

**WHATCOM COUNTY**  
Planning & Development Services  
5280 Northwest Drive  
Bellingham, WA 98226-9097  
360-778-5900, TTY 800-833-6384  
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**Mark Personius, AICP**  
Director

# **Agricultural Advisory Committee** **Meeting**

## **LOCATION**

**Hybrid Meeting: Zoom (details below) and  
Northwest Annex Conference Room  
Whatcom County Planning and Development Services  
5280 Northwest Drive, Bellingham, WA 98226**

**Date: October 9, 2024**

**Time: 2:00-4:00 P.M. Pacific Time PM Pacific Time (US and Canada)**

Whatcom County PDS is inviting you to a scheduled in person or Zoom meeting.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86432152429?pwd=matGxIV4BjnL6vS8DMoQDxVMShkReJ.1>

Meeting ID: 864 3215 2429

Passcode: 000000

One tap mobile

+12532158782,,86432152429#,,,,\*000000# US (Tacoma)

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## **Agricultural Advisory Committee Meeting Agenda**

for  
October 9, 2024  
2:00-4:00 P.M.

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1. Roll Call & Introductions (5 min)
  - Determination of Quorum
2. Agenda Review & Adjustments (5 min)
3. Open Public Session (5 min)
4. Review and Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes (5 min)
  - September 11, 2024
5. Election of 2025-2026 Chair and Vice-Chair (10 min)
6. Report of Subcommittee Activities (30 min)
  - Comp Plan Coordination Sub-Committee
  - VSP, Strategic Plan, Rural Land Study, Ag Planner Sub-Committee
7. Discussion on Local Meat Processing (30 min)
8. Review of AAC Business Rules and Procedures (10 min)
9. Staff & Member Updates (10 min)
10. New Business (5 min)
11. Action Items & Next Agenda (5 min)
12. Adjournment

### Attachments:

- Draft minutes for AAC Meeting 9/11/24
- Approved AAC Initial Comp Plan Recommendations
- CIAC Comments on AAC Initial Comp Plan Recommendations
- Comp Plan Discussions Memo
- Current AAC Business Rules
- Friesla Meat Processing Blog: <https://friesla.com/blog/>

Individuals who require special assistance to participate in the meetings are asked to contact AAC staff at least 96 hours in advance at: [dstranik@whatcomcounty.us](mailto:dstranik@whatcomcounty.us), 360-778-5911.

**Agricultural Advisory Committee  
Meeting Summary  
September 11, 2024**

Start Time:	2:00 p.m.
Location:	Hybrid Meeting – Zoom & at Whatcom County Planning & Development

Meeting Highlights
There were 17 people in attendance (Voting members: 9 of 10, Staff members: 2, Ex-Officio: 3 Members of the public: 3).

Attendees – Members	Affiliation	Present
Chapman, Alan (chair)	Whatcom Conservation District	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Kubalek, Roger (vice chair)	Ag Producer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
McDermott, Matthew	Ag Producer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Harron, Elli	Ag Producer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Welch, Chantel	Ag Programs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Likkel, Fred	Whatcom Family Farmers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Pehl, Clay	Consumer of Ag Products	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Hawley, Roger	Ag Producer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Steele, Eliza	Ag Producer	<input type="checkbox"/>
Del Giorgio, Isaiah	Ag Producer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
VACANT	Ag Producer	
VACANT	Ag Producer	
VACANT	Ag Processing	

<b>Quorum Present</b>	<b>YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/></b>
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Attendees – Ex-Official/Contributing	Affiliation	Present
Corina Cheever	Whatcom Conservation District	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Benedict, Chris	WSU Extension	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hall, Alex	NRCS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Hallberg, Brooklyn	FFA Youth	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Attendees - Staff	Present
Dakota Stranik, PDS Alex Harris, PDS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Others Present
Kim Hallberg Steven Harrell Brandy Reed

**Zoom Recording:**

[https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/iHWPO9YEN2LMcI\\_IJ2wpBaX1nLKydp6OujKxCkK3nrUQvDDOFRgEPhPcUskl4dOA.7LNNqr9SnWm2j1t4](https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/iHWPO9YEN2LMcI_IJ2wpBaX1nLKydp6OujKxCkK3nrUQvDDOFRgEPhPcUskl4dOA.7LNNqr9SnWm2j1t4)

**1- Roll call and introductions** - starting at 00:00:30

WCC 2.34.040 establishes that "a quorum shall consist of at least half of the appointed voting members." A quorum was established with 9 of 10 appointed voting members present.

**2- Agenda Review & Adjustments** - starting at 00:01:40

The agenda was adopted without any changes. Roger K motioned, Elli seconded, no objections.

**3- Open Public Session** - starting at 00:02:23

Alex Harris introduced himself as new outreach staff for the Conservation Easement Program (CEP), which works to preserve farmland in Whatcom County, a shared goal with the AAC. More information on CEP can be found here:

<https://www.whatcomcounty.us/573/Conservation-Easement-Program>

**4- Review and Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes** – starting at 00:04:16

Two sets of minutes were reviewed for prior meetings on May 8, 2024 and July 17, 2024. Fred motioned approval and Elli seconded. Minutes were unanimously approved.

**5- Report of Subcommittee Activities** - starting at 00:05:15**a. VSP, Strategic Plan, Rural Land Study, & Ag Planner Subcommittee**

This meeting was unable to meet due to scheduling conflicts.

**b. Comp Plan Coordination Subcommittee**

Elli gave a brief review of communications that have been had with other advisory committees. A written summary of these communications was also included in the agenda packet. The Climate Impact Advisory Committee has provided a number of recommended additions to the AAC comments on the comp plan (from 2/21/24 AAC meeting). Their comments will be circulated for discussion at the next AAC meeting. Other committees that have engaged in the conversation so far are the Housing Advisory Committee, Conservation Easement Program Oversight Committee, Business & Commerce Advisory Committee, Food System Committee, Forestry Advisory Committee, Drayton/Portage Shellfish Protection District Advisory Committee, and the Surface Mining Advisory Committee. According to Elli, many groups supported the concept of avoiding expansion onto prime ag soils if possible. This could merit more discussion and clarification around the Rural Study Areas. Roger suggested completing a summary document as well as revised AAC Comp Plan recommendations and submitting to the County Comp Plan Consultant. Elli agreed to help with this effort.

Alan commented on the difference between a Comp Plan and an implementation plan, and the need for the AAC to clarify where effort would be best focused. The idea was discussed around building a clear list of desired actions and then having regular engagement with Council and/or the Executive in order to build awareness and support for those actions. These actions could be better clarified in an updated Ag Strategic Plan, but it is important that a plan be more than just a conceptual document. One example is that water insecurity is potentially holding back forward movement on a number of agricultural initiatives. How can the AAC engage with finding solutions that might simultaneously

address water access and parcelization of ag lands? How can we better paint the picture of what is at stake? How to build genuine interest and engagement between agricultural and non-agricultural communities? This includes building interest within communities outside of ag, but also encouraging those within agriculture to be open to that engagement. Fred suggested the idea of a farm tour, specifically including some of the larger operations.

Alan recommended reviewing the Council meetings from 9/10/24 regarding county funding constraints and also a discussion on the Conservation Easement Program.

#### **6- Staff & Member Updates – starting at 00:48:35**

Dakota went over an informal brainstormed list of possible action items that the committee might consider focusing on moving forward. These actions might be less conceptual and also within the influence of Whatcom County PDS, Council, and the Executive. These possible actions included:

- Clarify a stance on VSP & inform County Council
- Provide advisory guidance for CPAL
- Address Ongoing Agriculture limitations
- Develop documents to support hiring of an Ag Planner
- Address barriers to improved meat processing infrastructure
- Engage with issues regarding Riparian Buffer incentives

Further discussion was had around VSP and the need for programs and policies that support the viability of farm operations. Corina mentioned that Sustainable Farms & Fields funding (through SCC) has the potential to fund farm machinery.

Ideas for future presentations to the AAC to help clarify a path forward include:

- Joint presentation of Skagit's Farmland Legacy Program and Whatcom's CEP
- Friesla and/or others (WSDA?) engaged with issues surrounding local meat processing, and if/how beef cattle numbers are increasing.
- Ag Planners working for other counties (Snohomish, Pierce, Thurston, King, etc.)
- Perspective from Ag realtors and/or farm loan offers

The recently released Whatcom CD Annual Report for 2023 was mentioned as an example of a very clear and approachable document for communicating goals and progress, and could potentially serve as a model for an updated Ag Strategic Plan.

Fred mentioned conflicts between smaller ag and larger ag or different types of ag – for example helicopter applications adjacent to livestock operations, or wedding venues and agritourism adjacent to manure application, etc. These issues may be increasing as changes continue in Whatcom County.

Dakota asked for feedback from the group on potential CPAL outreach materials in development.

Matt provided some feedback on the issue of local meat processing starting at 1:59:27. The mobile unit for North Cascades Meat Cooperative may have been problematic from an

efficiency and profitability perspective. A survey of current Puget Sound meat processing operations as well as the number of local animal units needing that service would be prudent. It took King County about 10 years to get a new meat processing facility up and running.

Fred mentioned the closure of the Cargill grain mill in Ferndale and the concerns this may bring up if a future flood were to impact EPL in Sumas. It could create a very dire situation for livestock operations needing access to feed.

### **7- New business**

There was no new business

### **8- Action items and next agenda**

This item was not discussed

### **9- Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 2:07 p.m. The next meeting will be scheduled on Wednesday, October 9<sup>th</sup> from 2pm to 4pm. The meeting will be held as a hybrid between Zoom and in person at Whatcom County Planning & Development Services (5280 Northwest Drive).

DRAFT

# 2025 CompPlan Update

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## Agricultural Advisory Committee Recommendations

### General Comments

- Ag zoning ought to be expanded to cover more lands:
  - The AAC has determined that the Rural Study Areas meet the Agricultural Lands of Long-Term Commercial Significance criteria and therefore recommends that the Council rezone these areas to Agricultural zoning contingent on pursuing/providing compensatory funding to property owners for lost development rights.
  - The AAC recommends evaluating and eliminating nonconforming lots (combine nonconforming plots under same ownership) located in Agricultural Zones. Parcelization of existing agricultural zoned land has occurred and is relatively widespread in the Ag Zone, with an average parcel size of 17 acres.
  - Change the Agriculture Protection Overlay to apply to clusters of land 10 acres or larger, rather than 20 acres.
- The AAC supports recommendations from the Housing Advisory Committee that encourage options for urban infill to reduce UGA expansion.
- Regarding climate change:
  - There is a noticeable lack of climate-related language in here, an acknowledgement of the effects of a changing climate and strategies to maintain agricultural viability would be useful.
  - We need to more clearly integrate climate change, equity, and economic security throughout the CompPlan.
  - Support a thriving local agriculture and food system economy and food security, considering the impacts of climate change on agriculture as well as equity and housing needs of farmworkers.
- Regarding land/infrastructure preservation:
  - Continue to protect ag lands through existing County programs
  - Explore new ways to support ag-land succession that keeps ownership local.
  - Develop new strategies to reduce urban sprawl and preserve rural characteristics of urban edge development
  - Incentivize agricultural operations and work cooperatively to improve existing and install new state of the art infrastructure.
- Regarding water rights and use:
  - Protect agriculture as an allowed use for permit exempt wells.
  - Support efficient application process for new water rights.
  - Throughout the document strengthen the need to address water security for farms. Note the Council's goals in goal 6 of their priorities resolution: Work to provide secure and legal access to water for all farmers with an end goal of water use efficiency to drive profitability for a diverse agriculture economy, recognizing that the "use it or lose it doctrine" of water rights does not promote water use efficiency.
- Update the ag descriptive language and charts using the 2022 Ag Census

- While the goals are useful in indicating a policy direction to protect agricultural lands, the policies lack adequate specificity to be able measure progress toward achieving those goals.
  - There are no metrics to measure the effectiveness of the identified actions. The policies are full of relative terms like involve, support, encourage, assist, work cooperatively, discourage.
  - Few of the stated policies identify who will be responsible for implementing them, and several policies have been worked on by other organizations.
  - There is a question whether advisory committees are supported sufficiently to have the information to evaluate options to discharge their responsibilities.
  - Several of the policies are under the authority of State agencies, though land use is the cause of most water quality and quantity issues are under the authority of the City and County Governments.
  - There should be a restriction on putting people on land that cannot support the needs for water and waste treatment, rather than developing infrastructure to provide those services.
- Regarding conflicting goals:
  - When there are competing goals, there should be guidance on how to balance them (e.g., ag vs. mining vs. fish and wildlife habitat).
  - The conflicting policies within the Natural Resources Chapter 8 are not adequately addressed. How do you choose which resource is of greater value?
  - It is important to look at both the Mineral Resource section and Agriculture section on Chapter 8 as to the conflicting codes and policies.
- The relative coordination between the County and Cities on actions that impact viable agriculture should be made more transparent in the goal statements. The UGAs are still under County authority.
- Replace the term "agriculture industry" "agriculture community."
- We're all aware that flooding has become a major issue, but what most don't know (yet) is that the river has lost 30% of its capacity above Everson since the 90's. This is where the nexus of salmon habitat and farming becomes a bit challenging, but it is our job as an Ag Committee to advocate strongly for drainage to be maintained if farming is going to survive. Again, the Council priorities under goal 6: Enhance flood control and drainage vitally important to protecting people, farm families, and infrastructure. If agricultural land is used for "overflow areas," the County should also plan to facilitate drainage to enable the ability of the land to be productively farmed. Manage drainage areas, including wildlife control, to protect land intended to produce food and fiber, except where they have been placed in the conservation programs.
- Can including educating the public and involving them in the struggles farmers, farmland, and agriculture face be dispersed throughout the plan?
- The Food Systems Plan has some Goals and Action plans that I thought were clearer and may be a model to look at.
- The Co. should better support value-added processing facilities and services (e.g., meat processing, etc.) so as to better support ag viability.

## Specific Comments

- Policy 8A-3, 3.d: It is mentioned in the background that diversity of agriculture has increased. If the diversity of crops has increased and some commodities that have been growing for longer have decreased in production, are there newer agriculture practices and commodities that

would have a longer-term commercial significance than other commodities that have been operating before 1985?

- 8D-4 & 5 Surface Mining and Mineral Resource Extraction: The language suggests accommodating these activities in the Ag zone, which are currently not permitted. Concerning, given this topic has previously been discussed and determined to not be conducive to ag and/or the returning of soils to productive ag activities after surface mining/extraction activities.
- Policy 8C-4: Are there programs to help small farms that are struggling, not just new farmers?
- Policy 8E-3: Instead of just encouraging the use of these practices to protect water quality, is there a way to help these farmers perform these practices?
- Policy 8A-1 Conserve productive agricultural lands and agricultural resource lands, including areas with prime soils that are not now zoned agriculture. With a 20 – 100-year plan.
  - ADD Give high priority to these lands over MRL that could contribute to the degradation of these rural lands with prime soils.
- Chapter 8 page 12, Mining activities, such as the extraction of sand and gravel, are often an alternative use of land zoned agriculture. Such activities may limit options for later agricultural use, depending upon the intensity of the activity and the extent of soil rehabilitation efforts.
- Policy 2 DD-2 Protect the character of the rural area through the County's development regulations. What are the county's development regulations that address this? These regulations should be addressed herein, stated with clarification on how that goal will be met.
- 8M-2. Protect areas where existing residential uses predominate against intrusion of mineral extraction and processing.
  - What is the density that makes an area residential instead of rural? Why protect residential areas and not rural areas from intrusion of mineral extraction?
  - This needs to be expanded to state: Protect areas where existing residential and rural uses predominate against intrusion of mineral extraction and processing.

## Individual's Comments

### Chantel

- To maintain long-term agricultural viability, the Whatcom County Council has set a goal of preserving 100,000 acres of farmland within the county (RES 2009-040)

To achieve this goal, the Agricultural Advisory Committee recommends the following:

1. The 2019 Rural Land Study identified 28,449 acres with 'high agricultural value' as determined by; 1) Proximity to active agricultural areas; 2) Current land use characterized by agriculture – visual analysis; 3) High percentage of APO and prime soils; 4) Parcelization of the area; 5) Land use as identified on Assessors records (Agricultural Open Space), and 6) Evaluation of forested areas for potential ecological benefits adjacent to agricultural use. These spatial data were applied to evaluate the Agricultural Lands of Long-Term Commercial Significance designation criteria as identified in Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan policy 8A-3. **The AAC determines that the Rural Study Areas meet the Agricultural Lands of Long-Term Commercial Significance criteria and therefore recommends that the council rezone these areas to Agricultural zoning and pursue/provide compensatory funding to property owners for lost development rights.**  
\*Current agricultural zoning has a minimum parcel size of 40 acres, which may be appropriate for these areas though it is noted that many farms in these areas are smaller commercial farms and therefore a minimum parcel size of 20 acres might be more appropriate.
2. Parcelization of existing agricultural zoned land has occurred and is relatively widespread in the Ag Zone with an average parcel size of 17 acres, the AAC recommends **evaluating and eliminating nonconforming lots** (combine nonconforming plots under same ownership) located in Agricultural Zones.
3. Change the **Agriculture Protection Overlay to apply to clusters of land 10 acres or larger**, rather than 20 acres.

Additionally, we highlight the connections between our recommendations that strengthen and support the work of other committees—notably the Wildlife Advisory Committee, the Climate Impact Advisory Committee, and the WRIA 1 Planning Unit—and support recommendations from the Housing Advisory Committee that encourage options for urban infill to reduce UGA expansion.

- I mainly have questions about what has been done and where the main roadblocks are for protecting the remaining 12,000(ish) acres of ag land to reach 100,000 acres. If I read correctly, that amount of land was designated back in the 1990s, so what are the main reasons for it still not being secured? Knowing the roadblocks may provide a clearer path ahead and allow for better recommendations for 8A-2 and 8A-3. The 2019 Rural Lands Study Update made a pretty clear case for expanding APO to the areas of greatest concern that are also adjacent to protected lands, and noted " Existing programs, such as the Purchase of Development Rights Program and Open Space Farm and Agriculture Current Use Assessment program, are known to be effective tools to provide heightened agricultural protection measures" so I would recommend that we strengthen language around expanding APO and funding compensation for development rights.
- There is a noticeable lack of climate-related language in here, an acknowledgement of the effects of a changing climate and strategies to maintain agricultural viability would be useful. For example, how will we support producers through increased winter precipitation (managing

flooding) and decreased summer precipitation (managing drought). I see this as an expansion of the following 8A-2 bullets "Working cooperatively...to address water quality impacts" and "securing an adequate, sustainable, and legal supply of irrigation water..." as well as \*E & 8F.

## Matt

- Exhibit A of the Executive Memo related to the Resource Lands Chapter: Emphasis on sustainable ag, climate smart ag, resilient ag, etc. and suggestions of incentives to help farmers change practices might need clearer definitions. And, overall, a means to measure/track the goals seems essential to measure impact.
  1. "Consider the impacts of climate change, water resources..." Wondering how this overarching statement translates to policy action?
  2. Water: Supporting a pivot from "use it or lose it" makes good sense, as does water supply planning.
  3. Promote ag/processing sustainability: Great and how?
  4. Implement Whatcom County Food Assessment: Great
  5. Improve wages, housing, etc.: Curious how the actionable details would look from a policy standpoint?
  6. Ensure safe and affordable on-farm housing, transport, insurance: Same, curious how actionable details would play out.
  7. Increase demand for local...: Sounds good
  8. Increase local food producer capacity: I think the important component here is to support policy/permit pathways that accommodate various size/scale operations rather than a one-size fit all. I think that's what's trying to be relayed in original statement?
  9. Ag Research: Great
  10. Enhance flood control: Great
  11. Encourage climate smart farming...: How is this different from #3 above?
  12. Preserve productive farmland, implement Ag Strategic Plan, RSA rezoning...: Yes, supports the 100,000-acre goal
  13. Expand allowable ag to non-traditional farm models: What examples are being targeted?
- CompPlan Goals Reviewed:
  1. 8A Conserve/Enhance Land base
    - 100,00-acre land base: #12 from above, including RSA rezone, support this goal
    - Is the density credit program active? Or is this being proposed for the 1<sup>st</sup> time?
  2. 8D Reduce Land Use Conflict:
    - 8D 4/5 Surface Mining and Mineral Resource Extraction: The language suggests accommodating these activities in the Ag zone, which are currently not permitted. Concerning, given this topic has previously been discussed and determined to not be conducive to ag and/or the returning of soils to productive ag activities after surface mining/extraction activities.

## Roger

1. Ag Support Programs:
  - a. Best Management Practices
    - i. Incentives - environmentally friendly and conservation practices
    - ii. Focus on regenerative (buzz word, but likely to stay relevant for foreseeable future)
    - iii. Climate Resilience
    - iv. Measure and report
  - b. Marketing and Infrastructure Improvement
    - i. Highlight Whatcom County products

- ii. Encourage agritourism
- iii. Help protect/buffer from import price gouging
- iv. Gain funds for grants and loan assistance to Farmers and supporting industries
- v. Public Education towards the value of agriculture within the county and fair representation of sensitive issues involving agriculture
- vi. Measure and report
- c. Land/infrastructure Preservation
  - i. Continue to protect ag lands through existing county programs
  - ii. Explore new ways to support ag-land succession that keeps ownership within Whatcom County or Washington State and reduces/deters foreign or out-of-state land holders.
  - iii. Develop new strategies to reduce urban sprawl and preserve rural characteristics of urban edge development
  - iv. Incentivize agricultural operations and work cooperatively to improve existing and install new state of the art infrastructure.
- d. Water Rights
  - i. Protect agriculture as an allowed use for permit exempt wells.
  - ii. Support efficient application process for new water rights.

## Chris

Some suggestions. Depending on how things play out with Ecology some of the language in here will be outdated.

- The most recent ag census (2022) should be out any day, so depending on when this gets updated could pop in those numbers.
- The economic impacts of agriculture on Whatcom County are substantial. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's 2012 (2017) Census of Agriculture, 1,483 (1,712) Whatcom County farms produced a market value of \$326 (\$372) million in crops and livestock that year, ranking eighth in the state. Milk produced locally in 2013 (2017) reached an all-time high market value of \$246.1 (\$180.5) million. Raspberries and blueberries combined for a record market value of \$123.6 (\$114 - though this number is considerably higher in 2023) million in 2014. There are new values for these as well.
- Average annual agricultural employment in Whatcom County in 2014 was 3,512, with substantial seasonal variation within that average, according to the Washington State Employment Security Department. Locally, agricultural jobs soared to 5,661 in the third quarter of 2015. In addition, farms and support businesses, such as equipment retailers, veterinarians, processing facilities, and feed suppliers employ many Whatcom County residents.
- (*New numbers in parenthesis*): In 1949, 200,000 acres of land were reported to be in farm production in Whatcom County. Between 1949 and 1992, land in farm production declined. In 2012 (2017), agriculture accounted for 115,831 (102,253) acres, nearly 85,000 (97,747 or 49%) fewer acres than 1949. However, since 1992, the amount of land in farms has remained relatively stable (between 100,000 and 125,000 acres). But at the same time, both the number and diversity of farms in the County has been increasing. Even while the amount of land in agricultural use has remained relatively stable over the past two decades, the economic value of the products produced on those farms has increased by more than \$100 million in the same time period.
- Update chart: Whatcom County Land in Farms/ Product Market Value Over Time

## Alan

1. The goals stated are useful in indicating a policy direction to protect agricultural lands in Whatcom County, but the sub goals lack specificity to measure their impact on progress toward achieving those goals.
  - a. There are no metrics to measure the effectiveness of the identified actions. The sub goals are full of relative terms like involve, support, encourage, assist, work cooperatively, discourage.
  - b. Few of the stated sub goals identify who will be responsible for implementing them, and several sub-goals have been worked on by other organizations.
  - c. There is a question whether Committees are supported sufficiently to have the information to evaluate options to discharge their responsibilities.
  - d. Several of the sub-goals are under the authority of state Agencies, though land use is the cause of most water quality and quantity issues are under the authority of the City and County Governments
  - e. There should be a restriction on putting people on land that can not support the needs for water and waste treatment, rather than developing infrastructure to provide those services.
2. From the goal statement it is extremely difficult to understand what guidance is provided to determine tradeoffs when there are differences in actions required to make progress on competing goals in the plan or required in the GMA.
  - a. Even within the Agricultural section there is no guidance on how to balance the protection of agricultural lands with the mining of mineral resources.
  - b. There is no guidance on how to balance the needs of agriculture and fish and wildlife for habitat and water.
  - c. Similarly, there is a lack of guidance on how to reconcile affordable housing and the infrastructure to support it.
  - d. Prime agricultural lands are included in GMAs to the disadvantage of Agriculture.
3. The relative coordination between the County and Cities on actions that impact viable agriculture should be made more transparent in the goal statements. The UGAs are still under county authority.

## Fred

1. I would check the document for every place it says "agriculture industry" and consider replacing it with "agriculture community". There are places where the "industry" term is used that makes the farming community out to be an impersonal business, when the reality is that farming is at its essence a community function. We use that often for fishing and tribal resources, and we should reflect the same thing for agriculture. The vast majority of farmers aren't in it for the money!
2. The last time this was written water rights issues were a distant issue, and now they are very much at the forefront. Goal 8F recognizes this need, but with the upcoming adjudication the issue of safe, secure water is now a very real threat to the farming community. We are already seeing farms shut down because of uncertain water rights, letters from Ecology threatening fines of \$10,000/day if irrigation doesn't cease, and now banks starting to seriously devalue land where water rights are in question. Throughout the document we could use to strengthen the need to address water security for farms. I would note especially the council's goals in goal six: Work to provide secure and legal access to water for all farmers with an end goal of water use efficiency to drive profitability for a diverse agriculture economy, recognizing that the "use it or lose it doctrine" of water rights does not promote water use efficiency. I know the Planning Unit has been working on some language from a group of diverse stakeholders that agree with this. Perhaps we should grab onto their language to look at using for our own comments?

3. Another area I see needing to be strengthened is the drainage issues. As I know you are aware, flooding has become a major issue. What most don't know (yet) is that the river has lost 30% of its capacity above Everson since the 90's. This is where the nexus of salmon habitat and farming becomes a bit challenging, but it is our job as an ag committee to advocate strongly for drainage to be maintained if farming is going to survive. Again, the council priorities under goal six: Enhance flood control and drainage vitally important to protecting people, farm families, and infrastructure. If agricultural land is utilized for " overflow areas," the County should also plan to facilitate drainage to enable the ability of the land to be productively farmed. Manage drainage areas, including wildlife control, to protect land intended to produce food and fiber, except where they have been placed in the conservation programs.

## Brooklyn

- In Background Summary, will current market values for crops be added and will these be properly compared to older values and other crops? Will current average annual agricultural employment be added and how has it changed over the years? Will current acres of farmland and economic value of products be revised? How has the number and diversity of farms changed?
- Policy 8C-4: Are there programs to help small farms that are struggling, not just new farmers?
- Policy 8E-3: Instead of just encouraging the use of these practices to protect water quality, is there a way to help these farmers perform these practices?
- Can including educating the public and involving them in the struggles farmers, farmland, and agriculture face be dispersed throughout the plan?
- Policy 8A-3, 3.d: It is mentioned in the background that diversity of agriculture has increased. If the diversity of crops has increased and some commodities that have been growing for longer have decreased in production, are there newer agriculture practices and commodities that would have a longer-term commercial significance than other commodities that have been operating before 1985?

## Elli

- The Food Systems Plan has some Goals and Action plans that I thought were clearer and may be a model to look at.
- Priorities for Whatcom County's 2025 comprehensive plan. As stated by the County Council in resolution 2022-036, there are chapters on many intersectional issues impacted by climate change, equity, and economic security including Land Use, Housing, etc.
- We are experiencing increased severe and frequent effects of climate change and we are running out of time to mitigate and adapt to the worst of these effects on climate change, therefore we need to more clearly integrate climate change, equity and economic security throughout the CompPlan.
- Preservation of the Whatcom County Farmlands and agriculture industries is a common goal.
- Support a thriving local agriculture and food system economy and food security, considering the impacts of climate change on agriculture as well as equity and housing needs of farmworkers.
- The conflicting codes within the Natural Resources Chapter 8 are not adequately addressed. How do you choose which resource is of greater value?
- It is important to look at both the Mineral Resource section and Agriculture section on Chapter 8 as to the conflicting codes and policies.
- The main goals under Agriculture are:
  - 1) Conserve and enhance Whatcom County's agricultural land base for the continued production of food and fiber

- 2) Maintain and Enhance Whatcom County's agricultural products industry as a long-term and sustainable industry.
  - 3) Preserve and enhance the cultural heritage that is related to agriculture.
  - 4) Reduce land use conflicts between Whatcom County's agriculture and non-agricultural landowners.
- I agree with the strategies outlined for Goal 1, Conserve productive agricultural lands and agricultural resource lands with prime soils, etc., Encourage farming on rural lands, etc.
- Policy 8A-1 Conserve productive agricultural lands and agricultural resource lands, including areas with prime soils that are not now zoned agriculture. With a 20 – 100-year plan.
  - ADD Give high priority to these lands over MRL that could contribute to the degradation of these rural lands with prime soils.
- Chapter 8 page 12, Mining activities, such as the extraction of sand and gravel, are often an alternative use of land zoned agriculture. Such activities may limit options for later agricultural use, depending upon the intensity of the activity and the extent of soil rehabilitation efforts.
  - This would also be the case for agricultural lands in close proximity to a MRL.
  - What criteria are used to assess the impacts of mining activity on agricultural lands, such as, soil, dust, water supply, air quality, industrial site established versus rural character.
  - 8A-7. Work with farmers and the rural community to prioritize agricultural activity in land use decisions when land is composed of prime and/or productive agricultural soils and agriculture is the highest value resource. How is the highest value resource determined? Based on economics? On rural character or community concerns? On cultural heritage of rural life? Environmental preservation or Impact on climate change?
- Policy 2 DD-2 Protect the character of the rural area through the County's development regulations. What are the county's development regulations that address this? These regulations should be addressed herein, stated with clarification on how that goal will be met.
- Policy 2 DD7. Maintain the historic character and cultural roles of each rural area and community. What are the characteristics that need to be preserved in each area.? Who decides what these characteristics are? No more than one home per 5 acres? Proximity to urban growth areas? Historic use of property?
- 8M-2. Protect areas where existing residential uses predominate against intrusion of mineral extraction and processing.
  - What is the density that makes an area residential instead of rural? Why protect residential areas and not rural areas from intrusion of mineral extraction?
  - This needs to be expanded to state: Protect areas where existing residential and rural uses predominate against intrusion of mineral extraction and processing.
- Goal 4) Reduce land use conflicts between Whatcom County's agriculture and non-agriculture uses.
  - When a MRL overlay has not been updated with new information on population growth within 2 miles of MRL and the County has allowed new residential areas to locate near MLR, that new information will take precedence over allowing application to be granted.
  - When conflicts within these areas are brought to the County Planning Department, via application for land use that impacts historic character and rural character, that has adverse impacts on surrounding farmland, and dramatically changes the rural character of the area, what criteria are used to determine impacts and whether application is allowed to proceed?
  - How do you protect farmland when you allow adverse impacts within the rural area to develop, even when you already have codes and policies that should protect farmland in

place? Farmland with prime soils should take precedence over other land uses that meet the criteria outlined in the Whatcom County Agricultural Strategic Plan, Resolution 2018-027. When determined that the proximity of land conflicts will have major negative impacts of farmland. Which codes take precedent? Water is critical for farming; which resource gets the water?

For Example

- 8 K-3. Avoid adversely impacting ground water and surface water quality. The protection of aquifers and recharge zones should have precedence over surface mining in the event it is determined by the county that adverse impacts cannot be avoided through the standard use of best management practices for reclamation or on-site storage.
- Groundwater is essential to farming, impacting water quality or reducing ground water that should be used for farming which should once again be given priority.
- This code should state:  
The following criteria will be used to determine the impacts on ground water and aquifers.
  - Location of fish bearing streams that will be impacted
  - Proximity to Creeks and Rivers
  - Proximity to residences that may have their wells impacted.
  - Proximity to farmland that has future significance that meets the following criteria, based on
    - Whatcom County's Agricultural Strategic Plan
    - The majority of the area contains Prime Farmland Soils
    - Land use settlement practices are generally compatible with agricultural practices
    - The predominate parcel size in the area is large enough to adequately maintain agricultural operations.
    - Proximity to agricultural markets.
    - Prime Farm Land should have precedence over all other land use conflicts and meets many of the Councils Goals for GMA 2025, Including
      - Chapter 8, Natural Resources
      - Additional Criteria for Designated Agricultural Areas
    - 15. Prohibit MRL designations in areas designated Agriculture by the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan that contain "Prime Farmland Soils" determined by the Natural resource Conservation Service.
    - Furthermore, meets the Councils Goals of:
      - Build resilience to climate change
      - More thoroughly consider impacts of climate change, equity, and economic security in relation to natural hazards mitigation and emergency response
      - Incorporate climate change mitigation adaptation, resilience, and greenhouse gas emission reduction throughout the Comprehensive Plan.
      - Protect Farmland
      - Support a thriving local agriculture and food system economy and food security, considering the impacts of climate change on agriculture as well as equity and housing needs of farmworkers.
      - Plan for future farmland preservation.

- The Agricultural Advisory committee will have a meaningful role in identifying agricultural lands for preservation.

## Comp Plan 2025 Ag committee

### General comments

Agricultural zoning out to expanded to cover more lands;

The AAC has determined that the Rural Land Study Areas meet the Agricultural Lands of Long-term Commercial Significance criteria and therefore recommends the the Council rezone these areas to to Agricultural zoning contingent of pursuing/providing compensatory funding to property owners for lost development rights.

The AAC recommends evaluating and eliminating nonconforming lots (combine nonconforming plots under same ownership) located in Agricultural Zones. Parcelization of existing agricultural zoned land has occurred and is relatively widespread in the Ag Zone, with an average parcel size of 17 acres.

Change the Agriculture Protection Overlay to apply to clusters of land 10 acres or longer, rather than 20.

The AAC supports recommendations from the Housing Advisory Committee that encourage options for urban infill to reduce UGA expansion.

### Climate Change

Climate change impacts need to be taken into consideration in regards to agricultural lands. Best practices for water use, regenerative farming, protecting climate sensitive areas and sound irrigation practices

Climate Change Anticipated Impact should include sea level rise, decreased ocean pH, increased coastal and riverine flooding, lower summer stream flows, wildfires and degraded air quality and loss of potable water supplies.

Goal 8 B should include policies that promote non-regulatory programs such as markets for carbon and other ecosystems services.

We need to more clearly integrate climate change, equity, and economic security throughout the Comp Plan.

Support a thriving local agriculture and food system economy and food security, considering the impacts of climate change on agriculture as well as equity and housing needs of farmworkers.

Regarding land/infrastructure preservation:

Continue to protect Ag lands through existing County Programs

Develop policies that preserve or expand the possibility of agriculture and other elements of rural livelihood in a time of climate uncertainty.

Explore new ways to support Ag-land succession that keeps ownership local.

Develop new strategies to reduce urban sprawl and preserve rural characteristics of urban edge development.

Incentivize agricultural operations and work cooperatively to improve existing and install new state of the art infrastructure.

Regarding water rights and use.

Support agriculture as an allowed use for permit exempt wells.

Support efficient application process for new water rights.

All plans with regard to water rights should take account of projected decreases in surface water and possibly groundwater availability in future summers as our summers become drier.

Plans to avoid land uses that threaten groundwater quality should take into account any predicted changes in seasonal groundwater levels or quality due to drier and hotter summers as projected.

Throughout the document strengthen the need to address water security for farms. Note the Council's goals in goal 6 of their priorities resolution: Work to provide secure and legal access to water for all farmers with an end goal of water use efficiency to drive profitability for a diverse agriculture economy, recognizing that the "use it or lose it doctrine" of water rights does not promote water use efficiency.

Measures to protect critical areas and surface groundwater resources should take into account the effects of higher temperatures, reduced summer water flows, aquifer drawdown, increased winter water flows, and possible increased marine, riverine and compound flooding. (Policy 2DD-2.C.1)

Policies under goal 8F must reflect the impact on in stream flows and the resulting change in water availability as climate disruption intensifies and future climate conditions produce smaller mountain snowpacks and warmer and drier summers.

Update the Ag descriptive language and charts using the 2022 Ag Census.

## Memorandum

To : Agriculture Advisory Committee

From: Comp Plan Sub-Committee

Subject: Discussions with other Advisory Committees

The Comprehensive Plan is supposed to meet the goals of the Growth Management Act. Copies of the comments forwarded from all Committees were obtained for background. The County website identified 55 County Boards and Commissions. All have rolls that are likely to relate to goals in the Comp Plan. Fourteen committees were identified where goals and policies would deal with issues also important to agriculture. This includes competition for land and water and impacts on natural processes that would have to be replaced by infrastructure that would be expensive to build and operate in the interest of public health and safety.

We had preliminary meetings with representatives of 5 committees and have contacted 3 additional committees. It was difficult to get the discussions going because they were not sure where the exercise was going. All seemed reluctant to suggest times for introductory meetings. We ended up sending out times when we would have some of our sub-committee available and an outline of our expectations. This got things moving.

The objective was to introduce ourselves and our interests and what we were trying to accomplish and get the same information from other committee representatives. We used a version of an overarching goal of an economically viable, environmentally responsible agriculture community to provide food and fiber, provide jobs and conserve natural processes and the valued goods and services they provide to the whole community. We provided copies of our submission to the PDS, and I stripped out the goals and policies/objectives in the current plan so people could easily see what is in the current plan without wading through the verbiage. The discussions indicated where there might be more likelihood of agreement on action priorities that might make the Comprehensive Plan more implementable.

### Preliminary Takeaways

- 1) The current plan is not a strategic plan with actions to make progress on all goals, it is a check list on the wishes of many.
- 2) The goals were interactive, and it was difficult to find the connections between them because they were siloed in different chapters, and sometimes contradicted one another.
- 3) The goals are very general, they were generally acceptable, but the lack of specificity made it difficult to understand how progress would be made.
- 4) In the mantra of if you can't measure it, you can't measure it, the lack of metrics on goals made evaluation of policies intended to make progress across the board.

- 5) There was no assignment of authority, responsibility and funding required to prioritize scarce county resources to identify the most effective path to progress on all goals.
- 6) There is a need for an implementation plan associated with monitoring and reporting to allow for adaptive management.
- 7) Because guidance of the GMA requires goals that require adaptation to the local community choices on how to make progress in the framework of state and federal mandates, the comp plan needs to have representatives of stakeholder groups involved in developing goals and actions to make progress on them

### **Business and Commerce Committee**

The initial meeting went well. They have a broad mandate to look to future needs in business and commerce. We agreed on the need for urban infill to reduce UGA expansion and they heard out concern for expanding development on prime ag lands. They were interested in the results of the Rural Lands Study. They want to make sure that housing is developed to meet current and future needs, and it is affordable, protect mobile home parks, advocate condominium reform, allow ADUs. They have targets of rental vacancy rate of 4-7%, housing sale for 4-6 months supply and expand housing to 2100% of AMI. This will require code updates, invest in wetland mitigation and create a housing ombudsman.

There is substantial room for additional discussion as many of the actions may have impacts on prime agricultural soils and require substantial funding and expand UGAs. The devil is in the details.

### **Food System Committee**

They see commonality in some of their objectives in support of agriculture, but they seemed to be more focused on social issues. They are focused on the 5 elements of their plan adopted by the Council.

- 1) Equity and justice in the food system
- 2) Protect and regenerate our soil, water and land
- 3) Build a resilient and vibrant local food economy
- 4) Ensure access to healthy food for all
- 5) Reduce food systems GHG emissions and adapt the system to a changing Climate

While there were many commonalities in ensuring that prime agricultural soils remain available for agriculture, and that small parcels could contribute to the agriculture sector and local food supply, there were questions about how to achieve a living wage, affordable housing and living wages for agricultural workers while still ensuring food for those who did not have the resources to purchase basic food needs. There is certainly much more left to discuss to identify common goals dealing with conditions under the county authority.

### **Shellfish Production Districts:**

The overlapping interests were in water quality that has impacted the harvest of shellfish for human consumption because of fecal contamination. This also deals with zoning and ensuring that domestic water and adequate wastewater treatment is available for shoreline parcels in the face of sea level rise being experienced and projected. Zoning to ensure economic development that conserves the landscape processes the ensure clean air and water, open spaces and critical fish and wildlife habitat. We are looking for additional meetings to get more representation from their committees

### **Forestry Advisory Committee**

They are concerned about the sustainability of a healthy forest economy because of regulations that have severely limited the harvests, and the lack of wood supply is eroding the infrastructure that will cause further decreased profitability. They need the infrastructure and institutions (mills, equipment suppliers, and trained loggers, planners, managers and truckers) to compete on world markets, They understand the impact of climate change on the long-term health of the forests and are prepared to support the value of carbon storage in wood products that will address some of the greenhouse gas issues. They would like to see a balance of environmental, recreational and logging issues in the state and federal lands that could support the industry. Many of these issues are like those the agricultural sector faces. Ag and forestry sectors have more in common than is typically realized at first glance. Our workforces share similar skills. Building on this, some common focus could be on workforce development for the ag, forestry, and fishing sectors and including into that affordable housing projects for these working groups

### **Surface Mining Advisory Committee**

We met with a subgroup of the committee focused on concerns about a mining operation in the Saar Creek that was in the process of being permitted. The concerns were related to the way the rules were being implemented and the lack of concern by county officials to follow the intent of the comp plan goals and policies in matters related to impacts on agriculture, the water table and health and welfare of the local populations. Much of this was attributed to the lack of detail in the rules that seemed to handicap permit writers, and the lack of monitoring associated with issues identified. The basic issue is how to balance the need for aggregate for the construction needs and protection of agricultural soils. Criteria on how to achieve that balance are needed. They will report the discussions to their committee which has many vacancies and is focused more on mining than environmental and public health issues

### **Climate Action Implementation Committee.**

This group has the responsibility to advise on the implementation of the Climate Action Plan. We focused on issues related to adjusting to the projected impacts of warmer temperatures, changes in precipitation and impact of the stream hydrographs and associated ecosystem processes. They have conducted the same exercise of searching for mentions of climate in the current plan and find it in many chapters, but are concerned that more clarity in goal statements, clarify what adaptations to climate change would be necessary. They are also in the process of working with a consultant that is creating a chapter in the plan to incorporate state mandated climate plans.

### Conclusions

- 1) What is the value of a plan without an implementation strategy?
- 2) Goals need to be developed by the wide range of affected parties to ensure that there is enough agreement creating a political will for implementation including authority, responsibility, resources necessary to implement and monitor progress.
- 3) We have met many amazing volunteers who all want to have a more concise GMA plan.
- 4) We all see issues with implementation and how to proceed.
- 5) It is worth the effort to continue the process to see how collective action might be able to influence a more effective Comp Plan reflecting the values of our community.

### Attachments:

AAC Comments

Introductory Email

All Current Goals and Policies

Council Resolution 2022-036

There are 55 Boards and Commissions listed on the County Web Site. A thorough review of goals and shows that there is stiff competition between many goals that interact with issues of importance to all of the All of the

<b>Advisory Committee/Board</b>	<b>Contacted</b>	<b>Met</b>
Agricultural Advisory Committee		
Business and Commerce Advisory Committee	yes	Yes
Conservation Easement Program Oversight Committee	Yes	
Economic Development Investment Board		
Flood Control Zone District Advisory Committee	Yes	
Food System Committee	Yes	Yes
Forestry Advisory Committee	Yes	Yes
Housing Advisory Committee		
Marine Resource Committee	Yes	
Parks and Recreation Commission		
Planning Commission		
Drayton Harbor Portage Bay Shellfish Protection District Advisory Committee	yes	Yes
Surface Mining Advisory Committee	Yes	Yes
Transfer and Purchased Development Rights		
Wildlife Advisory Committee		

I will add

Copies of a sample invitation, the full list of goals and a copy of Resolution 2022 036 setting out Council priorities.

# **BUSINESS RULES AND PROCEDURES**

## **AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE OF WHATCOM COUNTY, WASHINGTON**

The Whatcom County Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC), being formed by the County Council pursuant to Resolution 2001-036, adopted July 24, 2001, and as revised by Resolution 2009-002, adopted January 27, 2009, does hereby adopt the following rules and procedures for the transaction of its business:

### **I. NAME**

The official name is the "Whatcom County Agricultural Advisory Committee."

### **2. AUTHORITY**

The committee was appointed by Resolution 2001-036 on July 24, 2001.

### **3. PURPOSE**

The AAC shall make recommendations to the County Council on agricultural issues of importance to conserving, maintaining and enhancing the County's agricultural resource base and agricultural products industry. These issues will include but not be limited to:

1. Zoning of agricultural lands,
2. Implementation of Title 20 and the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan,
3. Regulation and taxes impacting the agricultural sector,
4. The county's efforts to establish, promote and implement a comprehensive agricultural protection/preservation program, and
5. Any other agricultural issues as requested by the County Council and/or consistent with the County's Comprehensive Plan.

### **4. OFFICERS - ELECTION**

The AAC shall elect a chairperson and vice-chairperson at the first fall meeting on or after October 1st. These officers are elected for terms of one year with no term limits.

In the event of a vacancy in the office of chairperson, the vice-chairperson automatically becomes the chairperson. A vacancy occurring in the office of vice-chairperson is filled by election of a replacement to serve for the un-expired portion of the term. A vacancy in an office automatically occurs upon the third consecutive unexcused absence of an officer from the regular meetings, unless otherwise agreed to by the majority of the committee membership.

**5. OFFICER DUTIES**

The chairperson has the responsibility of presiding at meetings of the AAC, placing items on the agenda, calling special meetings, canceling meetings, excusing members for valid reasons from attendance at AAC meetings and shall be the spokesperson for the committee.

The vice-chairperson assumes the responsibilities of the chairperson in his/her absence.

**6. MEETINGS**

Meetings will be at a time and location determined by the chairperson in consultation with the members. Meetings will normally be suspended May through September to accommodate farmer members.

Special meetings may be called by a majority vote of the members at a regular meeting. Special meetings may also be called by order of the chairperson upon giving written notice to other members at least 24 hours before the meeting. The written notice must state the time, place and business to be transacted. Final action can not be taken on any item that is not included on the agenda.

All meetings shall be open to the public.

**7. ATTENDANCE**

The chairperson, upon the fourth consecutive unexcused absence of any member from the regular meetings, shall bring forward the issue to the full AAC to consider a recommendation to the County Executive for removal or replacement of that member. In the event of regular recurring absences any member can bring the matter to the committee for discussion.

**8. QUORUM – DECISION MAKING**

A majority of currently appointed positions (one more than half) is required for a quorum to conduct regular business. Members may be counted as present when calling in to committee meetings.

Meetings of the Committee will be conducted using the latest version of Robert's Rules of Order, as modified by these business rules. Decision-making will endeavor to be by consensus with the positions of each member having been heard, respected, and seriously considered.

A simple majority of the voting members present, either in person or on the phone, shall prevail.

Any committee member or committee members may file for the record a minority opinion. Such minority opinion shall include the specific issue, proposed code language, or policy which is opposed and a rationale for the minority opinion. When possible, preferred alternative language or options should be included in the minority report. Members supporting the minority report shall be listed in the minority report.

## **9. ORDER OF BUSINESS**

The regular order of business is as follows:

- (a) Roll call
- (b) Determination of Quorum
- (c) Approval or modification of previous meeting summary
- (d) Open Session for the public to speak on agricultural issues
- (e) Staff reports or agency presentations
- (f) AAC discussion, deliberations and decision-making
- (g) Adjournment

## **10. OPEN SESSION FOR THE PUBLIC TO SPEAK ON AGRICULTURE ISSUES**

All meetings are to be open to the public and shall include time for the public to speak on Agricultural issues. The Chairperson or the committee, by consensus, may limit speakers to five (5) minutes per person per meeting to make their points.

## **11. REPORTING TO THE WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL**

- a. The AAC shall forward any proposed amendments or recommendations to the Whatcom County Code, deemed necessary to realize the purpose of the AAC or to implement the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan, to the County Council for consideration.

- b. A member may be chosen to represent the AAC in front of the County Council or a Council Committee regarding a particular matter. No member shall represent the committee without being duly authorized by the committee.
- c. The Chair (or Vice-Chair) will sign the report forwarded to the County Council to reflect the decision of the committee.
- d. Any AAC member may address the County Council on any issue relating to agriculture in Whatcom County. The member must state clearly if he/she is speaking on behalf of the AAC or in another capacity.

**12. MEETING SUMMARIES AND RECORDS**

Meeting summaries will be maintained as per (WCC 2.34.050). Meeting summaries shall be approved by the AAC and signed by the chairperson at the next meeting. Upon approval, the meeting summaries will be posted on the County's web site and forwarded to the County Council and other interested parties for their information.

**13. NOTICE - AGENDA**

Copies of the agenda will be placed in the mail to AAC members at least one week prior to the next meeting.

**14. STAFF**

The Planning & Development Services Department will provide staffing for the Agricultural Advisory Committee (2.34.060).

**15. AMENDMENT**

These rules may be amended by a majority vote of the AAC, provided notice of the proposed amendment has been placed in the mail or delivered to the members at least one week in advance.

LAST REVISED ON THE 12th of February, 2018

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Larry Davis

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Date