

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL AGENDA BILL

NO. AB2008-082

CLEARANCES	Initial	Date	Date Received in Council Office	Agenda Date	Assigned to:
Originator: Gary Davis	<i>GD</i>	<i>2/4/08</i>		2/12/2008	P & D/Council
Division Head: Linda Peterson	<i>LP</i>	<i>2.4.08</i>			
Dept. Head: David Stalheim	<i>DS</i>	<i>2-4-08</i>			
Prosecutor: Royce Buckingham	<i>R.B.</i>	<i>2-7-08</i>			
Purchasing/Budget:					
Executive: Pete Kremen					

TITLE OF DOCUMENT: *Resolution Confirming Completion of Urban Growth Area Review*

ATTACHMENTS: *Draft Resolution; Staff Report, Appendices A-E – Draft resolution is based on current recommended findings and conclusions, pending Planning Commission action on February 7, 2008.*

SEPA review required? () Yes (x) NO SEPA review completed? () Yes () NO	Should Clerk schedule a hearing? () Yes (x) NO Requested Date:
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SUMMARY STATEMENT OR LEGAL NOTICE LANGUAGE: *(If this item is an ordinance or requires a public hearing, you must provide the language for use in the required public notice. Be specific and cite RCW or WCC as appropriate. Be clear in explaining the intent of the action.)*

Resolution to confirm completion of Whatcom County’s review of its Urban Growth Areas, as related to land supply and densities, per the requirements of RCW 36.70A.130(3)(a).

COMMITTEE ACTION:
2/12/2008: Amended and forwarded to Council for approval

COUNCIL ACTION:
2/12/2008: Council Approved 7-0
Res. 2008-007

Related County Contract #:	Related File Numbers:	Ordinance or Resolution Number: Res. 2008-007
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Please Note: *Once adopted and signed, ordinances and resolutions are available for viewing and printing on the County’s website at: www.co.whatcom.wa.us/council.*

SPONSORED BY: Consent
PROPOSED BY: Planning
INTRODUCTION DATE: 2/12/2008

RESOLUTION NO. 2008-007

CONFIRMING COMPLETION OF URBAN GROWTH AREA REVIEW

WHEREAS, RCW 36.70A.130(3)(a) requires counties to review their UGAs and the densities permitted within those UGAs at least every ten years; and

WHEREAS, Whatcom County Countywide Planning Policy C.4 states, "UGAs shall be evaluated at least every ten years to determine if they contain sufficient area to accommodate the urban growth that is projected for the succeeding twenty-year period"; and

WHEREAS, Whatcom County's UGAs were first designated with the adoption of the 1997 Comprehensive Plan update, which was signed by the County Executive in May 1997; and

WHEREAS, The Western Washington Growth Management Hearings Board has confirmed that the GMA-required ten-year review period begins with the designation of the UGAs and Whatcom County's deadline for reviewing the UGAs was May 23, 2007. The Board has ordered the County to achieve GMA compliance no later than February 25, 2008 (Wiesen v. Whatcom County, #07-2-0009); and

WHEREAS, Whatcom County staff has worked with the staff of each of the cities to review the cities' land supply and densities within their respective UGAs; and

WHEREAS, For the Bellingham UGA, county staff has based its analysis on the land supply analysis done by the City of Bellingham as amended by vote of the County Council on July 10, 2007 as part of the Bellingham Subarea Plan update; and

WHEREAS, For the Birch Bay UGA, county staff has based its analysis on the land supply analysis adopted as part of the Birch Bay Community Plan in 2004; and

WHEREAS, For the Blaine UGA, county staff has based its analysis on the

land supply analysis from the April 2006 draft Comprehensive Plan Background Document, which city staff provided as the best available information on land supply within the city limits. County staff performed a land supply analysis for the unincorporated UGA consistent with the methodology used by the city for the incorporated area; and

WHEREAS, For the Columbia Valley UGA, county staff has based its analysis on the land supply analysis done in 2007 by county staff for the pending Foothills Subarea plan update. County staff extended the analysis to include the Kendall area, which is within the current UGA boundary but had been excluded from the UGA boundary proposed in the draft Foothills Subarea Plan; and

WHEREAS, For the Everson, Ferndale, Lynden, Nooksack, and Sumas UGAs, county staff has based its analysis on the land supply analysis contained in the respective cities' current comprehensive plans; and

WHEREAS, For all UGAs, county staff has compiled and analyzed the data in a format consistent with that prescribed by CTED, and has consulted with city staff to ensure that the analysis is consistent with that done by the cities. County staff's full analysis showing detailed data and the sources and assumptions for that data, is contained in spreadsheet format, which is available for public review; and

WHEREAS, For the purpose of determining the demand for buildable land to accommodate the projected 20-year population growth, county staff has used projections based on those adopted in the 2004 update of the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan, which projects population growth for the county between 2002 and 2022, and for each UGA between 2000 and 2022. Those population projections are within the range of the most recent ten-year population forecast by the Office of Financial Management, pursuant to RCW 36.070A.130(1)(c); and

WHEREAS, In each UGA except Birch Bay and Sumas the net available buildable residential acres planned for residential uses in the Short Term Planning Area exceeds the amount of land needed to accommodate the projected 20-year population growth, assuming the densities planned by the county and the cities; and

WHEREAS, In the Birch Bay and Sumas UGAs, the net buildable acres planned for residential uses in the short term and long term planning areas exceed the amount of land needed to accommodate the projected 20-year population growth if the land in the long term planning area is transferred to short term planning area; and

WHEREAS, In each UGA the net available buildable acres planned for

commercial and industrial uses exceeds the amount of land needed to accommodate the projected demand as determined by the Whatcom County Population and Economic Forecasts study done by ECONorthwest in 2002; and

WHEREAS, RCW 36.70A.130(4)(a) requires Whatcom County and its cities to complete their next Comprehensive Plan update by 2011; and

WHEREAS, RCW 36.70A.130(3)(b) requires that the comprehensive plans of the county and each city located within the urban growth areas shall be revised to accommodate urban growth projected to occur within the county for the succeeding twenty year period; and

WHEREAS, As part of the comprehensive plan update process, the county will work cooperatively with the cities to evaluate the UGAs based on updated land supply analysis and population projections and propose comprehensive plan revisions that ensure the UGAs are appropriately sized to accommodate the growth projected to occur for the succeeding twenty-year period; and

WHEREAS, Notice of the Planning Commission hearing was published in the Bellingham Herald on Sunday, January 13, 2008; and

WHEREAS, The Whatcom County Planning Commission held a public hearing related to the UGA review on January 24, 2008 and that hearing was continued to a February 7, 2008 Commission meeting in order to allow additional time for public review and comment; and

WHEREAS, RCW 36.70A.130(1)(a) requires counties to continually review and evaluate their comprehensive land use plan and development regulations, and take legislative action to review and, if needed, revise the plan and regulations according to the time periods specified in RCW 36.70A.130(4); and

WHEREAS, RCW 36.70A.130(1)(c) requires the review and evaluation of comprehensive land use plans and development regulations to include consideration of the population allocated to a city or county by the most recent ten-year population forecast by the Office of Financial Management; and

WHEREAS, The most recent ten-year population forecast by the Office of Financial Management was published in 2002; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development has commented that the total population allocated in the currently adopted plan remains in the range of both the 2002 and 2007 OFM projections and represents a reasonable choice on the part of the county,

regardless of which set of projections is used; and

WHEREAS, RCW 36.70A.130(1)(c) states that the review and evaluation of comprehensive land use plans and development regulations may be combined with the ten-year UGA review required in RCW 36.70A.130(3). Because this review and evaluation is not required to be a part of the ten-year UGA review, Whatcom County has chosen to conduct its UGA review as a study of whether the UGAs were adequate to accommodate the projected population growth based on the best available data, with the review and evaluation required by RCW 36.70A.130(1) to be accomplished through the comprehensive plan update due in 2011; and

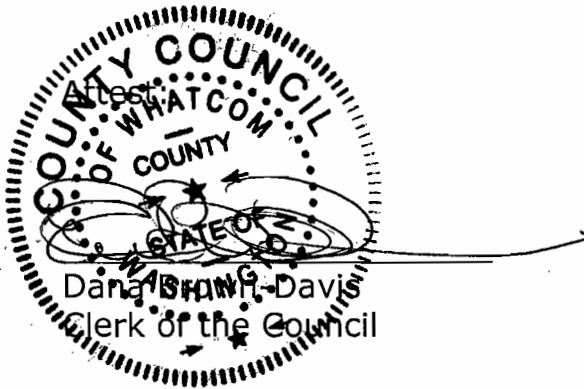
WHEREAS, The Hearings Board gave Whatcom County 180 days to perform its UGA review, based on the county's estimate of the time required to perform a study of whether the UGAs were adequate to accommodate the projected population growth, and the county's assumption that the full public participation envisioned by the GMA would be accomplished through the review and evaluation required by RCW 36.70A.130(1) as part of the comprehensive plan update due in 2011.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL:

1. Whatcom County has completed its review of its UGAs, as required by RCW 36.70A.130(3)(a).
2. Whatcom County, in cooperation with the cities, will evaluate the UGAs as part of the comprehensive plan update process, and any proposed changes to the UGAs would be considered under a comprehensive plan revision process, as required in RCW 36.70A.130(3)(b).
3. The review of Whatcom County's UGAs shows there is sufficient land area within the UGAs to accommodate projected population growth within a 20-year planning period.
4. The review of the UGAs shows there is sufficient land area within Whatcom County's UGAs to accommodate projected demand for commercial and industrial uses within a 20-year planning period.
5. Residential development that has occurred in the incorporated and unincorporated areas within Whatcom County's UGAs in the ten years since 1997, with the exception of the Columbia Valley UGA, has occurred at urban densities.
6. Permitted densities in the incorporated and unincorporated areas within Whatcom County's UGAs allow development at urban densities.
7. Whatcom County, in cooperation with the City of Blaine, will evaluate the Blaine UGA as part of the comprehensive plan update process by the end of 2009.

8. Columbia Valley is in the middle of a draft subarea plan update, with its UGA's status to be determined by the final subarea plan as approved by the County Council. Nothing in these findings and conclusions will delay or prevent the continuing review of the Foothills Subarea Plan update, nor will these findings be used to approve or deny that plan or proposed developments within the Columbia Valley UGA.

APPROVED this 12th day of February, 2008.

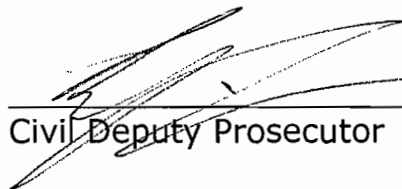


WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WASHINGTON



Carl Weimer, Chairperson

Approved as to form:



Civil Deputy Prosecutor