

## EXHIBIT A

### Chapter One INTRODUCTION

#### HOW THE PLAN WAS CREATED

Whatcom County's Comprehensive Plan is intended to guide growth in unincorporated areas for the next 20 years in coordination with the new plans of its cities. The fundamental purpose of the Comprehensive Plan is to establish a framework of goals, policies and action items for the more detailed growth planning and implementation actions which will occur in the near future in designated urban growth areas and in the county's rural areas.

The plan identifies urban growth area (UGA) boundaries and contains a future land use map. The majority of the county's growth will be located within the UGA's. Several factors influenced the development of the adopted goals and polices contained in the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan.

First, this plan has been reviewed for consistency with the requirements of the Growth Management Act (GMA), the thirteen (13) goals of the GMA (RCW 36.70A.020), mandatory plan elements (RCW 36.70A.070), and the current County-Wide Planning Policies.

Second, through inter-jurisdictional cooperation, Whatcom County has coordinated planning and decision making with all levels of government to ensure compatibility of goals and desires, and has made this plan consistent with local plans.

Third, extensive citizen participation was facilitated through educational forums, surveys/questionnaires, ~~video~~ presentations, public hearings, and written comments made throughout this process. The Planning Commission and County Council quickly learned that for every group or individual that sought a benefit, another's rights were potentially impacted. This Plan will probably not satisfy any one particular group of citizens with strongly held views. It does, however, provide common ground on the most sensitive issues that all sides can stand on, if somewhat uneasily, in the interest of what is best for the County as a whole.

#### *County-Wide Planning Policies*

The Whatcom County Council in conjunction with all local cities previously adopted a set of County-Wide Planning Policies. The framework provided by the adopted County-Wide Planning Policies ensures that local planning efforts will be consistent with one another and supportive of regional goals.

#### *Whatcom County: The Next Generations*

In April 1993, the County Executive appointed a committee of individuals representing a broad cross-section of county residents. Their charge was to produce a graphic and written description of what the people of Whatcom County wanted the county to be in 2010 and beyond. They designed an extensive public input process to define this vision for the County. The committee's work was supported and facilitated by Planning staff. Staff also provided the committee with information about GMA requirements and existing conditions in the county. Information included

land use facilities, population, environment, resources, and existing plans and zoning designations.

The committee helped staff a booth at the Northwest Washington Fair in August 1993. Over 1,500 people visited the booth where they perused displays and maps, completed questionnaires, and read newsletters. In June, August, and September, the Visioning Committee hosted sixteen town hall meetings throughout the county that were attended by over 500 people. Committee members also met with various community groups to explain the Visioning Process. To encourage public input, over 12,000 surveys were distributed, and by October 1, over 1,000 had been returned. A countywide statistically valid phone survey was conducted which added another 410 people's opinions to the Visioning Process.

The telephone survey and questionnaire data were then analyzed, and the results tabulated and summarized by professional survey consultants. By February 1994, the committee had thoroughly reviewed the data and generated a set of **Visioning Community Value Statements**. These statements are included in Appendix C of this plan. They were distributed to all committees working on components of the plan.

The committee then developed four land use alternatives in order to explore and test different ways of expressing the value statements. ~~These four alternatives are the same alternatives used for the Environmental Impact Statement for this comprehensive plan.~~ The four land use alternatives were presented around the county in another series of town hall meetings. Finally, in June 1994, the committee produced a recommended land use alternative expressed through written value statements and a conceptual land use map. The Visioning Community Value Statements and written recommendations were the basis from which individual committees and Planning staff developed land use issues, goals, policies, and action plans as presented to the Planning Commission in the November 1994 *Draft Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan*.

### [Whatcom 2031](#)

[Whatcom 2031 is the County's work program for the period 2008 to 2011 to prepare for the next 20 years of growth and update its Comprehensive Plan consistent with GMA. Phase I focused on the required 10-Year UGA Review and included developing population and employment forecasts and reviewing land capacity and UGA boundaries. An EIS addressing four regional growth alternatives was prepared addressing urban and rural growth patterns to the year 2031. Phase II will address the required 7-Year Review which is anticipated to involve a broader review of the Comprehensive Plan elements in relation to GMA amendments and other required topics.](#)

### **Other Growth Management Committees**

Citizen committees were used extensively to develop this plan [in the 1990s](#). Almost all of the elements of the plan were generated using input from appointed citizen committees. Each committee was given the results of surveys and town hall meetings from the *Whatcom County: The Next Generations*. Each committee spent countless hours reviewing background material, identifying issues, generating goals and policies, and, in some cases, action plans. Committees and committee members are listed in the front of this document.

For the purposes of updating the Urban Growth Areas (UGAs) in 2009, and as Phase I of the Whatcom 2031 comprehensive plan update process, the Growth Management Coordinating Council (GMCC) was formed in 2008. This committee was composed of elected officials from all the affected jurisdictions including one representative from each of the small cities, two from Bellingham, and three from Whatcom County. Planning staff from each of these municipalities met with county staff on a regular basis to review methodologies, data, and policies and provide guidance to the GMCC on these issues. At its last meeting for the UGA update process on July 1, 2009, the GMCC approved a document showing their recommendations for the Urban Growth Area review. This document was presented to the county planning commission and county council to provide perspective to their decision-making process.

The Whatcom 2031 process will be on-going through 2011 and the comprehensive plan will be revised and updated as part of that process.

### **Coordinating Committee**

~~The final step in developing the plan was to bring together representatives from all the committees to review each other's products in order to identify conflicts and inconsistencies. Committees then attempted to respond to and correct conflicts.~~

### **Planning Commission and County Council Review**

~~With the development of the draft plan completed, the County Council and Planning Commission held four joint public hearings to receive public input. Following these hearings, the Planning Commission held a series of 43 work sessions from March 1995 through June 1996, reviewing and editing each of the eleven chapters of the draft plan. On June 26, 1996, the Planning Commission completed their review of the plan and forwarded their recommendations to the Whatcom County Council. The Council then conducted six final public hearings and numerous work sessions of their own, and produced the final version contained herein.~~

### **Whatcom County Planning and Development Services**

~~The actual drafting and production of the plan was completed by the Planning Division staff. To a substantial degree, this plan is a refinement of the County's existing Subarea plans. The subarea planning recognized the diversity of communities, life styles and interests in Whatcom County. It afforded citizens a more direct influence in the planning for their particular community. This outcome would seem to validate both the basic wisdom of our subarea planning and the methodology and content of this new Plan.~~

~~This plan, and its attendant goals and policies and optimal land use patterns, represents a balance of the views and opinions expressed by the many citizens who took time to participate in surveys, workshops, hearings or wrote letters for the record.~~

~~The goals, policies, and implementation strategies developed through the regional visioning and planning process were intended to be consistent with the goals of the GMA. These will provide the foundation for policies intended to assist in the implementation of the GMA by forming a framework for coordinating and integrating the regional goals of our community. In August 1996 a short video was produced introducing the plan to the community. This video was made available in local libraries, to local groups, and to individuals who wished to check it out from the Planning Office. Citizens were asked to return a questionnaire after viewing the video.~~

## Original Adoption and Amendments

The County Council adopted the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan in May of 1997. Since then, amendments have been made on an annual basis. Additionally, the periodic review of the comprehensive plan for consistency with the GMA, required by RCW 36.70A.130, is occurring over a three-year period from ~~2002-2004~~2008-2011 and is called Whatcom 2031.

## GMA GOALS, COUNTY-WIDE PLANNING POLICIES, AND VISIONING COMMUNITY VALUE STATEMENTS

Every chapter in this plan was reviewed for consistency with the *GMA Planning Goals*, the *County-Wide Planning Policies*, and the *Visioning Community Value Statements* generated by the Visioning Process. Each individual chapter describes how consistency was achieved. The connections between this plan's goals and policies, and the goals, policies, and value statements of the other documents are evaluated in the *Environmental Impact Statement* for this plan.

For the complete text of the GMA Planning Goals, the County-Wide Planning Policies, and the Visioning Community Value Statements, see Appendix C of this plan.

## INTRODUCING WHATCOM COUNTY

Whatcom County lies in the northwest corner of both the State of Washington and the coterminous United States. It is bounded on the north by the Canadian border, on the east by Okanogan County, on the south by Skagit County, and on the west by the Strait of Georgia and Bellingham Bay. These borders enclose large parts of the Mount Baker National Forest and the North Cascades National Park, which take up about two-thirds of Whatcom County's total area. All but a few residents live in the western third of the county. Bellingham, with an estimated ~~20028~~ population of ~~69,260~~75,750 (89,284 with unincorporated UGA), is Whatcom County's largest city. Other cities include Blaine, Everson, Ferndale, Lynden, Nooksack, and Sumas, and there are several smaller unincorporated communities.

Two Indian reservations and associated trust lands are located within Whatcom County's borders. The Lummi Nation reservation is on the Lummi Peninsula and Portage Island on the western side of the county; the Nooksack Tribe reservation and trust lands comprise several parcels along the Nooksack River in the west-central area of the county.

## Population

Population growth in Whatcom County since the arrival of the first Euro-American immigrants in the 1850s has been driven largely by in-migration of people from other sections of the state and country. **Table 1** displays the growth of population in Whatcom County from 1910 to 2000, and **Table 2** shows the growth figures for each year of the current decade. These tables indicate a steady increase in population over time, with varying rates of growth often driven by factors external to Whatcom County such as international events or changes in technology and transportation. Approximately 73% of the population growth between 1960 and 2000 was due to in-migration of people from outside the area seeking jobs, life styles, and amenities found in Whatcom County.

It should be noted that the first decade of planning under the Growth Management Act (1990-2000) accompanied the reversal of a 30-year trend from 1960-1990 where unincorporated areas grew faster than cities. From 1990 to 2000, cities grew at a more rapid rate than unincorporated areas for the first time since the 1950's.

**Table 1. Population Growth in Whatcom County, 1910-2000**

YEAR	TOTAL COUNTY POPULATION	AVERAGE ANNUAL RATE OF GROWTH	UNINCORPORATED POPULATION	AVERAGE ANNUAL RATE OF GROWTH	COMBINED POPULATION OF CITIES*	AVERAGE ANNUAL RATE OF GROWTH
1910	49,511		20,183		29,328	
1920	50,600	0.2%	19,621	-0.3%	30,979	0.5%
1930	59,128	1.6%	23,112	1.7%	36,016	1.5%
1940	60,355	0.2%	25,860	1.1%	34,495	-0.4%
1950	66,733	1.0%	26,462	0.2%	40,271	1.6%
1960	70,317	0.5%	25,990	-0.2%	44,327	1.0%
1970	81,983	1.5%	34,004	2.7%	47,979	0.8%
1980	106,701	2.7%	48,622	3.6%	58,079	1.9%
1990	127,780	1.8%	59,187	2.0%	68,593	1.7%
2000	<b>166,814</b>	2.7%	74,231	2.3%	92,583	3.0%

Source: US Census

\*Cities include Bellingham, Blaine, Everson (since 1930), Ferndale, Lynden, Nooksack (since 1920), and Sumas.

**Table 2. Estimated Population Growth in Whatcom County, 2000-20022008**

YEAR	TOTAL COUNTY POPULATION	ANNUAL RATE OF GROWTH	UNINCORPORATED POPULATION	ANNUAL RATE OF GROWTH	COMBINED POPULATION OF CITIES*	ANNUAL RATE OF GROWTH
2000	166,814		74,231		92,583	
2001	170,600	2.27%	75,682	1.95%	94,918	2.52%
<del>2002</del>	<del>172,200</del>	<del>.94%</del>	<del>76,718</del>	<del>1.37%</del>	<del>95,482</del>	<del>.59%</del>
<del>2003</del>	<del>174,500</del>	<del>1.3%</del>	<del>77,796</del>	<del>1.4%</del>	<del>96,704</del>	<del>1.3%</del>
<del>2004</del>	<del>177,300</del>	<del>1.6%</del>	<del>78,746</del>	<del>1.2%</del>	<del>98,554</del>	<del>1.9%</del>
<del>2005</del>	<del>180,800</del>	<del>2.0%</del>	<del>79,848</del>	<del>1.4%</del>	<del>100,952</del>	<del>2.4%</del>
<del>2006</del>	<del>184,300</del>	<del>1.9%</del>	<del>81,066</del>	<del>1.5%</del>	<del>103,234</del>	<del>2.3%</del>
<del>2007</del>	<del>188,300</del>	<del>2.2%</del>	<del>82,309</del>	<del>1.5%</del>	<del>105,991</del>	<del>2.7%</del>
<del>2008</del>	<del>191,000</del>	<del>1.4%</del>	<del>83,911</del>	<del>1.9%</del>	<del>107,089</del>	<del>1.0%</del>
<del>2002</del>	<del>172,200</del>	<del>.94%</del>	<del>76,718</del>	<del>1.37%</del>	<del>95,482</del>	<del>.59%</del>

Source: Washington State Office of Financial Management (~~June 28, 2002~~June 29, 2009)  
 \*Cities include Bellingham, Blaine, Everson, Ferndale, Lynden, Nooksack, and Sumas.

~~In the last ten years~~Between 1997 and 2007, the total population of Whatcom County had grown at an average annual rate of ~~2.25~~1.83% per year, with the incorporated cities growing at an annual rate of 1.86% and the unincorporated areas (including the urban areas of Birch Bay and Columbia Valley) growth at 1.50% per year (source: OFM~~1992-2002~~). The total 2007 estimated population was 188,300 and the 2008~~2~~ estimated population of Whatcom County is 172,200191,000, ~~representing a 1.86% annual rate of growth in five years (1997-2002)~~.

More than half of all Whatcom County residents live in cities. **Map 1** displays the 2000 population density for Whatcom County. The highest densities are in and around cities, though there are other small centers of medium to high population density such as the ones at Sudden Valley, Birch Bay, Paradise Lakes near Kendall, and along the Guide Meridian. The 2000 Census data showed 92,583 people, or about 55.5% of the county's total population, living inside the city limits of Whatcom County's seven incorporated cities. Another 13,920 people were living near the cities in city urban growth areas (derived from *Whatcom County Population and Economic Forecasts*, ECONorthwest, May 2003, Table 3-2 and Census counts). Counting these neighborhoods, the urban population was about 64% of the county total.

**Population Projections**

Projections of future population size are an essential component of land use planning. As required by RCW 36.70A.110, in 2007~~2~~, the Washington State Office of Financial Management developed a 20-year population projection for Whatcom County. ~~Meanwhile, Bellingham, in coordination with Whatcom County and the other cities, contracted with a private consulting firm (ECONorthwest) to develop population projections for the next 20 years. The ECONorthwest OFM and OFM projections for 2029~~are provided in Table 3 below:

**Table 3. ECONorthwest-OFM Population Projections for Whatcom County**

	<b>ECONorthwest OFM Population Projections for 2022-2029</b>	<b>Average Annual Growth Rate 2009-2022-29</b>	<b>Average Annual Population Growth 2002-2009-2022-29</b>	<b>Total Population Growth 2002-2009- 2022-2029</b>
<b>Low</b>	215,850 <u>216,300</u>	1.14% <u>0.66%</u>	2,183 <u>1,265</u>	43,650 <u>25,300</u>
<b>Medium</b>	231,928 <u>258,448</u>	1.50% <u>1.77%</u>	2,986 <u>3,372</u>	59,728 <u>67,448</u>
<b>High</b>	261,084 <u>318,832</u>	2.10% <u>3.35%</u>	4,444 <u>6,392</u>	88,884 <u>127,832</u>

Source: *Whatcom County Population and Economic Forecasts (ECONorthwest, May 2002); Whatcom County Countywide Population and Employment Extrapolations and Scenarios, Memo, Berk and Associates, February 9, 2009*

Note: The OFM population estimate of 172,200 people in Whatcom County in 2002 estimate of 191,000 in 2008 was utilized as a starting point for calculating the average annual growth rates and average annual population growth figures in this table.

Source: *State Office of Financial Management Population Projections (Jan 2002).*

The Growth Management Act requires that the County plan for a 20-year population growth that is based upon the growth management population projection by the office of financial management within the range projected by (OFM). The county and each city must include areas and densities sufficient to permit the urban growth that is projected to occur for the succeeding twenty-year period. ~~unless the County has studies to prove that a different figure is justified. The current 2022-OFM projection for Whatcom County ranges from to a Low projection of 205,991 people to a Medium projection of 236,837 people and a High projection of 281,122 people.~~

The County's 2022-2029 population projection of ~~234,917-244,892~~ is within OFM's range and therefore requires no further justification. The rationale for using this figure, which is close to ECONorthwest's-OFM's medium projection, include: an overall slowing trend for growth in Washington State and Whatcom County. ~~Consistency with past growth trends, the quality of life in Whatcom County is expected to fuel growth in the future, and~~ ensuring an adequate land supply to accommodate ~~this~~ growth, the need to plan for growth and the need to protect the quality of life and natural resources in Whatcom County. This population projection is selected for planning purposes only and does not obligate the County to encourage growth. Given past population trends and the requirements of GMA, planning for population growth, whether it occurs or not, is critical for the quality of life, protection of natural resources and economic health of Whatcom County.

**Table 45** shows how the total projected 2022-2029 population would be distributed assuming: 1) that all of the UGAs have been annexed into existing cities; ~~and~~ 2) that each city-urban area receives a share of the county's overall growth; ~~and~~ 3) that the portion of growth to urban areas is approximately 85% of county-wide growth, with the balance to rural areas. ~~apportioned according to each city's comprehensive plan growth projections.~~

**Table 45. Whatcom County Population Projections and Distribution**

	2000 Population (Based on 2000 City Limits)	2008 <del>0</del> Population- (Cities and unincorporated <del>inc</del> include UGAs)	Projected 2022 2029 Population (Cities Include UGAs)	2008 <del>0</del> -2022 2029 Net Growth Cities Include and unincorporated UGAs)
<b>Bellingham</b>	67,174	89,284 78,040	111,761 113,055	22,477 35,015
<b>Birch Bay</b>		5,290	8,529	3,239
<b>Blaine</b>	3,770	4,667 4,779	8,916 7,942	4,249 3,163
<b>Columbia Valley</b>		3,924	5,000	1,076
<b>Everson</b>	2,035	2,395 2,256	3,623 3,912	1,228 1,656
<b>Ferndale</b>	8,758	12,019 9,934	20,140 17,322	8,121 7,388
<b>Lynden</b>	9,020	11,613 9,604	15,078 16,900	3,465 7,296
<b>Nooksack</b>	851	1,137 895	2,081 1,884	944 986
<b>Sumas</b>	978	1,279 995	2,072 1,669	793 674
<b>Subtotal</b>	92,583	131,608 106,503	177,200 162,684	45,592 56,178
<b>Unincorporated Rural Whatcom County</b>	74,231	59,392 60,314	67,692 72,236	8,300 11,925
<b>Total Whatcom County</b>	166,814	191,000 166,814	244,892 234,917	53,892 68,103

Source: *Whatcom County Population and Economic Forecast* (ECONorthwest, May 2002), Washington Office of Financial Management (July 28, 2002 April 1, 2009) and County Council (January 2004).

It is also projected that, by the year 2022, the Birch Bay UGA will have 9,619 people, the Columbia Valley UGA will grow to 5,000 people, and Point Roberts will have 1,743 people. These three areas are all located within unincorporated Whatcom County. It is projected that other unincorporated areas (rural, agriculture, etc.) will have 55,874 people.

To avoid tightening urban land supply, the county is using a projection of 234,917 for land use and facility planning purposes.

## **Employment Forecasts and Distribution**

The Growth Management Act requires that comprehensive plans and/or development regulations provide sufficient capacity of land suitable for development within their jurisdictions to accommodate employment growth. In 2009, the Act was amended to ensure that the employment growth accommodated medical, governmental, educational, institutional, commercial and industrial facilities.

Whatcom County contracted with ICF Jones & Stokes and Berk and Associates, to develop Countywide Population and Employment Extrapolations and Scenarios, and then to provide allocation scenarios to the various urban and rural areas. These employment scenarios were reviewed with cities, the Growth Management Coordinating Council, and their report was first published on September 23, 2008, and later edited and re-published on February 9, 2009 prior to the scoping process for the Environmental Impact Statement on the Urban Growth Area review.

The employment forecasts considered the various sectors of the labor force in Whatcom County, including construction, finance, government, manufacturing, retail, services, transportation, and wholesale trade. The forecasts also considered the labor participation rate as the proportion of labor to the total population of all ages. For the purpose of Urban Growth Areas, non-agricultural labor force was considered in the forecasts.

After the county-wide employment forecasts were complete, the allocation of that employment to the various urban areas was also developed in a report by Berk and Associates, published on January 13, 2009. These allocation scenarios considered allocation based on current pattern of job distribution and an alternative approach to allocating job growth distinguishing between regional and local employment growth. Variations on these scenarios were tested in an EIS prepared in 2009.

The common theme recommended by the Growth Management Coordinating Council was a labor participation rate of 49%. In some urban areas, this rate is either high (Bellingham) or low (Columbia Valley and Birch Bay). City requests for allocation of employment, and the sizing of the Urban Growth Area, were based largely on the local request recognizing the incentives that cities have for larger employment areas (sales tax, property tax). Due to the challenge in designating lands for commercial or industrial development, the allocation of employment allowed for these optimistic scenarios if they did not result in expansion of Urban Growth Areas. If expansion of an Urban Growth Area would be considered for employment purposes, greater justification for the need for employment lands should be required. Table 5 shows the allocation of total non-agricultural employment to the various Urban Growth Areas.

**Table 5: Whatcom County Employment Projections and Distribution**

<u>Study Area</u>	<u>2008 Employment</u>	<u>Growth Allocation</u>	<u>2029 Total Employment</u>
<u>Bellingham UGA</u>	<u>51,153</u>	<u>18,829</u>	<u>69,982</u>
<u>Birch Bay UGA</u>	<u>436</u>	<u>489</u>	<u>925</u>
<u>Blaine UGA</u>	<u>2,971</u>	<u>1,903</u>	<u>4,874</u>
<u>Cherry Point UGA</u>	<u>1,182</u>	<u>760</u>	<u>1,942</u>
<u>Columbia Valley UGA</u>	<u>90</u>	<u>359</u>	<u>449</u>
<u>Everson UGA</u>	<u>638</u>	<u>602</u>	<u>1,240</u>
<u>Ferndale UGA</u>	<u>5,534</u>	<u>4,335</u>	<u>9,869</u>
<u>Lynden UGA</u>	<u>4,832</u>	<u>3,115</u>	<u>7,947</u>
<u>Nooksack UGA</u>	<u>206</u>	<u>130</u>	<u>336</u>
<u>Sumas UGA</u>	<u>254</u>	<u>391</u>	<u>645</u>
<u>Rural</u>	<u>10,130</u>	<u>2,276</u>	<u>12,406</u>
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>77,426</b>	<b>33,188</b>	<b>110,614</b>

Note: Year 2008 employment data (77,426) do not add up to Employment Security Department's (ESD) current estimate of non-agriculture wage and salary employment for the County as a whole (84,850) likely due to jobs for which ESD was unable to assign a specific location.

**Demographics**

The culturally diverse demographic makeup of the county's population has an effect on land use patterns. For example, Whatcom County residents with children may choose different kinds of transportation and recreation than retired people. Single-parent families and large extended families need different kinds of housing. And levels of service requirements will vary according to cultural and individual abilities. Another influence on county demographics is the cyclical influx of seasonal residents, primarily from Canada, who maintain recreational homes in parts of the county. Areas most influenced by seasonal residency include Point Roberts, Birch Bay, and the ~~Foothills Subarea~~ ~~Paradise Lakes/Peaceful Valley area near Kendall~~.

In the period between 1990 and 2000, the age composition of Whatcom County's population changed appreciably, and some of the changes were different from what was happening state-wide and nation-wide. These changes were partly due to in-migration. For instance, the number of people at or nearing retirement age (50-69 years) increased in Whatcom County faster than simple aging could account for, and at a much greater rate than the state average (*Whatcom County Population and Economic Forecast*, ECONorthwest, May 2002, pp. 2-7 & 2-8). In 2000, there were 19,400 people age 65 and older in Whatcom County (11.6% of the total population). Over 4,900 of the 65+ group had self-care or mobility limitations. Approximately 1,560 (8%) had incomes below the poverty level. By comparison, approximately 15% of Whatcom County residents under age 65 lived in poverty.

Census age groups containing the traditional ages of college students (15-19 and 20-24) have significantly larger counts than the pre-college-age and post-college-age groups.

In 2000, Whatcom County residents between the ages of 15 and 64 numbered 114,185. There were 33,229 children under 15.

The county's racial composition also changed between 1990 and 2000. Although in 2000 88% of all county residents were white, there has nevertheless been an increase in populations of Native Americans, African Americans, Asian-Pacific Islanders, and Hispanics. The Hispanic population

is the most difficult to assess accurately because of its mobility. It is the primary component of a large contingent of migrant farm workers. The Washington State Employment Security Department estimates that of the approximately 3,600 farm workers employed annually in the county (not including agricultural support services such as processing and trucking), 2,300 are seasonal or migrant workers.

### **Land Use History**

When Euro-American immigrants first arrived on Bellingham Bay in the 1850s, the landscape of Whatcom County was comprised of mature conifer forests, winding streams and rivers, numerous lakes and wetlands, and small natural meadows.

Lummi and Nooksack people inhabited villages near the coast and along the rivers and lakes at strategic fishing locations. The Nooksack Indian people cultivated root crops they had developed along the Nooksack Valley where sub-irrigated meadows were ideal sites for such plants as camas and "Indian carrot." They emphasized the use of root crops, perhaps much more than other native peoples along the Pacific Coast.

The abundance of high-quality timber and easy accessibility to water for milling and transport were the principal reasons Euro-American immigrants first came to Whatcom County in the 1850s. Small communities grew along Bellingham Bay and the Nooksack River as more immigrants arrived in Whatcom County. They began clearing the forests and draining the wetland areas for farmsteads. Between 1890 and 1925, 130,000 acres of lowland Nooksack Valley forests were cleared for farms. In addition, logging companies sold logged-over land to their employees and to immigrants from the East Coast for small farmsteads. As a result of the sale of small parcels of logged-over lands, the average farm size in Whatcom County is relatively small--about 84 acres--compared to the statewide average of 523 acres (1997 Census of Agriculture Profiles, USDA).

Many lumber and shake mills and other industrial plants were built in Bellingham, on Lake Whatcom, and in other areas of the county, while new commercial and residential buildings were being developed in all communities. Coal mining was taking place at several locations in Whatcom County at this time, and major fish processing plants were constructed on Bellingham Bay. Whatcom County's population in 1910 was 49,511.

Between 1925 and 1950, there was little change in the land use patterns that had been developed during the previous fifty years. Some land, which had been cleared for agriculture was abandoned and naturally regenerated into second-growth forests. Most areas that were harvested for timber had reseeded and were growing mixed forests of conifers and deciduous trees. Residential and industrial development continued to grow, but at a slower pace than during the previous fifty years. Commercial centers remained within the core of the major cities. By 1950, Whatcom County's total population had grown to 66,733, with the majority of the growth occurring in the cities.

Between 1950 and 2000, the amount of land devoted to commercial activity gradually increased in response to population growth. Expanded use of the automobile encouraged commercial activities and residential development outside city centers. Coal mining ceased, but sand and gravel mining grew in importance. Farming became increasingly competitive, and the economic pressure tended to concentrate agricultural resources on the most productive soils. The trend toward abandonment or conversion of farmland to other uses continued. Some lands in the Nooksack Valley, which were formerly cleared for agriculture reverted back to native forest cover. Residential, commercial, and industrial uses continued to expand into agricultural areas. These

changes picked up speed during the 1960s and 1970s as Whatcom County experienced a population boom. The total population for Whatcom County in 2000 had grown to 166,814, an increase of approximately 137% in 40 years.

**Current Land Use**

Whatcom County covers 1,377,645 acres, or approximately 2,152 square miles. Of that total area, about 1,107,453 acres, or 80%, is either covered with forest or is managed for forest resources. This total includes virtually all federal lands and all state and private forest lands in unincorporated Whatcom County. A significant portion of this total (877,000 acres) is under federal management by either the US Department of Agriculture Forest Service or the US Interior Department, North Cascades National Park. Cities cover ~~29,063~~30,647 acres.

~~Land use patterns on non-federal lands in unincorporated Whatcom County (470,241 acres) can be summarized by looking at the distribution of the various uses. Table 6 reflects the land use patterns. These data show that agriculture and forestry land uses predominate today in Whatcom County with 116,120 and 231,352 acres respectively classified in each category. Forest lands in the lower foothills which were initially harvested between 1900 and 1950 now support commercially mature stands of timber. Some areas of original forest still remain on non-federal lands in Whatcom County. Large tracts of un-managed forest are found primarily on federal lands in the Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest in the upper watershed of the Nooksack Basin.~~

**Table 6. Land Use Distribution on Non-Federal Lands in Unincorporated Whatcom County**

Land Use	Total Acres	Percent of County Total
Forestry	231,352	49.2
Agriculture	116,120	24.7
Residential	53,008	11.3
Vacant	29,323	6.2
Mining, Fishing & Related Uses	2,177	0.5
Public & Utilities	10,729	2.3
Industrial & Manufacturing	2,987	0.6
Commercial & Services	8,856	1.9
Lummi Nation Trust Lands	7,100	1.5
Property with no Assessor's Land use code (Roads, lands along the Nooksack River, etc.)	8,589	1.8
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>470,241 Acres</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

—Source: Whatcom County Planning and Development Services, 2003

Resource land uses, which include agriculture, forestry, and minerals, are the largest category of land use in Whatcom County. **Map 2** displays the distribution of agriculture and forestry land uses based on County Assessor's data within Whatcom County. From the map it is evident that agricultural land use predominates throughout the western lowlands of the county and in the South Fork Nooksack Valley. Forest land use is concentrated on the uplands of the county. (See Chapter 8, "Resource Lands," for more detailed information on each of these land uses.)

**Map 3** displays the distribution of commercial and industrial land uses in Whatcom County. The majority of commercial land uses occur next to major transportation routes, such as the Guide Meridian, or within the boundaries of cities. There are also concentrations of commercial uses in the Birch Bay UGA and Point Roberts. The majority of industrial parcels are also located in the cities, their UGAs or at the Cherry Point industrial area. ~~There are a total of 14,222 acres of industrially zoned land in Whatcom County, including 4,095 acres within city limits and 7,045 acres in the Cherry Point industrial area.~~ The locational pattern shown by **Map 3** indicates the importance of transportation connections to these land uses. (See Chapter 6, "Transportation," and Chapter 7, "Economics.")

Vacant lands are scattered throughout the county. **Map 4** depicts the general distribution of vacant lands, as defined by the latest Whatcom County Assessor's records. Vacant lands are land which at the time of the assessor's survey appear to be undeveloped, or if previously developed, are presently vacant and unused. They are usually lands being held for future development. Vacant lands are particularly concentrated in and around urban areas of the county.

**Map 5** graphically portrays the distribution of all single-family residential parcels in unincorporated Whatcom County, as interpreted from the Whatcom County Assessor's property information database. The majority of single-family residents are concentrated in the cities and the major urban and intensely developed rural portions of the county such as Sudden Valley, Paradise Lakes, Glacier, Lake Samish, Lake Whatcom (north end), Cain Lake, Birch Bay, Sandy Point, and Lummi Island. A fairly even, but lower, density distribution of single-family residences is scattered throughout the central rural portion of the county between Bellingham and Lynden, Ferndale and Everson/Nooksack. Another even but lower density distribution of single-family residences occurs between Ferndale and Blaine. As may be expected, single-family homes are also located along the valley floors of the three forks of the Nooksack. The Cherry Point industrial area, the agriculturally dominated area north of Lynden and the forested foothills in the eastern part of the county have very low to zero residential density.

A prominent characteristic of Whatcom County housing is the high number of vacation, resort, and second-home units found throughout the county. In 2000 approximately 2/3 of the "vacant" units were actually occupied part of the year for seasonal, recreational or occasional use.

Multi-family residential land use is displayed on **Map 6**. The majority of multi-family residential units are located in the urban areas of the county, primarily in and around Bellingham, Ferndale, Lynden, and Blaine. Within the unincorporated area of Whatcom County, multi-family housing units are found near Birch Bay, Sudden Valley, Glacier, Point Roberts and in the area between Bellingham and Lynden.

According to the 2000 Census, there were 34,421 housing units within the unincorporated portions of Whatcom County. This figure equates to a residential housing density of 0.127 dwelling units per acre of land, or one residence per eight acres, on land currently zoned to permit residences (Rural, Urban, Rural Residential, Agricultural, certain commercial zones, the Point

Roberts Transitional zone, Eliza Island and Rural Forestry). ~~The density of cities in Whatcom County is as follows:~~

Under the direction of the Growth Management Act, Whatcom County is required to develop transportation plans for future population growth. Part of the analysis for transportation planning includes defining the density of population by transportation analysis zones. **Map 7** presents the housing density per acre for Whatcom County in 2000, displayed by Census Block. (See Chapter 3, "Housing," and the *Housing Background Document* for more information.)

#### ~~Future Land Use~~

~~Future land use patterns in Whatcom County will likely be influenced to a large degree by County and city land use plans, existing development patterns, existing transportation systems, local and international economics, and environmental and natural resource land constraints. Agriculture and forest resource lands will likely continue to dominate the landscape. Availability of potable water for residential, commercial, and industrial use will almost certainly be a limiting factor to development in some areas of the county. Establishing urban growth areas will likely encourage more growth in those areas identified and result in less pressure on rural areas.~~

## Chapter Three HOUSING

### INTRODUCTION

Housing is not only a basic human need; it is a fundamental building block in the development of strong communities. The quality, price and availability of housing have far reaching effects. Housing is an issue of equity, and a healthy community strives to provide housing affordable to households at all income levels.

Every community and neighborhood needs a healthy mix of housing sizes, types and prices, affordable at the wages of the jobs nearby. A balanced mix will have housing costs in sync with wages and incomes.

#### Purpose

The purpose of this housing element is to consider future needs for housing in Whatcom County by examining existing housing patterns, projected population growth, and most-likely growth scenarios, and to suggest realistic ways to provide for those housing needs within the wishes of county citizens, sound public policy, and within the mandates of the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA). First, the number, type, and condition of housing units in place today must be compared with current housing needs. Second, future housing needs must be proposed based on expected needs of identifiable social and economic groups. Third, future housing needs must be addressed through a package of incentives, local requirements, and regulations that encourage development of housing that matches the incomes of citizens throughout the county.

#### Process

In 2004 and 2009, the Housing Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan has been updated, adding new information and updated data to the chapter produced in the mid-1990s. The earlier chapter was produced through the efforts of the Residents' Housing Advisory Committee (RHAC). The committee was formed and appointed by, the Whatcom County Executive, in September 1993. Members included representatives of the building industry, of special needs groups, of Christian, AIDS and other advocate groups, and an attorney. The RHAC met every month, and frequently more than once per month. The focus on identification of key issues, development of goals and policies, and careful framing of action plans. Two members were delegated by the committee to sit on the GMA Coordinating Committee to review all comprehensive plan chapters for consistency. When the RHAC completed its tasks in June 1994, those two members continued making valuable contributions to the work of the Coordinating Committee. The RHAC sent the final version of the chapter to Planning Commission for review.

#### GMA Goals, County-Wide Planning Policies, and Visioning Community Value Statements

Realization of all the thirteen Growth Management Act goals is fostered by the goals, policies, and action plans in this chapter. Those directly relating to housing will be met with successful adoption of this comprehensive plan chapter. This chapter has been written to satisfy those goals while also meeting the intent of the County-Wide Planning Policies (CWPP) and general guidelines of Visioning Community Value Statements. CWPP's direct the county and its cities to ensure a balance of housing and economic growth consistent with diverse income levels and allowing for a range of housing types and costs. Further, the county and cities can employ innovative

techniques providing for a variety of housing types: single-family-detached, multifamily building for both ownership and rental, accessory dwelling units (Ado's), manufactured and modular homes, manufactured and mobile home parks, along with mixed use and increased densities as affordable housing alternatives. Visioning Community Value Statements identify the importance of affordable housing and encourage even distribution of housing affordability and a mix of housing types throughout the county. Growth Management goals, Visioning Community Value Statements, and County-Wide Planning Policies will be served by adoption and implementation of this chapter.

### **GMA Requirements**

The Growth Management Act mandates that counties required to plan under the act adopt comprehensive plans that “encourage the availability of affordable housing to all segments of the population of this state, promote a variety of residential densities and housing types, and encourage preservation of existing housing stock.” (RCW 36.70A.020 (4))

### **BACKGROUND SUMMARY**

Comprehensive plans have been developed for Whatcom County and each of the cities that lie within its boundaries. Each of these plans contains a housing element that addresses the housing needs of each jurisdiction and offers suggestions for changes that could occur to help meet these needs.

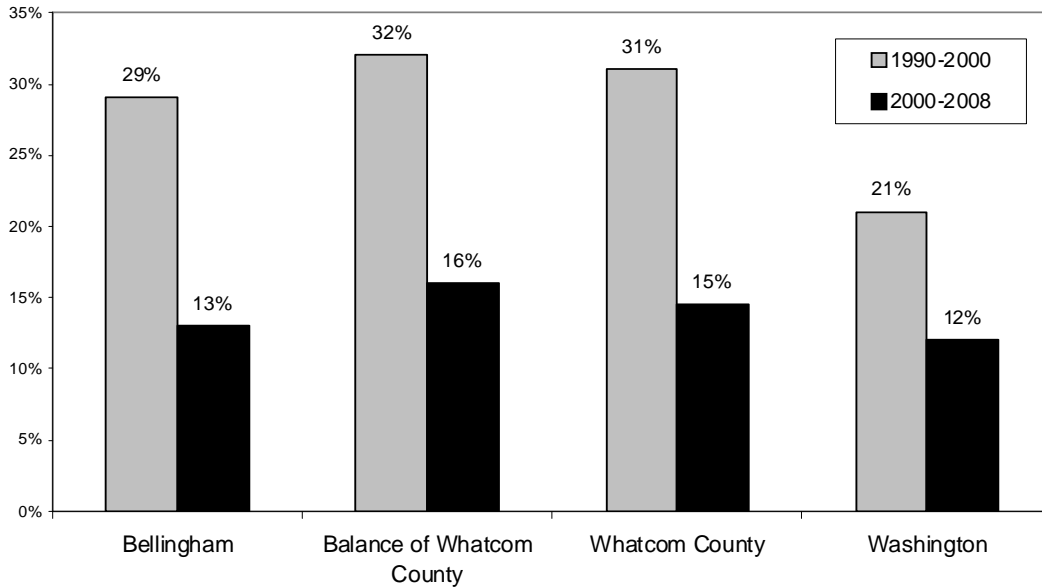
This chapter will overlap many of the ideas put forth in those plans—the problems perceived in each community, their changing demographics, and the directions the communities seem willing to go to improve the overall situation. It also incorporates other recent studies of Whatcom County, such as *Community Counts: Whatcom County Health Indicator Report 2002* and the *Whatcom Real Estate Research Report*.

### **Demographic Overview**

Whatcom County's population is growing steadily. Between ~~1990 and 2000~~ and 2008 it rose ~~14.5%–30.5%~~. An estimated 75% of that increase is attributable to in-migration as opposed to birth rate. In addition to increasing the number of people living in the county, in-migration is resulting in changes to its demographic makeup. Increased minority, retirement-age, and single-parent household populations characterize demographic changes resulting from in-migration.

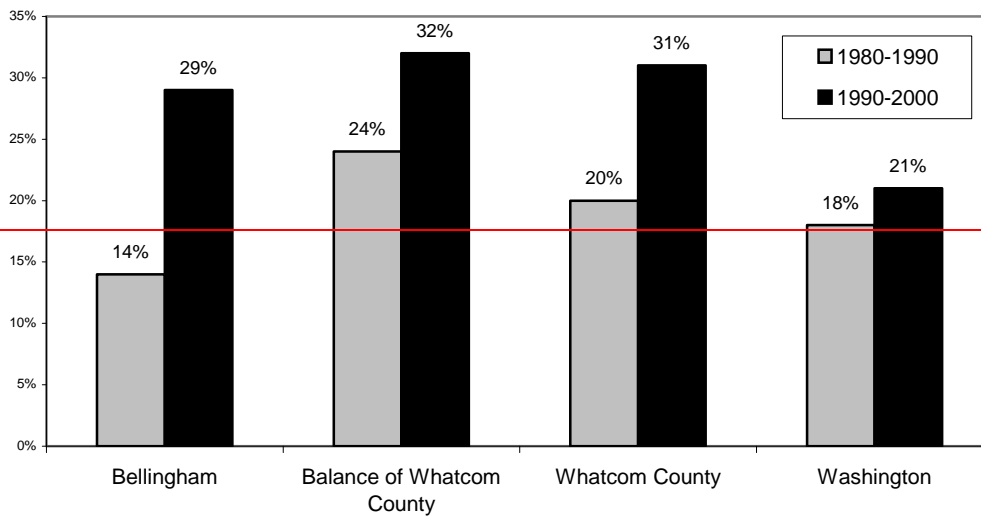
Single-parent households are proportionally more sensitive than two-parent households to factors contributing to poverty and sub-standard living conditions such as housing costs, health care costs, and other increases in the cost of living. The number of such households is increasing at a faster rate than households with two parents. Shifts in proportions of various groups comprising county population also shift the need for various types and sizes of housing. Some families require larger homes to accommodate larger extended families. Some groups, such as single-parent households, require smaller and more efficient housing.

Figure 1  
Population Change 1990 - 2008



[Delete Figure 1 Below](#)

Figure 1  
Population Change 1980 - 2000



**Income Distribution**

~~In 1990, 37% of the County's households were classified as extremely low, very low and low-income based on Housing and Urban Development (HUD) criteria<sup>1</sup>. Fifty-one ~~Fifty-three~~ percent of Whatcom County Bellingham renters put more than 30% of their income towards housing costs in 2007, compared to 45% of renters state-wide. ~~The 1999~~ In 2007, median income in Whatcom County Bellingham was more than 16% ~~29%~~ below Washington State's median income, while median gross rent was just over 9% ~~7%~~ lower. ~~This disparity, some of which is attributed to high student and elderly populations, grew from 21% in 1989.~~~~

Table 1 <del>1999-2007</del> Household Income <sup>1</sup>			
Income	<del>Bellingham</del>	Whatcom County	Washington
Median household income		<u>\$46,506</u>	<u>\$55,591</u>
	<del>\$32,530</del>	<del>\$40,005</del>	<del>\$45,776</del>
Per capita income		<u>\$24,336</u>	<u>\$29,027</u>
	<del>\$19,483</del>	<del>\$20,025</del>	<del>\$22,972</del>
Median family income		<u>\$62,948</u>	<u>\$ 66,642</u>
	<del>\$47,196</del>	<del>\$49,325</del>	<del>\$53,760</del>

Family incomes are slightly higher than household incomes, but still lower than the State numbers. ~~Fourteen~~ Sixteen percent of Whatcom County's population fell below the federal poverty level in 2007~~1999~~, a percentage significantly higher than Washington State's 11%. ~~Unemployment, which is expected to average 6% through 2020 despite an expected 2% annual growth rate in the labor force, is also a factor.~~<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [U.S. Census Bureau, 2007 American Community Survey Community Counts: Whatcom County Health Indicator Report 2002](#)

<sup>2</sup> [ECONorthwest Whatcom County Population and Economic Forecasts, May 2002](#)

Table 2 1999-2007 Population Living in Poverty			
Population Living in Poverty	Bellingham	Whatcom County	Washington
		16%	11.4%
<b>Total Population</b>	20.6%	14.2%	10.6%
		15.5%	10.3%
<b>Individuals 18 plus</b>	21.2%	14.1%	9.6%
		12.7%	7.9%
<b>Individuals 65 plus</b>	9.0%	8.3%	7.5%
		8.7%	7.8%
<b>Families living in poverty</b>	9.4%	7.8%	7.3%
		44.2%	34%
<b>Females with related children under 18</b>	36.8%	31.2%	30.8%
		79.6%	42.1%
<b>Females with related children under 5</b>	61.9%	50.0%	45.6%

Statistics have shown that as housing prices increased at a faster rate than household incomes, so decreased the ability of Low- to Moderate-Income (LMI) populations to obtain decent housing in Whatcom County.

- Between ~~1999 and 2007~~ ~~1989 and 1999~~ the median household income grew ~~16%~~ ~~41%~~ while housing costs grew ~~103%~~ ~~108%~~ over the same period.<sup>23</sup>
- In each year ~~1999-2007~~ ~~1998-2000~~ the average wage in Whatcom County was not enough to afford a two-bedroom rental unit.<sup>34</sup>
- There are ~~about 20,000 more than 7,500~~ very low-income households in ~~Whatcom County~~ ~~Bellingham~~, ~~70% of which report having housing problems.~~<sup>45</sup>

### Employment and Wage Trends

~~According to the May 2002 ECONorthwest employment study, the percentage of people employed in the retail, commercial, and industrial sectors in each Whatcom County community will vary over the next twenty years. Average annual wage data from 1999 shows that many employees vital to community function are paid wages below the area median income of \$40,005 per year. As more and more households rely on incomes from the retail and service sector, housing needs become increasingly dire.~~

<sup>2</sup> ~~WA Center for Real Estate Research; U.S. Census Bureau~~ <sup>3</sup> ~~Community Counts: Whatcom County Health Indicator Report 2002~~

<sup>3</sup> ~~National Low Income Housing Colition~~ <sup>4</sup> ~~Community Counts: Whatcom County Health Indicator Report 2002~~

<sup>4</sup> ~~U.S. Census Bureau, 2007 American Community Survey~~ <sup>5</sup> ~~Bellingham Consolidated Plan~~

The following tables indicate that high percentages of the population will continue to be employed in the retail and commercial sectors. As shown with 1999 data in Table 3, individuals employed in these sectors typically make less than the area median income. This suggests that the numbers found in the projected households 2022 column of Table 4 may in fact be understated.

**Table 3  
Whatcom County Income by Employment Sector**

1999 Data	Average Annual Wage 1999 *	Percent of AMI 1999	Income Level	Percent of Median Income
Retail	\$13,914	34.8%	Very Low	30—50
Services	\$20,769	51.9%	Low	50—80
Government	\$26,888	67.2%	Low	50—80
Wholesale Trade	\$29,657	74.1%	Low	50—80
Finance	\$30,445	76.1%	Low	50—80
Transportation	\$30,840	77.1%	Low	50—80
Construction	\$32,480	81.2%	Moderate	80—95
Manufacturing	\$34,755	86.9%	Moderate	80—95

\* Source: ECONorthwest Whatcom County Population and Economic Forecasts, 2002

1999 Whatcom County Income Data Used in Forecasting Income Trends

**Table 4  
Projected Employment Allocations and Associated Projected Incomes  
2007 and 2012**

Jurisdiction	2007 Projected Income Range				2012 Projected Income Range		
	Percent Retail	Percent Commercial	Percent Industrial		Percent Retail	Percent Commercial	Percent Industrial
	\$15,654	\$28,941– \$38,532	\$33,071– \$39,292		\$17,016	\$35,149– \$45,920	\$36,677– \$41,179
Bellingham	30.7%	44.7%	24.6%		30.2%	46.4%	23.4%
Bellingham UGA	3.7%	27.3%	69.0%		3.8%	29.0%	67.2%
Birch Bay UGA	20.3%	71.8%	7.9%		19.6%	73.2%	7.4%
Blaine	19.6%	46.0%	34.3%		19.3%	48.0%	32.7%
Blaine UGA	*	*	73.8%		*	*	72.9%
Columbia Valley UGA	59.2%	36.9%	3.9%		59.8%	37.0%	3.1%
Everson	13.8%	5.9%	80.6%		13.9%	6.2%	79.7%
Everson UGA	*	*	90.9%		*	*	90.5%
Ferndale	32.1%	32.5%	35.3%		31.9%	34.1%	34.0%
Ferndale UGA	4.7%	15.3%	80.0%		4.8%	16.5%	78.8%
Lynden	33.3%	41.6%	25.0%		32.8%	43.3%	23.8%
Lynden UGA	*	*	88.7%		*	*	87.7%
Nocksack	63.1%	*	*		63.5%	*	*
Point Roberts	55.3%	25.2%	19.5%		55.1%	26.6%	18.7%
Sumas	11.0%	9.1%	79.6%		11.4%	10.0%	78.9%
Other Uninc. Areas	9.4%	17.3%	73.3%		9.6%	18.5%	71.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>25.3%</b>	<b>38.0%</b>	<b>36.7%</b>		<b>25.0%</b>	<b>39.8%</b>	<b>35.2%</b>

Source: ECONorthwest Whatcom County Population and Economic Forecasts, 2000—\*indicate suppressed data

**Table 4 (continued)  
Projected Employment Allocations and Associated Projected Incomes  
2017 and 2022**

Jurisdiction	2017 Projected Income Range			2022 Projected Income Range		
	Percent Retail	Percent Commercial	Percent Industrial	Percent Retail	Percent Commercial	Percent Industrial
	\$18,450	\$42,543– \$54,137	\$40,111– \$42,974	\$19,886	\$51,079– \$63,278	\$43,400– \$44,742
Bellingham	29.7%	47.9%	22.4%	29.4%	49.2%	21.4%
Bellingham UGA	3.8%	30.6%	65.5%	3.8%	32.1%	64.15
Birch Bay UGA	19.0%	74.2%	6.8%	18.4%	75.0%	6.5%
Blaine	19.1%	49.6%	31.3%	18.9%	51.1%	30.0%
Blaine UGA	*	*	73.6%	*	*	72.9%
Columbia Valley UGA	60.3%	37.1%	2.6%	60.1%	37.1%	2.8%
Everson	14.3%	6.7%	79.1%	14.6%	7.0%	78.2%
Everson UGA	*	*	91.5%	*	*	90.1%
Ferndale	31.7%	35.5%	32.7%	31.6%	36.8%	31.6%
Ferndale UGA	4.8%	17.4%	77.8%	4.8%	18.3%	76.6%
Lynden	32.4%	44.8%	22.8%	32.1%	46.1%	21.9%
Lynden UGA	*	*	86.9%	*	*	86.6%
Nooksack	63.5%	*	*	63.5%	*	*
Point Roberts	54.4%	27.6%	17.9%	54.3%	28.5%	17.3%
Sumas	11.4%	10.6%	78.0%	11.8%	11.4%	77.1%
Other Uninc. Areas	9.7%	19.6%	70.7%	9.8%	20.7%	69.5%
Total	24.8%	41.4%	33.8%	24.7%	42.8%	32.6%

Source: ECONorthwest Whatcom County Population and Economic Forecasts, 2000 \*indicate suppressed data

**Projected Employment Allocations and Associated Projected Incomes**

\*Data are suppressed when less than 2 employers compose all employers summed, or when one employer accounts for 80% or more of the summed employment as per Washington State Employment Security confidentiality laws.

**NEEDS**

With current inadequacies in federal funding, innovative housing solutions are needed to provide enough housing units to accommodate all of the County’s growing housing needs. By 2022 the end of the 20-year planning period, Whatcom County will have experienced substantial growth. ~~Assuming the County’s income distribution remains the same, there will be more than 11,000 households within the County with incomes less than 30% of the area’s median income.~~

While there are many programs that address affordable housing issues in Whatcom County, a growing number of households are in need of assistance, causing increased competition for existing resources. Many of these resources are not available to some jurisdictions that do not meet all of the necessary criteria or cannot produce the required matching funds to participate in certain programs<sup>56</sup>.

<sup>56</sup>-Bellingham Comprehensive Plan Housing Element part IV

Between 1990 and 2000, Bellingham’s multi-family housing experienced a 65% increase, ~~now making up almost half of the housing stock. It is estimated that by 2010~~ in 2009, multi-family housing ~~will~~ comprised 50% ~~56%~~ of the housing in the City. Concern that an increase in rental units may pose a challenge to community development has been expressed in Bellingham’s Consolidated Plan, as rental tenants move frequently. <sup>67</sup>

Accommodating our future housing need will require substantial effort and planning. There is an increasing need for all forms of affordable housing including multi-family housing and smaller single-family houses constructed on smaller lots.

**Unaffordable Housing**

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines unaffordable housing as that which places a cost burden of greater than 30% on a household’s income. ~~One-third~~ Forty-two percent of Whatcom County households put more than 30% of their income towards housing costs in the year 2007 ~~2000~~. This cost burden is most detrimental for those in the lower income categories, but its negative effects are felt well into the middle-income range.

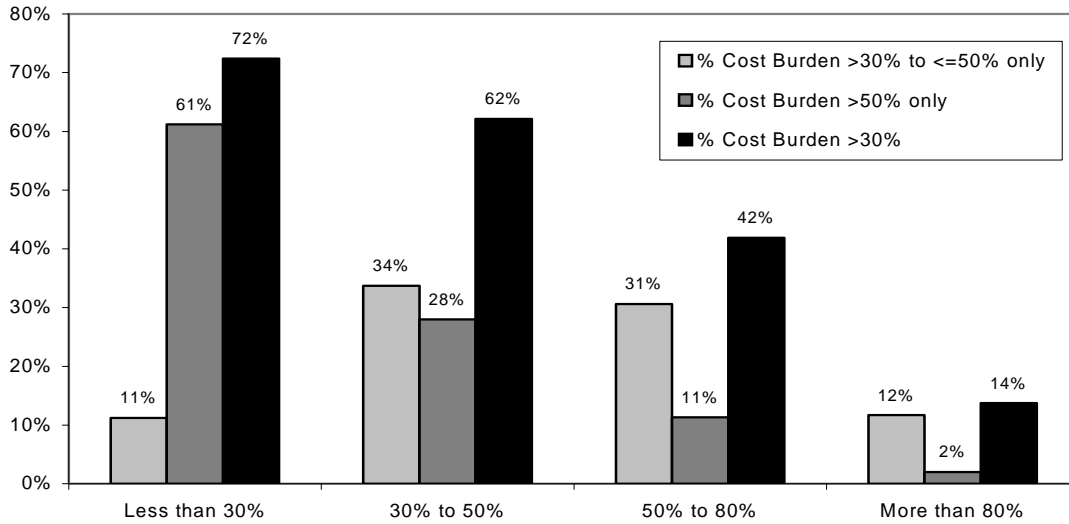
<u>Whatcom County Housing Units</u>	<u>Owner Occupied</u>	<u>Renter Occupied</u>	<u>Total</u>
Unaffordable Units *	<u>16,618</u>	<u>14,934</u>	<u>31,552</u>
	<del>10,628</del>	<del>11,078</del>	<del>21,706</del>
Total Units	<u>46,474</u>	<u>29,285</u>	<u>75,759</u>
	<del>40,876</del>	<del>23,570</del>	<del>64,446</del>

\*Unaffordable defined as units that require housing payments greater than 30% of household income.  
Source: ~~2000~~-US Census, 2007 American Community Survey

Households with incomes at less than 30% of the area median income are the hardest hit—61% of them putting more than 50% of their income toward housing costs. As seen in Figure 2, the next two income categories also experience significant housing affordability problems with 62% and 42% experiencing cost burdens.

<sup>67</sup> Bellingham Consolidated Plan

**Figure 2**  
**Housing Cost Burden by Income Category in Whatcom County, 2000**



### Housing Mismatch

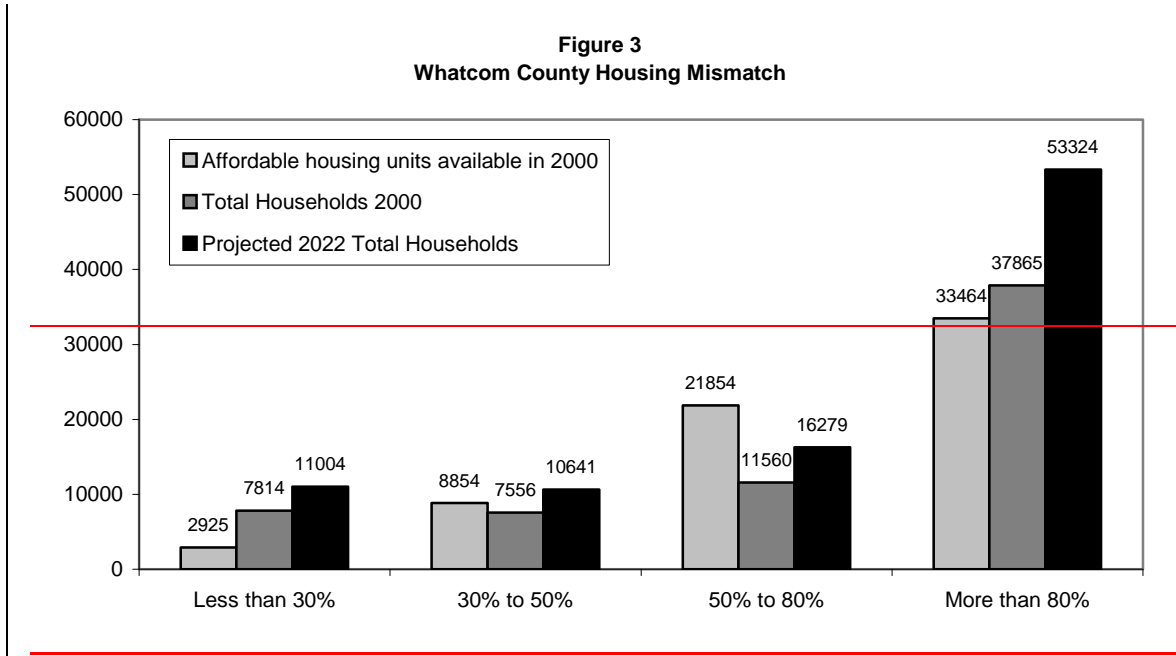
Part of the problem is the disparity that exists between the number of lower-income households in the county and the number of housing units that are affordable to these households. HUD calls this the “housing mismatch” and derives a functional data set of this mismatched data from each U.S. Census.

~~As shown in Figure 3, the~~ The number of housing units affordable to each income group does not properly match the number of households. There ~~were are~~ more housing units available in the 50% to 80% income category in 2000 than there ~~were are~~ households, implying that households in lower and higher income categories must be occupying a significant portion of these units. Whatcom County currently needs 7,814 housing units for households in the lowest income category, ~~but falls short of this number by 4,889 units, according to available data. In actuality, more units are needed for this income group as shown in Figure 3. The disparity is illustrated with the 72.4% or 5657 households in the less than 30% of area median income group reside in unaffordable housing. This further explains the nature of the “housing mismatch” where available units for each income group are not necessarily occupied by households falling in the same category.~~

A July 2008 Countywide Housing Action Plan extrapolated to 2025 the number of households with extreme housing burden – those paying more than 50% of their income for housing, and earning under 80% of the area median income – putting the number at 14,193, which is a 62% increase above 2000. This is an increase at a rate faster than population growth if present trends continue – meaning the housing crisis will get worse over time.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Countywide Housing Action Plan submitted by the Countywide Housing Affordability Task Force July 18, 2008

Delete Figure 3 Below



~~Thirty-six~~ ~~Twenty-six percent~~ of Whatcom County homeowners put more than 30% of their income into their housing costs in ~~2007~~ ~~1999~~ (up from 15% in 1989 ~~and 26% in 1999~~)<sup>8</sup> and it has been estimated that renters spend 55% of their income on housing.

<sup>8</sup> U.S. Census

<b>Table 4.6</b> <b>Housing Costs <del>2007</del> 2000</b>			
Cost by Type	Bellingham	Whatcom County	Washington Bellingham
Selected owner costs			
___ 30% <u>or more</u> of income <del>plus</del>	<del>23.2%</del>	<u>35.8%</u> <del>26.0%</del>	<u>33.4%</u> <del>25.7%</del>
Selected renter costs			
___ 30% <u>or more</u> of income <del>plus</del>	<del>53.0%</del>	<u>51%</u> <del>47.0%</del>	<u>44.8%</u> <del>39.1%</del>
Median value owner- occupied	<del>\$156,100</del>	<u>\$300,800</u> <del>\$156,700</del>	<u>\$305,500</u> <del>\$168,300</del>
Median owner costs			
___ With mortgage	<del>\$1,133</del>	<u>\$1,532</u> <del>\$1,165</del>	<u>\$1,675</u> <del>\$1,268</del>
___ Not mortgaged	<del>\$323</del>	<u>\$439</u> <del>\$327</del>	<u>\$453</u> <del>\$338</del>
Median gross rent	<del>\$613</del>	<u>\$739</u> <del>\$622</del>	<u>\$816</u> <del>\$663</del>
Source: <del>Bellingham 2003 – 2007 Consolidated Plan</del> Note: <del>numbers based on 2000</del> US Census, <u>2007 American Community Survey</u>			

The median value of an owner occupied house in Whatcom County Bellingham increased 95% ~~75%~~ between ~~1989 and~~ 2000 and 2007.

**Table 5.7**  
**Median Price of Houses Sold in Whatcom County**  
**1980 -- 2007 2002**

Year	Median Price	Year	Median Price	Year	Median Price
1980	\$49,700	1990	\$86,350	2000	<del>\$146,500</del> \$144,500
1981	n.a.	1991	\$98,250	2001	<del>\$152,600</del> \$151,050
1982	\$56,000	1992	\$112,000	2002	<del>\$159,100</del> \$159,900
1983	\$54,000	1993	\$120,000	2003	<del>\$176,700</del> \$176,700
1984	\$54,441	1994	\$125,800	2004	<del>\$216,800</del> \$216,800
1985	\$52,600	1995	\$127,000	2005	<del>\$265,000</del> \$265,000
1986	\$54,000	1996	<del>\$131,800</del> \$127,500	2006	<del>\$282,300</del> \$282,300
1987	\$55,500	1997	<del>\$133,700</del> \$132,000	2007	<del>\$290,000</del> \$290,000
1988	\$59,500	1998	<del>\$138,900</del> \$136,500		
1989	\$67,450	1999	<del>\$143,100</del> \$140,000		

Source: Whatcom County Real Estate Research Report

**Currently Available Low-Income Affordable Housing**

Various subsidized housing exists in all of the cities in the County. Small-scale affordable housing projects are located in each city.

The Whatcom/Skagit Homes program funded by USDA Rural Development is available in rural parts of the County. Habitat for Humanity of Whatcom County builds single family homes affordable to very low income homebuyers. Kulshan Community Land Trust provides affordable homeownership opportunities that remain affordable for each successive owner of the CLT homes. Mobile and manufactured homes are allowed in designated areas (usually mobile home parks) throughout the County and often provide housing to low-income populations.

The Bellingham/Whatcom Housing Authorities owns and/or manages ~~1,712~~ ~~4,642~~ subsidized units that house families, the elderly, and disabled people. They also have ~~1,891~~ ~~4,693~~ Shelter Plus Care and Section 8 rental assistance vouchers to distributed throughout the County. Although the Bellingham/Whatcom Housing Authorities facilitates the provision of a total of ~~3,603~~ ~~3,335~~ subsidized housing units, they do not receive enough funding to provide housing assistance to all of the families in need in the County. Most of the funding they do receive cannot be recaptured.

In addition to this, the City of Bellingham’s housing programs, using federal funds, include rehabilitation of existing housing units, acquisition of housing units or land for housing, new

construction, assistance to homebuyers, rental assistance to tenants and assistance to homeless households and those at risk of becoming homeless.

Several other organizations, including the Archdiocesan Housing Authority and Intercommunity Mercy Housing, own and manage nonprofit rental housing affordable to low-income households.

The Whatcom County Health Department conducted a detailed inventory of affordable housing resources in August 2007 and determined the total number of public and nonprofit affordable housing units included 4,901 housing units equal to 9,877 bedrooms.

<u>Housing Type</u>	<u># Bedrooms</u>	<u># Units</u>
<u>Rental housing units</u>	<u>5,229</u>	<u>2,861</u>
<u>Permanent rental assistance – housing vouchers</u>	<u>3,511</u>	<u>1,620</u>
<u>Homeownership assistance</u>	<u>175</u>	<u>89</u>
<u>Permanent supportive housing</u>	<u>219</u>	<u>185</u>
<u>Emergency shelter and transitional housing</u>	<u>743</u>	<u>146</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,877</b>	<b>4,901</b>

### Other Subsidized Housing

The federal government expends billions of dollars each year in tax breaks and mortgage interest deductions—all government subsidies on housing that disproportionately serve high income populations.

~~In the year 2000, nearly 80% of the mortgage interest deductions benefited households with yearly incomes over \$75,000. It has been estimated that in 2003 the federal government spent \$69 billion on mortgage interest deductions, \$22 billion on local property tax deductions, and \$14 billion on capital gains tax exemptions on sales of principal residences.~~

The federal government spends more on these subsidies each year than it allocates to the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Federal benefits to renters – including low income housing tax credits and HUD direct expenditures to fund subsidized housing throughout the country – totaled under \$50 billion. ~~HUD's entire yearly budget for 2003 was \$38 billion to fund subsidized housing throughout the country along with many other HUD programs.~~

### ISSUES, GOALS, AND POLICIES

In order to offer appropriate and affordable housing for everyone in the County, programs and policies designed to meet a variety of housing needs can be implemented. With the right mix of policy decisions and local programs, we can increase the supply of affordable housing and offer a variety of housing choices, thereby strengthening our communities. Thousands of Whatcom County households do not live in affordable housing. Looking ahead, the incomes of working people in Whatcom County will make affordability one of the County's biggest challenges. Both public and private investments can be directed into housing that ensures that low- to moderate-income people will be able to continue to live near where they work in the community.

**Adopting an Ambitious but Achievable Affordable Housing Goal**

Whatcom County and its cities might consider adopting a HOUSING GOAL that sets the bar at a high but achievable level:

**By the year 2020, every community and neighborhood has a healthy mix of housing sizes, types and prices, affordable at the wages of the jobs nearby. A balanced mix of housing will have housing costs in sync with wages and incomes in the community.**

To achieve this overarching goal, the following goals, policies and actions are adopted:

**Permitting Process Efficiency**

Building codes and zoning ordinances, in part, influence costs of development and construction of housing. The permitting processes require time (raising finance costs), fees, and the personal time investment of parties involved. Building plan reviews increase cost and time. Local plans checking of non-commercial development by county officials could save time and money. A budget that allows adequate staff is necessary to minimize processing time. Also, to the extent possible, regulatory predictability and certainty in the processes required of the private sector will contribute to its willingness to contribute to housing affordability.

**GOAL 3A: Minimize the time required for processing housing-related development and construction permits in the interest of overall cost reduction.**

Policy 3A-1: Streamline and simplify existing and proposed permitting processes.

Policy 3A-2: Educate interested parties in the permitting process using easy to understand publications such as brochures or handouts readily available to the public.

Policy 3A-3: Consistently apply the International Building Codes and do not increase requirements.

**Mixed Land Uses with Appropriate Buffering and Siting Criteria**

Where feasible, mixed land uses should be encouraged. The concept of encouraging housing near employment and siting employment near the work force is well-accepted and logical. Housing, transportation, and employment-base needs are well-served by this proximity; it is desirable from public, employer, employee, and public service perspectives. Incompatible uses such as heavy, noisy, or noxious industrial facilities adjacent to residential uses should continue to be discouraged. Some non-polluting, low-impact types of light industrial uses such as textile manufacturing, which could be large-scale but not environmentally or aesthetically offensive, could, with some buffering, be perfectly acceptable and probably desirable near residential development. Design standards and funding sources will be needed to fully explore the potential for mixed use since, in some instances; lenders are reluctant participants in mixed-use projects.

County-Wide Planning Policies, Visioning Community Value Statements ~~and preferred alternatives (from the Visioning Process)~~, preservation of agricultural lands and environmentally sensitive areas, [the comprehensive plan](#) and zoning regulations generally prescribe preferred locations for housing a growing population of county residents. Various levels of affordability and types of housing are needed and must be somehow blended into locational constraints.

Subsidized housing, homeless housing, transient, emergency, and special needs housing are all part of the affordability riddle, and in some instances a major part. Citizens currently possessing safe and decent housing may not fully understand the scope of the housing problem and they may tend not to want housing for less advantaged households near them. In that regard, the location of affordable housing can be as difficult an issue as funding.

**GOAL 3B: Support residential housing near employment opportunities and transit.**

Policy 3B-1: Enable and support housing development opportunities integral with, and near, compatible industrial and commercial activities and transit.

Policy 3B-2: Establish commercial zoning regulations that accommodate residential uses at a density higher than surrounding residential or rural zoning provided adequate transportation access and services are available.

Policy 3B-3: Establish industrial zoning regulations that accommodate temporary residential uses at a density higher than surrounding residential or rural zoning provided adequate transportation access is available.

Policy 3B-4: Residential development adjacent to major transportation routes may require buffering.

**GOAL 3C: Create opportunity for a broad range of housing types and encourage mixed affordability.**

Policy 3C-1: Support lot clustering, varied lot sizes, small-scale multi-family dwellings, accessory housing and reductions in infrastructure requirements for subdivisions as incentives for development of housing obtainable by purchasers with the greatest possible mix of household incomes.

Policy 3C-2: Support programs in which citizens participate in the construction of their own home.

Policy 3C-3: Support development of manufactured and mobile home parks and establish design criteria that will enable them to fit into the surrounding community.

Policy 3C-4: Develop zoning criteria in order to appropriately site group homes and accessory dwelling units within county residential urban growth areas.

### **Access to Housing**

Changing demographics demand flexibility in siting, regulating, and designing future housing stocks. Family size, household size, proximity to employment and services, living space requirements due to cultural preferences, immigration patterns, and other factors contribute to changes in the type, number, and location of housing opportunities required for the future. The demographic makeup of Whatcom County's population can logically be expected to change over time through the 20-year Growth Management Act planning period.

Availability of housing for seniors, young adults, single parents, and groups is frequently overlooked by both the private development sector and the public sector. In addition, many

migrant farm workers entering the county each season face substandard housing and homelessness. While the upper ends of the housing scale are normally well-served by the developers of housing projects, other housing needs are frequently overlooked or neglected. Making housing affordable and accessible in all residential areas will help integrate these groups of people into the larger community.

Housing appropriate for those with temporary, transitional, emergency, and special needs is available only on an exceptional basis. Population growth will directly affect the number of people seeking such shelter.

A portion of the agricultural workers have difficulty in obtaining adequate housing. Prior to adoption of the comprehensive plan, Whatcom County considered ordinance amendments allowing for easier and better provision of migrant worker housing. Difficult issues associated with the amendments such as water, sewer, and other health concerns caused them to be tabled while an accessory housing ordinance allowing development of detached second dwelling units was adopted. Nevertheless, those farm worker housing amendments must proceed to provide some relief for this important housing need.

**GOAL 3D: Encourage provision of housing at every income level.**

Policy 3D-1: Participate with other agencies to provide housing options for all income levels by donating land, providing expertise, expediting permits, and other appropriate mechanisms.

Policy 3D-2: Enable the ability of the farmer to provide housing for all agricultural workers.

Policy 3D-3: Support programs which assist agricultural workers seeking affordable housing opportunities.

**GOAL 3E: Provide for future housing needs by responding to changing household demographics.**

Policy 3E-1: Review and revise existing regulations to identify inhibitions to housing for the varying preferences of those needing housing. Focus on population segments with particular needs such as temporary, transitional, or emergency housing.

Policy 3E-2: Evaluate all new regulations or codes developed at the county level to ensure they accommodate housing preferences and needs existing at that time.

Policy 3E-3: Encourage financial institutions to participate in creative housing solutions which respond to changing demographics and needs.

Policy 3E-4: Support the development of housing specifically for young adults, seniors, groups, and single parents.

**Incentives for Affordability**

Profit generally drives the production of most housing. Some types of housing, particularly some of the more affordable types, are less profitable to build. If the private sector is expected to play a

part in the provision of affordable, obtainable housing, there must be incentives encouraging them to do so.

**GOAL 3F: Provide incentives to create affordable housing.**

Policy 3F-1: Include density or inclusionary bonus provisions in land use regulations, where appropriate, to offset the reduced profit inherent in more affordable types of housing. These bonuses may be transferred to other locations.

Policy 3F-2: Review accessory housing ordinances for effectiveness and appropriateness and revise when necessary.

Policy 3F-3: Support innovative housing ideas including co-housing (essentially a micro-community with some centralized facilities), elder cottages (temporary housing units for healthy but aging family members), and shared living residences or group quarters.

**Regulatory Controls**

Many forces act to inhibit the availability of affordable housing. Among these are regulatory controls, including zoning, subdivision regulations, development standards, and critical areas requirements. In addition, growth management itself implies some restrictions to affordable housing, by excluding land from development by focusing growth in urban areas, avoiding environmentally sensitive areas, and other ways. Mechanisms are needed to balance these inhibitions to affordability, such as design variety promoted through covenants, conditions, and restrictions, relaxed infrastructure requirements, and zoning.

**GOAL 3G: Identify and remove impediments to affordable housing.**

Policy 3G-1: Create opportunities to provide more affordability by relaxing or eliminating some infrastructure requirements or impact fees where it is clearly demonstrated that such action does not create a safety hazard and is not contrary to the interests of the health and well-being of county residents.

Policy 3G-2: Review and revise existing and proposed regulations for consistency with other housing goals.

Policy 3G-3: Educate the public on equal opportunity laws specifically related to housing and housing conditions including options available to anyone discriminated against.

Policy 3G-4: Allow development of smaller lots and creative options.

**Preservation of Existing Housing Stocks**

Destruction of existing housing units due to redevelopment may be counterproductive for housing affordability. Instead, redevelopment should be taken as an opportunity to increase affordable housing.

**GOAL 3H: Facilitate maintenance and rehabilitation of existing housing.**

- Policy 3H-1:           Wherever there is potential for destruction of existing structures, provide for preserving existing housing or creating new housing, whether by incorporation into the new project, moving, or recycling.
- Policy 3H-2:           Support creation of one or more additional housing units, within permitted density, when existing housing is remodeled or commercial or light industrial facilities are redeveloped.
- Policy 3H-3:           Identify and implement incentives to preserve and sensitively rehabilitate historic properties.

## **HOUSING - ACTION PLAN**

### **Zoning**

1. Amend regulations and establish criteria for appropriate development standards to allow an appropriate mix of manufactured and mobile home parks in certain Urban Residential (UR) zones.
2. Amend zoning regulations to more broadly allow child and senior day care facilities with traffic and buffers adequately addressed.
3. Allow innovative housing ideas including co-housing, elder cottages, and shared living residences or group quarters.

### **Permitting**

4. Allow conditional occupancy by the owner of a residence under construction, yet not ready for permanent occupancy, where health, liability, and legal concerns have been addressed. Such occupancy would be conditioned on identified criteria.

### **Regulatory Review and Reform**

5. Review any changes to county regulations affecting the provision of housing for negative influence on direct costs and on the indirect costs of permit processing time.
6. Review any new changes to regulations affecting the provision of housing for population and housing preferences and needs prevailing at that time.
7. Establish a regular periodic review schedule of policies and procedures, including accessory housing ordinance, by Planning Commission, panel, task force, executive review, or other methods.
8. Adopt land use regulations and development standards which allow lot clustering, varied lot sizes, small scale multi-family dwellings and reductions to infrastructure requirements for subdivisions to encourage development of housing obtainable by purchasers with the greatest mix of household incomes.
9. Adopt land use regulations and development standards which allow innovative housing ideas including co-housing, elder cottages, and shared living residences or group quarters.

### **Review Committees**

10. Form a special task force consisting of farmers, workers, lenders, public housing providers, and elected officials to initiate regulations designed to encourage and enable farmers to provide housing for farm workers.
11. Establish a broad-based citizen committee consisting of interested and affected parties to:
  1. Review existing regulations for consistency with the goals contained in this plan and review proposed regulations for their affect on housing affordability and availability.

2. Evaluate local legislative actions for opportunities to enhance availability of affordable housing to all residents of the county and enforcement of laws pertaining to tenant rights.

### **Staffing**

12. In general budget review, allow for adequate staff to provide timely review of land use proposals.

### **Building Standards**

13. Encourage private groups to inventory sets of pre-approved residential building plans that can be offered to the public free of charge.
14. Investigate and enable creative options to reduce or eliminate infrastructure requirements such as road width, sidewalks, curbs and gutters where it is clearly demonstrated that such action does not create a safety hazard and is not contrary to the interests of the health and well-being of county residents.

### **Lot Size/Shape**

15. Adopt land use regulations and development standards that allow innovative lot designs (Z lots, zero lot lines, small lot districts) in the interest of reducing the serviced-lot portion of overall housing development costs.
16. Eliminate lot consolidation criteria when it is in the interest of serving housing affordability.
17. Where appropriate, and through density adjustments, decrease minimum lot sizes.

### **Mixed Use**

18. Adopt development regulations that provide for adequate buffering requirements (trees, other vegetation, and fences) and sound insulation between uses to minimize drawbacks of mixed use such as noise, odors, and cluttered views.
19. Review and revise land use regulations and adopt "adaptive re-use" to allow the conversion of single-family dwellings, commercial/light industrial facilities and other non-residential structures to a variety of housing types where water and sewage treatment can be provided.

### **Developer Incentives**

20. Review potential for offering density bonuses, reduced lot size, and other incentives for including specified proportions of housing targeted for low- and moderate-income households.
21. Through adoption of a set of incentives, use some form of inclusionary zoning that encourages provision of housing targeted for low- and moderate-income households.
22. Make a series or menu of incentives, including but not limited to density bonuses, transfer of development rights, and/or infrastructure concessions available to project developers wherever special needs populations are specifically served.

23. Require impact and mitigation fees, if any, to be paid at the time the occupancy permit is issued by Whatcom County.
24. Provide additional bonus housing density for inclusion of affordable housing in a Planned Unit Development.

### **Buyer Assistance**

25. Establish a housing development fund, accessible to individuals qualified for affordable housing assistance who are legal residents of the county, administered by an agency such as Bellingham-Whatcom County Housing Authority or the Whatcom County Opportunity Council, and funded by contributions from developers wishing to utilize affordable housing incentives and bonuses, but not wishing to include affordable housing in their own projects.
26. Support existing agencies which provide for, or provide assistance in obtaining, low- or no-interest loans for first-time home buyers and others needing assistance to purchase homes.

### **Education**

27. Prepare an easily-understood guide or set of guides, readily available to the public, describing in a step-by-step fashion the processes required for land use actions.
28. Educate the public about permitting processes, and the availability of existing house plans by providing easy access to information through media such as videotapes, workshops, the Internet and others.
29. Educate the public about innovative housing ideas including co-housing, elder cottages, and shared living residences or group quarters.
30. Coordinate with local, state, and federal housing agencies, organizations and jurisdictions to further Whatcom County's goals and policies relating to housing.
31. Work with local, state and federal agencies to coordinate programs and secure grants or other funds available for housing programs.

### **Housing Affordability Distribution and Targeting**

32. Allocate to each UGA and city a "fair share allocation" that specifies the number of affordable housing units that are needed to accommodate each economic segment of the population in each area.

### **Policy Priority in Favor of Permanent Community Benefit**

33. Seek perpetual affordability achievable through nonprofit-owned rental housing and certain forms of homeownership including community land trusts, limited equity condominiums, and deed restricted homeownership.

### **Inclusionary Zoning**

34. Develop inclusionary zoning incentives and requirements that integrate affordable housing into new market-rate developments.
35. Develop a system for inclusionary zoning payments made in lieu of providing inclusionary units in some developments.

### **Financial Incentives to Encourage Affordability**

36. Explore legislative authority to use “current use taxation policies” to benefit affordable housing by applying the tax-abatement policy now available for farmland, timberland and other open spaces.
37. Explore other financial incentives such as tax credits for low-income households who opt into a nonspeculative housing market.
38. Encourage “employer-assisted housing” as a recruitment/retention strategy using down payment assistance, interest rate buy-downs, second mortgages, etc.

### **Funding Strategies**

39. Create a “housing trust fund” to provide dedicated funding for housing priorities set by the jurisdictions involved.
40. Consider using the “Housing and Conservation Trust” used in Vermont to fund affordable housing inside urban areas that takes pressure off farmland, open space and rural lands.
41. Consider a ballot measure for a “housing levy” that funds affordable housing development.
42. Consider a housing levy that adapts the Vermont model by proposing a combination of open space/farmland/salmon protection along with support for permanently affordable housing at the right location.
43. Consider using a “real estate excise tax” or a “real estate transfer tax” a County-wide tax or levy to provide a revenue stream for the local housing trust fund for affordable housing.

## Chapter Four CAPITAL FACILITIES

### INTRODUCTION

Capital facilities as defined here, and for purposes of the plan, include facilities owned by Whatcom County and other public entities. Capital facilities typically have long useful lives, significant costs, and are not mobile. Whatcom County capital facilities include buildings, land, parks, and roads.

Capital facilities provided by other public entities may be included in this plan by reference. Those capital facility plans that may be adopted by reference include plans for water, sewer, fire protection, storm water, schools, parks and recreation facilities.

#### Purpose

This chapter contains policies to guide Whatcom County in providing adequate public services within the county's financial capability, and provides a unifying framework for facilities planning. It also establishes levels of service for county-owned and operated capital facilities. The cities and other public owners of capital facilities are encouraged to use the *Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan* as a guide in preparing their own plans and capital improvement programs, particularly with respect to designated urban growth areas (UGAs).

#### Process

In 1991, the firm of Henderson, Young and Company (HYCo) was hired to obtain the necessary expertise in capital facilities planning to assist the county in preparing this chapter. Unlike most other chapters of this plan, Capital Facilities did not involve a citizen's committee or a technical advisory committee per se. The functions assumed by committees for other chapters were not required for completion of this chapter. Methodology, however, was needed to bring together technical expertise concerning all county organizational divisions that manage the capital facilities of the county. HYCo provided that methodology. Department and division administrators have been called upon repeatedly to provide detailed information on existing facilities, levels of service, funding, projected improvements, and revenue sources. Through that process, they participated in the plan as an ad hoc technical committee. Because of the complexity of this topic, the County Council went through an exercise to establish preliminary levels of service after receiving recommendations from department heads. After review and input by the public, these preliminary levels of service were finalized.

HYCo was responsible for organizing the effort toward completion of this chapter in the original 1997 Comprehensive Plan, with much of the actual work performed by the Whatcom County Planning Division. This chapter was updated in 2004 as part of the seven-year review required under the Growth Management Act [and in 2009](#).

## **GMA Goals, County-Wide Planning Policies, and Visioning Community Value Statements**

The goals, policies, and action plans in this chapter contribute to achievement of several of the GMA planning goals, including those considering urban growth, open space and recreation, and public facilities and services. The chapter has been written to satisfy those goals while also meeting the intent and requirements of the County-Wide Planning Policies (CWPP), and general guidelines of the Visioning Community Value Statements.

Although CWPPs do not separately address capital facilities, as defined in this chapter, they are addressed within a number of the policies. Policies requiring fiscal and physical ability to provide adequate public facilities, services, and infrastructure are satisfied in this chapter. The interlocal agreements specified in the policies must address reasonable criteria for annexation and ensure adequate public services including transportation, parks, administrative services and corrections facilities.

In relation to capital facilities, the Visioning Community Value Statements emphasize the importance of law enforcement, crime prevention, and other social services, as well as encourage retention and development of recreational opportunities.

Growth Management Goals, County-Wide Planning Policies, and Visioning Community Value Statements will be served by adoption of this chapter and implementation of its goals, policies, and action plans.

### **GMA Requirements**

The Growth Management Act mandates that counties required to plan under the Act adopt comprehensive plans including an inventory of facilities, a forecast of future needs for such facilities, the proposed location and the capacities of expanded or new facilities, minimum levels of service of facility capacity, a six-year plan for financing those facilities with indication of sources for that funding, and a requirement to re-assess the Land Use chapter of this plan if there are funding shortfalls. The Land Use element must be consistent and coordinated with the capital facilities plan with respect to adopted minimum levels of service and adequacy of facilities to serve development. These Growth Management Act requirements are addressed in this chapter of the Comprehensive Plan, [the 20-Year Capital Facilities Plan \(Appendix E\)](#) and in the *Six-Year Capital Improvement Program (Appendix F)*.

## **BACKGROUND SUMMARY**

Once a level of service standard is established for a particular facility, then a cost can be assigned to achieve the desired level of service. The next step is to develop funding mechanisms to pay for the desired levels of service.

Levels of service for different facilities are defined differently. In this chapter, the level of service for most facilities is defined as a unit per population; for example, a fraction of a square foot of office space per capita or a number of jail beds or park acres per 1,000 population. The major exception is roads, for which level of service is measured as volume over capacity ratios, i.e. how many cars are anticipated to use a particular section of road (volume) divided by how many cars the road can theoretically accommodate over a specific period of time (capacity).

One of the major issues confronting Whatcom County in relation to capital facilities is the question of availability of revenue versus ability to provide services. While it is generally desirable to provide high levels of service for roads, law enforcement, and other essential services, costs for those services continue to rise and, generally, new or additional taxes are undesirable.

Whatcom County has kept additions to its capital facilities to a minimum over the past ten years (~~1999-2009~~ ~~1994-2004~~) in order to contain the cost of government operations. Whatcom County has relied on a pay-as-you go approach for funding capital expenditures under one million dollars. Large capital acquisitions have been financed with general obligation debt. The ~~2009~~ ~~2004~~ budget for debt service is ~~\$1,893,618~~ ~~\$2,487,000~~, or ~~one~~ ~~two~~-per cent of ~~2009~~ ~~2004~~ budgeted revenues of ~~\$188,439,728~~ ~~\$114,635,799~~.

The GMA expressly authorizes cities and counties to impose impact fees on new development to help finance the capital facilities required to serve new development. This authorization applies only to capital facilities owned or operated by government entities: (a) public streets and roads; (b) publicly owned parks, open space, and recreation facilities; (c) school facilities; and (d) fire protection facilities in jurisdictions that are not part of a fire district. Certain background information that must be included in a capital facilities element of the Comprehensive Plan in order to collect transportation impact fees is included in Appendix G.

If the desired level of service cannot be achieved without acquiring major debt, raising taxes beyond acceptable levels or establishing unacceptable impact fees, then the level of service standard must be adjusted, facility costs must be reduced, or growth must be curtailed until a balance is achieved. Adjusting land use ~~to meet the ability~~ to achieve desirable levels of service is one means of attaining concurrency. Concurrency, as required by the GMA, means that adequate facilities as defined by adopted levels of service are available at the time that the impacts of development occur or within a specified time thereafter. The GMA, at minimum, requires concurrency for transportation facilities. Concurrency is obviously desirable for all other capital facilities as well if the overall goal is to provide for new development while maintaining a quality of life that people desire. ~~More detailed information is available in the following background documents: Whatcom County Financial Resource Projections for Growth Management and Capital Facility Requirements 1995-2000 and to 2014.~~

With regard to fire protection, Whatcom County has not adopted level of service standards (NFPA 1720 or any other response-time based level of service) for most urban or rural areas. The County should define an urban level of service for fire protection during the required 7-year comprehensive plan review and update process. The 7-year plan review and update process should demonstrate that the urban growth areas have adequate existing fire protection facilities and service capacities to meet the urban level of service and any additional needed fire facilities and services. If the level of service standard adopted by the County can not be provided over the 20-year planning period, then re-designation of UGAs to rural designations should be considered.

## ISSUES, GOALS, AND POLICIES

Adopted levels of service are incorporated within the following goals, policies, and action plans.

**GOAL 4A:**            **Within the county's financial capacity, adopt a carefully planned program of county services and facilities.**

Policy 4A-1:            Establish appropriate level of service standards for county facilities commensurate with the ability of the county to fund them.

Policy 4A-2:            Extend County facilities and services in a manner that supports future urban growth in urban growth areas (UGAs).

Policy 4A-3:            Evaluate all types of facilities to determine whether they should be provided at county-wide, or strictly unincorporated levels of service. Transportation facility levels of service should be evaluated for appropriateness as to adopted urban or rural levels of service.

Policy 4A-4:            The land use element of the comprehensive plan must be reassessed to ensure that land use is coordinated and consistent with the financing plan within the capital facilities element and to ensure probable funding does not fall short of meeting existing needs.

**GOAL 4B:**            **Develop a six-year financing program for capital facilities that meets the requirements of the GMA, achieves the county's levels-of-service, and is within financial capability as determined by projected financial resources.**

Policy 4B-1:            Maintain and update, on at least a biennial basis, a six-year capital improvement program (CIP) that identifies projects, outlines a schedule, and designates realistic funding sources for all county capital projects based on a review of population and revenue conditions existing at that time.

**GOAL 4C:**            **Locate county facilities which require urban infrastructure, serve primarily urban populations, and are urban in character within identified urban growth areas (UGAs).**

Policy 4C-1:            Evaluate all new capital facilities requiring a new site for urban characteristics and limit selection of sites for urban projects to designated UGAs.

**GOAL 4D:**            **Develop and implement a coordinated program of facility expansion for the departments and agencies which together carry out the county's law enforcement and corrections functions.**

Policy 4D-1:            Complete those capital improvement projects necessary to eliminate ~~existing~~ any space deficiencies in law enforcement facilities.

**GOAL 4E:** Develop and carry out a realistic long-range program of facility expansion or improvement to accommodate the county's projected staffing requirements for departments and agencies.

Policy 4E-1: Include in the capital facilities master-plan, a program of building and space improvements to efficiently provide quality work space for projected staffing levels through the 20-year planning period year-2024.

Policy 4E-2: Investigate alternatives to Capital Facility construction through the private sector, and pursue technologically feasible alternatives.

**GOAL 4F:** Achieve level of service targets for park and recreational facilities identified in this chapter and which support objectives and priorities identified in the Comprehensive Park and Recreation Open Space Plan, in the Natural Heritage Plan, and in this plan.

Policy 4F-1: Seek non-capital opportunities to acquire, enhance and maintain park lands, trails, and other recreational facilities.

Policy 4F-2: Include acquisition and development costs in the six-year CIP for future trails projects.

Policy 4F-3: Develop a recreational facilities program that achieves and maintains the level of service for athletic fields and courts, trails, and support facilities for shoreline access, picnicking, and camping without adding to capital costs.

Policy 4F-4: Place a high priority on improvements to existing county recreational sites and facilities and using them to their full potential, including those outlined in the Whatcom County Comprehensive Park and Recreation Open Space Plan, before investing capital in the acquisition and development of new facilities.

Policy 4F-5: Continue to provide centers for use by senior citizens and others.

**GOAL 4G:** Establish levels of service for roads, parks, corrections, and administrative services.

Policy 4G-1: For purposes of transportation management systems, adopt level of service standards (LOS) for transportation facilities as listed in Chapter 6, Transportation, Policy 6A-3.

Policy 4G-2: Adopt the following level of service standards for park facilities:

developed parks ..... 9.6 acres per 1,000 population  
trails ..... 0.60 0.75 of a mile per 1,000 population  
activity centers..... five six-centers per 100,000 population

Policy 4G-3: Adopt the following level of service for correction facilities:

jails ..... 1.42 beds per 1,000 population  
juvenile detention ..... 0.125 0.165 beds per 1,000 population

Policy 4G-4: Adopt the following levels of service for administrative facilities:

office space (unincorporated).....	0.51 sq. ft. per capita
maintenance & operations (unincorporated) .....	0.41 sq. ft. per capita
sheriff's office (unincorporated) .....	0.26 sq. ft. per capita
office space (county-wide).....	<u>0.63</u> <del>0.74</del> sq. ft. per capita
sheriff emergency ops (county-wide).....	0.011 sq. ft. per capita

**GOAL 4H: Coordinate with non-county facility providers such as cities and special purpose districts to support the future land use pattern promoted by this plan.**

Policy 4H-1: Establish interagency planning mechanisms and interlocal agreements to assure coordinated and mutually supportive capital facility plans from special districts, cities, and other major non-county facility providers which are consistent with this and other chapters of the comprehensive plan.

Policy 4H-2: In consultation and coordination with special districts, cities, and other major non-county facility providers, review and update as appropriate capital facility plans supporting UGAs in conjunction with GMA 7-Year Review and 10-Year UGA Review.

Policy 4H-3 Whatcom County should define an urban level of service for fire protection by December 1, 2011. The 7-year comprehensive plan review and update process should demonstrate that the urban growth areas are served by urban levels of fire protection facilities and service. If the level of service standard adopted by the County can not be provided over the 20-year planning period, then re-designation of UGAs to rural designations should be considered.

**GOAL 4J: Maintain effective concurrency measures and procedures for all facilities and services necessary for development.**

Policy 4J-1: Based on established levels of service for all road segments under control of the county, administer a concurrency management program that provides for consistent and predictable evaluation of the impacts of future proposed development.

**GOAL 4K: Consider alternative funding sources to assure levels of service adopted in the plan.**

Policy 4K-1: After all other financing options have been exhausted, consider the use of bonded indebtedness to finance major capital investments in infrastructure ~~consistent with the discussion in the Capital Facilities Plan support document: *Financial Resource Projections for Growth Management (Chapter 11)*.~~

Policy 4K-2: Identify and promote public private partnerships to provide and enhance the provision of necessary services.

**GOAL 4L: Ensure that capital facilities provide protection for threatened and endangered fish and wildlife species.**

Policy 4L-1: Fish and wildlife habitat should be carefully considered when selecting projects for the Six-Year Capital Improvement Program.

Policy 4L-2: Projects selected for the Six-Year Capital Improvement Program shall not degrade habitat for threatened and endangered species.

Policy 4L-3: Projects selected for the Six-Year Capital Improvement Program should strive to restore degraded habitat for threatened and endangered species, when the projects are in direct contact with such habitat. The County Council will determine when such restoration is financially feasible through adoption of the six-year capital improvement program and the County budget.

**GOAL 4M: Enable school districts to receive impact fees to fund a proportionate share of system improvements reasonably related to new development by adopting into this plan their capital facilities plans and establishing interlocal agreements with the districts to collect and transfer funds.**

Policy 4M-1: The capital facilities plan for the Bellingham School District, adopted by the district on ~~July 16, 2009~~ ~~March 25, 2004~~, is adopted into the comprehensive plan by reference.

Policy 4M-2: The capital facilities plan for the Ferndale School District, adopted by the district on December 23, 2005, is adopted into the comprehensive plan by reference.

Policy 4M-3: The capital facilities plan for the Lynden School District, adopted by the district on June 29, 2006, is adopted into the comprehensive plan by reference.

Policy 4M-4: The capital facilities plan for the Meridian School District, adopted by the district on June 30, 2009, is adopted into the comprehensive plan by reference.

Goal 4N: Adopt special district and County capital facility plans for unincorporated UGAs into this plan by reference when consistent with the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan.

Policy 4N-1: The Birch Bay Water and Sewer District Comprehensive Water System Plan, dated March 2009, is adopted by reference into the comprehensive plan.

Policy 4N-2: The Birch Bay Water and Sewer District Comprehensive Sewer System Plan, dated May 2009, is adopted by reference into the comprehensive plan.

- Policy 4N-3: The Birch Bay Comprehensive Stormwater Plan, dated July 2006, is adopted by reference into the comprehensive plan.
- Policy 4N-4 The North Whatcom Fire and Rescue Capital Facilities Plan, dated August 2009, is adopted by reference into the comprehensive plan.
- Policy 4N-5: The Public Utility District No. 1 Comprehensive Water System Plan, dated October 2004, is adopted by reference into the comprehensive Plan.
- Policy 4N-6: The Evergreen Water-Sewer District Comprehensive Water System Plan, dated June 2004, is adopted by reference into the comprehensive plan. This water system serves a portion of the Columbia Valley UGA.
- Policy 4N-7: The Water District No. 13 Water System Plan, dated February 2005, is adopted by reference into the comprehensive plan. This water system serves a portion of the Columbia Valley UGA.
- Policy 4N-8: The public stormwater facilities sections relating to the Columbia Valley UGA in the Water Quantity and Quality Report Foothills Subarea (Aspect Consulting, July 18, 2008, pp. 2-3, 36-39, and 55-56) are adopted by reference into the comprehensive plan.

## CAPITAL FACILITIES - ACTION PLAN

1. Adopt a county six-year CIP to meet the GMA specifications including concurrency and all other capital needs for the six-year financing program component of the capital facilities element.
2. Identify appropriate levels of long-term bonded debt to finance major capital investments in infrastructure.
3. Explore alternative funding sources as authorized under the GMA to help fund the cost of infrastructure expansions required to serve new development.
4. ~~Maintain~~ ~~Establish~~ a concurrency management or monitoring process for transportation and adequacy reviews of new development as an integral part of land use and building permit review.
5. Explore alternative funding techniques for law and justice facilities and operations, including contracts for service with other agencies, private providers, and joint use of facilities.
6. Analyze probable future staffing and space requirements in conjunction with the budget process and updating of the capital facilities plan.
7. Pursue acquisition strategies for resource conservancy and linear parks (trails) on an other than fee simple basis to reduce cost without significant reduction in public use/benefit potential.
8. Pursue joint ventures with cities, school districts, and other potential partners in developing regional athletic parks as recommended in the *Comprehensive Park and Recreation Open Space Plan*.
9. Work with special districts, cities, and other major non-county facility providers including water and sewer districts, fire districts, public utility districts and others as appropriate to establish levels of service for urban growth areas. This must be done in order to assure facilities adequate to provide for anticipated population growth and development consistent with land use plan designations and zoning.
10. Explore alternative technology to create cost savings for capital facility needs.
11. Establish public/private partnership alternatives to capital financing.
12. [Capital facility plans for water, sewer, stormwater, fire and schools that serve unincorporated UGAs will be incorporated by reference when consistent with the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan.](#)

## Chapter Five UTILITIES

Whatcom County strongly encourages utilities to develop in a safe and rational manner based on the demand requirements of development consistent with the County Comprehensive Plan.

[The 20-Year Capital Facilities Plan \(Appendix E\) provides additional information relating to water systems, sewer systems, and solid waste management.](#)

Policy 5Q-3: Review Urban Growth Areas ~~at least every seven years~~ to ensure appropriate actions have occurred to provide adequate water supplies.

27. Review urban growth areas ~~every seven years~~ to ensure adequate water supplies are available and revise boundaries accordingly.

*NOTE: There are no changes to portions of Chapter Five preceding or following the above text.*

**Chapter Six  
TRANSPORTATION**

***No Text Amendments Proposed  
(See attached map amendment)***

**Chapter Eight**  
**RESOURCE LANDS**

***No Text Amendments Proposed***  
***(See attached map amendments)***

## Appendix A GLOSSARY

**Short-Term/~~Long-Term~~ Planning Area ~~Boundaries~~:** Short Term Planning Areas ~~boundaries~~ are used as a tool for facilitating provision of urban levels of services and preventing sprawl. ~~The Long-Term boundary includes the short term boundary as well as areas that have unresolved issues within the identified 20-year Urban Growth Boundary.~~

**Urban Fringe Subarea Plan:** A plan pertaining to the Bellingham Urban Growth Area and a portion of Whatcom County surrounding Bellingham ~~and containing most of Bellingham's suburban growth.~~ It is a plan designating the interface between urban and rural land uses. ~~Some part~~ Part of the Urban Fringe Area ~~will be~~ is included in an Urban Growth Area. Some of the area already lies within Bellingham's Urban Service Area.

**Urban growth area (UGA):** An area designated, within which urban growth will be encouraged and outside of which growth can only occur if it is not urban in nature. ~~(CWPP)~~ Urban growth areas around cities are designated by the county in consultation with the cities; urban growth areas not associated with cities are designated by the county.

*NOTE: There are no changes to portions of Appendix A preceding or following the above text.*

**Appendix E**

**~~SHORT TERM PLANNING AREA MAPS~~**

~~Map #28-A, Bellingham Urban Growth Area~~

~~Map #28-B, Blaine Urban Growth Area~~

~~Map #28-C, Everson Urban Growth Area~~

~~Map #28-D, Ferndale Urban Growth Area~~

~~Map #28-E, Lynden Urban Growth Area~~

~~Map #28-F, Nooksack Urban Growth Area~~

~~Map #28-G, Sumas Urban Growth Area~~

~~Map #28-H, Birch Bay Urban Growth Area~~

~~Map #28-I, Cherry Point Major/Port Industrial UGA~~

~~Map #28-J, Columbia Valley Urban Growth Area~~

PROPOSAL: Repeal "Appendix E Short Term Planning Area Maps" entirely, because Short Term Planning Areas are zoning designations not comprehensive plan designations. Therefore, they are shown on the zoning maps rather than on comprehensive plan maps.

## Appendix G TRANSPORTATION IMPACT FEE – BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### EXISTING TRAFFIC CONDITIONS

#### *State Law Requirements*

State law requires that, prior to collecting transportation impact fees, the Comprehensive Plan must identify deficiencies in public streets and roads that serve existing development and the means by which existing deficiencies will be eliminated within a reasonable period of time (RCW 82.02.050(4)(a)).

#### *Procedure*

Through a transportation impact fee program development study performed in 2007-08, the County has developed a list of planned system improvements that are reasonably related to the impacts of projected growth and are therefore eligible for funding through impact fees. The Six-Year Transportation Improvement Program shows all projects that are programmed for construction in 2009 through 2014.

#### *Results*

The analysis of V/C ratios performed by the Whatcom County Division of Engineering did not show any County roads that are currently deficient in meeting the level of service standards set forth in the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan.

### PROJECTED 2022 TRAFFIC CONDITIONS

#### *State Law Requirements*

State law requires that the County's Comprehensive Plan must identify additional demands placed on existing public streets and roads by new development (RCW 82.02.050(4)(b)).

#### *Procedure*

The Whatcom Council of Governments contracted with a consultant to develop a computer transportation model to project future traffic on County roads. The computer transportation model assumed ~~that the total Whatcom County population would grow from 166,814 people in 2000 to 234,917 people in the year 2022, consistent with population and employment projections from~~ the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan, ~~which was in effect at the time of the modeling. Additionally, the transportation model utilized projected population growth for each urban growth area as distributed by the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan. The population assumptions incorporated into the transportation model are shown below.~~

	2000 Population (Based on 2000 City Limits)	2000 Population- (Cities include UGAs)	Projected 2022 Population (Cities Include UGAs)	2000-2022 Net Growth Cities Include UGAs)
<b>Bellingham</b>	67,171	78,040	113,055	35,015
<b>Blaine</b>	3,770	4,779	7,942	3,163
<b>Everson</b>	2,035	2,256	3,912	1,656
<b>Ferndale</b>	8,758	9,934	17,322	7,388
<b>Lynden</b>	9,020	9,604	16,900	7,296
<b>Nooksack</b>	851	895	1,881	986
<b>Sumas</b>	978	995	1,669	674
<b>Subtotal</b>	92,583	106,503	162,681	56,178
<b>Unincorporated Whatcom County</b>	74,231	60,311	72,236	11,925
<b>Total Whatcom County</b>	166,814	166,814	234,917	68,103

The computer transportation model assumed that total Whatcom County employment would grow from 83,195 jobs in 2000 to 116,288 jobs in 2022. Projected employment utilized in the transportation model was derived from the “baseline forecast” from *Whatcom County Population and Economic Forecasts* (ECONorthwest, May 2002), with the exception of agriculture and mining employment, which were not evaluated by the ECONorthwest study.

The Whatcom Council of Governments computer transportation model assumed that the following major road improvements would be constructed by 2022:

Road	Location	Improvement
<b>Blaine/Birch Bay Area</b>		
SR 543	Boblett to Border	Widen from 2 lanes to 4 lanes
Lincoln Rd (Birch Point Connector)	Shintaffer Rd to Birch Pt Rd.	New 2-lane road
Lincoln Rd	Harborview Rd to Blaine Rd	Reconstruction and new 2-lane road
<b>Bellingham Area</b>		
West Illinois St	W Illinois to Marine Dr	New 2-lane road
San Juan Blvd	Elwood to San Juan Blvd	New 2-lane road
Lakeway Dr	Yew St to Electric Ave	Add west bound lane
Sunset Dr	Woburn to City Limits	Widen from 2 lanes to 4 lanes
I-5 South Bound	Ohio on-ramp to Lakeway off	Widen to 3 lanes
I-5 South Bound	Lakeway off-ramp	Widen to 2 lanes
<b>Mid County Area</b>		
SR 539 (Guide Meridian)	Horton Rd to SR 546 (Badger)	Widen to 4 lanes
<b>Lynden</b>		
Drayton St Extension	2nd St to Depot Rd	New 2-lane road
<b>Ferndale</b>		
Nordic Way Connector	Nordic Way to LaBounty Dr	New 2-lane road
Main St/I-5 Overpass		Widen to 4 lanes
<b>Sumas Area</b>		
SR 9	South of Sumas	Realign
Garrison Rd	North of SR 9	Close due to realignment

*Results*

The results of this computer model are displayed on three attached maps:

Map # G1 Forecasted Total Daily Traffic for 2022 - Depicts total projected daily traffic on County and State roads for 2022, including the percentage of traffic generated by new development from 2000-2022.

Map # G2 Forecasted P.M. Peak Hour Traffic for 2022 – Depicts projected p.m. peak hour traffic on County roads for 2022, including the percentage of p.m. peak hour traffic generated by new development from 2000-2022.

Map # G3 Forecasted P.M. Peak Hour Level of Service for 2022 – Depicts projected p.m. peak hour level of service, in a volume/capacity ratio, for 2022.

The Whatcom Council of Governments is developing an updated transportation model for its regional 2011 Whatcom Transportation Plan. Whatcom County will use that model to update future demands and system needs for the 2011 Comprehensive Plan update. It must be noted that the City of Bellingham is

~~in the process of~~ forecasting traffic for the City and urban growth area using its own computer transportation model. The County will consider incorporating the results from this model in future Comprehensive Plan updates in order to refine the analysis for the Bellingham urban growth area.

### **Identification of Transportation Projects to Serve New Development**

#### *State Law Requirement*

State law requires that impact fees may be collected and spent only for the public facilities defined in RCW [82.02.090](#) (including roads) that are addressed by a capital facilities plan element of a comprehensive land use plan (RCW 82.02.050(4)). State law also requires that the County's Comprehensive Plan must identify additional transportation facility improvements required to serve new development (RCW 82.02.050(4)(c)).

#### *Procedure*

~~Road projects completed in the last six years and related costs were derived from Whatcom County Public Works Department records.~~ Road projects proposed in the next six years were derived from the Six-Year Transportation Improvement Program. Projects that weren't reasonably related to the impacts of new development (i.e. maintenance projects that would have to be completed even if there wasn't any new growth) were omitted from the list of projects for which impact fees could be collected.

#### *Results*

Whatcom County has identified transportation facility improvements necessary to serve new development as shown below.

**Projects Eligible for Impact Fees**

Project Name	Project Limits	Project Cost (\$1,000s) Estimated
Birch Bay- Lynden Road / Portal Way	Intersection	\$3,000
Birch Bay-Lynden Road / Harborview Road	Intersection	\$3,000
Birch Bay-Lynden Road Widening	Portal Way to UGA limit just east of Blaine Road	\$1,500
Birch Bay-Lynden Road Widening	UGA limit just east of Blaine Road to Harborview	\$1,800
Birch Point Connector Road	Birch Pt. Road. to Shintaffer Road.	\$2,000
Lincoln Road Extension and Improvement	Shintaffer Road. to Blaine Road (SR 548)	\$9,000
Portal Way/Dakota Creek Bridge #500	Bridge	\$5,000
Birch Bay- Lynden Road / Blaine Road (SR 548)	Intersection	\$3,000
<u>Grandview Road (SR 548) / Vista Drive Intersection</u>	<u>Intersection</u>	<u>\$3,000</u>
Hannegan Rd. Intersections (4 intersections)	Intersections of Hannegan Rd with Kelly Rd., E Laurel, Ten-Mile Rd., Van Dyk Rd.	\$1,800
Hannegan Rd./SR 544 (E Pole Rd.) Intersection	Intersection	\$3,000
Haxton Way Non-motorized Improvements- 2 phases	Gooseberry Point to Slater Rd.	\$3,000
Lake Louise Rd.	Sudden Valley Gate 13 to Austin St.	\$8,000
Lake Louise Rd.	Sudden Valley Gate 13 to Whatcom Blvd.	\$8,000
Lake Whatcom Blvd. High Bridge #115	Entire bridge	\$5,500
Marine Drive	Bennett Drive to Locust St.	\$1,400
Slater Rd.	Hannegan Rd to Northwest Dr	\$4,000
Slater Rd. intersections (3 intersections in project)	Slater Rd with Imhof Rd., Ferndale Rd., and Northwest Rd.	\$3,000
Yew St. Rd.-Samish connector (amalgamation of several projects)	Yew St. (San Juan Blvd.) and Samish Way	\$1,000
<u>Yew Street Rd. Phase 2</u>	<u>Samish Way to Kingsmill</u>	<u>\$6,000</u>
Ferry Dock Improvements	Undefined	\$6,000
		<b>\$7976,000</b>

**2009-2014 Transportation Improvement Program**

Priority	Project Identification	Project Costs in Thousands of Dollars			
		Federal Cost by Phase	State Funds	Local Funds	Total Funds
-	-	-	-	1,910	1,910
1	Hannegan Road / SR 544 Intersection: Signalization	-	-	1,910	1,910
2	Lincoln Road - I: Reconstruction and non-motorized enhancements	-	500	-	500
3	Birch Bay Lynden Road / Blaine Road SR 548: Intersection Improvements	-	-	5	5
4	Yew Street Road, Phase 2: Reconstruction and non-motorized enhancements	1,864	1,636	-	3,500
5	Birch Bay Drive Pedestrian Facility: Pedestrian and non-motorized enhancements	-	-	5	5
6	Bay Road Fish Passage: Fish Passage project, CRP # 908012	-	-	5	5
7	West Illinois / Timson Way: New roadway	1,100	750	5	1,855
8	Hampton Road, Mormon Ditch Bridge #261: Bridge replacement	4,775	-	350	5,125
9	Baker Lake Road, Sulphur Creek Bridge #422: Replacement	1,100	-	165	1,265
10	Mesquite Lake Road, Middle Fork Bridge #140: Rehabilitation	4,150	-	-	4,150
11	Slater Road / Nooksack River Bridge	-	-	750	750
12	Lake Louise Road: Reconstruction	2,860	750	-	3,610
13	Haxton Way Non-Motorized Improvements: Pedestrian and bicycle off-road trail and safety improvements	-	1,624	430	2,054
14	Birch Bay Lynden Road / Portal Way: Intersection improvements	-	750	-	750
15	Clearbrook Road / Johnson Creek, Bridge #302: Bridge Replacement	794	-	-	794
16	Portal Way / Dakota Creek Bridge #500: Reconstruction	-	-	5	5
17	Potter Road, Bridge #148: Replacement	-	-	5	5
18	Lummi View Drive: Embankment Stabilization	-	-	5	5
19	Haxton Way: Structural overlay, paved shoulders, flood proofing	-	500	-	500
20	Tyee Drive: Reconstruction and non-motorized enhancements	-	-	5	5
21	North Shore Road: Reconstruction, non-motorized enhancements	-	-	5	5
22	Slater Road Intersections: Install turn lanes at Imhof Road and Ferndale Road	-	-	5	5
23	Lincoln Road - II: Reconstruction and new road, non-motorized enhancements	-	-	5	5
24	Siper Road: Reconstruction	-	-	5	5
25	Marine Drive: Reconstruction and bicycle/pedestrian facilities	-	-	5	5
26	Marine Drive, Little Squalicum Bridge #1: Rehabilitation	-	-	5	5
27	Mountain View Road: Reconstruction	-	-	5	5
28	Hannegan Road, Scott Ditch Bridge #245: Reconstruction/replacement	-	-	10	10
29	Refurbish/Upgrade of the Whatcom Chief	-	-	40	40

30	Ferry Dock Improvements: Improvements to Lummi Island Ferry Docks	-	-	30	30
34	Various Ferry Parking and Staging	-	-	30	30
32	Gooseberry Point Ferry Dock Relocation: Relocation feasibility study	154	-	74	225
	Various Bridges Rehabilitation / Replacement: As prioritized	-	-	1,400	1,400
34	Subdivision overlays: Various locations	-	-	5	5
35	Structural Overlays: Various locations	-	-	5	5
36	Right of Way Acquisition: Various locations	-	-	30	30
37	Unanticipated Site Improvements: As prioritized	-	-	2,400	2,400
38	Gravel Conversions: Various locations	-	-	5	5
39	Storm water Quality Improvements: As Prioritized	-	-	5	5
40	Non-motorized Transportation Improvements: Various Locations	-	-	5	5
41	Fish Passage Project: Various Locations	-	-	5	5
42	Railroad Crossing Improvements: Various Locations	-	-	5	5
43	Neighborhood Traffic Calming: Various Locations	-	-	5	5
Totals	-	16,797	6,510	7,731	31,038

**2010-2015 Transportation Improvement Program**

Priority	Project Identification	Project Costs in Thousands of Dollars			
		Federal Cost by Phase	State Funds	Local Funds	Total Funds
1	Lincoln Road - I: Reconstruction and non-motorized enhancements	-	2,400	1,300	3,700
2	Birch Bay Lynden Road / Blaine Road SR 548: Intersection Improvements	-	-	20	20
3	Yew Street Road, Phase 2: Reconstruction and non-motorized enhancements	2,228	-	1,197	3,425
4	West Illinois / Timson Way: New roadway	-	-	5	5
5	Birch Bay Drive Pedestrian Facility: Pedestrian and non-motorized enhancements	-	-	10	10
6	Potter Road, Bridge #148: Replacement	795	-	105	900
7	Baker Lake Road, Sulphur Creek Bridge #422: Replacement	1,225	-	190	1,415
8	Slater Road / Nooksack River Bridge	-	-	750	750
9	Haxton Way Non-Motorized Improvements: Pedestrian and bicycle off-road trail and safety improvements	-	-	100	100
10	Birch Bay Lynden Road / Portal Way: Intersection improvements	-	750	40	790
11	Mosquito Lake Road, Middle Fork Bridge #140: Rehabilitation	450	-	-	450
12	Clearbrook Road / Johnson Creek, Bridge #302: Bridge Replacement	800	-	-	800
13	Portal Way / Dakota Creek Bridge #500: Reconstruction	-	-	5	5
14	Haxton Way: Structural overlay, paved shoulders, flood proofing	-	500	-	500
15	Point Roberts Transportation Improvement: Project location to be determined in 2010	-	-	400	400
16	North Shore Road: Reconstruction, non-motorized enhancements	-	-	50	50
17	Slater Road Intersections: Install turn lanes at Imhof Road and Ferndale Road	-	-	10	10

18	<u>Lincoln Road - II: Reconstruction and new road, non-motorized enhancements</u>	-	-	5	5
19	<u>Siper Road: Reconstruction</u>	-	-	5	5
20	<u>Marine Drive: Reconstruction and bicycle/pedestrian facilities</u>	-	-	5	5
21	<u>Marine Drive, Little Squaticum Bridge#1: Rehabilitation</u>	-	-	5	5
22	<u>Mountain View Road: Reconstruction</u>	-	-	5	5
23	<u>Hannegan Road, Scott Ditch Bridge #245: Reconstruction/replacement</u>	-	-	5	5
24	<u>Legoe Bay Road Protection: Seawall removal and beach creation</u>	-	-	50	50
25	<u>Noon Road, Ten Mile Creek Bridge #240</u>	-	-	300	300
26	<u>Assink Road, Fishtrap Creek Bridge # 256</u>	-	-	320	320
27	<u>South Pass Road, Saar Creek Bridge # 212</u>	-	-	350	350
28	<u>Northwest Drive, Bear Creek Culvert</u>	420	-	58	478
29	<u>South Pass Road Repair: January 2009 storm</u>	453	-	92	545
30	<u>Manley Road Culvert Replacement: January 2009 storm</u>	210	-	30	240
31	<u>Emerald Way Slide Repair: from January 2009 storm</u>	428	-	104	532
32	<u>Rutsatz Road: Repair January 2009 storm damage</u>	268	-	39	307
33	<u>Refurbish/Upgrade of the Whatcom Chief</u>	-	850	-	850

34	<u>Ferry Dock Improvements: Improvements to Lummi Island Ferry Docks</u>	-	-	600	600
35	<u>Various Ferry Parking and Staging</u>	-	-	10	10
36	<u>Gooseberry Point Ferry Dock Relocation: Relocation feasibility study</u>	10	-	5	15
37	<u>Various Bridges Rehabilitation / Replacement: As prioritized</u>	-	-	1,600	1,600
38	<u>Subdivision overlays: Various locations</u>	-	-	850	850
39	<u>Structural Overlays: Various locations</u>	-	-	850	850
40	<u>Right of Way Acquisition: Various locations</u>	-	-	180	180
41	<u>Unanticipated Site Improvements: As prioritized</u>	-	-	1,900	1,900
42	<u>Gravel Conversions: Various locations</u>	-	-	50	50
43	<u>Storm water Quality Improvements: As Prioritized</u>	-	-	450	450
44	<u>Non-motorized Transportation Improvements: Various Locations</u>	-	-	750	750
45	<u>Fish Passage Project: Various Locations</u>	-	-	650	650
46	<u>Railroad Crossing Improvements: Various Locations</u>	-	-	180	180
47	<u>Neighborhood Traffic Calming: Various Locations</u>	-	-	180	180
Totals		7,287	4,500	13,810	25,597