

**WHATCOM COUNTY  
PLANNING COMMISISON**

**Lummi Island Ferry  
Comprehensive Plan Amendments**

**FINDINGS OF FACT AND REASONS FOR ACTION**

**Background Information**

1. The subject amendments to the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan (Chapter 6, Transportation) are summarized as follows:
  - a. Amending Policy 6A-1 relating to Lummi Island ferry level of service.
  - b. Deleting Policy 6C-9 relating to a ferry feasibility study.
2. Notice of the subject amendments was submitted to the Washington State Department of Commerce on December 12, 2018.
3. Notice of the Planning Commission hearing was sent to citizen, media, and other groups on the County's e-mail list on January 9, 2019.
4. Notice of the Planning Commission hearing was posted on the County website on January 10, 2019.
5. Notice of the Planning Commission hearing was published in the Bellingham Herald on January 11, 2019.
6. A determination of non-significance (DNS) was issued under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) on January 11, 2019.
7. The Planning Commission held a public hearing on the subject amendments on January 24, 2019.
8. Pursuant to WCC 22.10.060(1), in order to approve comprehensive plan amendments the County must find all of the following:
  - a. The amendment conforms to the requirements of the Growth Management Act, is internally consistent with the county-wide planning policies and is consistent with any interlocal planning agreements.

- b. Further studies made or accepted by the Department of Planning and Development Services indicate changed conditions that show need for the amendment.
- c. The public interest will be served by approving the amendment. In determining whether the public interest will be served, factors including but not limited to the following shall be considered:
  - i. The anticipated effect upon the rate or distribution of population growth, employment growth, development, and conversion of land as envisioned in the comprehensive plan.
  - ii. The anticipated effect on the ability of the county and/or other service providers, such as cities, schools, water and/or sewer purveyors, fire districts, and others as applicable, to provide adequate services and public facilities including transportation facilities.
  - iii. Anticipated impact upon designated agricultural, forest and mineral resource lands.
- d. The amendment does not include or facilitate spot zoning.

### **Growth Management Act**

- 9. The Growth Management Act (GMA) establishes planning goals in RCW 36.70A.020 to guide adoption of comprehensive plan amendments.
- 10. GMA Planning goal # 3 is to “Encourage efficient multimodal transportation systems that are based on regional priorities and coordinated with county and city comprehensive plans” (RCW 36.70A.020(3)).
- 11. GMA planning goal # 12 is to “Ensure that those public facilities and services necessary to support development shall be adequate to serve the development at the time the development is available for occupancy and use without decreasing current service levels below locally established minimum standards” (RCW 36.70A.020(12)).
- 12. The GMA, at RCW 36.70A.070(3), requires that a comprehensive plan must include, among other things, a forecast of the future needs for such capital facilities. The level of service provides a basis to project future needs.

### **County-Wide Planning Policies**

- 13. County-Wide Planning Policy A-2 states that the County “. . . shall provide opportunities for citizens to become involved in the growth management planning process through various mechanisms, such as surveys, public workshops, meetings, hearings, and advisory committees. . .”

### **Interlocal Agreements**

14. There are no interlocal agreements that would prevent the subject amendments.

### **Further Studies/Changed Conditions**

15. The Lummi Island Ferry Advisory Committee was established by WCC 2.145 (adopted in 2012) to advise the County on a number of issues:
  - a. Review and provide recommendations on proposed changes to ferry operations and fares; and
  - b. Review at least annually ferry revenue and expenditures, ferry fund balance, and actual versus targeted fare return; and
  - c. Assist the county in collecting information from ferry riders on actual and desired ferry services, concerns, and ideas for improved service; and
  - d. Analyze and develop recommendations to continue and improve the cost effective operation of ferry service to Lummi Island; and
  - e. Research, review, and make recommendations regarding ferry replacement, long-term planning, parking, transportation to and from ferry docks, alternative docking locations, alternative funding sources, and other major capital and operational issues regarding ferry service to Lummi Island.
16. The Lummi Island Ferry Advisory Committee proposed modifications to Comprehensive Plan Policy 6A-1 relating to ferry level of service.
17. The *Lummi Island Ferry System Level of Service Alternatives Analysis Final Report* (July 5, 2018) was prepared by KPFF Consulting Engineers, Steer Davies Gleave, Elliott Bay Design Group, and Progressions. Therefore, Comprehensive Plan Policy 6C-9, relating to a ferry feasibility study, will be deleted because the study is complete.
18. The Whatcom County Council endorsed the Lummi Island Ferry Advisory Committee recommendations by approval of Resolution 2018-026 on July 24, 2018.

### **Public Interest**

19. The subject Comprehensive Plan amendments relating to level of service standards are intended to facilitate ferry service that meets future community needs. These amendments were developed with the advice of the Lummi Island Ferry Advisory Committee, which considered public input at meetings and through surveys.

20. The subject Comprehensive Plan amendments address the provision of adequate ferry service in the future. Planning for such service is in the public interest.

**Spot Zoning**

21. The subject proposal does not involve rezoning property.

**CONCLUSIONS**

The subject Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan amendments are consistent with the approval criteria in WCC 22.10.060.

**RECOMMENDATION**

Based upon the above findings and conclusions, the Planning Commission recommends:

1. Approval of Exhibit A, Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan amendments (Chapter 6, Transportation).

**WHATCOM COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Nicole Oliver, Chair

  
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Ashley Ubil, Secretary

1-25-19  
Date

01-25-2019  
Date

Commissioners present at the January 24, 2019 meeting when the vote was taken: Kelvin Barton, Atul Deshmane, Gary Honcoop, Stephen Jackson, Kimberly Lund, Natalie McClendon, Dominic Mocerri, and Nicole Oliver.

**Vote: Ayes: 8, Nays: 0, Abstain: 0, Absent: 1. Motion carried to adopt the above amendments.**

Planning Commission Exhibit A  
is attached to the proposed Ordinance.