

WHATCOM COUNTY

Planning & Development Services
5280 Northwest Drive
Bellingham, WA 98226-9097
360-778-5900, TTY 800-833-6384
360-778-5901 Fax



Mark Personius
Director

Memorandum

August 16, 2019

TO: The Honorable Jack Louws, Whatcom County Executive
The Honorable Whatcom County Council

FROM: Matt Aamot, Senior Planner *MAK*

THROUGH: Mark Personius, Director *MP*

RE: Interim Interlocal Agreement Relating to Countywide Planning Policies

The Growth Management Act required the County to adopt countywide planning policies in cooperation with the cities (RCW 36.70A.040(4) and RCW 36.70A.210). Countywide planning policies establish a framework for developing city and county comprehensive plans and ensuring these plans are consistent. The County Council originally adopted countywide planning policies in 1993 and amended these policies in 1997 and 2005.

The Washington State Legislature approved Engrossed Second Substitute Senate Bill 5254 relating to the Growth Management Act's "Review and Evaluation Program" (buildable lands) requirements in 2017. This legislation imposes new requirements that Whatcom County must address, in close coordination with the cities, over the next several years. One of these requirements is to amend the countywide planning policies to establish the buildable lands program.

As the City/County Planner Group discussed the requirement to amend the countywide planning policies, we came to the conclusion that we needed to establish an interim procedure for making amendments. We established a subcommittee that reviewed other jurisdictions' procedures for countywide planning policy amendments, drafted a proposed interlocal agreement, and brought it back to the City/County Planner Group for consideration.

County Planning and Development Services would like to discuss the proposed interlocal agreement with the County Council's Committee of the Whole on September 10 to ascertain whether or not the Council has any concerns with the proposed agreement. The cities would then take the agreement through their respective approval processes (and obtain signatures of the appropriate city officials), before the agreement would come back to the County Council for a formal vote and signature by the County Executive.

Thank you for your review and consideration of the proposed interlocal agreement between Whatcom County and the cities. We look forward to discussing it with you.