



Memorandum

May 9, 2023

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

FROM: Matt Aamot, Senior Planner

THROUGH: Steve Roberge, Assistant Director

RE: Draft Scope of Work for 2025 Comprehensive Plan Update

The Growth Management Act (GMA) indicates that county and city comprehensive plans, including urban growth area (UGA) plans, must be coordinated and consistent (RCW 36.70A.100). The GMA also requires Whatcom County and the cities to update their respective comprehensive plans by June 2025 (RCW 36.70A.130).

The Washington State Legislature has adopted significant changes to the GMA over the last several years. These GMA amendments will be addressed in the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan update. They include:

- Engrossed Second Substitute House Bill 1220, passed in 2021, relating to housing;
- Substitute House Bill 1717, passed in 2022, relating to Tribal participation in planning; and
- Engrossed Second Substitute House Bill 1181, passed in 2023, relating to climate response.

Additionally, the Whatcom County Council approved Resolution 2022-036 establishing priorities for Whatcom County's 2025 Comprehensive Plan update last year. There are also other tasks that the County will need to undertake as part of the Comprehensive Plan update process, including population & employment growth projections, evaluation of housing needs, transportation modeling, and environmental analysis.

The State of Washington is providing funding to the County and cities to update their comprehensive plans and development regulations. These funds will be used to pay for consultant services and staff salaries.

The City/County Planner Group, consisting of a County Planning & Development Services representative and city planners representing all seven cities, developed the draft scope of work. Additionally, the Group is developing a draft cost sharing interlocal agreement to pay for tasks that benefit both the County and the cities. The draft scope of work is split into two sections:

- Tasks that will be jointly funded by Whatcom County and the cities (using state grants), in accordance with the terms of an interlocal agreement. The Whatcom Council of Governments will also provide funding for transportation related tasks.
- Tasks that will be funded solely by Whatcom County (using state grants), without city participation.

The Planning and Development Services Department looks forward to discussing the draft scope of work at the Council's Committee of the Whole meeting on May 23 and receiving input from the Committee so we can finalize the scope. We plan to insert the scope of work into a Request for Proposals in order to seek a qualified consulting firm(s) for the project.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.