Discussion and preliminary Council direction on Comprehensive Plan Appendices.

ATTACHMENT:

1. Cover letter
2. Draft Planning Commission Findings

SUMMARY STATEMENT OR LEGAL NOTICE LANGUAGE: (If this item is an ordinance or requires a public hearing, you must provide the language for use in the required public notice. Be specific and cite RCW or WCC as appropriate. Be clear in explaining the intent of the action.)

Under the Growth Management Act, Whatcom County and the seven cities within the County must complete the periodic update of their comprehensive plans and review urban growth areas in 2016 (RCW 36.70A.130). The Planning and Development Services Department would like to discuss Comprehensive Plan Appendices with Council. The Appendices are:


COMMITTEE ACTION:

6/14/2016: Briefed and discussed
6/21/2016: Comments received; did not discuss
6/28/2016: Comments received and held in Committee
7/5/2016: Comments received but not discussed
7/12/2016: Comments received and prelim. direction given

COUNCIL ACTION:

6/28/2016: Public Testimony Received

Related County Contract #: AB2016-047

Please Note: Once adopted and signed, ordinances and resolutions are available for viewing and printing on the County’s website at: www.co.whatcom.wa.us/council
Memorandum

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

FROM: Matt Aamot, Senior Planner

THROUGH: Mark Personius, Assistant Director

DATE: June 1, 2016

SUBJECT: Comp Plan Update/UGA Review – Appendices

As you know, Whatcom County has initiated a multi-year project to update the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan and conduct the urban growth area (UGA) review, as required by the Growth Management Act. The Comprehensive Plan update and UGA review is being conducted in coordination with the seven cities in Whatcom County. It is anticipated that the Council will adopt an ordinance relating to the Comprehensive Plan update and UGA review in July 2016.

Staff would like to discuss Comprehensive Plan Appendices with the Council on June 14, 2016. The Appendices are:

- Appendix A – Glossary;
- Appendix B - List of Acronyms;
- Appendix C – GMA Goals, County-Wide Planning Policies and Visioning Value Statements;
- Appendix D – Bibliography;
- Appendix E - Whatcom County 20-Year Capital Facilities Plan;
- Appendix F – Six Year Capital Improvement Program for Whatcom County Facilities;
- Appendix G - Transportation Impact Fee Background Information (proposed for deletion);
- Appendix H - Airport Overlay Zones; and
- Appendix I – Airport FAR Part-77 Imaginary Surfaces.
The Council has requested a summary of the substantive changes made by the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission considered the Appendices on May 26, 2015. Planning Commission changes to the staff recommendations include the following:

**Appendix F (Six-Year Capital Improvement Program)** – Add the following note under the inventory of existing parks: “Pursuant to RCW 36.87.130, there are also public access properties on right-of-way ends that intersect shorelines.”

The proposed amendments to the Appendices will be posted on the County’s website at:  [http://www.whatcomcounty.us/1170/Comprehensive-Plan-Updates](http://www.whatcomcounty.us/1170/Comprehensive-Plan-Updates).

Thank you for your consideration of this matter. We look forward to discussing it with you.
Call To Order: The meeting was called to order, by Whatcom County Planning Commission Chair, Nicole Oliver, in the Whatcom County Northwest Annex at 6:30 p.m.

Roll Call
Present: Natalie McClendon, Jerry Vekved, Gary Honcoop, Nicole Oliver, David Hunter, Kelvin Barton, Andy Rowson, Atul Deshmene
Absent: Michael Knapp

Staff Present: Mark Personius, Matt Aamot, Gary Davis, Tyler Schroeder-Executive’s Office, Mike McFarlane-Parks Department, Becky Boxx

Department Update
Mark updated the commission on their upcoming schedule.

Open Session for Public Comment
Max Perry, Whatcom County: Stated that when the Comprehensive Plan update process started staff stated the plan would be streamlined, but it has actually become larger.

Commissioner Comments
There were no commissioner comments.

Approval of Minutes
Commissioner Vekved corrected page 3, line 25 to read: Mr. Boggs stated reasons may be the associated costs and time to do the plans. Whatcom County has interpreted that new agricultural activates activities require a farm plan.

Commissioner Rowson moved to approve the minutes as corrected. Commissioner McClendon seconded. The motion carried.

Public Hearing
Amendments to Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan (WCCP) Appendices, which are:
Appendix A - Glossary, Appendix B - List of Acronyms, Appendix C - GMA Goals,
County-Wide Planning Policies and Visioning Value Statements, Appendix D -
Bibliography, Appendix E - Whatcom County 20-Year Capital Facilities Plan, Appendix F
- Six Year Capital Improvement Program for Whatcom County Facilities, Appendix G -
Transportation Impact Fee Background Information (proposed for deletion), Appendix
H - Airport Overlay Zones, and Appendix I - Airport FAR Part-77 Imaginary Surfaces.

Matt Aamot presented an overview of the staff report.
Appendix A – Glossary

A number of the definitions have been updated for consistency with the Growth Management Act (GMA), the state administrative codes, the zoning code and the Critical Areas Ordinance (CAO).

Appendix B – Acronyms

Some new ones were added and some were deleted.

Appendix C – Countywide Planning Policies

The current Comprehensive Plan contains the GMA Planning Goals, the Countywide Planning Policies and the Visioning Value Statements.

The Planning Commission recommended adding the GMA Planning Goals to Chapter 1 so they are being removed from this appendix.

There are no changes to the Countywide Planning Policies. The county and the cities will probably get together in the next several years to review them.

This appendix also contains the community value statements from 1994. Staff recommends removing them from the plan.

Appendix D – Bibliography

Staff is proposing to add a number of reference documents that are relevant to the Comprehensive Plan.

Appendix E & F – Capital Facilities

The GMA requires Comprehensive Plans to contain certain information relating to capital planning. These include an inventory of existing facilities, such as trails, schools, etc. It must also include a forecast of future needs. One way to forecast future needs is to utilize a level of service (LOS). The GMA requires a LOS for transportation. In the Comprehensive Plan, chapter 4, we also have LOS standards for parks, trails and fire protection. The GMA also requires that new and expanded facilities be shown, including their location and capacity, a financing plan and the land use plan and capital plan consistency.

Appendix E covers both county facilities and non-county facilities. For county facilities it references the Six Year CIP (Appendix F) and provides more generalized information for years 7-20. For non-county facilities it summarizes water, sewer, fire and school plans. The concept is to provide for adequate facilities to keep pace with growth as it occurs through the 20 year planning period. The 20 year CFP also includes a county revenue analysis that projects the potential county funding available for capital projects over the 20 year planning period.
Appendix F is the more detailed capital plan for county facilities only. It provides an inventory of existing facilities, a list of planned projects, projected costs and funding sources.

Appendix G – Transportation Impact Fees

The state law says that only projects that are set forth in the Comprehensive Plan are eligible for impact fees. The county put a list of transportation projects in the plan that would be eligible for impact fees if they were ever adopted. Impact fees have not been adopted so staff recommends deleting this appendix. Appendix G is proposed to be replaced with Water Resource and Salmon Recovery Programs, which is part of Chapter 11.

Appendix H – Bellingham International Airport Overlay Zones

There are six zones, each with different policies.

Appendix I – Bellingham International Airport Imaginary Surfaces

The federal governments rules establish imaginary surfaces around airports to preserve the navigable airspace. They are concerned about tall buildings or antennas creating a hazard for aircraft. There is a provision in the county zoning code prohibiting tall structures from protruding into these imaginary surfaces. The current map also shows the Blaine airport which was shut down so it is proposed to be deleted.

Staff recommended the Planning Commission approve the amendments.

The hearing was opened to the public.

There was no public testimony.

The hearing was closed.

Commissioner Barton addressed the list of parks in Appendix F. There are beach accesses in Birch Bay that are not included in the list.

Mike McFarlane stated those are not county park facilities but rather road ends, maintained by Public Works, which is why they do not show up on the list. Parks does not oversee or maintain them.

Commissioner Barton stated some of them are a requirement and they function and are signed the same as the other beach accesses. How can they be listed?

Mr. Aamot suggested adding a footnote stating there are road end public access areas.
Mr. McFarlane stated Public Works has been reluctant to list those as parks or public access because they are basically transportation routes. He had no problem with adding a footnote.

Commissioner Barton stated the community prefers they not be called road ends because there are no roads around most of them. They are just walkways to the beach from Birch Bay Drive.

Mr. McFarlane stated it is an issue in other parts of the county such as Lummi Island, Nooksack River, Lake Whatcom, etc. Another suggestion may be a paragraph that lists all of these types of accesses.

Mr. Aamot suggested Public Works could create an inventory which would not necessarily have to be in this document but available for the public.

Commissioner Oliver asked if they are referenced in the Parks and Open Space Plan.

Mr. McFarlane stated they are not because they are treated as roads.

Commissioner McClendon stated these sites are very valuable so they should not go away.

Mr. Aamot suggested a note that there are public access properties on right of way ends that intersect the shoreline. The RCW stating these areas can't be abandoned could also be cited.

Commissioner Rowlson liked that idea because he did not want to see another list.

The commission agreed to the verbiage: Pursuant to RCW 36.87.130, there are also public access properties on right of way ends that intersect shorelines.

Commissioner Rowlson asked why the placeholder for impact fees (Appendix G) is being taken away.

Mr. Aamot stated that it has been over a decade since it was added and the county still has not adopted impact fees. As such the appendix is not serving any purpose. If the county does adopt impact fees in the future a new appendix could be added.

Commissioner Rowlson asked why there was no mention of the Lynden Airport.

Mr. Aamot stated they did not receive any maps from Lynden.

Commissioner Vekved addressed the definition of “Distribution Pipeline”. The language was changed from as amended to if amended. What is the intent?

Mr. Schroeder stated it is referring to the federal code, which if amended, this would then revert to the federal code which is referenced.
Commissioner Hunter addressed Appendix E, page 70, regarding County Road Property Tax Levy. It seems we are not spending what we could be spending because we are banking the ability to tax an additional 1% per year.

Mr. Aamot stated current councils have chosen not to draw on that banked capacity but future councils could.

Mr. Schroeder explained the taxing process and how banking works.

Commissioner Vekved addressed “Groundwaters”. What is artificially stored ground water?

Mr. Aamot stated the definition is: Water that is made available in underground storage artificially. Either intentionally or incidentally to irrigation.

Commissioner Rowlson asked where the budget figures come from.

Mr. Schroeder stated the Executive’s Office meets with the Finance Department along with other county departments to determine the budget numbers.

**Commissioner Rowlson moved to recommend approval of the Comprehensive Plan Appendices as amended and the Findings of Fact and Reasons for Action.**

**Commissioner Hunter seconded. Roll Call Vote: Ayes – Barton, Honcoop, Hunter, McClendon, Oliver, Rowlson, Vekved; Nays – 0; Abstain – Deshmane; Absent – Knapp. The motion carried.**

**Amendments to Whatcom County Code (WCC) Title 20 (Zoning), Title 21 (Land Division Regulations), Title 22 (Guide Meridian Improvement Plan), and the official zoning map. Title 20 amendments include amending WCC Chapter 20.36 to require reclamation plans for surface mining uses in the Rural zone, amending Chapter 20.43 revising the maximum percentage of lot area that can be removed from production of forest products in the Commercial Forestry zone, amendments to WCC Chapter 20.72, 20.80 and 20.97 and the Point Roberts Character Plan involving sign regulations in the Point Roberts Special District, amending WCC Chapter 20.82 concerning new sewer lines and amendments to WCC Chapters 20.24, 20.65, 20.66, 20.68, and 20.80.210 to update references to the Urban Fringe Subarea Plan. WCC 20.80.210 is adopted by reference in the WCCP and amendments to that section are also a WCCP amendment. The Point Roberts Character Plan is a part of the Point Roberts Subarea Plan, which is a subset of the WCCP, therefore the amendment is an amendment to the WCCP.**

Gary Davis presented an overview of the staff report.

**Title 20 – Zoning Code**
WHATCOM COUNTY
PLANNING COMMISSION

2016
Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update
Appendices

FINDINGS OF FACT AND REASONS FOR ACTION

1. The Planning Commission held a public hearing regarding these amendments on May 26, 2016. Notification of the public hearing was published on May 13, 2016.

2. A determination of non-significance (DNS) was issued under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) on May 27, 2016

3. Notice of the proposed amendments was submitted to the Washington State Department of Commerce on April 28, 2016.

4. Pursuant to WCC 2.160.080, in order to approve the proposed comprehensive plan amendments the Planning Commission and County Council must find all of the following:
   A. The amendment conforms to the requirements of the Growth Management Act, is internally consistent with the county-wide planning policies and is consistent with any interlocal planning agreements.
   B. Further studies made or accepted by the Department of Planning and Development Services indicate changed conditions that show need for the amendment.
   C. The public interest will be served by approving the amendment. In determining whether the public interest will be served, factors including but not limited to the following shall be considered:
      1) The anticipated effect upon the rate or distribution of population growth, employment growth, development, and conversion of land as envisioned in the comprehensive plan.
      2) The anticipated effect on the ability of the county and/or other service providers, such as cities, schools, water and/or sewer purveyors, fire districts, and others as applicable, to provide adequate services and public facilities including transportation facilities.
      3) Anticipated impact upon designated agricultural, forest and mineral resource lands.
   D. The amendment does not include or facilitate spot zoning.
E. Urban growth area amendments that propose the expansion of an urban growth area boundary are required to acquire development rights from a designated TDR sending area, with certain exceptions.

5. **WCCP Appendix A - Glossary of Terms.** The proposed amendments add certain definitions from other WCCP appendices to ensure the definitions are consistent with state law, state administrative code, County codes, and pertinent technical documents.

6. **WCCP Appendix B - Acronyms.** The proposed amendments to Appendix B add several acronyms that are used repeatedly in the document but were not already included. The amendments also remove acronyms that are listed in the appendix but do not appear – or appear only once – in the WCCP document.

7. **WCCP Appendix C – Countywide Planning Policies.** Currently this appendix contains the Growth Management Act Goals, Visioning Value Statements, and the Countywide Planning Policies, with a Glossary for the latter. Appendix C will be amended to contain only the Countywide Planning Policies. The proposed WCCP Chapter 1 contains the GMA Planning Goals, along with a discussion of the goals. The community value statements were developed in 1994 to assist in creation of the original 1997 Comprehensive Plan. Today, there are many advisory committees and commissions that are specifically focused on many of these issues and concerns. These committees and commissions fill a void that was present during the comprehensive plan visioning process. These value statements will be preserved as part of the historical record of comprehensive planning in Whatcom County. The proposed amendments delete the glossary to the Countywide Planning Policies to avoid duplication with the glossary in Appendix A. Terms from this glossary that were not already in Appendix A are proposed to be moved to that appendix.

8. **WCCP Appendix D – Bibliography.** The proposed amendments to Appendix D add references to reports the County used when preparing the current periodic update.

9. **WCCP Appendix E – Whatcom County 20-Year Capital Facilities Plan and WCCP Appendix F – 6-Year Capital Improvements Program.**

   B. GMA planning goal # 12 is to “Ensure that those public facilities and services necessary to support development shall be adequate to serve the development at the time the development is available for occupancy and use without decreasing current service levels below locally established minimum standards” (RCW 36.70A.020(12)).

   C. The GMA, at RCW 36.70A.070(3), requires that a comprehensive plan must include a capital facilities plan element consisting of:
1) An inventory of existing capital facilities owned by public entities, showing the locations and capacities of the capital facilities.

2) A forecast of the future needs for such capital facilities.

3) The proposed locations and capacities of expanded or new capital facilities.

4) At least a six-year plan that will finance such capital facilities within projected funding capacities and clearly identifies sources of public money for such purposes.

5) A requirement to reassess the land use element if probable funding falls short of meeting existing needs and to ensure that the land use element, capital facilities plan element, and financing plan within the capital facilities plan element are coordinated and consistent.

D. The updated Whatcom County 20-Year Capital Facilities Plan (CFP) and the updated Six-Year Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for Whatcom County Facilities contain inventories of existing public facilities, a forecast of future needs, proposed expanded or new capital facilities, costs and funding sources. The existing 20-year CFP and existing Six-Year CIP will be repealed.

E. Existing Comprehensive Plan Policy 4A-4 addresses the GMA requirement to reassess the land use element if probable capital facility funding falls short.

10. **WCCP Appendix G – Transportation Impact Fee Background Information.** In 2005 the County added transportation impact fee background information to Appendix G. However, the County has not enacted impact fees. Therefore the existing appendix is not needed. The proposed amendments delete the existing Appendix G in its entirety and replace it with a description of the County’s water resource and salmon recovery programs. This new material has been reviewed as part of the Planning Commission and County Council public hearings on WCCP Chapter 11 amendments.

11. **WCCP Appendix H – Airport Overlay and WCCP Appendix I – Airport Surfaces.**

A. RCW 36.70.547 requires “Every county, city, and town in which there is located a general aviation airport that is operated for the benefit of the general public, whether publicly owned or privately owned public use, shall, through its comprehensive plan and development regulations, discourage the siting of incompatible uses adjacent to such general aviation airport. Such plans and regulations may only be adopted or amended after formal consultation with: Airport owners and managers, private airport operators, general aviation pilots, ports, and the aviation division of the department of transportation. . .”
B. The Whatcom County Council created an Airport/Land Use Compatibility Advisory Committee in 2003 (Resolution 2003-058).

C. The Airport/Land Use Compatibility Advisory Committee issued final recommendations in 2004.

D. The County Council adopted Comprehensive Plan amendments relating to airport/land use compatibility in 2005 (Ordinance 2005-004). This ordinance included an “Airport Overlay Zones” map (relating to land use near an airport) in Appendix H for the Bellingham International Airport. It also included “Imaginary Surfaces” maps (relating to height of structures near an airport) in Appendix I for the Bellingham International Airport and the Blaine Municipal Airport.

E. The Blaine Municipal Airport closed in 2008. Therefore, the proposed amendments delete the “Imaginary Surfaces” map for Blaine from Appendix I.

CONCLUSIONS

1. The subject amendments are consistent with and implement the GMA planning goals. The proposed amendments conform to applicable requirements of the GMA.

2. The proposed amendments satisfy the approval criteria of WCC 2.160.080.

RECOMMENDATION

Based upon the above findings and conclusions, the Whatcom County Planning Commission recommends approval of the proposed amendments to the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan.
WHATCOM COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

Nicole Oliver, Chair

Becky Boxx, Secretary

Date

Date

Commissioners present at the May 26, 2016 meeting when the vote was taken: Kelvin Barton, Atul Deshmane, Gary Honcoop, David Hunter, Natalie McClendon, Nicole Oliver, Andy Rowlson, Gerald Vekved.

Vote: Ayes: 7, Nays: 0, Abstain: 1, Absent: 1. Motion carried to adopt the above amendments.
APPENDIX F

(PROPOSED TO BE REPLACED IN ITS ENTIRETY WITH THE ATTACHED)
Six-Year
Capital Improvement Program
For Whatcom County Facilities
2017-2022
# Table of Contents

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Chapter 6 - Emergency Management ................................. 16
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Chapter 10 - Stormwater Facilities .................................. 22
Chapter 11 - Total Costs ................................................ 25
Chapter 1 – Introduction

The Growth Management Act requires that the County’s Comprehensive Plan include a “capital facilities plan element” (RCW 36.70A.070(3)). The Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan calls for the County to develop and update the Six-Year Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for County projects every two years. The main purpose of the Capital Improvement Program is to identify priority capital improvement projects and estimated costs, outline a schedule for project completion, and designate funding sources for these projects based on a review of existing and projected population and revenue conditions for the six year planning period.

Growth Management Act Requirements

According to the Growth Management Act, a county’s capital facilities plan must include five items, which are shown below.

A. An inventory of existing capital facilities owned by public entities, showing the locations and capacities of the capital facilities.

Current inventories of existing County capital facilities, based upon information provided by various County departments, are included in each chapter of this document.

B. A forecast of the future needs for such capital facilities.

Chapter 4 of the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan establishes numerical “level of service” standards for County parks and trails and contains policies relating to other County facilities. Capital facility needs are forecasted over the six-year planning period by applying the adopted level of service standards to the expected population in the year 2022 and by considering other relevant factors.

C. Proposed locations and capacities of expanded or new capital facilities.

General locations and capacities (trail miles, jail beds, etc.) of proposed County facilities are indicated in this document.

D. At least a six-year plan that will finance such capital facilities within projected funding capacities and clearly identifies sources of public money for such purposes.

This Six-Year Capital Improvement Program presents costs and funding sources for proposed County capital facilities (all figures are in 2016 dollars). There are a variety of funding sources that the County utilizes to pay for capital facilities, including real estate excise taxes, the Public Utilities Improvement Fund (also known as the Rural Sales Tax Fund, Economic Development Initiative Fund or EDI Fund), Road Fund, state grants, federal grants and a variety of other funds. It is
anticipated that the County’s largest project in the six-year planning period, the new jail, will require voter approval of an additional revenue stream.

E. A requirement to reassess the land use element if probable funding falls short of meeting existing needs and to ensure that the land use element, capital facilities plan element, and financing plan within the capital facilities plan element are coordinated and consistent.

Finally, in accordance with the Growth Management Act, a requirement to reassess the land use element of the Comprehensive Plan if probable funding falls short of meeting existing needs and to ensure consistency between plans already exists in the Comprehensive Plan (Policy 4A-4).

**Charter Provisions and the County Budget**

In addition to Growth Management Act provisions relating to capital facilities, Section 6.30 of the County Charter also requires the County to include a six-year capital improvement program as part of the budget. Appropriations for 2017-2018 capital projects may be included in the biennial budget or may be adopted through the supplemental budget process. Ultimate funding for capital improvement projects is subject to County Council authorization in the adopted budget. Costs identified for 2019-2022 are included for planning purposes and review of potential future needs, but not for budget authorization at this time.
Chapter 2 – Parks, Trails, and Activity Centers

Parks

The 2016 inventory of County parks and open space areas is over 14,700 acres. This inventory is shown below.

Existing Parks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site No.</th>
<th>Park Name and Location</th>
<th>Acres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Bay Horizon Park, 7467 Gemini St., Birch Bay</td>
<td>69.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Boulevard Park, 471 Bayview Dr.</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Broadway Beach Access, 7497 Birch Bay Dr.</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Canyon Lake Community Forest</td>
<td>2,394.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Chuckanut Mountain Park</td>
<td>973.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Cottonwood Beach Access, 8191 Birch Bay Dr.</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Deming Eagle Homestead Park, 5615 Truck Rd.</td>
<td>28.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Hovander Homestead Park and Tennant Lake, 5299 Nielsen Rd.</td>
<td>338.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Jackson Rd. Beach Access, Birch Bay</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Jensen Family Forest Park, 8051 Stein Rd.</td>
<td>21.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Josh VanderYacht Park, 4106 Valley Highway</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Lake Whatcom Park, 3220 North Shore Rd.</td>
<td>4,686.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Lighthouse Marine Park, 811 Marine Dr. in Point Roberts</td>
<td>24.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Lily Point Marine Park, 2315 APA Rd. in Point Roberts</td>
<td>274.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Little Squalicum Park, 640 Marine Dr.</td>
<td>13.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Lookout Mountain Forest Preserve</td>
<td>4,430.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Lummi Island Beach Access, 2198 N. Nugent Rd.</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Monument Park, 25 Marine Dr. in Point Roberts</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Northwest Soccer Park/Baseball &amp; Softball Complex, 5238 Northwest Dr.</td>
<td>36.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Nugent's Corner River Access, 3685 Mt. Baker Highway</td>
<td>16.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Ostrom Conservation Site, 4304 South Pass Rd.</td>
<td>36.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Point Whitehorn Marine Reserve, 6770 Koehn Rd.</td>
<td>55.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Redwood Park, 3310 Redwood Ave.</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Samish Park, 673 N. Lake Samish Dr.</td>
<td>26.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Semiahmoo Park, 9261 Semiahmoo Parkway</td>
<td>304.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Silver Lake Park, 9006 Silver Lake Rd.</td>
<td>410.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Squires Lake Park, 2510 Nulle Rd.</td>
<td>82.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Stimpson Family Nature Reserve, 2076 Lake Louise Rd.</td>
<td>376.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Sunset Beach, 2580 West Shore Dr. on Lummi Island</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Sunset Farm Park, 7977 Blaine Rd.</td>
<td>70.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Ted Edwards Park, 4150 Oriental Ave.</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Teddy Bear Cove Park, 1467 Chuckanut Dr.</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Welcome Bridge River Access, 5585 Mosquito Lake Rd.</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOTAL 14,703.2

Pursuant to RCW 36.87.130, there are also public access properties on right-of-way ends that intersect shorelines.
Future Needs

A level of service of 9.6 acres of developed parkland for every 1,000 people in the County was adopted in the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan. The County’s existing parks will meet the adopted level of service over the six-year planning period. However, the County is proposing park improvement projects to increase quality of existing park facilities and develop the Birch Bay Community Park to meet the longer term needs of a growing population.

Proposed Improvement Projects

Park improvement projects, totaling more than $2.2 million, are proposed over the six-year planning period. These costs would be paid by real estate excise taxes (REET), state grants, and the Nesset Foundation as shown in the table at the end of this chapter.
Trails

Whatcom County currently has 65.46 miles of trails in various locations throughout the County. This inventory is shown below.

Existing Trails

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site No.</th>
<th>Trail Name and Location</th>
<th>Miles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Bay Horizon/Bay Crest Trail</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Bay to Baker Maple Falls-Glacier</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Canyon Lake Community Forest</td>
<td>7.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Chuckanut Mountain / Pine &amp; Cedar Lakes</td>
<td>15.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Deming Homestead Eagle Park, Truck Rd.</td>
<td>0.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Euclid Park</td>
<td>0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Hovander Homestead Park</td>
<td>3.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Interurban, Chuckanut area</td>
<td>2.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Jensen Family Forest Park, Stein Rd. and Birch Bay Lynden Rd.</td>
<td>0.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Lake Whatcom Park</td>
<td>4.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Lily Point, Point Roberts</td>
<td>4.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Lookout Mountain Forest Preserve</td>
<td>4.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Maple Creek Park, 7842 Silver Lake Rd., Maple Falls</td>
<td>1.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Monument Park, 25 Marine Dr. In Point Roberts</td>
<td>0.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Northwest Soccer Park Trail, Smith Rd. and Northwest Dr.</td>
<td>0.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Ostrom Conservation Site, 4304 South Pass Rd.</td>
<td>0.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Point Whitehorn Marine Reserve, 6770 Koehn Rd, Birch Bay</td>
<td>0.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Samish Park, 673 N. Lake Samish</td>
<td>1.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Semiahmoo Park</td>
<td>0.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Silver Lake Park, 9006 Silver Lake Rd.</td>
<td>5.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Squires Lake, 2510 Nulle Rd.</td>
<td>2.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Simpson Family Nature Reserve, 2076 Lake Louise Rd.</td>
<td>4.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Sunset Farm, 7977 Blaine Rd.</td>
<td>0.56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOTAL 65.46

Future Needs

A level of service of 0.60 miles of trails for every 1,000 people in the County was adopted in the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan. With projected population growth in Whatcom County over the next six years, about 72 additional miles of trails would be needed by the year 2022 to serve the people of Whatcom County.

Proposed Improvement Projects

Trail improvement projects and associated facilities, totaling more than $3.5 million, are proposed over the six-year planning period. These costs would be paid by REET and grants as shown in the table at the end of this chapter. These projects would add 32 trail miles (the South Fork Park Trails project would add 4 miles and the Lake Whatcom Re-conveyance Land Trails project would add 28 miles). Potential acquisitions are also being considered that may add another 44 trail miles within the six-year planning.
Activity Centers

There are currently 13 activity centers that provide a variety of year-round programs for various age groups. The activity center inventory is shown below.

Existing Activity Centers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site No.</th>
<th>Activity Center Name and Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Bay Horizon, 7511 Gemini Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Bellingham Senior Activity Center, 315 Halleck Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Blaine Community Senior Center, 763 G Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>East Whatcom Regional Resource Center, 8251 Kendall Rd.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Everson Senior Center, 111 W. Main Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Ferndale Senior Center, 1998 Cherry Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Lynden Senior Center, 401 Grover Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Plantation Rifle Range, 5102 Samish Way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Point Roberts Senior Center, 1487 Gulf Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Roeder Home, 2600 Sunset Dr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Sumas Senior Center, 461 2nd Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Van Zandt Community Hall, 4106 Valley Highway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Welcome Senior Center, 5103 Mosquito Lake Rd.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The Blaine, Everson, Lynden and Sumas Centers are owned by these respective cities. The Point Roberts Center is owned by the Point Roberts Park District. Whatcom County provides and/or contracts for senior activities and recreational programming at these centers.

Future Needs

The Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan does not contain a level of service standard for activity centers. Rather, Comprehensive Plan Policy 4F-5 states:

Continue to provide and support activity centers, including senior centers, to serve the growing population of Whatcom County by the following methods, as needed, which are listed in priority order: (1) implementing programming changes, (2) adding space to existing centers, and/or (3) establishing new centers.

The County will budget for improvements to such facilities as needed.

Proposed Improvement Projects

One activity center improvement project, costing $125,000, is proposed over the six-year planning period. These costs would be paid by REET and a state grant as shown in the table below.
Six-Year Capital Improvement Program

The park, trail and activity center projects planned over the next six years are shown below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parks</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>2021</th>
<th>2022</th>
<th>Total Cost</th>
<th>Funding Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Birch Bay Community Park Development</td>
<td></td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>470,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>500,000</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hovander Park Buildings Demo &amp; Site Restoration</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hovander Park Maintenance Building</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>125,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>175,000</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hovander Park Slough Bridge</td>
<td></td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>130,000</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lighthouse Marine Park Boat Ramp Replacement</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>115,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>125,000</td>
<td>2,3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lummi Island Overlook Stairs</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maple Creek Bridge Replacement</td>
<td></td>
<td>115,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>115,000</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nessett Restroom &amp; Bridge Improvements</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>180,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>180,000</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parks Headquarters Water Distribution System</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samish Park Lodge Deck Replacement</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semiahmoo Facility Remodel</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silver Lake Park Bridge Replacement</td>
<td>35,000</td>
<td>175,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>210,000</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silver Lake Park Improvements</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>200,000</td>
<td>200,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>420,000</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennant Lake/Fragrance Garden Walk &amp; Irrigation</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan
### Trails

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>200,000</th>
<th>343,000</th>
<th>233,000</th>
<th>363,000</th>
<th>246,000</th>
<th>380,000</th>
<th>1,765,000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lake Whatcom Reconveyance Land Trails</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2,3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lake Whatcom Trailhead Improvements</td>
<td>195,000</td>
<td>780,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>975,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lake Whatcom Trailhead Restrooms</td>
<td>110,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>110,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maple Falls Trailhead</td>
<td>70,000</td>
<td>400,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>470,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Fork Park Trails</td>
<td>209,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>209,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Activity Centers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>125,000</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>125,000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plantation Indoor Range Renovations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL**  

1,139,000  698,000  603,000  2,423,000  446,000  580,000  5,889,000

1. REET I  
2. REET II  
3. State Grant  
4. Nesset Foundation  
5. Federal Grant
Chapter 3 – Maintenance and Operations

Existing Maintenance and Operations Space

The 2016 inventory of maintenance & operations/facilities management space that serves the County is 44,411 square feet. This inventory is shown below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site No.</th>
<th>Facility Name</th>
<th>Square feet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Central Shop, 901 W. Smith Rd. (Maintenance and Operations)</td>
<td>35,773</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>316 Lottie St. (Facilities Management)</td>
<td>4,978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Minimum Security Correction Facility - 2030 Division St. (Facilities Management Storage)</td>
<td>3,660</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOTAL 44,411

Future Needs

The Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan does not contain a level of service standard for maintenance and operations. The County will budget for improvements to such facilities as needed.

Proposed Improvement Projects

Improvement projects at the Central Shop, totaling $400,000, are proposed over the six-year planning period. These costs would be paid by the road fund and shop services mark-ups as shown in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Central Shop</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>2021</th>
<th>2022</th>
<th>Total Cost</th>
<th>Funding Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vector Truck Garage</td>
<td>300,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>300,000</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Shop Exhaust System</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOTAL 300,000 100,000 400,000

Funding Sources
1. Road Fund
2. Shop Services Mark-ups
Chapter 4 – General Government Buildings and Sites

Existing Office Space

The 2016 inventory of County government office space is 306,691 square feet at eight locations. This inventory is shown below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Square Feet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Civic Center Annex (322 North Commercial)</td>
<td>30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Central Plaza Building (215 N. Commercial)</td>
<td>10,307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>County Courthouse (311 Grand Avenue)</td>
<td>200,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Forest St. Annex (1000 North Forest St.)</td>
<td>14,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>509 Girard St.</td>
<td>13,189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>3373 Mt. Baker Highway</td>
<td>2,110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>1500 N. State St.</td>
<td>16,820</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Northwest Annex (5280 Northwest Dr.)</td>
<td>20,265</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOTAL 306,691

Future Needs

The Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan does not contain a level of service standard for general government buildings. The County will budget for improvements to such facilities as needed.

Proposed Improvement Projects

Improvement and maintenance projects on existing buildings and sites over the six-year planning period total approximately $23.2 million as shown below.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>2021</th>
<th>2022</th>
<th>Total Cost</th>
<th>Funding Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Courthouse</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courthouse Projects</td>
<td>404,500</td>
<td>200,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>604,500</td>
<td>1,2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Alarm Upgrades, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exterior Maintenance</td>
<td>770,000</td>
<td>200,000</td>
<td>200,000</td>
<td>200,000</td>
<td>200,000</td>
<td>200,000</td>
<td>1,770,000</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chambers Remodel</td>
<td>140,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>140,000</td>
<td>1,2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>509 Girard</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remodel</td>
<td>3,644,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3,644,000</td>
<td>2,3,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1500 N. State St.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remodel</td>
<td>2,035,000</td>
<td>1,750,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3,785,000</td>
<td>2,4,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Civic Center</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remodel</td>
<td>2,253,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2,253,000</td>
<td>6,7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Health Triage Center</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Facility</td>
<td>700,000</td>
<td>6,300,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7,000,000</td>
<td>4,8,9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Northwest Annex</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demolition</td>
<td>1,000,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1,000,000</td>
<td>1,7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Multiple Locations</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance Projects</td>
<td>500,000</td>
<td>500,000</td>
<td>500,000</td>
<td>500,000</td>
<td>500,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>2,000,000</td>
<td>1,2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct Digital Control System Upgrades</td>
<td>336,063</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>336,063</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carpet Replacements</td>
<td>65,000</td>
<td>65,000</td>
<td>65,000</td>
<td>65,000</td>
<td>65,000</td>
<td>65,000</td>
<td>390,000</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interior Painting</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>300,000</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>4,382,500</td>
<td>12,830,063</td>
<td>3,565,000</td>
<td>815,000</td>
<td>815,000</td>
<td>815,000</td>
<td>23,222,563</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Funding Sources**

1. REET I
2. EDI
3. Girard Fund
4. Inter-fund Loan
5. State Street Fund
6. Civic Center Fund
7. Road Fund
8. Chemical Dependency/Mental Health Fund
9. Grants

*Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan*  
*F- 13*
Chapter 5 – Sheriff’s Office

Existing Sheriff’s Office Space

The 2016 inventory of Sheriff’s office space is 23,326 square feet. This inventory is shown below.

EXISTING SHERIFF’S FACILITIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site No</th>
<th>Facility Name</th>
<th>Square Feet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Public Safety Building (311 Grand Ave)</td>
<td>15,102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Minimum Security Correction Facility (2030 Division St.)</td>
<td>6,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Laurel Substation (194 W. Laurel Rd.)</td>
<td>1,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>East Whatcom Regional Resource Center (8251 Kendall Road)</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Birch Bay Fire Hall</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Nugent’s Corner Fire Hall</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>23,326</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:

The Sheriff’s Office also has storage facilities at various locations in Whatcom County.

The County has two mobile homes and an old detention facility in Point Roberts. The resident deputies operate out of their homes or utilize space at the U.S. Customs office at the border.

Sheriff’s Office facilities include shared space at local fire districts, which is rented or leased space not solely dedicated to Sheriff’s Office use. This space is available depending on Fire District needs and is generally subject to change with short notice.

Future Needs

The Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan does not contain a level of service standard for Sheriff’s Office facilities. Rather, Comprehensive Plan Policy 4D-2 is to:

Maintain Sheriff’s Office adult corrections facilities and headquarters to provide a safe environment for the community, staff and inmates... Existing facilities may be expanded or new facilities developed in response to increasing need.

Most Sheriff’s Office functions are currently based in the Public Safety Building adjacent to the Courthouse and are remote from the majority of Sheriff’s Office Bureau of Law Enforcement and Investigative Services functions that take place in unincorporated Whatcom County. This results in inefficiencies and delays. Space and design factors in current facilities preclude consolidating various functions performed throughout the agency (reception, finance, etc.) and result in redundancies. Because of these issues, existing Sheriff’s Office facilities and
associated functions will be consolidated (except for "Resident Deputy" program facilities), and co-located on the site of the proposed new jail.

**Proposed Improvement Projects**

A new Sheriff’s Headquarters facility, co-located with the proposed new jail on LaBounty Rd. in Ferndale, is proposed within the six-year planning period. The Sheriff’s Headquarters facility would cost approximately $19 million, paid with bond proceeds that would be repaid from the General Fund, as shown below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>2021</th>
<th>2022</th>
<th>Total Cost</th>
<th>Funding Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Sheriff's Office</td>
<td>3,808,000</td>
<td>3,808,000</td>
<td>3,808,000</td>
<td>3,808,000</td>
<td>3,808,000</td>
<td>3,808,000</td>
<td>19,040,000</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>3,808,000</td>
<td>3,808,000</td>
<td>3,808,000</td>
<td>3,808,000</td>
<td>3,808,000</td>
<td>3,808,000</td>
<td>19,040,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Funding Source**

1. Bonds (General Fund)
Chapter 6 – Emergency Management

Existing Emergency Management Space

The 2016 inventory of Sheriff’s Office, Division of Emergency Management space is 24,000 square feet, located at the Whatcom Unified Emergency Coordination Center (WUECC). Rented by and shared between both Whatcom County and the City of Bellingham, the WUECC is comprised of 2,000 square feet of office space and an additional 22,000 square feet of support facilities (used for meetings, training, exercises, and during emergencies). The WUECC serves as the Emergency Operations Center for both the County and the City.

EXISTING EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT/EOC FACILITIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site No.</th>
<th>Facility Name</th>
<th>Square Feet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Whatcom Unified Emergency Coordination Center</td>
<td>24,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3888 Sound Way, Bellingham</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Future Needs

The Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan does not contain a level of service standard for emergency management facilities. Rather, Comprehensive Plan Policy 4D-4 is to:

Maintain adequate facilities for daily emergency management activities and, during an emergency or disaster, for the emergency operations center. The facilities will provide sufficient space for activities relating to emergency/disaster planning, mitigation, response and recovery. Existing facilities may be expanded or new facilities developed in response to increasing need.

The County will budget for improvements to such facilities as needed.

Proposed Improvement Projects

There are no capital improvement projects planned or needed in the six-year planning period.
Chapter 7 – Adult Corrections

Existing Jail Facilities

The County’s Main Jail was designed and originally built to hold 148 beds, although with some limited remodeling and the use of double bunking, the operational capacity of the main jail should be for the use of 212 beds. Additionally, the jail is currently not in compliance with the Building/Fire Codes for double bunking, although a plan has been approved to bring it into compliance. Whatcom County completed construction of a 150 bed minimum security correction facility on Division St. in 2006. The Main Jail is located in the Public Safety Building next to the County Courthouse in downtown Bellingham and the Minimum Security Correction Facility is located in the Bakerview Rd. industrial area.

**EXISTING JAIL BEDS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site No.</th>
<th>Facility Name</th>
<th>Jail Beds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Public Safety Building (311 Grand Ave.)</td>
<td>283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Minimum Security Correction Facility (2030 Division St.)</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>433</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Future Needs

There are serious concerns among law and justice officials relating to jail facility needs in the community. This need has been documented by recommendations from the *Whatcom County Law and Justice Plan Phase II Report* (June 2000), in a report entitled *Operational Review of the Whatcom County, Washington Jail* (March 2004), in the Whatcom County Jail Planning Task Force Recommendations (Dec. 2011 and March 2012), and in the *Whatcom County Adult Corrections Facilities & Sheriff’s Headquarters Pre-Design Report* (Sept. 2013).

The Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan does not contain a level of service standard for jail facilities. Rather, Comprehensive Plan Policy 4D-2 is to:

> Maintain Sheriff’s Office adult corrections facilities and headquarters to provide a safe environment for the community, staff and inmates. The number of jail beds in adult corrections facilities will be determined after review of multiple factors, including projected population growth, State sentencing laws, alternative programs, treatment diversion programs, early release programs, the need to separate violent inmates, the need to separate inmates by gender, the need to separate inmates by other classification considerations, average length of stay, peak inmate populations and available funding. Existing facilities may be expanded or new facilities developed in response to increasing need.
Proposed Improvement Projects

In an effort to meet the community need, the County plans to construct a new Adult Corrections Facility on LaBounty Rd. in Ferndale, tentatively scheduled to open with 521 beds. At the time this new jail is opened, the offenders at the minimum-security corrections facility would be relocated to the new facility.

As an interim measure, existing correction facility improvements are planned so that these buildings can continue to function until the new jail is completed.

The cost of the proposed new jail is approximately $112,000,000. The cost of the improvements to the existing jail facilities is approximately $3,000,000. These costs would be paid with bond proceeds that would be repaid with a new sales tax, the jail improvement fund, and the general fund as shown below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>2021</th>
<th>2022</th>
<th>Total Cost</th>
<th>Funding Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Jail</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>112,000,000</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existing Correction Facilities Interim Fix</td>
<td>2,3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>1,200,000</td>
<td>24,200,000</td>
<td>22,400,000</td>
<td>22,400,000</td>
<td>22,400,000</td>
<td>22,400,000</td>
<td>115,000,000</td>
<td>2,3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Funding Sources

1. Bonds (New Sales Tax)
2. Jail Improvement Fund
3. General Fund
Chapter 8 – Juvenile Detention

Existing Juvenile Detention Facilities

The 2016 inventory of County juvenile detention facilities includes 32 beds serving the county-wide population. The juvenile detention facility is located on the sixth floor of the County Courthouse at 311 Grand Avenue.

EXISTING JUVENILE DETENTION BEDS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site No.</th>
<th>Facility Name</th>
<th>Beds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>County Courthouse (311 Grand Ave.)</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Future Needs

The Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan does not contain a level of service standard for juvenile detention facilities. Rather, Comprehensive Plan Policy 4D-3 is to:

Maintain juvenile detention facilities and alternative corrections programs to provide safe and secure methods to provide accountability and support for minors who break the law. Existing facilities may be expanded or new facilities developed in response to increasing need.

The County will budget for improvements to such facilities as needed.

Proposed Improvement Projects

There are no capital improvement projects planned or needed in the six-year planning period.
Chapter 9 – Transportation

Existing Roads

The 2015 inventory shows a total of 938.55 miles of County roads. Additionally, there are 217.5 miles of state highways in Whatcom County (including I-5). Therefore, there are approximately 1,156 miles of public roads in Whatcom County.

Future Needs

The Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan sets level of service (LOS) standards for County roads. Future traffic and the level of service for roads can be forecasted using computer-modeling software. The Whatcom Council of Governments forecasts future traffic utilizing a computer transportation model. This modeling effort will inform transportation planning in Whatcom County.

Whatcom County accomplishes planning for County road improvements by approving a Six-Year Transportation Improvement Program each year, as required by RCW 36.81.121.

Proposed Improvement Projects

The Whatcom County Six-Year Transportation Improvement Program includes preliminary planning for three proposed new road projects:

- Horton Road Connector (between Northwest Drive and Aldrich Road);
- Slater Road Connector (between Northwest Drive and Aldrich Road); and
- Lincoln Road extension (between Harborview Road and Blaine Road).

While these three projects are on the Six-Year Transportation Improvement Program, construction is not anticipated within the six-year planning period. Rather, preliminary engineering to determine project feasibility may be initiated within this time frame.

The six-year plan also includes bridge replacements, reconstruction projects, and the Birch Bay Drive & Pedestrian Facility improvements, which include pedestrian and non-motorized enhancements along Birch Bay Dr.
Existing Ferry Facilities

Whatcom County currently has one ferry vessel serving Lummi Island. The ferry runs between Lummi Island and Gooseberry Point on a daily basis.

Future Needs

Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan Policy 6A-1 is to establish the following levels of service (LOS) for purposes of maintaining transportation concurrency:

The Lummi Island Ferry Advisory Committee (LIFAC) is cooperating with Public Works to develop an updated LOS standard. LIFAC will present a revision to this section when that work is complete. The interim LOS is calculated using the scheduled trips, the estimated car units of the ferry and the Small Area Estimates Program (SAEP) population figure. The interim standard is established at 439 (LOS = (Scheduled one way trips X estimated car units for the boat) X 2/ Small Area Estimates Program Population figure from OFM for Lummi Island).

The Special Programs Manager for the County Public Works Department confirmed that the ferry service currently meets and, over the six-year planning period, should continue to meet the interim LOS standard.

Proposed Improvement Projects

The Six-Year Transportation Improvement Program includes construction of ferry dock improvements and preliminary engineering for upgrading the Whatcom Chief and replacing the Whatcom Chief.

Total Transportation Costs

The County plans to expend $48.4 million on transportation projects, including road and ferry projects, over the six-year planning period. In addition to these local funds, it is anticipated that funding will be received from the State and Federal governments.
Chapter 10 – Stormwater Facilities

Existing Stormwater Management Facilities

The Public Works Department is responsible for design, engineering, and construction of county-owned stormwater facilities. Many stormwater facilities are road-related stormwater conveyance systems such as culverts and ditches on and adjacent to county roads. Others are off right-of-way facilities that control storm flows and improve water quality.

In response to increasing federal and state mandates to manage stormwater and the public’s desire to improve stewardship of sensitive watersheds, Whatcom County established a Stormwater group in the Surface Water Division of the Public Works Department in 2005. The Stormwater group is responsible for planning, designing, engineering, and construction of stormwater facilities. Inventories of existing stormwater facilities are maintained by the Public Works Department. The Engineering Services Division maintains an inventory of all road-related facilities. The Stormwater group maintains an inventory of public and private stormwater facilities in the area covered by the County’s NPDES Phase II permit for Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems. This inventory includes ditches, culverts, catch basins, vaults, ponds, and swales. Completed stormwater construction projects since the Public Works-Stormwater group was created in 2005 are listed below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Description</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lake Whatcom Geneva Stormwater Retricts</td>
<td>2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lake Whatcom Cable Street Reconstruction &amp; Stormwater Improvements</td>
<td>2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lake Whatcom Lahti Drive Stormwater Improvements</td>
<td>2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lake Whatcom Silver Beach Creek Improvements - Brownsville Drive to E. 16th Place</td>
<td>2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lake Whatcom Silver Beach Creek Improvements - West Tributary</td>
<td>2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lake Whatcom Coronado-Fremont Stormwater Improvements</td>
<td>2014</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lake Whatcom Coronado-Fremont Stormwater Improvements
Whatcom County Public Works received an award for the West Tributary of Silver Beach Creek Stormwater Improvements (Existing Site No. 5 above). Silver Beach Creek experiences increased stormwater runoff and greater peak flows due to its developed landscape. This project was designed to substantially improve water quality and reduce flooding in an especially problematic reach of the creek. The project included reshaping and stabilizing the stream channel, installing water quality treatment swales, and installing stormwater vaults. These improvements filter phosphorus-containing sediment, alleviate flooding, reduce erosion, and promote infiltration. Project construction cost was approximately $500,000 and shared between local real estate excise tax (REET) revenues, a State of Washington Department of Ecology grant, and a federal EPA grant.

**Future Needs**

An increasing emphasis on the protection of sensitive watersheds has resulted in the adoption of comprehensive stormwater plans, including plans for Lake Whatcom and Birch Bay. The adopted plans identify work towards planning, design, engineering, and construction of capital projects intended to address stormwater issues.

**Proposed Improvement Projects**

Stormwater improvement projects, totaling more than $7.2 million, are proposed over the six-year planning period as shown below. These costs would be paid by the flood fund, REET, state grants, and Birch Bay Watershed and Aquatic Resources Management (BBWARM) District funds.
### Lake Whatcom

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Description</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>2021</th>
<th>2022</th>
<th>Total Cost</th>
<th>Funding Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agate Heights</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1,000,000</td>
<td>1,2,3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estate/Bay Lane</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1,000,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Quality Improvements</td>
<td>1,000,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sudden Valley</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drainage System Upgrades and Outfall Retrivals</td>
<td>115,000</td>
<td>25,000</td>
<td>520,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>660,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silver Beach Creek Channel Restoration</td>
<td>150,000</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>550,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>750,000</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northshore Rd, East of City Limits Water Quality Improvements</td>
<td>150,000</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>600,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>800,000</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lowell Dr. and Cedarbrook Court Stormwater Improvements</td>
<td>150,000</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>600,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>800,000</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glen Cove Lane/Lakeside St. Water Quality Improvements</td>
<td>150,000</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>200,000</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Birch Bay

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Description</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>2021</th>
<th>2022</th>
<th>Total Cost</th>
<th>Funding Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Harborview Phase I Drainage Improvements</td>
<td>700,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>700,000</td>
<td>2,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harborview Phase II Drainage Improvements</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>80,000</td>
<td>585,000</td>
<td>2,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cottonwood Dr. Inlet Upgrade</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>2,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richmond Park Drainage Improvements</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>300,000</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>1,200,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,550,000</td>
<td>2,4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL** 1,295,000 1,175,000 1,355,000 1,950,000 800,000 650,000 7,225,000

**Funding Sources**
1. Flood Fund
2. REET II
3. State Grant
4. BBWARM

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*Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan*
Chapter 11 – Total Costs

Total Costs for the six-year planning period are shown below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>2021</th>
<th>2022</th>
<th>Total Cost</th>
<th>% of Total Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parks, Trails, and Activity Centers</td>
<td>1,139,000</td>
<td>698,000</td>
<td>603,000</td>
<td>2,423,000</td>
<td>446,000</td>
<td>580,000</td>
<td>5,889,000</td>
<td>2.69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance and Operations</td>
<td>300,000</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>400,000</td>
<td>0.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Government Buildings and Sites</td>
<td>4,362,500</td>
<td>12,839,063</td>
<td>3,565,000</td>
<td>815,000</td>
<td>815,000</td>
<td>815,000</td>
<td>23,222,563</td>
<td>10.59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheriff’s Office</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3,808,000</td>
<td>3,808,000</td>
<td>3,808,000</td>
<td>3,808,000</td>
<td>3,808,000</td>
<td>19,040,000</td>
<td>8.69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Management</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Corrections</td>
<td>1,200,000</td>
<td>22,400,000</td>
<td>22,400,000</td>
<td>22,400,000</td>
<td>22,400,000</td>
<td>22,400,000</td>
<td>115,000,000</td>
<td>52.47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juvenile Detention</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>7,465,016</td>
<td>7,696,432</td>
<td>7,935,021</td>
<td>8,181,007</td>
<td>6,434,618</td>
<td>8,696,091</td>
<td>46,408,185</td>
<td>22.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stormwater Facilities</td>
<td>1,295,000</td>
<td>1,175,000</td>
<td>1,355,000</td>
<td>1,950,000</td>
<td>800,000</td>
<td>650,000</td>
<td>7,225,000</td>
<td>3.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>15,781,516</strong></td>
<td><strong>50,507,495</strong></td>
<td><strong>39,666,021</strong></td>
<td><strong>39,577,007</strong></td>
<td><strong>36,703,618</strong></td>
<td><strong>36,949,091</strong></td>
<td><strong>219,184,748</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The County plans to undertake capital improvement projects costing more than $219 million between 2017 and 2022. The *Whatcom County Capital Facilities Revenue Analysis* contains a plan to finance these capital facilities within the County’s projected funding capacities.
Proposed Council Changes to Comprehensive Plan

Appendix F – 6-year Capital Improvement Plan

Page and line numbers reflect Planning Commission Recommended Draft (http://whatcomcounty.civicplus.com/DocumentCenter/View/18696). To improve clarity of Councilmember requested changes, previous edits (i.e. staff and Planning Commission) are included, but not show as edits.

1) p. F-13; in table: Remove demolition of Northwest Annex. (Brenner)

2) p. F-14; end of page – top of F-15: Most Sheriff’s Office functions are currently based in the Public Safety Building adjacent to the Courthouse and are remote from the majority of Sheriff’s Office Bureau of Law Enforcement and Investigative Services functions that take place in unincorporated Whatcom County. This results in inefficiencies and delays. Space and design factors in current facilities preclude consolidating various functions performed throughout the agency (reception, finance, etc.) and result in redundancies. Because of these issues, existing Sheriff’s Office facilities and associated functions will be consolidated (except for “Resident Deputy” program facilities), and co-located on the site of the proposed new jail.

Proposed Improvement Projects

A new or remodeled Sheriff’s Headquarters facility, co-located with the proposed new jail on LaBounty Rd. in Ferndale, is proposed within the six-year planning period. The Sheriff’s Headquarters facility would cost approximately $19 million, paid with bond proceeds that would be repaid from the General Fund, as shown below.

3) p. F-15: Remove table (Mann)

4) p. F-17; Existing Jail Beds table: Change Jail Bed count of the Public Safety Building from 283 to 212. (Brenner)

5) p. F-16: Maintain adequate facilities for daily emergency management activities and, during an emergency or disaster, for the emergency operations center. The facilities will provide sufficient space for activities relating to emergency/disaster planning, mitigation, response and recovery. Existing
facilities may be expanded, remodeled, and/or new facilities developed in response to increasing changing need. (Mann) (consistent with Chapter 4)

6) p. F-17:
Maintain Sheriff’s Office adult corrections facilities and headquarters to provide a safe environment for the community, staff and inmates. The number of jail beds in adult corrections facilities will be determined after review of multiple factors, including projected population growth, State sentencing laws, alternative programs, treatment diversion programs, early release programs, the need to separate violent inmates, the need to separate inmates by gender, the need to separate inmates by other classification considerations, average length of stay, peak inmate populations and available funding. Existing facilities may expanded, remodeled, and/or new facilities developed in response to increasing changing need. (Mann) (consistent with Chapter 4)

7) p. F-18:
In an effort to meet the community need, the County plans to construct a new Adult Corrections Facility on LaBounty Rd., in Ferndale, tentatively scheduled to open with 521 beds. At the time this new jail is opened, the offenders at the minimum-security corrections facility would be relocated to the new facility.

As an interim measure, existing correction facility improvements are planned so that these buildings can continue to function until the jail is expanded, remodeled, and/or new facilities developed in response to increasing changing need.

The cost of the proposed new jail is approximately $112,000,000. The cost of the improvements to the existing jail facilities is approximately $2,000,000. These costs would be paid with bond proceeds that would be repaid with a new sales tax, the jail improvement fund, and the general fund as shown below. (Mann)

8) p. F-18:
Remove table (Mann)

9) p. F-19:
Maintain juvenile detention facilities and alternative corrections programs to provide safe and secure methods to provide accountability and support for minors who break the law. Existing facilities may be expanded, remodeled, and/or new facilities developed in response to increasing changing need. (Mann) (consistent with Chapter 4)
APPENDIX G

(Proposal – delete the existing Appendix G and replace with a description of the County’s water resource and salmon recovery programs)
Appendix G

Whatcom County Water Resource
and Salmon Recovery Programs

Note: This is a new appendix describing the County’s various water resource and
salmon recovery programs and efforts. Originally proposed to be included in
Chapter 11 (Environment), the P/C felt it made the chapter too long, and that given
that the programs are evolving, it would best be located in an appendix.

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Whatcom County Water Resource Programs

Reason for Change: The following text describing County water programs has been
added to describe the current environment and activities.

WRIA 1 Watershed Management Project

The WRIA 1 Watershed Management Project is the result of the 1998 Washington
State Watershed Management Act, which required all participating local
governments to address water quantity, with the option of addressing water
quality, instream flows, and fish habitat. The WRIA 1 Watershed Management
Project has brought together citizens, local governments, tribes, and state and
federal agencies to address these issues.
The framework for watershed management in the state is based on geographic areas known as Water Resource Inventory Areas (WRIs). WRIA 1 includes the Nooksack River basin and several adjoining smaller watersheds, such as the coastal drainages of Dakota and California Creeks, as well as Lake Whatcom.

Watershed planning in WRIA 1 started in 1998 with the signing of a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the Initiating Governments. In the WRIA 1 the Initiating Governments are Whatcom County, City of Bellingham, Public Utility District No. 1, Lummi Nation, and Nooksack Tribe (the latter joining slightly later through a Letter of Agreement). The role of the Initiating Governments was to review a recommended Watershed Plan and take it to their governments’ councils for adoption.

**WRIA 1 Joint Board**

In 1999, an Interlocal Agreement further formalized the government-to-government relationship essential to the tribes’ participation in the process by creating a Joint Board. The Joint Board is comprised of the Initiating Governments, including the mayor of the City of Bellingham, executive for Whatcom County, manager of Public Utility District No. 1, and designated policy representatives of Lummi Nation and Nooksack Tribe. The Board manages the project’s administrative functions such as contracts and budgets. Members of the Joint Board also sit on the Joint Policy Boards.

**WRIA 1 Joint Policy Boards**

The WRIA 1 Joint Policy Boards are comprised of members of the WRIA 1 Joint Board and Salmon Recovery Board. This organizational level interacts with federal, state, and regional organizations at a policy-level and provides policy-related direction to staff for purposes of incorporating regional issues into work plans, programs, etc. Additionally, the Joint Policy Boards:

- Endorse programs/actions to forward to Legislative Bodies, as applicable
- Provide WRIA 1 programs policy direction
- Meet and discuss watershed and salmon program topics as joint policy boards with decision-making of each policy board retained.

**Local Integrating Organization (LIO)**

The Whatcom Local Integrating Organization (LIO) is a function of the WRIA 1 Watershed Joint Board and WRIA 1 Salmon Recovery Board (Joint Policy Boards). Local integrating organizations are designated by the Puget Sound Partnership. The two WRIA 1 Boards accepted the function of the Whatcom LIO in October 2010 under the integrated program structure, and was officially recognized by the Puget Sound Partnership’s Leadership Council in November 2010. The purpose of the Whatcom LIO is to coordinate implementation of Puget Sound Action Agenda priorities that are consistent with or complement local priorities. One of its functions

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is to provide a local update to the Action Agenda for Puget Sound. Local updates are intended to identify local priorities in the form of near-term actions (NTAs), which are priority actions with measurable outcomes that can be implemented in the next two years and that align with strategies in the Action Agenda for Puget Sound.

**WRIA 1 Planning Unit**

The Initiating Governments established the Planning Unit to ensure representation of a broad range of water resource interests. The Planning Unit’s role is to recommend actions for a Watershed Plan and to contribute knowledge, interests, technical expertise, and other resources to its development. The Planning Unit is made up of representatives from the Initiating Governments, other governments, and various caucuses. There are 16 total caucuses on the WRIA 1 Planning Unit.

Reason for Change: The P/C felt that the PU deserved mentioning.
Note: Staff does not support the addition of this language. The PU is a subcommittee of the Joint Boards, as are the Watershed Management Team, the Watershed Staff Team, and the Salmon Staff Team. Staff purposefully left all but the highest levels of the organization out. Furthermore, the organization of the WRIA 1 is currently undergoing potential change, and the status of the PU is unknown.

**WRIA 1 Watershed Management Plan**

The WRIA 1 Watershed Management Plan was completed in 2005 through the cooperation of local stakeholders and governments. It provides a roadmap for addressing water quantity, water quality, instream flow, and fish habitat challenges. The goals of the WRIA 1 Watershed Management Project are to have water of sufficient quantity and quality to meet the needs of current and future human generations, including the restoration of salmon, steelhead, and trout populations to healthy harvestable levels, and the improvement of habitats on which fish and shellfish rely. These goals are addressed more specifically below:

- **Water Quantity** – To assess water supply and use, and develop strategies to meet current and future needs. The strategies should retain or provide adequate amounts of water to protect and restore fish habitat, provide water for future out-of-stream-uses, and ensure that adequate water supplies are available for agriculture, energy production, and population and economic growth under the requirements of the state’s Growth Management Act.

- **Water Quality** – To ensure that the quality of our water is sufficient for current and future uses, including restoring and protecting water quality to meet the needs of salmon and shellfish, contact recreational uses, cultural uses, protection of wildlife, providing affordable, safe domestic water
supplies, and other beneficial uses. The initial objectives of the water quality management strategy will be to meet the water quality standards.

- **Instream Flow** – To supply water in sufficient quantities to restore salmon, steelhead, and trout populations to healthy and harvestable levels and improve habitats on which fish rely.

- **Fish Habitat** – To protect or enhance fish habitat in the management area and to restore salmon, steelhead, and trout populations to healthy and harvestable levels and improve habitats on which fish rely.

In 2010, the WRIA 1 Joint Board adopted a work plan, budget and financing strategy, called the Lower Nooksack Strategy, to advance a negotiated settlement of Tribal and state in-stream flow water rights on the mainstem of the Nooksack River, while maximizing the economic and environmental benefits of out-of-stream water use in the Lower Nooksack sub-basin. The Joint Board adopted the Lower Nooksack Strategy consistent with WRIA 1 Watershed Management Plan priorities.

**Lower Nooksack Strategy Objectives:**

- Develop and implement a process for negotiating settlement of water rights on the Mainstem Nooksack River.
- Update and verify the Lower Nooksack River sub-basin water budget and develop a groundwater model.
- Determine out-of-stream water user needs:
  - Public water system needs determined by updated the Whatcom County Coordinated Water System Plan (CWSP).
  - Other out-of-stream user needs (e.g., agriculture, private domestic wells, industrial, etc.) determined through a regional water supply planning process.
- Continue and, if appropriate, enhance targeted streamflow and water quality sampling.
- Advance work on tools that foster water resource allocations consistent with long-term economic and environmental land-use goals for implementation in five years.

**Lake Whatcom Watershed Management**

Reason for Change: The below text regarding Lake Whatcom was moved from Chapter 2 to this chapter.

Lake Whatcom is a large multi-purpose reservoir that is the source of drinking water for the City of Bellingham, Lake Whatcom Water and Sewer District, several other smaller water districts/associations, and about 250 homes that draw water directly from the lake. All told, the lake provides water to about half the population of Whatcom County.
Lake Whatcom is a multiple use lake and watershed. In addition to providing water for drinking, commercial and industrial uses, the lake is used for boating, swimming, and fishing. The majority of the watershed is forested, mainly surrounding the large southernmost portion of the lake. Other land uses include residential development (approximately 5,030 homes are located within the watershed), limited agriculture and commercial development, parks, and other public facilities. The on-going management challenge is trying to determine the extent to which these practices can occur while maintaining safe, clean drinking water. The challenge is further complicated by possible requirements related to the Endangered Species Act, tribal water rights, and the potential impact these issues may have on how the City's diversion from the Nooksack River is operated.

The watershed contains four developed areas: the City of Bellingham, which straddles the upper portion of the northern-most basin of the lake; Geneva, which is immediately south and east of Bellingham's city limits and is part of the city's urban growth area; Hillsdale, which is immediately north and east of Bellingham's city limits and is also part of the city's urban growth areas; and the Sudden Valley Rural Community. In addition, it includes a variety of other zones, including resource, rural, and residential rural zones. Over-Outside the Bellingham City limits, approximately 70\%-75\% of the watershed is in Forestry zoning and more than 75\%-73\% of the current land use is forestry.

In 2003, there were approximately 2,730 existing dwelling units in the Lake Whatcom watershed located outside of the Bellingham UGA. Under the zoning adopted in January 2004, the gross-potential build-out in this area is about 6,507 total dwelling units. Therefore, even under the more restrictive zoning adopted in January 2004, there could be a significant amount of new development in the watershed. Water and sewer service are provided by the Lake Whatcom Water and Sewer District—Water-District 10. Capacity problems in the district's sewer line, which serves Geneva and Sudden Valley, have caused overflows into the lake in the past. An aggressive program to preclude stormwater infiltration has eliminated the overflow problems to a large extent. In addition, the district has a contractually limited flow capacity to Bellingham. The Lake Louise Road sewage interceptor was constructed in January 2003 to carry waste water from Sudden Valley and Geneva and serves as a complement to the Lake Whatcom Boulevard trunk line. The interceptor was designed to service full build-out of Sudden Valley and Geneva.

The City of Bellingham and Lake Whatcom Water and Sewer District are responsible for ensuring drinking water standards are met for their customers. To date, water supplies have consistently met standards. The ability to continue to economically meet drinking water standards requires maintaining source water that requires minimal treatment. For this reason the City of Bellingham maintains an on-going source water-monitoring program. Other agencies including Western Washington University, Department of Natural Resources, Department of Fish and Wildlife, Department of Ecology, Lake Whatcom Water and Sewer District, and
Whatcom County, have also conducted monitoring, studies, and/or evaluations of
the lake and watershed.

Lake Whatcom is the drinking water source for approximately half of Whatcom
County. Recent studies on Lake Whatcom conducted over a number of years
indicate water quality in the lake has declined. Oxygen levels in Lake Whatcom are
decreasing to lower levels, and are declining faster than in the past. In 19971998,
the Washington State Department of Ecology listed Lake Whatcom as an impaired
water body and placed Lake Whatcom on the Federal Clean Water Act 303(d) list
because of low oxygen levels in the Lake and high bacteria levels in streams that
flow into the Lake. The 303(d) listing requires the establishment of a Total
Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs), that designates loading capacity of the lake such
that there will be no measurable change in oxygen levels from natural lake
conditions. The TMDL goals will require a variety of planning, pollution prevention;
pollution reduction and technical approaches. Meeting the TMDL goals will be
required in order to stabilize water quality in Lake Whatcom. The Department of
Ecology issued the “Lake Whatcom Watershed Total Phosphorus and Bacteria Total
Maximum Daily Loads: Volume 1, Water Quality Study Findings” in 2008. This study
documented that Lake Whatcom is impaired for dissolved oxygen due to
phosphorus loading and that streams flowing into Lake Whatcom do not meet fecal
coliform bacteria standards. Loading capacities for total phosphorus and bacteria
reduction targets were set forth in this document. In 2013 The Department of
Ecology issued a draft “Lake Whatcom Watershed Total Phosphorus and Bacteria
Total Maximum Daily Loads: Volume 2, Water Quality Improvement Report and
Implementation Strategy.” in 2013. This report identifies how much phosphorus can
be discharged to the Lake and identifies how the bacteria load should be allocated
between the County and City of Bellingham, in order to meet water quality
standards.

A significant cause of declining oxygen levels has been from residential
development in the watershed. Past development permitted by the City of
Bellingham and Whatcom County has led to increased phosphorus loading into the
lake, which stimulates algae growth. Bacteria that consume the dying algae deplete
the dissolved oxygen, leading to in turn has led to lower oxygen levels in the lake.
Past poorly managed forest practices may have led to significant increases in
phosphorus loading to the lake.

There are several pending subdivisions in the area which are being proposed at less
than full density, but which will increase the overall development level outside of
urban areas to a significant degree. Whatcom County has taken a number of
actions to reduce phosphorus and otherwise address Lake Whatcom water quality.
These include rezoning land to allow less development in the watershed, adoption
of the Lake Whatcom Comprehensive Stormwater Management Plan, revising
stormwater management standards for private development to significantly reduce
potential phosphorus runoff, construction of stormwater capital improvement
projects and adoption of regulations that restrict the application of commercial
fertilizers.

In 2014, approximately 8,800 acres of forest lands around Lake Whatcom were
transferred to Whatcom County from the Washington Department of Natural
Resources through reconveyance. These lands will provide passive recreation
opportunities with hiking and biking trails connecting various communities,
neighborhoods and parks throughout the watershed. Under County ownership, the
forests will be allowed to mature to an older growth environment benefiting the
watershed and helping to stabilize steep slopes that surround the lake. In 2006 the
Whatcom County Council approved funding to study reconveyance of DNR managed
County Forest Board Lands.

There are still state forest lands in the Lake Whatcom watershed. In 2004, the
Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Board on Natural Resources adopted the
Lake Whatcom Landscape Plan. This plan provides additional protections on
remaining state managed lands within the Lake Whatcom watershed. The plan
provides additional protections on streams and potentially unstable slopes not
normally included in forest practices in Washington State. If the DNR exchanges
land from the watershed the protections provided by the plan would not be
applicable to the new owner.

Lake Whatcom Watershed Management Program

A variety of agencies, organizations, and individuals play a role in managing and
protecting Lake Whatcom. In an effort to coordinate efforts of these various
players, in 1990, the City of Bellingham, Whatcom County, and Water District 10
(now known as the Lake Whatcom Water and Sewer District) began meeting to
develop a joint management strategy for the Lake Whatcom watershed.

In November/December 1992, a joint resolution was passed by the Bellingham City
Council, Whatcom County Council, and the Lake Whatcom Water and Sewer District
(formerly Water District 10) Commissioners, which reaffirmed this position with six
general goal statements and a set of specific goal statements in various categories.
The specific goal statements for urbanization were the following:

- Prevent water quality degradation associated with development within the
  watershed.
- Review and recommend changes in zoning and development potential that
  are compatible with a drinking-water reservoir environment.
- In addition to zoning identify and promote other actions to minimize potential
  for increased development in the watershed (i.e. land trust, development
  rights, cost incentives, etc.).
- Develop specific standards which reduce the impacts of urbanization, such as
  minimal lot clearing; clustered development to reduce infrastructure;
  collection and treatment of stormwater before entering the lake.

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• Develop appropriate interlocal agreements with governing agencies to prohibit the potential for additional development once an agreed upon level is set.

The joint resolution included goals for watershed management that extended beyond urbanization. Goals were included for stormwater management, on-site waste systems, conservation, forest management, spill response, hazardous materials transport and handling, data/information management, education/public involvement, and other topics. A joint strategy was agreed to for developing specific plans to meet the adopted goals. Eight high priority goals were selected and plans have been completed and jointly adopted for each of the goals.

In 1998, the City, County, and District 10 formalized their joint commitment to protect and manage the lake through the joint adoption of an interlocal agreement and allocation of funding toward protection and management efforts in the watershed. A five-year program plan was developed for ten program areas. Specific priority was placed on activities related to watershed ownership, stormwater management, and urbanization/land development.

The resulting Lake Whatcom Management Program guides actions to protect Lake Whatcom as a long-term supply of drinking water for the City of Bellingham and portions of Whatcom County. The program emphasizes protection over treatment in managing Lake Whatcom and its watershed. The structure of the Lake Whatcom Management Program includes legislative bodies, a management team, an interjurisdictional coordinating team, agency staff, and advisory committees.

The Lake Whatcom Watershed Management Program website (http://www.lakewhatcom.whatcomcounty.org/resources) contains the management plans, reports, and work programs, as well as the jurisdictions’ pertinent regulations and brochures on the different programs aimed at the various efforts to improve water quality.

### Sudden Valley Recreational Subdivision

**Reason for Change:** The following text was moved from Chapter 2, and edited for brevity.

Sudden Valley is a community within the Lake Whatcom Watershed. It was established in the early 1970s as a recreation/resort area located in the Lake Whatcom-Watershed. But over the last thirty years it has developed into an urban significant residential area. Sudden Valley has private paved roads, all underground utilities (electricity, gas, cable, and telephone), and a public water and sewer system provided by Lake Whatcom-Water and Sewer District. Fire District #2, strategically located in Sudden Valley, provides fire and ambulance service. Sudden Valley’s 1,724 total acres originally included 4,648 platted single-family lots/condominiums, a limited commercial area, community facilities, a marina, and a golf course. Of the 1,545 acres, 835 acres of open space and 140 acres of golf course (63%) are

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The remaining 749 acres (43%) are private property. 2000 US Census data indicates that approximately 26% of the existing housing in Sudden Valley is either seasonal or vacant.

Sudden Valley contributes to a high volume of vehicle trips on Lake Whatcom Boulevard and Lake Louise Road. Right-of-way and alignment studies have been proposed for the 6-year TIP to study alternatives, cost, and location relative to addressing the growing volume of vehicular trips on Lake Whatcom Boulevard and Lake Louise Road. Public transportation services are provided by the Whatcom Transportation Authority (WTA).

Sudden Valley lies within the Lake Whatcom Watershed where limiting development has been identified as desirable. The Sudden Valley Community Association (SVCA) has a Board of Directors mandated lot consolidation program with a targeted density reduction of 1,400 lots, reducing the total lots for development from 4,648 to 3,248. To date approximately 75% (1,047 lots) have been placed into density reduction of which 452 are voluntary private lot consolidation. SVCA funding has been set aside to purchase additional lots for density reduction. In accordance with the 2000 Lake Whatcom Management Program, the County and Lake Whatcom Water and Sewer District have also assisted Sudden Valley with their density reduction program through several joint agreements and exchanges of property and restrictive covenants. To date, the SVCA, County, and Lake Whatcom Water and Sewer District have acquired 115 undeveloped lots in Sudden Valley at annual tax foreclosure auctions. The Lot Consolidation Covenant to Bind process has, also, increased voluntary private lot consolidation. The County Council has exempted Sudden Valley from the Lake Whatcom Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program because Sudden Valley’s density reduction plan meets the intent of the TDR program.

Since 1985, Sudden Valley has mandated the use of appropriate stormwater best management practices through standards for individual stormwater detention for all new construction. Any new building permits on existing lots must be able to demonstrate that stormwater detention is included on the plan as a precondition to issuance of a permit. Sudden Valley is also subject to additional regulatory protections that apply to the Lake Whatcom watershed under the Water Resource Protection Overlay District, Stormwater Special District, and Water Resource Special Management Area requirements. Under the provisions of these special districts, potential impacts from impervious surfaces, stormwater runoff, and clearing activities are required to be addressed either on-site or through a community-wide process.

Sudden Valley has implemented a 10-year Forest and Wildlife Stewardship (FAWS) plan with the State of Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR). This plan provides environmental education and guidance to the Sudden Valley community, on a continuing basis, to assure sound environmental health and safety.
for plants, animals, and residents with an emphasis on properly managing flora and fauna indigenous to the region.

**Groundwater Protection & Management**

Groundwater is contained in aquifers, which are subterranean layers of porous rock or soil. Most aquifers are replenished by rainwater, though some may contain water trapped during glacial periods. Aquifers are often integrally linked with surface water systems and are essential for meeting in-stream and out-of-stream water needs such as for drinking water, agriculture, and industry. Whatcom County residents rely heavily on groundwater for drinking water, agriculture, and commercial and industrial needs. Groundwater also plays an important role in maintaining stream flows.

Many studies have been conducted related to groundwater quality in Whatcom County documenting water quality issues such as exceedances of standards for nitrate, ethylene dibromide (EDB) and 1,2-dichloropropane (1,2-D), pesticides, iron and other agricultural-related contaminates, particularly in the northern portion of the County. In general, groundwater in Whatcom County is very vulnerable to contamination because much of the County's groundwater lies within a shallow unconfined aquifer. Activities that occur on the surface of the ground directly affect groundwater quality. Shallow wells that draw water from unconfined water table aquifers are at highest risk.

Whatcom County's Critical Areas Regulations protect Critical Aquifer Recharge Areas (CARAs) during the development process, by precluding certain uses in CARAs and/or requiring certain precautions be taken in handling certain chemicals.

**Flood Hazard Management**

A comprehensive approach to flood hazard management planning provides for a better understanding of the river and floodplain system and ensures that flooding and channel morphology problems are not simply transferred to another location within the basin, but are addressed in a comprehensive, basinwide manner. This approach directs future flood hazard management expenditures in the most efficient and cost effective manner.

Whatcom County Public Works coordinates with the Flood Control Zone District Advisory Committee (FCZDAC) to identify and characterize flooding problems and provide recommendations for achieving consistent long-term flood hazard reduction strategies. Some activities typically involved in developing a Comprehensive Flood Hazard Management Plan (CFHMP) include data collection, hydraulic modeling, alternatives analysis, floodplain mapping, and meander limit identification. In addition to the technical components in comprehensive flood planning, extensive coordination with the public and other agencies is required throughout the planning process.
Other County flood management programs include:

**Early Flood Warning** – Work with the United States Geological Survey (USGS) to maintain a network of early flood warning stations to help citizens prepare and take appropriate measures to protect lives and property from flood damages.

**Flood Hazard Reduction Program** – Implement projects to reduce future flood damages and public expenditures to repair damaged areas. Examples include construction of setback levees and overflow spillways, and designation of overflow corridors in overbank areas. Two alluvial fan studies have been completed for Jones Creek and Canyon Creek. For Jones Creek, review of potential mitigation measures and concept design of a preferred approach has also been completed.

**Comprehensive Flood Hazard Management Planning** – Identify flooding problems and provide recommendations for achieving long-term flood hazard reduction strategies. The Lower Nooksack River Comprehensive Flood Hazard Management Plan was adopted in 1999. Implementation of the plan is ongoing.

**Preparedness and Response** – Plan for and implement a coordinated response during flood events to ensure public safety and minimize flood damages.

**National Flood Insurance Program** – Participate in the Congress-initiated National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) of 1968, to make affordable flood insurance available to citizens of communities that adopt approved flood management regulations.

**Repair and Maintenance Program** – Address problem areas with rivers, streams, and coastlines of Whatcom County, and mitigates future flood damages in a proactive and cost-effective manner.

**Technical Assistance** – Provide technical assistance regarding drainage and flood issues to private citizens and businesses located along the many water bodies within Whatcom County.

**Organization**

**Flood Control Zone District Advisory Committee (FCZDAC)**

Following the severe floods of 1989 and 1990, in 1992 Whatcom County created the countywide Flood Control Zone District (FCZD), including both incorporated and unincorporated areas of the County. The FCZD is a quasi-municipal corporation that is a separate legal entity from the Whatcom County government. Even though this legal separation exists, the Whatcom County Council and the County Executive (Board of Supervisors) and the Public Works Department (staff) perform the governance and administrative support for the district.
The primary purpose of the FCZD is flood hazard management. Revenue generated to for this purpose is accomplished in two ways: (1) a county-wide uniformly applied service charge; and, (2) supplemental revenue generated within localized Diking Districts and Sub-Flood Districts where specific local project activity is planned.

While the primary purpose of the FCZD is flood hazard management, the district is allowed to address a wide variety of water resource issues. Due to this ability, revenue generated by the district is currently used to finance additional water supply and water quality related improvement projects.

Pertinent Documents

Lower Nooksack River Comprehensive Flood Hazard Management Plan (CFHMP)

In 1999, the county adopted the Lower Nooksack River Comprehensive Flood Hazard Management Plan (CFHMP). The CFHMP identifies projects, programs, and other recommendations aimed at reducing future flood damages along the Lower Nooksack River.

Critical Areas Regulations (WCC 16.16)

Whatcom County’s Critical Areas Regulations aim to protect people and property in Frequently Flooded Area (FFAs) by requiring that any development conforms to WCC Title 17, Flood Damage Prevention.

Stormwater Management

Stormwater runoff occurs when precipitation from rain or snowmelt flows over the land surface. The addition of roads, driveways, parking lots, rooftops and other surfaces that prevent water from soaking into the ground to our landscape greatly increases the runoff volume created during storms. This runoff is swiftly carried to our local streams, lakes, wetlands and rivers and can cause flooding and erosion. Stormwater runoff also picks up and carries with it many different pollutants that are found on paved surfaces such as sediment, nitrogen, phosphorus, bacteria, oil and grease, trash, pesticides and metals.

County Stormwater Management Programs

National Pollutant Discharge and Elimination System (NPDES) Phase II Permit

Stormwater runoff picks up pollutants as it travels over our developed landscapes and is a major source of water quality problems. In 1987, the Federal Clean Water Act was amended to address stormwater pollution. As a result, the United States Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan
Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) created the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) to address stormwater runoff. States are then required to administer permits to local jurisdictions to regulate runoff as part of the NPDES Program. The Permit is referred to as the "NPDES Phase II Permit" or "Phase II Municipal Stormwater Permit".

In February of 2007, the Washington State Department of Ecology issued Whatcom County's Phase II Municipal Stormwater Permit. This permit regulates discharges from Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewers, and is part of the National Pollutant Discharge and Elimination System (NPDES) and State Waste Discharge General Permit. It sets forth requirements of municipalities to address stormwater runoff in areas determined to have population densities reaching urban standards. Whatcom County is required to implement various stormwater management strategies to comply with this State permit.

The current Permit boundary covers approximately 15,000 acres and generally includes the following areas (Figure 1):

- Bellingham Urban Growth Area
- Sudden Valley
- Portions of the Hillsdale and Emerald Lake area
- Portions along North Shore Drive on Lake Whatcom and Lake Whatcom Boulevard
- Ferndale Urban Growth Area
- Portions along Chuckanut Drive and Chuckanut Bay
- Birch Bay Urban Growth Area (Beginning August 1, 2013)
- The entire Lake Whatcom watershed is subject to illicit discharge detection and elimination requirements of the Permit.

Jurisdictions are allowed to discharge runoff into water bodies of the State (such as rivers, lakes, and streams) as long as they implement programs that protect water quality by reducing pollutants to the maximum extent possible through requirements of the NPDES Phase II Permit. Those requirements are reported and submitted to the Department of Ecology through the Stormwater Management Program (SWMP) and the Annual Compliance Report.

The Western Washington Phase II Municipal Stormwater Permit is required by the State of Washington Water Pollution Control Law Chapter 90.48 RCW, and the Federal Water Pollution Control Act Title 33 United States Code (Clean Water Act). The Permit is administered by the Washington State Department of Ecology.
Pollution Identification and Correction (PIC) Program

Everyone wants clean water to support healthy drinking water, safe recreational uses, quality water for irrigation and livestock, healthy fish, and shellfish that are safe to consume. Currently, many streams in Whatcom County do not meet water quality standards for fecal coliform bacteria. Fecal coliform bacteria are found in the intestinal tract of warm-blooded animals and when found in streams are an indicator of human or animal waste in the water. The higher the bacteria level, the greater the public health risk to people drinking, wading, fishing, or consuming shellfish. The Pollution Identification and Correction (PIC) Program has been created to help implement community solutions to clean water.

Pollution – The key potential sources of bacteria that have been identified in Whatcom County coastal drainages are (1) animal waste from agricultural...
operations, domestic pets, waterfowl, and wildlife, and (2) human sewage from failing on-site sewage systems (OSS), leaking sewers, or cross-connections.

**Identification** – Whatcom County coordinates a routine water quality monitoring program at approximately 90 stations in watersheds that discharge to marine waters. Samples are collected on at least a monthly basis and analyzed for fecal coliform bacteria. Results are evaluated annually to identify focus areas with the largest bacteria problems. Within the focus areas, stream segments are monitored and potential bacteria sources are identified.

**Correction** – Technical and financial resources are offered to landowners to identify and implement solutions on their property. Residents can help improve the community’s water quality by inspecting and maintaining septic systems and by fencing animals out of streams, ditches and swales. By actively managing pastures, creating protected heavy use areas, and covering manure storage areas, residents can prevent manure-contaminated mud from polluting surface water. Planting shrubs and trees along stream banks and picking up after dogs also contributes to better water quality.

**Salmon Recovery Program**

In the Nooksack basin, abundances of several salmonid stocks have diminished substantially from historical levels. The declines in local salmonid stocks, especially Chinook salmon, have had profound economic, cultural and social impacts on the greater WRIA 1 community. Direct impacts include reduced jobs and income for commercial fisherman, severe curtailment of tribal and subsistence catch, and loss of tourism associated with recreational fishing. In addition, ESA listings impose constraints on the activities of local and tribal governments, businesses, the agricultural community, and citizens, who must seek to avoid or minimize take of listed species. Nonetheless, salmon remain an integral part of the natural and social landscape of Whatcom County and the Nooksack River watershed. Recent watershed recovery planning and restoration efforts by federal, state, local and tribal governments, non-profit organizations, businesses, and private citizens demonstrate a commitment to salmon recovery in WRIA 1.

The WRIA 1 Salmon Recovery Program is a multi-government planning effort with a WRIA-wide scope to address salmon recovery and protection of ESA and non-ESA listed salmonids.

**WRIA 1 Salmon Recovery Strategy**

The ultimate goal for salmon recovery in WRIA 1 is to recover self-sustaining salmonid runs to harvestable levels through the restoration of healthy rivers and natural stream, river, estuarine, and nearshore marine processes, careful use of hatcheries, and responsible harvest, and with the active participation and support of local landowners, businesses, and the larger community. The purpose of the
WRIA 1 Salmonid Recovery Plan is to identify the actions necessary to recover WRIA 1 salmonid populations, especially listed species, and to outline the framework for implementation of recommended actions that have been agreed to by local, state, tribal, and federal governments and stakeholders in WRIA 1. In the near term, the objectives are to:

1. Focus and prioritize salmon recovery efforts to maximize benefit to the two Nooksack early chinook populations;
2. Address late-timed Chinook through adaptive management, focusing in the near-term on identifying hatchery- versus naturally-produced population components;
3. Facilitate recovery of WRIA 1 bull trout and steelhead by implementing actions with mutual benefit to both early chinook, and bull trout and steelhead and by removing fish passage barriers in presumed bull trout and steelhead spawning and rearing habitats in the upper Nooksack River watershed; and
4. Address other salmonid populations by (a) protecting and restoring WRIA 1 salmonid habitats and habitat-forming processes through regulatory and incentive based programs; and (b) encouraging and supporting voluntary actions that benefit other WRIA 1 salmonid populations without diverting attention from early chinook recovery.

Focusing efforts on early chinook is consistent with regional salmon recovery—current abundance and productivity for the two populations is very low and recovery of both populations is critical to delisting and recovery of the Puget Sound Evolutionarily Significant Unit (ESU) for Chinook salmon.

Salmon Recovery Board (SRB)

WRIA 1 Salmon Recovery Board membership includes the County Executive, Bellingham Mayor, Mayors of the Small Cities of Whatcom County, the regional director of the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, and policy representatives from Lummi Nation and Nooksack Indian Tribe.

The WRIA 1 Salmonid Recovery Plan (2005), a chapter of the Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Plan, guides restoration in the Nooksack River and adjacent watersheds. This plan was developed in partnership with Nooksack Tribe, Lummi Nation, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Bellingham, and the small cities of Whatcom County. Chinook salmon populations (listed as threatened with extinction under the Federal Endangered Species Act) are prioritized, yet the plan also provides the template for recovery of threatened steelhead and bull trout and the other salmon and trout populations native to Whatcom County.

The salmon plan was developed in parallel with the WRIA 1 Watershed Management Plan. Salmon habitat is intricately linked to watershed management; salmon recovery will be most successful when fish habitat objectives are carefully coordinated with watershed management objectives. Integrating salmon recovery

Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan Apx G - 16
with flood hazard management and restoring fish passage under County roads are two primary areas of focus.
Proposed Council Changes to Comprehensive Plan

Appendix G – Water Resources and Salmon Recovery Programs

*Page and line numbers reflect Planning Commission Recommended Draft dated 1/14/16 ([http://wawhatcomcounty.civicplus.com/DocumentCenter/View/15163](http://wawhatcomcounty.civicplus.com/DocumentCenter/View/15163)]. To improve clarity of Councilmember requested changes, previous edits (i.e. staff and Planning Commission) are included, but not show as edits.*

1) Return all of Appendix G to Chapter 11 (Brenner)

2) p. G-2; lines 27-35: The WRIA 1 Joint Policy Boards are comprised of members of the WRIA 1 Joint Board and Salmon Recovery Board. This organizational level interacts with federal, state, and regional organizations at a policy-level and provides policy related direction to staff to coordinate the implementation and management of the WRIA 1 Watershed Management Plan – Phase 1, the WRIA 1 Salmonid Recovery Plan and other related activities, for purposes of incorporating regional issues into work plans, programs, etc. Additionally, the Joint Policy Boards:
   - Endorse programs/actions to forward to Legislative Bodies, as applicable
   - Provide WRIA 1 programs policy direction
   - Meet and discuss watershed and salmon program topics as joint policy boards with decision-making of each policy board retained.

(Brenner)

3) p. G-3; lines 24-28: **2005** WRIA 1 Watershed Management Plan – **Phase One**

The **2005** WRIA 1 Watershed Management Plan was **completed approved** in 2005 through the cooperation of local stakeholders and governments by the Joint Administrative Board, Planning Unit (by consensus), and the County Council. Pursuant to subsequent state requirements, a WRIA1 Watershed Detailed Implementation Plan was approved by the Joint Administrative Board, Planning Unit, and County Council in **2007**. It provides a roadmap for addressing water quantity, water quality, instream flow, and fish habitat challenges. (Brenner)

4) p. G-5; line 29-32: Capacity problems in the district’s sewer line, which serves Geneva and Sudden Valley, have caused overflows into the lake in the past. An aggressive program to preclude stormwater infiltration has **eliminated reduced** the overflow problems to a large extent. (Brenner)
5) p. G-6; line 30-36: A significant cause of declining oxygen levels has been from residential development in the watershed. Past development permitted by the City of Bellingham and Whatcom County has led to increased phosphorus loading into the lake, which stimulates algae growth. Bacteria that consume the dying algae deplete the dissolved oxygen, leading to lower oxygen levels in the lake. Past poorly managed forest practices may have led to significant increases in phosphorus loading to the lake. (Brenner)

6) p. G-8; lines 5-10: The joint resolution included goals for watershed management that extended beyond urbanization. Goals were included for stormwater management, on-site waste systems, conservation, forest management, spill response, hazardous materials transport and handling, data/information management, education/public involvement, and other topics. A joint strategy was agreed to approved for developing specific plans to meet the adopted goals. (Brenner)

7) p. G-12; line 1-5: The primary purpose of the FCZD is flood hazard management. Revenue generated for this purpose is accomplished in two ways: (1) a county-wide uniformly applied service charge tax; and, (2) supplemental revenue generated within localized Diking Districts and Sub-Flood Districts where specific local project activity is planned.

8) p. G-12; lines 24-26: Whatcom County's Critical Areas Regulations aim to protect people and property in Frequently Flooded Area (FFAs) by requiring that any development in these areas conforms to WCC Title 17, Flood Damage Prevention. (Brenner)

9) p. G-13; lines 15-26: The current Permit boundary covers approximately 15,000 acres and generally includes the following areas (Error! Reference source not found.):
   - Bellingham Urban Growth Area
   - Sudden Valley
   - Portions of the Hillsdale and Emerald Lake area
   - Portions along North Shore Drive on Lake Whatcom and Lake Whatcom Boulevard
   - Ferndale Urban Growth Area
   - Portions along Chuckanut Drive and Chuckanut Bay
   - Birch Bay Urban Growth Area (Beginning August 1, 2013)

   Additionally, though not within the NPEDS permit area, the County has made the entire Lake Whatcom watershed subject to the illicit discharge detection and elimination requirements of the Permit through ordinance and agreement with the Department of Ecology. (Brenner)

10) p. G-16; lines 34-38: The WRIA 1 Salmonid Recovery Plan (2005), a chapter of the Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Plan, guides restoration in the Nooksack River and adjacent
watersheds. This plan was developed in partnership with Nooksack Tribe, Lummi Nation, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Bellingham, Whatcom County Government and the small cities of Whatcom County. (Brenner)

*Items 11 through 35 concern comma use and other grammatical changes and may be considered in a single motion.*

11) p. G-3; lines 29-33: The goals of the WRIA 1 Watershed Management Project; are to have water of sufficient quantity and quality to meet the needs of current and future human generations, including the restoration of salmon, steelhead, and trout populations to healthy harvestable levels, and the improvement of habitats on which fish and shellfish rely. (Brenner)

12) p. G-3; lines 35-40: **Water Quantity** – To assess water supply and use, and develop strategies to meet current and future needs. The strategies should retain or provide adequate amounts of water to protect and restore fish habitat, provide water for future out-of-stream-uses, and ensure that adequate water supplies are available for agriculture, energy production, and population, and economic growth under the requirements of the state’s Growth Management Act. (Brenner)

13) p. G-3; lines 42- p. G-4, line 2: **Water Quality** – To ensure that the quality of our water is sufficient for current and future uses, including restoring and protecting water quality to meet the needs of salmon and shellfish, contact recreational uses, cultural uses, protection of wildlife, providing affordable, safe, domestic water supplies, and other beneficial uses. The initial objectives of the water quality management strategy will be to meet the water quality standards. (Brenner)

14) p. G-4; lines 12-17: In 2010, the WRIA 1 Joint Board adopted a work plan, budget, and financing strategy, called the Lower Nooksack Strategy, to advance a negotiated settlement of Tribal and state in-stream flow water rights on the mainstem of the Nooksack River, while maximizing the economic and environmental benefits of out-of-stream water use in the Lower Nooksack sub-basin. The Joint Board adopted the Lower Nooksack Strategy, consistent with WRIA 1 Watershed Management Plan priorities. (Brenner)

15) p. G-4; lines 40-44: Lake Whatcom is a large multi-purpose reservoir that is the source of drinking water for the City of Bellingham, Lake Whatcom Water and Sewer District, several other smaller water districts/associations, and about 250 homes that
draw water directly from the lake. The lake provides water to about half the population of Whatcom County. (Brenner)

16) p. G-5; lines 1-3: Lake Whatcom is a multiple use lake and watershed. In addition to providing water for drinking, commercial, and industrial uses, the lake is used for boating, swimming, and fishing. (Brenner)

17) p. G-6; lines 18-21: This study documented that Lake Whatcom is impaired for dissolved oxygen due to phosphorus loading and that streams flowing into Lake Whatcom do not meet fecal coliform bacteria standards. (Brenner)

18) p. G-7; lines 6-8: These lands will provide passive recreation opportunities with hiking and biking trails connecting various communities, neighborhoods, and parks throughout the watershed. (Brenner)

19) p. G-7; lines 40-42: In addition to zoning, identify and promote other actions to minimize potential for increased development in the watershed (i.e. land trust, development rights, cost incentives, etc.). (Brenner)

20) p. G-9; lines 32-35: Any new building permits on existing lots must be able to demonstrate that stormwater detention is included in the plan as a precondition to issuance of a permit. Sudden Valley is also subject to additional regulatory protections that apply to the Lake Whatcom Watershed. (Brenner)

21) p. G-10; lines 8-10: Aquifers are often integrally linked with surface water systems and are essential for meeting in-stream and out-of-stream water needs, such as for drinking water, agriculture, and industry. (Brenner)

22) p. G-10; lines 14-18: Many studies have been conducted related to groundwater quality in Whatcom County documenting water quality issues, such as exceedances of standards for nitrate, ethylene dibromide (EDB) and 1,2-dichloropropane (1,2-D), pesticides, iron, and other agricultural-related contaminants, particularly in the northern portion of the County. (Brenner)

23) p. G-10; lines 30-33: A comprehensive approach to flood hazard management planning provides for a better understanding of the river and floodplain system. It also and ensures that flooding and channel morphology problems are not simply transferred to another location within the basin, but are addressed in a comprehensive, basinwide manner. (Brenner)

24) p. G-10; lines 39-40: Whatcom County Public Works coordinates with the Flood Control Zone District Advisory Committee (FCZDAC) to identify and characterize flooding problems and provide recommendations for achieving consistent, long-term, flood hazard reduction strategies. (Brenner)
25) p. G-11; lines 27-29: **Repair and Maintenance Program** – Address problem areas with rivers, streams, and coastlines of Whatcom County, and mitigates future flood damages in a proactive and cost-effective manner. *(Brenner)*

26) p. G-11; lines 41-42: The FCZD is a quasi-municipal corporation that is a separate legal entity from the Whatcom County government. *(Brenner)*

27) p. G-12; lines 30-37: Stormwater runoff occurs when precipitation from rain or snowmelt flows over the land surface. The addition of roads, driveways, parking lots, rooftops, and other surfaces that prevent water from soaking into the ground to our landscape greatly increases the runoff volume created during storms. This runoff is swiftly carried to our local streams, lakes, wetlands, and rivers, and can cause flooding and erosion. Stormwater runoff also picks up and carries with it many different pollutants that are found on paved surfaces such as sediment, nitrogen, phosphorus, bacteria, oil and grease, trash, pesticides, and metals. *(Brenner)*

28) p. G-12; line 46 – p. G-13, line 4: As a result, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) created the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) to address stormwater runoff. States are then required to administer permits to local jurisdictions to regulate runoff as part of the NPDES Program. *(Brenner)*

29) p. G-14; lines 6-14: **Everyone wants clean water** to support healthy drinking water, safe recreational uses, quality water for irrigation and livestock, healthy fish, and shellfish that are safe to consume. Currently, many streams in Whatcom County do not meet water quality standards for fecal coliform bacteria. Fecal coliform bacteria are found in the intestinal tract of warm-blooded animals and when found in streams are an indicator of human or animal waste in the water. The higher the bacteria level, the greater the public health risk to people drinking water, wading, fishing, or consuming shellfish. The Pollution Identification and Correction (PIC) Program has been created to help implement community solutions to clean water. *(Brenner)*

30) p. G-15; lines 23-25: The declines in local salmonid stocks, especially Chinook salmon, have had profound economic, cultural, and social impacts on the greater WRIA 1 community. *(Brenner)*

31) p. G-15; lines 30-34: Nonetheless, salmon remain an integral part of the natural and social landscape of Whatcom County and the Nooksack River Watershed. Recent recovery watershed planning and restoration efforts by federal, state, local, and tribal governments, non-profit organizations, businesses, and private citizens demonstrate a commitment to salmon recovery in WRIA 1. *(Brenner)*
32) p. G-15; lines 42-46: The ultimate goal for salmon recovery in WRIA 1 is to recover self-sustaining salmonid runs to harvestable levels through the restoration of healthy rivers and natural stream, river, estuarine, and nearshore marine processes; careful use of hatcheries; and responsible harvest, and with the active participation and support of local landowners, businesses, and the larger community. (Brenner)

33) p. G-16; lines 2-4: ...and to outline the framework for implementation of recommended actions that have been agreed to by local, state, tribal, and federal governments, and stakeholders in WRIA 1. (Brenner)

34) p. G-16; lines 8-10: Address late-timed Chinook through adaptive management, focusing in the near-term on identifying hatchery-[remove hyphen] versus naturally-produced population components; (Brenner)

35) p. G-16; lines 11-15: Facilitate recovery of WRIA 1 bull trout and steelhead by implementing actions with mutual benefit to both early chinook, and bull trout, and steelhead, and by removing fish passage barriers in presumed bull trout and steelhead spawning and rearing habitats in the upper Nooksack River watershed; (Brenner)
Briefing and discussion on Comprehensive Plan Chapter 7 (Economics).

ATTACHMENT:

Related paperwork can be found at:
www.co.whatcom.wa.us/2346/Comprehensive-Plan-Update-Process

SUMMARY STATEMENT OR LEGAL NOTICE LANGUAGE: (If this item is an ordinance or requires a public hearing, you must provide the language for use in the required public notice. Be specific and cite RCW or WCC as appropriate. Be clear in explaining the intent of the action.)

Under the Growth Management Act, Whatcom County and the seven cities within the County must complete the periodic update of their comprehensive plans and review urban growth areas by June 30, 2016 (RCW 36.70A.130). The Planning and Development Services Department would like to make a presentation and discuss Comprehensive Plan Chapter 7 (Economics) with the Council’s Planning and Development Committee.

COMMITTEE ACTION:
4/19/2016: Briefed and discussed
5/17/2016: Comments recvd., discussed and gave direction
6/14/2016: Comments received and Prelim. direction given
6/28/2016: Comments received and prelim. direction given

COUNCIL ACTION:
5/31/2016: SCOTW: Not discussed
6/14/2016: Public Testimony Received

Please Note: Once adopted and signed, ordinances and resolutions are available for viewing and printing on the County’s website at: www.co.whatcom.wa.us/council.
Chapter Seven
Economics

Introduction

Purpose

Economic vitality is the measure of the economic health of the County—its people, its businesses, and its government. A way of enhancing economic vitality are through public and private actions designed to achieve:

1. Maintenance of a strong sustainable economic base;
2. Diversification of the local economy;
3. Improved job training and educational opportunities; and
4. Creation and maintenance of a range of family-wage jobs.

Economic vitality depends on a wide variety of factors—job retention, job creation, job training programs, public and private capital investment, and business and community capacity-building to allow businesses or community groups to do the job themselves. The purpose of the economic element is to set goals and establish policies which promote economic vitality for the future of Whatcom County. This chapter provides policies that directly affect other elements of this plan, and how this plan was drafted. There are also policies that can be utilized to help direct future planning actions or to review private requests for plan amendments, rezones, or specific projects. Finally, the list of specific action items sets forth the direction for immediate and long-term actions by the county and suggestions that involve other entities interested in Economic Development.

Process

This chapter was originally created by utilizing policies from the Overall Economic Development Program (OEDP), developed while working with the boards of the Bellingham/Whatcom County Economic Development Council (EDC), formerly the Fourth Corner Economic Development Group, the Bellingham/Whatcom Chamber of Commerce, the Chamber of Commerce Economic Committee, and an ad-hoc committee that was established to review industrial land supply issues. Currently, the Economic Development Administration (EDA) now requires a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) instead of an OEDP to be eligible for grant funding. The EDA established the OEDP process in order to create an effective Federal/local partnership in economic planning. An expansion of the OEDP process, the CEDS directs its investments to be based on strategies resulting from locally controlled participatory planning processes established to develop and maintain the CEDS.

Lead by the Partnership For a Sustainable Economy, a committee of the principal coordinators and advocates of the wise management of new public and private investment provided ongoing involvement during development of the CEDS. The

Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan 7-1
resulting vision, goals, and strategies provide the framework for public and private
decision-making and serve as the basis for the action plan.

In addition to establishing a series of goals and strategies, a countywide
compilation of projects has been assembled and is included as an appendix section
entitled Whatchom County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Project
List. Included in this list are capital improvements, planning efforts, business
development and finance tools and technical assistance projects. This compilation
may be used as a tool for coordinating community and economic proposals
throughout the county.

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

This chapter specifically addresses Goal #5 of the Growth Management Act, which
encourages economic development and economic opportunity for all citizens of the
state. The County-Wide Planning Policies and Community Value Statements also
have sections on economic development, which this chapter specifically
addresses. Examples include: recognition of the need for a healthy economy; the
emphasis on coordination and cooperation among jurisdictions and public/private
partnering; coordination with environmental quality; and the desire to maintain the
resource-based industries and recreation as we move toward a more diversified
economy. This chapter recognizes the best path towards economic prosperity will
likely be found through promotion of the county's existing strengths, such as our
unique position to accommodate Canadian companies looking to expand and access
the US market, our extensive recreational infrastructure, and the skilled workforce
produced by our excellent educational institutions. In general this chapter
addresses the points raised in the CEDS, the County-Wide Planning Policies, and the
Visioning Community Value Statements but goes beyond all documents to address
other economic issues.

As a result of the CEDS process, a compilation of all countywide economic
development goals, strategies and objectives has been assembled. The Key Policies
(Goals & Strategies) Related to Local Economic Development is also a part of the
CEDS document as an appendix. This summary includes entries from municipalities
such as area cities, Whatcom County, Council of Governments, PUD #1; economic
development groups such as East County (Foothills), Point Roberts, Birch Bay
Economic Development Committees; and special focus organizations such as
Agriculture Preservation Committee, Workforce Development Council, and Whatcom
Coalition for Healthy Communities. Goals, strategies and objectives are categorized
among six general topics: Land Use & Development; Public Infrastructure &
Services; Workforce & Education; Business Development; Coordination; and
Natural Resources. Each general topic is further divided into sub-categories allowing
for cross-community themes and coordination efforts to be supported.

Reason for change: This section of Chapter 7 addresses the GMA and County-wide
Planning Policies. The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) is
addressed later in this chapter.
GMA Requirements

The GMA was amended beginning in 2002 to require an economic development element into be included as a comprehensive plan upon appropriation of state funding. As of 2014, state funding has not been provided. In addition, the County Council has specifically requested that the CEDS report prepared by the Partnership for a Sustainable Economy be incorporated in the comprehensive plan. With this update to the Economics Chapter of the Comp Plan current economic data contained within the CEDS and other sources is incorporated. This chapter directly accomplishes the above objectives though economic policies also appear in other chapters of this plan.

Reason for change: The GMA was amended in 2002 to require an economic development element only if funds covering local government costs are distributed by the state at least two years prior to the deadline for updating the comprehensive plan. The state has not yet distributed such funds.

Background Summary

Total number of people employed in Whatcom County increased from 64,720 in 1990 to 94,310 in 2013, an increase of almost 30,000 people with jobs. During this period, monthly unemployment has typically ranged from about 5 to 7.5%, but has gone as low as 3.8% in 2006-2007 and peaked at 11.1% in 2010 in the aftermath of the Great Recession.

Figure 1. Labor Force, Employment and Unemployment, 1990-2013

The Washington State Employment Security Department maintains more detailed statistics on "covered" employment, which are jobs covered by state unemployment insurance. Covered employment for Whatcom County is shown below in Table 1, and Figures 2 and 3 by North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) codes.

**Table 1. Employment by Industry, 2002-2013**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>% Increase</th>
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<tr>
<td>Resources and Utilities</td>
<td>3,053</td>
<td>3,110</td>
<td>3,071</td>
<td>3,196</td>
<td>3,097</td>
<td>3,115</td>
<td>3,382</td>
<td>3,336</td>
<td>3,376</td>
<td>3,645</td>
<td>3,710</td>
<td>3,672</td>
<td>20.28%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>5,471</td>
<td>5,679</td>
<td>6,030</td>
<td>6,906</td>
<td>7,216</td>
<td>6,928</td>
<td>6,979</td>
<td>5,652</td>
<td>4,861</td>
<td>4,845</td>
<td>5,078</td>
<td>5,002</td>
<td>-8.57%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>7,932</td>
<td>7,991</td>
<td>8,034</td>
<td>8,324</td>
<td>8,630</td>
<td>9,027</td>
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<td>8,242</td>
<td>8,703</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wholesale Trade</td>
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<td>2,629</td>
<td>2,919</td>
<td>3,127</td>
<td>3,075</td>
<td>2,994</td>
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<td>2,552</td>
<td>2,535</td>
<td>2,514</td>
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<tr>
<td>Retail Trade</td>
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<td>10,012</td>
<td>10,063</td>
<td>10,253</td>
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<td>10,373</td>
<td>10,834</td>
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<td>1,506</td>
<td>1,634</td>
<td>1,707</td>
<td>1,751</td>
<td>1,782</td>
<td>1,827</td>
<td>1,862</td>
<td>1,856</td>
<td>1,950</td>
<td>2,047</td>
<td>2,102</td>
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<td>9,784</td>
<td>9,781</td>
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<td>7,220</td>
<td>7,544</td>
<td>7,944</td>
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<td>8,159</td>
<td>7,621</td>
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<td>7,257</td>
<td>7,138</td>
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<td>Other Services</td>
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<td>15,639</td>
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<td>17,084</td>
<td>17,421</td>
<td>16,673</td>
<td>16,295</td>
<td>16,675</td>
<td>16,935</td>
<td>17,235</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
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<td>13,451</td>
<td>13,652</td>
<td>13,742</td>
<td>14,082</td>
<td>14,224</td>
<td>14,316</td>
<td>14,346</td>
<td>14,291</td>
<td>14,101</td>
<td>14,339</td>
<td>11.87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>70,306</td>
<td>72,417</td>
<td>74,988</td>
<td>78,501</td>
<td>80,188</td>
<td>82,544</td>
<td>83,157</td>
<td>79,164</td>
<td>77,779</td>
<td>79,270</td>
<td>80,401</td>
<td>82,315</td>
<td>17.08%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Figure 2. Employment by Industry, 2002-2013**
Total covered employment in Whatcom County increased by 17% between 2002 and 2013, while population grew by 18% during this same period (see Table 1 above). Health care services increased by 38% from 2002-2013, which is the highest percentage gain of any industries shown above. Employment in the resources and utilities, retail trade, transportation and warehousing, and other services categories also grew more than average. Between 2002 and 2013, about 8.5% of the construction jobs were lost. Construction, which was hit hard in the aftermath of the economic downturn, was the only industry that suffered a net loss of jobs in this time-frame. The 2013 distribution of jobs is shown below.

**Figure 3. Employment by Industry, 2013**

Median household income in Whatcom County increased between 1990 and 2013, although not as much as in Washington State. In 2013, the median household income was almost $52,000 in Whatcom County. In the state as a whole, 2013 median household income was approaching $59,000. A comparison of County and State median income, not adjusted for inflation, is presented below.
Historically, Whatcom County has had a cyclical economy. The unemployment rate typically runs nearly a percentage point higher than the state as a whole, though the 2002 year-to-date (10-month) average unemployment rate for Whatcom County of 6.3% is lower than the state average of 7.1%. Average annual wages run several thousand dollars below the state as a whole, a gap that continues to grow.

A number of efforts have been made in the past to address the economic issues in the county. Beginning in 1966 and continuing periodically thereafter, the Whatcom County Council of Governments, working with public and private sectors, published an Overall Economic Development Program (OEDP). For the years 1991 to 1993, the OEDP was prepared by the EDC, in cooperation with Whatcom County Council of Governments. Since 1993, the Whatcom County area has not had an update to overall or comprehensive economic development strategy, until completion of the CEDS process.

The earlier programs led to several studies that were completed in the early 1980s, including: The Business Triad Report, 1981; The Economic Futures Study of Whatcom County, 1983; and The Stanford Research Institute Study, 1983. These studies led to the creation of Team Whatcom, a coordinating group, and Fourth Corner Economic Development Group, both of which joined with the Council of Governments, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Port of Bellingham to sponsor studies and/or carry the economic development role in the county. In 1987, the Business College at Western Washington University led an exercise involving all of the agencies in Whatcom County interested in economic development. From this
exercise, a major conclusion was that there is a need for continuing coordination. In 1989, the Cities of Everson and Nooksack held economic summits sponsored by Puget Sound Power and Light. Several years later, the City of Ferndale followed suit.

Early in 1993, an ad hoc industrial land supply committee was created under the auspices of EDC to review industrial land supply needs. The Whatcom County Council appointed a Jobs Based Economy Committee that published a report in September 1994. Prior to an economic summit in October 1994, the Chamber of Commerce published a background study on the local economy.

In addition, an Economic Development Task Force (EDTF) was formed in the fall of 1996 to address economic development issues, network between jurisdictions and organizations in Whatcom County and to take positive actions in information and marketing; regulatory issues; and infrastructure. In addition, the EDTF was charged with the mission to facilitate actions that will improve the economy of Whatcom County. A full work plan was established from which to accomplish these objectives.

Reason for change: Deleting outdated information.

Community Wide Strategic Planning Efforts

Whatcom County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

The Whatcom County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) was updated in 2015. The principal purpose of the CEDS is to facilitate the retention and creation of living-wage jobs and to foster a stable and diversified regional economy, thereby improving the quality of life in the region. Its intent is to bring together the public and private sectors in the creation of an "economic roadmap" to diversify and strengthen the regional economy by integrating the region's human resources and capital-improvements planning in the service of economic development. The CEDS incorporates three vision statements relating to the County's preferred economic future:

- Whatcom County values its business community, which is principally responsible for the continued growth in jobs and incomes in the region;

- Whatcom County and its constituent communities have vibrant and dynamic economies where the region's abundant natural resources are cherished and protected; and

- Whatcom County has an outstanding quality of life where all residents have opportunities to thrive and the support they need to seize those opportunities.

The CEDS also identifies infrastructure and other projects that support economic development and includes economic data. The CEDS report has primarily directed sales tax revenue collected under RCW 82.14.370 be used to fund infrastructure.

Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan
Whatcom Futures

In 2012, more than 90 leaders and representatives from businesses, local governments, not-for-profit organizations and the public helped create the Whatcom Futures report. The following are quotes from the report:

“Whatcom County’s lower commercial real estate costs compared to those in B.C. – as well as the enhanced access to the U.S. market that a Canadian company enjoys with a U.S. location – has resulted in significant Canadian business investment in the County.”

“Bellingham Technical College’s Engineering and Advance Manufacturing programs offer degrees that are in demand by industries in Whatcom – and nationwide – with starting salaries for new graduates in excess of $50,000 a year”.

“The economic value of Whatcom’s natural resources manifests itself in numerous ways. For instance, the County is the top producer of raspberries in the U.S. and a leading producer of other types of berries as well as dairy products, fish and shellfish”.

“However, it is important to note that a single resource will often have value to more than one economic sector. For instance, the presence of timberland supports eco-tourism as well as the forest products industry. The same can be said of farmland – which in addition to the produce it generates also facilitates agri-tourism – as well as the region’s fisheries, which support both commercial and sport fishing.”

“The ability to receive a quality education from Pre-K through post graduate study greatly enhances the quality of life in the County and is an important asset in recruiting businesses to come to the region. Indeed, strong public schools and the availability of higher education are among the principal attributes that prospects look for when considering relocation.”

In 2000, the Partnership for a Sustainable Economy was formed to coordinate countywide economic development planning efforts. The first task is completion of the CEDS, which is being incorporated into this Economics Chapter. Six overarching Economic Development Strategies have been identified through the CEDS process:

Goal A: Finance and maintain appropriate infrastructure for community and economic development.
Goal B: Ensure sustainable development and uses of natural resources.
Goal C: Promote a diverse economy by sector and location.
Goal D: Foster collaborative working relationships among economic development stakeholders at the community, state, federal, international and tribal levels.
Goal E: Provide and retain a high quality workforce.
Goal F: Increase public understanding and involvement in economic issues.
Numerous strategies accompany each of the above goals.

**Minority Population Issues**

Historically, Native Americans, the largest minority population in Whatcom County, have had high unemployment rates. This has been further impacted by the loss of fisheries, although casinos recently built on both reservations have partially substituted for this loss. Another growing cultural group in the county is the Hispanic community, which came to Whatcom County for seasonal agriculture work and has chosen to stay. Seasonal employment, however, cannot provide for adequate housing and other basic needs. Russian and Ukrainian immigrants are another growing minority in Whatcom County who may have special needs.

**Strategic Economic Vitality Issues**

There are a number of major economic vitality issues facing Whatcom County. These issues are discussed individually below and each is addressed through a specific goal with attendant policies.

**Current County Economic Development Activities**

Whatcom County delegated job creation activities to the Port of Bellingham, which serves as the County’s “Associate Development Organization” (ADO). The Port of Bellingham’s mission statement is: “To fulfill the essential transportation and economic development needs of the region, while providing leadership and maintaining Whatcom County’s overall economic vitality through the development of comprehensive facilities, programs, and services”.

**Issues, Goals, and Policies**

**Diversified Economy**

Quality of life is an essential component in many people’s choice to live in Whatcom County. A fundamental aspect of “quality of life” characteristics is a strong and diversified economy, one that remains resilient through business cycles, is relatively recession-proof, and one that can provide family-wage employment, affordable housing, discretionary income, tax base, and sponsors for worthy causes. Such an economy should provide for all segments of society with a geographic distribution that, in accordance with the land use plan, spreads the jobs and tax base throughout the area. This concept was reinforced by a non-statistical Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) survey conducted by Western Washington University’s Small Business Development Center (SBDC) with 54 manufacturers. They reported that the top two strengths of Whatcom County are Recreation and Quality of Life.

Reason for change: The WWU Small Business Development Center no longer conducts this survey.
Retain the diverse base of manufacturing and other family wage firms already here, as well as prepare for future opportunities by:

(i) working with our workforce development partners to ensure we focus on the skills enhancement needed for existing and future industries; and

(ii) maintaining an adequate supply of shovel-ready land to support the buildings and infrastructure companies will require.

The wage and job prospects in the service sector vary widely based on the nature of the employment. Retail positions offer relatively low wages and limited prospects for job growth in part due to the trend of retail sales shifting away from traditional storefronts to the internet. Conversely, computer programming and cyber-security positions offer entry-level wages that are typically well above the national average with some artificial intelligence positions attracting stratospheric starting salaries in other areas of the country.

As the developed world evolves away from a resource-based and high-volume/low-value-added manufacturing economy, most of the new generation of family wage jobs will likely come from knowledge-intensive industries such as computer software and high-value-added specialty manufacturing.

The CEDS and Whatcom Futures reports are valuable contributions to the challenge of improving the Whatcom County economy and Whatcom County has much to offer prospective employers as indicated by our latest informational resource www.ChooseWhatcom.com.

Based on non-agriculture payroll employment data in Whatcom County, the number of non-agricultural jobs has consistently grown since 1982. In general, the long-term trend in the county’s economic development is similar to state and national trends. More specifically, the service-producing employment sectors (trade, services, government, financial, transportation/utilities) have grown over time, while goods-production (mining, construction, and manufacturing) has decreased as a share of total employment. The goods-share of the Whatcom County economy declined from 33% in 1970 to 23% in 2000, while services rose from 67% to 77%.

Even though employment growth has surged, wage growth has lagged. Per capita personal income growth in Whatcom County also has not kept pace with the statewide average. In 1999, per capita personal income for Whatcom County was reported to be $23,228 while Washington State reported $30,380. From an analysis of the annual average wage in Whatcom County and Washington State since 1970, the wage-gap that is apparent in per capita personal income is even wider by this measure. In 2000, the average annual wage difference between the state and the county was $10,743. Adjusted for inflation, average wages in Whatcom County have declined from $23,872 to $19,958 over the last 30 years.
This overall decline of the average wage has been subject of considerable discussion because it is a national trend. Some of the explanations considered include an overall decline in high-paying goods-producing jobs accompanied by a large increase in lower-paying trade and service jobs.

The rapid growth in service-related jobs mirrors national and state trends that have occurred for several decades. As reported in the CEDS, forecasts suggest that these trends will continue through 2020 and beyond. Washington State's economy will continue to become more and more dominated by service jobs. It is expected that service jobs will account for 35% of Whatcom County's employment in 2020, up from 26% in 2000.

Reason for change: Employment information is included in the Background Summary in this Chapter. Wage information is in the CEDS and on the Internet.

Goal 7A: Promote a healthy economy which provides ample opportunity for family-wage jobs for diverse segments of the community, which is essential to the quality of life in the area.

Policy 7A-1: Together with the cities, provide an ample, developable land supply for commercial and industrial uses to provide opportunity for new and expanding firms wishing to locate or remain in Whatcom County.

Policy 7A-2: Foster a diverse, private-sector job base, which will provide family-wage jobs at the state median income level or greater, and facilitate the retention and expansion of existing businesses. An increasing body of research has concluded communities that prioritize and invest in Business Start Up, Retention, Expansion, and Recruitment will experience job growth, income growth, and economic resiliency.

Policy 7A-3: Employ innovative techniques to attract and recruit a mix of diversified industries for a broader economic base starting with the creation of a new economic development program to be funded ideally with monies collected under RCW 82.14.370. This program will be governed by a sunset provision whereby it will automatically terminate after seven years if it was not able to document its efforts were contributing to an equal or greater number of new jobs for the money invested in it, compared to other economic development projects funded by the community.

Policy 7A-4: In addition to stimulating family-wage jobs and employment and jobs in diverse sectors, plan for ensure we retain entry level and service-related jobs such as those necessary to support tourism,
recreation, and retailing, as well as those that relate to and other industries.

Policy 7A-5: Support a joint venture between the public and private sector in a training and technology partnership with local education resource providers to develop the interest of supporting the development of an educated work force as a key factor for economic success. Such partnerships should include Western Washington University, Whatcom Community College, Bellingham Technical College, Northwest Indian College, NW Northwest Workforce Development Council, and businesses and industries.

Policy 7A-6: Support "Industrial Incubators" to facilitate business start-up operations and entrepreneurship education for small companies which are bigger than cottage industries, but not yet ready for a stand-alone industrial site.

Policy 7A-7: Foster an adequate amount of preferred housing supply for all income levels as a prerequisite for a healthy economy.

Policy 7A-8: Enhance the environment for resource-based and knowledge-based industries and the growing service industry—with an emphasis on attracting employment to the communities in eastern Whatcom County.

Policy 7A-9: Produce a strategic plan to guide the county’s participation in tourism development-marketing.

Policy 7A-10: Establish a competitiveness review of policies, taxes/fees, processes, and other influences that impact county businesses.

Coordination/Cooperation and Public/Private Partnerships

In the mid-1980s, it was recognized that cooperation and coordination by businesses, jurisdictions and other entities were essential components to achieve a strong economy. The CEDS states that one of its purposes is communication and outreach that encourages local goal setting, public engagement, and a commitment to cooperation among the different levels of government, the business community, and the not-for-profit sector. Special efforts were made to accomplish these; both the City of Bellingham and Whatcom County hired staff with this focus.

The Port of Bellingham was designated as the Associate Development Organization (ADO) in Whatcom County by the County Executive in 2012. An ADO is intended to serve as a point of contact for local economic development activities by supporting business retention, expansion of existing businesses, and new business development.
In the late 1970s, Whatcom County and its communities were suffering economically. Reliance on natural resource harvesting and export to drive employment growth was insufficient to generate the jobs that were required. A work group of community leaders, local governments, and the private sector was convened, and the Stanford Research Institute was hired to assess opportunities. Their report emphasized:

a. Selling the State of Alaska on relocating the southern terminus of its ferry from Seattle to Bellingham;
b. Marketing to BC businesses interested in a foothold in the U.S. market; and
c. Promoting Whatcom County’s potential as a regional service center for Northwest Washington and the lower BC mainland, including retail, healthcare and manufacturing entrepreneurs.

The community rose to the challenge and the Alaska Ferry terminal was relocated to Bellingham and more than 3,000 primarily manufacturing jobs were added at a time when the county’s population was about half of what it is today.

The community recognizes both the global and local economy have changed significantly since the Stanford report was commissioned in the 1970s and the report itself is out of date. Nonetheless the community remains confident our history proves that with updated research, and an intelligent, focused approach, we can again bring much needed family-wage jobs to our community. Our success will depend on leveraging the significant expertise of our business community and our willingness to allocate sufficient financial resources for our economic development initiatives to have a meaningful impact.

New employers have traditionally emerged from three primary sources:

i. Canadians looking for skilled labor and cheaper industrial land than can be found in BC and/or access to the US market;
ii. Home grown entrepreneurs who have chosen to remain headquartered in the county as their businesses have grown; and
iii. Established business owners who have relocated because they are attracted to the county’s superior quality of life.

During the 1990s, the county’s small cities followed suit with the addition of either added staffing or contracted planners and three unincorporated areas (Birch Bay, Point Roberts and East County) assembled economic development committees. As evidenced in the Key Policies Related to Local Economic Development, this commitment to coordination and cooperation by all entities and jurisdictions throughout the county is more specifically revealed. As the area continues to grow and systems become more complex, it will be increasingly important to maintain this effort.

**Goal 7B:** Support increased public/private sector partnering among all entities involved with economic development.
Policy 7B-1: The Port of Bellingham, serving as the ADO, will work with the cities, the County, Chambers of Commerce, educational institutions, and other groups to assist retention and expansion of existing local businesses and to attract appropriate businesses to Whatcom County. Prior to an ADO contract renewal, the ADO’s performance shall be evaluated by surveying the members of the other organizations and private companies the ADO has been working with to promote economic development. Work with the Partnership for a Sustainable Economy, Chambers of Commerce, the Port of Bellingham, the ECD, and the Convention and Visitor Bureau and other groups to attract sustainable industry to Whatcom County and to assist expansion and retention of local businesses.

Policy 7B-2: Continue to work with the Partnership for a Sustainable Economy in informal meetings of informally meeting with staff from all the entities and jurisdictions involved with economic development to discuss issues of interest on a periodic basis.

Reason for change: The Partnership for a Sustainable Economy has transitioned into a group called the Small City Partnership, which is a forum for small city issues and economic development topics.

Policy 7B-3: With the Partnership for a Sustainable Economy, cities, Port of Bellingham, Council of Governments, Tribal governments, Northwest Economic Council (EDC), Chambers of Commerce, business, labor, education, and other social and community interests, continue to cooperate, on updating prepare and implementing the annual Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy project list and other economic analyses and plans.

Policy 7B-4: Identify, develop and match funding opportunities with the economic development projects contained within the CEDS report. Funding sources could include WA-CERT, the Economic Development Administration (EDA), Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), & Community Economic Revitalization Board (CERB), CWM, Rural Sales Tax (also known as the Economic Development Initiative or EDI fund), USDA Rural Development, and other types of grants, and loans, private investment, local match and many other federal, state, and local sources.

Policy 7B-5: Encourage utilization of current technology and efficient communications tools to disseminate information.

Policy 7B-6: A forward focused marketing strategy and a professional outbound lead generation program shall solicit inward investment from targeted industry sectors that are forecast to provide growth in
type of family wage jobs that the community is well positioned to
support.

Policy 7B-7: Provide these leads to organizations such as Team Whatcom, the
Port, non-profits, and private sector partners that offer the best fit
based on the nature of the lead and the partners commitment to
continuously demonstrate/verify high levels of responsiveness and
customer satisfaction.

Policy 7B-8: Leads related to economic development must at all times be
responded to promptly and professionally.

Infrastructure

Despite the many natural advantages for economic growth in Whatcom County,
several factors constrain the creation of future wealth in the county. One of the
factors is the lack of adequate infrastructure for future industrial development. An
adequate water distribution system is one example.

Water quantity and quality and the distribution system needed to supply water are
all elements of the water supply problem. In addition, the complex legal issues
regarding rights to water are being considered relative to planning for future growth
(see Utilities and Environment Chapters). Future water withdrawals from the
region's rivers and aquifers will be considered relative to the need to provide
adequate water for both in-stream and out-of-stream other users. In 1998, through
the enactment of state legislation, the boundaries of the Water Resource Inventory
Area No. 1 (WRIA 1) were established. Caucus - The Planning Unit, representing
various stakeholders, were designated to address, through local government,
water resource planning needs from a watershed perspective through local
government. The WRIA 1 Watershed Management Plan was completed in 2005.
This plan addresses water quantity, water quality, instream flow, and fish habitat.
This process is currently underway and is expected to provide technical tools to aid
future local planning for sustainable economic development.

Watershed planning must continue to be considered relative to the 20 year plans
for sewer, all-weather access roads, and appropriate storm drainage to encourage
new industries to easily locate in Whatcom County.

Effective government services, such as criminal and civil justice, public health and
safety, planning and development services, safe roads, and stormwater facilities
play an important role in supporting economic development. Adequate funding for
the increased demand for governmental services and the infrastructure to support
them is critical to expansion of the Whatcom County economy.

Along with planning for future water and other infrastructure for economic
development, electric energy supply and telecommunications are also important for
future economic growth within the county. The expansion or construction of new
transmission facilities is important for the locational decisions of the industries that might want to locate to Whatcom County. Also, PUD #1’s InfiNET Telecommunications Utility (Whatcom Open Network) has been established to facilitate the availability of advanced telecommunications services for public agencies and businesses in proximity to the InfiNET network facilities. Facilities include a backbone of fiber optic infrastructure, both existing and future, as InfiNET’s network expands countywide.

Reason for change: The PUD is no longer pursuing this particular project.

Goal 7C: Ensure adequate infrastructure to support existing and future business development and evolving technology.

Policy 7C-1: Continue to work with all involved parties to ensure an adequate water supply and distribution system to support economic growth.

Policy 7C-2: Encourage the provision of adequate transportation infrastructure, including roads to all industrial sites.

Policy 7C-3: Work with service providers for a dependable electric power supply, alternative energy sources, communications, and evolving technology to support existing and future business development.

Policy 7C-4: Encourage location of industrial areas, especially where sewer and water service and all weather access can be readily provided when necessary.

Policy 7C-5: Support the efforts of the PUD #1 and area communication and cable companies to get a fiber optic network throughout Whatcom County.

Policy 7C-6: Consider proposals for an east-west rail line between Cherry Point and Sumas including stops in Lynden.

Reason for change: Any such proposal would be considered under the permitting authorities that exist.

Policy 7C-67: Participate in the ongoing, implementation and operation of the countywide water resources management body (WRIA #1) for Whatcom County.

Policy 7C-78: Recognize the importance of governmental services and facilities to support economic development. Update capital facility plans and appropriate adequate funding for public facility upgrade or expansion necessary to serve projected population and business growth.

Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan
Policy 7C-89: Recognize the importance of integrated transportation planning to economic development.

Policy 7C-9: Work with Bellingham Whatcom County Tourism, and the cities to develop and implement a common Countywide Way-Finding system that encourages people traveling on the I-5 corridor to detour and easily find the many tourist attractions that Whatcom County has to offer.

Policy 7C-10: Develop plans and prioritize facilities for the County to become internationally recognized as a “Trail-Town” tourist destination (one that offers 100 miles or more of contiguous walking/hiking trails) by 2027.

Regulations/Processing

Governmental regulations are both a perceived and a real problem. Sufficient regulatory control and enforcement is needed to protect the environment and general health, safety, and welfare of the community and also to assure minimum quality standards to protect development investments from adverse effects from neighboring development. This must be tempered to avoid excessive cost, inflexibility, unpredictability, and excessive time delays. Ample land is needed with proper zoning to ensure a wide range of choice and preclude excessive land prices. Such lands should be located in areas suitable for development, thus minimizing the need for regulatory controls.

Site-specific environmental constraints such as wetlands, streams, and river protection areas reduce land use options for many businesses and industrial firms. The current incremental, site-by-site approach to regulating environmental resources is considered an impediment to achieving economic vitality goals. One step toward addressing this issue is the initiation by the Port of Bellingham to conduct an--a land capacity analysis, which includes an inventory of the supply and availability of industrial and commercial properties in the county and to conduct--a forecast of future demands--and needs--

Goal 7D: Consistent with other goals of the county, strive for balanced, clear, and predictable overall policies, practices and regulations which do not unnecessarily or inadvertently prevent, confuse, delay, or create costly hurdles restricting effective and desirable economic development.

Policy 7D-1: Work with state and federal agencies to coordinate and streamline environmental review.

Policy 7D-2: In--implementing this plan, do Consider conducting in-depth environmental analysis for comprehensive plans and subarea plans
to limit the need for future analysis by the private sector to a few issues that are unique to a specific project and cannot be reasonably analyzed at a subarea level.

Policy 7D-3: Seek grants to develop government-sponsored environmental impact statements for specific industrial sites.

Reason for change: Policies 7D-2 and 7K-5 address addresses programmatic environmental analysis.

Policy 7D-34: Integrate and simplify regulations to make them more understandable and user-friendly.

Policy 7D-45: Utilize graphic illustrations to explain choices which cannot be clearly conveyed in a few words.

Policy 7D-56: Utilize private sector professional review, where appropriate, to streamline the permitting process and provide a choice of reviewing options for applicants including engineers who could provide pre-approved engineered drawings.

Policy 7D-67: Streamline and coordinate the permit process and sustain a supportive customer service approach towards permitting.

Policy 7D-78: Develop a computerized system, similar to the public library system, Use technology and an Internet web site so the public computer owners can receive information on the status of projects, latest drafts of documents, and access to general resources via the Internet.

Policy 7D-89: Create options for greater flexibility in the regulatory and development review process.

Policy 7D-910: Consider the vision statements and action items in the CEDS when conducting local planning processes. Review and incorporate into local planning processes the goals and policies summarized from countywide planning documents in the CEDS appendix document: Key Policies Related to Local Economic Development.

Proximity To Canada

The impact of the British Columbia population on the local Whatcom County economy is considered both an asset and a liability, depending on the particular type of impact being considered. The large Canadian consumer population has created an inordinately large retail sector in Whatcom County, increasing jobs, retail sales, taxes, and traffic. In 1994, estimates indicated that over 25% of all county employment was related to Canadian consumer activity, and 30% to 40% of all county retail activity depended on the Canadian shopper. Over time, the
impacts of Canadian consumer activity have fluctuated greatly, primarily in relationship to the value of the Canadian dollar and more recently due to increased security issues. Between 1995 and 2001, taxable retail sales declined 2%, 10% and 27% in Everson, Blaine and Sumas, respectively, according to Washington Department of Revenue.

Retail jobs tend to be low-wage, frequently part-time, and without benefits. Even though these jobs can prove to be a valuable asset to a community by providing supplemental family income, part-time work availability, and entry-level positions, when this is factored with the rising cost of living in Whatcom County, it becomes apparent that many local retail jobs do not pay a living wage. This fact has important ramifications for funding public sector services, provision of affordable housing, meeting rising medical costs, and supply of other basic services.

A more positive aspect of the proximity to Canada is the opportunity for job creation through BC to provide for Canadian companies who want to look for a great location to expand or relocate in the United States to broaden their market or enjoy other economic advantages.

**Goal 7E:** Enhance the economic trade, tourism, and industrial siting advantages of the county's location adjacent to the Canadian border.

**Policy 7E-1:** Support attractions for Canadians and other visitors so they will remain in the community longer and distribute their spending throughout the community. Some of the examples would include support for such items as the following:

- Events such as the "Ski to Sea" race and festival.
- The Whatcom Museum of History and Art, Mount Baker Theater, other historic and cultural centers, and community revitalization efforts.
- Parks and open spaces.
- The Bellingham Festival of Music.
- The Mount Baker outdoor recreation area.
- Farmers markets and other natural resource based activities.
- Projects, events and activities of unincorporated areas such as Point Roberts, Birch Bay and East County.

**Policy 7E-2:** Work cooperatively with jurisdictions in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia along with US and Canadian national
governments to facilitate the development of economic, transportation, and environmental initiatives.

Policy 7E-3: Use Western Washington University as a regional resource and major draw for Canadians and others who participate in symposiums and other regional events.

Policy 7E-4: Continue to provide assistance and the opportunities for Canadian companies to relocate or set up a second plant in Whatcom County, while at the same time encouraging our companies to explore and develop markets in Canada.

Business Retention and Expansion

Businesses create jobs, supply needed goods and services, and enhance economic opportunities for the residents of the County. It is also important to encourage locally owned and operated businesses to re-invest profits and pay wages in the local community. A local company with national or international interests, or a national firm with major local investment can provide substantial support to local causes and educational and cultural activities and the tax base. Local businesses use local banks and other support services which help keep dollars cycling through the local economy. Therefore, business retention and expansion are important elements that support the economic well-being of the community.

In the “Evaluation for Industry Recruitment in Whatcom County and Cherry Point” study conducted for the Port of Bellingham and PUD #1 in 2000, it was shown that the best industrial sectors for targeting success include small (20-50 employees) to medium-sized (50-250 employees) firms. Target locations include firms in the Seattle and BC market, as well as industries already present in the county that are ready for expansion and retention.

Goal 7F: Encourage development that creates local re-investment funds and provides jobs in the local community.

Policy 7F-1: Support existing local businesses locally as the major contributors of job creation and regeneration and afford them every opportunity to continue their success in the community.

Policy 7F-2: Encourage businesses whose products and services can be marketed beyond the borders of Whatcom County, both domestically and internationally.

Policy 7F-3: Encourage firms to contribute financially as partners with the public sector in sharing the costs for civic and cultural needs of the community-at-large.

Policy 7F-4: Enhance opportunities for increased resource-based (agricultural, forest, fisheries, and mining products) value added industries.
Policy 7F-5: Encourage utilization of existing and future resources available through local agencies, entities, and organizations, such as the "Evaluation for Industry Recruitment in Whatcom County and Cherry Point" and industry-sector analyses being completed by information from the Western Washington University Center for Economic and Business Research.

Economic Growth and Environmental Quality

Often economic development and environmental protection are seen as opposites. Because growth can increase pressure on sensitive critical areas and resource lands there can be some truth to this. However, both economic vitality and environmental quality are interrelated and are extremely important to the community. Economic development requires adequate water supply as a fundamental need. The fishing and shellfishing industries are particularly dependent on water quantity, good water quality, and habitat. The tourist industry needs these same attributes. Washington CEO, dated November 1993, printed a survey, which ranked quality of life and environment as first and third, respectively, as reasons that other businesses are to be attracted to Whatcom County, the State of Washington. Conversely a strong economy that provides well-paying jobs allows the leisure time and the resources to focus on environmental protection.

Goal 7G: Coordinate economic development with environmental, resources, and other comprehensive plan land use and open space policies and measures to enhance the community's overall quality of life.

Policy 7G-1: Recognize the natural environment as a major asset and manage environmental resources accordingly. We need both economic prosperity and environmental sustainability.

Policy 7G-2: Review the environmental protection policies plan for Whatcom County to coordinate with and incorporate economic development objectives.

Policy 7G-3: Provide support to Whatcom County's tourist industry to maintain and enhance a balance between the economic benefits of tourism and the local quality of life.

Policy 7G-4: Encourage sustainability a "sustainable materials economy" by:

- Supporting waste reduction, re-use, recycling and the processing of used and waste resources into economically viable products; and
• Supporting renewable energy, state-of-the-art technology, and conservation techniques to minimize demands on resources such as water, energy, and other natural and developed resources.

• Pursuing energy resiliency and self-sufficiency by establishing renewable energy overlay zones, and by revisiting restrictions on the development of wind energy systems that protect public health and safety.

Policy 7G-5: Coordinate environmental and economic planning efforts.

Policy 7G-6: Address environmental issues on a county-wide basis so that areas like the Cherry Point Industrial Area or public access areas such as marinas or the airport can expand as necessary using mitigation banking or other appropriate mitigation measures.

Natural Resource Based Industries

Natural resource based industries are agriculture, forestry, fishing and mining. While accounting for less than 5% of the total county employment, resource based industries are still major components of the economy. For example, the market value of crop and livestock product sales from Whatcom County farms was over $357 million in 2012 (Census of Agriculture). Over $26 million in timber was harvested in 2012 from private and public lands in Whatcom County (State Department of Revenue). Additionally, almost $11 million was paid to fishermen for salmon, ground-fish and shellfish at Whatcom County ports in 2012 (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife). Farming, forestry, fishing, and mining are important to the economic health of the County. In 1997, the total value of farm products produced and sold in the county was $241.6 million, ranking 5th among counties in the state. Some resource jobs tend to be high paying and it is the resource industries that give Whatcom County its distinctive flavor.

Agriculture is one of Whatcom County’s largest economic drivers. Whatcom County holds the most agricultural and farming land within western Washington, according to the 2014 Whatcom Futures Report. Additionally, according to U.S. Department of Agriculture’s 2012 Census of Agriculture, 1,702 Whatcom County farms produced a market value of $357 million in crops and livestock that year. Locally produced milk produced in 2013 reached an all-time high market value of $246.1 million. Raspberries and blueberries combined for a record market value of $123.6 million in 2014.

The reduction in jobs in the resource industries not only lowers the average wages; it also disproportionately eliminates jobs from different segments of society. For example, dwindling fisheries have impacted those who, historically, have relied on fishing for a livelihood. According to the Washington State Department of Employment Security, commercial fishing has declined to 71 reported local jobs in 2000, down from a 1990-1994 average of 208 local jobs per year. Likewise, the
local shellfish industry has suffered significant losses. The Dungeness crab fleet has been affected by increased competition, imposition of quotas and shorter harvest seasons. Also, due to deteriorating water quality, the State of Washington Department of Health has prohibited commercial shellfish harvest within Drayton Harbor (Blaine) and Portage Bay (off the Lummi Peninsula). In response, the County created Shellfish Protection Districts for these waterbodies and local advisory committees are actively working on strategies and actions to reduce pollution sources.

Forest industry job losses also severely impact families living in the eastern part of the county. In addition, consolidation of farmsteads and land use is occurring more rapidly in Whatcom County than in other parts of the state. In Whatcom County, the number of farms declined by 11% between 1992 and 1997, while the state declined by only 6%. Also, the acreage devoted to farming has been steadily declining. Between 1992 and 1997, the county acreage fell 12%. During the same period, the state declined by only 3%.

New technology and improved practices are continually being evaluated. With the decrease in farmland and increase in farm productivity, more manure waste is being generated in decreasing areas of agricultural land. Thus, efforts to use waste for biogas (energy production) is under study.

Reason for change: Agriculture, forestry and mining are addressed in Chapter 8. Some of the above statistics change over time. With the availability of information on the Internet, it is generally not necessary to have this level of detail in the Comprehensive Plan.

**Goal 7H:** To promote economic diversity, continue to support the resource industries as significant elements of the local economy including the employment base.

**Policy 7H-1:** Ensure that sufficient agricultural land, support services, and skills are available to encourage a healthy and diversified agricultural economy.

**Policy 7H-2:** Work with other agencies, Tribal governments, and other groups to improve the condition of the fishery resource, including habitat maintenance and enhancement, especially for habitats utilized by threatened and endangered fish species.

**Policy 7H-3:** Maintain the commercial forestland base of Whatcom County to assure the industry’s continued economic viability and sustainable harvest.

**Policy 7H-4:** As part of a broad-based economy, foster productive timber, agriculture, and fisheries industries in a sustainable manner.
Policy 7H-5: Support mining, which is compatible with other land use and environmental policies, including surface mining of sand, gravel, and rock and subsurface mining of other minerals found in Whatcom County, such as gold and silver.

Policy 7H-6: Promote the expansion of "value added" production of secondary products and resources to support the primary resource industries and maintain wealth and jobs in the local community.

Policy 7H-7: Encourage growth of tourism, and recreational activities, and businesses that provide for diversity of the natural resource industry, provided they comply with County regulation, the countywide planning policies, and when located in a rural area, preserve the rural character of the area.

Policy 7H-8: Develop and support more programs to promote ag-tourism and ag-education to increase public awareness of the nutritional and economic value of agriculture and quality food production.

Unemployment and Underemployment

Over the past five years (1996-2001), unemployment has tended to run nearly a percentage point higher in Whatcom County (5.8%) than in the state as a whole (5.2). Unemployment tends to affect minorities harder; thus, lessening the opportunity for cultural diversity. However, this relationship has reversed during 2002 with the 10 month average unemployment rates of some more rural counties of the state, it has averaged the highest of three similar Westside counties of Thurston (Olympia), Kitsap (Bremerton), and Pierce (Tacoma) since 1990. Adjacent and more rural Skagit County has consistently held a higher unemployment rate since 1990 than Whatcom County.

Average yearly unemployment rates in Whatcom County have generally tracked unemployment rates in Washington State as a whole. In the 1990s, Whatcom County unemployment was slightly higher than the state. However, state unemployment has generally been higher from 2002 to 2013.
Underemployment reflects underutilization of the productive capacity of the employed population. Measurable statistics are not available to monitor this issue but should be considered as the employment base of Whatcom County shifts from being a resource-based economy to one of services-producing employment. Cottage industry and home-based businesses, also minimally measured, have an impact on the employment base. Graduates from Western Washington University, area high schools, and the community and technical colleges desiring to remain in the area are another sector of the population that is underutilized.

**Goal 7J:** In an economic strategy for Whatcom County, address unemployment and underemployment as important issues and continue the effort to increase family wage jobs.

**Policy 7J-1:** Support creation of job opportunities for local residents, especially family wage jobs to decrease unemployment and underemployment.

**Policy 7J-2:** Support economic development that recognizes and respects the needs, concerns, rights, and resources of a diversity of cultural groups, and allow them every opportunity to participate and benefit in this process in full partnership with the community-at-large.
Policy 7J-3: Focus on absorbing and retraining displaced and discouraged workers and addressing the skills gap through grants, training by the Northwest Workforce Council, Through—grants—Bellingham Technical College, Whatcom Community College, Northwest Indian College, and other opportunities—focus on absorbing and retraining displaced workers from declining industries.

Geographic Diversity

A final issue with the local economy is the location of the majority of jobs in the western-most portion of the lowlands area of Whatcom County. This is where the majority of the population lives and works, and the infrastructure is available, and where most of the jobs should continue to be located. People from smaller communities located throughout the County generally have longer commutes. But as the commercial forestry, farming, and fishing job base declines and people disperse more throughout the county, commuting distances increase, creating greater impacts on the road system. Also, there is it creates additional need for more discretionary income for travel costs.

These and other area-specific issues have spurred three communities to focus efforts on economic development: the creation of three economic development regions in the unincorporated areas of Whatcom County: Point Roberts; Birch Bay; and East County. Each has successfully developed an area Economic Development Plan and has either completed or is in the process of completing a Sub-Area plan, with the Planning Department. The ongoing work of these groups is crucial to addressing the most urgent and long-range planning needs in these areas—the most rural areas of Whatcom County such as loss of family-wage jobs and tax-base revenues, and the increased demand for services by a growing residential population.

Goal 7K: Enable a geographic balance for economic growth within the capacities of the county's natural resources, natural systems, public services, and public facilities.

Policy 7K-1: Support small and cottage businesses in rural areas that minimally impact productive agricultural, forest, or mineral resource land.

Policy 7K-2: Designate adequate zoning to allow business and industrial development where it is needed and most appropriate.

Policy 7K-3: Locate new commercial or industrial development along Guide Meridian within designated urban growth areas, Rural Community LAMIRDs, and Rural Business LAMIRDs in a manner that does not disrupt the Guide’s regional transportation function.

Policy 7K-4: Consider establishing more—Encourage resource and tourism based recreational, commercial, and cottage industry—uses to create economic opportunity in the rural areas of the county.
Policy 7K-5: Support the implementation of land use concepts as defined in Chapter Two by seeking grants to provide technical support and complete necessary programmatic environmental analysis to facilitate reduced time frames and duplication in the SEPA process.

Policy 7K-6: Support long-term employment efforts in the unincorporated areas of the county, such as those stated in the Point Roberts, Birch Bay, and east County Economic Development Plans and Sub-Area Plans.

Policy 7K-7: Support efforts and/or organizations trying to achieve agricultural diversity such as:

- niche markets for local products.
- technical assistance or educational programs.
- farmers' markets.
- value-added or innovative ag-products or services.
- other product outlets.
- community education and information dissemination.

Policy 7K-7B: Support agriculture, agricultural processing, and manufacturing as a high priority in future allocations of water rights.

Policy 7K-8: Within urban growth areas, balance areas planned for housing and jobs to potentially shorten commute times.

Policy 7K-9: Recognize high speed Internet and cellular coverage are essential for all regions of our economy to succeed.

Policy 7K-10: Encourage, and if necessary provide incentives, for high speed Internet and cellular infrastructure to be deployed in areas of the County such as the Columbia Valley.

Local Food System

Whatcom County is home to a robust agricultural production industry, marine harvest industry, as well as an associated local consumption industry. To maintain and advance the quality and quantity of food produced in Whatcom County, consideration must be given to interconnected sectors which support a thriving food system, including land, water, fishing, farming, labor, processing, transportation, consumption, aquaculture and waste. A vibrant local food system is a community asset to be protected, strengthened, planned for and celebrated.
Goal 7L: Strengthen the local food system and take steps to improve conditions for a healthy, resilient, and prosperous food economy.

Policy 7L-1: Encourage government, institutions, and local businesses to purchase food produced within Whatcom County when available.

Policy 7L-2: Encourage local farmers and producers to sell their products to local markets.

Policy 7L-3: Support development plans and zoning changes that increase access to healthy and locally grown food products.

Policy 7L-4: Support food outlets such as grocery stores, convenience stores, and local food markets that provide fresh, healthy foods, especially in underserved areas.

Policy 7L-5: Support efforts and/or organizations seeking to achieve economic diversity within the food system such as:
- Niche markets for local agricultural products;
- Technical assistance or educational programs;
- Farmer’s markets;
- Value-added or innovative agricultural products or services;
- Farm-to-school and farm-to-institution;
- Agricultural diversity;
- Food access and affordability; and
- Community gardens, education, and information dissemination.

Policy 7L-6: Support efforts to protect water quality and quantity, soil health, and best management practices as related to the food system.

Policy 7L-7: Encourage communication and collaboration across and within all sectors of the food system and support efforts/organizations working to build common understanding and to facilitate better collaborative effort toward an equitable, sustainable, and healthy food system for all.

Policy 7L-8: Support establishment of community-wide food system development plans.

Policy 7L-9: Support healthy and safe working conditions as well as healthy and safe living conditions for farmworkers.

Policy 7L-10: Support organizations that provide technical assistance, educational programs, and general support to people and businesses within the local food system.
Policy 7-11: Consider food waste systems that reduce food waste and capture food waste nutrients.

**Economics-Action-Plan**

**Coordination**

1. In addition to present efforts at various levels to coordinate programs, work with the Partnership for a Sustainable Economy, the Bellingham/Whatcom Economic Development Council, are Chambers of Commerce, Bellingham/Whatcom Convention and Visitors Bureau and other agencies on a more formal basis than in the past in order to ensure a coordinated economic development program in Whatcom County.

   **Reason for change:** This is similar to concepts in Policy 7B-3.

2. Work with the Partnership for a Sustainable Economy and all other participating entities and jurisdictions to implement the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy as designated.

   **Reason for change:** This is addressed by Policy 7B-3.

3. Utilize the information and data contained in the CEDS document and accompanying appendices along with the Goals, Strategies and Action Steps as a guide to all planning and development efforts.

   **Reason for change:** The CEDS is addressed in Policies 7B-3, 7B-4 and 7D-10.

**Economic-Development-Strategy**

4. Through the Partnership for a Sustainable Economy, Bellingham/Whatcom EDC or other designated entity, ensure that the CEDS is updated every two years or as necessary to qualify for federal programs.

   **Reason for change:** This is addressed by Policy 7B-3.

4.5. In addition, and working with the Partnership for a Sustainable Economy, Bellingham/Whatcom EDC or other designated entities, ensure the development of a strategic plan for economic development utilizing the benchmarking approach to measure specific objectives. The strategic plan should specifically address the following:

   - Develop benchmarks to measure success of economic development in the county:
     - Increase of the median household income of the county;
     - Reduction of the county unemployment rate.
• Improve turn-around time on development permit processing.
• Increase the percentage of "owner-occupied" dwellings in the county.
• Increased worker access to affordable housing.
• Increase citizen satisfaction of county government including permit processing.
• Increased access to healthcare.
• Assess the degree to which the following commitments stated in the CEDS are implemented.

• The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies overarching goals (below) and their accompanying strategies:

  Goal A: Finance and maintain appropriate infrastructure for community and economic development.
  Goal B: Ensure sustainable development and uses of natural resources.
  Goal C: Promote a diverse economy by sector and location.
  Goal D: Foster collaborative working relationships among economic development stakeholders at the community, state, federal, international and tribal levels.
  Goal E: Provide and retain a high quality workforce.
  Goal F: Increase public understanding and involvement in economic issues.

• Consider any additional recommendations which may surface as a result of the goals and policies adopted by Partnership for a Sustainable Economy, EDC, Chambers of Commerce, Convention and Visitors Bureau, and local governments, and economic development committees, such as cities, towns, and Port Authorities.

• Strategies which acknowledge and address environmental issues including trade-off, areas where environmental and economic issues have positive linkages and creative solutions to the environmental contracts for specific development areas.

• Strategies which take advantage of our proximity to Canada (see policies under Goal 7E).

• Strategies which address the needs of local businesses (see policies under Goal 7F).

• Strategies which address our local resource industries (see policies under Goal 7H).

• Strategies which address employment issues for all of Whatcom County's citizens (see policies under Goal 7J).
• Strategies that support sustainable economic development demonstration projects.

• A mechanism for review of benchmarks and update the plan components.

Reason for change: The Whatcom County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) is being updated in 2014-2015. It may be appropriate in future CEDS updates to establish benchmarks, but it is not necessary to have two separate economic development plans or duplicate such planning efforts.

5.6. Working through the Convention and Visitors Bureau and with the other governmental entities in Whatcom County, draft a program for expenditure of hotel/motel tax, which maximizes the draw for visitors to Whatcom County.

Reason for change: The County budget states that "Pursuant to RCW 67.28.210, the county levies an excise tax on hotel, motel, or other lodging sales. The revenue collected from this tax is used for the operation of the Bellingham/Whatcom County Visitor/Convention Center, the Mount Baker Foothills Visitor Center and various other activities that promote tourism in Whatcom County." County elected officials determine how to utilize tax revenues in the budget.

Specific County Tasks

Infrastructure

6.7. Provide adequate levels of cost effective service to support business development and retention in all areas of the county when adopting and updating capital facilities plans.

Reason for change: Capital facilities are addressed by Policy 7C-7.

7.8. Working with the special districts, citizens in proposed Small Towns and others, develop a strategy for providing sewer service to suitable industrial areas in situations that will comply with GMA.

Reason for change: The relationship between provision of sewer and industrial sites is addressed in Policy 7C-4.

8.9. Work with the Port, PUD, COG, cities and other entities in planning and developing a countywide fiber optic system.

Reason for change: This is generally addressed by Policy 7C-5.

Regulations/Processing
10. Using goals and strategies contained within the Key Policies Related to Local Economic Development, review and re-draft the land use codes.
   - integrate and simplify regulations.
   - remove barriers to recycle product manufacturing in Title 20.
   Reason for change: Simplifying regulations is addressed by Policy 7D-3. Zoning for industrial uses is generally addressed in Policy 7K-2. Recycling and processing of used products and waste into new products is addressed by Policy 7G-4.

11. Continue to improve the permit and development review process so that greater communication and efficiency will result to better expedite the application process and provide better communication when information is needed.
   Reason for change: The permit process is addressed by Policies 7D-5 and 7D-6.

12. Develop various permitting process tracks such as:
   - rapid processing for developments that conform to a prescribed set of regulations.
   - more flexibility for more creative proposals where more information can be provided.
   Reason for change: In 2013, Whatcom County Planning and Development Services participated in a “Lean Academy” event designed to facilitate continuous improvements to the permitting process. This process has reduced residential permit turnaround times.

13. Continue to improve customer service, train and/or cross-train permitting staff to provide excellent and expeditious customer service.
   Reason for change: Customer service is addressed by Policy 7D-6.

13.14. Based on the result of the Industrial Land Availability, Conditions and Marketing Project currently being completed through the Port, continue to update the Comprehensive Plan of the County and other jurisdictions in the County to identify additional industrial land that may be needed including the areas identified in the proposed urban growth areas by each of the cities for longer planning time frames beyond 20 years and up to 50 years in order to prevent premature division of land that would preclude large-parcel sites needed for future industrial sites.
   Reason for change: Industrial land supply and zoning is addressed by Policies 7A-1 and 7K-2. UGA land use planning, including planning for industrial uses, is conducted in conjunction with the cities in accordance with the GMA.
14.15. In accordance with the CEDS recommendations and other recommendations review the permit process to achieve a streamlined, user friendly approach that can turn around permits faster without losing the original objective of the review.

Reason for change: The permit process is addressed by Policies 7D-5 and 7D-6.

**Water Issues**

15.16. Work with the Public Utility District No. 1 and others to implement the Coordinated Water System Plan including adopting a satellite system management program.

Reason for change: The Coordinated Water System Plan is addressed in Chapter 5, Utilities.

16.17. Actively pursue resolution of water rights issues by maintaining a major role in working with user groups, interest groups and other jurisdictions on the Nooksack River issues and other related water questions.

Reason for change: Water rights are addressed in Chapter 11, Environment.

17.18. Continue to work with the WRIA #1 process and implement recommendations resulting from the collaborative watershed management project currently being completed.

Reason for change: WRIA is addressed in Policy 7C-6.
Memorandum

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

FROM: Matt Aamot, Senior Planner

THROUGH: Mark Personius, Assistant Director

DATE: April 5, 2016

SUBJECT: Comp Plan Update – Chapter 7 (Economics)

As you know, Whatcom County has initiated a multi-year project to update the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan and conduct the urban growth area (UGA) review by June 30, 2016, as required by the Growth Management Act. Staff is requesting to make a presentation to the Council’s Planning and Development Committee relating to Chapter 7 - Economics on April 19, 2016.

The Council has requested a summary of the substantive changes made by the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission considered Chapter 7 – Economics on June 11 and July 9, 2015. Planning Commission changes to the staff draft include the following:

**Goal 7A-5 (Training/Technology Partnerships)** – The existing policy discusses public and private partnerships relating to training and technology. The policy lists certain educational institutions that should be included in these partnerships. The Planning Commission added the Northwest Indian College to the list, as shown below.

Support a joint venture between the public and private sector in a training and technology partnership with local education resource providers to develop in the interest of supporting the development of an educated workforce as a key factor for economic success. Such partnerships should include Western Washington University, Whatcom Community College, Bellingham Technical College, **Northwest Indian College**, NW Northwest Workforce Development Council, and businesses and industries.
**Infrastructure Section Text** – The Planning Commission changed “Caucuses” to “Planning Unit” in the paragraph below, which appears in the “Infrastructure” section of the Economics Chapter.

Water quantity and quality and the distribution system needed to supply water are all elements of the water supply problem. In addition, the complex legal issues regarding rights to water are being considered relative to planning for future growth (see Utilities and Environment Chapters). Future water withdrawals from the region’s rivers and aquifers will be considered relative to the need to provide adequate water for both in-stream and out-of-stream other users. In 1998, through the enactment of state legislation, the boundaries of the Water Resource Inventory Area No. 1 (WRIA 1) were established. Caucuses—The Planning Unit representing various stakeholders is were designated to address, through local government, water resource planning needs from a watershed perspective. The WRIA 1 Watershed Management Plan was completed in 2005. This plan addresses water quantity, water quality, instream flow, and fish habitat. This process is currently underway and is expected to provide technical tools to aid future local planning for sustainable economic development.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter. We look forward to discussing it with you.
Memorandum

TO: WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL

FROM: Regina Delahunt, Director

DATE: APRIL 12, 2016

RE: HEALTH REVIEW OF 2016 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN–ECONOMICS CHAPTER

Overview:
As one step in the implementation of the County’s Healthy Planning Resolution #2015-038, Health Department staff will provide an overview of health recommendations for selected chapters of the 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update to the County Council.

Process:
The process for developing and incorporating the recommendations included:

- Technical review of the 2008 Comprehensive Plan by Alta Planning and Design (2013), identifying opportunities to strengthen specific policies in the plan from a health perspective
- Planning workshop to prioritize health topics and associated policy recommendations with Public Health Advisory Board (PHAB), Planning and Development Services (PDS) staff, Whatcom County Health Department (WCHD) staff, and community stakeholders (March 2014)
- Refinement of policy recommendations based on PHAB, County PDS and stakeholder input (Spring 2014)
- Correspondence and connection with PDS to integrate recommendations into draft chapters, as feasible and appropriate
- Support for PHAB feedback to Planning Commission on specific issues and recommendations
- Review and analysis of the status of health recommendations in the Planning Commission’s draft chapters

Economics Chapter Recommendations:
All of WCHD’s policy recommendations were either included in the 2016 draft or otherwise adequately addressed.
Separately from 2014 recommendations made to PDS, WCHD signed on to a recommendation from the Whatcom Food Network’s (WFN) Steering Committee, dated January 25, 2016, suggesting a new section to the Economics Chapter (a proposed Goal 7L) that encourages support for the value and needs of Whatcom County’s food system. WCHD supports this recommendation in light of the potential for local food systems efforts to improve environmental health, access to healthy foods, and the health and safety of all those who work in the food system. National organizations, such as the American Public Health Association (APHA) and American Planning Association, also encourage policies similar to those proposed by the WFN Steering Committee. A policy statement from the APHA “encourages cooperative efforts in local food systems, with governmental support, to— a. Improve local food marketing, distribution, and processing capacity and infrastructure, b. Establish and promote food policy councils to enable evaluating food systems and recommend changes, c. Reduce barriers to obtaining sustainable, locally produced, fair trade and healthy foods, d. Increase state and local cooperative extension program activities targeted to small farms and those producing fruits and vegetables.” Additionally, a review of public health literature conducted by staff in 2014 indicated that policies that promote local food production show some evidence of improving access to healthy foods, as well as improvements to other determinants of health, such as economic status and environmental health.²


Local Food System

Whatcom County is home to a robust agricultural production industry, marine harvest industry, as well as an associated local consumption industry. To maintain and advance the quality and quantity of food produced in Whatcom County, consideration must be given to interconnected sectors which support a thriving food system, including land, water, fishing, farming, labor, processing, transportation, consumption, aquaculture and waste. A vibrant local food system is a community asset to be protected, strengthened, planned for and celebrated.

Goal 7L: Strengthen the local food system and take steps to improve conditions for a healthy, resilient, and prosperous food economy.

Policy 7L-1: Encourage government, institutions, and local businesses to purchase food produced within Whatcom County when available.

Policy 7L-2: Encourage local farmers and producers to sell their products to local markets.

Policy 7L-3: Support development plans and zoning changes that increase access to healthy and locally grown food products

Policy 7L-4: Support food outlets such as grocery stores, convenience stores, and local food markets that provide healthy foods in underserved areas.

Policy 7L-5: Support efforts and/or organizations seeking to achieve economic diversity within the food system such as:

- Niche markets for local agricultural products
- Farmer’s markets
- Value-added or innovative agricultural products or services
- Farm-to-school and farm-to-institution
- Agricultural diversity
- Food access and affordability
- Community gardens

Policy 7L-6: Support efforts to protect water quality and quantity, soil health, and best management practices as related to the food system.
Policy 7L-7: Encourage communication and collaboration across and within all sectors of the food system and support efforts/organizations working to build common understanding and to facilitate better collaborative effort toward an equitable, sustainable, and healthy food system for all.

Policy 7L-8: Support establishment of community-wide food system development plans.

Policy 7L-9: Support healthy and safe working conditions as well as healthy and safe living conditions for farmworkers.

Policy 7L-10: Work towards a fair and equitable food system that honors and supports the people working within it.

Policy 7L-11: Support organizations that provide technical assistance, educational programs, and general support to people and businesses within the local food system.

Policy 7L-12: Consider food waste systems that reduce food waste and capture food waste nutrients.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal/Policy</th>
<th>2008 Comp Plan Goal Language</th>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Priority Ranking (High-Medium-Low)</th>
<th>Status in Planning Commission Recommended Draft</th>
<th>2014 Notes to PDS:</th>
<th>2016 Notes:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7K</td>
<td>GOAL 7K: Enable a geographic balance for economic growth within the capacities of the county's natural resources, natural systems, public services, and public facilities.</td>
<td>Keep/Strength</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Retained</td>
<td>H, K</td>
<td>Policy priority from workshop: Balance commercial and residential development (jobs and housing) within county to reduce the number of people who must commute a long distance to work; prioritize commercial/economic development strategies that match jobs to existing residents' skills and employment needs. We're not sure how/if the language should be changed, but the above priority policy seems to apply here.</td>
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<td>7K1</td>
<td>Policy 7K-1: Support small and cottage businesses in rural areas that minimally impact productive agricultural, forest, or mineral resource land.</td>
<td>Keep.</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Retained</td>
<td>H, K</td>
<td>Policy priority from workshop is addressed in new Policy 7K-9</td>
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<td>7K2</td>
<td>Policy 7K-2: Designate adequate zoning to allow business and industrial development where it is needed and most appropriate.</td>
<td>Keep.</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Retained</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>Community stakeholders advocated for &quot;complete neighborhoods&quot; that include residential, services, and employment opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7K7</td>
<td>Policy 7K-7: Support efforts and/or organizations trying to achieve agricultural diversity such as: -niche markets for local products -technical assistance or educational programs -farmers’ markets -value-added or innovative ag products or services -other product outlets -community education and information dissemination</td>
<td>Keep.</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Retained</td>
<td>H</td>
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<tr>
<td>Goal/Policy</td>
<td>Sample Language</td>
<td>Recommendation</td>
<td>Priority Ranking (High-Medium-Low)</td>
<td>Status in Planning Commission Recommended Draft</td>
<td>Associated Health Impacts</td>
<td>2014 Notes to PDS:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Utilize existing economic development incentives and/or create new incentives to encourage stores to sell fresh, healthy foods such as produce in underserved areas (e.g. tax breaks, grants and loans, conditional use zoning, dedicated assistance funds for infrastructure improvements such as refrigeration and signage).</td>
<td>Add</td>
<td>High</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Identify and prioritize areas that lack access to healthy food, and grocery stores in particular</td>
<td>Add</td>
<td>High</td>
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<td>Support affordable local food markets by encouraging programs that increase the use of federal, state and local food assistance programs, such as SNAP, WIC, and local matching funds.</td>
<td>Add</td>
<td>High</td>
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**Key to Associated Evidence-based Health Impacts**

**Physical Activity**
A: Walkable neighborhood design encourages physical activity.
B: Transit is associated with increased levels of physical activity.
C: Well-designed and accessible parks provide a space to be active, and are correlated with increased rates of physical activity.

**Mental Health**
D: Places that encourage or enable physical activity can help prevent and treat depression.
E: Neighborhood characteristics, including aspects of the built environment, are associated with mental health outcomes.

**Injury & Safety:**
F: Roadway design affects pedestrian, bicyclist, and motor vehicle safety.

**Healthy Food Access**
G: Proximity to a healthy food retail source is associated with better individual eating habits and reduced risk for obesity and diet-related diseases, such as type-2 diabetes.
H: Local food production increases access to healthy foods.
I: The types of stores available in a neighborhood affect food access.

**Social Connectedness**
J: Safe and inviting public places, such as open spaces, parks and community gathering places, promote social connectedness and health.
K: Walkable, mixed-use neighborhood design can encourage social cohesion.
Proposed Council Changes to Comprehensive Plan

Chapter 7 - Economics

*Page and line numbers reflect Planning Commission Recommended Draft dated 1/14/16 (http://wa-whatcomcounty.civicplus.com/DocumentCenter/View/15156). To improve clarity of Councilmember requested changes, previous edits (i.e. staff and Planning Commission) are included, but not show as edits.*

Items for Reconsideration

1) p. 7-10; Policy 7A-2: Foster a diverse, private-sector job base, which will provide family-wage jobs at the state median income level or greater, and facilitate the retention and expansion of existing businesses. *An increasing body of research (from institutions, such as the Federal Reserve Bank, Yale, the Kauffman Foundation, and the Center on Policy and Budget Priorities) has concluded communities that prioritize and invest in Business Start Up, Retention, and Expansion, and Recruitment will experience more job growth, income growth, and economic resiliency than those that spend heavily on recruitment, including giving away tax money and other incentives to attract businesses.* (Brenner, Mann)

2) p. 7-11; Policy 7A-3: Employ innovative techniques to attract recruit develop a mix of diversified industries for a broader economic base starting with the creation of a new economic development program to be funded ideally with monies collected under RCW 82.14.370. This program will be governed by a sunset provision whereby it will automatically terminate after seven years if it was not able to document its efforts were contributing to an equal or greater number of new jobs for the money invested in it, compared to other economic development projects funded by the community. (Brenner, Mann)

3) p. 7-12; Delete New Policy 7B-6: A forward focused marketing strategy and a professional outbound lead generation program shall solicit inward investment from targeted industry sectors that are forecast to provide growth in type of family wage jobs that the community is well positioned to support. (Brenner, Mann)

4) p. 7-12; Delete New Policy 7B-7: Provide these leads to organizations such as Team Whatcom, the Port, non-profits, and private sector partners that offer the best fit based on the nature of the lead and the partners commitment to continuously demonstrate/verify high levels of responsiveness and customer satisfaction. (Brenner, Mann)

5) p. 7-12; Delete New Policy 7B-8: Leads related to economic development must at all times be responded to promptly and professionally. (Brenner, Mann)
Passed May 17

1) p. 7-1; lines 17-20: Economic vitality depends on job retention, job creation, job training programs, public and private capital investment, and business and community capacity-building to allow businesses or community groups to do the job themselves. *(Brenner)*

2) p. 7-2; line 19-23: Examples include: recognition of the need for a healthy economy; the emphasis on coordination and cooperation among jurisdictions and public/private partnering; coordination with environmental quality; and the desire to maintain the resource-based industries and recreation as we move toward a more diversified economy. *(Brenner)*

3) p. 7-8; lines 24-39: The CEDS incorporates three vision statements relating to the County’s preferred economic future:
   
   - Whatcom County values its business community, which is principally responsible for the continued growth in jobs and incomes in the region;
   - Whatcom County and its constituent communities have vibrant and dynamic economies where the region’s abundant natural resources are cherished and protected; and
   - Whatcom County has an outstanding quality of life where all residents have opportunities to thrive and the support they need to seize those opportunities.

   The CEDS also identifies infrastructure and other projects that support economic development, and includes economic data. *(Brenner)*

4) p. 7-9; lines 33-36: A fundamental aspect of “quality of life” characteristics is a strong and diversified economy that remains resilient through business cycles, and that can provide family-wage employment, affordable housing, discretionary income, tax base, and sponsors for worthy causes. *(Brenner)*

5) p. 7-11; Policy 7A-4: In addition to stimulating family-wage jobs and jobs in diverse sectors, plan for service-related jobs such as those necessary to support tourism, recreation, and retailing, as well as those that relate to industry. *(Brenner)*

6) p. 7-11; Policy 7A-8: Enhance the environment for resource-based industries and the growing service industry with an emphasis on the communities in eastern Whatcom County. *(Brenner)*

7) p. 7-11; Policy 7A-10: Establish a competitiveness review of policies, taxes/fees, processes, and other influences that impact county businesses. *(Brenner)*
8) p. 7-11; lines 37-39: Cooperation and coordination by businesses, jurisdictions, and other entities are essential components to achieve a strong economy. The CEDS states that one of its purposes is communication and outreach that encourages local goal setting, public engagement, and a commitment to cooperation among the different levels of government, the business community, and the not-for-profit sector. (Brenner)

9) p. 7-11; line 46 - p. 7-12 line 3: The Port of Bellingham was designated as the Associate Development Organization (ADO) in Whatcom County by the County Executive in 2012. An ADO is intended to serve as a point of contact for local economic development activities by supporting business retention, expansion of existing businesses, and new business development. (Brenner)

10) p. 7-12; Policy 7B-1: The Port of Bellingham, serving as the ADO, will work with the cities, the County, Chambers of Commerce, educational institutions, and other groups to assist retention and expansion of existing local businesses and to attract appropriate businesses to Whatcom County. (Brenner)

11) p. 7-13; Policy 7B-5: Encourage utilization of current technology and efficient communications tools to disseminate information. (Brenner)

12) p. 7-14; Policy 7C-2: Encourage the provision of adequate transportation infrastructure, including roads to all industrial sites. (Brenner)

13) p. 7-14; Policy 7C-4: Encourage location of industrial areas, especially where sewer and water service and all weather access can be readily provided when necessary. (Brenner)

14) p. 7-14; Policy 7C-5: Support the efforts of the PUD #1 and area communication and cable companies to get a fiber optic network throughout Whatcom County. (Brenner)

15) p. 7-14; Policy 7C-6: Participate in the ongoing implementation and operation of the countywide water resources management body (WRIA #1) for Whatcom County. (Brenner)

16) p. 7-15; lines 8-11: Ample land is needed with proper zoning to ensure a wide range of choices and preclude excessive land prices. Such lands should be located in areas suitable for development, thus minimizing the need for regulatory controls. (Brenner)

17) p. 7-15; lines 16-20: One step toward addressing this issue is a land capacity analysis, which includes an inventory of the supply and availability of industrial and commercial properties in the county and a forecast of future demands. (Brenner)

18) p. 7-15; Goal 7D: Consistent with other goals of the county, strive for balanced, clear, and predictable overall policies, practices and regulations which do not unnecessarily or inadvertently prevent, confuse, delay, or create costly hurdles restricting effective and desirable economic development. (Brenner)
19) p. 7-16; Policy 7D-7: Use information technology and improve the internet web sites so the public can receive information on the status of projects, latest drafts of documents, and access to general resources via the Internet. (Brenner)

20) p. 7-16; lines 28-30: The large Canadian consumer population has created a large retail sector in Whatcom County, increasing jobs, retail sales, taxes, and traffic. Over time, the impacts of Canadian consumer activity has have fluctuated greatly, primarily in relationship to the value of the Canadian dollar and increased security issues. (Brenner)

21) p. 7-16; line 39: Retail jobs tend to be low-wage, frequently part-time, and without benefits. (Brenner)

22) p. 7-17; lines 1-3 A more positive aspect of the proximity to Canada is the opportunity to provide for Canadian companies who want to expand or relocate in the United States to broaden their markets or enjoy other economic advantages. (Brenner)

23) p. 7-17; Goal 7E: Enhance the economic trade, tourism, and industrial siting advantages of the county's location adjacent to the Canadian border. (Brenner)

24) p. 7-17; Policy 7E-2: Work cooperatively with jurisdictions in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia, along with US and Canadian national governments, to facilitate the development of economic, transportation, and environmental initiatives. (Brenner)

25) p. 7-17; Policy 7E-4: Continue to provide assistance and the opportunities for Canadian companies to relocate or set up a second plant in Whatcom County, while at the same time encouraging our companies to explore and develop markets in Canada. (Brenner)

26) p. 7-18; lines 6-8: A local company with national or international interests, or a national firm with major local investment can provide substantial support to local causes, and educational and cultural activities, and the tax base. (Brenner)

27) p. 7-18; Policy 7F-3: Encourage firms to contribute financially as a partners with the public sector in sharing the costs for civic and cultural needs of the community-at-large. (Brenner)

28) p. 7-18; Policy 7F-4: Enhance opportunities for increased resource-based (agricultural, forest, fisheries, and mining products) value added industries. (Brenner)

29) p. 7-18; Policy 7F-5: Encourage utilization of existing and future resources available through local agencies, entities, and organizations, such as information from the Western Washington University Center for Economic and Business Research. (Brenner)
30) p. 7-19; lines 13-14: Conversely a strong economy that provides well-paying jobs allows the leisure time and the resources to focus on environmental protection. (Brenner)

31) p. 7-19; Goal 7G: Coordinate economic development with environmental, resources, and other comprehensive plan land use and open space policies and measures to enhance the community's overall quality of life. (Brenner)

32) p. 7-19; Policy 7G-4: Encourage sustainability by:
- Supporting waste reduction, re-use, recycling, and the processing of used and waste resources into economically viable products; and
- Supporting renewable energy, state-of-the-art technology, and conservation techniques to minimize demands on resources such as water, energy, and other natural and developed resources. (Brenner)

33) p. 7-19; Policy 7G-6: Address environmental issues on a county-wide basis so that areas like the Cherry Point Industrial Area or public access areas such as marinas or the airport can expand as necessary using mitigation banking or other appropriate mitigation measures. (Brenner)

34) p. 7-19; lines 12-14: Additionally, almost $11 million was paid to fishermen for salmon, ground-fish, and shellfish at Whatcom County ports in 2012 (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife). Farming, forestry, fishing, and mining are important to the economic health of the County. (Brenner)

35) p. 7-21; Goal 7H: To promote economic diversity, continue to support the resource industries as significant elements of the local economy including the employment base. (Brenner)

36) p. 7-21; Policy 7H-1: Ensure that sufficient agricultural land, support services, and skills are available to encourage a healthy and diversified agricultural economy. (Brenner)

37) p. 7-21; Policy 7H-4: As part of a broad-based economy, foster productive timber, agriculture, and fisheries industries in a sustainable manner. (Brenner)

38) p. 7-21; Policy 7H-5: Support mining, which is compatible with other land use and environmental policies, including surface mining of sand, gravel, and rock and subsurface mining of other minerals found in Whatcom County, such as gold and silver. (Brenner)

39) p. 7-21; Policy 7H-7: Encourage growth of tourism and recreational activities and businesses that provide for diversity of the natural resource industry, provided they comply with County regulations and, when located in a rural area, preserve the rural character. (Brenner)
40) p. 7-22; lines 17-23: Measurable statistics are not available to monitor this issue but should be considered as the employment base of Whatcom County shifts from being a resource-based economy to one of services-producing employment. Cottage industry and home-based businesses, also minimally measured, have an impact on the employment base. Graduates from Western Washington University, area high schools, and the community and technical colleges desiring to remain in the area are another sector of the population that is underutilized. (Brenner)

41) p. 7-23; Policy 7J-2: Support economic development that recognizes and respects the needs, concerns, rights, and resources of a diversity of cultural groups, and allow them every opportunity to participate and benefit in this process in full partnership with the community-at-large. (Brenner)

42) p. 7-23; lines 19-21: This is where the majority of the population lives and works, and the infrastructure is available, and where most of the jobs should continue to be located. However, people from smaller communities located throughout the County generally have longer commutes, creating greater impacts on the road system. Also, there is it creates additional need for more income for travel costs. (Brenner)

43) p. 7-23; lines 19-21: These and other area-specific issues have spurred three communities to focus efforts on economic development: Point Roberts, Birch Bay, and East County. Each has successfully developed an area Economic Development Plan and has a Sub-Area plan. The ongoing work of these groups is crucial to addressing the most urgent and long-range planning needs in these areas, such as loss of family-wage jobs and tax-base revenues, and the increased demand for services by a growing residential population. (Brenner)

44) p. 7-24; Policy 7K-5: Support the implementation of land use concepts as defined in Chapter Two by seeking grants to provide technical support and complete necessary programmatic environmental analysis to facilitate reduced time frames and duplication in the SEPA process. (Brenner)

45) p. 7-24; Policy 7K-6: Support long-term employment efforts in the unincorporated areas of the county, such as those stated in the Point Roberts, Birch Bay, and east County Economic Development Plans and Sub-Area Plans. (Brenner)

46) p. 7-24; Policy 7K-7: Support efforts and/or organizations trying to achieve agricultural diversity, such as:

- niche markets for local products
- technical assistance or educational programs
- farmers' markets
- value-added or innovative ag products or services
• other product outlets; and
• community education and information dissemination. (Brenner)

47) p. 7-24; Policy 7K-8: Support agriculture, agricultural processing, and manufacturing as a high priority in future allocations of water rights. (Brenner)

48) p. 7-2; lines 15-23: This chapter specifically addresses Goal #5 of the Growth Management Act, which encourages economic development and economic opportunity for all citizens of the state. The County-Wide Planning Policies also have a section on economic development, which this chapter specifically addresses. Examples include recognition of the need for a healthy economy; the emphasis on coordination and cooperation among jurisdictions and public/private partnering; coordination with environmental quality; and the desire to maintain the resource based industries and recreation as we move toward a more diversified economy. This chapter recognizes the best path towards economic prosperity will likely be found through promotion of the county’s existing strengths, such as our unique position to accommodate Canadian companies looking to expand and access the US market, our extensive recreational infrastructure, and the skilled workforce produced by our excellent educational institutions. (Browne)

49) p. 7-8; line 20, new subheadings: Community Wide Strategic Planning Efforts

Whatcom County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (Browne)

50) p. 7-8; lines 21-25: The Whatcom County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) was updated in 2015. The principal purpose of the CEDS is to facilitate the retention and creation of living-wage jobs and to foster a stable and diversified regional economy, thereby improving the quality of life in the region. Its intent is to bring together the public and private sectors in the creation of an “economic roadmap” to diversify and strengthen the regional economy by integrating the region’s human resources and capital-improvements planning in the service of economic development. The CEDS incorporates three vision statements relating to the County’s preferred economic future. (Browne)

51) p. 7-8; lines 38-39: The CEDS also identifies infrastructure and other projects that support economic development, and includes economic data. The CEDS report has primarily directed sales tax revenue collected under RCW 82.14.370 be used to fund infrastructure. (Browne)

Passed June 14

2) p. 7-8; line 41, new subsection: Whatcom Futures
In 2012, more than 90 leaders and representatives from businesses, local governments, not-for-profit organizations and the public helped create the Whatcom Futures report. The following are quotes from the report:

“Whatcom County’s lower commercial real estate costs compared to those in B.C. – as well as the enhanced access to the U.S. market that a Canadian company enjoys with a U.S. location – has resulted in significant Canadian business investment in the County.”

“Bellingham Technical College’s Engineering and Advance Manufacturing programs offer degrees that are in demand by industries in Whatcom – and nationwide – with starting salaries for new graduates in excess of $50,000 a year”.

“The economic value of Whatcom’s natural resources manifests itself in numerous ways. For instance, the County is the top producer of raspberries in the U.S. and a leading producer of other types of berries as well as dairy products, fish and shellfish”.

“However, it is important to note that a single resource will often have value to more than one economic sector. For instance, the presence of timberland supports eco-tourism as well as the forest products industry. The same can be said of farmland – which in addition to the produce it generates also facilitates agri-tourism – as well as the region’s fisheries, which support both commercial and sport fishing.”

“The ability to receive a quality education from Pre-K through post graduate study greatly enhances the quality of life in the County and is an important asset in recruiting businesses to come to the region. Indeed, strong public schools and the availability of higher education are among the principal attributes that prospects look for when considering relocation.” (Browne)

3) p. 7-9; line 27, new subsection: Current County Economic Development Activities

Whatcom County delegated job creation activities to the Port of Bellingham, which serves as the County’s “Associate Development Organization” (ADO). The Port of Bellingham’s mission statement is: “To fulfill the essential transportation and economic development needs of the region, while providing leadership and maintaining Whatcom County’s overall economic vitality through the development of comprehensive facilities, programs, and services”. (Browne)

4) p. 7-9; lines 32-40: Quality of life is an essential component in many people’s choice to live in Whatcom County. A fundamental aspect of “quality of life” characteristics is a strong and diversified economy that remains resilient through business cycles,
and that can provide family-wage employment, affordable housing, discretionary income, tax base, and sponsors for worthy causes. Such an economy should provide for all segments of society with a geographic distribution that, in accordance with the land use plan, spreads the jobs and tax base throughout the area.

Retain the diverse base of manufacturing and other family wage firms already here, as well as prepare for future opportunities by:

(i) working with our workforce development partners to ensure we focus on the skills enhancement needed for existing and future industries; and

(ii) maintaining an adequate supply of shovel-ready land to support the buildings and infrastructure companies will require.

The wage and job prospects in the service sector vary widely based on the nature of the employment. Retail positions offer relatively low wages and limited prospects for job growth in part due to the trend of retail sales shifting away from traditional storefronts to the internet. Conversely computer programming and cyber-security positions offer entry level wages that are typically well above the national average with some artificial intelligence positions attracting stratospheric starting salaries in other areas of the country.

As the developed world evolves away from a resource-based and high-volume/low-value-added manufacturing economy, most of the new generation of family wage jobs will likely come from knowledge intensive industries such as computer software and high-value-added specialty manufacturing.

The CEDS and Whatcom Futures reports are valuable contributions to the challenge of the improving the Whatcom County economy and Whatcom County has much to offer prospective employers as indicated by our latest informational resource www.ChooseWhatcom.com. (Browne)

6) p. 7-11; Policy 7A-4: In addition to stimulating family-wage jobs employment and jobs in diverse sectors, plan for ensure we retain entry level and service-related jobs such as those necessary to support tourism, recreation, and retailing, as well as those that relate to and other industries. (Browne)

7) p. 7-11; Policy 7A-7: Foster an adequate amount of preferred housing supply for all income levels as a prerequisite for a healthy economy. (Brenner)

8) p. 7-11; Policy 7A-8: Enhance the environment for resource-based and knowledge-based industries and the growing service industry with an emphasis on attracting employment to the communities in eastern Whatcom County. (Browne)
9) p. 7-12, line 4:

In the late 1970s, Whatcom County and its communities were suffering economically. Reliance on natural resource harvesting and export to drive employment growth was insufficient to generate the jobs that were required. A work group of community leaders, local governments, and the private sector was convened, and the Stanford Research Institute was hired to assess opportunities. Their report emphasized:

a. Selling the State of Alaska on relocating the southern terminus of its ferry from Seattle to Bellingham;

b. Marketing to BC businesses interested in a foothold in the U.S. market; and

c. Promoting Whatcom County's potential as a regional service center for Northwest Washington and the lower BC mainland, including retail, healthcare and manufacturing entrepreneurs.

The community rose to the challenge and the Alaska Ferry terminal was relocated to Bellingham and more than 3,000 primarily manufacturing jobs were added at a time when the county's population was about half of what it is today.

The community recognizes both the global and local economy have changed significantly since the Stanford report was commissioned in the 1970s and the report itself is out of date. Nonetheless the community remains confident our history proves that with updated research, and an intelligent, focused approach, we can again bring much needed family-wage jobs to our community. Our success will depend on leveraging the significant expertise of our business community and our willingness to allocate sufficient financial resources for our economic development initiatives to have a meaningful impact.

New employers have traditionally emerged from three primary sources:

i. Canadians looking for skilled labor and cheaper industrial land than can be found in BC and/or access to the US market;

ii. Home grown entrepreneurs who have chosen to remain headquartered in the county as their businesses have grown; and

iii. Established business owners who have relocated because they are attracted to the county's superior quality of life.

10) p. 7-12; Policy 7B-1: The Port of Bellingham, serving as the ADO, will work with the cities, the County, Chambers of Commerce, educational institutions and other groups to assist retention and expansion of existing local businesses and to attract appropriate businesses to Whatcom County. Work with the Partnership for a
Sustainable Economy, Chambers of Commerce, the Port of Bellingham, the ECD, and the Convention and Visitor Bureau and other groups to attract sustainable industry to Whatcom County and to assist expansion and retention of local businesses. **Prior to an ADO contract renewal, the ADO’s performance shall be evaluated by surveying the members of the other organizations and private companies the ADO has been working with to promote economic development.** (Browne)

11) p. 7-12; Policy 7B-2: Continue in informal meetings of informally meeting with staff from all the entities and jurisdictions involved with economic development to discuss issues of interest on a periodic basis. (Brenner)

12) p. 7-12; Policy 7B-4: Identify, develop, and match funding opportunities with the economic development projects contained within the CEDS. Funding sources could include the Economic Development Administration (EDA), Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), Community Economic Revitalization Board (CERB), Rural Sales Tax (also known as the Economic Development Initiative or EDI fund), USDA Rural Development, and other types of grants, and loans, private investment, local match, and many other federal, state, and local sources. (Brenner)

16) p. 7-13; lines 24-26: The Planning Unit, representing various stakeholders, is designated to address, through local government, water resource planning needs from a watershed perspective through local government. (Brenner)

17) p. 7-14; Rename Policy 6-G9 as Policy 7C-10 (Passed 5/17 with intention to move): Work with Bellingham Whatcom County Tourism, and the cities to develop and implement a common Countywide Way-Finding system that encourages people traveling on the I5 corridor to detour and easily find the many tourist attractions that Whatcom County has to offer. (Browne)

18) p. 7-14; Rename Policy 6F-8 as Policy 7C-11 (Passed 5/17): Develop plans and prioritize facilities for the County to become internationally recognized as a “Trail-Town” tourist destination (one that offers 100 miles or more of contiguous walking/hiking trails) by 2027. (Browne) (Staff recommends move)

19) p. 7-15; Policy 7D-3: Integrate and simplify regulations using the “Federal Plain Language Guidelines” available at www.plainlanguage.gov to make them more understandable and user-friendly. (Browne)

20) p. 7-16; Policy 7D-6: Streamline and coordinate the permit process and sustain a supportive customer service approach towards permitting. Benchmark the County’s regulatory and permitting performance against itself and other comparable
jurisdictions. Develop and publish reports on these key performance metrics. (Browne)

21) p. 7-16; Policy 7D-8: Use information technology and improve the Internet web site so the public can receive information on the status of projects, latest drafts of documents, and access to general resources via the Internet. (Browne)

22) p. 7-17; lines 1-3: A positive aspect of the proximity to Canada is the opportunity for job creation through BC to provide for Canadian companies who want to looking for a great location to expand or relocate in the United States to broaden their market or enjoy other economic advantages. (Browne)

Passed June 28

1) p. 7-17; Policy 7E-1: Support attractions for Canadians and other visitors so they will remain in the community longer and distribute their spending throughout the community. Some of the examples would include support for such items as the following:

- Events such as the "Ski to Sea" race and festival
- The Whatcom Museum, Mount Baker Theater, other historic and cultural centers, and community revitalization efforts
- Parks and open spaces
- The Bellingham Festival of Music
- The Mount Baker outdoor recreation area
- Farmers markets and other natural resource based activities; and
- Projects, events and activities of unincorporated areas such as Point Roberts, Birch Bay and East County. (Brenner)

2) p. 7-18; Policy 7F-1: Support existing businesses in the community locally as the major contributors of job creation and regeneration and afford them every opportunity to continue their success in the community. (Brenner)

3) p. 7-19; lines 8-9: The fishing and shellfishing industries are particularly dependent on water quantity, good water quality, and habitat. (Brenner)

4) p. 7-19; Policy 7G-1: Recognize the natural environment as a major asset and manage environmental resources accordingly. We need both economic prosperity and environmental sustainability.

5) p. 7-19; Policy 7G-4: Encourage sustainability by:
- Supporting waste reduction, re-use, recycling and the processing of used and waste resources into economically viable products.
- Supporting renewable energy, state-of-the-art technologies and conservation techniques to minimize demands on resources such as water, energy, and other natural and developed resources.
- Pursuing energy resiliency and self-sufficiency by establishing renewable energy overlay zones, and by revisiting restrictions on the development of wind energy systems that protect public health and safety. (Brenner, Mann)

6) p. 7-20; lines 6-8: Natural resource based industries are agriculture, forestry, fishing, and mining. While accounting for less than 5% of the total county employment, resource based industries are still major components of the economy. (Brenner)

7) p. 7-21; Policy 7H-2: Work with other agencies, Tribal governments, and other groups to improve the condition of the fishery resource, including habitat maintenance and enhancement, especially for habitats utilized by threatened and endangered fish species. (Brenner)

8) p. 7-20; line 15: Agriculture is one of Whatcom County's largest economic drivers. Whatcom County holds the most agricultural and farming land within western Washington, according to the 2014 Whatcom Futures Report. Additionally, according to U.S. Department of Agriculture's 2012 Census of Agriculture, 1,702 Whatcom County farms produced a market value of $357 million in crops and livestock that year. Locally produced milk produced in 2013 reached an all-time high market value of $246.1 million. Raspberries and blueberries combined for a record market value of $123.6 million in 2014. (Brenner)

9) p. 7-21; New Policy 7H-8: Develop and support more programs to promote ag-tourism and ag-education to increase public awareness of the nutritional and economic value of agriculture and quality food production. (Brenner, Sidhu)

10) p. 7-22; Goal 7J: In an economic strategy for Whatcom County, address unemployment and underemployment as important issues and continue the effort to increase family wage jobs. (Brenner)

11) p. 7-23; Policy 7J-3: Focus on absorbing and retraining displaced and discouraged workers and addressing the skills gap through grants, training by the Northwest Workforce Council through grants, training by the Northwest Workforce Development Council, Bellingham Technical College, Whatcom Community College, and Northwest Indian College, and other opportunities focus on absorbing and retraining displaced and discouraged workers and addressing the skills gap. (Brenner)
12) p. 7-24; **New Policy 7K-11**: Recognize high speed Internet and cellular coverage are essential for all regions of our economy to succeed. (Browne)

13) p. 7-24; **New Policy 7K-12**: Encourage, and if necessary provide incentives, for high speed Internet and cellular infrastructure to be deployed in areas of the County such as the Columbia Valley. (Browne)

14a) p. 7-24; **New Section: Local Food System**

Whatcom County is home to a robust agricultural production industry, marine harvest industry, as well as an associated local consumption industry. To maintain and advance the quality and quantity of food produced in Whatcom County, consideration must be given to interconnected sectors which support a thriving food system, including land, water, fishing, farming, labor, processing, transportation, consumption, aquaculture and waste. A vibrant local food system is a community asset to be protected, strengthened, planned for and celebrated. (Weimer)

14b) **New Goal 7L**: Strengthen the local food system and take steps to improve conditions for a healthy, resilient, and prosperous food economy. (Weimer)

14c) **New Policy 7L-1**: Encourage government, institutions, and local businesses to purchase food produced within Whatcom County when available. (Weimer)

14d) **New Policy 7L-2**: Encourage local farmers and producers to sell their products to local markets. (Weimer)

14e) **New Policy 7L-3**: Support development plans and zoning changes that increase access to healthy and locally grown food products. (Weimer)

14f) **Move and renumber Policy 7K-10 as Policy 7L-4**: Support food outlets such as grocery stores, convenience stores, and local food markets that provide fresh, healthy foods, especially in underserved areas. (Weimer)

14g) **Move and edit Policy 7K-7 as 7L-5**: Support efforts and/or organizations seeking to achieve economic agricultural diversity within the food system such as:

- Niche markets for local agricultural products;
- Technical assistance or educational programs;
- Farmer’s markets;
- Value-added or innovative agricultural products or services;
- Other product outlets
- Farm-to-school and farm-to-institution;
- Agricultural diversity;
- Food access and affordability; and
- Community education and information dissemination gardens, education, and information dissemination.
14h) New Policy 7L-6: Support efforts to protect water quality and quantity, soil health, and best management practices as related to the food system. (Weimer)

14i) New Policy 7L-7: Encourage communication and collaboration across and within all sectors of the food system and support efforts/organizations working to build common understanding and to facilitate better collaborative effort toward an equitable, sustainable, and healthy food system for all. (Weimer)

14j) New Policy 7L-8: Support establishment of community-wide food system development plans. (Weimer)

14k) New Policy 7L-9: Support healthy and safe working conditions as well as healthy and safe living conditions for farmworkers. (Weimer)

14m) New Policy 7L-11: Support organizations that provide technical assistance, educational programs, and general support to people and businesses within the local food system. (Weimer)

14n) New Policy 7L-12: Consider food waste systems that reduce food waste and capture food waste nutrients. (Weimer)
WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL AGENDA BILL

CLEARANCES

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TITLE OF DOCUMENT:

Discussion and preliminary Council direction on Comprehensive Plan Chapter 11, Environment

ATTACHMENT: Preliminary draft, Comprehensive Plan Chapter 11, Environment

Related paperwork can be found at:
www.co.whatcom.wa.us/2346/Comprehensive-Plan-Update-Process

SEPA review required? (X) Yes ( ) NO
SEPA review completed? (X) Yes ( ) NO
Should Clerk schedule a hearing? ( ) Yes ( ) NO

SUMMARY STATEMENT OR LEGAL NOTICE LANGUAGE: (If this item is an ordinance or requires a public hearing, you must provide the language for use in the required public notice. Be specific and cite RCW or WCC as appropriate. Be clear in explaining the intent of the action.)

The Whatcom County Council will hold a public hearing on May 17, 2016, regarding the periodic update of the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan, Chapter 11, Environment (AB2016-047K). This hearing will give the public an opportunity to provide comments to the County Council relating specifically to Chapter 11.

The Council is conducting the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan and urban growth area (UGA) review as required by the Growth Management Act under RCW 36.70A.130. It is anticipated that the County Council will adopt an ordinance amending the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan and UGAs by the end of June 2016.

COMMITTEE ACTION:

2/23/2016: Briefed and discussed
4/5/2016: Discussed and provided preliminary direction
4/19/2016: Comments received
4/19/2016: Discussed and proved preliminary direction
5/3/2016: Comments received
5/3/2016: Discussed and provided preliminary direction
6/21/2016: Comments received; did not discuss
6/28/2016: Comments received, but did not discuss
7/5/2016: Comments received and prelim. direction given

CONTINUED ON ATTACHED PAGE

Please Note: Once adopted and signed, ordinances and resolutions are available for viewing and printing on the County’s website at: www.co.whatcom.wa.us/council.
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**COMMITTEE ACTION:**

7/12/2016: Comments received and prelim. direction given

**COUNCIL ACTION:**
# Chapter Eleven

## Environment

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*Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan* 11-1
Introduction

Each person in Whatcom County has a fundamental right to a healthful and safe environment in which to live and grow. With this right comes a responsibility to contribute to the protection and enhancement of our natural environment. Consequently, an important goal of the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan is to protect or enhance the county's environmental quality. This means that, individually and collectively, we have the obligation to protect these resources for our children and their children. Essential to this is the establishment of safe development practices and patterns that do not significantly disrupt natural systems and that ensure the continuation of ample amounts of clean water, natural areas, farmlands, forest lands, and fish and wildlife habitat.

Chapter Organization

This chapter is composed of an introduction and four sections organized by topic heading. The first section, entitled "General Environmental Management," addresses general environmental goals and policies. The remaining three sections deal with Natural Hazards, Water Resources, and Natural Systems. An Action Plan at the end of the chapter recommends specific actions to implement these goals and policies. Together, the elements sections of this chapter provide the direction necessary to ensure and promote long-term sustainability of the environment in Whatcom County.

Reason for Change: Action plan has been deleted, and unaccomplished actions added to the policies.

Purpose

Whatcom County's natural environment, with its seasonally abundant supply of water, its beauty, and its other natural resources, has attracted people to our community for generations. This setting is important to our sense of well-being, spirit, to our health, to our economic well-being, and to our future. Yet sustaining these assets in the face of increasingly intense human activity has becomes more difficult over the each years. The challenge of protecting this environment while accommodating growth will requires maintaining guidelines for development a blueprint that can help guide development so that it growth does
not ultimately overrun the very assets that brought most of us here. The purpose of
this chapter is to create such a blueprint guidelines.

**Process**

This chapter was first originally produced by the Citizens' Environmental Task Force
(ETF). The ETF began its task with fourteen members from diverse backgrounds,
who were selected by the County Executive in October 1993. The ETF's objectives
were divided into two tasks: develop an Environmental chapter for the
Comprehensive Plan, and develop regulatory and non-regulatory tools to
implement the provisions of the Comprehensive Plan.

Members of the ETF participated in the county's Visioning Process by attending
town hall meetings to explain the committee's activities and to gather additional
public input regarding the environment. The values and alternatives gathered
through the Visioning Process are reflected in this chapter.

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

GMA Planning Goal 10, "Environment," provides the directive for much of this
chapter. It requires Whatcom County to "protect the environment and enhance the
state's high quality of life, including air and water quality, and the availability of
water." In addition, some of the goals and policies of this chapter support Planning
Goal 9, "Open Space and Recreation," which directs the county to "conserve fish
and wildlife habitat."

Relative to environmental protection, Whatcom County's County-Wide Planning
Policies (CWPP) give the most attention to water issues. They state, "The quality of
life and economic health of Whatcom County communities depend on the
maintenance of a safe and reliable water supply. All jurisdictions and water
purveyors should cooperate to ensure the protection and quality of the area's water
resources." Five specific policies address water, promoting inter-jurisdictional
cooperation in conserving, protecting, and managing the water resource, and in
reducing water pollution. The CWPP also support protecting wildlife habitat and
corridors, natural drainage features, and "other environmental, cultural and scenic
resources."

**GMA Requirements**

The GMA also requires Whatcom County to identify and manage critical areas in
such a manner as to prevent destruction of the resource base and reduce potential
losses to property and human life. The GMA has identified Critical Areas to include
the following areas and ecosystems:

- Wetlands
- Areas with a critical recharging effect on aquifers used for potable
  water
- Critical Aquifer Recharge Areas
- Fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas
Frequently flooded areas
Geologically hazardous areas: (GMA-Definition)

Background-Sources
The background information contained in this chapter incorporates background information from the following documents:

- Whatcom County Environmental Resources Report Series: Hydrologic and Fishery Resources of Whatcom County. Whatcom County Planning Department, December 1994.

Reason for Deletion: These references are old. Newer, pertinent documents are referenced below and in the bibliography.

Environmental Setting
Whatcom County bedrock geology can be divided into five bedrock geologic provinces. From east to west these provinces are the Methow terrain, the Cascade Crystalline Core, the Northwest Cascades System, the Fraser Lowland, and the San Juan Island system. Tectonic activity over the past 15 million years has created the present North Cascades and the formation of Mount Baker, a 10,000-foot high composite volcano.

The mountains of Whatcom County, as well as the streams, lakes, valleys, and hills, and shoreline features are the result of millions of years of geologic events. Over 2.5 million years ago, during the Ice Ages, glacial ice invaded the Puget Sound lowlands from the north at least four times, with the last major glacial event, the Fraser Glaciation, ending approximately 12,000 years ago. A minor advance of glacial ice, the Sumas Advance, ended approximately 10,000 years ago. The ice formed from the accumulation of snow in the British Columbia Coast Range and interior of British Columbia. Numerous glaciers are still present within the mountains of Whatcom County, and some of these mountain glaciers formerly extended far down the mountain valleys of the County. The underlying bedrock was deeply eroded during these glacial events creating very steep mountainsides, and in some areas, particularly in northwestern Whatcom County, a thick sequence of glacial related sediments was deposited. The glacial ice was approximately 6,000 feet thick in the vicinity of Bellingham.
Two main glacial advances are the most important to our area, the Salmon Springs glaciation and the later Vashon glaciation. Each time the massive glacier advanced, it dammed up the Puget lowlands to form a huge lake. As the floating ice melted, sand, gravel, clay and occasional boulders would melt out of the ice and fall to the sea floor. This deposit, the Bellingham Drift, covers the ground surface over a large area of western Whatcom County. Each time the Ice Age glacier advanced, it also compacted underlying sediments with its great weight. It created a concrete-like material called "till" (also known as "hardpan") beneath it. Because the Bellingham Drift consists primarily of clay and silt, it is relatively impermeable; water tends to accumulate on the ground surface. Wetlands are common on the Bellingham Drift.

On the bottom of the lake, "rock flour"—the finely ground remains of rocks pulverized by glacial action—settled out. These deposits became the familiar "blue clays" of the Puget lowland. The milky color of the Nooksack River is due to the same kind of rock flour, created by glacial activity on the slopes of Mount Baker.

Additionally, each time the glacier retreated, water from the melting ice deposited thick layers of sand and gravel known as "outwash." The outwash areas are typically where we find our most productive aquifers, since these loose sands and gravel are porous and drain rapidly. While these areas absorb rainwater for our later use from wells, they are also vulnerable to contamination. An example of this phenomenon is found in the outwash sands and gravels resulting from the Sumas Advance. Large melt water streams and rivers flowed from this glacier depositing the Sumas Outwash sands and gravels. The Sumas Outwash sands and gravels make up the best non-floodplain farmland in the County and some of the highest quality construction gravel deposits—as well. Abandoned outwash channels were formerly used as sources of peat.

Each of these glacial sediments—lake bed deposits, till and outwash—is present in various places from place to place and in varied combinations in Whatcom County. These sediments provide both the formations that hold the groundwater for many of the area's wells, and the parent material for most of the different soils.

Out of these long physical processes a complex natural ecology has emerged that supports a diversity of wildlife. Many of our lakes, rivers, and streams support fish including, but not limited to, native species such as the five pacific salmon (Chinook, Coho, Sockeye, Chum, Pink) as well as Steelhead, Rainbow Trout, Cutthroat (coastal and resident), Bull Trout, and Dolly Varden. Every year salmon return to spawn in the streams and rivers of Whatcom County. Bufflehead and goldeneye ducks winter here. Additionally, numerous bird species including scoters, snow geese, trumpeter swans, canvasbacks, cormorants, grebes, loons, and other migrating waterfowl pass through every spring and fall as they travel between their breeding grounds in Alaska and Canada and their wintering grounds in California and Mexico. Mallards, Canada geese, great blue herons, and numerous songbirds live in the county year-round. Maintaining these unique resources is a high priority for both present and future county residents. Whatcom County is home to a distinct subspecies of the Great Blue Heron, which is the third largest colony in the Puget Sound area. The wetlands, fields, streams, and nearshore habitat in the county
support many birds of special concern, such as the bald eagle (ESA threatened), the piliated woodpecker (candidate for State threatened list), and the peregrine falcon (ESA monitored). The National Audubon Society has designated Semiahmoo, Drayton Harbor, and Birch Bay as “important Bird Areas.”

Environmental Management

Introduction

General environmental goals and policies are intended to provide guidance for environmental management that will promote environmental protection and good stewardship practices through a balance of public education and involvement; incentives, acquisition, and voluntary programs; land use planning and regulations; environmental monitoring; and intergovernmental cooperation. These goals and policies are also intended to provide guidance to County government as it assists its citizens in maintaining a balance between individual property rights, economic development, and environmental protection.

GMA Requirements

See Appendix C.

Background Summary

Development in the last 100 years has had a significant impact on the natural environment in Whatcom County. At the turn of the 20th century, the areas surrounding Lynden, Sumas, and Ferndale were logged, drained, and converted to agricultural land. In the intervening years, many of the remaining forests were logged, many streams re-routed and channelized, and much of the native vegetation removed and replaced with a wide variety of introduced vegetative types. Roads now crisscross most areas, with homes, farms, businesses, and industries scattered throughout the county.

Issue, Goals, and Policies

There are designated many lands in Whatcom County that can still accommodate extensive-development. The Whatcom County also has areas that are sensitive to human activity (wetlands, streams, lakes, marine shorelines) and lands that can pose a hazard to the community (floodplains and unstable slopes). In these areas the areas where development must be carefully planned or limited to maintain environmental quality and public safety. This can be done through the creation and implementation of goals and policies that seek to reduce hazards and prevent adverse environmental impacts.

Community and Environmental Protection

The elements of the natural environment—water, air, soil, plants, and animals—are interconnected and interdependent, functioning as one dynamic ecosystem. Environmental resources within this ecosystem are extensive and, in some cases,
irreplaceable. They provide important beneficial uses to the community such as; the supply of clean drinking water; management of stormwater run-off and flood hazard management; support for a wide variety of fish and wildlife; fresh air; and a sense of place that residents invest in, enjoy, and expect.

Some of these same resources result in serious environmental constraints or pose a hazard to development and a danger to the community. Flooding in the Nooksack River is frequent and impacts much of the valley floor. There are numerous wetlands and hydric soils throughout the lowlands that provide critical wetland functions but are generally unsuitable for development. The steep gradient and geologic structure of the mountain ranges in conjunction with heavy annual precipitation can contribute to slope instability and flood-prone drainage basins.

Much of the environmental degradation and destruction to property occurs as a result of a lack of information or understanding rather than willful action. Natural systems are subtle and complex. Too often both their benefits and hazards are not readily apparent to the community. Additionally, baseline information is not always available to help identify the real costs or hazards of building in Whatcom County. There is a need for further research and education.

**Goal 11A:** Protect natural resources and systems, life, and property from potential hazards.

**Policy 11A-1:** Support good stewardship of Whatcom County lands, and apply this principle to the management of public lands.

**Policy 11A-2:** Protect the environment through a comprehensive program that includes voluntary activity, education, incentives, regulation, enforcement, restoration, monitoring, acquisition, mitigation, and intergovernmental coordination.

**Policy 11A-3:** Continue to identify, and designate, and protect Environmentally Critical Areas and other important environmental features.

**Policy 11A-4:** Manage designated Environmentally Critical Areas (ECAs) as needed, to minimize or protect against environmental degradation and reduce the potential for losses to property and human life.

**Policy 11A-5:** Actively pursue voluntary, cooperative, and mutually beneficial efforts aimed at advancing county environmental goals.

**Policy 11A-6:** Aim to meet or exceed adopted in accordance with national, state, and regional regulations the required air quality standards. Work with the Northwest Clean Air Agency to ensure compliance with applicable air quality standards. Develop and implement programs to monitor and assure compliance with those standards.

*Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan* 11-7
Reason for change: No individual jurisdiction adopts its own air monitoring programs; the Northwest Clean Air Agency performs this role.

Policy 11A-7: Using Best Available Science, support efforts to educate and inform the public as to the benefits of a healthy and viable environment, their ecologically fragile areas, and their economic and social value.

Policy 11A-8: Lead and/or coordinate efforts with property owners, citizen groups, and governmental and non-governmental agencies in furthering Whatcom County’s environmental goals and policies.

Policy 11A-9: Cooperate with state and federal agencies and neighboring jurisdictions to identify and protect threatened and endangered fish and wildlife species and their habitats.

Policy 11A-10: Support acquisition, conservation easements, open space, and other such programs to protect high-value natural areas as identified through the GMA planning process, the Natural Heritage Plan, the state Priority Habitats and Species (PHS) program, the Lake Whatcom Management Program, and other sources.

Policy 11A-11: Designate high-value open space and natural areas for acquisition, conservation easements, open space, and other such programs to protect these natural areas upon request or consent of the property owner.

Policy 11A-12: Broadly inform the citizens of the Whatcom County of the locations of potential development constraints associated with natural conditions. Information should include known natural hazards, and an assessment of the potential danger to both the property owner and the public.

Administration and Regulation

There are currently a multitude of regulations and administrative processes at the federal, state and local level that, together, have become excessive and difficult to understand. Conflicting regulations and complicated administrative processes can create undue hardship on community members and result in reduced levels of environmental protection. Regulatory inspection and enforcement of environmental regulations are currently inconsistent and lack effectiveness. The combination of complex regulations and inadequate enforcement have led to a lack of administrative predictability, widespread violations, and ultimately to environmental deterioration. Regulatory inspection and enforcement of environmental regulations are currently inconsistent and lack effectiveness. The combination of complex regulations and inadequate enforcement have led to a lack of administrative predictability, widespread violations, and ultimately to environmental deterioration.
Thoughtful and efficient regulations play an important part in protecting the environment.

Reason for Change: Amended by the P/C because they thought the language too negative.

**Goal 11B:** Simplify and harmonize regulations to ease the burden of excessive and confusing regulations, in instances when they are clearly identified, relating to the identification, delineation, and protection of environmental features.

**Policy 11B-1:** Develop, as a significant primary component of a comprehensive environmental management program, non-regulatory measures that include voluntary activity, education, incentives, restoration, acquisition, advanced mitigation (i.e., mitigation done in advance of impacts), and intergovernmental coordination.

**Policy 11B-2:** Provide incentives for good stewardship of the land through the use of non-regulatory and innovative land use management techniques.

**Policy 11B-3:** Support education as an important tool in developing public appreciation for the value of natural systems and provide the public with informational materials and presentations relating to natural system functions, regulations, and issues.

**Policy 11B-4:** Promote cooperation and coordination among involved government agencies when multiple agencies have jurisdiction over aspects of a single project.

**Policy 11B-5:** Process the environmental review of building and development permit applications within an established timeframe that is predictable and expeditious.

**Policy 11B-6:** Provide clear, timely, appropriate, and understandable direction to citizens, developers, and property owners.

**Policy 11B-7:** Simplify, keep ensure regulations as as simple as possible and establish maintain effective inspection, compliance, and enforcement measures.

**Policy 11B-8:** Recognize the policies of the Whatcom County Shoreline Management Program as constituting a “Shoreline Element” of this plan. The shoreline program regulations and policies shall be considered to be consistent with this plan until such time as any necessary amendments are made.

**The Environment and Property Rights**

Prior to the 1970s, growth in Whatcom County was relatively slow and received little management. As a result, private property owners were left to their own...
resources as they determined how best to use their land. However, as increasing
numbers of people have moved to this area and settled, a greater demand has
been placed on Whatcom County's natural resources.

The problems that arise from this situation have caused many to realize that what
one person does with his or her property may have an impact on the larger
environmental system that sustains us as a community and on the property rights
of other property owners.

Land use decisions can no longer be considered exclusively private matters. We are
aware that public actions impact every private citizen in Whatcom County and that
private actions may have public consequences as well. To that end, the law must
protect the public good from detrimental private actions. Nevertheless, the right of
the individual to use his or her property, within the bounds permitted by law, is a
value supported by law and the community and must be recognized when making
land use decisions in Whatcom County.

Goal 11C: In implementing Whatcom County's environmental policies, provide for protection of private property rights, economic opportunities, and plan appropriately for growth.

Policy 11C-1: Actively pursue voluntary and cooperative efforts that advance Whatcom County's goals in a mutually beneficial manner.

Policy 11C-2: Review current comprehensive planning documents and environmental protection programs, to ensure that they consider multiple economic parameters including development objectives, and impacts, and the economic benefits of the natural environment as both a resource and an amenity.

Policy 11C-3: Emphasize an approach to environmental protection by encouraging the use of conservation easements, open space taxation, land acquisition, purchase/voluntary, workable transfer of development rights, and other mechanisms to assist affected property owners. Consider mechanisms to compensate affected property owners in the event that the regulations implementing these Environmental Goals and Policies prohibit or significantly restrict the use of property as otherwise permitted by law.

Policy 11C-4: Avoid standards and procedures likely to require compensation to property owners or invalidation of such rules. Avoid extreme standards and procedures that are likely to require compensation to property owners or invalidation of such rules.

Reason for change: The P/C thought it best to avoid regulations leading to compensation for takings, rather than build compensation into the system.
Climate Change

Climate change is a global phenomenon that has the potential for significant local impacts to natural resources, ecosystem functions, as well as human health, infrastructure, and the economy. In Washington State, the Climate Impacts Group (CIG), a consortium of scientists at the University of Washington, has done the most extensive analysis of potential local climate change impacts in the Pacific Northwest. Based on a range of climate change model projections, as well as peer-reviewed scientific publications, the CIG concludes that during the next 20-40 years the Pacific Northwest climate may change significantly. See Climate Change Impacts and Adaptation in Washington State: Technical Summaries for Decision Makers, Climate Impacts Group, University of Washington, December 2013. The CIG confirms that global climate models project mid-21st century temperatures in the Pacific Northwest that are higher than the natural range of temperature observed in the 20th century. The CIG reports that as a result of likely climate change—causing slightly higher average annual temperature—impacts to the Pacific Northwest will likely affect a broad spectrum of the natural environment, but most notably changes to water resources, including:

- More precipitation falls as rain rather than snowfall in the Cascades due to an increased snow-line elevation;
- Decreased (winter) mountain snowpack and earlier (spring) snowmelt;
- Higher winter streamflow in rivers that depend on snowmelt;
- Higher winter streamflow in rain-fed river basins resulting in scouring floods that negatively affect salmon populations if winter precipitation and rain-on-snow events increases in the future as projected;
- Earlier peak (spring) streamflow in rivers that depend on snowmelt;
- Lower summer streamflow in rivers and streams; and,
- Decreased water in summer for irrigation, fish, human consumption and recreational use (more drought-like conditions).

Climate change impacts are likely to include longer-term shifts in forest types and species, potentially increasing wildfire risk and greater exposure to insects and disease. Nearshore and riverine fisheries may be subjected to increased stress due to even lower average summer stream flows (and higher summer stream temperatures) and increased acidity in Puget Sound. Agricultural sector concerns include the cost of climate adaptation, development of more climate-resilient technologies, and management and availability of adequate water supplies. Susceptibility to natural hazards is also expected to intensify due to climate change, including increased landslides, erosion, and coastal and riverine flooding due to more winter rainfall, and potential rising sea levels.

In 2007, Whatcom County completed a Climate Protection and Energy Conservation Action Plan that laid out specific actions and targets for reducing greenhouse gas...
emissions and increasing energy conservation efforts in response to potential climate change.

In addition many insurance industry experts are now factoring in the costs of climate change into insurance premiums as the increase in the frequency and severity of extreme weather events around the world results in a corresponding increase in claims costs.

Local government, residents and business must anticipate that as the climate changes, more frequent and severe damage to private and public infrastructure will occur. Maintenance costs and insurance premiums can be expected to increase accordingly. (Browne)

Reason for Change: Climate change was not addressed in the Comprehensive Plan

**Goal 11D** Strengthen the sustainability of Whatcom County’s economy, natural environment, and built communities by responding and adapting to the impacts of climate change.

**Policy 11D-1** Whatcom County’s natural resource-based economic sectors, natural systems, water resources, infrastructure, emergency management, and public health all face potentially noteworthy climate change related risks in the future. The County should consider potential long-range climate change implications into its on-going functional planning and implementation actions.

The County should:

1. Study the resilience of its natural and built environments to the potential impacts of climate change;
2. Identify the relative vulnerability of these sectors to climate change; and,
3. Examine the adaptive capacity of these sectors to cope with or mitigate climate change and take advantage of any beneficial opportunities.

**Policy 11D-32** Develop strategies that encourage a diversified and sustainable economy that is resilient to the impacts of climate change.

**Policy 11D-43** Promote the efficient use, conservation, and protection of water resources.

**Policy 11D-54** Pursue strategies to reduce the vehicle miles traveled (VMT) in the county by encouraging expanded availability and use of public transportation, carpooling, and non-vehicular modes of transportation.

**Policy 11D-75** Establish land use patterns that minimize transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions and encourage the preservation of natural resource lands and the protection of water resources.
Policy 11D-6: Convene a climate impact advisory committee by 2017. The advisory committee should consist of (but not be limited to) experts in energy efficiency and carbon emission reduction, representatives from Whatcom County, and interested community members. The committee will be tasked with:

- Evaluating Whatcom County’s compliance with meeting targets set forth in the 2007 Climate Plan;
- Establishing new targets that meet or exceed state and federal climate impact goals;
- Updating the Climate Plan, at minimum every five years, or as needed to meet targets;
- Recommending updates to the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan in accordance with meeting Whatcom County’s emission reduction goals; and
- Ensuring that Whatcom County government facilities and operations are designed to meet or exceed goals and standards resolved in the current Climate Protection and Energy Conservation Action Plan.

Policy 11D-7: Encourage sustainability by developing strategies and practices to increase the use of renewable, net-neutral carbon energy in Whatcom County facilities and County vehicles, with a goal of net zero man-made carbon emission by 2050.

Policy 11D-8: Encourage sustainability by developing strategies and practices to reduce landfill waste from Whatcom County government facilities to near zero.

Policy 11D-9: Identify responsible parties and agencies and encourage them to identify and properly seal and/or burn methane that is escaping into the atmosphere from wells.

Reason for Change: Address most current scientific assessments of potential, local climate change impacts.

Natural Hazards

Introduction

The location, climate, and geology of Whatcom County combine to create many natural hazards to people and their developments. Earthquakes, volcanoes, landslides, and flooding streams and rivers are some of the major natural hazards found in our region. Additionally, old mines are scattered around the county that could be dangerous to the community. Natural Hazards goals and policies are intended to provide guidance to county government as it assists its citizens in effectively managing natural hazards in a manner that minimizes the danger.
Background Summary

Natural Hazards include the following (Map 2711-4):

Landslide Hazards – The geologically recent retreat of glaciers from the Whatcom County landscape, succeed by contemporaneous geomorphic processes of erosion, sediment transport, deposition, isostatic rebound and tectonic uplift, has left many hillsides over-steepened and susceptible to naturally occurring and human-triggered slope failure landslides and erosion-earth movements. Several large, well-known landslides are presently active exist in Whatcom County, such as the Swift Creek Slide on Sumas Mountain and the Darrington Slide located in the upper Jones Creek–Watershed. In addition, numerous large-scale, pre-historic slope failure deposits have been mapped by past workers and are readily identified in more recently available LiDar imagery. Various slope failure processes contribute to the mosaic of landslide hazards present in the County the large slide on Slide Mountain south of Maple Falls. These larger landslides affect significant areas with and the potential exists for a multitude of impacts ranging from periodic small- to large-scale rockfall and slides, as well as the potential for massive debris slides and avalanches, destructive debris flows, and deep-seated earthflows, slumps and slides, deposits. Numerous smaller–These landslides processes act on both the large- and small-scale, and though much less catastrophic in nature, smaller landslides occur more frequently and pose a continually hazard to County residents and infrastructure also exist in the county, affecting smaller areas. In addition, the presence of certain types of geologic conditions and formations are commonly cause culprits in the occurrence of landslides, namely the Chuckanut Formation and the Darrington Phyllite, but are also frequently observed in unconsolidated glacial sediments, in the presence of day-lighting groundwater seams and springs, on slopes in excess of 35 percent, along coastal bluffs, and in areas of fluvial erosion are susceptible to land sliding under certain conditions. In the 1970s, a portion of Interstate-5 south of Bellingham collapsed where the freeway crossed portions of unstable Chuckanut Formation.

Reason for Change: Updated due to updated knowledge.

Alluvial Fan Hazards – Alluvial fan hazards areas exist where steep mountain streams flow onto floodplains or into lakes and deposit debris and sediment. Because these streams are steep and flow in confined canyons, they can carry more sediment and debris than a similar-sized stream flowing over flat land. During a large storm, streams on alluvial fans can create catastrophic flooding and debris floods, such as were experienced in 1983 in the Lake Whatcom area. During this storm event, the Sudden Valley development on Lake Whatcom incurred significant damage to property from flooding and debris flows on the Austin Creek alluvial fan.

Flood Hazards – Heavy winter rains and a transient snowpack combined with the steep and sometimes unstable slopes of Whatcom County's foothills create
conditions ideal for flooding and debris flows along many of our rivers and streams. The Nooksack River floodplain alone covers 38,000 acres in Whatcom County. In 1989 and 1990, the Nooksack River overflowed and flooded lowland Whatcom County causing millions of dollars of damage. During some extreme floods, the Nooksack River overflows near Everson and adversely impacts residents along Johnson Creek in Sumas, and in the Abbotsford area of British Columbia. It is predicted that climate change will exacerbate flooding, due to increased sea level and changes in rainfall patterns. Significant damage may result from these such floods. In 1991, Whatcom County formed a countywide Flood Control Zone District to address the major flooding issues in the county.

**Volcanic Hazards** – The presence of Mt. Baker is an asset to our region. Its 10,778-foot peak is one of the dominant features of Whatcom County's landscape. However, Mt. Baker is also considered one of the most potentially active volcanoes in the Cascade Range, and of the six major volcanoes in the range, Mt. Baker is considered by geologists to be very hazardous during and after an eruption. The frequency of Mt. Baker volcanic events averages once every 200 years. The last recorded significant event was about 200 years ago—Pyroclastic flows, ash flows, and especially volcanic mudflows, (also called known as lahars,) are believed to be the greatest dangers to human life and development in Whatcom County. Geologic evidence indicates that an eruption on Mt. Baker caused a major mudflowlahar about 6,000-6,600 years ago which inundated the Middle Fork Nooksack Valley from its headwaters downstream past the confluence with the North Fork at Welcome. The same mudflow, or lahar is now known to have been over 300 feet deep in the upper reaches of the Middle Fork and extended as far east-west as Nugent's Corner, and likely traveled to the Puget Sound. A major mudflowlahar along the Nooksack would divert the river from its channel and cause mass flooding. Fortunately, volcanic eruptions are infrequent with periods of hundreds and thousands of years between events, but this infrequency also makes forecasting a volcanic eruption extremely difficult. However, a major eruption of Mt. Baker would pose a serious threat to human life and property. The deeply weathered nature of the rocks forming Mt. Baker may also fail, triggering a mudflow that would travel rapidly down the stream channels ringing the volcano and result in damage similar to that from a volcanic eruption trigger. Mapping over the past decade of other Cascade volcanoes has demonstrated massive mudflows extending from the volcanoes to Puget Sound, and from Mount Rainier and Glacier Peak.

Reason for Change: According to web research, the event frequency doesn’t appear to be true; in fact there doesn’t appear to be a frequency to the known events.

**Earthquake Hazards** – Whatcom County lies within the influence of the convergent plate margin between the Pacific and North American Plate termed the Cascadia Subduction Zone. Regionally-extensive and damaging, a major earthquakes, termed mega-thrusts, are possible when stress generated between the subducting Pacific Plate and over-riding North American Plate is released, fault area off the coast of western North America. The Cascadia subduction zone has the
potential for a mega-thrust earthquake is capable of generating an earthquake of magnitude 9, eight or greater, and research has indicated an approximate recurrence interval of earthquakes every 500-600 years. Associated with the stresses generated at the convergent plate margin are shallow, crustal faults that are mapped. This type of earthquake is called a great interplate earthquake. Throughout Whatcom County, earthquake activity on these fault systems is much more frequent than that observed at the Cascadia Subduction Zone, and the has recently experienced much smaller interplate earthquakes near Deming area is considered one, fortunately with little damage to property. Deming is one of the most seismically active areas in Washington. Recent research has shown that these crustal faults are capable of generating a magnitude 7 earthquake with an average recurrence interval of. These types occur more frequently (30 to 50 years) than the great-interplate earthquakes. While all buildings are susceptible to damage from seismic-shaking earthquakes, structures built on peat soils, and large areas of non-structural fill, or liquefiable soils are prone to more severe shaking during an earthquake. If the shaking is strong enough, or of sufficient duration, structures may collapse or become damaged due to building fatigue, ground settlement liquefaction, and/or lateral spreading. In addition to seismic hazards posed by the Cascadia Subduction Zone, a significant mega-thrust earthquake has the potential to generate a large and destructive tsunami that has the potential to affect most low-bank areas of the County.

Reason for Change: Updated due to updated knowledge.

Mine Hazards – Mine hazard areas are sites of abandoned underground mine shafts, adits, and mine tailings. Coal mining was a major industry in Whatcom County in the early part of the 20th century, and several major mines were developed in various parts of the county. All of the formerly active mines are now no longer worked and are abandoned. For the most part these mine locations are known and mapped, such as the extensive coal mines under the northern part of the City of Bellingham and in the Blue Canyon area of South Lake Whatcom.

Issues, Goals, and Policies

Landslides – Siting human development on or adjacent to known landslide hazard areas can create health and safety risks for humans and their property, on and around these hazards, especially during The risks can be elevated due to extreme weather events and earthquakes, but may also occur with little or no warning. In the case of the Swift Creek Landslide Sumas Mountain, the release of asbestos-laden sediment poses an additional risk to public health. Development activity can also de-stabilize naturally unstable slopes and impact natural systems. However, predicting the exact timing, location, or extent of a damaging landslide is difficult, and in particular areas of the County landslide hazards are not possible to completely mitigate or avoid. In some circumstances, the development of upland properties may place While upslope landowners may develop their properties with little or no on-site impacts, downslope neighbors and natural systems may be placed at risk from rockfall or landslides as a result of the upslope land...
development. A similar relationship holds true for development at the toe of a potentially unstable slope. In either event, development in proximity to landslide hazards must proceed in consideration of potential impacts in order to ensure life safety and preserve and protect public and private infrastructure.

Reason for Change: Updated due to updated knowledge.

**Alluvial Fans** – Because alluvial fan areas are associated with streams, are generally gently sloping and elevated above the adjacent floodplain, and are located at the base of mountains, they have historically been popular places to develop. However, once every 10-25 years, a large storm event occurs in our area and creeks-streams flood homes and developments, causing damage to property, natural systems, and sometimes loss of lives.

**Flooding** – Floodwaters from the Nooksack River can damage rural-homes, agricultural areas, businesses, and industries in the small cities situated along the river; fish and wildlife habitat and other natural systems; and disrupt transportation and utility corridors. Storm tides can flood homes and roads along low, exposed marine shorelines in the Birch Bay, Sandy Point, Point Roberts, and Gooseberry Point areas. Homes along Lake Whatcom, Lake Samish, and Cain/Reed Lakes have also been impacted by flooding during extreme storm events. Property and public safety are also impacted by rapid channel morphology events.

**Volcanos** – A volcanic eruption or mudflow at Mount Baker could potentially severely affect river flow on the Nooksack River or Baker River and cause severe property damage near the volcanoes or along mudflow-lahar routes. A lahar is an extremely rare and unpredictable occurrence. Evacuation routes should be planned and made public. Development should be regulated according to the Critical Areas Ordinance.

Note: The P/C added this text, modified from language submitted by the BIAWC.

**Earthquakes** – A major earthquake could—may likely and significantly affect Whatcom County. If the shaking is strong enough, buildings may collapse, roads could be damaged, and/or communications, power, and utilities could be severely disrupted, mud and rock slides could occur on unstable slopes, and local sea levels may change as shorelines assume altered post-quake elevations.

Reason for Change: Recommended changes by the Marine Resources Committee.

**Mines** – Some abandoned mine areas may pose a risk of ground subsidence from the collapse of abandoned mine shafts. Air and water pollution may also be hazards associated with abandoned mine tailings and trapped toxic gases. Development on or near mine hazards could be adversely impacted.

Gas wells – Several exploratory oil & gas wells have been drilled around the county over the last 70+ years. Some of these present potential environmental hazards due to ongoing leakage of gas.
Old Landfills – There are known abandoned landfills in the County and possibly some that are unknown. There are also several sites around the County that contain large numbers of abandoned vehicles and other debris. As with most landfills these locations pose some degree of risk of hazardous substances leaking into local aquifers.

**Balanced Management** – A central issue common to all development in natural hazard areas is the need for Whatcom County to balance the responsibility of local government to protect the public interest and provide for a safe and healthy environment while safeguarding the rights of private property owners.

**Economic Impact** – Damage to private and public property resulting from the siting of human development in areas of natural hazards is significant to the people of Whatcom County. The 1990 Nooksack River floods caused over $20 million dollars of damage to roads, bridges, buildings, and farmland. Disaster relief efforts are expensive and dangerous to conduct during an emergency. Public efforts to reduce hazards, such as the establishment of the Flood Control Zone District, are also expensive.

**Goal 1D-E:** Minimize potential loss of life, damage to property, the expenditure of public funds, and degradation of natural systems resulting from development in hazardous areas such as floodplains, landslide-prone areas, seismic hazards areas, volcanic impact areas, abandoned mine and exploratory gas well locations, potentially dangerous alluvial fans, and other known natural hazards by advocating the use of land acquisition, open space taxation, conservation easements, growth planning, regulations, and other options to discourage or minimize development, or prohibit inappropriate development in such areas.

Reason for change: We do use regulations as well as these other measures to achieve this.

**Policy 1D-E-1:** Avoid or minimize public investments for future infrastructure development on known natural hazard areas.

**Policy 1D-E-2:** Utilize the Best Available Science to research and investigate the nature and extent of known natural hazards in the county and make this information available to the general public and policy makers in an accessible and understandable form.

**Policy 1D-E-3:** Broadly inform the people of Whatcom citizens of the locations of known natural hazards, and the potential for adverse impacts of such natural hazards to the health, safety, and welfare of people and their properties.

**Policy 1D-E-4:** Formally—establish acceptable levels of public risk for development in known natural hazard areas based upon the

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nature of the natural hazard; and levels of public risk, and establish maintain regulatory criteria for approving, disapproving, conditioning, or mitigating development activity.

Policy 11DF-5: Allow all permitted uses that do not require human habitation as long as probable adverse off-site impacts to other properties or natural systems (those impacts resulting from the interaction of the natural hazard and the proposed development) are minimized or mitigated. Probable adverse impacts should be prevented or avoided in habitats of state-sensitive or federally listed sensitive plant and animal species.

Policy 11DF-65: Prohibit the siting of critical public facilities in known natural hazard areas unless the siting of the facility can be shown to have a public benefit which outweighs the risk of siting in the particular hazard area.

Policy 11D-7: Develop a comprehensive land use management program consistent with the findings and recommendations of the Comprehensive Flood Hazard Management Plan.

Reason for Change: Similar to and redundant with new policy 11F-15.

Policy 11DF-876: Maintain Develop a comprehensive program of regulatory and non-regulatory mechanisms to achieve Natural Hazard goals and policies. This program should include such mechanisms as education, tax incentives, zoning, land use regulations, conservation easements, purchase of development rights, transfer of development rights, and public acquisition.

Policy 11DF-987: Review and revise consistent with the Natural Hazard goals and policies and consider the locations of Natural Hazard Areas when establishing or changing zoning patterns and densities.

Reason for Change: Policies 11F-9 – 15, below, were moved from the Action Items section which is being deleted.

Policy 11DF-1098: To address the causes of flooding and avoid expensive and maintenance-intensive bank protection measures, the County shall prioritize its floodplain property acquisition program and add an emphasis of and emphasize restoring river connectivity to historic side channels and floodplain areas. This approach addresses the causes of flooding in contrast to expensive and maintenance intensive bank protection measures.

Policy 11DF-109: Take steps to discourage additional new floodplain development in the floodplain.

Policy 11DF-110: Require applicants for development permits located in natural hazard areas to provide development plans designed to minimize the potential to exacerbate the natural hazard as well.

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as the risk of damage to property or threats to human health
and safety. In natural hazard areas where engineering solutions
cannot be designed to withstand the forces expected to occur
under the design event of a particular natural hazard, or off-site
adverse impacts to adjacent properties or natural systems
cannot be adequately mitigated, Whatcom County may deny
development permits intended for permanent or seasonal
human habitation.

Policy 11DF-121: Consider conducting a public process with affected citizens,
technical experts, and decision-makers to establish
recommended levels of public risk for each of the identified
natural hazards. In developing recommended levels of public
risk for natural hazards, consider the appropriate variables
affecting developments in hazardous areas. These variables may
include:

- Specific types of risk associated with the particular hazard
  area;
- The gradation of hazards associated with a particular geo-
  hazard;
- Level of detail necessary to map hazard areas;
- Different levels of risk associated with different ownership
classes (e.g., public ownership versus private ownership);
- Different levels of risk associated with different types of
  land uses; and,
- Mitigation measures related to specific adverse impacts of
development in hazard areas.

Once a set of risk levels have been identified, propose these risk
levels for adoption by the County Council as the level to which
future development must be designed and appropriate locations
for them.

Policy 11DF-132: Formally consider establishing acceptable levels of public risk for
use in approving and conditioning development activity in
known natural hazard areas. The established level of risk may
be expressed as the potential hazard posed as determined by
scientific and historical methods applicable to each specific
natural hazard.

Policy 11DF-143: Review the findings and recommendations of alluvial fan hazard
evaluations and make appropriate recommendations for land
use and zoning regulations to the County Council to assist in
reducing the hazards posed on these fans. Whatcom County has
completed or nearly completed alluvial fan evaluations of Canyon Creek, Jones Creek, and Glacier-Gallop Creeks.

Policy 11DF-154: Review the findings and recommendations of the Comprehensive Flood Hazard Management Plan (CFHMP) and make appropriate recommendations for land use and zoning regulations to the County Council to assist in the implementation of the CFHMP.

Policy 11F-15: Identify known locations of abandoned wells that could produce methane and/or other hazardous substances and where immediate danger of methane and hazardous substance leaking exists, condition development approvals on affected parcels to mitigate those impacts.

Reason for Change: Policies 11F-9 – 15, above, were moved from the Action Items section which is being deleted.

Water Resources

Introduction

Water resources refer to the numerous surface waters such as lakes, streams, wetlands; groundwater; aquifers; estuaries; and marine waterbodies within Whatcom County (Map 2411-1). These waterbodies are often integrally linked through the complex network referred to as the water cycle. The water cycle describes the series of transformations that occur in the circulation of water from the atmosphere onto the surface and into the subsurface regions of the earth, and then back from the surface to the atmosphere. Water resources of Whatcom County provide: natural beauty; recreation; habitat for fish and wildlife; water for drinking, agriculture, and industry; and other benefits essential to the quality of life and economic health of the community. The quality of life and economic health of our county's communities depend on the maintenance of a safe and reliable water supply. Decisions affecting any element of the water environment must be based on consideration of the effects on other elements.

Background Summary

Whatcom County has 16 major freshwater lakes, 3,012 miles of rivers and streams, over 37,000 acres of wetlands, 134 miles of marine shoreline, and aquifers containing an undetermined amount of groundwater. These water resources serve multiple uses, including providing a source of drinking water for the people of Whatcom County. Surface water sources such as Lake Whatcom, the Nooksack River, and Lake Samish provide water to more than half the county residents, with the remainder relying on groundwater, either from individual wells or from about 300 public water systems. Agriculture relies on both ground and surface water for irrigation, drinking water for livestock, and facility wash down. Businesses and industries may also require water, sometimes in substantial quantities, from the non-
potable as well as and potable supplies. Water is also essential to meet many of what are referred to as "in-stream" uses, such as for recreation, shellfish growing and harvesting, habitat for fish and wildlife habitat, aesthetics, and other uses and benefits.

Groundwater is contained in aquifers, which are subterranean layers of porous rock or soil. Most of the surficial aquifers in Whatcom County are replenished by rainwater, though some may contain water trapped during glacial periods. Aquifers are often integrally linked with surface water systems and are essential for meeting in-stream and out-of-stream water needs such as for drinking water, agriculture, other and industry, and other uses.

Rainfall that does not soak into the ground or evaporate is regarded as surface water and runs into drainage courses such as ditches, streams, wetlands, rivers, lakes, and the Strait of Georgia supports local surface and marine waters. Natural and manmade drainage systems have many important functions, including storing excess water flow, purifying surface water, recharging groundwater, conveying water, and supporting important biological activities. As more areas in Whatcom County are being urbanized, natural water resource systems are being replaced with built systems, leading to permanent changes in hydrology.

Whatcom County government has a major role in helping to maintain these benefits through its many responsibilities and programs, particularly in the areas of health, safety, land use, and development. The intent of the following goals and policies is to provide guidance to Whatcom County government as it assists its citizens in effectively managing our water resources in a manner that ensures that the benefits of those resources are maintained far into the future. The water resource section focuses primarily on groundwater and surface water management. Surface water management relates generally to watershed protection and stormwater/drainage systems. However, some policy direction may indirectly be provided for areas such as wetlands, estuaries, streams, and marine waterbodies within the Water Resource section. Some of these areas are covered in more detail in other sections within the Environment Chapter.

**Whatcom County Water Resource Programs**

Whatcom County has and/or participates in numerous water resource programs aimed at protecting and enhancing water quality and quantity, including:

- WRRA 1 Watershed Management Project;
- Lake Whatcom Watershed Management;
- Groundwater Protection & Management;
- Flood Hazard Management; and,
- Stormwater Management.

These programs are described in Appendix G.

Reason for Change: The Planning Commission felt that the descriptions of the County’s water resource and salmon recovery programs should be in an appendix.

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rather than the body of this chapter, mostly for brevity’s sake, but also because their organization may be changing soon.

Issues, Goals, and Policies

Watershed Planning and Management

General

Problems exist which affect water resources in Whatcom County. Surface and groundwater quality problems can be found in many areas of Whatcom County and are described in various chapters of the Comprehensive Plan. There are significant legal limitations in obtaining new consumptive water rights in a majority of the County. Management actions between and within jurisdictions are not always well coordinated or consistent. Additionally, there is much to learn about the physical characteristics and availability of the resource, since water resources are heavily linked in complex systems that are only understood in varying degrees. Sound technical data upon which to base a thorough understanding of these complex systems is still continuously being developed. Other issues, in the last 10 years, have been many updated regulations, and policies such as the Clean Water Act, Endangered Species Act, and State water code, and tribal actions act to further exacerbate which come into play more and more, aimed at solving and rationalizing and lend unpredictability to the problems associated with water.

These problems and issues have already led to many impacts on the community. The impacts include health concerns associated with drinking contaminated water; fisheries depletion and closure of shellfish harvesting areas; and other in-stream problems; a lack of adequate water storage and delivery systems to meet the requirements of growth and development; concerns with the availability of water to meet existing agricultural and public water supply demands; potential difficulties and additional costs associated with obtaining building permits and subdivision approvals; and other-related increasing financial costs to the community.

Long-term resolution of the numerous, complex, and changing water issues requires actions in many areas. Sound technical data and a better understanding of the water systems is are needed, including the recognition that water resources must be managed as an integrated system. Cooperation and coordination among the various users, jurisdictions, and those who impact the resource is necessary. Creative solutions should be pursued which extend beyond regulatory action to include education and technical and financial assistance.

Reason for Change: Much of the above text was incorporated into Appendix G.

Goal 11EG: Protect and enhance water quantity and quality and promote sustainable and efficient use of water resources.

Policy 11EG-21: Maintain as a high priority the protection of water quality and quantity, and associated features like watersheds and aquifers.
Policy 11EG-2: Actively participate in and support WRIR 1 Watershed Planning efforts associated with the coordination of local, federal, tribal, and state agencies to achieve integration or consistency between the various levels of environmental regulations relating to the County. In conjunction with the cities, other municipal corporations, tribal governments, federal and state agencies, public and private utilities, and the public, develop programs, such as WRIRA Watershed Management Planning, which promote sustainable and efficient use of water resources.

Policy 11EG-12: Actively participate in the development of WRIRA Watershed Management Plannings efforts and the process to establish a county-wide water resources management body.

Reason for Change: Policies 11G-2 & 3 were combined.

Policy 11EG-83: Work cooperatively with Federal, State, and local jurisdictions, Tribal governments, municipal corporations, and the public to implement the goals and policies, and action items contained in of this the chapter Comprehensive pPlan as well as state water resources and water quality laws.

Policy 11EG-4: Participate in the coordination of all local water and land management efforts, plans, and data to ensure adequate oversight of water quantity and quality issues.

Policy 11EG-5: Manage and prioritize water resources for multiple instream and out-of-stream beneficial uses, including commensurate with instream flows set by the State Department of Ecology.

Reason for Change: Recommended change by Dept. of Ecology. When issuing water rights, the state's surface water & groundwater codes specifically do not prioritize one beneficial use above another. Also, in-stream flows and water rights are all by priority date.

Policy 11EG-16: Actively promote and participate in education, research, and information opportunities which better—improve our understanding of the county's complex water resource systems. New information should be considered in the development and evaluation of management actions.

Policy 11EG-37: Pursue the most effective methods for protecting water quantity and quality, through both regulatory (e.g. zoning, enforcement, fines) and non-regulatory approaches (education, incentives, and technical/financial assistance). Emphasis should be placed on non-regulatory approaches where possible and effective.

Policy 11EG-98: Track the development of policies and regulations at the local, state, and federal level. Provide input to those regulations and
policies as necessary to ensure that the interests of Whatcom County are considered.

Policy 11FG-69: In conjunction with all jurisdictions, develop and adopt programs to protect water quality and quantity within watersheds, aquifers, and marine waterbodies that which cross jurisdictional boundaries.

Policy 11EG-1110: Promote awareness and participation in management and protection efforts by individual citizens and the community as a whole.

Surface Water and Groundwater

Surface water systems face sediment, nutrient, bacteria, petroleum, metals, and other contamination from a variety of point and non-point sources. Groundwater supplies in some areas are also vulnerable to contamination. Nitrates, arsenic, bacteria, elevated chlorine levels, EDB, 1,2-DCP, and other contaminants have been found in some groundwater supplies at levels that exceed those considered safe for drinking water.

Reason for Change: Background information is now provided in Appendix G.

Goal 11FH: Protect and enhance Whatcom County’s surface water and groundwater quality and quantity for current and future generations.

Policy 11FH-1: Manage surface water systems, where appropriate, on a watershed basis.

Policy 11H-2: Coordinate efforts to bring all water users in Whatcom County into compliance with state and federal water laws in a way that enhances stream flows, water quality, and fish and wildlife habitat.

RFC: The P/C felt that the County should be coordinating such efforts with other agencies.

Policy 11FH-23: In conjunction with the public and appropriate local, State, Tribal, and Federal jurisdictions, define, and identify, and develop management strategies for watershed basins and subbasins which may require special protection. These areas may include aquifers, critical aquifer recharge areas as defined under the Growth Management Act, Groundwater Management Areas, wellhead protection areas, and high priority watersheds such as those specified under WAC 400 (Local Planning and Management of Non-point Source Pollution), WRIA Watershed Management Planning, and under legislative policy direction (e.g. Nooksack Basin, Lake Whatcom, Lake Samish and Drayton Harbor).
Policy 11F-7: Continue identifying areas that require special protection such as wellhead protection areas, aquifers, and high-priority watersheds, and incorporate that knowledge into management actions, including dissemination of the information to the general public.

Policy 11F-3: In conjunction with the public and appropriate local, State, Tribal, and Federal jurisdictions, develop management strategies for those areas requiring special protection. Management efforts should consider both water quality and quantity. Water quality efforts should help reduce the likelihood that potential contaminant sources will pollute water supplies. Water quantity efforts should include consideration and protection of recharge areas as appropriate and potential effects on stream flow.

Reason for Change: The above three policies were similar, so combined into one.

Policy 11FH-4: Support the completion and implementation of local and state Watershed Action Management Plans, the Lower Nooksack Strategy, the Lake Whatcom Management Program, NPDES Phase II Permitting, and the WRIA Watershed Management Projects as some of the means of addressing non-point source pollution.

Policy 11FH-5: Pursue the adoption and implementation of ground and/or surface water management plans and their integration into the plans—into local comprehensive plans. Designate the Lake Whatcom and Lake Samish Watersheds as a high priority in this effort.

Policy 11H-6: Oppose the use of hydraulic fracturing in oil and gas wells (also known as “fracking”) to avoid the potential degradation of water quality in aquifers and other ground water.

Stormwater and Drainage

Stormwater is that portion of rainwater that does not naturally percolate into the ground or evaporate, but flows overland or through pipes, gullies, or channels into a defined channel, or a constructed infiltration facility. In many cases, stormwater is associated with impervious surface in areas where development has taken place. In these areas, replacement of natural drainage systems with built systems results in short and long-term public costs and can lead to environmental degradation, including flooding, erosion, sedimentation, habitat loss, and degradation of water quality.

Various land uses can have significant effects on water flow. Sedimentation from ground-disturbed by grading, new development, farming, and logging can reduce river or stream channel capacity, fill small lakes, and smother aquatic life and habitat. Surface water runoff from developed areas can carry pollutants such as
| 1 | petroleum products, heavy metals, garden chemicals, and animal wastes into the water system; runoff from farms and forests can bring pollutants including fertilizers and pesticides. |
| 3 | Reason for Change: Background information is now provided in Appendix G. |

| 5 | **Goal 11GI:** Protect water resources and natural drainage systems by controlling the quality and quantity of stormwater runoff. |
| 7 | **Policy 11GI-1:** Manage stormwater runoff to minimize surface water quality and quantity impacts and downstream impacts on channel morphology, property owners, and aquatic species and habitats. |
| 10 | **Policy 11GI-2:** Maintain or enhance, when appropriate, natural drainage systems and natural water storage sites in order to better protect water quality, moderate water quantity, minimize environmental degradation, and reduce public costs. |
| 14 | **Policy 11GI-3:** Limit the alteration of natural drainage systems and natural water storage sites without mitigating measures. Such measures should not degrade water quality or fish and wildlife habitat, and should not increase hazards to the community. |
| 18 | **Policy 11GI-4:** Support the use by resource industries—such as agriculture, forestry, and mineral resource extraction—of management practices that minimize erosion and sedimentation, and significantly reduce pollutants. |
| 22 | **Policy 11GI-5:** Evaluate the role of watersheds in the maintenance of water quality and quantity and determine what cumulative impacts development activity may have on watershed hydrology. |
| 25 | **Policy 11GI-6:** Develop specific stormwater management programs for each drainage basin within the county's jurisdiction which that may be impacted by urban levels of development. Recognize the Lake Whatcom Watershed, Lake Samish, and Drayton Harbor as high priorities in this effort. Coordinate efforts with the Lake Whatcom Management Committee—Policy Group—program, the various shellfish protection districts, and other watershed management plan|entities. |
| 33 | **Policy 11GI-7:** Establish, as a high priority, a stormwater maintenance program which that assures that stormwater systems are adequately maintained and function at or near design capacity. |
| 36 | **Policy 11GI-8:** Strongly incentivize Encourage—the use of low impact development strategies. Minimize the amount of impervious surface whenever practicable by using natural engineering design methods such as the use of open, grassed, street swales and rain gardens instead of curbs and gutters. Where feasible, |
encourage alternate surfacing options and other techniques associated with low impact development (see Glossary).

Policy 11GI-9: Develop and administer stormwater management standards as required by the NPDES Phase II Permit.

Policy 11GI-10: Develop and administer regulations and incentives such that there is no net loss of ecological functions and values of regulated wetlands and fish and wildlife habitats.

Policy 11I-11: Place a high priority on integrating impervious surface reduction incentives into policies, regulations, and standards for the Lake Whatcom and Lake Samish watersheds.

Reason for Change: Policy 11I-11 comes from the Action Plan that was removed from this chapter.

Policy 11I-12: Develop and implement comprehensive stormwater management programs and strategies designed to address runoff from all private and public developments and facilities within regulated and sensitive watersheds.

1. Implement the Western Washington Phase II Municipal Stormwater Permit as part of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Program. Incorporate watershed considerations into the development of a comprehensive stormwater management strategy for designated areas.

2. Review Stormwater Special Districts Standards, Watershed Protection Districts, and other related codes that address runoff treatment from potentially polluting surfaces for their applicability to other sensitive watersheds with the Technical Advisory Committee and other appropriate agencies. Coordinate efforts for ongoing monitoring and evaluation within the sensitive watersheds and NPDES areas.

1.3. Amend subdivision, zoning, and other land use regulations and design standards to encourage that land use activities minimize the amount of impervious surface.

4. Identify and implement a long-term funding source to provide for water resource protection services, including non-point source identification and enforcement of applicable county regulations.

5. Focus on the Lake Whatcom watershed as a high priority in developing a stormwater management program. Develop a stormwater management plan that achieves a uniform level of protection throughout the Lake Whatcom watershed.
Ensure coordination and communication with the public and affected jurisdictions, such as the Lake Whatcom Water and Sewer District, the Sudden Valley Community Association, and the City of Bellingham.

2.6. Ensure that existing stormwater standards are adequately enforced within Stormwater Special Districts, Watershed Protection Districts, and the NPDES areas.

Develop a comprehensive stormwater management program designed to manage runoff from public facilities and industrial, commercial, and urban residential areas including streets and roads in compliance with NPDES requirements. Establish a stormwater management plan for rural roads. Each component of the program shall cover both new and existing developments. Emphasis should be placed on controlling stormwater through source controls and Best Management Practices. Establish a long term goal of minimal pollutant discharge into surface water resources.

At a minimum, the components of this program shall include:

- Identification of potentially significant pollutant sources and their relationship to the drainage system and water bodies;
- Investigation of problem drains, including sampling;
- Programs for operation and maintenance of storm drains, detention systems, ditches, and culverts;
- A water quality response program to investigate sources of pollutants, spills, fish kills, illegal hookups, dumping, and other water quality problems. These investigations should be used to support compliance/enforcement efforts;
- Assurance of adequate local funding for the stormwater program through surface water utilities, sewer charges, fees, or other revenue generating sources;
- Local coordination arrangement such as interlocal agreements, joint programs, consistent standards, or regional boards or committees;
- Regulations requiring implementation of stormwater control for new development;
- A public stormwater educational program aimed at residents, businesses, and industries in the urban area;
- Strong inspection, compliance, and enforcement measures.
• An implementation schedule.
• Adequate design specifications and construction practices to ensure minimal on-site erosion and sedimentation during and after construction.

3. Incorporate watershed considerations into the development of a comprehensive stormwater management strategy. This should include the identification of priority watersheds relative to stormwater management and the application of Action Item 1 to each watershed in the order of their priority.

4. Review Stormwater Special Districts Standards that address runoff treatment from potentially polluting surfaces for their applicability to other sensitive watersheds.

5. Amend subdivision, zoning, and other land use regulations and design standards to require that land use activities minimize the amount of impervious surface. Low impact surfacing options should be encouraged wherever possible.

6. Identify and implement a long-term funding source to provide for water resource protection services including non-point source identification and enforcement of applicable county regulations.

7. Focus on the Lake Whatcom watershed as a high priority in developing a stormwater management program. Develop a stormwater management plan that achieves a uniform level of protection throughout the Lake Whatcom watershed. Ensure coordination and communication with the public and affected jurisdictions such as the Lake Whatcom Water and Sewer District, the Sudden Valley Community Association, and the City of Bellingham.

8. Work with the Technical Advisory Committee and other appropriate agencies in revising or developing standards necessary to ensure watershed protection and then coordinate the effort within sensitive watersheds for ongoing monitoring and evaluation.

9. Develop and implement a stormwater maintenance program for the Lake Whatcom Watershed that would ensure that existing systems are adequately maintained.

10. Ensure that existing stormwater standards are adequately enforced within Stormwater Special Districts.

Reason for Change: The double underlined and struck out policy was an action item. The new language (underlined) is a rewrite of the policy by Public Works.
Water Conservation

**Goal 11-J: Policy 11E-4:** Support water conservation, reclamation, and reuse measures and education as a means to helping ensure sufficient water supplies in the future.

**Policy 11E-71:** Support and assist water users in the development of cost-effective means of improving efficiency of water use.

**Policy 11E-82:** Support efforts to establish and protect sustainable water supplies to meet existing and future demands for water in the county.

**Policy 11J-3:** Develop and implement plans to comply with the Department of Ecology’s instream flow and water management rules and water resources management programs.

Lake Whatcom Watershed

**Goal 2MM11-K:** Prioritize the Lake Whatcom watershed as an area in which to minimize development, repair existing stormwater problems (specifically for phosphorus), and ensure forestry practices do not negatively impact water quality. Provide sufficient funding and support to be successful.

**Policy 2MM11-K-1:** Work with property owners to find acceptable development solutions at lower overall densities than the present zoning allows.

**Policy 2MM11-K-2:** Develop a storm drainage utility district or other funding mechanism to deal with the unique problems of development in a drinking water watershed.

**Policy 2MM11-K-3:** Recognize that all users of Lake Whatcom water have an interest in the resource and should share in the cost of its protection.

**Policy 2MM11-K-4:** Work cooperatively with the City of Bellingham, and the Lake Whatcom Water and Sewer District, Water District 10, and applicable associations to identify, review, and, as appropriate, recommend changes to existing monitoring programs that will address the needs of the various jurisdictions. Place a particular focus on the information needed to evaluate the impacts of additional development and stormwater management measures in the watershed. Include an analysis of the diversion from the Middle Fork of the Nooksack. Coordinate efforts with the Lake Whatcom Management Committee process.
Reason for Change: "Applicable associations" added by P/C in response to the Sudden Valley Community Association's request.

Policy 2MM11-K-5: Evaluate and pursue, as appropriate, the use of incentives to encourage voluntary lot consolidation, transfer or purchase of development rights, current use taxation, and participation in open space conservation programs.

Policy 2MM11-K-6: Do not allow density bonuses within the Lake Whatcom Watershed.

Policy 2MM11-K-7: Work cooperatively with the City of Bellingham and the Lake Whatcom Water and Sewer District to develop benchmarks to determine the effectiveness of management actions; when goals have been achieved; or when additional actions are necessary.

Policy 2MM11-K-8: Continue to develop and refine structural and non-structural best management practices (BMPs), both voluntary and required, to minimize development impacts within the Lake Whatcom watershed.

Policy 2MM11-K-9: Work to keep state-owned forest lands within the Lake Whatcom Board and Forest Purchase lands within the Lake Whatcom watershed in public ownership, and support managing forestry on these lands in a manner that minimizes sediment and phosphorus yields from streams.

Policy 2MM11-K-10: Encourage the location of public services, such as schools, libraries, parks/open space, and post offices within Rural Communities that would likely reduce the vehicle miles traveled within the watershed.

Reason for change: This change was recommended by the County Health Department.

Policy 2MM11-K-11: Continue to work with Bellingham and Lake Whatcom Water and Sewer District to protect and manage the Lake Whatcom watershed in accordance with the 1998 joint interlocal agreement. Focus on continued implementation of the 5-Year Work Plans of the Lake Whatcom Management Program. In addition, work with the affected jurisdictions and secure funding for programs.

Reason for change: This text was moved from the action plan items in Chapter 2.

Policy 2MM11-K-12: Review and modify (as needed) the current development review process for projects in the Lake Whatcom Watershed to ensure coordination with other jurisdictions.

Reason for change: This text was moved from the action plan items in Chapter 2.
Policy 2MM11-K-13: The existence of sewer lines in the Rural and Rural Forestry comprehensive plan designations will not be utilized to justify rezoning property in the Lake Whatcom watershed to allow higher density land uses.

Reason for change: This text was moved from the action plan items in Chapter 2.

Note: Policies 11-K-14 through 21 were moved from Chapter 2.

Policy 2BB11-K-14: Facilitate meeting the unique needs of Sudden Valley due to its location within the Lake Whatcom Watershed.

Policy 2BB11-K-15: Recognize the existing parcelization and the commitment for development of the remaining multi-family parcels in Sudden Valley.

Policy 2BB11-K-16: Work with the Community Association towards voluntary achievement of the density reduction target of 1,400 of additional lots within Sudden Valley.

Reason for change: According to Public Works, the density reduction program has been completed; thus, this policy is no longer needed.

Policy 2BB11-K-17: If vacant lots in the Lake Whatcom watershed come available due to a tax foreclosure the County may acquire them, remove the developments rights and then place them back on the market through the public auction process to recover any residual value. If the county acquires lots through tax foreclosure, consider selling them as non-buildable lots.

Policy 2BB11-K-18: Support Lake Whatcom Water and Sewer District’s effort to maintain adequate sewer capacity and control stormwater run-off in keeping with appropriate environmental controls and the Sudden Valley Community Association’s density reduction goal.

Policy 2BB11-K-24: Work with all parties to maintain, and appropriately plan for infrastructure, public services, and stormwater retention so that Sudden Valley can develop to its appropriate potential.

Note: Policies 11-K-14 through 21 were moved from Chapter 2.

Natural Systems

Introduction

"Natural systems" refers to the complex biological ecosystem that has grown from the geologic setting of Whatcom County. It includes fish and wildlife, as well as diverse vegetation that has adapted to a variety of physical and climatic conditions (Map 2511-2, Map 2611-3). Natural Systems goals and policies are intended to provide guidance to county government as it assists citizens.
to effectively manage and enhance these natural systems, and ensures that the
benefits of these systems are maintained far into the future.

Background Summary
Whatcom County provides a wide variety of natural habitats which support and
shelter a diverse array of fish and wildlife species. The county's wildlife is
particularly varied and abundant when compared to many other areas of
Washington State. There are a number of factors that have contributed to this:
abundant water resources, rich soils, mild climate conditions, and a moderate
degree of urbanization are among the most important. Among the habitats of
importance to fish and wildlife are the following:

- wetlands, lakes, and streams;
- nearshore, intertidal, and—estuarine habitats and marine habitats
  including, but not limited to, kelp and eelgrass beds;
- riparian areas and other travel corridors;
- snags and downed logs;
- forested habitats in a variety of successional stages;
- caves, cliffs, and talus slopes;
- grasslands and cultivated fields; and,
- thickets and fence rows.

Aquatic habitats include rivers, streams, ponds, lakes, and their riparian borders.
Together, these habitats are essential to Whatcom County's fish and wildlife.
Twenty-six species of fish—including twelve economically important stocks of
salmon and trout—inhbit fresh water in Whatcom County for all or part of their life
cycles. Healthy flowing streams and rivers, as well as off-channel wetland habitats,
are essential to the survival of the majority of these fish. Wetland ponds, especially
beaver ponds, provide optimal habitats for rearing and over-wintering of young
fish, particularly Coho salmon and cutthroat trout juveniles.

Most regional wildlife species regularly use aquatic and riparian habitats for
breeding, feeding, shelter, and migratory activities. Of this large grouping, over half
are dependent upon wetland habitats at some point in their life cycles, and would
decline or disappear in the absence of wetlands. Wetlands also contain unique
vegetative communities that harbor many species of rare and unusual plants.

Native-Fish and Wildlife Populations and Habitat
Optimum habitat for Pacific Northwest salmon and other fish is one that resembles
the riparian landscape of pre-settlement times: braided streams wandering freely
through nearly continuous forest; trees overhanging and partly fallen into streams;
stream beds with abundant logs, step waterfalls, pools, and cutbanks; and
vegetated marine and estuarine communities. In most cases, it is not realistic to
return to that state. However, measures can be taken to retain or regain those
features which provide the minimum requirements of a viable fishery.
The best habitat for native wildlife includes native plants, which have evolved and occur naturally in the county. Native plants are more closely matched to local soils, climate, and wildlife. They provide the right kinds of food, shelter, and diversity needed by wildlife. Native plants frequently need less watering, spraying, pruning, fertilizing, and other maintenance than do exotic or imported plants. Loss of native vegetation through conversion to ornamental vegetation and non-native species often results in loss of wildlife habitat, increased competition to native wildlife from introduced species, such as starlings, and increased maintenance needs. Loss of native vegetation also can occur through invasions such as the spread of Spartina, which can drastically displace important native eelgrass communities.

**Salmon Recovery Program**

The decline of salmonids throughout Washington and the Pacific Northwest over the past century is well established. Since 1991, numerous evolutionarily significant units (ESUs) of Pacific salmonids have been listed as endangered or threatened under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), including those of chinook, coho, chum, sockeye, and steelhead. Decline in salmonid abundances have been attributed to widespread loss and degradation of habitat, due to hydropower, residential and urban development, agriculture, and forestry. Fishing and hatchery production have also contributed to declines.

Whatcom County participates in the WRIA 1 Salmon Recovery Program aimed at protecting and enhancing native salmon stock, which is described in Appendix G.

**Reason for Change:** The Planning Commission felt that the descriptions of the County’s water resource and salmon recovery programs should be in an appendix rather than the body of this chapter, mostly for brevity’s sake, but also because their organization may be changing soon.

**Marine Resources Management**

Marine habitats include all salt water bodies and their shorelines, kelp beds, eelgrass meadows, salt marshes, beaches, and mudflats. These habitats play a vital role in the health of the local environment, as well as of the broader Puget Sound region. They provide spawning, rearing, and feeding grounds for a wide variety of marine life, as well as refuge for juvenile and adult fish, birds, and shellfish. The vegetation on back-shore marshes and within estuaries buffers adjacent upland areas by absorbing wave energy and slowing erosion.

Symptoms of ecosystem stress include: declining stocks of salmon, bottomfish, and forage fish; closures of recreational and commercial shellfish beds; degradation and losses of eelgrass beds, kelp forests, and other marine habitats; and dwindling populations of seabirds and marine mammals.

The Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative was authorized by Congress in 1998. The Initiative established the Northwest Straits Commission and Marine Resources Committees (MRCs) in seven western Washington counties, including

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Whatcom County. The MRCs’ main purpose is to guide local communities, using up-to-date information and scientific expertise, to achieve the important goals of resource conservation and habitat protection within the Northwest Straits. The Whatcom County MRC acts as an advisory committee to the Whatcom County Council.

**Shellfish Recovery**

Many of the marine waterbodies in Whatcom County support natural and cultured bivalve shellfish, including oysters and many species of clams. The warm, nutrient-rich tide flats in and around Lummi, Portage, and Birch Bays; and Drayton Harbor; and Eliza and Lummi Islands represent unique water resources in this regard. Commercial shellfish growers, recreational clam and oyster harvesters, and Native Americans have used this resource for many years. It is an important part of our community’s heritage.

Our ability to grow and harvest shellfish that is safe for human consumption is directly linked to surface water quality and the influence it has on marine waters. The primary measure of water quality for shellfish harvesting is bacterial contamination associated with human sewage and animal wastes. Potential sources of fecal bacteria include municipal sewage treatment plants, on-site sewage systems, boat waste, farm animals, pets, and wildlife. Since 1995, valuable shellfish beds in Portage Bay and Drayton Harbor have been downgraded (harvest prohibited) due to non-point pollution impacting recreational, tribal, and commercial harvesting. In 2014, Portage Bay was identified as a threatened Shellfish Growing Area by the Washington Department of Health. (Washington Department of Health, 2014)

**Shellfish Protection Advisory Boards**

Whatcom County has three Shellfish Protection District Advisory Boards Committees, one for each of the Shellfish Protection Districts: Birch Bay, Drayton Harbor, and Portage Bay. Each advises the County Council on proposed actions and operations relating to the restoration of water quality in their respective watersheds.

**Shellfish Recovery Plans**

Shellfish Recovery Plans have been created for each of three districts. The plans outline the primary sources of bacteria and actions to improve water quality:-

- Drayton Harbor Shellfish Recovery Plan (2007);
- Portage Bay Shellfish Recovery Plan (2014), Portage Bay Initial Closure Response Strategy (1998); and,
- Birch Bay Initial Closure Response Strategy (2009);

**Pertinent Documents**


This document outlines the MRC’s mission, vision, and values, their goals, and objectives, and strategies for achieving them.
Shoreline Management Program

The State Legislature passed the Washington State Shoreline Management Act (SMA) in June 1971. The SMA was overwhelmingly passed by public initiative in 1972. Under the SMA, each county and city was required to prepare a shoreline “master program” in accordance with the shoreline guidelines issued by the State Department of Ecology in 1972.

The Whatcom County Shoreline Management Program (SMP), WCC Title 23, is the document that implements the goals and policies of the SMA at the local level. It was adopted in 1976 in accordance with RCW 90.58. The goals and policies of the Whatcom County Shoreline Management Program also constitute the shoreline component of the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan.

Under the provisions of the SMA, all development along shorelines of the state is required to comply with the provisions of local shoreline master programs. The Whatcom County Shoreline Management Program works with other chapters of the Whatcom County Code to protect and preserve saltwater and freshwater shorelines throughout the county by managing natural resources and directing development and land use suitable for the shoreline environment.

The Whatcom County Shoreline Management Program jurisdiction includes:

- More than 130 miles of marine shoreline;
- More than 60 miles of lake shoreline;
- More than 220 miles of stream channels; and,
- All wetlands and floodways associated with the above shorelines, together with all upland areas within 200-feet of the Ordinary High Water Mark (OHWM).

Whatcom County and the Washington State Department of Ecology (DOE) share joint authority and responsibility for the Whatcom County SMP. Whatcom County Planning and Development Services is the primary agency responsible for implementation of the Whatcom County Shoreline Management Program.

Issues, Goals, and Policies

General – Natural Systems

Growth and urbanization of the land base have and may continue to impose a risk to the degradation and reduction of natural systems. Wetlands and estuaries continue to be lost incrementally. Streams and their adjacent riparian habitat are affected by land clearing, ditching, erosion, and road building. Lakeshore development degrades the foreshore environment for waterfowl and other species, as well as negatively affecting water quality. It is estimated that Washington has also lost approximately one-third of its historic eelgrass beds from a variety of causes, including dredging, shading, and filling. Large-diameter snags and downed logs, an essential feature for dozens of wildlife species, are lost during clearing or intensive forest management. Forested habitats are lost to a number of development processes including urbanization, agriculture, increased rural/
suburban housing density, and timber harvesting. The delicate environment of cliffs
and caves may be affected by housing development, mining, and other activities.
Conversely, grasslands, thickets, fields, and fence rows are habitats largely
provided and enhanced by human activities, and are thus fairly abundant and
stable within the developing county. The existence of farms, in particular, has
contributed to an abundance of these more open, pastoral habitats.

Many stream systems in Whatcom County have been altered by agriculture,
forestry, development, and flood control practices, contributing to low stream flows,
fisheries loss, water pollution, sedimentation and other problems. These impacts
can directly affect the fisheries resources by depositing silt and debris into
spawning beds, by removing trees that shade and cool the water, bank
armoringsstabilizing banks, interfering with the recruitment and establishment of
large woody debris (LWD), by obstructing fish passage with culverts and roads, by
altering natural channels through filling, bank hardening, and channelizing. In
addition, the physical processes that create functional habitats for fish life stages
are altered by increasing flows through stormwater runoff or consuming water
volume for other out-of-stream uses.

Finally, the cultural value of functioning habitats, including wetlands and the fish
and wildlife they harbor, has often been ignored in land use decisions. The
gathering of fish, game, and other natural resources forms a central aspect of many
cultures in this region. Also, the mere presence of these natural resources
constitutes a community amenity that is a substantial part of our local economic
base.

**Goal 11HL:** Protect and enhance natural systems, which provide
economic, ecological, aesthetic, and cultural benefit.

**Policy 11HL-1:** Define and identify habitats and habitat features important to a
balanced and sustainable web of life that supports fish and
wildlife.

**Policy 11HL-2:** Develop and adopt programs which protect habitats that
are essential to the conservation of species that have been
identified as endangered, threatened, or sensitive by the state
or federal government. These programs should maintain and
encourage restoration of habitat conditions for threatened listed
species.

**Policy 11HL-3:** Develop and adopt programs which provide incentives for
the protection of environmentally fragile areas or critical wildlife
habitats and corridors.

**Policy 11HL-4:** Where feasible, incorporate fish and wildlife habitats into public
capital improvement projects, and consider for incorporation
into a mitigation banking program.
Policy 11HL-5: Provide measures to mitigate negative water quality and quantity impacts from both public and private alterations of natural drainage systems.

Policy 11HL-6: Consider sensitive fish, shellfish, and wildlife species and their habitats when establishing zoning densities and patterns.

Policy 11HL-7: Promote voluntary fish and wildlife habitat enhancement projects through educational and incentive programs. These projects, which can be done by individuals, organizations, and businesses, should—will buffer and expand fish and wildlife habitat.

Policy 11HL-8: Give careful consideration to the siting of industrial, commercial, residential, and other land use designations when located near important marine habitats.

Policy 11HL-9: Protect, retain, and enhance the beneficial uses and functions of streams and rivers. Define and identify the beneficial uses and functions of streams and rivers, which—including wildlife and fisheries habitat, water quality, open space, aesthetics, and recreation.

Policy 11HL-10: Protect and enhance natural systems when flood hazard management control measures are utilized used.

Policy 11HL-11: Regulate the operation of river gravel extraction activities in such a manner so as to provide long-term protection of fish and wildlife habitat and water quality.

Policy 11HL-12: Support—Ensure that design and development of residential and industrial development that—minimizes disturbance to rivers, streams, and functioning riparian areas.

Policy 11HL-13: Evaluate the full value of the fishery—including its cultural and economic value—in land use decisions that may impact that fishery. Unavoidable impacts to an individual habitat or fishery should—shall be mitigated.

Fish and Wildlife Populations and Habitat

Goal 11JM: Protect and enhance natural systems that support native fish and wildlife populations and habitat.

Policy 11JM-1: Strongly discourage any activity that might cause significant degradation of the fishery resource or habitat.

Policy 11JM-2: Protect and enhance Support the protection and enhancement of significant fish spawning and rearing habitat, food resources, refugia (shelter), and travel passages.
Policy 113M-3: When possible, establish non-regulatory mechanisms and incentives for development that accommodates the habitat needs of fish and wildlife and encourages good stewardship practices.

Policy 113M-4: Support protection and enhancement of fish and wildlife habitat through site design in new development.

Policy 113M-5: Native vegetation and soils on stream-banks and shorelines should be disturbed as little as possible. In situations where re-vegetation is necessary to restore stream bank or shoreline stability and provide shading, site-specific native plants should be used. Retention of vegetated riparian areas on all lake and marine shorelines should also be encouraged.

Policy 113M-6: Discourage shoreline armoring. Instead, encourage natural or bio-engineering solutions such as planting native vegetation, engineered log jams/LWD, and beach nourishment along eroding banks to address stream and shoreline bank erosion problems. Riparian buffers should be replanted with suitable native vegetation as a part of all bank stabilization projects.

Policy 113M-7: Encourage native vegetation and soils retention and plantings which provide or maintain the beneficial uses and functions of streams, rivers, lakes, and marine shorelines.

Policy 113M-8: Maintain and encourage restoration of habitat functions for threatened and endangered fish species.

Policy 11M-9: Use Best Available Science to inform the creation of regulations to mitigate adverse impacts of development adjacent to rivers, streams, and marine shorelines.

Policy 11M-10: Encourage landowners to protect surface water quality with filter strips or other appropriate water cleansing mechanisms installed between lawns, landscaping, livestock pens, or agricultural fields and waterbodies.

Reason for Change: Proposed policies 11M-9 and 11M-10 were proposed by the Marine Resources Committee.

Policy 11M-11: Formulate and implement a comprehensive, watershed landscape-based, environmental management program to protect fish and wildlife. The program will include the following:

1. Formulate an administrative approach to the review of development and planning proposals that consider natural system policies;
2. Investigate and develop programs for acquisition and restoration of important fish and wildlife habitat areas;.
3. Develop and enter into cooperative agreements with State and Federal agencies and neighboring jurisdictions for the purpose of identifying and protecting natural systems;.
4. Identify and map important habitat corridors throughout the county; and,
1.5. Support the development of an—educational booklet materials which lists, describes, and characterizes the appropriate use of native vegetation to enhance natural systems in Whatcom County.

Reason for Change: Proposed policy 11M-11 comes from the Action Plan that was removed from this chapter.

Policy 11M-12: Consider establishing formal meander limits for the Nooksack River, precluding additional development within this zone, and promote the River and Flood property acquisition program within these areas.

Reason for Change: Proposed policy 11M-12 comes from the Action Plan that was removed from this chapter.

Policy 11M-13: Diligently work to prevent and reduce the spread of invasive species.


Policy 11M-14: Actively participate in and support WRIA 1 Salmon Recovery efforts to return self-sustaining salmonid runs to harvestable levels through: the restoration of healthy rivers, marine shorelines, and natural processes; the careful use of hatcheries; and responsible harvest.

Reason for Change: There were no policies acknowledging the County’s position regarding salmon recovery or its work with the Salmon Recovery Board.

**Wetlands**

Wetlands are crucial environmental features in Whatcom County. Once thought of as waste areas and unproductive lands, it is now known that wetlands provide invaluable functions in aquifer recharge, groundwater storage, floodwater detention, pollutant removal and purification of water supplies, as well as provision of fish and wildlife habitat. Loss of wetlands has been due to many factors, including urbanization, and to a large degree to agricultural development and associated drainage projects.
A plethora of complex and often confusing laws govern the definition, delineation, and protection of wetlands. These laws originate at national, state, and county levels. Land managers and private citizens often experience difficulty in interpreting, synthesizing, and applying wetland regulations. In general, however, state regulations must comply with federal standards and local regulations must comply with both federal and state standards.

**Goal 11KN:** Conserve and enhance important regulated wetlands.

Policy 11KN-1: Recognize natural wetlands such as swamps, bogs, saltwater marshes, and ponds for their value in cleaning water, reducing flood damage, providing valuable habitat for plants, fish and wildlife, and as sites for groundwater recharge.

Policy 11KN-2: Develop and adopt criteria to identify and evaluate wetland functions that meet the Best Available Science standard and that are consistent with state and federal guidelines.

Policy 11KN-3: Biological functions of wetlands are complex and interwoven. Evaluate the full range of potential and immediate economic impacts in land use decisions relating to wetlands, including fisheries, wildlife, recreation, farmlands, sustainable resources, air and water quality, flood hazard management, real estate, cultural attributes, and other entities uses.

Policy 11KN-4: Encourage land development to avoid or mitigate wetland impacts. Impacts to important regulated wetlands should be contingent upon full mitigation measures that equitably compensate for wetlands impacts, on a case-by-case basis. Approved mitigation measures shall include resources for long-term monitoring and adaptive management of mitigation outcomes to assure effectiveness. Strongly discourage alteration of land that results in the degradation of type 1 and 2 significant wetlands.

**Reason for Change:** The P/C felt that mitigation monitoring should last longer than 5 years, and that the applicant should pay for it. They also agreed that “significant” should be replaced with “type 1 and 2,” as it better defines what the County would consider significant.

Policy 11KN-5: Property rights and public services are an essential component of our political and economic system. Where such rights and public services are significantly compromised by the goal of wetland preservation, adverse wetland impacts may be permitted through standardized mitigation. This may include avoidance, impact minimization, restoration, enhancement, creation, or off-site compensation for loss of wetland functions in accordance with mitigation sequencing.
Policy 11KN-6: Recognize beneficial wetland uses, functions, and values. Support protection of fish and wildlife habitat, water quality, plant diversity, flood attenuation and low-flow contribution, and water storage through planning, acquisition, incentive programs, and mitigation.

Policy 11KN-7: Development proposals—applications—should be assessed on a case-by-case basis so that marginal wetlands are not preserved at the expense of upland areas with higher habitat value.

Marine Habitat

Marine habitats include all salt water bodies and their shorelines, kelp beds, eelgrass meadows, salt marshes, beaches, and mudflats. These habitats play a vital role in the health of the local environment as well as of the broader Puget Sound region. They provide spawning, rearing, and feeding grounds for a wide variety of marine life as well as refuge for juvenile and adult fish, birds, and shellfish. The vegetation on back-shore marshes and within estuaries buffers adjacent upland areas by absorbing wave energy and slowing erosion. Symptons of ecosystem stress include declining stocks of salmon, bottomfish, and forage fish; closures of recreational and commercial shellfish beds; degradation and losses of eelgrass beds, kelp forests, and other marine habitats; and dwindling populations of seabirds and marine mammals.

The Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative was authorized by Congress in 1998. The Initiative established the Northwest Straits Commission and Marine Resources Committees (MRCs) in seven western Washington counties, including Whatcom County. The MRCs’ main purpose is to guide local communities, using up-to-date information and scientific expertise, to achieve the important goals of resource conservation and habitat protection within the Northwest Straits. The Whatcom County MRC acts as an advisory committee to the Whatcom County Council.

Reason for Change: This text was moved to an earlier section of this chapter.

Goal 11LQ: Protect and enhance marine resources in Whatcom County.

Policy 11LQ-1: Support the Whatcom County Marine Resources Committee in their pursuit of the Northwest Straits Commission benchmarks as follows:

- Broad county participation in MRC’s;
- A net gain in high-value habitat and ecosystem functions;
- A net reduction in shellfish bed closures;
- Measurable increases in factors supporting bottomfish recovery;
- Population increases in other key indicator species;
- Coordination of scientific data;
Successful public education and outreach efforts.; and,
• The establishment of a regional system of Marine Protected
Areas (MPA’s).

Policy 11O-3: Promote naturalized shoreline buffers and restoration of riparian
vegetation.

Reason for Change: Policy 11O-3 was added by the P/C.

Shellfish Habitat

Many of the marine water bodies in Whatcom County support natural and cultured
bivalve shellfish, including oysters and many of species of clams. The warm,
nutrient rich tideflats in and around Lummi, Portage, and Birch Bay, and Drayton
Harbor, and Eliza and Lummi Islands represent unique water resources in this
regard. Commercial shellfish growers, recreational clam and oyster harvesters, and
Native Americans have utilized this resource for many years. It is an important part
of our community’s heritage.

Our ability to grow and harvest shellfish that is safe for human consumption is
directly linked to surface water quality and the influence it has on marine waters.
The primary measure of water quality for shellfish harvesting is bacterial
contamination associated with human sewage and animal wastes. Potential sources
of fecal bacteria include municipal sewage treatment plants, on-site sewage
systems, boatwaste, farm animals, pets, and wildlife. Since 1995, valuable shellfish
beds in Portage Bay and Drayton Harbor have been downgraded (harvest
prohibited) due to non-point pollution impacting recreational, tribal, and commercial
harvesting. In July 2003-2014, Birch Portage Bay was added identified as a
threatened Shellfish Growing Area by the Washington Department of Health to the
Washington State list of threatened shellfish harvesting areas. (Washington
Department of Health, 2014)

Reason for Change: This text was moved to an earlier section of this chapter.

Goal 11MP: Protect and enhance shellfish habitat in commercial and
recreational areas in order to ensure a productive
resource base for long-term use.

Policy 11MP-1: Identify and designate marine shellfish habitat for commercial
and recreational uses.

Policy 11MP-2: Restore degraded waters within the drainage basins of shellfish
growing areas to a level that allows/supports shellfish
harvesting by work with the Department of Ecology, Tribes,
Department of Health, and affected property owners to improve
water quality.

Reason for Change: Suggestion by Dept. of Ecology.

Policy 11MP-3: Protect shellfish resources by means of pollution prevention and
enforcement when necessary. This should include surface and
groundwater monitoring for early detection of pollution which
that will minimize the damage and cost of resource
restoration.

Policy 11MP-4: Improve knowledge of the importance of protecting, preserving,
and improving the quality of shellfish habitat within the County.
Seek out valuable partnerships that will raise awareness,
provide education, and enhance shellfish habitat.

Policy 11MP-5: Develop Low Impact Development standards in shellfish habitat
areas.

Policy 11MP-6: Identify and encourage the use of stormwater treatment
systems and Best Management Practices that will help to reduce
fecal coliform bacteria levels in stormwater that discharging directly into shellfish habitat areas and encourage their use and
construction.

Policy 11MP-7: Solicit input from the Puget Sound Action Team staff and
Shellfish Protection District advisory committees and appropriate
state, federal, and tribal agencies when considering updates to
the Comprehensive Plan that relate to shellfish protection.

Policy 11MP-8: Identify and restore functions, selected through best available
landscape-based science, of key wetland areas, which are
selected through best available landscape-based science.

Policy 11MP-9: Modify county roadside ditch maintenance procedures to protect
water quality.

Policy 11MP-10: Continue to partner with jurisdictions in British Columbia to
minimize impacts on water quality, including what affecting
shellfish habitat.

Reason for change: Proposed Policies 11P-11 through 16 were moved from Action
Plan, which has been deleted.

Policy 11MP-11: Work within the structure of County programs such as the WRIA
Watershed Management Planning process to achieve
improvements in land use Best Management Practices that will
positively affect change in marine water quality.

Policy 11MP-12: Continue to develop programs that help identify potential
pollution sources and ensure timely and science-based
approaches are used in response to problems as they arise.

Policy 11MP-13: Develop educational tools and opportunities to raise public
awareness of marine issues and to inform them of how they can
have a positive impact by helping preserve these marine
resources.
Policy 11MP-14: Identify areas (such as wetlands and the nearshore environment) that are important to shellfish habitat preservation. Also identify river and stream processes that adversely impact shellfish habitat. Use this information when making land use management and preservation decisions.

Policy 11MP-15: Create a tracking mechanism to document progress made toward improving downgraded shellfish areas. This information will be useful not only in helping to support an upgrade when water quality shows improvement, but also in helping to prevent degradation in currently approved shellfish areas.

Policy 11MP-16: Work with other the County Shellfish Advisory Boards committees, programs, or processes, such as MRCD Marine Resources Committee, Salmon Recovery Fund Board, and WRIA Watershed Management Board, and other local, state, federal, and tribal agencies Planning to address issues associated with shellfish, shellfish area closures, and shellfish habitat.

Reason for change: Proposed Policies 11P-11 through 16 were moved from Action Plan, which has been deleted.

Policy 11MP-17: Consider establishing the Drayton Harbor Watershed as a sending area when considering a transferrable transfer of development rights (TDR) program sending area in the Drayton Harbor Watershed.

Reason for change: Policy 11P-17 was moved from Policy 2F-7 and edited. It was tabled by Council over the wording “voluntary, workable” added by Brenner throughout Ch. 11 wherever TDR was used.

Policy 11P-18 Support the Department of Health’s On-Site Sewage System (OSS) Program as a means to lower degradation of our waterways.

Reason for Change: Monitoring septic systems is an important component of helping keep our waters clean.

Other Marine and Marine Dependent Organisms and Systems

Our marine system supports not only local, critical, and global fisheries resources, but also a myriad of interdependent organisms, the importance of which we lack the capacity to fully grasp. The marine ecosystem is a complex web of life that is increasingly affected by anthropogenic impacts. Toxics, hormones, heavy metals, and other harmful substances flushed into nearshore and marine environments with storm water have been shown to have deleterious cumulative impacts on a range of aquatic and marine dependent organisms. Whatcom County will take steps to halt the practice of treating its streams and rivers as a storm sewer and the marine system as a water treatment facility.
Policy 11-Q: Promote Best Management Practices, land use, and stormwater policies that result in a minimal release of harmful chemicals and metallic substances into surface water and the marine environment.

Reason for Change: Recommended addition by the Marine Resources Committee.

Environment—Action Plan

Note: The Action Plans in each of the Comprehensive Plan elements is proposed for deletion, as many of the items have been accomplished. Those that have not been accomplished are being considered for adding into the policies, above.

Environmental Management

Community Protection and Environmental Preservation

- Work with the community to develop and implement a comprehensive environmental management strategy. The result of these efforts should be a Comprehensive Environmental Management Program that identifies both regulatory and non regulatory elements. These elements should be organized, developed, and implemented consistent with the three sections of the Environmental chapter. They include Water Resources, Natural Systems, and Natural Hazards.

- Explore and develop a funding source for environmental management efforts. The development of a management strategy should include evaluation of resource availability to ensure realistic goals and efficiency in implementation.

Reason for deletion: This work has been accomplished through the adoption of the Critical Areas Regulations, participation in the WRIA 1 planning process and development of the Watershed Plan, participation in the Salmon Recovery planning process and development of the Salmon Recovery Plan, and other similar plans.

Environmental Management Program Development

- Regulatory Action

- Ensure that local regulations are not in conflict with one another, are in compliance with the comprehensive plan, meet the GMA requirements, and are capable of being administered in an efficient and fair manner. Successful integration of Whatcom County environmental regulations must include the following:

  o Whatcom County Code
  o Title 16 Environment
  o Critical Areas Regulations
  o SEPA Regulations
  o Agriculture Nutrient Management Plan
  o Title 17 Flood Damage Prevention

Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan 11-47
o Flood Hazard Management
o Title 20 Zoning
o Water Resource Protection Overlay Districts
o Stormwater Special Districts
o Water Resource Special Management Areas
o Clearing Regulations
o Title 21 Land Division Regulations
o Title 23 Shoreline Management Program
o Title 15 Building and Construction
o Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan (agriculture, forestry, mining)

Reason for deletion: This action has been accomplished.

Development Standards: As a subset of regulations, update the existing development standards to provide the detailed specifications to implement the necessary regulatory and non-regulatory environmental programs in Whatcom County. At a minimum, these should include or compliment the following:

- Whatcom County Road Standards
- Chapter 2: Stormwater Management
- Chapter 3: Land Clearing
- Low Impact Development Standards

Because standards only provide the technical guidance for implementation of those activities allowed by regulatory authority, the development of these standards must follow both comprehensive plan and regulatory development.

Reason for deletion: This action has been accomplished.

Continue to participate and support WRIA Watershed Planning efforts associated with the coordination of local, federal, tribal, and state agencies to achieve integration or consistency between federal, tribal, state, and local environmental regulations relating to the county. The objective should be to reduce confusion, conflicts, and duplication in administrative interpretation and at the counter during the permitting process.

Reason for deletion: This action item has been moved to Policy 11E-5.

Take steps to discourage additional floodplain development.

Reason for deletion: This has been largely accomplished through the adoption of the Critical Areas Regulations, WCC Chapter 17 (Flood Damage Prevention), and the Comprehensive Flood Hazard Management Plan. Additionally, it has been included to Policy 11D-11.
• Non-regulatory Action

  ▲ Develop a comprehensive and streamlined system of permitting and approval of building and land-development projects which incorporates environmental protection. All effort should be made to make the permitting process accessible and understandable to the public. To this end, the application and permitting process should be housed in one accessible location. Additionally, a uniform, step-by-step procedure should be developed for the permitting process. This procedure should be available as a printed handout to prospective applicants and other interested parties.

  Reason for deletion: This action item has been accomplished.

  ▲ Develop systems for tracking development in sensitive areas such as the Lake Whatcom, Lake Samish, Drayton Harbor, and Birch Bay watersheds or priority areas containing habitats used by federally listed threatened or endangered species.

  Reason for deletion: This action item has been accomplished.

  ▲ Maintain a working relationship with a local Land Trust and/or other similar organizations. In doing so, Whatcom County should seek assistance in the development and implementation of such non-regulatory elements as education, acquisition, mitigation and mitigation banking, conservation easements, and other non-regulatory tools.

  Reason for deletion: This action item has been accomplished.

  ▲ Develop non-regulatory programs for consideration of adoption by the County Council. In achieving these non-regulatory elements, Whatcom County should endeavor to reach cooperative arrangements with landowners, jurisdictions, and other interests. The programs will be comprised of a number of elements, including:

    Education
    Free-Market Mechanisms
    Technical Assistance
    Restoration and Preservation
    Acquisition
    Innovative Development Alternatives
    Incentives such as Development Rights Transfer, Tax Deferrals, etc.
    Mitigation Banking
    A technical committee should be established to develop these options and offer further recommendations to the County Council. Additionally, consideration should be given to the

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merits of using other sources of expertise in developing a non-regulatory program of this type.

Reason for deletion: This action item has been accomplished.

- Administrative Procedure
  - Improve existing administrative procedures as follows:
  - Enforcement: Establish strong education inspection, compliance, and enforcement measures for each of the three programs (Natural Hazards, Water Resources, and Natural Systems). An analysis of existing enforcement effectiveness should establish the requirements for additional enforcement needs.
  - Staffing: Provide adequate staffing to administer and enforce the programs outlined above. The county should analyze staffing needs and provide adequate staffing to meet these needs.
  - Permits: Develop a streamlined permit process so that the applicant can readily understand what is required (in simple, straightforward language), can fill out the application without expending large amounts of time and money, and does not have to wait unacceptable periods of time. In meeting this objective, the county should pursue the following:
    - One-stop service.
    - Clear permit information and instructions.
    - Well thought out and reasonable permit requirements.
    - Acceptable permit processing time.
    - Code flexibility when necessary to provide for a reasonable use of property while still protecting environmental values.
    - Review by pre-approved, private sector professionals, where appropriate, to provide choice of reviewing options for applications.
  - Accountability: Review and modify existing policies, regulations, and administrative processes to ensure efficiency, effective service to the community, and implementation of the environmental goals of the Comprehensive Plan. Provide a timetable for the environmental review portion of permits to ensure predictable and expeditious processing of permits.

Reason for deletion: This action item has been accomplished.

The Environment and Private Rights

- Develop working relationships with development, environmental protection, and property rights organizations, with a clear vision of promoting the greatest public good and environmental health.

Reason for deletion: This action item has been accomplished.

Natural Hazards

- Require applicants for development permits located in identified natural hazard areas to provide development plans designed to
minimize the potential to exacerbate the natural hazard as well as the risk of damage to property or threats to human health and safety according to the following ordered preference:

- Avoid the identified hazard area if possible.

If not,

- Provide a qualified professional assessment of the hazard, type, frequency, potential magnitude, and adequate mitigation.

- Provide an engineered structural design to withstand calculated forces associated with the design event applicable to a specific natural hazard while creating no off-site impacts to adjacent property owners or natural systems.

- If off-site impacts are likely to occur as a result of the engineered design, provide mitigation plans for identified adverse off-site impacts to adjacent property owners and natural systems along with the above engineered structural design.

- In natural hazard areas where engineering solutions cannot be designed to withstand the forces expected to occur under the design event of a particular natural hazard, or off-site adverse impacts to adjacent properties or natural systems cannot be adequately mitigated, Whatcom County may deny development permits intended for permanent or seasonal human habitation.

Reason for deletion: This action item has been moved to Policy 11D-12.

Reason for deletion: Moved to policies.

- Include identified natural hazard areas in areas designated for density reduction.

Reason for deletion: In considering any density changes, natural hazard areas are always considered.

**Water Resources**

- Promote and participate in efforts to protect and manage water quality and quantity through non-regulatory actions such as education, incentives, and technical/financial assistance. Particular emphasis should be placed on efforts that increase and enhance efficiency among existing programs. Programs that emphasize multiple solutions to water resource questions should receive top priority.

- Use processes such as the WRIA Watershed Management Planning and the Lake Whatcom Management Program to actively promote and participate in education, research, and information opportunities that better our understanding of the county’s complex water resource systems. New information should be considered in the development and evaluation of management actions.
Promote more efficient use of resources by supporting and/or participating in efforts of the Countywide Conservation Committee, the Whatcom Water Utilities Committee (WWUC), WRIA Watershed Management Planning, and other avenues as they may arise.

Reason for deletion: These items are similar to policies already included above.

Continue identifying areas that require special protection such as wellhead protection areas, aquifers, and high-priority watersheds, and incorporate that knowledge into management actions, including dissemination of the information to the general public.

Reason for deletion: This item has been moved to Policy 11F-7.

Pursue adoption and implementation of ground and/or surface water management plans and protection efforts, and integrate the plans into local comprehensive plans.

Support existing and pending programs such as those directed at Lake Whatcom, the Nooksack Basin, Abbotsford/Sumas Aquifer, Blaine Groundwater Management Area, Drayton Harbor and Portage Bay Shellfish Protection Districts, Samish Bay Watershed, Critical Aquifer Recharge Areas, WRIA Watershed Management Planning, and Wellhead Protection (Sumas, Blaine and Everson are currently under development). The level of support for these programs must be consistent with County budgeting priorities.

Reason for deletion: These items are similar to policies already included above.

Support/build upon the implementation and completion of local/state Watershed Action Plans, the Lake Whatcom Management Program, and WRIA Watershed Management Planning as some of the means of addressing non-point source pollution.

Reason for deletion: This item has been moved to Policy 11F-8.

Identify critical aquifer recharge areas and develop management options for review by the County Council.

Develop criteria for establishing water resource protection areas, and adopt measures to protect those areas.

Encourage metering of public water systems with Urban Growth Areas.

Actively participate in the current process to establish a countywide water resources management body.

Reason for deletion: These items are similar to policies already included above.

Stormwater

Develop a comprehensive stormwater management program designed to manage runoff from public facilities and industrial, commercial,
urban residential areas including streets and roads in compliance with NPDES requirements. Establish a stormwater management plan for rural roads. Each component of the program shall cover both new and existing developments. Emphasis should be placed on controlling stormwater through source controls and Best Management Practices. Establish a long-term goal of minimal pollutant discharge into surface water resources.

- At a minimum, the components of this program shall include:
- Identification of potentially significant pollutant sources and their relationship to the drainage system and water bodies.
- Investigation of problem drains, including sampling.
- Programs for operation and maintenance of storm drains, detention systems, ditches, and culverts.
- A water-quality response program to investigate sources of pollutants, spills, fish kills, illegal hookups, dumping, and other water-quality problems. These investigations should be used to support compliance/enforcement efforts.
- Assurance of adequate local funding for the stormwater program through surface water utilities, sewer charges, fees, or other revenue-generating sources.
- Local coordination arrangement such as interlocal agreements, joint programs, consistent standards, or regional boards or committees.
- Regulations requiring implementation of stormwater control for new development.
- A public stormwater educational program aimed at residents, businesses, and industries in the urban area.
- Strong inspection, compliance, and enforcement measures.
- An implementation schedule.
- Adequate design specifications and construction practices to ensure minimal on-site erosion and sedimentation during and after construction.
- Incorporate watershed considerations into the development of a comprehensive stormwater management strategy. This should include the identification of priority watersheds relative to stormwater management and the application of Action Item 1 to each watershed in the order of their priority.
- Review Stormwater Special Districts Standards that address runoff treatment from potentially polluting surfaces for their applicability to other sensitive watersheds.
- Amend subdivision, zoning, and other land-use regulations and design standards to require that land use activities minimize the amount of impervious surface. Low-impact surfacing options should be encouraged wherever possible.
- Identify and implement a long-term funding source to provide for water resource protection services including non-point source identification and enforcement of applicable county regulations.
Focus on the Lake Whatcom watershed as a high priority in developing a stormwater management program. Develop a stormwater management plan that achieves a uniform level of protection throughout the Lake Whatcom watershed. Ensure coordination and communication with the public and affected jurisdictions such as the Lake Whatcom Water and Sewer District, the Sudden Valley Community Association, and the City of Bellingham.

Work with the Technical Advisory Committee and other appropriate agencies in revising or developing standards necessary to ensure watershed protection and then coordinate the effort within sensitive watersheds for ongoing monitoring and evaluation.

Develop and implement a stormwater maintenance program for the Lake Whatcom Watershed that would ensure that existing systems are adequately maintained.

Ensure that existing stormwater standards are adequately enforced within Stormwater Special Districts.

Reason for deletion: This item has been moved to Policy 11G-12.

Place a high priority on integrating impervious surface reduction incentives into policies, regulations, and standards for the Lake Whatcom and Lake Samish watersheds.

Reason for deletion: This item has been moved to Policy 11G-11.

Prioritize project review in the Lake Whatcom, Lake Samish and Drayton Harbor watersheds. Continue to implement an administrative review process for new development projects within the Lake Whatcom, Lake Samish, and Drayton Harbor watersheds to clearly resolve potential stormwater problems prior to construction.

Reason for deletion: This action has already been incorporated into PDS procedures.

Natural Systems

General

Formulate and implement a comprehensive watershed-based environmental management program to protect fish and wildlife. The program will include the remaining action items.

Reason for deletion: This item has been moved to Policy 11J-11.

Formulate an administrative approach to the review of development and planning proposals that consider natural system policies.

Investigate and develop programs for acquisition and restoration of important fish and wildlife habitat areas.
Develop and enter into cooperative agreements with State and Federal agencies and neighboring jurisdictions for the purpose of identifying and protecting natural systems.

Reason for deletion: These items have been accomplished via other means.

- Identify and map important habitat corridors throughout the county.
- Support the development of an educational booklet which lists, describes, and characterizes the appropriate use of native vegetation to enhance natural systems in Whatcom County.

Reason for deletion: This action item has been accomplished.

**Fish and Wildlife**

- Update the County fish and wildlife folio.
- Develop an outreach program with landowners and citizens for the purpose of further identifying, understanding, and supporting stewardship of wildlife species and their habitats. This program may include open space tax incentives, cooperative arrangements, volunteer stewardship programs, site specific management plans, conservation easements, and provision of educational materials.
- Support the development of educational programs to reduce adverse cumulative impacts to fish and wildlife from incremental riparian vegetation removal on marine and freshwater shorelines, especially in areas of higher density development.
- Develop geographically-based wildlife management plans for important habitat conservation areas. These plans should take into full account the unique environmental qualities of the area as well as the existing or planned surrounding land use activities and constraints. These plans should be used as a basis for both the formulation and administration of regulations that address fish and wildlife protection.
- Amend the existing Whatcom County Development Standards to provide design standards and specifications for the passage of fish through culverts where necessary and feasible. Implement a program that corrects existing obstructions to fish passage.

Reason for deletion: These action items have been accomplished.

- Develop and distribute educational materials to the public that describe the characteristics of healthy and viable fish and wildlife habitats.

Reason for deletion: This action item has been accomplished.
County Council Preliminary Draft
May 3, 2016

Chapter 11 – Environment

1. Identify existing and historically important fish habitats. Include a component that seeks to protect and restore these habitats and to mitigate future impacts to fish habitats.

Reason for deletion: This action item has been accomplished.

2. Determine appropriate stream and river buffer widths, based upon Best Available Science that will optimize fish and wildlife habitat and water quality.

Reason for deletion: This action item has been accomplished.

3. Coordinate the various jurisdictional interests and the responsibilities of Whatcom County.

Reason for deletion: This action item has been accomplished.

4. Amend the Whatcom County Shoreline Management Program to protect threatened and endangered species, consistent with RCW 90.58 and Department of Ecology rules (WAC 173-26).

Reason for deletion: This action item has been accomplished.

5. Amend the Critical Areas regulations to protect threatened and endangered species, consistent with RCW 36.70A.172, which calls for giving special consideration to conservation or protection measures necessary to preserve or enhance anadromous fisheries, and Department of Ecology rules relating to Best Available Science (WAC 365-195, Part IX).

Reason for deletion: This action item has been accomplished.

6. Amend the Whatcom County Land Division Regulations approval criteria to require subdivisions and short plats to be designed in a manner to protect fish habitat and water quality when a fish bearing stream or river passes through the site.

Reason for deletion: This action item has been accomplished.

7. Review and consider amendments to the Whatcom County Development Standards, Stormwater Management chapter, to protect threatened and endangered species. Review and consider amendments to the Stormwater Management chapter consistent with the Department of Ecology’s new manual.

Reason for deletion: This action item has been accomplished.

8. Review and consider amendments to the Whatcom County Development Standards, Land Clearing chapter, to protect threatened and endangered species.

Reason for deletion: This action item has been accomplished.
• Establish formal meander limits for the Nooksack River, preclude additional development within this zone, and promote the River and Flood property acquisition program within these areas.

Reason for deletion: This item has been moved to Policy 11J-12.

Wetlands

• Consider rezoning of areas of the County that are largely comprised of critical areas.

• Develop a system of classifying wetlands, assigning buffers, and addressing riparian wetlands and habitat for listed species that follows state guidelines.

• Incorporate Best Available Science to support criteria for buffer reductions and mitigation.

Reason for deletion: These items have been accomplished.

• Formulate a comprehensive watershed-based wetlands protection component of the management program that incorporates both regulatory and non-regulatory elements in order to protect wetlands in Whatcom County. This component will include the remaining action statements.

• Describe, inventory, and categorize wetland systems in Whatcom County. Assess the functions and values of these systems as they relate to fish, wildlife, water quality, and water quantity.

Reason for deletion: These action items have been accomplished.

• Synthesize the myriad federal, state and local regulations relating to wetlands into a single, unified local policy document that meets the intent and direction of the comprehensive plan. This document should be as brief and concise as possible.

Reason for deletion: This action item has been accomplished.

• Develop a mitigation program that will allow for full build out of designated Industrial and Commercial zoning districts. The program should include provisions for the creation of off-site wetland mitigation and for the creation and use of mitigation banking.

Reason for Change: There are other options for achieving this.

Marine

• Work within the structure of County programs such as the WRIA Watershed Management Planning process to achieve improvements in land use Best Management Practices that will positively affect change in marine water quality.
- Continue to develop programs that help identify potential pollution sources and ensure timely and science-based approaches are used in response to problems as they arise.

- Develop educational tools and opportunities to raise public awareness of marine issues and to inform them of how they can have a positive impact by helping preserve these marine resources.

- Identify areas (such as wetlands and the nearshore environment) that are important to shellfish habitat preservation. Also identify river and stream processes that adversely impact shellfish habitat. Use this information when making land use management and preservation decisions.

- Create a tracking mechanism to document progress made toward improving downgraded shellfish areas. This information will be useful not only in helping to support an upgrade when water quality shows improvement, but also in helping to prevent degradation in currently approved shellfish areas.

Reason for deletion: Moved to policies Policy 11M-11 through 11M-16.
Proposed Council Changes to Comprehensive Plan

Chapter 11 – Environment

Page and line numbers reflect Planning Commission Recommended Draft dated 1/14/2016 (http://wa-whatcomcounty.civicplus.com/DocumentCenter/View/15160). To improve clarity of Councilmember requested changes, previous edits (i.e. staff and Planning Commission) are included, but not show as edits.

Previous changes made by the Council are underlined or struck-out, but not bold. New changes are in bold.

1) p. 11-26; New Policy 11H-8: Identify wellhead protection areas and critical aquifer recharge areas and incorporate into the Critical Areas Ordinance. This information should be available to the public. (Brenner)

Tabled

2) p. 11-30; New Policy 11J-7: Encourage the Department of Ecology to provide flexibility in the application of the water relinquishment rule simultaneous with establishing a water bank/water exchange program in Whatcom County in cooperation with stakeholders. (Donovan)
Changes Approved April 5

1) p. 11-4; lines 23-26: Over 2.5 million years ago, during the Ice Ages, glacial ice invaded the Puget Sound lowlands from the north at least four times, with the last major glacial event, the Fraser Glaciation, ending approximately 12,000 years ago. (Brenner)

2) p. 11-6; lines 5-12: General environmental goals and policies are intended to provide guidance for environmental management that will promote environmental protection and good stewardship practices through a balance of public education; and involvement; incentives, acquisition, and voluntary programs; land use planning and regulations; environmental monitoring; and intergovernmental cooperation. These goals and policies are also intended to provide guidance to County government as it assists its citizens in maintaining a balance between individual property rights, economic development, and environmental protection. (Brenner)

3) p. 11-6; lines 21-23: At the turn of the 20th century, the areas surrounding Lynden, Sumas, and Ferndale were logged, drained, and converted to agricultural land. (Brenner)

4) p. 11-8; Policy 11A-11: Designate high-value open space and natural areas for acquisition, conservation easements, open space, and other such programs to protect these natural areas upon request or consent of the property owner. (Brenner)

5) p. 11-8; lines 38-40: There are currently a multitude of regulations and administrative processes at the federal, state, and local level that, together, have become excessive and difficult to understand. (Brenner)

6) p. 11-11; lines 9-11: Climate change is a global phenomenon that has the potential for significant local impacts to natural resources, ecosystem functions, as well as human health, infrastructure, and the economy. (Brenner)

7) p. 11-11; lines 14-16: Based on a range of climate change model projections, as well as peer-reviewed scientific publications, the CIG concludes that during the next 20-40 years the Pacific Northwest climate may change significantly. (Brenner)

8) p. 11-11; lines 39 – p. 11-12, line 2: Agricultural sector concerns include the cost of climate adaptation, development of more climate-resilient technologies, and management and availability of adequate water supplies. Susceptibility to natural hazards is also expected to intensify due to climate change, including increased landslides, erosion, and coastal and riverine flooding due to more winter rainfall, and potential rising sea levels. (Brenner)
9) p. 11-12; Policy 11D-1: Whatcom County’s natural resource-based economic sectors, natural systems, water resources, infrastructure, emergency management, and public health all face potentially noteworthy climate change related risks in the future. (Brenner)

10) p. 11-12; Policy 11D-3: Promote the efficient use, conservation, and protection of water resources. (Brenner)

11) p. 11-14; lines 37-39: Pyroclastic flows, ash flows, and especially volcanic mudflows, (also known as lahars), are believed to be the greatest dangers to human life and development in Whatcom County. (Brenner)

12) p. 11-27; Policy 11I-3: Limit the alteration of natural drainage systems and natural water storage sites without mitigating measures. Such measures should not degrade water quality or fish and wildlife habitat, and should not increase hazards to the community. (Brenner)

13) p. 11-27; Policy 11I-8: Strongly incentivize the use of low impact development strategies. Minimize the amount of impervious surface whenever practicable by using natural engineering design methods, such as the use of open, grassed, street swales and rain gardens instead of curbs and gutters. Where feasible, encourage alternate surfacing options and other techniques associated with low impact development (see Glossary). (Brenner)

14) p. 11-32; Policy 11K-10: Encourage the location of public services, such as schools, libraries, parks/open space, and post offices within Rural Communities that would likely reduce the vehicle miles traveled within the watershed. (Brenner)

15) p. 11-34; lines 46 – p. 11-35, line 3: Loss of native vegetation through conversion to ornamental vegetation and non-native species often results in loss of wildlife habitat, increased competition to native wildlife from introduced species, such as starlings, and increased maintenance needs. (Brenner)

16) p. 11-42; lines 10-12: Loss of wetlands has been due to many factors, including urbanization, and to a large degree to agricultural development and associated drainage projects. (Brenner)

17) p. 11-43; Policy 11N-6: Recognize beneficial wetland uses, functions, and values. Support protection of fish and wildlife habitat, water quality, plant diversity, flood attenuation, and low-flow contribution, and water storage through planning, acquisition, incentive programs, and mitigation. (Brenner)

18) p. 11-10; lines 6-15: Prior to the 1970s, growth in Whatcom County was relatively slow and received little management. As a result, private property owners were left to their own resources as they determined how best to use their land. However, as
increasing numbers of people have moved to this area and settled, a greater demand has been placed on Whatcom County’s natural resources.

The problems that arise from this situation have caused many to realize that what one person does with his/her property may have an impact on the larger environmental system that sustains us as a community and on the rights of other property owners. (Brenner)

19) p. 11-10; lines 17-19: Land use decisions can no longer be considered exclusively private matters. We are aware that public actions impact every private citizen in Whatcom County and that private actions may have public consequences as well. (Brenner)

20) p. 11-10; Policy 11C-2: When adopting new environmental protection programs, consider multiple economic parameters including development objectives, and impacts, and the economic benefits of the natural environment as both a resource and an amenity. (Brenner)

21) p. 11-11; lines 25-32:

- More precipitation falls as rain rather than snowfall in the Cascades due to an increased snow-line elevation;
- Decreased (winter) mountain snowpack and earlier (spring) snowmelt;
- Higher winter streamflow in rivers that depend on snowmelt;
- Higher winter streamflow in rain-fed river basins if winter precipitation increases in the future as projected;
- Earlier peak (spring) streamflow in rivers that depend on snowmelt;
- Lower summer streamflow in rivers and streams and
- Decreased water in summer for irrigation, fish, human consumption and recreational use (more drought-like conditions). (Brenner)

22) p. 11-13; Policy 11D-5: Establish land use patterns that minimize transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions and encourage the preservation of natural resource lands and the protection of water resources. (Brenner)

23) p. 11-13; lines 34-35: Various slope failure processes contribute to the mosaic of landslide hazards present in the County and the potential exists for a multitude of impacts ranging from periodic small- to large-scale rockfalls and slides, massive debris slides and avalanches, destructive debris flows, and deep-seated earthflows, slumps, and slides. These landslide processes act on both the large- and small-scale, and though much less catastrophic in nature, smaller landslides occur more frequently and pose a continually hazard to County residents and infrastructure. Certain types of geologic conditions and formations are common
culprits in the occurrence of commonly cause landslides, namely the Chuckanut Formation and the Darrington Phyllite, ... (Brenner)

24) p. 11-14; lines 43-45: The same lahar is now known to have been over 300 feet deep in the upper reaches of the Middle Fork and extended as far west as Nugent’s Corner. (Brenner)

25) p. 11-15; lines 8-10: Mapping over the past decade of other Cascade volcanoes has demonstrated massive mudflows extending from the volcanoes to Puget Sound, and from Mount Rainier and Glacier Peak. (Brenner)

26) p. 11-15; lines 30-32: Recent research has shown that these crustal faults are capable of generating a magnitude 7 earthquake with an average recurrence interval of 30 to 50 years. (Brenner)

28) p. 11-17; lines 30-31: The 1990 Nooksack River floods caused over $20 million dollars of in damage to roads, bridges, buildings, and farmland. (Brenner)

29) p. 11-19; Policy 11F-9: To address the causes of flooding and avoid expensive and maintenance-intensive bank protection measures, the county should prioritize its floodplain property acquisition program. (Brenner)

30) p. 11-21; lines 5-8: Water resources of Whatcom County provide; natural beauty; recreation; habitat for fish and wildlife; water for drinking, agriculture, and industry; and other benefits essential to the quality of life and economic health of the community. (Brenner)

31) p. 11-21; lines 15-21: Whatcom County has 16 major freshwater lakes, 3,012 miles of rivers and streams, over 37,000 acres of wetlands, 134 miles of marine shoreline, and aquifers containing an undetermined amount of groundwater. These water resources serve multiple uses, including providing a source of drinking water for the people of Whatcom County. Surface water sources such as Lake Whatcom, the Nooksack River, and Lake Samish provide water to more than half the county residents, with the remainder relying on groundwater, either from individual wells or from about 300 public water systems. (Brenner)

32) p. 11-21; lines 32-35: Aquifers are often integrally linked with surface water systems and are essential for meeting in-stream and out-of-stream water needs such as for drinking water, agriculture, other industry, and other uses. (Brenner)

33) p. 11-22; lines 3-6: The intent of the following goals and policies is to provide guidance to Whatcom County government as it assists its citizens in effectively managing our water resources in a manner that ensures that the benefits of those resources are maintained far into the future. (Brenner)
34) p. 11-22; lines 18-22:

- WRIA 1 Watershed Management Project;
- Lake Whatcom Watershed Management;
- Groundwater Protection & Management;
- Flood Hazard Management; and
- Stormwater Management;  
  (Brenner)

35) p. 11-24; Policy 11G-6: Actively promote and participate in education, research, and information opportunities that better improve our understanding of the county’s complex water resource systems. New information should be considered in the development and evaluation of management actions. (Brenner)

36) p. 11-25; Policy 11H-3: In conjunction with the public and appropriate local, State, Tribal, and Federal jurisdictions, define and identify and develop management strategies for watershed basins and subbasins that may require special protection. These areas may include aquifers, critical aquifer recharge areas as defined under the Growth Management Act, Groundwater Management Areas, wellhead protection areas, and high priority watersheds such as those specified under WAC 400 (Local Planning and Management of Non-point Source Pollution), WRIA Watershed Management Planning, and under legislative policy direction (e.g. Nooksack Basin, Lake Whatcom, Lake Samish, and Drayton Harbor). (Brenner)

37) p. 11-26; Policy 11H-5: Pursue the adoption and implementation of ground and/or surface water management plans and their integration into local comprehensive plans. Designate the Lake Whatcom and Lake Samish Watersheds as a high priorities in this effort. (Brenner)

38) p. 11-27; Policy 11I-4: Support the use by resource industries, such as agriculture, forestry, and mineral resource extraction of management practices that minimize erosion and sedimentation, and significantly reduce pollutants. (Brenner)

39) p. 11-31; Policy 11K-4: Work cooperatively with the City, and Lake Whatcom Water and Sewer District, and applicable associations to identify, review, and, as appropriate, recommend changes to existing monitoring programs that will address the needs of the various jurisdictions. Place a particular focus on the information needed to evaluate the impacts of additional development and stormwater management measures in the watershed. Include an analysis of the diversion from the Middle Fork of the Nooksack. Coordinate efforts with the Lake Whatcom Management Committee process. (Brenner)

40) p. 11-31; Policy 11K-7: Work cooperatively with the City and the Lake Whatcom Water and Sewer District to develop benchmarks to determine the effectiveness of management options; when goals have been achieved; or when additional actions are necessary. (Brenner)
41) p. 11-33; Policy 11-K-18: Work with all parties to maintain, and appropriately plan for infrastructure, public services, and stormwater retention so that Sudden Valley can develop to its appropriate potential. (Brenner)

42) p. 11-33; lines 37-40: Natural Systems goals and policies are intended to provide guidance to county government as it assists citizens to effectively manage and enhance these natural systems, and ensures that the benefits of these systems are maintained far into the future. (Brenner)

43) p. 11-34; lines 6-14:
- wetlands, lakes, and streams;
- nearshore, intertidal, estuarine habitats, and marine habitats including, but not limited to, kelp and eelgrass beds;
- riparian areas and other travel corridors;
- snags and downed logs;
- forested habitats in a variety of successional stages;
- caves, cliffs, and talus slopes;
- grasslands and cultivated fields; and
- thickets and fence rows.
(Brenner)

44) p. 11-34; lines 36-37: ...stream beds with abundant logs, step waterfalls, pools, and cutbanks, and vegetated marine and estuarine communities. (Brenner)

45) p. 11-35; lines 28-36: These habitats play a vital role in the health of the local environment, as well as of the broader Puget Sound region. They provide spawning, rearing, and feeding grounds for a wide variety of marine life, as well as refuge for juvenile and adult fish, birds, and shellfish. The vegetation on back-shore marshes and within estuaries buffers adjacent upland areas by absorbing wave energy and slowing erosion.

Symptoms of ecosystem stress include: declining stocks of salmon, bottomfish, and forage fish... (Brenner)

46) p. 11-36; lines 7-9: The warm, nutrient-rich tide flats in and around Lummi, Portage, and Birch Bays, and Drayton Harbor, and Eliza and Lummi Islands represent unique water resources in this regard. (Brenner)

47) p. 11-36; lines 7-9: Shellfish Recovery Plans
Shellfish Recovery Plans have been created for each of three districts. The plans outline the primary sources of bacteria and actions to improve water quality:
- Drayton Harbor Shellfish Recovery Plan (2007);
- Portage Bay Shellfish Recovery Plan (2014), Portage Bay Initial Closure Response Strategy (1998); and

7
• **Birch Bay Initial Closure Response Strategy (2009);**

Pertinent Documents
• **Whatcom Marine Resources Committee 2011-2015 Strategic Plan (2010)**

This document outlines the MRC's mission, vision, and values, their goals and objectives, and strategies for achieving them. *(adjust formatting as appropriate)*

(Brenner)

48) p. 11-37; lines 20-26: The Whatcom County Shoreline Management Program jurisdiction includes:
• More than 130 miles of marine shoreline;
• More than 60 miles of lake shoreline;
• More than 220 miles of stream channels; and
• All wetlands and floodways associated with the above shorelines, together with all upland areas within 200-feet of the Ordinary High Water Mark (OHWM).

(Brenner)

49) p. 11-37; lines 28-29: Whatcom County and the Washington State Department of Ecology (DOE) share joint authority and responsibility of for the Whatcom County SMP.

(Brenner)

50) p. 11-37; lines 37-38: Growth and urbanization of the land base have and may continue to impose a risk to the degradation and reduction of for natural systems.

(Brenner)

51) p. 11-38; Policy 11L-3: Develop and adopt programs that provide incentives for the protection of environmentally fragile areas or critical wildlife habitats and corridors.

(Brenner)

52) p. 11-38; Policy 11L-12: Ensure that design and development of residential and industrial development minimizes disturbance to rivers, streams, and functioning riparian areas.

(Brenner)

53) p. 11-41; Policy 11M-14: Actively participate in and support WRIA 1 Salmon Recovery efforts to return self-sustaining salmonid runs to harvestable levels through the restoration of healthy rivers, marine shorelines, and natural processes, careful use of hatcheries, and responsible harvest.

(Brenner)

54) p. 11-41; Policy 11M-11: Formulate and implement a comprehensive, landscape-based, environmental management program to protect fish and wildlife. The program should include the following:
1. Formulate an administrative approach to the review of development and planning proposals that consider natural system policies;
2. Investigate and develop programs for acquisition and restoration of important fish and wildlife habitat areas;
3. Develop and enter into cooperative agreements with State and Federal agencies and neighboring jurisdictions for the purpose of identifying and protecting natural systems;

4. Identify and map important habitat corridors throughout the county; and

5. Support the development of educational materials which lists, describes, and characterizes the appropriate use of native vegetation to enhance natural systems in Whatcom County.

(Brenner)

55) p. 11-43; Policy 11N-5: Property rights and public services are an essential components of our political and economic system. Where such rights and public services are significantly compromised by the goal of wetland preservation, adverse wetland impacts may be permitted through standardized mitigation. This may include avoidance, impact minimization, restoration, enhancement, creation, or off-site compensation for loss of wetland functions in accordance with mitigation sequencing. (Brenner)

56) p. 11-43; Policy 11N-7: Development proposals applications should be assessed on a case-by-case basis so that marginal wetlands are not preserved at the expense of upland areas with higher habitat value. (Brenner)

57) p. 11-44; Policy 11O-1: Support the Whatcom County Marine Resources Committee in their its pursuit of the Northwest Straits Commission benchmarks as follows:

- Broad county participation in MRC’s;
- A net gain in high-value habitat and ecosystem functions;
- A net reduction in shellfish bed closures;
- Measurable increases in factors supporting bottomfish recovery;
- Population increases in other key indicator species;
- Coordination of scientific data; and
- The establishment of a regional system of Marine Protected Areas (MPA’s).

(Brenner)

58) p. 11-45; Goal 11P: Protect and enhance shellfish habitat in commercial and recreational areas in order to ensure a productive resource base for long-term use. (Brenner)

59) p. 11-46; Policy 11P-10: Continue to partner with jurisdictions in British Columbia to minimize impacts on water quality, including that affecting what effects shellfish habitat.

(Brenner)

60) p. 11-47; lines 31-33: Whatcom County will take steps to halt the practice of treating its streams and rivers as a storm sewer and the marine system as a water treatment facility.

(Brenner)
61) p. 11-2; lines 13-20: This chapter is composed of an introduction and four sections organized by topic heading. The first section, entitled "General Environmental Management," addresses general environmental goals and policies. The remaining three sections deal with Natural Hazards, Water Resources, and Natural Systems. Together, the sections of this chapter provide the direction necessary to ensure/promote long-term sustainability of the environment in Whatcom County. (Brenner)

62) p. 11-7; line 13-14 Much of the environmental degradation and destruction to property occurs as a result of a lack of information/understanding rather than willful action. (Brenner)

63) p. 11-7; Policy 11A-4: Manage designated Critical Areas (ECAs) as needed, to minimize or protect against environmental degradation and reduce the potential for losses to property and human life. (Donovan, Weimer)

64) p. 11-8; Policy 11A-7: Support efforts using best available science to educate and inform the public as to the benefits of a healthy and viable environment, ecologically fragile areas, and their economic and social value. (Weimer)

65) p. 11-8; Policy 11A-8: Lead and/or coordinate efforts with property owners, citizen groups, and governmental and non-governmental agencies in furthering Whatcom County's environmental goals and policies. (Weimer)

66) p. 11-8; Policy 11A-12: Broadly inform the citizens of the people of Whatcom County residents of the locations of potential development constraints associated with natural conditions. Information should include known natural hazards, and an assessment of the potential danger to both the property owner and the public. (Brenner)

67) p. 11-8; lines 38 - p.11-9, line 2: There are currently a multitude of regulations and administrative processes at the federal, state and local level that together have become excessive and difficult to understand. Conflicting regulations and complicated administrative processes can create undue hardship on community members and result in reduced levels of environmental protection. Regulatory inspection and enforcement of environmental regulations are currently inconsistent and lack effectiveness. The combination of complex regulations and inadequate enforcement have led to a lack of administrative predictability, widespread violations, and ultimately to environmental deterioration. Thoughtful and
efficient regulations play an important part in protecting the environment. 
(Brenner, Weimer)

68) p. 11-9; Policy 11B-7: Keep Ensure regulations are as simple as possible and maintain effective inspection, compliance, and enforcement measures. (Brenner)

69) p. 11-10; Policy 11C-3: Emphasize an approach to environmental protection by encouraging the use of conservation easements, open space taxation, land acquisition, purchase/voluntary, workable transfer of development rights, and other mechanisms that assist affected property owners. Avoid extreme standards and procedures that are likely to require compensation to property owners or invalidation of such rules. (Brenner)

70) p. 11-10 lines 17-23: Land use decisions can no longer be considered exclusively private matters. We are aware public actions impact every private citizen in Whatcom County and private actions avoid standards and procedures that are likely to require compensation to property owners or invalidation of such rules may have public consequences as well. To that end, the law must protect the public good from detrimental private actions. Nevertheless, the right of the individual to use his or her property, within the bounds permitted by law, is a value supported by law and the community and must be recognized when making land use decisions in Whatcom County.

71) p. 11-11; lines 18-21: The CIG confirms that global climate models project mid-21st century temperatures in the Pacific Northwest that are will be higher than the natural range of temperature observed in the 20th century. (Brenner)

72) p. 11-11; lines 29-30:
- Higher winter streamflow in rain-fed river basins resulting in scouring floods that negatively affect salmon populations if winter precipitation and rain-on-snow events increases in the future as projected (Donovan)

73) p. 11-12; Policy 11D-1: Whatcom County’s natural resource-based economic sectors, natural systems, water resources, infrastructure, emergency management and public health all face potentially noteworthy climate change related risks in the future.... (Donovan)

74) p. 11-13; New Policy 11D-6: Convene a climate impact advisory committee by 2017. The advisory committee should consist of (but not be limited to) experts in energy efficiency and carbon emission reduction, representatives from Whatcom County, and interested community members. The committee will be tasked
with:

- Evaluating Whatcom County’s compliance with meeting targets set forth in the 2007 Climate Plan;
- Establishing new targets that meet or exceed state and federal climate impact goals;
- Updating the Climate Plan, at minimum every five years, or as needed to meet targets;
- Recommending updates to the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan in accordance with meeting Whatcom County’s emission reduction goals; and
- Ensuring that Whatcom County government facilities and operations are designed to meet or exceed goals and standards resolved in the current Climate Protection and Energy Conservation Action Plan. (Weimer)

75) p. 11-13; New Policy 11D-7: Encourage sustainability by developing strategies and practices to increase the use of renewable, net-neutral carbon energy in Whatcom County facilities and County vehicles, with a goal of net zero man-made carbon emission by 2050. (Donovan)

76) p. 11-13; New Policy 11D-8: Encourage sustainability by developing strategies and practices to reduce landfill waste from Whatcom County government facilities to near zero. (Donovan)

77) p. 11-16; lines 11-12: Landslides — Siting human development on or adjacent to known landslide hazard areas can create health and safety risks for humans and their property. (Brenner)

78) p. 11-17; lines 1-6: Volcanos — A volcanic eruption or mudflow at Mount Baker could potentially severely affect river flow on the Nooksack River or Baker River and cause severe property damage near the volcanoes or along lahar routes. A lahar is an extremely rare and unpredictable occurrence. Evacuation routes should be planned and made public. Development should be regulated according to the Critical Areas Ordinance. (Donovan)

79) p. 11-18; Policy 11F-3: Broadly inform the people of Whatcom County and residents of the locations of known natural hazards, and the potential for adverse impacts of such natural hazards to the health, safety, and welfare of people and their properties. (Brenner)
80) p. 11-18; Policy 11F-5: Allow permitted uses that do not require human habitation so long as probable adverse off-site impacts to other properties or natural systems (those impacts resulting from the interaction of the natural hazard and the proposed **development uses**) are minimized or mitigated. Probable adverse impacts should be prevented or avoided in habitats of state or federally listed sensitive plant and animal species. (Brenner)

Approved April 19
1) p. 11-12; lines 4- : In 2007, Whatcom County completed a Climate Protection and Energy Conservation Action Plan that laid out specific actions and targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and increasing energy conservation efforts in response to potential climate change.

   **In addition many insurance industry experts are now factoring in the costs of climate change into insurance premiums as the increase in the frequency and severity of extreme weather events around the world results in a corresponding increase in claims costs.**

   **Local government, residents and business must anticipate that as the climate changes, more frequent and severe damage to private and public infrastructure will occur. Maintenance costs and insurance premiums can be expected to increase accordingly.** (Browne)

2) p. 11-13; New Policy 11D-9: **Identify responsible parties and agencies and encourage them to identify and properly seal and/or burn methane that is escaping into the atmosphere from wells.** (Browne)

3) p. 11-17; line 22, insert new paragraphs:

   **Gas wells - Several exploratory oil & gas wells have been drilled around the county over the last 70+ years. Some of these present potential environmental hazards due to ongoing leakage of gas.**

   **Old Landfills - There are known abandoned landfills in the County and possibly some that are unknown. There are also several sites around the County that contain large numbers of abandoned vehicles and other debris. As with most landfills these locations pose some degree of risk of hazardous substances leaking into local aquifers.** (Browne)

4) p. 11-17; Goal 11F: Minimize potential loss of life, damage to property, the expenditure of public funds, and degradation of natural systems resulting from development in hazardous areas such as floodplains, landslide-prone areas, seismic hazards areas, volcanic impact areas, abandoned mine and **exploratory gas well** locations, potentially dangerous alluvial fans, and other known natural hazards
by advocating the use of land acquisition, open space taxation, conservation easements, growth planning, regulations, and other options to discourage or minimize development, or prohibit inappropriate development in such areas. (Browne)

5) p. 11-19; Policy 11F-12: Consider conducting a public process with affected citizens, technical experts, and decision-makers to establish recommended levels of public risk for each of the identified natural hazards. In developing recommended levels of public risk for natural hazards, consider the appropriate variables affecting developments in hazardous areas. These variables may include:
   - Specific types of risk associated with the particular hazard areas;
   - The gradation of hazards associated with a particular geo-hazard;
   - Level of detail necessary to map hazard areas;
   - Different levels of risk associated with different ownership classes (e.g. public ownership versus private ownership); and
   - Different levels of risk associated with different types of land uses.
Once a set of risk levels have been identified, propose these risk levels for adoption by the County Council as the levels to which future development must be designed. (Brenner)

7) p. 11-26; Policy 11H-4: Support the implementation of local and state Watershed Management Plans, the Lower Nooksack Strategy, the Lake Whatcom Management Program, NPDES Phase II Permitting, and the WRIA Watershed Management Projects. (Brenner)

8) p. 11-26; New Policy 11H-6: Oppose the use of hydraulic fracturing in oil and gas wells (also known as “fracking”) to avoid the potential degradation of water quality in aquifers and other ground water. (Mann)

9) p. 11-28; Policy 11I-11: Place a high priority on integrating impervious surface reduction incentives into policies, regulations, and standards for the Lake Whatcom and Lake Samish watersheds. (Weimer)

10) p. 11-28; Policy 11I-12: Develop and implement comprehensive stormwater management programs and strategies designed to address runoff from all private and public developments and facilities within regulated and sensitive watersheds.
   ...
   1. Amend subdivision, zoning, and other land use regulations and design standards to encourage that land use activities minimize the amount of impervious surface.
   2. Identify and implement a long-term funding source to provide for water resource protection services, including non-point source identification and enforcement of applicable county regulations.
   3. Focus on the Lake Whatcom watershed as a high priority in developing a stormwater management program. Develop a stormwater management
plan that achieves a uniform level of protection throughout the Lake Whatcom watershed. Ensure coordination and communication with the public and affected jurisdictions, such as the Lake Whatcom Water and Sewer District, the Sudden Valley Community Association, and the City of Bellingham.

4. Ensure that existing stormwater standards are adequately enforced within Stormwater Special Districts, Watershed Protection Districts, and the NPDES areas.

(Brenner)

11) p. 11-30; Goal 11-J: Support water conservation, reclamation, reuse measures, and education as a means to **help ensure** sufficient water supplies in the future.

(Brenner)

12) p. 11-30; **New Policy 11J-3: Develop and implement plans to comply with the Department of Ecology's instream flow and water management rules and water resources management programs.** (Donovan)

13) p. 11-33; Restore Policy 2K-16 with edits: **Work with the community association towards voluntary achievement of the density reduction additional lots within Sudden Valley.** (Brenner)

Approved May 3

1) p. 11-18; Delete Policy 11F-5: Allow permitted uses that do not require human habitation in hazard areas that are deemed to be of low or acceptable risk, so long as probable adverse off-site impacts to other properties or natural systems (those impacts resulting from the interaction of the natural hazard and the proposed development) are minimized or mitigated. Probable adverse impacts should be prevented or avoided in habitats of state or federally-listed sensitive plant and animal species. (Brenner)

3) p. 11-36; lines 26-31: Shellfish **Protection District Advisory Committees**

Whatcom County has three Shellfish Protection District Advisory Committees, one for each of the Shellfish Protection Districts: Birch Bay, Drayton Harbor, and Portage Bay. Each advises the County Council on proposed actions and operations relating to the restoration of water quality in their respective watersheds. (Weimer)

4) p. 11-38; lines 9-11: Many stream systems in Whatcom County have been altered by agriculture, forestry, development, and flood control practices, contributing to low stream
flows, fisheries loss, water pollution, sedimentation, and other problems. These impacts can directly affect the fisheries resources by depositing silt and debris into spawning beds, by removing trees that shade and cool the water, bank armoring stabilizing banks, interfering with the recruitment and establishment of large woody debris (LWD), by obstructing fish passage with culverts and roads, by altering natural channels through filling, bank hardening, and channelizing. *(Brenner)*

5) p. 11-38; Policy 11L-7: Promote voluntary fish and wildlife habitat enhancement projects through educational and incentive programs. These projects, which can be done by individuals, organizations, and businesses, should will buffer and expand fish and wildlife habitat. *(Brenner)*

6) p. 11-38; Policy 11L-13: Evaluate the full value of the fishery—including its cultural and economic value—in land use decisions that may impact that fishery. Unavoidable impacts to an individual habitat or fishery should shall be mitigated. *(Brenner)*

7) p. 11-40; Policy 11M-3: When possible, Establish non-regulatory mechanisms and incentives for development that accommodates the habitat needs of fish and wildlife and encourages good stewardship practices. *(Brenner)*

8) p. 11-40; Policy 11M-5: Native vegetation and soils on stream banks and shorelines should be disturbed as little as possible. In situations where re-vegetation is necessary to restore stream bank or shoreline stability and provide shading, site-specific native plants should be used. Retention of vegetated riparian areas on all lake and marine shorelines should shall also be encouraged. *(Brenner)*

9) p. 11-41; Policy 11M-13: Diligently work to prevent and reduce the spread of invasive species. *(Brenner)*

10) p. 11-42; Policy 11N-3: Biological functions of wetlands are complex and interwoven. Evaluate the full range of potential and immediate economic impacts in land use decisions relating to wetlands, including fisheries, wildlife, recreation, farmlands, sustainable resources, air and water quality, flood hazard management, real estate, cultural attributes, and other entities uses. *(Brenner)*

11) p. 11-45; Policy 11P-3: Protect shellfish resources by means of pollution prevention and enforcement when necessary. This should include surface and groundwater monitoring for early detection of pollution that will to minimize the damage and cost of resource restoration. *(Brenner)*

12) p. 11-45; Policy 11P-6: Identify and encourage the use of stormwater treatment systems and Best Management Practices that will help to reduce fecal coliform bacteria levels in stormwater discharging directly into shellfish habitat areas. *(Brenner)*
13) p. 11-46; Policy 11P-12: Continue to develop programs that help identify potential pollution sources and ensure timely and science-based approaches are used in response to problems as they arise. (Brenner)

14) p. 11-46; Policy 11P-15: Create a tracking mechanism to document progress made toward improving downgraded shellfish areas. This information will be useful, not only in helping to support an upgrade when water quality shows improvement, but also in helping to prevent degradation in currently approved shellfish areas. (Brenner)

15) p. 11-47; Policy 11P-17: Consider establishing the Drayton Harbor Watershed as a sending area when considering a voluntary, workable transfer of development rights (TDR) program. (Brenner)

1) p. 11-20; New Policy 11F-16: Identify known locations of abandoned wells that could produce methane and/or other hazardous substances and where immediate danger of methane and hazardous substance leaking exists, condition development approvals on affected parcels to mitigate those impacts. (Browne)

2) p. 11-33; Policy 11K-16: If the county acquires lots through tax foreclosure, consider selling them as non-buildable lots. If vacant lots in the Lake Whatcom watershed come available due to a tax foreclosure the County may acquire them, remove the developments rights and then place them back on the market through the public auction process to recover any residual value. (Browne)

Changes Approved July 5

1) p. 11-2; lines 9-19: Essential to this is the establishment of safe development practices and patterns that do not significantly disrupt natural systems ecosystems and that ensure the continuation of ample amounts of clean water, natural areas, farmlands, forest lands, and fish and wildlife habitat. (Brenner)

2) p. 11-2; lines 13-16: This chapter is composed of an introduction and four sections organized by topic heading. The first section, entitled "General Environmental Management," addresses general environmental goals and policies. The remaining three sections deal with Natural Hazards, Water Resources, and Natural Ecosystems. (Brenner)

3) p. 11-7; lines 13-15: Much of the environmental degradation and destruction to property occurs as a result of a lack of information rather than willful action. Natural systems Ecosystems are subtle and complex. (Brenner)
4) p. 11-9; Policy 11B-3: Support education as an important tool in developing public appreciation for the value of natural systems ecosystems and provide the public with informational materials and presentations relating to natural system functions, regulations, and issues. (Brenner)

5) p. 11-12; Policy 11D-1: Whatcom County’s natural resource-based economic sectors, natural systems ecosystems, water resources, infrastructure, emergency management, and public health all face potentially noteworthy climate change related risks in the future. The County should consider potential long-range climate change implications into its on-going functional planning and implementation actions. (Brenner)

6) p. 11-16; lines 16-17: Development activity can de-stabilize naturally unstable slopes and impact natural systems ecosystems. (Brenner)

7) p. 11-16; lines 20-23: In some circumstances, the development of upland properties may place downslope neighbors and natural systems ecosystems at risk from rockfall or landslides. (Brenner)

8) p. 11-16; lines 34-36: However, once every 10-25 years, a large storm event occurs in our area and streams flood homes and developments, causing damage to property, natural systems ecosystems, and sometimes loss of lives. (Brenner)

9) p. 11-17; Goal 11F: Minimize potential loss of life, damage to property, the expenditure of public funds, and degradation of natural systems ecosystems resulting from development in hazardous areas... (Brenner)

10) p. 11-19; Policy 11F-11: ... In natural hazard areas where engineering solutions cannot be designed to withstand the forces expected to occur under the design event of a particular natural hazard, or off-site adverse impacts to adjacent properties or natural systems ecosystems cannot be adequately mitigated, Whatcom County may deny development permits intended for permanent or seasonal human habitation. (Brenner)

11) p. 11-33; lines 30-40: Natural-Systems Ecosystems

Introduction

“Natural systems” refers to the complex biological ecosystem that has developed from the geologic setting of Whatcom County. It includes fish and wildlife, as well as diverse vegetation that has adapted to a variety of physical and climatic conditions (Map 11-2, Map 11-3). Natural-Systems goals and
policies are intended to provide guidance to county government as it assists citizens to effectively manage and enhance these natural systems, and ensures that the benefits of these systems are maintained far into the future.

Ecological systems, or ecosystems, refer to the natural systems that have developed within the geologic and geographic setting of Whatcom County. Whatcom County contains a significant number of distinct ecosystem types, with associated fish, wildlife, and plant species, as well as many other living organisms. This biodiversity has evolved and adapted according to the specific physical and climatic conditions of the county (Map 11-2, Map 11-3). Ecosystem goals and policies are intended to provide guidance to county government as it assists people to manage and protect these ecosystems. Additionally they ensure other benefits are maintained far into the future. (Brenner)

12) p. 11-37; lines 33-39: Issues, Goals, and Policies

General – Natural Ecosystems

Growth and urbanization of the land base have and may continue to impose a risk to the degradation and reduction of natural systems ecosystem functions. Wetlands and estuaries continue to be lost incrementally. (Brenner)

13) p. 11-38; Goal 11L: Protect and enhance natural systems ecosystems, which provide economic, ecological, aesthetic, and cultural benefit. (Brenner)

14) p. 11-39; Policy 11L-10: Protect and enhance natural systems ecosystem functions when flood hazard management measures are used. (Brenner)

15) p. 11-3; lines 7-12: GMA Planning Goal 10, "Environment" (RCW 36.70A.020(10)), provides the directive for much of this chapter. It requires Whatcom County to "protect the environment and enhance the state's high quality of life, including air and water quality, and the availability of water." In addition, some of the goals and policies of this chapter support Planning Goal 9, "Open Space and Recreation" (RCW 36.70A.020(9)), which directs the county to "conserve fish and wildlife habitat." (Brenner)

16) p. 11-3; lines 18-22: Specific policies address water, promoting inter-jurisdictional cooperation in conserving, protecting, and managing the water resource, and in reducing water pollution (CWPP Policies N.1 – 6). The CWPPs also support protecting wildlife habitat and corridors, natural drainage features, and "other environmental, cultural and scenic resources." (Brenner)

17) p. 11-5; lines 30-32: Every year salmon return to spawn in the streams and rivers of Whatcom County. Whatcom County is located within the Pacific Migratory Flyway and
serves as a stopover and critical habitat area for many migratory birds. Bufflehead and goldeneye ducks winter here. (Brenner)

18) p. 11-5; lines 38-43: Whatcom County is home to a distinct subspecies of the Great Blue Heron, which has the third largest colony in the Puget Sound area. The wetlands, fields, streams, and nearshore habitat in the county support many birds of special concern, such as the bald eagle (ESA threatened protected under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act), the pileated woodpecker (candidate for State threatened listing), and the peregrine falcon (ESA monitored candidate species). (Brenner)

19) p. 11-6; lines 20-23: Development in the last 100 years has had a significant impact on the natural environment in Whatcom County. At the turn of the 20th century, some areas surrounding Lynden, Sumas, and Ferndale were logged, drained and converted to agricultural land and other types of development. (Brenner, Sidhu)

20) p. 11-6; lines 31-34: There are designated lands in Whatcom County that can still accommodate development. Whatcom County also has areas that are sensitive to human activity, including wetlands, streams, lakes, marine shorelines, and lands that can pose a hazard to the community, including floodplains and unstable slopes. (Brenner)

23) p. 11-8; lines 42 – p. 11-9, line 2: Regulatory inspection and enforcement of environmental regulations are currently inconsistent and lack effectiveness. The combination of complex regulations and inadequate enforcement have led to a lack of administrative predictability, widespread violations, and ultimately to environmental deterioration. Thoughtful, comprehensible, and efficient regulations play an important part in educating the public and protecting the environment. (Brenner, Sidhu)

24) p. 11-9; Policy 11B-7: Keep regulations are as simple and easy to understand as possible and maintain effective inspection, compliance, and enforcement measures as necessary. (Brenner, Sidhu)

26) p. 11-10; lines 17-20: Land use decisions can no longer be considered exclusively private matters. We are aware that public actions impact every private citizen in Whatcom County and that private actions may have public consequences as well. To that end, to the extent allowed by law, regulations should the law must protect the public good from detrimental private actions. (Sidhu)
29) p. 11-13; New Policy 11D-6: Convene a climate impact advisory committee by 2017. The advisory committee should consist of (but not be limited to) experts in energy efficiency and carbon emission reduction, representatives from Whatcom County, and interested community members. The committee will be tasked with:

- Evaluating Whatcom County’s compliance with meeting targets set forth in the 2007 Climate Plan;
- Establishing new targets that meet or exceed state and federal climate impact goals;
- Updating the Climate Plan, at minimum every five years, or as needed to meet targets;
- Recommending updates to the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan in accordance with meeting Whatcom County’s emission reduction goals; and
- Ensuring that Whatcom County government facilities and operations are designed to meet or exceed goals and standards resolved in the current Climate Protection and Energy Conservation Action Plan.

- **Recommend updates to Whatcom County land use policies and development regulations to support renewable energy development goals.** (Mann)

30) p. 11-13; New Policy 11D-10: Create updates to Whatcom County land use policies and development regulations to support renewable energy development goals. (Brenner)

31) p. 11-14; lines 19-30: Flood Hazards – Heavy winter rains and a transient snowpack combined with the steep and sometimes unstable slopes of Whatcom County's foothills create conditions ideal for flooding and debris flows along many of our rivers and streams. The Nooksack River floodplain alone covers 38,000 acres in Whatcom County. In 1989 and 1990, the Nooksack River overflowed and flooded lowland Whatcom County causing millions of dollars of damage. During some extreme floods, the Nooksack River overflows near Everson and adversely impacts residents along Johnson Creek in Sumas, and in the Abbotsford area of British Columbia. It is predicted that climate change will exacerbate flooding. It is projected that climate change will increase flood risk, due to increased sea level and changes in rainfall patterns. Significant damage may result from such floods. In 1991, Whatcom County formed a countywide Flood Control Zone District to address the major flooding issues in the county. (Brenner)

32) p. 11-14; lines 31-35: The presence of Mt. Baker is an asset to our region. Its 10,778-foot peak is one of the dominant features of Whatcom County’s landscape. However, Mt. Baker is also considered one of the most potentially active volcanoes in the Cascade
Range, and of the six major volcanoes in the range, Mt. Baker is considered by geologists to be very hazardous during and after an eruption. (Brenner)

33) p. 11-18 Policy 11F-2: Use Best Available Science and data to research and investigate the nature and extent of known natural hazards in the county and make this information available to the general public and policy makers in an accessible and understandable form. (Brenner)

34) p. 11-19; Policy 11F-11: Require applicants for development permits located in natural hazard areas to provide development plans designed to minimize the potential to exacerbate the natural hazard as well as the risk of damage to property or threats to human health and safety. In natural hazard areas where engineering solutions cannot be designed to withstand the forces expected to occur under the design event of a particular natural hazard, or off-site adverse impacts to adjacent properties or natural systems cannot be adequately mitigated, Whatcom County may deny development permits intended for permanent or seasonal human habitation as described in the Critical Areas Ordinance. (Sidhu)

35) p. 11-20; Policy 11F-12: Consider conducting a public process with affected citizens, technical experts, and decision-makers to establish recommended levels of public risk for each of the identified natural hazards. In developing recommended levels of public risk for natural hazards, consider the appropriate variables affecting developments in hazardous areas. These variables may include:

- Specific types of risk associated with the particular hazard area;
- The gradation of hazards associated with a particular geo-hazard;
- Level of detail necessary to map hazard areas;
- Different levels of risk associated with different ownership classes (e.g. public ownership versus private ownership); and
- Different levels of risk associated with different types of land uses and mitigation measures related to specific adverse impacts of development in hazard areas.

Once a set of risk levels have been identified, propose these risk levels for adoption of legislation by the County Council as the levels to which future development must be designed and appropriate locations for them. (Brenner, Sidhu)

36) p. 11-21; lines 19-23: Surface water sources such as Lake Whatcom, the Nooksack River, and Lake Samish provide water to more than half the county residents with the remainder relying on groundwater either from individual wells or from about 300 public water systems. Agriculture relies on both ground and surface water for a variety of uses, including irrigation, and drinking water for livestock, and facility wash down. (Brenner, Sidhu)
38) p. 11-23; Policy 11G-2: Actively participate in and support WRIA 1 Watershed Planning efforts associated with the coordination of to coordinate local, federal, tribal, and state agencies to achieve integration and/or consistency between the various levels of environmental regulations relating to the County. (Brenner)

40) p. 11-24; Policy 11G-7: Pursue the most effective methods for protecting water quantity and quality, through both regulatory (e.g. zoning, enforcement, fines) and non-regulatory approaches (education, incentives, and technical/financial assistance). Emphasis should–shall be placed on non-regulatory approaches where possible and effective. (Brenner, Sidhu)

41) p. 11-25; Policy 11H-2: Coordinate efforts to bring all water users in Whatcom County into compliance with state and federal water laws in a way that enhances stream flows, water quality, and fish and wildlife habitat while advocating for adequate water for existing agriculture. (Brenner, Sidhu)

43) p. 11-26; New Policy 11H-6: Monitor, prevent, and reduce the establishment of invasive species in Whatcom County waterbodies. (Brenner)

47) p. 11-29; Policy 11I-12: Develop and implement comprehensive stormwater management programs and strategies designed to address runoff from all private and public developments and facilities within regulated and sensitive watersheds.

5. Implement the Western Washington Phase II Municipal Stormwater Permit as part of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Program. Incorporate watershed considerations into the development of a comprehensive stormwater management strategy for designated areas.

6. Review Stormwater Special Districts Standards, Watershed Protection Districts, and other related codes that address runoff treatment from potentially polluting surfaces for their applicability to other sensitive watersheds with the Technical Advisory Committee and other appropriate agencies. Coordinate efforts for ongoing monitoring and evaluation within the sensitive watersheds and NPDES areas.

7. Amend subdivision, zoning, and other land use regulations and design standards to encourage that land use activities minimize the amount of impervious surface.

8. Identify and implement a long-term funding source to provide for water resource protection services including non-point source identification and enforcement of applicable county regulations.

9. Focus on the Lake Whatcom watershed as a high priority in developing a stormwater management program. Develop a stormwater management plan that achieves a uniform level of protection throughout the Lake Whatcom watershed. Ensure coordination and communication with the
public and affected jurisdictions, such as the Lake Whatcom Water and Sewer District, the Sudden Valley Community Association, and the City of Bellingham.

10. Ensure that existing stormwater standards are adequately enforced within Stormwater Special Districts, Watershed Protection Districts, and the NPDES areas.

11. Prioritize stormwater polluting areas and develop retrofits for areas most likely to impact sensitive waters. (Brenner)

48) p. 11-30; New Policy 11J-4: Coordinate local water and land management efforts, plans, and data to ensure adequate oversight of water quality and quantity issues. (Brenner)

49) p. 11-30; New Policy 11J-5: Quantify water use to promote conservation. (Donovan)

50) p. 11-30; New Policy 11J-6: Utilize water use data to encourage conservation and maintain availability of water for agriculture and instream flow. (Donovan)

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2b) p. 11-31; Policy 11K-2: Develop a storm drainage utility district or other funding mechanism to deal with the unique problems of development in a drinking water watershed and implement the fair and equitable funding mechanisms called for in the 2008 Lake Whatcom Comprehensive Stormwater Plan to support lake water quality protections by 2018. (Weimer) (alternative 53a and 53c)

3a) p. 11-31; Policy 11K-4: Work cooperatively with the City of Bellingham, and the Lake Whatcom Water and Sewer District, and applicable associations and organizations to identify, review, and, as appropriate, recommend changes to existing monitoring programs that will address the needs of the various jurisdictions to better improve lake water quality. (Brenner, Donovan)

4) p. 11-31; Policy 11K-7: Work cooperatively with the City of Bellingham and the Lake Whatcom Water and Sewer District to develop and track benchmarks to determine the effectiveness of management options; when goals have been achieved; and/or when additional actions are necessary. (Brenner)

5a) p. 11-32; Policy 11K-9: Work to keep state publicly-owned forest lands within the Lake Whatcom watershed in public ownership... (Donovan)

5b) ...and support managing forestry on these lands in a manner that minimizes sediment and phosphorus yields from streams, and is consistent with Best
Available Science (BAS) data, in order to protect and enhance water quality. (Brenner, Donovan)

6a) p. 11-32; Policy 11K-10: Encourage the location of public services, such as schools, libraries, parks/open space, and post offices within Rural Communities Sudden Valley ... (Brenner, Donovan)

6b) ...would likely in an attempt to reduce the vehicle miles traveled within the watershed. (Brenner)

7) p. 11-32; Policy 11K-11: Continue to work with Bellingham and Lake Whatcom Water and Sewer District to protect and manage the Lake Whatcom watershed in accordance with the 1998 jointly adopted interlocal agreement. Focus on continued implementation of the 5-Year Work Plans of the Lake Whatcom Management Program. In addition, work with the affected jurisdictions and secure funding for programs that protect and enhance water quality. (Brenner)

8) p. 11-32; Policy 11K-12: Review and modify (as needed) the current development review process for projects in the Lake Whatcom Watershed to ensure coordination with other jurisdictions to streamline regulations that improve and protect water quality. (Brenner)

9a) p. 11-33; New Policy 11K-20: Existing Urban Growth Areas shall not be expanded nor new Urban Growth Areas designated within the Lake Whatcom Watershed. (Brenner)

9b) ... and rezones that allow greater residential densities will not be allowed. (Weimer)

10) p. 11-34; lines 4...12: Among the habitats of importance to fish and wildlife are the following:

... • caves, cliffs, rocky balds, and talus slopes; (Brenner)

11) p. 11-34; lines 25-26: Most wildlife species regularly use aquatic and riparian habitats for breeding, feeding, shelter, and migratory activities. (Brenner)

12) p. 11-34; lines 46 – p. 11-35 line 5: Loss of native vegetation through conversion to ornamental vegetation and non-native species often can results in loss of wildlife habitat, increased competition to native wildlife from introduced species such as starlings, and increased maintenance needs. Loss of native vegetation also can occur through invasions of non-native species, such as the spread of Spartina, which can drastically displace important native eelgrass and mudflat communities. (Brenner)
13) p. 11-35; lines 12-15: Decline in wild salmonid abundances have been attributed to widespread loss and degradation of habitat, due to hydropower, residential and urban development, agriculture, and forestry, and fishing and hatchery production. Fishing and hatchery production have also contributed to declines. (Brenner, Sidhu)

14) p. 11-35; lines 27-28: Marine habitats include all salt water bodies and their shorelines, kelp and micro algae beds, eelgrass meadows, salt marshes, beaches, and mudflats. (Brenner)

15) p. 11-36; lines 16-22: The primary measure of water quality for shellfish harvesting is bacterial contamination. There are many potential sources of fecal bacteria, such as include municipal sewage treatment plants, on-site sewage systems, boat waste, farm animals, pets, and wildlife. Since 1995, valuable shellfish beds in Portage Bay and Drayton Harbor have been downgraded (harvest prohibited) due to non-point pollution impacting recreational, tribal, and commercial harvesting. (Brenner, Sidhu)

16) p. 11-37; lines 37-39: Growth Development and urbanization of the land base have and may continue to impose a risk to result in the degradation and reduction of natural systems ecosystem functions. Wetlands and estuaries continue to be lost incrementally. (Brenner)

19) p. 11-38; lines 21-26: Finally, the cultural value of functioning habitats, including wetlands and the fish and wildlife they harbor, has often been ignored in land use decisions. The gathering of fish, game, and other natural resources forms a central aspect of many cultures in this region. Also, the mere presence of these natural resources constitutes a community amenity that is a substantial part of our local economic base. Finally, a healthy and functioning ecosystem, including forests, wetlands, fish, wildlife, and native plants they harbor, is an identified resource. A healthy ecosystem supports diverse and abundant wildlife, fish, and plant populations, and is necessary. The gathering of fish, game, and other natural resources forms a central aspect of many cultures in Whatcom County. The mere presence of these natural resources constitutes a community amenity that is a substantial part of our local economic base. (Brenner)

20) p. 11-38; Policy 111-1: Define and identify habitats and habitat features important to a balanced and sustainable web of life that supports fish and wildlife. Define and identify species, habitats, and habitat features important to a balanced and sustainable web of life, biodiversity, and especially important to fish, native
plants, and wildlife. Create and regularly update an Ecosystem Report. (Brenner)

21) p. 11-38; Policy 11L-2: Develop and adopt programs that protect habitats essential to the conservation of species that have been identified as endangered, threatened, or sensitive by the state or federal government as well as habitats identified as necessary in the Ecosystem Report. These programs should maintain and encourage restoration of habitat conditions for listed species of concern, as well as habitats identified as having significant biodiversity, connectivity, and other important features and functions. (Brenner, Sidhu)

22) p. 11-38; Policy 11L-3: Develop and adopt programs that provide incentives for the protection of environmentally fragile areas or critical plant and wildlife habitats and corridors as well as habitats that provide connectivity (corridors). (Brenner, Sidhu)

23) p. 11-39; Policy 11L-7: Promote voluntary fish and wildlife habitat enhancement projects through educational and incentive programs, such as purchase of development rights or habitat conservation easements. These projects, which can be done by individuals, organizations, and businesses, should buffer and expand fish, plant, and wildlife habitat. (Brenner)

24) p. 11-39; Policy 11L-8: Give careful consideration to the siting of industrial, commercial, residential, and other land use designations when located near important marine, terrestrial, or other critical habitats. (Brenner)

25) p. 11-39; New Policy 11L-14: Continue to consider the value of wildlife populations, their associated habitats, and connectivity in land use decisions that may impact them. (Brenner)

26) p. 11-39; New Policy 11L-15: Mitigation to Habitat Conservation Areas should be tracked and monitored to ensure no net loss to natural area. (Weimer)

27) p. 11-39; New Policy 11L-16: Monitor Habitat Conservation Areas to obtain a baseline of current conditions and to ensure no net loss and avoidance of cumulative impacts. (Weimer)

29) p. 11-40; Goal 11M: Protect and enhance natural systems ecosystems that support native fish, plant, and wildlife populations and habitat. (Brenner)

30) p. 11-40; Policy 11M-2: Support protection and enhancement and enhance significant fish spawning and rearing habitat, food resources, refugia (shelter), and travel passages. (Sidhu)
31) p. 11-40; Policy 11M-10: Encourage landowners to voluntarily protect surface water quality with filter strips or other appropriate water cleansing mechanisms installed between lawns, landscaping, livestock pens, or agricultural fields and waterbodies. (Sidhu)

32) p. 11-41; Policy 11M-11: Formulate and implement a comprehensive, landscape-based, environmental management program to protect fish and wildlife. The program should include the following:
   6. Formulate an administrative approach to the review of development and planning proposals that consider natural system policies;
   7. Investigate and develop programs for acquisition and restoration of important fish, plant, and wildlife habitat areas;
   8. Develop and enter into cooperative agreements with State and Federal agencies and neighboring jurisdictions to identify and protect natural systems ecosystems;
   9. Identify and map important habitat corridors and connectivity throughout the county; and
   10. Support the development of educational materials which lists, describes, and characterizes the appropriate use of native vegetation to enhance natural systems ecosystem functions in Whatcom County. (Brenner)

33) p. 11-41; Policy 11M-13: Diligently work to prevent and/or reduce the establishment and/or the spread of invasive species. (Brenner)

34) p. 11-41; New Policy 11M-15: Participate in protection and improvement of biodiversity. (Brenner)

35) p. 11-41; New Policy 11M-16: Consider establishing important habitat areas as sending areas after creating a voluntary, workable transfer of development rights (TDR) program. (Brenner)

36) p. 11-43; New Policy 11N-6 (renumber subsequent policies): Mitigation of wetlands should be reviewed and tracked over time to ensure no net loss of wetland function. (Donovan, Weimer)

37) p. 11-43; New Policy 11N-9: A baseline of wetland identification and function should be made to track and prevent net loss and avoid cumulative impacts. (Weimer)

38) p. 11-42; lines 6-10: Wetlands are crucial environmental features in Whatcom County. Once thought of as waste areas and unproductive lands, it is now known that wetlands provide invaluable functions in aquifer recharge, groundwater storage, floodwater detention, pollutant removal and purification of water supplies, as well as provision of fish and wildlife habitat. (Brenner)

39) p. 11-42; lines 10-12: Loss of wetlands has been due to many factors including urbanization, agricultural development, and drainage projects. (Brenner, Sidhu)
40) p. 11-44; Goal 11O: Protect and enhance marine ecosystems and resources in Whatcom County. (Brenner)

41) p. 11-45; Policy 11P-2: Restore degraded waters within the drainage basins of shellfish growing areas to a level that allows/supports shellfish harvesting by work with the Department of Ecology, Tribes, Department of Health, Department of Fish and Wildlife, and affected property owners to improve water quality. (Brenner)

42) p. 11-7; Policy 11A-4: Manage designated Critical Areas (ECAs) as needed, as needed to minimize or protect against environmental degradation and reduce the potential for losses to property and human life. (Brenner, Sidhu)

46) p. 11-12; Policy 11D-1: Whatcom County’s natural resource-based economic sectors, natural systems, water resources, infrastructure, emergency management, and public health all face potentially noteworthy climate change related risks in the future. The County should consider potential long-range climate change implications into its on-going functional planning and implementation actions. (Brenner, Sidhu)

47) p. 11-17; lines 1-6: Volcanos – A volcanic eruption or mudflow at Mount Baker could potentially severely affect river flow on the Nooksack River or Baker River and cause severe property damage near the volcanoes or along lahar routes. A lahar is an extremely rare and unpredictable occurrence. Evacuation routes should be planned and made public. Development should be regulated according to the Critical Areas Ordinance. Development should be regulated according to the Critical Areas Ordinance. (Brenner, Sidhu)