



# Whatcom County

COUNTY COURTHOUSE  
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## Agenda Bill Master Report

File Number: AB2025-533

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<b>File ID:</b>	AB2025-533	<b>Version:</b>	1	<b>Status:</b>	Approved
<b>File Created:</b>	07/14/2025	<b>Entered by:</b>	aharris@co.whatcom.wa.us		
<b>Department:</b>	Planning and Development Services Department	<b>File Type:</b>	Resolution		
<b>Assigned to:</b>	Council Planning and Development Committee			<b>Final Action:</b>	08/06/2025
<b>Agenda Date:</b>	08/06/2025			<b>Enactment #:</b>	RES 2025-024
<b>Related Files:</b>					

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Primary Contact Email: aharris@co.whatcom.wa.us

### TITLE FOR AGENDA ITEM:

Resolution approving recommendation on application for open space current use assessment

### SUMMARY STATEMENT OR LEGAL NOTICE LANGUAGE:

None

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### HISTORY OF LEGISLATIVE FILE

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Date:	Acting Body:	Action:	Sent To:
08/06/2025	Council Planning and Development Committee	RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL Aye: 2 Elenbaas, and Scanlon Nay: 0 Absent: 1 Donovan	
08/06/2025	Council	APPROVED Aye: 6 Buchanan, Byrd, Elenbaas, Galloway, Scanlon, and Stremier Nay: 0 Temp Absent: 1 Donovan	

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**Attachments:** Staff Memo, Proposed Resolution, Staff Report, Assessor Estimate, Presentation



PROPOSED BY: \_\_\_\_\_

INTRODUCED: \_\_\_\_\_

**RESOLUTION NO:** 2025-024

**APPROVING RECOMMENDATION ON APPLICATION FOR  
OPEN SPACE CURRENT USE ASSESSMENT**

**WHEREAS,** The Open Space Taxation Act, codified as Chapter 84.34 RCW, gives counties authority to approve applications for current use classification and reclassification for the following classifications: Farm and Agricultural Land, Open Space Land, Farm & Agricultural Conservation Land, and Timber Land; and

**WHEREAS,** Pursuant to Whatcom County Code, Section 3.28.020, applications for the classification of Open Space Land and Open Space Farm & Agricultural Conservation Land are received and evaluated by Whatcom County Planning and Development Services Department staff, and the results of this evaluation are then presented to the Whatcom County Planning Commission for their review and consideration in making recommendations to the County Council on whether to approve the applications in whole or in part; and

**WHEREAS,** Pursuant to RCW 84.34.055 and WAC 458-30-330, Whatcom County has adopted a Public Benefit Rating System (PBRs) by Ordinance # 95-040, which is used by staff to rate applications for Open Space Land and Open Space Farm & Agricultural Conservation Land; and

**WHEREAS,** Applications for Open Space Land and Open Space Farm & Agricultural Conservation Land are evaluated with the Public Benefit Rating System and assigned a Public Benefit Rating (PBR) that corresponds with a staff recommendation of approval or denial and must receive a score of 45 or above for a staff recommendation of approval; and

**WHEREAS,** In accordance with the Whatcom County Open Space Policies and Public Benefit Rating System, public access is a condition of approval for Open Space Land applications, *except* that this requirement may be waived by the Council when the purpose of the classification is for the conservation of wetlands; or when there is a documented occurrence of: State or Federal Threatened Endangered Species, Federal Proposed Endangered or Threatened Species, State Sensitive or Monitor Species; or when there is a known or potentially significant archaeological site; and

**WHEREAS,** On October 24, 2024, the Whatcom County Planning Commission held a public hearing and considered staff recommendations and all input from the public on applications; and

**WHEREAS,** Pursuant to WAC 197-11-800(6)(c), matters relating to Open Space Current Use Assessment are determined not to be major actions and thus exempt from environmental review under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA); and

**WHEREAS,** Pursuant to RCW 36.70.390, the statutory requirements regarding legal notice have been met; and

**WHEREAS,** The County Council has approved the following Findings of Fact and Reasons for Action:

1. Whatcom County received an application to reclassify land from Open Space Farm & Agriculture Land (OSAG) to Open Space Land (OSL).
2. Upon receipt of the application, Planning and Development Services evaluated the open space land applications with the Public Benefit Rating System (PBRs) and for conformance with the Open Space Taxation Act (RCW 84.34).
3. PDS prepared a report for the Planning Commission with a recommendation on whether to approve in whole or in part or to deny the application based on a review of the applicable evaluation criteria and scores assigned. This report was presented to the Whatcom County Planning Commission and to members of the public who were present at the Whatcom County Planning Commission public hearing held on April 10, 2025.
4. PDS recommended approval of the Open Space Land application (OSP2024-0006) based on an assigned Public Benefit Rating (PBR) score of more than 45 points, a score that must be attained for a staff recommendation of approval pursuant to Whatcom County Open Space Policies and Criteria and Public Benefit Rating System.
5. The Planning Commission considered staff findings and recommendations and voted to recommend approval of application.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL:**

1. The below listed application for open space current use assessment is hereby approved:

**1. OSP2024-00006 – Geri Lewis**

Application to reclassify the following parcels to Open Space Land\*\*

- 4104341743160000
- 4104341383160000
- 4104342353230000

*\*\*Classification does not apply to any present or future non-qualifying 1.0-acre residential homesite.*

**Public Benefit Rating: 48.18**

Staff **recommends** approval

Planning Commission **recommends** approval

2. Adjudication of invalidity of any of the sections, clauses, or provisions of this

**APPROVED** this 6th day of August, 2025

WHATCOM COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Cathy Halka  
Clerk of the Council

  
Kaylee Galloway  
Council Chair

Approved via email on 07/11/25 by Kellen Kooistra

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