

**WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL AGENDA BILL**

**NO. 1996 - 196**

CLEARANCES		Date	Date Received in Council Office	Agenda Date	Assigned To
Orig. Dept.:	County Council	5/8/96		5/14/96	Public Works
Division Head:				9/17/96	Public Works
Dept. Head:					
Prosecutor:					
/Budget:					
Executive:					

**SUBJECT:**

Staff Report on the Progress of the Road Naming Committee

**ATTACHMENTS**

Ordinance, September 9, 1996 memorandum from Ed Henken

**SUMMARY STATEMENT:**

Related County Cotract #:	Should the Clerk schedule a hearing? (Y/N) N	Requested Date:
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On May 14, 1996 the Public Works Committee received a status report from Engineering on the progress of road naming and addressing within Whatcom County, and a draft ordinance from the Road Naming Task Force. The Public Works Committee is now ready to move forward with discussion on the draft ordinance.

**RECOMMENDED MOTION (for final action):**

**COUNCIL ACTION TAKEN**

- 1 1996 - 196 5/14/96: Discussed in Committee Only
- 9/17/96: Discussed. Held for work session on 9/24/96
- 9/24/96: Discussed. Held in committee for work session on 10/8/96
- 10/8/96: Discussed. Held in committee for work session on 10/22/96.
- 10/22/96 Discussed. Scheduled for introduction to council on 10/29/96
- 10/29/96: Introduced

11/12/96: Adopted 7 - 0. C

**Related File Numbers:**

**Ordinance or Resolution Number (this item only):**

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**SUBSTITUTE**  
*pw-eng/rdname3.ord*

SPONSORED BY: Brenner, Brown, Sutter  
PROPOSED BY: Road Name Task Force  
INTRODUCTION DATE: 9/17/96

ORDINANCE NO. 96-049

AMENDING THE WHATCOM COUNTY CODE BY CREATING CHAPTER 12.60  
UNINCORPORATED WHATCOM COUNTY ROAD NAMING SYSTEM

WHEREAS no ordinance for road naming and address numbering exists in unincorporated Whatcom County, and

WHEREAS discrepancies, ambiguities, inconsistencies, and voids exist in address numbers and road names, and

WHEREAS the Public is inconvenienced and discouraged by such inconsistencies, and

WHEREAS emergency response may be compromised by such inconsistencies, and

WHEREAS it is Whatcom County policy to maintain its rural character and unique sense of place, and

WHEREAS the names of our roads reflect both the cultural heritage of our county and are important to maintaining the unique sense of place of our various communities and of the county as a whole,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Whatcom County Council that the following ordinance shall be adopted:

***Chapter 12.60***  
***Road Naming System***

- 12.60.010. Purpose
- 12.60.020. Definitions
- 12.60.030. Responsibilities of the Public Works department
- 12.60.040. Appointment and responsibilities of the citizen address and road name appeals committee
- 12.60.050. Requirement for road name
- 12.60.060. Criteria for road name selection
- 12.60.070. Name assignment procedure
- 12.60.080. Road name signs

- 1    **12.60.090**    **Road sign specifications**
- 2    **12.60.100**    **Address numbering system**
- 3    **12.60.110**    **Correction of address number sequence**
- 4    **12.60.120**    **Address number assignment**
- 5    **12.60.130**    **Life, safety and property protection standards for address designation**
- 6    **markers**
- 7    **12.60.140**    **Road name changes & procedures**
- 8    **12.60.150**    **Master map**
- 9    **12.60.160**    **Compliance requirements and penalties**
- 10    **12.60.190**    **Severability**

11    **12.60.010. Purpose**

12           The purpose of this Chapter is to provide for a logical system of road naming and  
 13 address numbering, which is consistent with the desires of Whatcom County residents, with the  
 14 Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan, and with the practical needs of county residents,  
 15 emergency service providers, and visitors.

16    **12.60.020. Definitions**

17    "*Address*" means the appropriate combination of address number, directional prefix or suffix,  
 18 road name, and road type, e.g., 100 East Bakerview Road.

19    "*Address Grid System*" means an imaginary network of uniformly spaced horizontal and  
 20 perpendicular lines used to establish regularly spaced intervals as the basis for assigning address  
 21 numbers.

22    "*Address Marker*" means a marker with numbers on two sides used to designate an address  
 23 number along a road, or numbers affixed to a building.

24    "*Address Number*" means the assigned property number which is written ahead of the road  
 25 name, e.g., 525 Noon Road, and shall be numerical only.

26    "*Alpha Road Name*" means a word, usually a proper or common noun, or a combination of  
 27 words, used to identify a road, e.g. Smith Road, Trout Lake Road.

28    "*Applicant*" means the individual or entity responsible for initiating the creation or expansion  
 29 of a road.

30    "*Block Number*" means the 100 number interval based on the address grid system.

31    "*Building Address Number including Building Designation*" means the property number assigned  
 32 to a building

33    "*Directional Prefix*" is the word such as "West" or "East" placed ahead of the name of a road.

1 "Directional Suffix" is the word such as "West" or "East" placed after the road type e.g.,  
2 Willow Lane East.

3 "Driveway": Primary function is to provide direct access to property.

4 "Joint Driveway": Driveway with primary function to provide direct access for up to 4  
5 properties.

6 "Mobile Home Parks" means any parcel of land or adjacent parcels of land in the same  
7 ownership which is utilized for occupancy by more than two mobile homes.

8 "Numeric Road Name" means an ordinal number used to identify a road, e.g. 2nd Street, 31st  
9 Avenue.

10 "Private Road": A road which is on private property and which is maintained with private funds.

11 "Recreational Vehicle Park" means a parcel of land in which three or more sites are primarily  
12 for occupancy by recreational vehicles for travel, recreation or vacation uses.

13 "Right-of-Way": A Legal right of passage over a piece of land, generally established by either  
14 dedication, ownership, or easement.

15 "Road" means a travel way intended for the use of motorized vehicles or other modes of  
16 transportation.

17 "Road Name Sign" means a sign designating the name of a travel way.

18 "Road Name Type " follows the road name proper and indicates type of travel way, e.g. Britton  
19 Road, Sunset Lane.

20 **12.60.030 Responsibilities of the Public Works department**

21 A. Whatcom County Department of Public Works, hereinafter called the Department,  
22 is directed to assign and/or change address numbers to buildings and unimproved property, to  
23 facilitate and record the naming of roads, and to assure placement of road name signs, according  
24 to the provisions of this Ordinance.

25 B. The Department will recommend to the Executive for approval by the County Council  
26 rules and regulations regarding all address numbering and road naming policies.

27 C. The Department and the Applicant shall work cooperatively and in a timely manner  
28 to facilitate and expedite the procedures required by this Ordinance.

29 **12.60.040 Appointment and responsibilities of the citizen address and road name appeals**

1 committee.

2 A. The County Council shall appoint a Citizen Address and Road Name Appeals  
3 Committee, hereinafter called the "Citizen Appeals Committee", of five (5) members  
4 representing the diversity of Whatcom County residents. Committee members shall serve three-  
5 year overlapping terms and shall be eligible for reappointment.

6 B. The responsibilities of the Citizen Appeals Committee shall be as follows:

- 7 1. Consider and decide appeals of address numbering, road name assignments  
8 and corrections.
- 9 2. Review and decide appeals in enacting the policies and procedures of this  
10 ordinance.
- 11 3. Develop a list of pre-approved road names from which Applicants may  
12 choose.
- 13 4. May propose changes or additions in the County's address numbering, road  
14 naming and sign policy.

15 C. Decisions by the Citizen Appeals Committee may be appealed by the Department to  
16 the County Council.

17 **12.60.041 Appeal Procedure**

18 **12.60.050 Requirement for road name**

19 A. Road names shall be required for all public roads and private roads now existing or  
20 hereafter created when such roads:

- 21 1. Serve 5 or more lots or,
- 22 2. Are 1000' in length and serves 3 or more lots.

23 Roads which are not required to be named by these standards may also be named at the request  
24 of the Applicant and/or property owners served by the road.

25 **12.60.060 Criteria for road name selection**

26 A. *Objectives:* Names should be pleasant sounding, appropriate, and easy to read and  
27 pronounce (so that the public, and children in particular, can handle the name in an emergency  
28 situation) and shall meet What-Comm (9-1-1) computer programming requirements.

29 B. *Recommended types of names:* Names of local historic families, individuals,  
30 landmarks and events, features of the natural terrain, plants and animals, names of aesthetic or  
31 community significance.

32 C. *Unacceptable names:* Numeric (e.g. 42nd, 56th, Fifty-Fifth, etc.) if they have  
33 already been used or if they do not conform to the address grid system, alphabetical letters (A,  
34 B, C, etc.); frivolous, complicated or unseemly names (e.g. My Road, Slick Road).

1 D. *Avoidance of name duplication:* Similar sounding names shall be considered  
2 duplication regardless of spelling. No duplication of names shall be permitted within Whatcom  
3 County. Road type shall not be used to distinguish road names within these areas, except in  
4 logically compelling instances where there is contiguity (e.g. Oak Circle at the end of Oak  
5 Street; but not Oak Lane at a location not contiguous with Oak Street.) Directional indicators  
6 (e.g., North, South, Northeast) shall not be allowed as street names to distinguish non-  
7 contiguous roads (i.e., if there were an existing Wilson Road, "North Wilson Road" could not  
8 be considered a distinct, non-duplicative name.)

9 E. *Road Type Designations:* Due to existing road names, "view", "vista", "trail" and  
10 "plaza" shall not be permitted as road type. The designation "highway" shall be reserved for  
11 state and federal administered roads.  
12

13 F. *Directional prefixes:* Roads running east-west which intersect (cross or abut) the  
14 Guide Meridian shall be prefixed "East" on the east side of the Guide and "West" on the west  
15 side of the Guide.

16 G. *Directional suffixes:* Directional suffixes shall not be allowed in road names.

17 **12.60.070 Name assignment procedure**

18 A. The Applicant for a new road may propose three original names; a preferred name  
19 and two alternates. The Department shall provide the road Applicant with a copy of this  
20 Ordinance and a list of pre-approved names from which a road name may be selected, if the  
21 Applicant prefers not to propose an original name.

22 B. If pre-approved name is not selected, the road name approval process shall consist  
23 of submission to the Department for review including What-Comm 911 and the local fire chief  
24 according to the criteria set forth in Section .060.

25 C. If an appeal is made, the Citizen Appeal Committee shall evaluate the appeal with  
26 regard to compliance, review proposed road names for appropriateness, and make  
27 recommendations on new road names and road name changes.

28 D. When the recommendations of the Department and the Citizen Appeal Committee do  
29 not agree, or when the Applicant contests the decisions of the Department and the Citizen  
30 Appeal Committee, the matter may be referred to the Council for consideration.

31 **12.60.080 Road name signs**

32 A. Signs on public county roads shall be placed and maintained by the County. When  
33 an Applicant dedicates a road to the public, the Applicant shall pay for the initial installation of  
34 the road name sign(s).

35 B. Signs on new private roads shall be installed and maintained by the Applicant in  
36 accordance to Whatcom County Development Standards. On existing private roads, the

1 responsibility for installation and maintenance of signs shall rest collectively with the owners of  
2 real property which abuts or may use the private road as access or as outlined in the plat  
3 covenants.

4 **12.60.090 Road sign specifications**

5 A. *For arterial roads:* The color and letter size shall be consistent with current county  
6 road signs for all public county roads. In addition to the road name, block numbers shall be  
7 shown on all new and replacement arterial road signs.

8 B. *For private roads:* Signs designating private roads shall be the same style as public  
9 road signs in accordance with Whatcom County Development Standards. Block numbers shall  
10 be shown on or with all new and replacement private road signs at Public Road intersections.

11 **12.60.100 Address numbering system**

12 A. An address numbering system following a grid pattern of 400 three- or four-digit  
13 numbers per mile meets current and projected future needs in Whatcom County. This system  
14 provides for one address number every 26.4 feet on either side of the road.

15 **12.60.110 Correction of address number sequence**

16 A. The Department shall make corrections where necessary to accomplish full  
17 implementation of the address numbering system for all county addresses in  
18 accordance with the following time-line and criteria:

- 19 1. The Department shall correct addresses beginning in 1997.
- 20 2. One fourth (1/4) of the county shall be reviewed and corrected each year for  
21 four years. The quarter of the county being corrected shall correspond with the  
22 geographical quarters used by the County Assessor's Office. This review shall  
23 not preclude the Department from making addressing corrections as needed.
- 24 3. Notices of address corrections shall be mailed to affected property owners in  
25 October, and become effective in April of the year following review by the  
26 Department.
- 27 4. Address changes shall become effective within six (6) months of issuance.

28 **12.60.120 Address number assignment**

29 A. The Department shall assign address numbers to previously unaddressed lots prior  
30 to issuance of a building permit.

31 B. New address number assignments and address number corrections shall follow the  
32 address number system. New address numbers shall logically fit into the existing numbering  
33 system of the particular area. When incorrect address numbers are found during the permit  
34 process, corrections should be made to those addresses at that time.

35 C. One address per legal lot of record shall be assigned, except in the following cases:

- 36 1. There shall be one address per building for multi-dwelling units or alternately

1 one address number may be assigned for the entire complex with alphabetical  
2 letters assigned to the individual buildings as a prefix to the individual apartment  
3 identification.

4 2. An alpha building designator on a legal lot shall be allowed for: permitted  
5 accessory dwelling unit.

6 **12.60.130 Life, safety and property protection standards for address designation**  
7 **markers.**

8 A. The owner of real property on which any building is located which is habitable or  
9 tenantable for residential, commercial, business, storage, or other purposes shall be responsible  
10 for ensuring that the proper address numbers are placed in such a position as to be plainly visible  
11 and legible from the road fronting the property.

12 B. *Address Designation Marker:* Where the building is not visible from the road or the  
13 address is not legible from the road, or more than one building is on a site, one address  
14 designation marker per building or address shall be provided at the junction of the driveway and  
15 the named road, and another address designation marker should be provided at the intersection  
16 of the individual driveway and the joint driveway. The ultimate responsibility for health and  
17 safety issues on private property rests with the property owner.

18 1. *Placement:* Address designation markers shall be placed so that the numbers  
19 are not obstructed by grass or landscaping. Installation and maintenance are the  
20 responsibility of the property owner.

21 2. *Installation:* Installation and maintenance of temporary address designation  
22 markers during all permitted construction shall be the responsibility of the permit  
23 applicant in compliance with Section .130 B. & C.

24 3. *Specifications:* Address designation markers must be visible at night. The  
25 minimum standard shall be 3" numbers arranged horizontally or vertically on a  
26 clearly contrasting background. Reflective numbers and reflective backgrounds  
27 are recommended. Blue and white are the recommended colors to be used on  
28 address designation markers.

29 C. *Specifications for mobile home parks:* In mobile home parks, including RV parks,  
30 site numbers shall be assigned to the individual mobile home sites and not to the mobile homes  
31 themselves. One address number shall be assigned to the mobile home park as a whole. ( The  
32 address of any one unit in the mobile home park shall consist of the mobile home park address  
33 followed by the site number. ) The property owner(s) of mobile home parks are responsible for  
34 ensuring that each mobile home space is marked with the individual site number. The site  
35 number shall be easily visible and legible and affixed to some permanent structure located on  
36 the mobile home space. In mobile home parks with multiple access lanes, the access lanes shall  
37 be marked with the range of site numbers served.

1 D. Specifications for apartment complexes: One address number per building shall be  
2 assigned to each apartment building in the complex. The address of any one (individual  
3 apartment) unit in the apartment building shall consist of the address of the building followed  
4 by the individual apartment identification.

5 E. Map Signs: In apartment complexes or mobile home parks where multiple buildings  
6 exist, map signs are recommended to be posted at the main entrance of the complex.

7 **12.60.140 Road name changes & procedures**

8 A. Some road names warrant being changed in order to reduce confusion arising from duplicate  
9 names or by different names on segments of the same travel way (which may or may not change  
10 direction). Whenever possible, road name changes shall be made concurrently with correction  
11 of address number sequencing (refer to Section .110). The road(s) shall be re-named by the  
12 following procedure:

- 13 1. The Department shall notify all property owners served by the roads that their  
14 road(s) requires a name change. Within this notification, the property owner will  
15 be informed of the opportunity they have to participate in the selection of the new  
16 road name and the Department will also outline the following:

17 First Notification:

- 18 a. The reason for the road name change (duplication, merging roads,  
19 etc);  
20 b. The two (or more) existing affected road names;  
21 c. The Dept. may recommend road name(s) or changes based on the  
22 following criteria:  
23 \* Section .060: Criteria for Road Name Selection  
24 \* Section .070: Name Assignment Procedure  
25 \* historical records (deeds, plats, etc.)  
26 \* date in which road(s) were named  
27 \* number of affected residents and/or property owners of record  
28 located on each road  
29 \* extenuating circumstances known by the Department  
30 \* Pre-approved Road Name List  
31 d. The date at which a response is due back to the Department, any  
32 additional circumstances to be considered, and the road name  
33 proposals (a 3 week period);

34 Second Notification:

- 35 a. A brief summary of prior notice  
36 b. A list of all proposed road names submitted by residents  
37 c. A date in which the residents need to submit their top two choices  
38 (a 2 week period)

39 Third Notification:

- 40 a. Talled results from responses for New Road Name. The  
Department will strive to obtain consensus.

- b. An outline of the appeal process with the deadline to submit an appeal's request (3 weeks from date of 3rd notice).
- c. The Department will make the official road name announcement.
- d. The date when the new road name may become effective (additional 3 week period).

**12.60.150 Master map**

The Department shall develop a master map of all public and private roads in Whatcom County in conjunction with Section 12.60.110 of this ordinance and shall maintain and keep current thereafter.

**12.60.160 Compliance requirements and penalties**

A. All address assignments or changes duly required by the Department shall be recorded on title transfers.

B. Any person, firm, or corporation violating any of the provisions of this chapter, or of the Codes adopted by reference by this chapter, shall be deemed guilty of a civil offense and shall be given thirty (30) days to correct the situation and shall be fined not more than two hundred fifty dollars (\$250.00) for each offense.

**12.60.190 Severability**

If any portion of this ordinance is deemed to be invalid or inoperative, all remaining sections shall continue in effect.

ADOPTED this 12 day of November, 1996.

ATTEST:

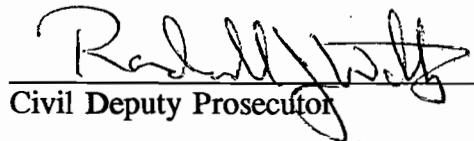
  
Dana Brown-Davis, Council Clerk

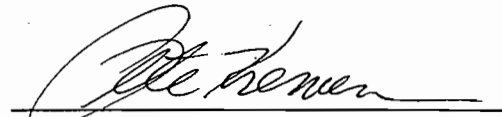
WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL  
WHATCOM COUNTY, WASHINGTON

  
L. Ward Nelson, Council Chair

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Approved ( ) Denied

  
Civil Deputy Prosecutor

  
Pete Kremen, Executive  
Date: 11/26/96