



CHILD AND FAMILY WELL-BEING TASK FORCE

JANUARY 23, 2024

Present: Allison Bishop, Anne Granberg, Beverly Porter, Chelsea Johnson, Christina Jackson, Colton Redtfeldt, Jamie Desmul, Katherine Orlowski, Jon Scanlon, Lyn Salazar, Pamela Jons, Ray Deck, Samya Lutz, Sarah Kidd, Sterling Chick, Tilda Doughty, Vesla Tonnesson, Karla Anderson, Megan Juenemann, Sallye Quinn

Not Present: Kayla Schott-Bresler, Jen Wright, Gregory Hansen, Kristi Dominguez, Jason Oldham, Monika Mahal, Samantha Cruz Mendoza, Sativa Robertson

Topic	Discussion/Outcome
<p>Welcome</p>	<p>Introductions, land acknowledgment, housekeeping, and review of agreements.</p> <p><u>Land Acknowledgement:</u> I would like to begin by acknowledging that we are here today on the ancestral homelands of Indigenous Peoples who have lived in the Salish Sea basin and the North Cascades watershed from time immemorial, in particular, the Lhaq'temish (LOCK-tuh-mish) people who we recognize today to be the Lummi Nation, the Nooksack Tribe, and Semiahmoo.</p> <p>May we be mindful of the inherent owners of this land, our children, who are our future. Our future stewards of the land and advocates for the generation to come. May that truth guide our work and efforts to improve the well-being of all families and children, native and non-native, living in this beautiful county.</p> <p>This land acknowledgment is not meant to be a substitute for authentic relationship-building and understanding. It is meant to introduce us to one way we can show respect and honor for the sacrifices of the first people of this land.</p> <p>Please join me in expressing the deepest respect for our indigenous neighbors, and gratitude for the enduring stewardship of our shared lands and waterways. https://www.lhaqtemish.org/ -Lhaq'temish Foundation</p> <p><u>Agreements:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family and self-care come first. • Be kind and gentle with yourself and others and assume everyone is coming from a positive place. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Everyone has the best intentions. ○ Listen with an open mind and heart. • Be mindful of this space. Step-in and step-out/Step-up and step-back. Offer your truth and insights and listen to others' truths and insights. • Treat each other with honor and grace. We are all working under difficult circumstances. • Embrace diversity. Remember that we all come from different backgrounds giving us different perspectives and only when we embrace that diversity can we develop creative solutions to address the child and family well-being needs in Whatcom County. • What is said here stays here. • Have fun. <p>Fist to Five Consensus Tool – Amended 4.25.22</p>





<p>Approve Meeting Minutes</p>	<p>Pamela Jons mentioned she and Jen Wright were both listed in the present and not present section of the minutes. Minutes from December 11, 2023 were approved as corrected.</p>
<p>Agenda Overview, Meeting Input/Evaluation</p>	<p>Evaluation tool: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSf59ubhijyXFZQJa0pXGgQQ5HhwJ1jamGFziQLXS6-zZC1hKQ/viewform</p> <p>The purpose of this Task Force was reviewed, as stated in the Ordinance. “The purpose of Whatcom County Child and Family Well-being Task Force is to continually review Whatcom governmental impact on children and family make recommendations for improvement for all departments.”</p>
<p>Community Shares, Shout-outs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allison shared a new dad's peer support group. Two dads are hosting a peer support group, monthly in person. The third Monday from 6:30-8:00 at the Ferndale Fire Station for fathers, those that self-identify as fathers or fathers to be. Started this month and had a few dad's join but are looking for more dads to join. • Tilda shared that Head Start and ECAP with the Opportunity Council are still enrolling for the school year. Send anyone who is interested a preschool program from now to June to Opportunity Council. The Roosevelt location has reopened. • Katherine Orlowski shared that she is grateful for all the task force members, new, old, attending, and not attending. When we work together we do make a difference as a community. Noticed there were vacancies for the task force, but I want to encourage the community for people to share with their friends because the work we do is important and I am truly grateful for everyone.
<p>Request for Task Force review and recommendations of 2025 Comp Plan: Chapter 7 - Economics and Chapter 12 - Climate Change and Resiliency</p>	<p>Matt Aamot with Whatcom County Planning and Development Services (PDS) shared that the Growth Management Act (GMA) requires that the county and cities update their respective comprehensive plans by June 30 2025. He is going to provide an overview of the update process and what PDS are asking the task force to do.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The GMA was passed by WA State legislature in 1991. • The GMA requires the county to adopt in consultation with the cities county wide planning policies. • The policies guide development of county and city comprehensive plans. • The County Comprehensive Plan needs to comply with the GMA and county wide planning policies. • Development regulations such as zoning or subdivision rules or critical area ordinances are amended or adopted to implement the Comprehensive Plan policies. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ When building permits come in for development they are review for compliance with the regulations. Developments like subdivisions and conditional use permits are reviewed for compliance with the Comprehensive Plan. • The GMA envision that future grow will be with directed to urban growth areas (UGA). There are ten UGAs in the county, seven that are associated with cities and three that are not associated with a city: Birch Bay, Cherry Point and Columbia Valley in the east county. The majority lands outside the UGA are forestry, agriculture, smaller areas that are mineral resource lands, and rural areas with varying degrees of density.



- Current county Comprehensive Plan has 10 chapters that will be updated by 2025. The state legislature passed House bill 1181 in the 2023 session and that added a New Climate Change and Resiliency chapter that the county will have to develop. Additionally, the County Council approved a resolution approving the shoreline chapter but it has not been approved by the Department of Ecology.
 - The chapters: Introduction (includes population and employment projections), Land Use, Housing, Capital Facilities, Utilities, Transportation, Economics, Resource Lands, Recreation, Environment, Climate Change and Resiliency (required by a 2023 GMA amendment).
- PDS is asking the CFWB Task Force to focus on the Economics chapter and the Climate Change and Resiliency chapter once it's been drafted. The county has a consultant and they will draft that this spring. You can also address other chapters as you deem appropriate.
- The GMA originally was passed in the early 1990's to address rapid growth and developing in some parts of our state. While growth varies over time, between 2013 and 2023 Whatcom County population grew by almost 30,000 people, from 206,000 to 236,000 that about a 14.5% increase. Going forward, the Washington State Office of Financial Management (OFM) provides high, medium and low population projections. The county will select a 20-year projection within that OFM range for planning person. OFMs medium puts the county at about 290,000 people at the year 2045, meaning that the county and cities will have to accommodate 54,000 more people over that 20-year planning period if the medium projection is selected. The county, along with the cities, will also develop employment projections through the year 2045.
- Where will all the growth go? The plan distribution through the current planning period, which is 2036. Three quarters of future population growth is planned for the cities and their UGAs, 9.5% to the two non-city UGAs (Birch Bay and Columbia Valley), and 16.1% outside of UGAs (in rural and resource lands). The county and cities will work together to allocate the future population and employment through 2045 through this update process. This will include a land capacity analysis to estimate whether existing UGAs have enough buildable area to accommodate the new projections. If they don't, the county and cities will consider increasing density and/or expanding UGAs.
- The state legislature passed HB 1220 a couple years ago. Counties and cities now have to plan for adequate housing for each income band: extremely low income, low income, moderate income, etc. In the past, county and cities looked at our land capacity without looking that specific affordability component and that really translates into are PDS going to allow more duplex, triplexes, fourplexes, townhomes, etc. In some areas around the nation, single-family zones are being rezoned to allow for this missing middle housing, accessory dwellings which tend to be more affordable.
- The basic components in the update process.
 - Public participation is an important part of the update. The county's consultant is developing a detailed public participation plan for the project.
 - PDS is asking multiple advisory committees to review and make recommendations on the Comprehensive Plan process.
 - PDS will do an Environmental Impact Statement. PDS has a scoping meeting to set forth the scope of that document.



- Comprehensive Plan will have a Planning Commission review. The committee, a nine-person citizen body, will hold public hearings and issue recommendations on the Comprehensive Plan amendments and then county council will adopt the amendments.
- Comprehensive Plans can be amended on an annual basis. However, the periodic update is only required every 10 years under the GMA. It will be done in 2025 and 2035.
 - Under a recent house bill, the county is required to do an implementation progress report to report how housing affordability has come along over the last five years. The report is due in 2030 and will include how affordability and availability has been addressed, permit timelines, and progress in meeting greenhouse gas emission reductions and vehicle mile traveled reductions.
- Current Draft Schedule that was built conjunction with the city planners.
 - Focuses on joint city and county tasks.
 - County has hired a consultant to develop work products including draft amendments to the various Comprehensive Plan chapters to comply with the GMA and to implement the county priorities.
 - Will be developing population and housing projections. Land capacity analysis and transportation model will be run by the Council of Governments to look at where traffic will flow based on growth patterns.
- The State of WA is providing grant funding for the Comprehensive Plan update in the county along with the cities developed a scope of work for the consultant services to assist the county in the update.
 - The scope includes 17 items.
 - Items 1-7 will be jointly funded by the county and cities, these are common tasks that benefit all the jurisdictions.
 - Items 8-17 will be funded by the county using state grant funds. The county council passed resolution 22-036 establishing priorities for the Comprehensive Plan update in August of 2022. The resolution is available online. This resolution sets priorities, one of the priorities relates to Equity, Environmental Justice and Economic Security.
- Matt shared a quote from the resolution that specifically addresses this task force asking to address climate change impact and economic insecurity. They are asking the task force to make recommendations on the existing economics chapter and the new, yet to be drafted climate change and resiliency chapter. PDS would like general comments by end of February. PDS staff and the consultant will develop specific wording changes because there are number of advisory committees that are addressing a number of chapters.
- PDS will take the task force's general recommendations, look at GMA language and county wide planning policies, and develop specific wording changes. Those changes will be brought back to the task force sometime in the summer with additional opportunity to weigh in once the actual language is developed.
- The County Executive sent a letter to advisory committees in late November asking the committees to focus on GMA compliance and the council resolution priorities. And administratively PDS also added addressing grammar and outdated or incorrect information. The county Comprehensive Plan update is a



large endeavor with a state deadline of June 30 2025. A focus approach is necessary to proceed through the process in a timely manner. PDS are asking all advisory committees including this task force to provide time for public comment on the county Comprehensive Plan at your meetings.

Matt requested questions.

- Samya asked for a quick overview of where they are at regarding development of the county wide planning policies.
 - Matt answered the county and city planning group is working on amendments to the county wide planning policies. The consultant is working on two specific items that were added to state law: climate change provisions and the protection of cultural resources (added by HB 1717). We have not seen any work products on those two items. The consultant is working on a public participation plan, one of the differences is the legislature is saying to county and cities they need to reach out to overburdened communities and vulnerable populations, not just the notice in the newspaper but make some effort to engage more. The consultant will be working that into the public participation plan. They are also working on a technical report on population projections going forward. They will be using that OFM medium county wide projection and will come up with some preliminary allocations to cities and the rest of the county and do that for employment too. Will look at land capacity, including a more focused look at land for a variety of housing for income bands and the capacity for missing middle housing. Then we will be working on the environmental impact statement.
- Vesla asked to learn more specifically about the ask of the task force.
 - Asked to review Chapter 7 of the County Comprehensive plan which is “Economics” and the chapter on climate change and resiliency which has not been drafted yet. Chapter 7 also touches on housing and unemployment/underemployment. Make recommendations about how the county could address economic insecurity. The consultant and county staff will take all the recommendations, draft final language and will bring back for review this summer.
- Vesla asked if there is an estimate one when the Climate Change and Resiliency chapter will be done.
 - Matt answered hopefully this spring so recommendations for that chapter will be due once there is language to review.
- Vesla asked do you have a list of the other groups you will be reaching out to?
 - Matt answered they have a number of advisory committees and the consultant is working on the public participation plan which will include outreach to other groups. Right now, we are engaging official County advisory groups. We will wait for the public participation plan and the strategies they have for reaching out to other groups. Vesla asked for the public participation plan to be shared with advisory groups drafted.
- Pamela mentioned she was also interested in knowing who else they were asking, to make sure that we are some voices but not all the voices they want.
- Colton clarified that task force recommendations are due at the end of February for chapter 7 in particular and that the due date for the climate chapter recommendations is TBD.
- Ray advised that the links for the current comp plan and chapter 7 are in the chat: [Chapter7](#) and [Current Comprehensive Plan](#)



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ray stated that PDS should expect recommendations on the housing chapter as well. Family homelessness is a focus of the healthy children's fund and of this task force. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ No state has fewer housing units per household than Washington. Average across the country is 1.14 housing units per household Across Washington we are 1.06 housing units per household. Last in black home ownership and also one of the highest states for homelessness. Relevant for families and is on our agenda a lot. Matt requested the general comments by the end of February. <p>Vesla asked are we moving to how the task force is going to do this.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ray suggested to refer it to one of our subcommittees to draft some recommendations, probably Rapid Response. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Allison says that it is a rapid response because we were just notified of this request for recommendations in January. We would need to vote on recommendations at the next meeting. Ray requests who wants to facilitate a meeting of the rapid response subcommittee. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Colton volunteered. He will convene a meeting of the rapid response subcommittee to draft recommendations. ▪ Ray suggests that task force members can read and send recommendations or come to the meeting. Prior to the February 26th meeting the subcommittee will share the draft recommendations to the whole group and we'll vote during the February meeting. ▪ Colton suggests a work group session sometimes the week of the 12th. Message Colton if you are interested helping out.
<p>Task Force individual introductions for new and current members, Board Buddies program introduction and next steps</p>	<p>Each task force member and Health Department employees introduced themselves individually.</p> <p>Ray stated that there are 4 co-chairs himself, Christina, Vesla and Colton.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are two-year terms. Christina and Ray are on their second year. Vesla and Colton, this is their first meeting as co-chairs. 30 membership seats. The quorum is 16. If we lose our quorum suddenly the meeting may end. • Refresh on our OPMA training, that will maybe be February or March. Ray mentioned they talk more about in the future. • The task force uses a consensus developing tool called Fist to Five to make decisions. Will review in more detail when the task force has a decision to make, which will be in February. <p>Ray explained the subcommittees.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues and Policy Subcommittee. Focuses on in depth topics. Helps to assemble agenda items. • Health Children's Fund subcommittee. Focuses on the HCF. • Rapid Response - drafting committee. Used to draft a memo or when needing to produce work quickly. Comes together as needed so doesn't have regular meetings. • Looking to reboot the Accountability subcommittee to track the recommendations that the task force has made throughout its history and how those recommendations have been responded to. Will get a co-chair leader shortly.



<p>CFWB Task Force representative for the Public Health Advisory Board (PHAB)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vesla shared information about the Public Health Advisory Board (PHAB). Provides recommendations and works with the county council on all things related to health in our community. PHAB has representation from other commissions, boards and task forces. • Vesla shared she has been a member for a while, would love to offer this opportunity to others as she is am stepping into the co-chair role. • Sterling has been on PHAB for five years. Every county has a Health Department and Health Board. The Health Board here is the County Council. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Legislation was passed that the health board needs to be a balance mixed between elected officials and sector experts, people with lived experience, stakeholder agencies, consumers, etc. Not required if a county has a charter government, which Whatcom does. The council elected not to become a mixed Health Board. ○ PHAB was given more duties, including evaluating all the policies of Health and Community Services, reviewing the budget and fees, and making recommendations for new policies. ○ There are 10 committees that make up the spokes of the advisory board. They facilitate and coordinate to help make easier the work of the other task forces and commissions, housing advisory board, business and commerce, domestic violence commission, etc. PHAB meetings are at 7am on Thursdays every other month. Every alternate month they meet with the county council as the health board. Interested task force member must go through an application process and be approved by council. • Reach out to Sterling and Vesla if interested in more information.
<p>Healthy Children's Fund update</p>	<p>Implementation Update/Task Force subcommittee update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sarah shared Chelsea has been working interlocal agreement, working with the original Healthy Whatcom professional development hub action team. Developing a long-term plan for professional development for early learning and care professionals in our community. Have been collecting feedback and convening childcare stakeholders for two years. They are going to present the plan they've been developing to legal and finance in hopes of moving forward another potential interlocal agreement or contract or RFP to implement this professional development. • Allison has been working to develop a consistent system of peer to peer support. A solicitation was recently released to seek an organization to train members of our community to offer peer to peer support for caregivers, parents and the workforce supporting young children and their caregivers. • Also developing an RFP seeking a local backbone agency to manage the peer to peer support groups, participants, group leaders, operations, programming, training in Whatcom County. We are hoping that will go out by the end of first quarter. • Also working on a solicitation for expanding access to doula services for Medicaid eligible families. This would include doula mentorship around trauma informed practices. • The innovation fund is still underway, we are in conversation with finance and legal. Eric, special projects manager, has been leading the writing on that with Kayla from the Exec's Office. We are still hoping that is release in the first quarter.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are still working on working a number of RFPs in early learning and care section of the plan and vulnerable children we are hoping to share more about next month.
<p>ARPA Childcare Updates</p>	<p>Sarah shared about the licensed home care expansion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contracting with the Imagine Institute to provide training and mentorship as well as payment for startup licensure costs for individuals preparing to start a licensed child care business. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requesting data from DOH to see where the licensed care facilities are in the county so we have more specific mapping available when we are considering funding. Finalizing a contract to have the HCF evaluation plan written. They put out a solicitation and received some proposals. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The agency has 3 months to create the evaluation plan, everyone will have a chance to provide feedback. WCHCS staff Amy Hockenberry will guide the process. They have finalized the agreement with DOH to produce an over sample of the Child Wellness Survey to continue to create some baseline data for our work moving forward to evaluate our success. Healthy Whatcom is helping to develop a process that enhances community involvement in the RFP process. Jamie asked in the chat is there any update on movement about looking how to possibly supplement low teacher wages? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sarah answered that staff are working with a child care consultant to crunch actual numbers crunched around subsidies to teacher wages. Hope to have a draft at the end of the month. Tilda said last month there was conversation around public good and what the HCF can fund. Did a work group form? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sara answered that we are not sure whether a change ease contracting. No work group formed but have had discussion with Ray, Colton and Kayla. Want to make sure there are no unintended consequences. Ray shared that a child and family's issues advocate connected to this group met with Rep. Rule and her staff. They will be doing some research as other communities are interested in this question. Sallye asked for a summary of the public good issue. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ray explained the HCF passed a year ago with a primary goal of improving kindergarten readiness by making child care more affordable, more accessible and higher quality. Named some specific strategies, such as teacher pay. The issue is that the WA Constitution prohibits a gift of public funds except in two circumstances: to accomplish the core functions of government and to be in service of the "poor and infirm". County's legal provided an interpretation that would make it challenging to execute some of the straight forward approaches to child care affordability. For example, child care subsidies could only be for those at or near poverty level which is not the desire and intent of the HCF. Supposed to have more of a global impact on child care affordability. An idea emerged that perhaps child care is a core function of government in that we have a department within state government that is responsible for early



	<p>learning programs, including funding and licensing. Providing clarity on this issue could benefit other municipalities. Questions are being explored and he will share more when he has more information.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ray circled back to an idea that his board at Skookum uses to connect and orient new members: pairing a veteran member with each new member. The “board buddy” can reach out between meetings to discuss how the group works. Calling on veteran members who are not co-chairs to make yourself available to a new member. If interested, email Ray. Jamie, Beverly, Tilda and Katherine agreed to participate. • Colton also circled back to confirm volunteers for the Rapid Response subcommittee. He had Vesla, Samya, Katherine and Sara volunteer.
Public comment	No public comment
Closing	Meeting adjourned at 5:01 pm
Next Meeting	<p>Next regular meeting: February 26, 2024 <u>Location: Hybrid</u></p>

