



Whatcom County

COUNTY COURTHOUSE
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Agenda Bill Master Report

File Number: AB2026-016

File ID:	AB2026-016	Version:	1	Status:	Adopted
File Created:	12/30/2025	Entered by:	Lucas Clark		
Department:	Planning and Development Services Department	File Type:	Ordinance Requiring a Public Hearing		
Assigned to:	Council	Final Action:	01/27/2026		
Agenda Date:	01/27/2026	Enactment #:	ORD 2026-002		
Related Files:					

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

TITLE FOR AGENDA ITEM:

Ordinance amending Whatcom County Code Chapter 20.34 Rural Residential Island (RRI) to allow food preparation for off-site consumption when accessory to and located within an approved community center

SUMMARY STATEMENT OR LEGAL NOTICE LANGUAGE:

Ordinance amending Whatcom County Code Title 20.34 Rural Residential Island (RRI) to allow food preparation for off-site consumption when accessory to and located within an approved community center.

The Rural Residential Island (RRI) District is specific to Lummi Island. It applies only to the north half of Lummi, which is generally rural. Some commercial uses are permitted through a conditional use permit under Whatcom County Code WCC 20.34.150. Lummi Island is a unique district with geographic barriers to food affordability and accessibility. This code change will allow food preparation for off-site consumption when accessory to and located within an approved community center as a conditional use.

HISTORY OF LEGISLATIVE FILE

Date:	Acting Body:	Action:	Sent To:
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Agenda Bill Master Report Continued (AB2026-016)

01/13/2026 Council

INTRODUCED FOR PUBLIC HEARING Council

Aye: 7 Boyle, Buchanan, Elenbaas, Galloway, Rienstra, Scanlon, and Stremier

Nay: 0

01/27/2026 Council

ADOPTED

Aye: 7 Boyle, Buchanan, Elenbaas, Galloway, Rienstra, Scanlon, and Stremier

Nay: 0

Attachments: Staff Memo, Staff Memo: Land Use Cost Analysis, Staff Report, Proposed Ordinance, Notice of Hearing after 1.13.2026

PROPOSED BY: PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES
INTRODUCED: January 13, 2026

ORDINANCE NO. 2026-002

AMENDING WHATCOM COUNTY CODE TITLE 20.34. RURAL RESIDENTIAL ISLAND (RRI) TO ALLOW FOOD PREPARATION FOR OFF-SITE CONSUMPTION WHEN ACCESSORY TO AND LOCATED WITHIN AN APPROVED COMMUNITY CENTER.

WHEREAS, The Council's 2025 docket includes item PLN2025-00004, "Review and revise the Whatcom County Zoning Code and other sections of the County Code to implement Comprehensive Plan policies and/or address issues identified in the administration of the codes. Revisions needed to achieve consistency with the Growth Management Act may also be considered."

WHEREAS, Whatcom County Planning and Development Services has proposed an amendment to Whatcom County Code Title 20 to fulfill this directive; and

WHEREAS, The Whatcom County Council reviewed and considered the Planning Commission recommendation, staff recommendation, and public comments on the proposed amendments; and

WHEREAS, The County Council hereby adopts the following findings of fact:

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. Whatcom County Planning and Development Services has submitted an application to make an amendment to Title 20 (Zoning).
2. A determination of non-significance (DNS) was issued under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) on November 11th, 2025. No comments have been received to date.
3. Notice of the subject amendment was submitted to the Washington State Department of Commerce on November 6th, 2025 for their 10-day expedited review. No comments were received.
4. The Planning Commission held a duly noticed public hearing on the proposed amendments on December 11th, 2025.
5. On October 11th, 2025 the Whatcom County Planning Commission recommended the proposed Zoning Code changes to The County Council.
6. The County Council held a duly noticed public hearing on the proposed amendments on January 27, 2026

7. The amendments are consistent with Comprehensive Plan Policy Goal 2D to “refine the regulatory system to ensure accomplishment of desired land use goals in a fair and equitable manner.” There are no policies with which these amendments would be inconsistent.
8. In reference to Exhibit A: This amendment is to revise Chapter 20.34. Rural Residential Island (RRI) through adding food service as a conditional use for off-site consumption when accessory to and located within an approved community center.

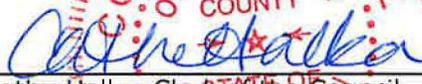
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Whatcom County Council that amendments to the Whatcom County Code Title 20 (Zoning) and are hereby adopted as shown in Exhibit A of the Staff Report; and

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED by the Whatcom County Council that staff is authorized to work with Code Publishing to correct and update any cross-references made ineffective by these amendments; and

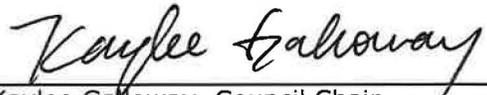
BE IT FINALLY ORDAINED by the Whatcom County Council should any part of this regulation be held to be illegal, unconstitutional, or otherwise unenforceable, the remainder of the regulation shall still apply.

ADOPTED this 27th day of January, 2026

ATTEST:



 Cathy Halka, Clerk of the Council

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
 WHATCOM COUNTY, WASHINGTON


 Kaylee Galloway, Council Chair

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Greg Greenan, per 1/6/2025 email
 Civil Deputy Prosecutor

WHATCOM COUNTY EXECUTIVE
 WHATCOM COUNTY, WASHINGTON


 Satpal Sidhu, County Executive

Approved () Denied

Date Signed: 2.3.26

Exhibit A: Lummi Island Code Amendment

1) Revise Whatcom County Code (WCC) 20.34.156 to allow food preparation for off-site consumption.

Lummi Island is a unique district with geographic barriers to food affordability and accessibility. The Gathering Place is a modern, fully accessible community center located on Lummi Island. The venue includes a main hall with a capacity of 191, a commercial kitchen, two restrooms, an outdoor patio, and access to the beach. Completed in 2023, the venue has been widely used by Lummi Islanders. WCC 20.34 only applies to Lummi Island. The addition to the code will allow The Gathering Place to utilize its commercial kitchen for food prep for off-site consumption (e.g. local food trucks, off-premise food purveyors).

TITLE 20 ZONING

Chapter 20.34

RURAL RESIDENTIAL-ISLAND (RR-I) DISTRICT

Chapter 20.34.150 Conditional Uses

20.34.156 Commercial uses including retail trade, professional and personal services, and food preparation for off-site consumption, when accessory to and located within an approved community center.