

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, June 16, 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

Roll Call

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

Announcements

Public Comments (Comprehensive Plan)

1. [AB2026-422](#) Public comments on all items related to the draft Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan

Committee Discussion (Comprehensive Plan)

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

MOTION 1:

Motion approved to amend Chapter 1 - Council Draft as Amended 5.19.2026 to include Items 20-26 as shown in the Chart of Proposed Council Changes for 6.16.2026 as Goal 1B and policies 1B-1 through 1B-6, with the word "shall" in 1B-3 changed to "should."

MOTION 2:

Motion approved to request staff to prepare Chapter 1 as amended 6.16.2026 for introduction and public hearing at a future meeting.

2. [AB2026-186](#) Discussion and preliminary Council direction on Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan Chapter 2, Land Use

MOTION 1:

Motion approved to begin review of Chapter 2 using the attachment Chapter 2 - Preliminary Council Draft for 6.16.2026, which is the current version of the chapter with Planning Commission recommendations from January 2026 and additional edits proposed and motions passed by councilmembers as listed in the Chapter 2 - Chart of Proposed Council Changes for 6.16.2026.

MOTION 2:

Motion approved to amend Item 174 (from Chapter 2 - Chart of Proposed Council Changes for 6.16.2026) to read "...while encouraging continued viability of industrial uses within designated industrial zones."

MOTION 3:

Motion approved to strike the proposed language in Item 175 (from Chapter 2 - Chart of Proposed Council Changes for 6.16.2026).

MOTION 4:

Motion approved to adopt Item 179 (from Chapter 2 - Chart of Proposed Council Changes for 6.16.2026).

MOTION 5:

Motion approved to include a new "Tribal Participation in Whatcom County Comprehensive Planning" subsection on page 2-4 under the GMA Requirements heading with a new subsection that reads as follows:

"Section 36.70A.040(8) of the Growth Management Act provides for Tribal participation in Whatcom County comprehensive planning."

MOTION 6:

Motion approved to include new Policy 2K-7 as requested by Lummi Nation with the addition of Nooksack Tribe and cities of Nooksack, Everson, Ferndale, Lynden, and Sumas and the removal of the reference to "Slater Road" so that the policy reads as follows:

"Policy 2K-7 Upgrade and strengthen infrastructure that protects against flooding.

1. Continue the Floodplain Integrated Planning (FLIP) team process for floodplain management planning and prioritization of actions that protect against flooding.
2. Implement infrastructure improvements recommended by FLIP Team through partnerships with Cities of Nooksack, Everson, Ferndale, Lynden, and Sumas and the Lummi Nation and Nooksack Indian Tribe.
3. Prioritize and implement transportation improvements that can help prevent flooding."

MOTION 7:

Motion approved to request staff to prepare Chapter 2 as amended 6.16.2026 for introduction and public hearing at a future meeting.

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

MOTION 1:

Motion approved to begin review of Chapter 3 using the attachment Chapter 3 - Council Draft for 6.16.2026, which is the current version of the chapter with Planning Commission recommendations from January 2026 and additional edits proposed and motions passed by councilmembers as listed in the Chapter 3 - Chart of Proposed Council Changes for 6.16.2026.

MOTION 2:

Motion approved to amend Items 58-60 (from Chapter 3 - Chart of Proposed Council Changes for 6.16.2026) to replace "shall" with "should" per Planning and Development Services' recommendation.

MOTION 3:

Motion approved to amend Item 56 (from Chapter 3 - Chart of Proposed Council Changes for 6.16.2026) to replace "shall" with "should."

MOTION 4:

Motion approved to strike the amended language in Item 61 (from Chapter 3 - Chart of Proposed Council Changes for 6.16.2026).

MOTION 5:

Motion approved to change "ensure" to "facilitate" in Policy 3A-2.

MOTION 6:

Motion approved to amend Policy 3A-2 to change "facilitate annexation" to "support annexation."

MOTION 7:

Motion approved to amend Policy 3K-2 to strike "adopt" and replace it with "consider."

MOTION 8:

Motion approved to request staff to prepare Chapter 3 as amended 6.16.2026 for introduction and public hearing at a future meeting.

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

MOTION 1:

Motion approved to request that staff prepare Chapter 4, Preliminary Council Draft for 6.16.2026 including PDS amendment Item 18 in the Chart of Proposed Council Changes for 6.16.2026, for inclusion in a future agenda bill file for Council introduction and public hearing.

5. [AB2026-217](#) Discussion and preliminary Council direction on Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan Chapter 5, Utilities
6. [AB2026-218](#) Discussion and preliminary Council direction on Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan Chapter 6, Transportation
7. [AB2026-231](#) Discussion and preliminary Council direction on Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan Chapter 7, Economic Development

MOTION 1:

Motion approved to begin review of Chapter 7 using the attachment Chapter 7- Council Draft for 6.16.2026, which is the current version of the chapter with Planning Commission recommendations from January 2026 and additional edit proposed and motions passed by councilmembers as listed in the Chapter 7 - Chart of Proposed Council Changes for 6.16.2026.

MOTION 2:

Motion approved to amend to retain Policy 7B-16.

MOTION 3:

Motion approved to amend Policy 7I-2 to strike the language "without imposing additional regulatory conditions, mandates, or costs on private development beyond existing law."

MOTION 4:

Motion approved to amend Policy 7G-7 to add "Plan for adequate provision of fully serviced, shovel-ready, and permit ready..."

MOTION 5:

Motion approved to request staff to prepare Chapter 7 as amended 6.16.2026 for introduction and public hearing at a future meeting.

8. [AB2026-250](#) Discussion and preliminary Council direction on Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan Chapter 8, Resource Lands

MOTION 1:

Motion approved to begin review of Chapter 8 using the attachment Chapter 8 - Preliminary Council Draft for 6.16.2026, which is the current version of the chapter with Planning Commission recommendations from January 2026 and additional edits proposed and motions passed by councilmembers as listed in the Chapter 8 - Chart of Proposed Council Changes for 6.16.2026.

MOTION 2:

Motion approved to remove Item 103 (from the Chart of Proposed Council Changes for 6.16.2026) and retain the language about treaty rights as amended so that the final sentence of the "Reducing Land Use Impacts" section reads as follows:

"It is also important to honor and uphold treaties as the supreme law of the land, pursuant to the US Constitution."

MOTION 3:

Motion approved to amend Carmichael Clark's Policy 8A-2 to change "may" to "should."

MOTION 4:

Motion approved to amend Carmichael Clark's Policy 8A-2 to change "has been" to "is."

MOTION 5:

Motion approved to accept the revised policy language suggested in the Carmichael Clark document from 6.15.2026 for Policy 8A-2, as amended so that the policy reads as follows:

"Maintain a working agricultural land base sufficient to support a viable local agricultural industry by considering the impacts to farmers, farmworkers and other food chain workers and agricultural lands as part of the legislative decision making process. The County's longstanding goal is to maintain a minimum of 100,000 acres of agricultural land to support a healthy agricultural industry. To support working farms and maintain the agricultural land base the County should:

- Maintain a voluntary density credit program where development incentives are offered in cities and/or UGAs if density credits are purchased by the developer. Funds from the density credit program shall supplement the Conservation Easement Program..."

MOTION 6:

Motion approved to accept the PDS-recommended version of Policy 8A-15, which strikes language and amends subsection 8A-15(B) so that the policy reads as follows:

"The County shall require mitigation when lands designated as agricultural resource lands of long-term commercial significance under RCW 36.70A.170 are de-designated and converted to urban growth areas/urban growth area reserve, as applicable, on the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map that result in an overall net loss of agricultural designated lands.

The mitigation requirements shall include:

A....

B. For each property designated as agricultural resource land (ARL) at the time of adoption of this Comprehensive Plan, a mitigation agreement memorialized by covenant between the affected property owner(s), city and the county shall be required and filed with the County Auditor within:..."

MOTION 7:

Motion approved to approve the PDS version of Policy 8A-16.

MOTION 8:

Motion approved to request staff to prepare Chapter 8 as amended for introduction and public hearing at a future meeting.

9. [AB2026-251](#) Discussion and preliminary Council direction on Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan Chapter 9, Parks and Recreation
10. [AB2026-261](#) Discussion and preliminary Council direction on Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan Chapter 10, Environment

MOTION 1:

Motion approved to request staff to prepare Chapter 10 as amended on 6.2.2026 for introduction and public hearing at a future meeting.

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

MOTION 1:

Motion approved to amend Chapter 12 – Preliminary Council Draft as amended 5.19.2026 to include the new section, Relationship to Federal, State, and Regional Regulations, as presented on screen.

MOTION 2:

Motion approved to request staff to prepare Chapter 12 as amended 6.16.2026 for introduction and public hearing at a future meeting.

12. [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

MOTION 1:

Motion approved to approve the new version of Appendix D: Bibliography for 6.16.2026.

MOTION 2:

Motion approved to approve the new version of Appendix E: 20-Year Capital Facilities Plan for 6.16.2026.

MOTION 3:

Motion approved to request staff to prepare the Appendices A, B, D, E, G, H, I, J, and the Foothills Subarea Plan as amended for introduction and public hearing at a future meeting.

13. [AB2026-473](#) Discussion and preliminary Council direction on Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan Appendix L: Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Subelement, Washington State Department of Commerce Approval

MOTION 1:

Motion approved to amend Appendix L to strike reference to 2CC-19 through 2CC-21.

MOTION 2:

Motion approved to request staff to prepare Appendix L - Greenhouse Gas Reduction Subelement as amended for introduction and public hearing at a future meeting.

14. [AB2026-249](#) Discussion regarding schedule for Council review of the comprehensive plan update

Items Added by Revision

Other Business

MOTION 1:

Motion approved that Council supports including evaluation of potential industrial lands reserve study areas or overlays as part of the UGAR study that has been docketed under PLN2026-00011, including consideration of up to 500 acres countywide for potential future industrial land.

Adjournment