

**WHATCOM COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION  
Findings of Fact, Reasons for Action, Conclusions &  
Recommendations**

**Whatcom County Zoning Map & Code Amendments under  
the 2025-2026 Periodic Update of the Whatcom County  
Comprehensive Plan Under the Growth Management Act**

**WHEREAS**, every ten years as part of the periodic update, RCW [36.70A.130](#)(1)(a) requires Whatcom County to take legislative action to review and, if needed, revise its comprehensive plan and development regulations to comply with the requirements of Chapter [36.70A](#) RCW (the Growth Management Act); and

**WHEREAS**, Zoning Code and Maps are an official control and therefore constitute development regulations pursuant to RCW [36.70A.030](#); and

**WHEREAS**, the Washington Administrative Code (WAC) requires that development regulations be consistent with and implement the Comprehensive Plan pursuant to WAC [365-196-500](#); and

**WHEREAS**, the Whatcom County Planning Commission reviewed and considered GMA requirements, Whatcom County Planning and Development Services (PDS) recommendations, and public comments; and

**WHEREAS**, the Planning Commission hereby adopts the following Findings of Fact and Reasons for Action:

**FINDINGS OF FACT AND REASONS FOR ACTION**

1. The County Council docketed PLN2023-00001 to implement development regulation updates associated with the 2025-26 periodic update of the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan as required pursuant to RCW [36.70A.130](#); and
2. A "Notice of Intent to Adopt Development Regulations" requesting expedited review was submitted to the Washington State Department of Commerce on May 6, 2026, for the proposed amendments. It was assigned Submittal ID Number 2026-S-12796 and granted expedited review on May 21, 2026; and
3. The Planning Commission held a duly noticed public hearing on the proposed zoning code and map amendments on May 14, 2026; and

4. The recommended amendments associated with the 2025-2026 periodic update of the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan were studied under the associated [Environmental Impact Statement](#) issued on August 22, 2025, under file number SEPA2024-00001; and
5. The proposed amendments are part of the 2025-2026 periodic update pursuant to RCW [36.70A.130](#), and are consistent with the goals and policies of the current Comprehensive Plan and those proposed for adoption under the update.
6. The State legislature found that order to meet the goal of 1,000,000 new homes statewide by 2044, and enhanced quality of life and environmental protection, innovative housing policies will need to be adopted and that increasing housing options that are more affordable to various income levels is critical to achieving the state's housing goals, including those established by the legislature in Engrossed Second Substitute House Bill No. 1220 (chapter 254, Laws of 2021); and
7. Adoption of the Zoning Code amendments implements the Growth Management Act's mandatory housing element for Comprehensive Plans, pursuant to RCW [36.70A.070](#) and RCW [36.70A.130](#); and
8. The proposed amendments are consistent with the following GMA Planning Goals under RCW [36.70.020](#):
  - a. Number 1: *"Encourage development in urban areas where adequate public facilities and services exist or can be provided in an efficient manner"*; and
  - b. Number 2: *"Reduce the inappropriate conversion of undeveloped land into sprawling, low-density development"*; and
  - c. Number 4: *"Plan for and accommodate housing affordable to all economic segments of the population of this state, promote a variety of residential densities and housing types, and encourage preservation of existing housing stock."*
  - d. Number 5: *"Encourage economic development throughout the state that is consistent with adopted comprehensive plans, promote economic opportunity for all citizens of this state, especially for unemployed and for disadvantaged persons, promote the retention and expansion of existing businesses and recruitment of new businesses, recognize regional differences impacting economic development opportunities, and encourage growth in areas experiencing insufficient economic growth, all within the capacities of the state's natural resources, public services, and public facilities"*; and
  - e. Number 9: *"Retain open space and green space, enhance recreational opportunities, enhance fish and wildlife habitat, increase access to natural resource lands and water, and develop parks and recreation facilities."*; and

- f. Number 10: "Protect and enhance the environment and enhance the state's high quality of life, including air and water quality, and the availability of water."; and
- g. Number 11: "Citizen participation and coordination. Encourage the involvement of citizens in the planning process and ensure coordination between communities and jurisdictions to reconcile conflicts".

### **CONCLUSIONS OF LAW**

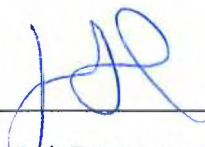
1. The recommended code and map amendments are in the public interest.
2. The recommended amendments do not include or facilitate spot zoning.
3. The recommended map amendments are consistent with applicable approval requirements for zoning map amendments under WCC [22.10.060](#).
4. The recommended code amendments implement and are internally consistent with the updated associated goals and policies of the 2025-2026 Comprehensive Plan pursuant to RCW [36.70A.070](#), RCW [36.70A.130](#), and WAC [365-196-500](#).
5. The recommended amendments are consistent with the Washington State Growth Management Act (RCW [36.70A](#)) and its Planning Goals (RCW [36.70A.020](#)).

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Planning Commission makes the following recommendations to the County Council:

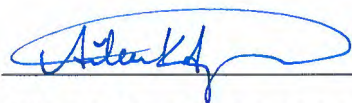
1. Approval of the proposed Zoning Code Amendments, relating to additional adequate provisions for housing availability, as shown in Exhibit 1:
  - a. Vote was 8 (Ayes) – 0 (Nays); and
2. Approval of the proposed Lummi Island Zoning Map Amendment, to remove a 25-acre area of the "Mineral Resource Special District Overlay" as shown in Exhibit 2:
  - a. Vote was 8 (Ayes) – 0 (Nays); and

### **WHATCOM COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION**



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Daniel Dunne, Chair



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Aileen Kogut-Aguon, Coordinator

Members present at the meeting when the votes were taken, as documented above: Selena Knoblauch, Matthew Berry, Rud Browne, Daniel Dunne, Dominic Mocerri, Scott Van Dalen, Jeremy Thompson, and Jim Hansen.