



## WHATCOM COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

5280 Northwest Drive  
Bellingham WA 98226

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### AGENDA Thursday May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024

The Whatcom County Planning Commission will hold a **hybrid** meeting at 6:30 p.m., with the option to attend remotely or in person at 5280 Northwest Drive, Bellingham.

- Call to Order
- Roll Call
- Flag Salute
- Department Update
- Open Session for Public Comment
- Commissioner Comments
- Approval of Minutes of: April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2024
- Meeting Topics:
  - *Public Participation Plan Public Hearing & Work Session*
  - *Population and Employment Projections & Allocations Work Session*
- Unfinished Business
- Adjournment

**NOTE:** For information on how to watch and participate in the meeting in real time, please visit the following web page: [Participate in Virtual Planning Commission Meeting](#)

*Individuals who require special assistance to participate in the meetings are asked to contact "PDS\_Planning\_Commission@co.whatcom.wa.us" at least 96 hours in advance.*

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*There are nine members on the Whatcom County Planning Commission. If you will be giving written information to the Commissioners, please give a copy to the Coordinator for our office files.*

*For more information please contact Aileen Kogut-Aguon at (360)778-5935 or PDS\_Planning\_Commission@co.whatcom.wa.us  
5280 Northwest Drive, Bellingham WA 98226*



RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS OF THE  
WHATCOM COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION  
April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Public Hearing and Work Session

1

1 **Call to Order**

2 The meeting was called to order by Whatcom County Planning Commission Chair,  
3 Kelvin Barton at 6:32 p.m.

4 **Roll Call**

5 **Present:** Kelvin Barton, Daniel Dahlquist, Jim Hansen, Stephen Jackson, Frank James

6 Atul Deshmane left meeting early

7 **Absent:** Scott Van Dalen, Dominic Mocerri, Julie Jefferson

8 **Staff Present:** Steve Roberge, Lucas Clark, Rod Lamb, Rob Ney, Bennett Knox and  
9 Aileen Kogut-Aguon

10 **Department Update**

11 Steve Roberge, Assistant Director of Planning and Development Services (PDS),  
12 provided an update on the Comprehensive Plan and what Planning Commission will be  
13 seeing on the docket within the upcoming weeks, such as the Public Participation Plan  
14 and the Population Employment Projections and Allocation.

15 **Open Session Public Comment**

16 Rosemary Van Beek provided a public comment regarding Accessory Dwelling Units

17 Kathleen Greenbaum provided public comment regarding the requested stop-work  
18 order for the ranch mine quarry.

19 Dave Widner provided public comment regarding his property on Sunset Drive.

20 **Commissioner Comments**

21 Commissioner Chair Barton provided comments about Petro Gas being bought out by  
22 Alta Gas.

23 **Approval of Meeting Minutes**

24 **Timestamp: 6:47p**

25 **1 Commissioner Hansen moved** to approve the meeting minutes from.

26 **Commissioner Dahlquist seconded.**

27 **Roll Call Vote: Ayes- Dahlquist, Hansen, Jackson, Barton**

28 **Abstain- Frank James**

29 **(Ayes-4; Nays-0; Abstain-1). The motion carried.**

30 **Capital Improvement Program**

31 **Timestamp: 6:50p**

32 Lucas Clark, PDS Planner, presented the proposed revisions of the six-year Capital  
33 Improvement Program (CIP) 2023 to 2028. Mr. Clark stated that the Whatcom County  
34 Comprehensive Plan indicates updates are required for CIP every two years. The last  
35 update was in 2023, however; the county has identified park and government facility



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Public Hearing and Work Session

2

- 1 projects to start and/or be completed in 2024. In order to use real estate excise tax  
2 dollars projects need to be within the six-year CIP. Therefore, the County is proposing  
3 to amend the Parks, Trails and Activity Centers and Government Buildings and cites  
4 chapters in the CIP, which will also modify the total cost chapter.
- 5 Mr. Clark outlined what is being amended in chapter 2 of the CIP regarding the Parks,  
6 Trails and Activity Center which includes; the Parks inventory, adding 642.5 acres to  
7 the county parks inventory; clarifying language to the future needs and proposed  
8 improvement projects; language for funding cleanup efforts associated with lead  
9 contamination at Plantation Rifle Range; and improve shower and restroom facilities at  
10 Silver Lake Park Trail. Mr. Clark added that the restroom facilities at Birch Bay Park is  
11 being added back into the text and the name "Birch Bay Community Park" will be  
12 renamed Birch Bay Beach Park" for consistency throughout the CIP update.
- 13 County facilities is proposing to add four projects to the CIP which will include;  
14 surveillance equipment project for the main jail, jail work center and juvenile detention  
15 center; the addition of a new generator for the Whatcom Unified Emergency  
16 Coordination Center; a remodel for the fifth Superior Court and IT tenant  
17 improvement; and construction of 23-hour Crisis Relief Center.
- 18 Mr. Clark concluded the presentation by stating that with these Park amendments the  
19 project costs would increase from about \$30 million to \$39 million over the six-year  
20 planning period of the CIP. The Government facility projects cost would increase from  
21 \$69 million to roughly \$86 million.
- 22 Commissioner Hansen asked about the lead remediation at the Plantation Rifle Range  
23 and if the use of lead bullets would not be allowed anymore.
- 24 Rod Lamb, Parks and Design Manager, responded by stating the lead cleanup will be  
25 focusing on the past 40 years of lead contamination, and working with the Department  
26 of Ecology on preventing any lead contamination after the cleanup going forward.
- 27 **a) Public Hearing and Work Session Regarding Capital Improvement Program**  
28 **Timestamp: 7p**
- 29 Danielle Gaughen, Executive Director at the Birch Bay Chamber of Commerce,  
30 provided public comment regarding getting a bathroom facility for Birch Bay Park.
- 31 Rosemary Van Beek provided public comment regarding the tax cost for all of the  
32 projects being planned.
- 33 Doralee Booth, County Liaison for Birch Bay Chamber of Commerce provided public  
34 comment regarding the port-o-potties and advocating for bathroom facilities for Birch  
35 Bay Beach Park.
- 36 Heather Lindsey, Director for the Birch Bay Park and Rec District, provided public  
37 comment regarding the facilities at Birch Bay Beach Park and needing to update and  
38 build bathrooms before the camps come in during the summer.
- 39 **Capital Improvement Program Work Session**  
40 **Timestamp: 7:08p**



**RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS OF THE  
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April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

Public Hearing and Work Session

3

1 **2***Commissioner James moved to adopt the changes to the six-year CIP plan*  
2 *presented to the Commission tonight.*

3 **Commissioner Hansen seconded.**

4 **Roll Call Vote: Ayes- James, Hansen, Dahlquist, Barton, Jackson**

5 **(Ayes-5; Nays-0; Abstain-0). The motion carried.**

6 **Timestamp: 7:10**

7 **Adjournment**

8 **Timestamp: 7:11**

9 The meeting was adjourned at 7:11 p.m.

10 Minutes prepared by Aileen Kogut-Aguon.

11 WHATCOM COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION ATTEST:

12 \_\_\_\_\_  
13 Kelvin Barton, Chair

\_\_\_\_\_

Aileen Kogut-Aguon, Secretary

DRAFT



## Memorandum

April 29, 2024

TO: The Whatcom County Planning Commission

FROM: Matt Aamot, Senior Planner

THROUGH: Steve Roberge, Assistant Director

RE: 2025 Comp Plan Update - Public Participation Plan & Population/Employment Report

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The Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA) requires Whatcom County to review and revise its comprehensive plan and development regulations by December 31, 2025 (RCW 36.70A.130). Additionally, the GMA requires review of urban growth areas (UGAs) under RCW 36.70A.130(3). The UGAs must be able to accommodate housing and employment growth projected for the planning period (through the year 2045). Therefore, Whatcom County has initiated a multi-year project to update its Comprehensive Plan and development regulations by the state deadline.

### **Comprehensive Plan Update Process**

The update process for the Comprehensive Plan and development regulations in Whatcom County will include:

- Creating and implementing a public participation plan;
- Developing population, housing and employment growth projections;
- Conducting an analysis under the State Environmental Policy Act, including the development of an environmental impact statement assessing various land use alternatives;
- Addressing recent GMA amendments, including changes relating to housing (HB 1220) and climate change planning (HB 1181);
- Engaging with advisory committees;
- Planning Commission work sessions, hearings, and recommendations; and
- Whatcom County Council meetings, hearings, and ordinance adoption.

## **Planning Commission's May 9 Meeting**

The Planning Commission will hold a public hearing and issue recommendations on the proposed Public Participation Plan on May 9. Additionally, the Planning Commission will hold a work session on initial population and employment projection at this meeting. The population and employment work session will be informational in nature, providing an opportunity for the Commission to review and discuss the initial projections. The Commission will make recommendations on growth projections at a later date.

The Washington State Legislature has allocated grant funds to local governments for the 2025 Comprehensive Plan & development regulation update and related climate change work. Whatcom County has used State grant funds to contract with SCJ Alliance to perform work relating to the update. Leland Consulting Group is a subcontractor for SCJ Alliance. On May 9, SCJ Alliance will make a presentation relating to the draft Public Participation Plan and Leland Consulting Group will make a presentation relating to the initial population and employment report.

### **Public Participation Plan**

The GMA requires counties to develop public participation programs for comprehensive plan and development regulation amendments ([RCW 36.70A.140](#)). The Whatcom County Council will approve the Public Participation Plan, after review by the Planning Commission.

The GMA includes planning goals in RCW 36.70A.020 to guide the process of amending comprehensive plans and development regulations. The State Legislature approved House Bill 1181 in 2023 modifying planning goal 11 as follows:

Citizen participation and coordination. Encourage the involvement of citizens in the planning process, including the participation of vulnerable populations and overburdened communities, and ensure coordination between communities and jurisdictions to reconcile conflicts.

The GMA contains the following definitions in RCW 36.70A.030, also added in the 2023 State legislative session:

(41)(a) "Vulnerable populations" means population groups that are more likely to be at higher risk for poor health outcomes in response to environmental harms, due to: (i) Adverse socioeconomic factors, such as unemployment, high housing and transportation costs relative to income, limited access to nutritious food and adequate health care, linguistic isolation, and other factors that negatively affect health outcomes and increase vulnerability to the effects of environmental harms; and (ii) sensitivity factors, such as low birth weight and higher rates of hospitalization.

(b) "Vulnerable populations" includes, but is not limited to:

- (i) Racial or ethnic minorities;
- (ii) Low-income populations; and
- (iii) Populations disproportionately impacted by environmental harms.

(40) "Overburdened community" means a geographic area where vulnerable populations face combined, multiple environmental harms and health impacts, and includes, but is not limited to, highly impacted communities as defined in RCW [19.405.020](#).

A draft Public Participation Plan has been developed to guide community engagement efforts throughout the process to ensure early and continuous involvement in the Comprehensive Plan and development regulations update. Public engagement is a key component of this update effort. The draft Public Participation Plan includes public engagement activities, including such activities relating to vulnerable populations and overburdened communities. Efforts to encourage participation will continue over the course of the Comprehensive Plan update.

### **Initial Population and Employment Report**

As part of the Comprehensive Plan update and UGA review, the County and cities are undertaking a process to allocate population, housing, and employment growth to UGAs and the areas of the County outside of UGAs. The UGAs must have the capacity to accommodate the 20-year housing and employment projections.

There are several steps in the process of allocating growth, including:

- **Technical / Background Reports** - The County and cities hired a consulting firm to develop initial countywide population, housing, and employment growth projections. The *Population and Employment: Growth Projections and Preliminary Allocations Technical Report*, issued on April 24, 2024, includes preliminary growth allocations to UGAs and the area outside UGAs. This report represents a starting point for public input and discussions by planning commissions and elected officials. Leland Consulting Group will provide an overview of this Technical Report at the May 9 Planning Commission meeting.
- **Initial Policy Based Recommendations** - The County and the cities will issue recommendations to adjust the technical allocations based upon County goals, city goals, public input, infrastructure capacity, land availability, etc. This step will include Whatcom County Planning Commission review and recommendations at a later date (tentatively scheduled for summer 2024).
- **Multi-Jurisdictional Resolution** - The Whatcom County Council will consider a nonbinding multi-jurisdictional resolution relating to population, housing needs, and employment growth allocations. This resolution will provide preliminary growth allocations for conducting environmental review, further analyzing land capacity, developing draft land use planning proposals, traffic modeling, and formulating draft capital facility plans.
- **Formal Planning Commission Recommendations** - The Whatcom County Planning Commission will hold public hearings on various components of the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan, including the population, housing needs, and employment growth projections. The Commission will issue formal recommendations to the County Council for modifications to the Comprehensive Plan.

- **County Council Adoption of Growth Allocations** - Final population, housing and employment growth projections will be adopted in the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan update, which must be completed by December 2025.

## **Summary**

The Whatcom County Planning Commission will be highly involved in the 2025 Comprehensive Plan and development regulations update. We hope to receive all Planning Commission recommendations on the Comprehensive Plan and development regulations update by June 2025 so that the County Council will have time to consider these recommendations prior to the December 2025 deadline for completing the update.

We look forward to hearing public comment and discussing the draft Public Participation Plan with the Planning Commission on May 9. After the public hearing, the Planning Commission's recommendations on the Public Participation Plan will be forwarded to the County Council for action.

Additionally, we will discuss the initial population and employment report with the Planning Commission in a work session format on May 9. This report will provide the Commission with foundational information for later discussions and recommendations relating to growth projections for the County.



# Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan and Development Regulations Update

## Draft Public Participation Plan

April 2024



**WHATCOM COUNTY**  
WASHINGTON



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# Introduction

Whatcom County is updating its Comprehensive Plan following the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA). Whatcom County is a fully planning jurisdiction and is required to evaluate the Comprehensive Plan and development regulations against updates in the GMA and changes in land use and population growth ([RCW 36.70A.130](#)).

The Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan is a policy document for how the County will manage a variety of topics including land use, zoning regulations, subdivisions, hazard regulations, annexations, and development review. The Plan is a framework and guide for accomplishing community aspirations and intentions. It contains goals and policies relating to future growth and development of the land, public facilities and services, and environmental protection. The Comprehensive Plan includes the following chapters:

1. Introduction and Growth Projections
2. Land Use
3. Housing
4. Capital Facilities
5. Utilities
6. Transportation
7. Economics
8. Resource Lands (Agricultural, Forest, Mineral, and Marine Resource Lands)
9. Recreation
10. Environment

Two new chapters will be added to the Comprehensive Plan: The Shorelines Chapter (currently being reviewed by the State Department of Ecology) and the Climate Change and Resiliency Chapter (required under Washington House Bill 1181, passed by the State Legislature in 2023).

Public engagement is a key component of this update effort. This Public Participation Plan (PPP) is intended to guide community engagement efforts throughout the process to ensure early and continuous involvement in the Comprehensive Plan and development regulations update. Efforts to encourage participation will continue over the course of the Comprehensive Plan update.

## Public Participation Plan Objectives

This document outlines the public participation opportunities for the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan update, including engagement methods, timeline, and implementation strategies. This is a working document and may be updated over time to reflect the needs of the community, changes in scheduling, etc.

The objectives for this Public Participation Plan are:

- ◆ Inform the public of the Comprehensive Plan and development regulations update, the process, and outcomes. Utilize outreach methods to inform the public and property owners of the variety of participation opportunities.
- ◆ Exchange information by conducting collaborative events that engage in conversation and the exchange of ideas and information. By exchanging information, we can give participants more ownership in the outcome of planning processes leading to buy-in, a sense of ownership, and higher-quality planning documents.
- ◆ Be inclusive of a range of perspectives, engaging the public in unique ways to reach a broader audience and understand their goals, needs, and desires.
- ◆ Provide access to engagement opportunities, events, and participation for all residents within Whatcom County, including vulnerable populations and overburdened communities.
- ◆ Be transparent and openly reflect a variety of viewpoints within the community and the County's process for the development and implementation of the Comprehensive Plan.
- ◆ Build support for the Comprehensive Plan and work with the Whatcom County community, elected officials, and other agencies toward success in implementing its goals and policies.

## Roles and Responsibilities

### Whatcom County

The Whatcom County is responsible for the update of the Comprehensive Plan and development regulations in compliance with the Growth Management Act. This responsibility includes actively inviting public comment and coordinating with state, regional, and County planning policies as outlined in the GMA.

### Planning Commission

Whatcom County's Planning Commission, a volunteer advisory body appointed by the County Council, is required to review amendments to the Comprehensive Plan and development regulations, conduct at least one public hearing, and provide a recommendation to the County Council for consideration and potential adoption.

### County Council

The Whatcom County Council will review the Plan, hold public meetings, conduct at least one public hearing, and adopt the final Plan.

## Public Participation

### Collaboration Groups

Governments, groups, stakeholders, individuals and agencies will participate in the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan and development regulations update, and each will engage with the process in different ways. The Whatcom County Council recognized, in Resolution 2022-036, the importance of coordinating and collaborating throughout the planning process with the following governments and stakeholders:

- ◆ Whatcom County residents, business owners, farmers, farmworkers, community interest groups, and nonprofits.
- ◆ Whatcom County departments including the Planning & Development Services, Public Works, Parks & Recreation, Health Department, Finance Department, and the Emergency Management Division of the Sheriff's Office.
- ◆ Whatcom County boards, commissions, and advisory committees including, but not limited to, the Planning Commission, Climate Impact Advisory Committee, Flood Advisory Committee, Marine Resources Committee, Bicycle/ Pedestrian Advisory Committee, Racial Equity Commission, Forest Advisory Committee, Agricultural Advisory Committee, Food System Committee, Child and Family Wellbeing Taskforce, Business and Commerce Advisory Committee, Housing Advisory Committee, and WRIA 1 Planning Unit.
- ◆ Native Nations including Lummi Nation and the Nooksack Indian Tribe.
- ◆ The seven incorporated cities of Whatcom County: Bellingham, Blaine, Ferndale, Lynden, Sumas, Everson, and Nooksack.
- ◆ The Port of Bellingham.
- ◆ The Public Utility District No. 1 of Whatcom County.
- ◆ Whatcom Conservation District.
- ◆ State government including local legislators, the Governor, the Department of Natural Resources, the Department of Ecology, the Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Commerce, and other relevant agencies.
- ◆ Federal government including local Congressional delegation, U. S. Forest Services, U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Interior, National Parks Services, U.S. Fish and Wildlife, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and other relevant agencies.

## Communication Channels

Information must be made available so any interested person can review the materials and participate. Throughout the Comprehensive Plan and development regulations update process, the County will maintain several channels to notify the public and other participants of relevant meetings and events. Regular opportunities for education and notification may include:

- ◆ Whatcom County 2025 Comprehensive Plan Update dedicated webpage: <https://www.whatcomCounty.us/4218/2025-Comprehensive-Plan-Updates>
- ◆ Material posting at public locations including:
  - ◆ Whatcom County Campus
  - ◆ Whatcom County Planning & Development Services Annex
- ◆ Social media posts
- ◆ Mailers and other County communications
- ◆ Press releases to local news organizations
- ◆ Email – Anyone can sign up to be on the “Planning & Development Services – 2025 Comprehensive Plan Update” email list at the County’s [Notify Me](#) website

# Participation Inclusivity and Potential Barriers

The channels by which we communicate and the events we hold should incorporate an inclusive engagement approach. The table below identifies the engagement options for this plan, including the potential barriers of each, and potential methods to achieve inclusivity.

Engagement Method	Potential Barriers	Inclusivity Method
<p><b>Project Website</b></p> <p><i>A central location for status updates, draft documents, meeting schedules and related information, official notices, and feedback/comment portal</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Getting the public to the website</li> <li>◆ Reaching non-English-speaking people</li> <li>◆ Reaching residents in areas of the County with limited internet services</li> <li>◆ Uploading materials promptly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Ensure ease of access through virtual outreach on social media and email correspondence directing the public to the website</li> <li>◆ Spanish translation of consultant provided materials can be provided upon request</li> <li>◆ Make materials available in advance for distribution to the public</li> <li>◆ Keep participants informed of results/progress</li> <li>◆ Display information in multiple formats (images, charts, graphs, videos, etc.)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Social Media</b></p> <p><i>Sharing of public events, surveys, and other opportunities to participate</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Posting and noticing promptly</li> <li>◆ Creating postings that appeal to a wide audience</li> <li>◆ Reaching non-English-speaking persons</li> <li>◆ Reaching people in areas of the County with limited internet services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Spanish translation of consultant provided materials can be provided upon request</li> <li>◆ Links to surveys and other web-based platforms provided</li> </ul>
<p><b>Public Meetings, Open Houses, and Presentations</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Identifying appropriate events for the community</li> <li>◆ Engaging non-English-speaking people</li> <li>◆ Childcare availability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Work with County departments to identify appropriate events to reach a diverse audience</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Potential for low participation</li> <li>◆ A high level of coordination/communication required</li> <li>◆ Inclement Weather</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Designate 1-2 point people for coordination/communication to ensure clarity and efficiency</li> <li>◆ Provide opportunity for written comments by non-English speaking people</li> <li>◆ Ensure ADA accessibility</li> <li>◆ Include opportunities for both virtual and in-person participation; host “hybrid” public meetings –in-person meetings with a virtual participation option</li> <li>◆ Tailor events to various size audiences</li> </ul>
<p><b>Printed Materials</b></p> <p><i>Printed materials describing the update process, including:</i></p> <p>Press releases Flyers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Reaching non-English-speaking people</li> <li>◆ Potential for low participation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Spanish translation of materials can be provided upon request</li> <li>◆ Identify a variety of outlets with relevant contact information for notification and distribution of materials (e.g. newspapers, neighborhoods, churches, and other community-oriented organizations/groups)</li> <li>◆ Include website link and QR code for access</li> </ul>
<p><b>Community Workshops and Open Houses</b></p> <p><i>Public events may be held at any location open and accessible to the public, including but not limited to neighborhoods, schools, community door-</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Engaging non-English speaking people</li> <li>◆ Potential for low participation</li> <li>◆ Identifying appropriate events for the community</li> <li>◆ Inclement Weather</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Provide opportunity for written comments by non-English speaking people</li> <li>◆ Ensure ADA accessibility</li> <li>◆ Include opportunities for both virtual and in-person participation; host “hybrid” public meetings –in-person meetings with a virtual participation option</li> <li>◆ Tailor events to various size audiences</li> </ul>

<i>to-door, or other gathering places</i>		
<b>Planning Commission and County Council Meetings and Hearings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Reaching non-English-speaking people</li> <li>◆ Potential for low public participation</li> <li>◆ May be intimidating</li> <li>◆ Childcare availability</li> <li>◆ Inclement Weather</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Provide ample time for the public to speak and/or provide written comments and questions</li> <li>◆ Provide opportunity for written comments by non-English speaking people</li> <li>◆ Include opportunities for both virtual and in-person participation</li> </ul>

## Languages Spoken in Whatcom County

Based on 2022 five-year estimates from the American Community Survey (Table: C16001) the languages spoken in Whatcom County in order of most spoken are:

- ◆ English: 86.6%
- ◆ Spanish: 6.1%
- ◆ Other Indo-European: 2.4%
- ◆ Asian and Pacific Island languages: 0.9%
- ◆ Russian, Polish or other Slavic languages: 0.6%
- ◆ Korean: 0.5%
- ◆ Unspecific languages: 0.5%
- ◆ French, Haitian, or Cajun: 0.4%
- ◆ Chinese (including Mandarin, Cantonese): 0.3%
- ◆ Tagalog (including Filipino): 0.3%
- ◆ Arabic: 0.1%

## Vulnerable Populations and Overburdened Communities Participation

The inclusion of vulnerable populations and overburdened communities in the participation process starts with identifying where those populations are located within the County. Based on both the Washington Health Disparities Mapping Tool and EPA’s Environmental Justice Screening tool vulnerable populations are located within urban Bellingham, East Whatcom County, and the Lummi and Nooksack Reservations. The consultant team, with support from County staff, will engage the following groups to facilitate conversations with vulnerable and

overburdened communities by engaging and partnering with diverse established organizations in the County:

- Foothills Community Alliance and/or Columbia Valley Parks & Recreation District - Coordinate with and attend established community meetings to solicit feedback from East Whatcom communities.
- North Sound Accountable Community of Health (ACH)/Race and Health Equity Alliance – Collaborate with established community health advocates and groups to invite them to participate and inform on the project. Utilize existing avenues of communication such as newsletters and regular meetings to engage groups.
- Chardi Kala Project – Reach out to the Chardi Kala project to partner with and/or attend a One Whatcom event to facilitate environmental justice discussions.
- Racial Equity Commission –Involve the County’s Racial Equity Commission as a sounding board and resource to effectively involve vulnerable and overburdened communities throughout the outreach process.
- Lummi Nation – Include the Lummi Nation in interviews, a letter from the County Executive requesting that the Lummi Nation review Substitute House Bill 1717 and consider whether they intend to participate in the County’s planning process through a memorandum of Agreement (MOA), and host pop-up at the annual Stommish Water Festival
- Nooksack Tribe: Included the Nooksack Tribe in interviews, a letter from the County Executive requesting that the Nooksack Tribe review Substitute House Bill 1717 and consider whether they intend to participate in the County’s planning process through an MOA, and host pop-up in Nooksack/Everson/Sumas region that invites tribal members to participate.

## Engagement Activities

This section delves deeper into each of the engagement strategies that are planned as part of the Comprehensive Plan update process, including descriptions and anticipated timeframe.

### Project Website

#### **Timeframe: Duration of Project**

The project website will provide the latest information related to the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan update for all interested parties. The website will allow the public to:

- ◆ Access project status and timelines
- ◆ View meeting schedules and related information
- ◆ Review draft and final documents and community workshop materials
- ◆ Provide feedback through a comment portal
- ◆ View official notices related to the update process

The County will be responsible for updating the website with current information as the consultant team provides deliverables and schedules events.

## Social Media

### **Timeframe: Key Points in the Project**

Social media (Facebook) will be utilized to broadcast public events, surveys, and other public participation activities. Project information will be targeted to areas in Whatcom County by using strategically scheduled posts.

To run a successful social media campaign, materials must be published on time and updated regularly. There should be a schedule for postings that lead up to events, and each post should include an image that can be clicked to redirect people to the County's website. Any comments from social media posts should be compiled and delivered to County staff and consultants regularly.

## Orientation Interviews

### **Timeframe: December 2023 (Completed)**

Interviews were held with community representatives, and other interested parties in Whatcom County. The interviews were primarily in-person and flexible to accommodate the diverse working schedules and home life responsibilities. Interviewees included County departments, committees, and Nooksack Indian Tribe to orient the project team to issues, concerns, and opportunities. The *Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan Orientation Interviews: Topic & Issues* report was issued in May 2024.

## Interactive Community Survey

### **Timeframe: June-July 2024**

SCJ Alliance will lead the design of a community survey for Whatcom County on Alchemer (interactive survey website). The survey will be made available online and in print format. The consultant team will provide the survey in English and Spanish (and possibly other languages). We will align the survey timeframe with the regional pop-ups and workshops to collect data from the public. Following the completion of the survey, we will analyze the information gathered to inform the Comprehensive Plan update.

## Topic-Specific Citizen Advisory Committees

### **Timeframe: Project Duration**

County staff will engage citizen advisory committees that have been appointed and are at work to review various plan elements for the 2025 plan update. SCJ Alliance will review and incorporate feedback into the planning process.

## Regional Pop-ups and Workshops

### **Timeframe: June-July 2024**

The Comprehensive Plan update process will include seven public pop-ups and workshops put on by SCJ Alliance to support engagement. Regional workshops will be planned and designed to discuss the project and review and assess Comprehensive Plan policies. These workshops

will also discuss changes that need to be made, as well as EIS alternatives. The regions of the County each workshop will be hosted in include:

- 1) Blaine / Birch Bay / Custer
- 2) Sumas / Nooksack / Everson
- 3) Lynden / Central County
- 4) Maple Falls / Kendall
- 5) Lummi Reservation / Southwest County
- 6) Ferndale
- 7) Bellingham

<b>Early June</b>			
<b>Area</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Date(s)</b>
Blaine/Birch Bay/ Custer	Market by the Sea	Blaine	Sat, June 1 @10a-2p
Sumas/ Nooksack/ Everson	Youth Fishing Derby Pop-Up	Sumas	Sat, Jun 1 @9am-12pm
Lynden/Central County	Lynden Farmer's Day Parade	Lynden	Sat, Jun 1 @10:30am
Maple Falls/Kendall	Coffee Talk Workshop (Coordinate w/Foothills Alliance)	Kendall	Sun, June 2 late morning
<b>Mid-June</b>			
<b>Area</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Date(s)</b>
Lummi Reservation	Lummi Stommish Water Festival	Lummi Reservation	Thurs/Fri, June 13 all-day, & 14 half-day
Ferndale	Ferndale Farmer's Market	Ferndale	Friday, June 14 @3p-7p
Bellingham	Bellingham Farmer's Market	Bellingham	Saturday, June 15 @10a-2p

County staff may conduct additional meetings, if needed.

## Draft EIS Release

### Summer of 2024

A draft EIS release will be distributed, and comments and feedback will be gathered from the community.

## Open House: Plan Recommendations

### Timeline: October 2024 to December 2024

At least one Open House event will be held in Bellingham toward the end of 2024 to gather plan recommendations from the community and stakeholders. One representative of SCJ Alliance from the consultant team will lead the recommendations with support from County staff. This may be a regional event to be held in more regions.

### Draft Plan Presentation 1

***Timeframe: Feb 2025 - June 2025 (TBD)***

County staff and consultant (SCJ Alliance) will present a summary of engagement efforts and the draft Comprehensive Plan to the Planning Commission.

### Draft Plan Presentation 2

***Timeframe: Feb 2025 - June 2025 (TBD)***

A combined Planning Commission/County Council workshop will be held to roll out the full draft of Whatcom County's updated Comprehensive Plan. County staff and consultants (SCJ Alliance) will provide an overview of the planning process, public feedback, and a draft of the plan. Feedback will also be collected from the two public bodies and substantive comments will be incorporated into the next draft set for Planning Commission deliberation.

### Planning Commission Recommendation

***Timeframe: Feb 2025 - June 2025 (TBD)***

After reviewing the draft Comprehensive Plan, the Planning Commission is required to review and provide a recommendation to the County Council for consideration and potential adoption.

### County Council Comprehensive Plan Review and Adoption

***Timeframe: June 2025 – December 2025***

The County Council will hold at least one hearing to adopt the updated Comprehensive Plan. It is anticipated that County Council committees will hold a number of meetings to discuss various Comprehensive Plan chapters prior to final adoption.

### Comprehensive Plan Coordination

While the Planning Commission and County Council will continue to hold regular meetings throughout the update process, there will be meetings specifically associated with the update process.

### Planning Commission

The Planning Commission will coordinate with the consultant team and County staff to host workshops, meetings, and public hearings, and they will serve in an advisory capacity throughout the update process.

The Planning Commission will hold work sessions on each element throughout the update process, then review a final consolidated draft of the updated Comprehensive Plan to prepare a recommendation for the County Council.

## Intergovernmental Coordination Meetings

The consultant team and County staff will meet with internal and external groups, as needed, to address key issues as they arise. Anticipated partner agencies include:

- ◆ Whatcom County departments include the Planning & Development Services, Public Works, Parks & Recreation, Health and Community Services Department, Finance Department, and the Emergency Management Division of the Sheriff's Office.
- ◆ Whatcom County boards, commissions, and advisory committees including, but not limited to, the Planning Commission, Climate Impact Advisory Committee, Flood Control Zone District Advisory Committee, Marine Resources Committee, Bicycle/ Pedestrian Advisory Committee, Racial Equity Commission, Forestry Advisory Committee, Agricultural Advisory Committee, Food System Committee, Child and Family Wellbeing Taskforce, Business and Commerce Advisory Committee, Housing Advisory Committee, and WRIA 1 Planning Unit, Surface Mining Advisory Committee, WRIA 1 Salmon Recovery Staff Team, Whatcom County Parks & Recreation Commission, WRIA 1 Watershed Staff Team, Wildlife Advisory Committee, and Joint Shellfish Advisory Committees.
- ◆ Native Nations including Lummi Nation and the Nooksack Indian Tribe.
- ◆ The seven incorporated cities of Whatcom County: Bellingham, Blaine, Ferndale, Lynden, Sumas, Everson, and Nooksack.
- ◆ The Port of Bellingham.
- ◆ The Public Utility District No. 1 of Whatcom County.
- ◆ Whatcom Conservation District.
- ◆ State government including the Department of Natural Resources, the Department of Ecology, the Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Commerce, and other relevant agencies as needed.
- ◆ Federal government including U.S. Forest Services, U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Interior, National Parks Services, U.S. Fish and Wildlife, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and other relevant agencies as needed.

## Outreach Schedule

Event	Date/Time	Location	Activity	Outcomes	Notes
<b>Orientation Interviews w/County Committees and Tribal Nations</b>	December 2023 (completed)	Whatcom County	Interviews	Early list of topics and issues for the process to address	Consultant conducted a series of orientation interviews early into the project process and incorporate comments into deliverables and summary.
<b>Project Website</b>	Launched	Online	Project Website	Accessible source of current project information, results, surveys, and resources	County launched and will maintain the project website.
<b>Interactive Community Survey</b>	June-July 2024	Online	Survey	Targeted identification of community priorities and general preferences	Consultant team will develop an online survey that is available as paper copy when requested. Survey timeline will coincide with regional workshops.
<b>Social Media Posts</b>	Key points in the project	Online	Social Media	Periodic invitations to participate in various activities	Consultant will provide social media flyers and images to advertise outreach events up to seven images/flyers, one for each pop-up and regional

<b>Event</b>	<b>Date/Time</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Notes</b>
					workshop. County will post and keep updated.
<b>Topic-Specific Citizen Advisory Committees</b>	Project Duration	Whatcom County	Staff Engagement	Committee recommendations on Comprehensive Plan and development regulation amendments	County staff will facilitate and gather feedback from advisory committees. Consultant will review and incorporate recommendations in deliverables.
<b>Regional Pop-ups and Workshops</b>	June-July 2024	Seven Locations	Public Event	Grass-roots input into planning issues, policy responses, inviting additional participation	Host a series of seven regional pop-ups and workshops throughout the County.
<b>Draft EIS Hearing</b>	Summer or fall 2024	TBD	Public Hearing	Public comment on Draft EIS	Release Draft EIS document, make available for public comment, and hold a public hearing.
<b>Open House: Plan Recommendations</b>	October 2024 to December 2024	TBD	Public Event	Feedback on initial Plan recommendations	Host an open house on the plan recommendations.
<b>Planning Commission/County Council Work Sessions</b>	2024 and 2025	Whatcom County	Planning Commission	Initial Planning Commission and County Council	County staff will lead work sessions with the Planning

<b>Event</b>	<b>Date/Time</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Notes</b>
				deliberations and feedback on Plan recommendations	Commission and County Council.
<b>Draft Plan Presentation 1</b>	Feb 2025 - June 2025	Whatcom County	Planning Commission	Introduction of draft plan to Planning Commission	County staff and SCJ Alliance will present a summary of engagement efforts and the draft Comprehensive Plan to the Planning Commission.
<b>Draft Plan Presentation 2</b>	Feb 2025 – June 2025	Whatcom County	Planning Commission	Planning Commission feedback on Plan recommendations	A combined Planning Commission/County Council workshop will be held to roll out the full draft of Whatcom County's updated Comprehensive Plan. County staff and consultant (SCJ Alliance) will provide an overview of the planning process, public feedback, and final draft of the plan. Feedback will also be collected from the two public bodies and substantive comments will be incorporated into the next draft set for Planning Commission deliberation.

<b>Event</b>	<b>Date/Time</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>Planning Commission Recommendation</b>	Feb 2025 - June 2025	Whatcom County	Planning Commission	Planning Commission issuance of Findings of Fact, Reasons for Action, Conclusions, and Recommendations on the Comprehensive Plan Update	After reviewing the draft Comprehensive Plan, the Planning Commission will hold at least one public hearing and review and provide a recommendation to the County Council for consideration and potential adoption.
<b>County Council Comprehensive Plan Review Adoption</b>	June 2025 - Dec 2025	Whatcom County	County Council	Comprehensive Plan adoption	The County Council will hold at least one hearing to adopt the updated Comprehensive Plan.

# Conclusion

The Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan and Development Regulations update is a collaborative effort in which the County will engage the public, businesses, governmental agencies, and other interested groups. As detailed in this Public Participation Plan, the County's website, public postings, community events, public meetings, interviews, and workshops will be used to engage with interested parties and involve them in the update process



# **Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan**

## **Population and Employment: Growth Projections and Preliminary Allocations**

Technical Report

Prepared by: Leland Consulting Group

April 2024

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## **Introduction**

The Whatcom County Department of Planning and Development Services, in coordination with the cities in Whatcom County, is engaged in a multi-year project to update the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan and conduct an urban growth area (UGA) review by 2025, as required by the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA). An initial step in this process is to develop a reasonable set of projections of future growth in population and economic activity and allocations of where this growth will occur. These projections and allocations of growth are foundational inputs that will inform many aspects of the comprehensive planning process over the next few years.

Projections and allocations of population and employment will be developed using a two-step process. The first step is to develop technical projections and allocations based on existing forecasts, historical trends, and additional data analysis. The second step is to make adjustments to the technical allocations based on local plans, special circumstances, and other policy considerations. This technical memo addresses the first step in the process – to establish 20-year technical projections of population and employment and then distribute this growth to UGAs and areas outside UGAs.

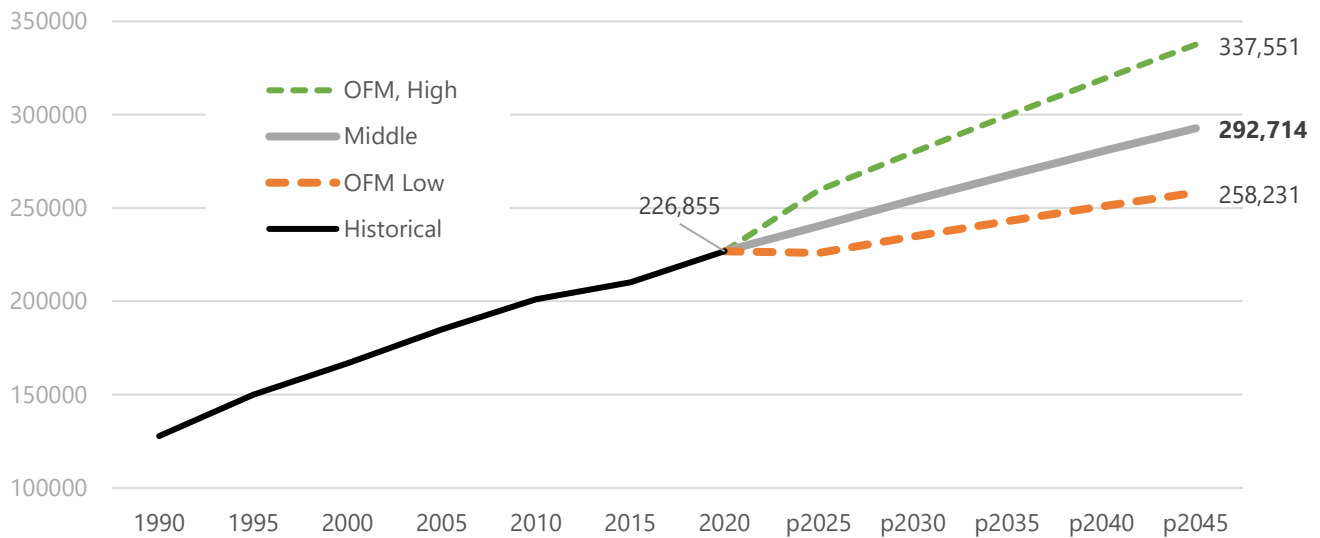
Using these technical projections as a starting point, city and County representatives will then collaborate to make policy-based adjustments to the technical projections and allocations of growth. It is anticipated that final projections and allocations of growth will be adopted by the Whatcom County Council and city councils in 2025. The specific elements documented in this technical memo include the following:

- Countywide projections of population and employment.
- Allocations of population and employment to UGAs and lands outside of UGAs.
- Trend analysis of Whatcom County age cohorts

## **Countywide Population**

The Washington Office of Financial Management (OFM) updates County and state long-range population forecasts every five years to support Growth Management Act planning. The most recent forecasts out to 2050 were issued in 2022 and are shown in Figure 1. OFM considers the middle projection the most likely because it is based on assumptions that have been validated with past and current information. The high and low projections represent the range of uncertainty that should be considered when using these projections for planning purposes.

**Figure 1: Whatcom County Population, 1990-2045**



Source: Office of Financial Management (OFM) historical data and projections from 2022

The middle projection issued in 2022 reflects slightly decreased growth expectations relative to OFM’s 2012 forecasts, with 2020 to 2040 forecasted growth now estimated to be approximately 1.6% lower than in that previous forecast. The 2012-issued low forecast for 2040, on the other hand, was *increased* by 9% in the 2022 series forecast. That 2012 low forecast had been conservative in part because the nation and region had yet to show convincing signs of recovery from the Great Recession, so it was unclear when a recovery would occur and how fully growth would resume once it did.

The high projection scenario had been fairly aggressive in the 2012 forecasts – partly in recognition of the impressive rates of growth that had immediately preceded the recession. By the time of the 2022 series forecast, it was clear that those high scenario growth rates were unlikely to resume and the 2040 high scenario projection was accordingly reduced by 9% to be more realistic – shifting from a 2040 population of 350,000 in the 2012 high forecast to approximately 319,000 in the 2022 updated model.

### OFM Historical and Projected Population Growth

Population growth is driven by three components of change: births, deaths, and migration. The difference of births minus deaths is considered the natural component of change (or natural increase), and net migration (the difference in in-migration and out-migration) is considered the migration component of change. Exhibit 2 shows that in both Whatcom County and Washington State, the net migration component has been and is expected to be larger than the natural component of population increase.

Whatcom County has historically had a larger percentage of its population growth come from net migration than the State. That gap was largest in the early 2000s, when 80% of Whatcom County’s growth was due to migration, versus just 52% of statewide growth. The gap narrowed during the Great

Recession. From 2010 to 2015, the County attributed just 57% of its growth to migration, almost as low as the 52% recorded statewide.

**Figure 2: Components of Population Change, 1990-2045**

		Whatcom County				Washington State			
		Net Migration	Natural Increase	Total Population Growth	Percent Migration	Net Migration	Natural Increase	Total Population Growth	Percent Migration
<b>Estimates</b>	1990-95	17,819	4,343	22,162	80%	327,599	202,307	529,906	62%
	1995-00	12,858	4,026	16,884	76%	316,328	181,246	497,574	64%
	2000-05	14,475	3,665	18,140	80%	227,948	176,706	404,654	56%
	2005-10	11,975	4,199	16,174	74%	222,185	203,558	425,743	52%
	2010-15	5,117	3,859	8,976	57%	198,862	183,587	382,449	52%
	2015-20	14,445	2,286	16,731	86%	444,774	154,547	599,321	74%
<b>OFM Forecast (Mid)</b>	2020-25	11,768	1,706	13,474	87%	300,650	93,424	394,074	76%
	2025-30	11,042	2,795	13,837	80%	277,685	124,695	402,380	69%
	2030-35	12,415	889	13,304	93%	293,530	88,218	381,748	77%
	2035-40	13,408	-595	12,813	105%	303,364	60,597	363,961	83%
	2040-45	13,558	-1,119	12,439	109%	306,500	43,624	350,124	88%
	<i>10-yr Trend</i>	2010-20	9,781	3,073	12,854	76%	321,818	169,067	490,885
<i>20-yr Trend</i>	2000-20	11,503	3,502	15,005	77%	273,442	179,600	453,042	60%
<i>30-yr Trend</i>	1990-20	12,782	3,730	16,511	77%	289,616	183,659	473,275	61%

Source: OFM - Forecasting & Research, December 2022

Note: The percentage of total growth from migration exceeds 100% from 2035 to 2045 because natural increase is negative

The OFM forecasts assume a gradually decreasing natural component of population growth largely due to growth in elderly population, a trend explored further in the Age Cohort Analysis section of this report. The migration component of population change tends to be more volatile than the natural increase component. Major economic, social, or policy changes can generate spurts or slowdowns in migration that are difficult to predict. The Office of Financial Management cites uncertainty about the pace of economic recovery and possible changes in U.S. immigration policy as factors that could affect migration trends in the future.

The 2022 OFM forecasts do not attempt to predict the timing or magnitude of major long-term migration shifts but OFM demographers do track migration closely for future forecast updates. From 2015 to 2020, as the Pacific Northwest was booming and attracting migrants from across the U.S. and abroad, migration had rebounded to account for 86% of Whatcom growth and 74% of statewide growth.

Informed in part by this components-of-change analysis, OFM produces the three future growth scenarios (low, middle, high) depicted in Figure 1 and summarized below along with average annual growth totals and average annual percentage rates of growth.

## Historical and Projected Population Growth Rates

Figure 3: Historical and Projected Population Growth Rates, 1990-2045

	Whatcom County			Washington State		
	Population	Avg. Annual Growth	Avg. Annual Rate	Population	Avg. Annual Rate	
<b>Historical</b>	1995	149,950		5,397,039		
	2000	166,834	3,377	5,894,613	1.8%	
	2005	184,974	3,628	6,299,267	1.3%	
	2010	201,148	3,235	6,725,010	1.3%	
	2015	210,124	1,795	7,107,459	1.1%	
	2020	226,855	3,346	7,706,780	1.6%	
<b>OFM Forecast (Low)</b>						
	2025	225,902	-191	-0.1%	7,530,451	-0.5%
	2030	234,679	1,755	0.8%	7,765,833	0.6%
	2035	242,954	1,655	0.7%	7,982,666	0.6%
	2040	250,769	1,563	0.6%	8,183,532	0.5%
	2045	258,231	1,492	0.6%	8,371,969	0.5%
<b>OFM Forecast (Middle)</b>						
	2025	240,321	2,693	1.2%	8,100,854	1.0%
	2030	254,158	2,767	1.1%	8,503,234	1.0%
	2035	267,462	2,661	1.0%	8,884,982	0.9%
	2040	280,275	2,563	0.9%	9,248,943	0.8%
	2045	292,714	2,488	0.9%	9,599,067	0.7%
<b>OFM Forecast (High)</b>						
	2025	259,547	6,538	2.7%	8,748,039	2.6%
	2030	279,846	4,060	1.5%	9,406,820	1.5%
	2035	299,569	3,945	1.4%	10,043,320	1.3%
	2040	318,762	3,839	1.2%	10,660,617	1.2%
	2045	337,551	3,758	1.2%	11,262,964	1.1%

Source: OFM - Forecasting & Research, December 2022

- From 1995 to 2010, the Whatcom County population grew at a faster rate than the state of Washington as a whole. After 2010, however, statewide population growth has been slightly higher on an average annual percentage basis. From 2015 to 2020, the state grew at 1.6% per year, versus 1.5% for Whatcom County.
- Looking forward, the OFM population projections – in each of the low, middle, and high scenarios – assume that Whatcom County will return to a slightly faster annual growth rate versus the statewide average, with that gap between state and County held steady at one to two tenths of a percent.
- By 2045, the horizon year for the Comprehensive Plan update, Whatcom County’s population is anticipated to reach 292,714 in the middle scenario. The low and high scenarios for 2045 range from 258,231 to 337,551, respectively.

- After 2025, growth statewide and in Whatcom County is projected to gradually decline in both percentage rate and in absolute annual additions. This slow deceleration is largely due to declining birth rates and rising death rates. Differences in assumed annual net in-migration account for most of the difference between low, mid, and high scenarios.
- Although almost 10% more ambitious than the 2012 set of OFM low projections, the latest low scenario forecast for Whatcom County remains quite conservative. The fastest future growth period (2025-2030) is projected to grow at a rate of 0.77%, lower than any 5-year period in Whatcom's modern history. The lowest prior recorded average growth rate over five years was from 2010 to 2015, following the Great Recession, when growth managed just 0.88% annually. In fact, even the middle forecast series averages just 1.0% annually overall through 2045, well below the 1.7% pace for the comparable historical timeframe.

## Comprehensive Plan Population Growth Alternatives

OFM demographers are generally thorough and consistent in their forecasting of population at the state and county levels, relying on widely accepted age cohort, fertility, and death rate data as inputs to a components-of-change model that then factors in migration tendencies based largely on broad economic and employment flows. The OFM middle projection is considered the most likely future and can safely be treated as a baseline assumption for the trajectory of Countywide growth for the present Comprehensive Plan update work underway in the County.

The OFM low and high projections generally represent well-reasoned attempts to capture the range of possible growth scenarios that may result in slower or faster population increase than baseline projections. Following the precedent used in the 2016 Whatcom County forecast work, we have determined that the OFM high-low range may represent outcomes that are both unlikely and too divergent for practical planning purposes. We have accordingly made minor adjustments to effectively tighten the forecast range. Figure 4 shows these alternative projections and how they compare to the OFM projections developed in 2022.

The alternatives were developed using the following rationale:

- **Middle projection.** No adjustments were made to the OFM middle projection, which is considered the most likely future. The OFM middle projection forecasts a slower annual growth rate between 2023-2045 (1.0%) than was experienced over the past 25 years (1.7% annually between 1995-2020). That slowdown is a reflection of steadily dropping fertility rates, rising death rates, and uncertain net migration.
- **Low projection.** The OFM low projection assumes growth rates much lower than historical averages. Over the past 30 years, there has not been a five-year period with an average annual growth rate as low as the 0.4% annual rate OFM is projecting between 2023 and 2045. In the early-mid 1980s, five-year annual average growth rates slipped to 1.2%, and most recently the annual average growth rate between 2010 and 2015 was 0.8% during that post-recession period.

The proposed alternative low projection results in a 2045 population of about 274,000. It is based on an assumption that migration will be 30% less than under the middle projection, and the natural component is the same as the middle projection. The unadjusted OFM low scenario resulted in total absolute growth that was 61% lower than the middle scenario. In contrast, after adjustment, the low scenario yields total horizon period growth that is just 33% lower than the OFM middle.

- High projection.** The OFM high projection assumes an annual growth rate (1.7%) that is somewhat higher than the 2010-2020 growth rate (1.2%) the County has experienced most recently, and yields a 2045 population of about 338,000. The alternative high projection results in a 2045 population of about 322,000. It is based on an assumption that the annual migration component will be approximately 50% higher than under the middle projection, and the natural increase component is the same as in the middle projection. After adjustment, the reduced high scenario results in absolute growth that is 51% above the middle scenario total growth, compared to the unadjusted OFM high growth total that was 79% higher than the middle scenario.

The smaller magnitude of adjustment used for the high projection versus the low reflects an intentional decision, based on the idea of preserving more of a conservative approach to infrastructure planning – helping to avoid a scenario where infrastructure expansion fails to keep pace with higher-than-expected growth (or even constrains growth despite strong demand).

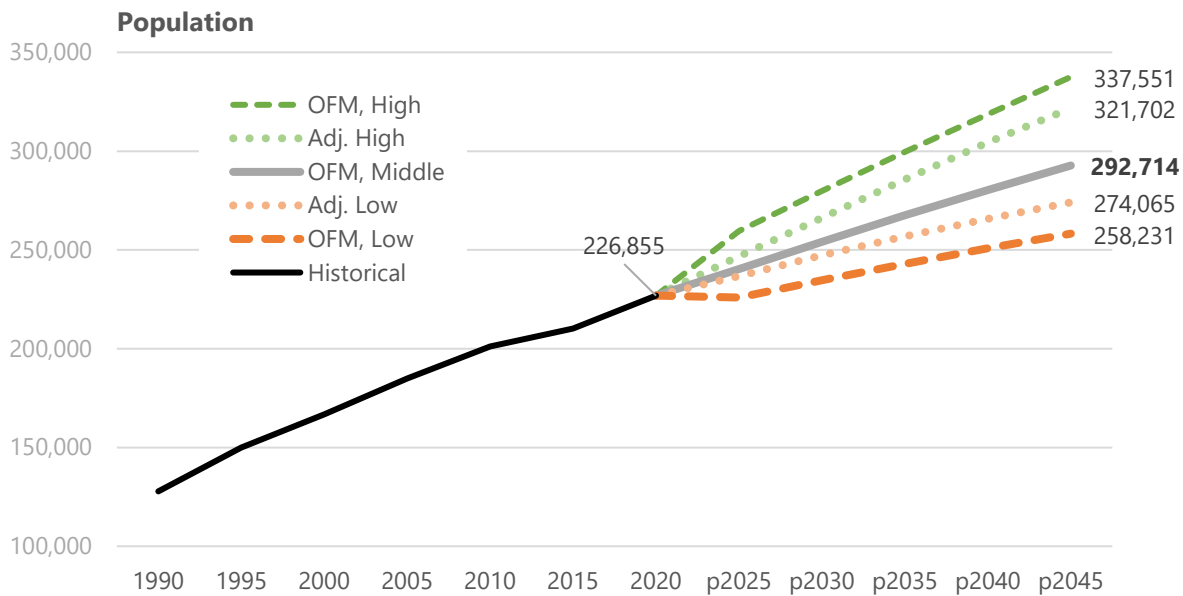
The table below shows growth figures, both adjusted and unadjusted, for the specific starting and horizon years used in the plan update (2023 to 2045). The chart following the table uses even 5-year breaks to illustrate the differences in trajectory for the adjusted low and high scenarios relative to the original OFM projections.

**Figure 4: Population Forecast Ranges, OFM vs. Adjusted, 2023-2045**

	Projected						
	2023 Population	2045, OFM	2045, Adjusted	Total Growth (Adjusted)	CAGR (Adjusted)	Total Growth (OFM)	OFM CAGR
<b>low</b>	235,800	258,231	274,065	38,265	0.69%	22,431	0.41%
<b>middle</b>	235,800	292,714	292,714	56,914	0.99%	56,914	0.99%
<b>high</b>	235,800	337,551	321,702	85,902	1.42%	101,751	1.64%

Source: OFM - Forecasting & Research, December 2022; and Leland Consulting Group  
CAGR is the Compound Annual Growth Rate

**Figure 5: Revised Population Forecast Ranges, Whatcom County**



Source: OFM - Forecasting & Research, December 2022; and Leland Consulting Group  
 Note: P means projection. For example "p2045" is the projected population in the year 2045.

## Allocation of Population to UGAs

After establishing a range of Countywide growth projections, the next step is to allocate future growth to UGAs. The process to develop technical allocations involves analysis of historical trends in population growth by UGA and assigning future growth based on these trends. The technical allocations will be used as a starting point for collaboration between the County and cities to make adjustments based on local plans, special circumstances, and other policy considerations.

## Historical Population Estimates by UGA

Historical estimates of population by urban growth areas are shown in the table below. The estimates are based on current 2023 UGA boundaries. Non-UGA areas within the County are combined and treated as a separate "all other" geography so that totals sum to the Countywide figure. Figure 7 shows population for each UGA in 2013 and 2023, along with absolute growth between those two years. The final column shows each UGA's share of standing Countywide population in 2023, followed by the UGA share of Countywide growth over that ten year period. The share of County population can be interpreted as essentially a given UGA's share of growth across the history of the County.

Bellingham, the primary city and UGA in Whatcom County, has a recent share of growth (42%) that is only slightly lower than its share of standing Countywide population (45%). Other UGAs such as Blaine, Ferndale, and Lynden have a 10-year growth share that is considerably higher than their share of standing population, reflecting more recent growth pressures. Fully 30% of the County's population can

be found in rural areas outside the ten official UGA geographies, although those areas account for just 19% of recent growth. That decreasing dependence on non-UGA areas for housing the County’s growing population is consistent with the State of Washington’s big-picture growth management policy and the concept of an urban growth boundary in general.

**Figure 6: Historical Population Growth and Growth Share by UGA, 2013-2023**

UGA	Pop. 2013	Pop. 2023	Growth 2013 to 2023	Average Annual % Growth	Share of County Population 2023	Share of 10-yr. County Growth
Bellingham	92,915	105,529	12,614	1.3%	44.8%	42.4%
Birch Bay	7,698	8,908	1,210	1.5%	3.8%	4.1%
Blaine	5,277	6,728	1,451	2.5%	2.9%	4.9%
Cherry Point	35	61	26	5.7%	0.0%	0.1%
Columbia Valley	3,060	3,577	517	1.6%	1.5%	1.7%
Everson	2,683	3,171	488	1.7%	1.3%	1.6%
Ferndale	12,962	16,762	3,800	2.6%	7.1%	12.8%
Lynden	13,208	16,696	3,487	2.4%	7.1%	11.7%
Nooksack	1,389	1,573	184	1.3%	0.7%	0.6%
Sumas	1,445	1,810	365	2.3%	0.8%	1.2%
Areas outside UGAs	65,349	70,985	5,637	0.8%	30.1%	18.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>207,937</b>	<b>235,800</b>	<b>29,779</b>	<b>1.3%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: OFM – Small Area Estimate Program (SAEP), December 2023; and Leland Consulting Group

Unless individual jurisdictions foresee significant changes to their local growth policies or confidently anticipate major shifts in the locational preferences of the homebuilding market, the more recent 10-year share-of-growth figure is assumed here to be the most appropriate numerical factor to use for apportioning out the forecasted County-level growth across Whatcom’s smaller planning geographies.

**Technical Allocations of Countywide Growth to UGAs**

The following table show how that allocation plays out across UGAs under the low, middle, and high forecast scenarios for the County. As per the discussion in the previous section, the adjusted Countywide growth projected for 2023 to 2045 is 38,265 for the low, 56,914 for middle, and 82,902 for the high scenarios. These totals are multiplied by the recent share-of-growth percentages for each UGA, as shown below.

Figure 7: Technical Allocations of Adjusted Countywide Population Growth to UGAs, 2023 to 2045

UGA	Allocation Share	Allocated Growth by Scenario (2023 to 2045)			Average Annual % Growth (2023 to 2045)		
		Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High
Bellingham*	<b>42.5%</b>	16,242	24,158	36,462	0.7%	0.9%	1.4%
Birch Bay	<b>4.1%</b>	1,555	2,313	3,490	0.7%	1.1%	1.5%
Blaine	<b>4.9%</b>	1,865	2,774	4,186	1.1%	1.6%	2.2%
Cherry Point*	-	-	-	-	2.0%	2.7%	3.7%
Columbia Valley	<b>1.7%</b>	665	988	1,492	0.8%	1.1%	1.6%
Everson	<b>1.6%</b>	627	933	1,408	0.8%	1.2%	1.7%
Ferndale	<b>12.8%</b>	4,883	7,262	10,961	1.2%	1.6%	2.3%
Lynden	<b>11.7%</b>	4,481	6,665	10,060	1.1%	1.5%	2.2%
Nooksack	<b>0.6%</b>	237	352	531	0.6%	0.9%	1.3%
Sumas	<b>1.2%</b>	468	697	1,052	1.1%	1.5%	2.1%
Areas outside UGAs	<b>18.9%</b>	7,243	10,773	16,260	0.4%	0.6%	0.9%
<b>Total Population Growth</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>38,265</b>	<b>56,914</b>	<b>85,902</b>	<b>0.7%</b>	<b>1.0%</b>	<b>1.4%</b>

Source: Leland Consulting Group, based on OFM – Small Area Estimate Program (SAEP), December 2023 .

Note: Although the Cherry Point UGA did account for a very small percentage (0.1%) of County growth over the past decade, it is assumed for this analysis to have no future residential capacity. Accordingly, Cherry Point’s calculated shares of population growth (33, 50, and 75 for low, middle, and high) were instead assigned to Bellingham.

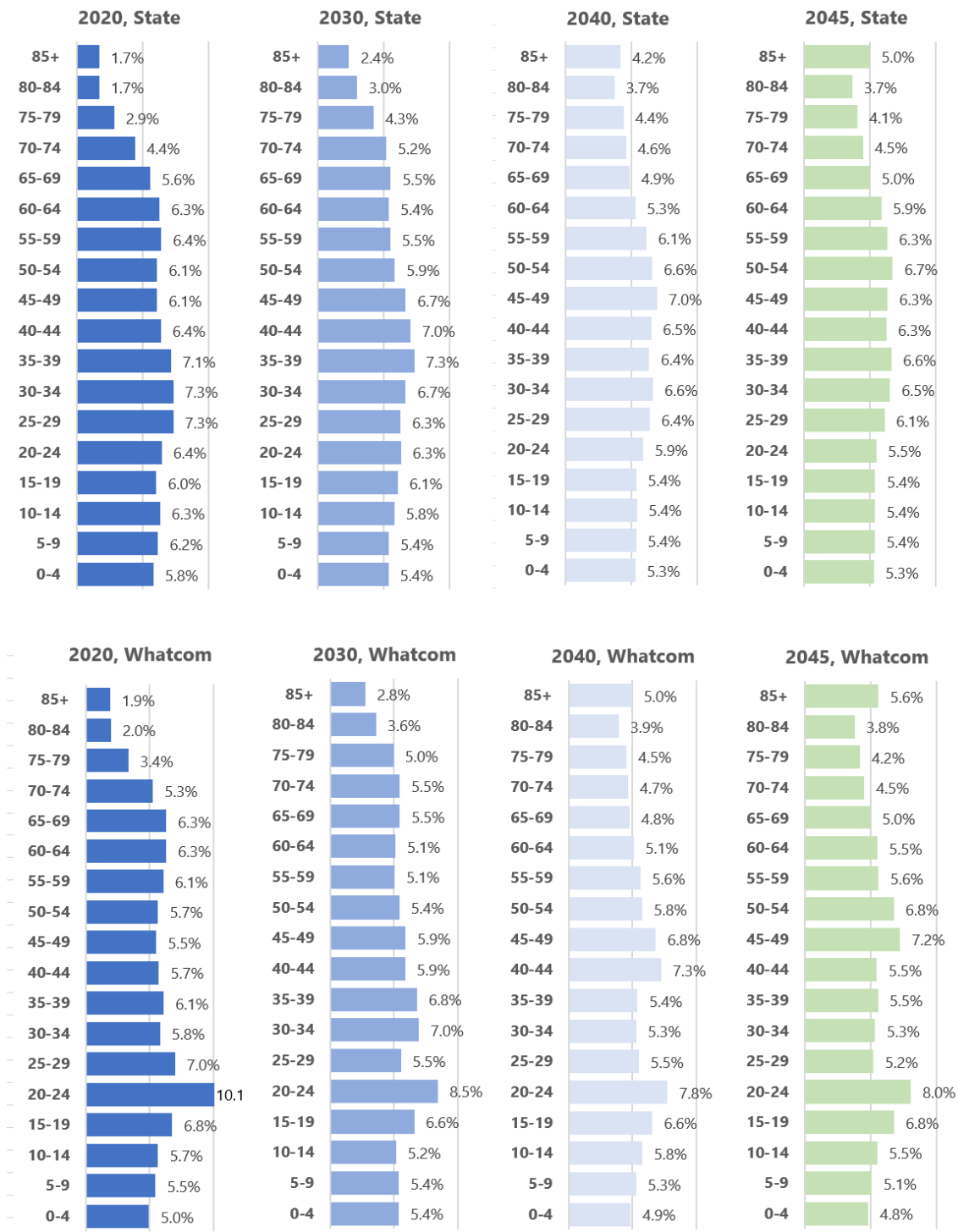
- Allocated in this manner, Bellingham would add between roughly 16,000 and 36,000 new residents by 2045.
- Although its share of growth has declined over time, the Other/Rural category of non-UGA areas receives the next-highest allocation, with anticipated population growth ranging between approximately 7,000 and 16,000 by the planning horizon.
- Ferndale and Lynden are set to grow at a similar pace, adding between 4,000 and 11,000 residents each, followed by Blaine and Birch Bay, with expected middle scenario growth in the mid-2,000s.

These population allocations are considered “technical” as they are strictly modeled on recent past growth performance, rather than reflecting any specific differences in goals or policies across the jurisdictions. As such, they represent a starting point subject to refinement through discussion and negotiation among the County and cities as a next step in the process.

## Age Cohort Analysis

Age cohorts in Whatcom County and Washington State were analyzed to provide context for some of the broader population changes being projected by the Office of Financial Management. Figures 9 and 10 shows the age distributions by five-year increments in Washington State and Whatcom County for 2020 and as projected by the OFM for 2030 and 2040.

Figure 8: Age Distribution, Statewide and Whatcom County, 2020 and Projections to 2045



Source: OFM; Leland Consulting Group

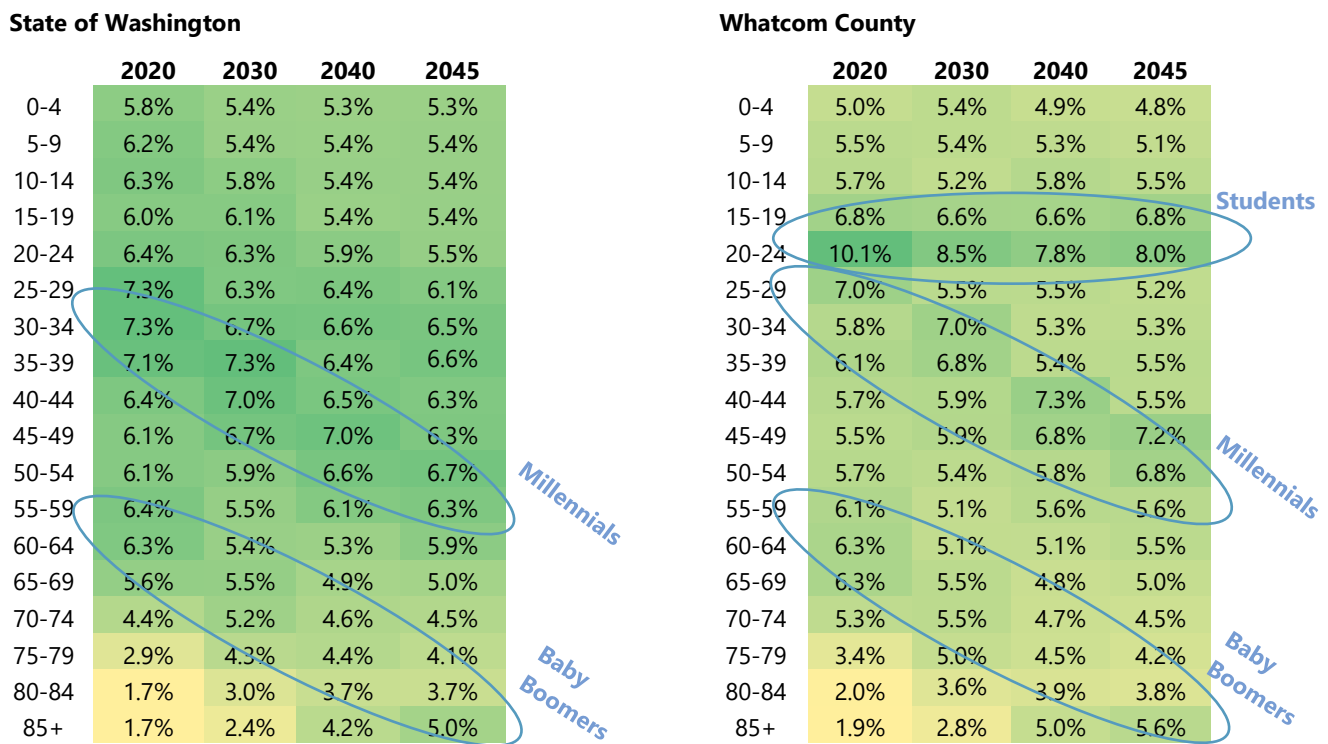
To aid in tracking population shifts across age cohorts, another illustration of those same distributions is shown below in tabular form, with conditional formatting of cells to highlight population skews by

shades of green. This method helps to understand how the aging of the two major U.S. population “bulges” effects the population as they track with each passing decade.

The largest shares of total population statewide can be found among Millennials. In Whatcom County, a distinct third concentration can be seen for college age young adults.

In fact, in 2020, the age 20 to 24 bracket in Whatcom County briefly accounted for a double-digit share of Countywide population, as the prime college age overlapped with the “natural” Millennial bulge found in the non-college population.

**Figure 9: Statewide and Whatcom County Population Shares by Age, 2020 to 2040**



Source: OFM; Leland Consulting Group

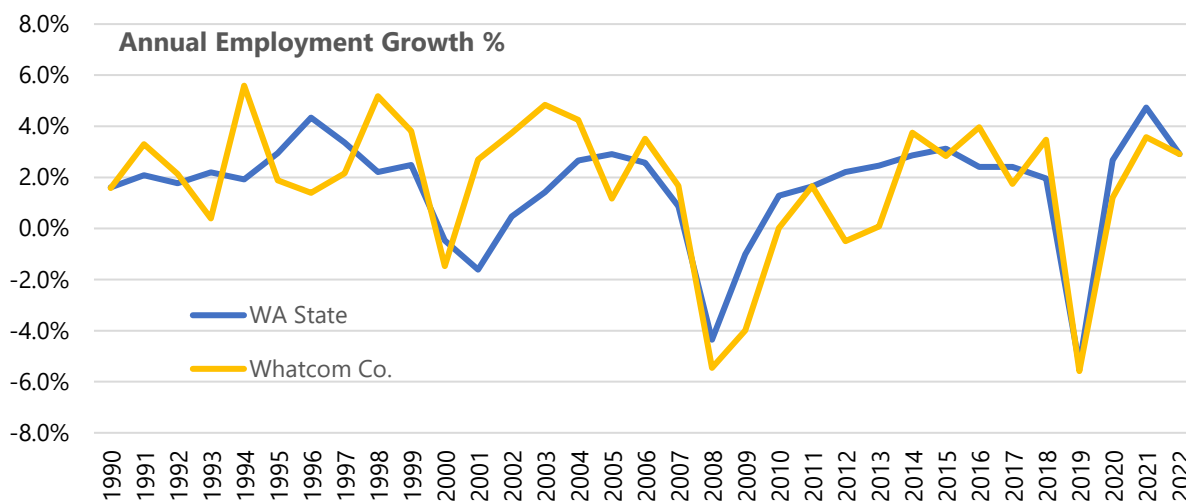
Although the Millennial and Baby Boomer generational cohorts were similar in size at their peak, the population shares for Boomers have begun to increasingly tail off as members of that group begin to reach average life expectancies. That said, a sizeable portion of Whatcom County’s population is reaching empty-nest and/or retirement age, where housing needs for some can begin to favor lower-maintenance options in walkable neighborhoods, such as urban missing middle housing. Others will be attracted to the continuum of senior housing options, ranging from age-restricted active senior apartments to assisted living and nursing care facilities.

In 2022, Whatcom County’s population aged 15 to 34 was just over 67,000, while the combined population aged 60 and up was approximately 61,000. By 2030, those two age ranges will have evened out at just over 70,000 each.

## Countywide Employment Trends

Historically, annual employment growth in Whatcom County has closely tracked along with the state of Washington as a whole. In the past ten years, the County has grown at 1.5% annually, compared to 1.9% statewide, with the difference mainly owing to increased volatility at the local level. Over a twenty year span, the average growth rates roughly converge, with the County growing at 1.3% versus the state at 1.4% per year.

**Figure 10: County vs. State Historical Employment Growth Rates by Year, 1990 to 2022**

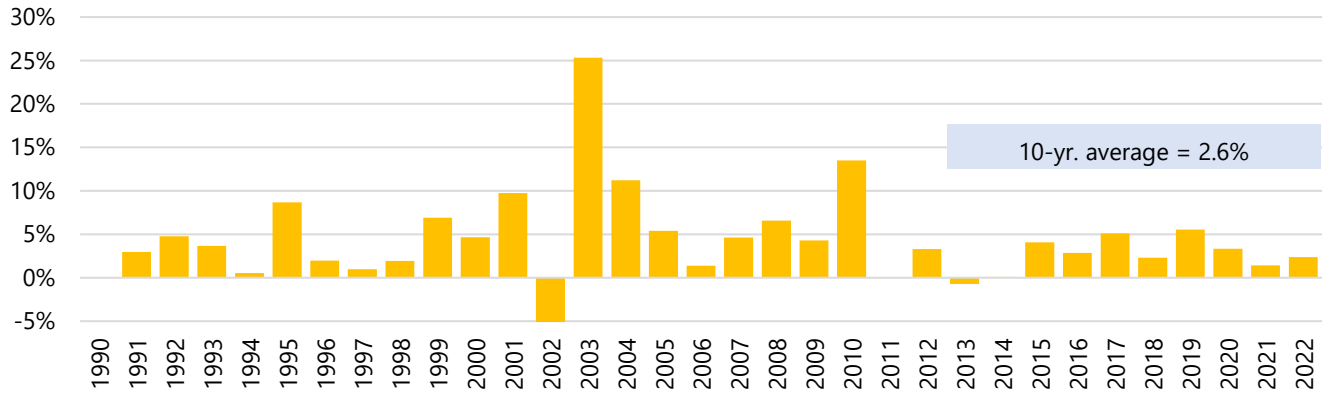


Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

The next graph tracks the County’s share of statewide employment growth over the same time period. Though there have been spikes, such as in 2003 and 2010, when the County briefly captured an outside share of growth, more recent years have settled into a more predictable pattern, with Whatcom County accounting for 2.6% of annual statewide job growth over the past 10 years.

Since 2000, Whatcom’s share of total statewide jobs (all standing employment, rather than just growth) has remained within a relatively narrow range, from just above 3.0% on the low end, to just over 3.4% on the high end. Currently, the County accounts for 3.1% of total statewide employment.

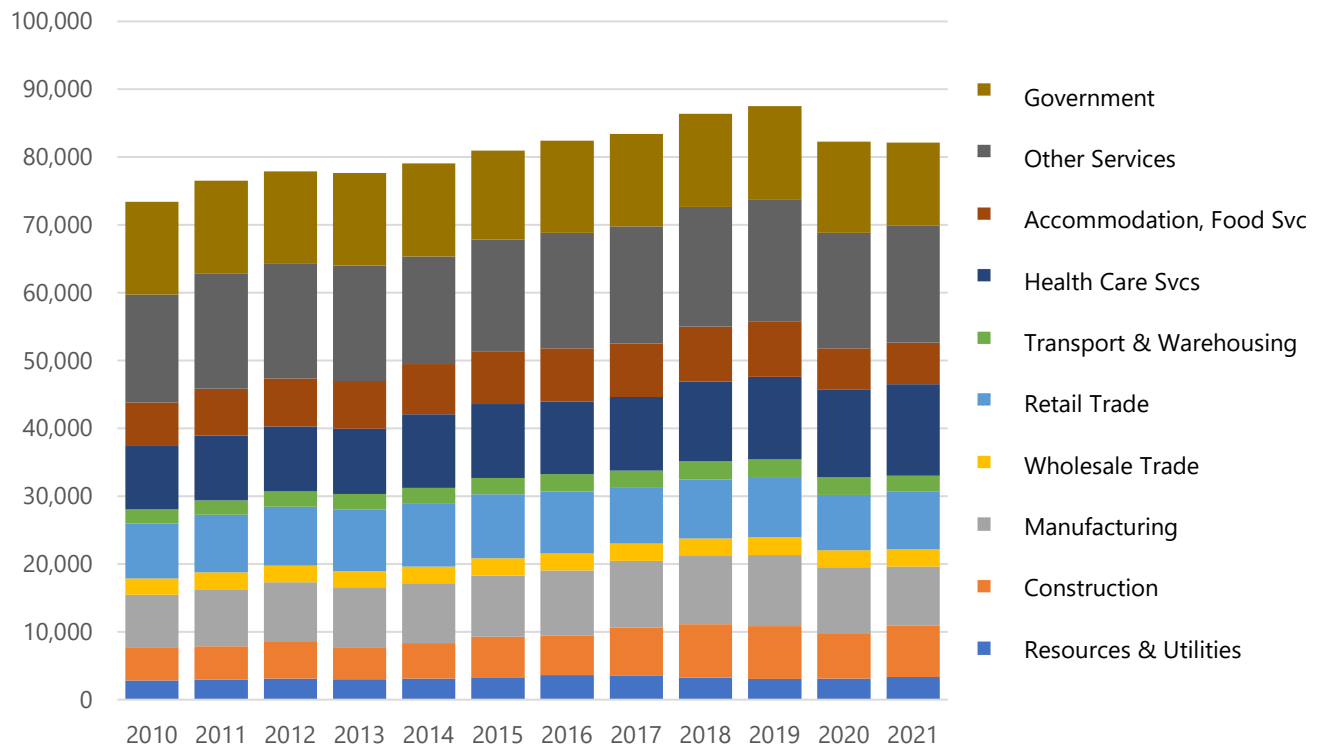
**Figure 10: Whatcom County Share of State Employment Growth, 1990 to 2022**



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

## Employment by Industry

**Figure 11: Whatcom County Employment by Industry Sector, 2010 to 2021**



Source: U.S. Census Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) On the Map; and Leland Consulting Group  
 Note: LEHD industry sector grouping differ slightly from State of Washington ESD categories and have been adjusted to match.

The figure below summarizes overall Countywide job growth (or loss) by those same groupings, to highlight areas of substantial change. The largest single growth sector was Health Care Services, which

added over 4,100 jobs in the County in just over a decade. At the same time, the Government sector lost nearly 1,500 jobs. Much of the employment decline occurred during 2020 and 2021, suggesting that temporary factors related to COVID-19 may account for some of that job loss.

The past decade saw a boom in Construction in the County, with that sector adding almost 2,700 jobs from 2010 to 2021. That growth was largely due to a very strong multifamily housing market, along with substantial transportation and infrastructure construction projects. The construction sector is historically one of the most volatile and responsive to business cycles. The current boom only recently reached annual job levels seen during the late 2000s, during the last major upcycle.

Despite the trends in automation reducing the labor requirements in Manufacturing, that sector has remained a somewhat surprising category for recent employment strength and expansion. The 8,700 manufacturing jobs in 2021 is up nearly 1,000 jobs from the 2010 employment level (even after falling from a peak of 10,400 jobs in 2019). In fact this relatively healthy trend in manufacturing is based on data that does not yet include some recent facility additions in the alternative energy subsector in the Bellingham market.

**Figure 12: Whatcom County Historical Employment Growth by Sector, 2010 to 2021**

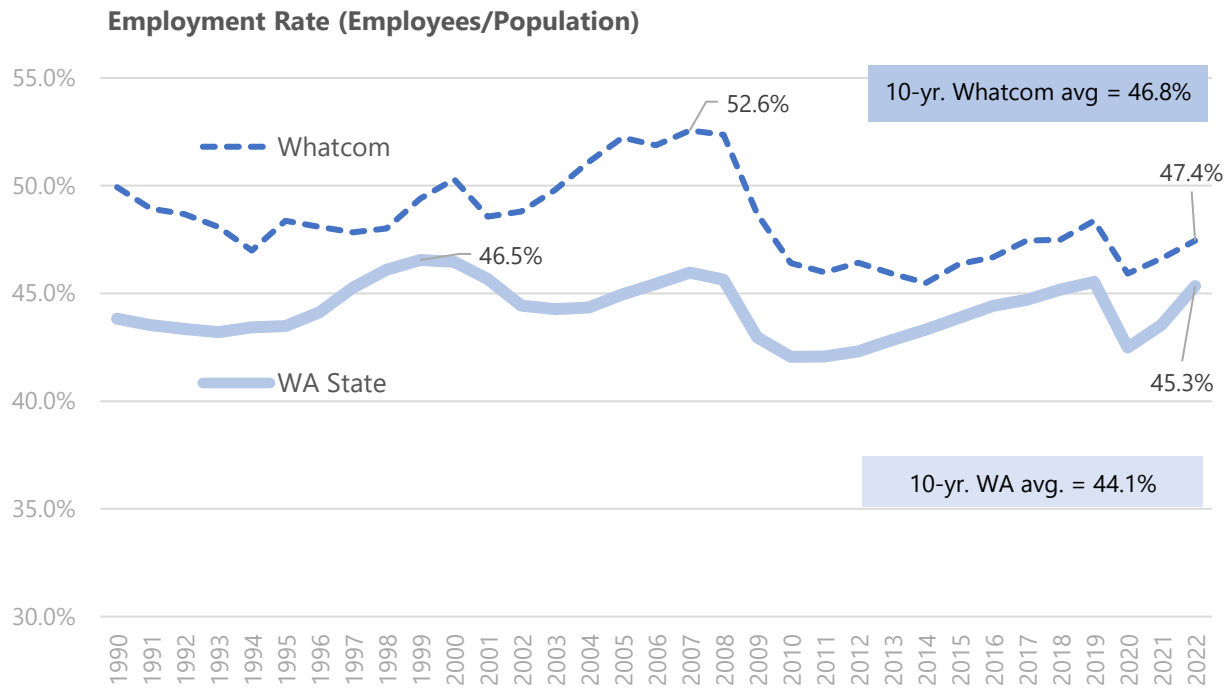
Industry	2010	2021	Growth	Percent Change 2010-21
Resources & Utilities	2,829	3,343	514	18.2%
Construction	4,885	7,556	2,671	54.7%
Manufacturing	7,738	8,699	961	12.4%
Wholesale Trade	2,425	2,629	204	8.4%
Retail Trade	8,099	8,450	351	4.3%
Transport & Warehousing	2,073	2,344	271	13.1%
Health Care Svcs	9,347	13,494	4,147	44.4%
Accommodation & Food Svc	6,413	6,148	-265	-4.1%
Other Services	15,893	17,247	1,354	8.5%
Government	13,718	12,247	-1,471	-10.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>73,420</b>	<b>82,157</b>	<b>8,737</b>	<b>11.9%</b>

Source: U.S. Census LEHD On the Map; and Leland Consulting Group

## Projecting Countywide Employment Growth

Neither the Washington Employment Security Department (ESD) nor OFM generate long-range employment projections for Whatcom County specifically. Given this limitation, it is useful to examine the historical relationship between employment and population, which are typically correlated. The next exhibit shows recent trends in that ratio (referred to as the employment rate) for Whatcom County and Washington State.

**Figure 13: Employment Rate (Employees/Population), Whatcom County vs. State of Washington, 1990 to 2022**



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, OFM; and Leland Consulting Group

As an example, in 2022, Whatcom County had a population of approximately 231,000 and total employment of approximately 109,000. The employment rate for that year was 47.4% (109,000 divided by 231,000).

Over time, this ratio has historically remained relatively stable, falling largely within a fairly narrow, plus or minus 1%, band around an average of 46.77 over the past ten years in Whatcom County. This predictable relationship between population and employment allows for reasonably reliable estimates of future employment based on our forecasts for County population.

**Figure 14: Projecting Future Employment Based on Employment Rate, 2023 to 2045**

	<b>Whatcom (low)</b>	<b>Whatcom (middle)</b>	<b>Whatcom (high)</b>
2023 population	235,800	235,800	235,800
2045 population (proj.)	<b>274,065</b>	<b>292,714</b>	<b>321,702</b>
<i>Assumed employment rate</i>	<i>46.77%</i>	<i>46.77%</i>	<i>46.77%</i>
2023 employment, est.	112,633	112,633	112,633
2045 employment, proj.	128,185	136,912	150,466
<b>Employment growth, 2023 to 2045</b>	<b>15,553</b>	<b>24,279</b>	<b>37,834</b>
<i>(including resource/ag industries)</i>			

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, OFM, Leland Consulting Group

Notes:

- 2023 Whatcom County total employment was not available at the time of this analysis. We estimate 2023 based on the 2022 total plus an additional year of growth (at the statewide job growth rate).

## Technical Allocation of Employment Growth to UGAs

Now that a low, middle, and high range of total employment growth has been established for Whatcom County, based on the historic ratio of employment to population (the employment rate), the next step is to allocate that Countywide growth across the County’s ten UGAs. That allocation applies the most current available (2021) distribution of jobs across industry types within those UGAs (and in the rural remainder of the County not included in any UGA).

To determine the proportion of Countywide employment accounted for by each UGA, we first obtained the most current geographic boundaries of each UGA in a GIS shapefile format. Those shapefiles could then be uploaded, one UGA at a time, to define selection areas within the U.S. Census’ LEHD-On the Map website to get estimated job counts across major industry sectors. Those LEHD results are returned using the 20 two-digit North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) code industry sector categories.

In order to be useful for planning purposes, the 20 NAICS industry sectors are combined into broad industry categories, using the categorization scheme below (as was used in the 2016 allocation methodology)

**Figure 15: Translation of NAICS Industry Codes into Broad Industry Type Categories**

NAICS	Industry Sector	Broad Industry Type (for allocations)
11	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	<b>Resources</b>
21	Mining, Quarrying, & Oil & Gas Extraction	
22	Utilities	<b>Industrial</b>
23	Construction	
31-33	Manufacturing	
42	Wholesale Trade	
44-45	Transportation & Warehousing	
48-49	Retail Trade	
51	Information	<b>Comm'l</b>
52	Finance & Insurance	
53	Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	
54	Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services	
55	Management of Companies & Enterprises	
56	Administration & Support, Waste Mgmt	
61	Educational Services	
62	Health Care & Social Assistance	
71	Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	
71	Accommodation & Food Services	
81	Other Services (excl. Public Admin)	
92	Public Administration	

Source: Leland Consulting Group, using WCOG industry category definitions

The table below shows the share of existing jobs by those broad industry groupings for 2021, as found using the UGA boundary GIS layers uploaded individually to LEHD/On the Map for analysis. Running the same analysis for the County as a whole allowed for determination of the Other/Rural group lying outside any UGA boundary.

**Figure 16: Share of Current (2021) Employment by UGA and Broad Industry Type**

UGA	UGA Job Shares by Broad Industry Type				
	Resources	Industrial	Retail	Comm'l	Total
Bellingham	14.9%	44.5%	73.7%	71.4%	<b>62.5%</b>
Birch Bay	0.0%	0.3%	0.4%	0.6%	<b>0.5%</b>
Blaine	0.4%	5.2%	1.9%	2.2%	<b>2.9%</b>
Cherry Point	0.0%	7.1%	0.0%	0.3%	<b>2.0%</b>
Columbia Valley	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	<b>0.1%</b>
Everson	1.1%	1.4%	1.0%	0.6%	<b>0.8%</b>
Ferndale	2.0%	15.2%	8.0%	6.6%	<b>8.8%</b>
Lynden	2.1%	9.6%	7.3%	6.8%	<b>7.4%</b>
Nooksack	0.0%	0.5%	0.3%	0.3%	<b>0.3%</b>
Sumas	0.2%	1.5%	0.3%	0.3%	<b>0.6%</b>
Other/Rural	79.3%	14.6%	6.9%	10.8%	<b>14.0%</b>
<b>Whatcom Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<i>% of Total Whatcom Jobs by Industry Category</i>	<i>3.8%</i>	<i>26.1%</i>	<i>10.3%</i>	<i>59.8%</i>	<i>100.0%</i>

Those total job shares by broad category (3.8% Resources, 26.1% industrial, 10.3% retail, 59.8%, commercial) were applied to the low, middle, and high employment projections to arrive at Countywide employment totals by industry group. These totals were used for allocation to the UGAs.

Figure 17: Countywide Growth Totals by Broad Industry Group Across Low, Middle, and High Scenarios

	Scenario	Total Employment Growth to Allocate	Resources	Industrial	Retail	Comm'l
<i>% of Total Whatcom Jobs by Industry Category</i>			3.8%	26.1%	10.3%	59.8%
Total Proj. Growth 2023-2045	Low	<b>15,553</b>	594	4,057	<b>1,600</b>	9,302
	Middle	<b>24,279</b>	928	6,333	2,497	14,521
	High	<b>37,834</b>	1,446	9,869	3,891	22,627

For example, we estimate that **15,553** total jobs will be added in Whatcom County from 2023 to 2045 under the low growth scenario.

Applying the retail share of jobs (**10.3%**), we get **1,600** low scenario retail jobs for allocation across the County.

Referring back to Figure 18, we then apportion those 1,446 jobs to the various UGAs based on their historical share of retail jobs. The Bellingham UGA gets 73.7% of all County retail jobs, so in the low scenario, is allocated **1,180** retail jobs ( $73.7\% \times 1,600 = 1,180$ ) in the low scenario.

The final three tables below use this described method to allocate employment growth from the Countywide level to each of the constituent UGAs under each of the three growth scenarios.

Figure 18: 2023-2045 UGA Employment Growth Allocations by Industry, by Scenario

<b>Low Scenario</b>	<b>UGA</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Industrial</b>	<b>Retail</b>	<b>Comm'l</b>	<b>Total</b>
	Bellingham	88	1,807	1,180	6,644	<b>9,719</b>
	Birch Bay	0	14	6	59	<b>80</b>
	Blaine	2	210	30	207	<b>449</b>
	Cherry Point	0	289	0	27	<b>316</b>
	Columbia Valley	0	4	2	3	<b>9</b>
	Everson	6	56	16	52	<b>130</b>
	Ferndale	12	615	129	616	<b>1,372</b>
	Lynden	13	388	117	635	<b>1,152</b>
	Nooksack	0	19	4	28	<b>51</b>
	Sumas	1	62	5	27	<b>96</b>
	Area outside UGAs	472	594	110	1,004	<b>2,180</b>
	<b>Whatcom Total</b>	<b>594</b>	<b>4,057</b>	<b>1,600</b>	<b>9,302</b>	<b>15,553</b>
<b>Middle Scenario</b>	<b>UGA</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Industrial</b>	<b>Retail</b>	<b>Comm'l</b>	<b>Total</b>
	Bellingham	138	2,820	1,841	10,373	<b>15,172</b>
	Birch Bay	0	22	10	92	<b>124</b>
	Blaine	4	327	48	322	<b>701</b>
	Cherry Point	0	450	0	43	<b>493</b>
	Columbia Valley	0	6	3	4	<b>13</b>
	Everson	10	88	24	81	<b>203</b>
	Ferndale	19	961	201	961	<b>2,141</b>
	Lynden	20	606	183	991	<b>1,799</b>
	Nooksack	0	29	7	44	<b>79</b>
	Sumas	2	98	8	43	<b>150</b>
	Area outside UGAs	736	927	172	1,567	<b>3,403</b>
	<b>Whatcom Total</b>	<b>928</b>	<b>6,333</b>	<b>2,497</b>	<b>14,521</b>	<b>24,279</b>
<b>High Scenario</b>	<b>UGA</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Industrial</b>	<b>Retail</b>	<b>Comm'l</b>	<b>Total</b>
	Bellingham	215	4,395	2,869	16,163	<b>23,642</b>
	Birch Bay	0	35	16	144	<b>194</b>
	Blaine	6	510	74	502	<b>1,092</b>
	Cherry Point	0	702	0	67	<b>769</b>
	Columbia Valley	0	9	5	7	<b>21</b>
	Everson	16	137	38	127	<b>317</b>
	Ferndale	29	1,497	313	1,498	<b>3,337</b>
	Lynden	31	944	285	1,544	<b>2,803</b>
	Nooksack	0	45	11	68	<b>124</b>
	Sumas	3	152	12	66	<b>233</b>
	Areas outside UGAs	1,147	1,445	268	2,442	<b>5,302</b>
	<b>Whatcom Total</b>	<b>1,446</b>	<b>9,869</b>	<b>3,891</b>	<b>22,627</b>	<b>37,834</b>

## Appendix: Population & Employment Allocations, Select Years

### Countywide Population & Employment Projections (select years)

Population	2023	2025	2031	2035	2045	2023 to 2045 Growth
low	<b>235,800</b>	236,799	249,210	256,903	<b>274,065</b>	38,265
middle	<b>235,800</b>	240,329	256,773	267,470	<b>292,714</b>	56,914
high	<b>235,800</b>	246,801	269,952	285,671	<b>321,702</b>	85,902

Population Growth	2023	2025	2031	2035	2045	2023 to 2045 Growth
low		500	1,887	1,945	1,695	38,265
middle		2,275	2,607	2,715	2,531	56,914
high		5,563	3,793	4,014	3,513	85,902

Total Employment	2023	2025	2031	2035	2045	2023 to 2045 Growth
low	<b>112,633</b>	110,755	116,560	120,158	<b>128,185</b>	15,553
middle	<b>112,633</b>	112,407	120,098	125,101	<b>136,912</b>	24,279
high	<b>112,633</b>	115,434	126,262	133,614	<b>150,466</b>	37,834

Resources Employment	2023	2025	2031	2035	2045	2023 to 2045 Growth
low	<b>4,305</b>	4,233	4,455	4,592	<b>4,899</b>	594
middle	<b>4,305</b>	4,296	4,590	4,781	<b>5,233</b>	928
high	<b>4,305</b>	4,412	4,826	5,107	<b>5,751</b>	1,446

Industrial Employment	2023	2025	2031	2035	2045	2023 to 2045 Growth
low	<b>29,381</b>	28,891	30,405	31,344	<b>33,438</b>	4,057
middle	<b>29,381</b>	29,322	31,328	32,633	<b>35,714</b>	6,333
high	<b>29,381</b>	30,111	32,936	34,854	<b>39,250</b>	9,869

Retail Employment	2023	2025	2031	2035	2045	2023 to 2045 Growth
low	<b>11,584</b>	11,391	11,988	12,359	<b>13,184</b>	1,600
middle	<b>11,584</b>	11,561	12,352	12,867	<b>14,082</b>	2,497
high	<b>11,584</b>	11,873	12,986	13,742	<b>15,476</b>	3,891

Commercial Employment	2023	2025	2031	2035	2045	2023 to 2045 Growth
low	<b>67,363</b>	66,240	69,712	71,864	<b>76,664</b>	9,302
middle	<b>67,363</b>	67,228	71,827	74,820	<b>81,883</b>	14,521
high	<b>67,363</b>	69,038	75,514	79,911	<b>89,990</b>	22,627

## UGA Population & Employment Projections (select years)

<b>Population - Middle</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2031</b>	<b>2035</b>	<b>2045</b>	<i>2023 to 2045 Growth</i>
Bellingham	<b>105,529</b>	107,447	114,413	118,944	129,641	24,112
Birch Bay	<b>8,908</b>	9,092	9,760	10,194	11,220	2,313
Blaine	<b>6,728</b>	6,949	7,751	8,272	9,502	2,774
Cherry Point	<b>61</b>	65	80	89	111	50
Columbia Valley	<b>3,577</b>	3,656	3,942	4,127	4,566	989
Everson	<b>3,171</b>	3,245	3,514	3,690	4,104	933
Ferndale	<b>16,762</b>	17,340	19,438	20,803	24,025	7,263
Lynden	<b>16,696</b>	17,226	19,152	20,404	23,361	6,666
Nooksack	<b>1,573</b>	1,601	1,703	1,769	1,925	352
Sumas	<b>1,810</b>	1,865	2,067	2,198	2,507	697
Other/Rural	<b>70,985</b>	71,842	74,955	76,980	81,751	10,766*
<b>County Total</b>	<b>235,800</b>	<b>240,329</b>	<b>256,773</b>	<b>267,470</b>	<b>292,714</b>	<b>56,914</b>

<b>Total Employment - Middle</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2031</b>	<b>2035</b>	<b>2045</b>	<i>2023 to 2045 Growth</i>
Bellingham	<b>50,154</b>	50,053	53,478	55,706	60,965	10,811
Birch Bay	<b>394</b>	393	420	438	479	85
Blaine	<b>5,818</b>	5,806	6,204	6,462	7,072	1,254
Cherry Point	<b>8,010</b>	7,993	8,540	8,896	9,736	1,727
Columbia Valley	<b>100</b>	100	106	111	121	22
Everson	<b>1,561</b>	1,558	1,664	1,734	1,897	336
Ferndale	<b>17,086</b>	17,052	18,218	18,977	20,769	3,683
Lynden	<b>10,769</b>	10,747	11,482	11,961	13,090	2,321
Nooksack	<b>515</b>	514	549	572	626	111
Sumas	<b>1,734</b>	1,731	1,849	1,926	2,108	374
Other/Rural	<b>16,492</b>	16,459	17,585	18,318	20,047	3,555
<b>County Total</b>	<b>112,633</b>	<b>112,407</b>	<b>120,098</b>	<b>125,101</b>	<b>136,912</b>	<b>24,279</b>

<b>Resource Jobs - Middle</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2031</b>	<b>2035</b>	<b>2045</b>	<i>2023 to 2045 Growth</i>
Bellingham	<b>1,917</b>	1,913	2,044	2,129	2,330	413
Birch Bay	<b>15</b>	15	16	17	18	3
Blaine	<b>222</b>	222	237	247	270	48
Cherry Point	<b>306</b>	306	326	340	372	66
Columbia Valley	<b>4</b>	4	4	4	5	1
Everson	<b>60</b>	60	64	66	73	13
Ferndale	<b>653</b>	652	696	725	794	141
Lynden	<b>412</b>	411	439	457	500	89
Nooksack	<b>20</b>	20	21	22	24	4
Sumas	<b>66</b>	66	71	74	81	14
Other/Rural	<b>630</b>	629	672	700	766	136
<b>County Total</b>	<b>4,305</b>	<b>4,296</b>	<b>4,590</b>	<b>4,781</b>	<b>5,233</b>	<b>928</b>

\* 2045 Rural/Other population (Middle) was manually reduced by 8 people to correct for a discrepancy across OFM source tables

## UGA Population & Employment Projections (select years), cont.

<b>Industrial Jobs - Middle</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2031</b>	<b>2035</b>	<b>2045</b>	<i>2023 to 2045 Growth</i>
Bellingham	13,083	13,057	13,950	14,531	15,903	2,820
Birch Bay	103	103	110	114	125	22
Blaine	1,518	1,515	1,618	1,686	1,845	327
Cherry Point	2,089	2,085	2,228	2,321	2,540	450
Columbia Valley	26	26	28	29	32	6
Everson	407	406	434	452	495	88
Ferndale	4,457	4,448	4,752	4,950	5,418	961
Lynden	2,809	2,803	2,995	3,120	3,415	606
Nooksack	134	134	143	149	163	29
Sumas	452	452	482	502	550	98
Other/Rural	4,302	4,293	4,587	4,778	5,229	927
<b>County Total</b>	<b>29,381</b>	<b>29,322</b>	<b>31,328</b>	<b>32,633</b>	<b>35,714</b>	<b>6,333</b>

<b>Retail Jobs - Middle</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2031</b>	<b>2035</b>	<b>2045</b>	<i>2023 to 2045 Growth</i>
Bellingham	<b>8,542</b>	8,525	9,109	9,488	<b>10,384</b>	<i>1,841</i>
Birch Bay	<b>47</b>	47	50	52	<b>57</b>	<i>10</i>
Blaine	<b>221</b>	220	235	245	<b>268</b>	<i>48</i>
Cherry Point	<b>0</b>	0	0	0	<b>0</b>	<i>0</i>
Columbia Valley	<b>15</b>	15	16	17	<b>18</b>	<i>3</i>
Everson	<b>112</b>	112	120	125	<b>137</b>	<i>24</i>
Ferndale	<b>931</b>	929	993	1,034	<b>1,132</b>	<i>201</i>
Lynden	<b>849</b>	847	905	943	<b>1,032</b>	<i>183</i>
Nooksack	<b>32</b>	31	34	35	<b>38</b>	<i>7</i>
Sumas	<b>37</b>	37	39	41	<b>45</b>	<i>8</i>
Other/Rural	<b>799</b>	798	852	888	<b>972</b>	<i>172</i>
<b>County Total</b>	<b>11,584</b>	<b>11,561</b>	<b>12,352</b>	<b>12,867</b>	<b>14,082</b>	<b>2,497</b>

<b>Comm'l Jobs - Middle</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2031</b>	<b>2035</b>	<b>2045</b>	<i>2023 to 2045 Growth</i>
Bellingham	<b>48,119</b>	48,022	51,308	53,445	<b>58,491</b>	<i>10,373</i>
Birch Bay	<b>428</b>	427	456	475	<b>520</b>	<i>92</i>
Blaine	<b>1,496</b>	1,493	1,595	1,661	<b>1,818</b>	<i>322</i>
Cherry Point	<b>199</b>	198	212	221	<b>242</b>	<i>43</i>
Columbia Valley	<b>21</b>	21	22	23	<b>25</b>	<i>4</i>
Everson	<b>377</b>	376	402	419	<b>458</b>	<i>81</i>
Ferndale	<b>4,460</b>	4,451	4,755	4,953	<b>5,421</b>	<i>961</i>
Lynden	<b>4,595</b>	4,586	4,900	5,104	<b>5,586</b>	<i>991</i>
Nooksack	<b>203</b>	202	216	225	<b>247</b>	<i>44</i>
Sumas	<b>197</b>	197	211	219	<b>240</b>	<i>43</i>
Other/Rural	<b>7,269</b>	7,254	7,751	8,073	<b>8,836</b>	<i>1,567</i>
<b>County Total</b>	<b>67,363</b>	67,228	71,827	74,820	<b>81,883</b>	<b>14,521</b>