

TO ALL COUNCILMEMBERS:

Additional Information

For

February 23, 2016

Other Items #8

AB2016-062A

- 8. Resolution adopting the 2016 Comprehensive Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan (AB2016-062A)
Pages 313 - 317**


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WHATCOM COUNTY
Parks & Recreation
3373 Mount Baker Highway
Bellingham, WA 98226-9097



Michael G. McFarlane, Director
Christ Thomsen, Operations Manager

MEMORANDUM

TO: Members of the Council and Executive Louws
FROM: Michael McFarlane, Director 
CC: Mark Personius, Assistant Planning Director
DATE: February 17th, 2016
RE: 2016 Whatcom County Comprehensive Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan (PROS)

This memo is to provide background to the February 9th Council discussion pertaining to the 2016 Comprehensive Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan.

The Comprehensive Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan (PROS) is a requirement of the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO), a state agency which acts as a clearing house for grant funding. The RCO requires counties, cities and districts to do comprehensive planning for parks, recreation and open space (PROS) in order to qualify for certain grant programs. Plans are valid for six years at which time they must be revised or redone. The plans must contain six specific elements; a) goals and objectives, b) inventory, c) public involvement, d) demand and need analysis, e) capital improvement program and f) an adoption strategy. Grants are applied for in even numbered years and a valid plan must be on file with RCO by March 1st of that year. The 2016 PROS plan is an update of the 2008 plan.

The PROS is not required by the Growth Management Act. Schedules are different for the PROS plan (every 6 years) versus the County's Comprehensive Plan (every 8 years). The PROS plan can be adopted as stand-alone document or if a County or municipality chooses, be adopted as part of its comprehensive plan. This is entirely a local decision. The 2008 PROS Plan was not adopted as part of the County's Comprehensive plan but as a departmental planning document to be used to inform the Comprehensive Plan. The 2016 plan is also being proposed to be adopted the same as the 2008 plan. The action being requested is not an amendment to the County's Comprehensive Plan. The resolution adopting the PROS Plan will meet the requirements of the RCO and allow the County to qualify for grant funding through 2021.

The PROS plan is a much more detailed document than Chapter 9-*Recreation* of the County's Comprehensive plan. As example, the PROS plan contains 28 levels of

service (LOS) for activities and facilities where the Comprehensive Plan contains only 2. The draft PROS Plan is 80 pages with a 191 page appendix. Chapter 9 of the Comprehensive plan is 17 pages with an additional 9 pages in Capital improvements. The two plans are similar and contain some of the same information for consistency.

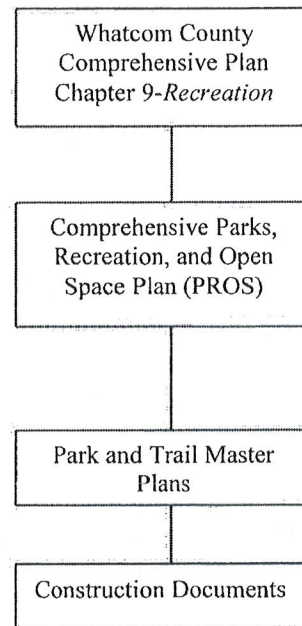
The following diagram illustrates the hierarchy and how the PROS plan relates to other planning documents.

GMA requirement-Optional element for Whatcom County Broad goals & objectives, adopted levels of service, capital improvements (appendix F)

Informs Comprehensive Plan; Goals and objectives, community surveys, desired levels of service, operations, programming, detailed inventory, implementation strategies, capital improvements

Plans for individual properties and facilities to meet goals and objectives.

Plans and documents for construction of park facilities and trails



When the PROS planning effort was started, Council members asked for the following items to be included in the plan.

1. A definition for developed park (see page 8)
2. Inclusion or discussion of the County's Comprehensive Plan, Chapter 9 Recreation; *Goals and Policies* (see pages 28-34 2016 proposed Chapter 9 Recreation Goals and Objectives)

While the draft PROS plan was completed in 2014 and presented to Council, it was decided to defer adoption to coordinate with the revision to Chapter 9-*Recreation* of the County's Comprehensive Plan which had been scheduled for an update in late 2014 and 2015. This was acceptable as there were no grant applications planned and by deferring the plan until 2016, the plan would qualify the County for an additional grant cycle. During this time there were no recommended changes received from Council. The revisions to Chapter 9-*Recreation* of the Comprehensive Plan were completed by the Parks Commission in August 2015 and the Planning Commission last month. These revisions are currently awaiting Council action which is scheduled for April and May. The draft version has been included in the PROS Plan.

There were comments expressed regarding the amount of public process. I've attached a log of all the public meetings for your reference. The PROS plan utilizes a variety of

tools to gather public input including surveys, visioning sessions and open houses. In the development of the plan, 332 persons directly participated in the process and another 62 helped contribute to the plan. Over the course of the planning process, there have been a total of 54 publically noticed and open meetings including 10 community meetings, 31 *Parks Commission* meetings, 6 *Planning Commission* meetings and 7 *County Council* meetings where the plan or elements of it were addressed. You will note that the Planning Commission did not approve their changes to the recreation chapter until January this year.

The draft PROS plan has been posted on the County's website since February of 2014. On January 14th, 2016 the on-line plan was revised to include the proposed Chapter 9-*Recreation* goals and objectives as revised and submitted to the Council by the Planning Commission. Hard copies of the draft PROS plan were distributed to members of the Council, Planning Commission and Parks Commission in 2014 and Council in 2016.

I've attempted to outline the major items associated with the PROS plan. Please let me know if you have any questions or if I can provide you with any additional information. As always, feel free to contact me at 778-5855

PUBLIC MEETINGS LOG 2016 CPROS PLAN UPDATE

Community Meetings

7-18-13	Stakeholders workshop- City of Bellingham
6-24-13	Visioning workshop- Lummi Island
6-25-13	Visioning workshop- City of Lynden
6-26-13	Visioning workshop- Point Roberts
6-27-13	Visioning workshop- City of Ferndale
7-8-13	Visioning workshop- City of Everson
7-10-13	Visioning workshop- Columbia Valley
7-11-13	Visioning workshop- City of Bellingham
7-15-13	Visioning workshop- Birch Bay
3-6-14	Public Open House- PROS Plan Draft

Parks Commission Meetings

1-17-13	Report on budget, timeline and process
2-21-13	Discussion on format, goals and objectives, community outreach
3-21-13	Review of community survey and workshop meeting schedule
4-18-13	Community survey review, consultant discussion
5-16-13	Community survey review, customer service survey
6-20-13	On-line survey review
7-18-13	Report on visioning workshops
9-19-13	Review goals and objectives and survey results
10-17-13	Demand and need analysis
12-19-13	Draft plan distributed for review
1-16-14	Update on process
2-20-14	Report on Public Open House, notice of meeting with Council Planning Committee
3-20-14	Discussion on March 11 th Council Planning Committee work session presentation
4-17-14	Discussion on level of service
6-19-14	LOS, Motion to not adopt as part of County Comprehensive Plan
7-17-14	Discussion on level of service
10-16-14	Chapter 9 review process, update relationship to CPROSP, 2014 Goals and Objectives
11-20-14	Chapter 9 review
12-18-14	Chapter 9 review
1-22-15	Request for final comments
2-9-15	Comprehensive plan mapping
3-19-15	Chapter 9 maps
4-19-15	Chapter 9 maps, recreational resource management areas
5-16-15	Recreational resource management areas, property inventory
6-18-15	Recreational resource management areas discussion

8-20-15	Chapter 9 final edits
9-17-15	Planning Commission edits on policies
10-15-15	Planning Commission edits
11-19-15	Response to Council, Executive and Planning Commission on policy items removed 12-
12-17-15	Report of action by Planning Commission on restoring policy items
1-21-16	Approval of 2016 Comprehensive Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan Update

Planning Commission Meetings

1-23-14	Draft plan presented
9-25-14	Levels of service presented, CIP
8-13-15	Review of Chapter 9/Parks Commission policy edits
9-10-15	Review of Chapter 9 Recreation, Trail policies removed
12-10-15	Trail policies restored
1-15-16	Planning Commission approves amendments-forwarded to Council

County Council Meetings

3-11-14	Planning and Development Committee	Presentation and copies PROSP Plan
3-11-14	Full Council	Discussion on PROS Plan and process
9-12-14	Public Works, Health and Safety Committee	CIP and levels of Service
10-14-14	Public Works, Health and Safety Committee	CIP and levels of Service
1-26-16	Planning and Development Committee	Presentation and copies PROS Plan
2-8-16	Public hearing on PROS Plan	
2-23-16	Resolution for adoption scheduled	

*April/May Council scheduled to review Chapter 9