5.19.2026) to Chapter 10 regarding derelict vessels.

Scanlon moved to strike Policy 10N-8.

Boyle seconded the motion.

Councilmembers discussed the motion.

The motion carried by the following vote:

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

Nay: 0

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

MOTION 1:

Motion approved to begin review of Chapter 10 Environment using the Preliminary Council Draft dated 5.19.2026, which is the current version of the chapter with Planning Commission recommendations from January 2026 and additional edits proposed by councilmembers as listed in the Chart of Proposed Council Changes for 5.19.2026.

MOTION 2:

Motion approved to hold Item 70 (in the Chart of Proposed Council Changes for 5.19.2026) as amended until after lunch.

MOTION 3:

Motion approved to strike Item 71 (as presented in the Chart of Proposed Council Changes for 5.19.2026).

MOTION 4:

Motion approved to amend Item 78 (from the Chart of Proposed Council Changes for 5.19.2026) so that it reads as follows:

Ensure the design and development of land avoids or minimizes disturbance to rivers, streams, floodplains, and functioning riparian areas as outlined in Chapter 11 Shorelines.

MOTION 5:

Motion approved to amend Item 80 (in the Chart of Proposed Council Changes for 5.19.2026) to read as follows:

Shoreline armoring falls under the Shoreline Management Program (SMP) and is allowed in very limited circumstances. New hard armoring should be consistent with Chapter 11 and the SMP and encourage soft shore techniques or other less impactful solutions or new development and when armor is degraded and in need of replacement.

MOTION 6:

Motion approved to hold Chapter 10 open until June 2.

5. [AB2026-390](#) Resolution regarding greenhouse gas reduction sub-element voluntary review as part of the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan periodic update under the Washington State Growth Management Act (RCW 36.70A.096)

Galloway introduced discussion of the draft resolution regarding greenhouse gas reduction sub-element voluntary review.

Lauren Clemens, Public Works, provided an overview of the draft resolution. She stated that there is a new state process for Chapter 12, which allows the section regarding greenhouse gas emissions reduction to be submitted for state review and approval. If Council moves forward with the resolution, the greenhouse gas emissions reduction portion of Chapter 12 would only go into effect when the state reaches its decision, which could take up to 180 days. If Council does not move forward with the resolution, the whole chapter will go into effect with the rest of the comprehensive plan. Some benefits of the resolution would be that, if there is an appeal and Commerce has approved the greenhouse gas emissions reduction section, they would defend that decision in front of the Growth Management Hearings Board.

Boyle asked about the benefit of going forward with the resolution.

Clemens stated that the benefit is just having another set of eyes on the document to confirm that the county is conforming with climate planning guidance. The extra layer of review is beneficial because the climate element is a new requirement and Whatcom County is one of the first jurisdictions to go through the process.

Elenbaas asked for clarification regarding the need for the resolution.

Clemens stated that each jurisdiction's climate chapter looks very different, so the purpose of the review is to ensure that the approving agency feels Whatcom County has adequately followed climate planning guidance.

Elenbaas asked if the state takes benefits of local oil production into consideration when providing greenhouse gas reduction targets and guidance.

Clemens stated that Whatcom County is unique within the jurisdictions that are currently submitting climate chapters. She said that there is some nuance involved and the Growth Management Hearings Board will have to clarify guidance about emissions tracking and goals. She stated that there is an opportunity to address Whatcom County's unique situation in its application submittal.

Councilmembers continued to discuss greenhouse gas emissions with Clemens.

Galloway stated that the resolution will return for consideration on May 26.

This agenda item was DISCUSSED.

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

Galloway introduced discussion of Comprehensive Plan Chapter 12 Climate.

Rienstra moved to begin review of Chapter 12 using the Preliminary Council Draft dated 4.28.2026, which is the current version of the chapter with Planning Commission recommendations from January 2026 and additional edits proposed by councilmembers as listed in the Chart of Proposed Council Changes for 4.28.2026.

Scanlon seconded the motion.

The motion carried by the following vote:

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

Nay: 0

Lauren Clemens, Public Works, provided an overview of Item 33 in the Chart of Proposed Council Changes, which adds two new paragraphs, and Item 34, which makes a few changes to the Background Summary regarding electric vehicles.

Councilmembers discussed the proposed amendments with Clemens.

Galloway clarified that the version of the chapter moved for review includes

the amendments, so no further motions are needed to incorporate the amendments.

Rienstra moved to request staff prepare Chapter 12 - Preliminary Council Draft as amended for inclusion in a future agenda bill file for Council introduction and public hearing.

Scanlon seconded the motion.

The motion carried by the following vote:

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

Nay: 0

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

MOTION 1:

Motion approved to begin review of Chapter 12 using the Preliminary Council Draft dated 4.28.2026, which is the current version of the chapter with Planning Commission recommendations from January 2026 and additional edits proposed by councilmembers as listed in the Chart of Proposed Council Changes.

MOTION 2:

Motion approved to request staff prepare Chapter 12 - Preliminary Council Draft as amended for inclusion in a future agenda bill file for Council introduction and public hearing.

7. [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. She provided an overview of proposed changes as outlined in the Chart of Proposed Changes.

Scanlon moved to begin review of the Appendices, which is the current version of the Appendices with Planning Commission recommendations from January 2026 and additional edits proposed by councilmembers as listed in the Chart of Proposed Council Changes for 5.19.2026.

Rienstra seconded the motion.

The motion carried by the following vote:

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

Stremler
Nay: 0

Elenbaas turned discussion to Item 2 in the Chart of Proposed Changes regarding the definition of "enhancement." He asked about the use of the word "degraded" in the definition.

Galloway stated that the definition for "enhancement" comes from Whatcom County Code 23.60.050(F).

Councilmembers discussed "enhancement."

Mark Personius, Planning and Development Services (PDS), stated that the definition of "enhancement" comes from code, but the term as it appears in the Comprehensive Plan Glossary could remove the word "degraded" without impacting the policy intent.

Galloway moved to amend the definition of "enhancement" in Item 2 in the Chart of Proposed Changes to strike the word "degraded."

Boyle seconded the motion.

Councilmembers discussed the motion.

The motion failed by the following vote:

Aye: 1 - Stremler

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

Galloway turned discussion to Item 3 regarding a definition for the Future Floodplain.

Scanlon asked for clarification about the recommended definition.

Lauren Clemens, Public Works, stated that option 3, the 2080 Climate Scenario, is the preferred option.

Scanlon moved to include option 3 (the 2080 Climate Scenario) in Item 3 (in the Chart of Proposed Changes).

Rienstra seconded the motion.

Galloway clarified that this would replace the Future Floodplain definition in the Glossary.

Councilmembers discussed the motion.

Elenbaas asked whether the county evaluates or models the chances of sea level lowering or flood magnitude dropping.

Clemens stated that the future floodplain definition was not clear, and clarifying what is being mapped provides the opportunity to continue to reevaluate the hydraulic modeling.

Councilmembers continued to discuss sea and flood mapping models with Clemens.

Galloway asked where the "future floodplain" term appears in the Comprehensive Plan chapters.

Clemens stated that the term appears in Chapters 2 and 12.

The motion carried by the following vote:

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

Nay: 2 - Stremmer and Elenbaas

Elenbaas asked about the reason for the change in Item 4 in the Chart of Proposed Council Changes.

Galloway stated that the goal was to provide a more multidisciplinary approach for the definition of "sustainability."

Elenbaas suggested adding "without intervention" to the definition.

Councilmembers continued to discuss the definition of "sustainability."

Scanlon turned discussion to Appendix J, which outlines subsidized housing and funding needs.

Elenbaas asked for clarification about the analysis.

Matt Aamot, Planning and Development Services (PDS), stated that the analysis identifies funding needs for housing, which is a requirement of the Growth Management Act.

Councilmembers continued to discuss Appendix J.

Galloway asked about next steps for the appendices.

Kiana Oos, Council Staff, stated that Council could move to prepare the chapters they've seen.

Scanlon moved to request that staff prepare the Appendices A, B, D, E, G, H, I, J, and the Foothills Subarea Plan as amended 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 - Stremmler and Elenbaas

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

MOTION 1:

Motion approved to begin review of the Appendices, which is the current version of the Appendices with Planning Commission recommendations from January 2026 and additional edits proposed by councilmembers as listed in the Chart of Proposed Council Changes for 5.19.2026.

MOTION 2:

Motion approved to include the 2080 Climate Scenario in Appendix A (as stated in Item 3 of the Chart of Proposed Council Changes for 5.19.2026).

MOTION 3:

Motion approved to request that staff prepare the Appendices A, B, D, E, G, H, I, J, and the Foothills Subarea Plan as amended for inclusion in a future agenda bill file for Council introduction and public hearing.

Committee Discussion (Final Coordination)

Clerk's note: Councilmembers discussed all the of the agenda bill items under this header together.

Galloway introduced discussion of a chart of Technical Amendments for 5.19.2026 (on file). She stated that Item 1 amends Table 5 in Chapter 1.

Matt Aamot, Planning and Development Services (PDS), stated that Council previously made an amendment to Table 5, which necessitates the change presented in Item 1.

Galloway moved to accept Item 1 (in the chart of Technical Amendments for 5.19.2026) amending Table 5.

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 2 amending Chapter 7.

Galloway moved to accept Item 2 (in the chart of Technical Amendments for 5.19.2026), which amends Policy 7D-12.

Rienstra seconded the motion.

Councilmembers discussed 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 3, which would reconsider Policy 3K-10.

Scanlon moved to strike Policy 3K-10.

Elenbaas seconded the motion.

Councilmembers discussed 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 4, which would reconsider Policy 9A-14.

Scanlon moved to strike Policy 9A-14.

Elenbaas seconded the motion.

Councilmembers discussed the motion.

The motion carried by the following vote:

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

Nay: 0

Abstain: 1 - Rienstra

Elenbaas turned discussion to Policy 9A-13.

Elenbaas moved to amend Policy 9A-13 as follows:

Whatcom County should manage recreation on County-owned or managed lands in a manner that avoids or minimizes impacts to areas of known and documented tribal cultural use and protects historical, cultural, and natural resources. Whatcom County should consult with the Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation and all interested federally recognized Tribes on all programs or projects that may impact state and federally defined Tribal resources. Work in partnership with Tribes to identify where recreation could co-exist that could support cultural education, stewardship, and shared understanding.

Stremler seconded the motion.

Bennett Knox, Parks and Recreation, stated that the language regarding tribal resources was recommended by the Public Works' archeologist.

Councilmembers discussed the motion.

Scanlon asked what happens when the county finds resources that may belong to indigenous peoples who happen to be located across the Canadian border.

Knox stated that staff would work with the relevant Tribes in Whatcom County and with the state to determine the appropriate process for outreach associated with that kind of situation.

Councilmembers continued to discuss the motion.

The motion failed by the following vote:

Aye: 2 - Elenbaas and Stremler

Nay: 7 - Boyle, Buchanan, Galloway, Rienstra, and Scanlon

Galloway turned discussion to Item 5, which would amend Policy 3B-4.

Stremler moved to accept Item 5 (in the chart of Technical Amendments for 5.19.2026).

Boyle seconded the motion.

The motion carried by the following vote:

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

Nay: 0

Galloway noted that Councilmember Elenbaas' proposed amendments include Chapter 5 Utilities, so that chapter should come back for discussion on June 2. She stated that Chapters 1 and 3 may need to be further amended as a result of discussions with the Tribes, as well.

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

Clerk's note: See discussion of this item under the "Committee Discussion (Final Coordination)" header in the minutes.

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

MOTION 1:

Motion approved to accept Item 1 (in Technical Amendments for 5.19.2026), which amends Table 5 in Chapter 1 on page 1-12.

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

Clerk's note: See discussion of this item under the "Committee Discussion (Final Coordination)" header in the minutes.

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

MOTION 1:

Motion approved to strike Policy 3K-10.

MOTION 2:

Motion approved to accept Item 5 (in Technical Amendments for 5.19.2026) amending Policy 3B-4.

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

This agenda item was DISCUSSED.

4. [AB2026-217](#) Discussion and preliminary Council direction on Whatcom County Comprehensive

Plan Chapter 5, Utilities

This agenda item was DISCUSSED.

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

This agenda item was DISCUSSED.

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

Clerk's note: See discussion of this item under the "Committee Discussion (Final Coordination)" header in the minutes.

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

MOTION 1:

Motion approved to accept Item 2 (in Technical Amendments for 5.19.2026), which amends Policy 7D-12.

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

Clerk's note: See discussion of this item under the "Committee Discussion (Final Coordination)" header in the minutes.

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

MOTION 1:

Motion approved to strike Policy 9A-14.

Committee Discussion (Schedule)

1. [AB2026-249](#) Discussion regarding schedule for Council review of the comprehensive plan update
- Galloway provided an overview of Council's schedule for continued review of the Comprehensive Plan.

Councilmembers discussed the proposed schedule.

This agenda item was DISCUSSED.

Items Added by Revision

There were no agenda items added by revision.

Other Business

There was no other business.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 3:17 p.m.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WA

Cathy Halka, Council Clerk

Kaylee Galloway, Council Chair

Meeting Minutes prepared by Jenna Gernand