

**WHATCOM COUNTY**

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**Mark Personius**  
Director

Memorandum

August 11, 2021

To: The Honorable Satpal Sidhu, Whatcom County Executive  
The Honorable Whatcom County Council

From: Matt Aamot, Senior Planner

Through: Mark Personius, Director

RE: Temporary Homeless Facility Regulations (PLN2021-00003)

The Whatcom County Council adopted interim zoning regulations for the siting, establishment, and operation of temporary homeless facilities (Ordinances 2018-039, 2018-041, 2019-074, and 2020-053). These ordinances also requested County staff to prepare proposed revisions to the County's land use regulations relating to temporary homeless facilities and bring the revisions to the Planning Commission and County Council for review.

The Planning Commission held a public hearing and issued recommendations on July 22, 2021. The Planning Commission's recommended proposal would amend the Whatcom County Zoning Code by:

- a. Adding a new chapter entitled "Temporary Homeless Facilities" (WCC 20.17). This new chapter includes a purpose statement, locational requirements, capacity and duration of temporary homeless facilities, requirements for temporary homeless facilities, application procedures, and permit procedures.
- b. Adding definitions of "Temporary Homeless Facility" and related terms (WCC 20.97).

Under the proposed regulations, temporary homeless facilities would normally be allowed only within urban growth areas, where more intensive land uses are permitted, services typically exist nearby, and transportation options are more readily available. However, under state law, this provision cannot be applied to facilities on property owned or controlled by religious organizations (RCW 36.01.290). Therefore, such temporary homeless facilities could be located anywhere throughout the County.

Thank you for your review and consideration of this matter. We look forward to discussing it with you.