

Note: The proposed language below would be entirely new text in the Countywide Planning Policies. Changes from the existing interim Interlocal Agreement are shown with underlining.

S. Countywide Planning Policy Amendment Procedures

1. Authority to Initiate Amendment – Any of the following may initiate a proposed amendment to the Countywide Planning Policies by submitting a written proposal to the County Planning Director:
 - a. The Whatcom County Executive;
 - b. The Whatcom County Council;
 - c. Any City Council;
 - d. Any City Mayor.

2. Required Information - The proposed amendment shall include:
 - a. The language of the proposed amendment shown with underlining and strikethroughs.
 - b. An explanation of the need for the proposed amendment. This may include, as appropriate, the factors, changed conditions, data, analysis, and/or experience with existing countywide planning policies that show a need for the proposed amendment.

3. Recommendation - The County Planning Director shall refer proposed amendments to the City/County Planner Group, which shall be comprised of the planning directors or designees from the County and each of the seven Cities. The City/County Planner Group will review and issue recommendations on the proposed amendments as follows:
 - a. The City/County Planner Group will strive to reach consensus but if consensus cannot be reached, recommendations will be by majority vote of the eight jurisdictions (the County and seven cities).
 - b. Any jurisdiction’s representative that cannot attend the meeting may vote by e-mail sent to the County Planning Director.

- c. The City/County Planner Group’s recommendations will be issued within 180 days of receiving the proposed amendments. The process of forming recommendations will allow time, within this 180-day period, for individual jurisdictions to consult with their respective planning commissions and/or elected officials, at the discretion of each jurisdiction.
 - d. If a majority of the City/County Planner Group votes against the proposed amendments or if the City/County Planner Group does not make a recommendation within the 180-day time period, the amendments will not be processed further unless the County Executive and a majority of the city mayors agree to proceed with the proposed amendments. The 180-day time period may be extended by 90 days by majority vote of the eight jurisdictions (voting by the County Executive and the mayors).
4. SEPA – Whatcom County will conduct SEPA review, if required, on the recommended Countywide Planning Policy amendments.
 5. Whatcom County Planning Commission Review – The Whatcom County Planning Commission will hold a public hearing and issue recommendations on the proposed countywide planning policy amendments. City planners will be invited to the hearing.
 6. Whatcom County Council Review – The County Council will invite County and City planners to a committee of the whole meeting to discuss the proposed countywide planning policy amendments. The County Council’s committee of the whole will take a vote whether or not to send final draft countywide planning policy amendments to the cities for review and approval.
 7. City Approval Process – The respective city legislative authorities must act upon final draft countywide planning policy amendments within 90 days of the County Council vote to send the amendments to the cities for review and approval.

City approval means a vote by the legislative authority to approve or disapprove the countywide planning policy amendments (up or down vote). Final draft countywide planning policy amendments may not be modified during the city approval process.

If a city does not notify the County Planning Director of the action taken within the 90-day period, that city shall be deemed to have approved the amendments.

8. Whatcom County Council Adoption – Following approval of the countywide planning policy amendments by the cities under subsection 7 above, the County Council may, after conducting a public hearing, adopt the countywide planning policy amendments. Final draft countywide planning policy amendments may not be modified during the County Council adoption process.
9. Ratified Amendments - In order to become effective, countywide planning policy amendments must be approved (pursuant to subsections 7 and 8 above) by:
 - a. Jurisdictions (the County and cities) representing at least 85% of the total population of Whatcom County; or
 - b. At least 75% of the jurisdictions, provided that Whatcom County must be one of the jurisdictions to approve the amendments (i.e., the County and at least 5 of the 7 existing cities).
10. Notification of Ratified Amendments - The County Planning Director shall notify the Cities and the Governor’s office in writing within fourteen (14) days of County Council adoption of the countywide planning policies, as set forth in subsection 8 above.