

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

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



## **Action Summary**

**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](http://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****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

**RECEIVED**

**Committee Discussion**

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

**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

**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

**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

**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)

**DISCUSSED**

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

**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

**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.

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

**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

**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

**DISCUSSED**

4. [AB2026-217](#) Discussion and preliminary Council direction on Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan Chapter 5, Utilities

**DISCUSSED**

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

**DISCUSSED**

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

**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

**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

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