



WHATCOM COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

MAY 2, 2024

- Present:** Sterling Chick (Chair), Julie Terry, Kelli Carroll, Madison Emry, Jon Scanlon, Chris Kobdish, Emily O'Connor, Ashley Thomasson, Greg Thompson, Shu-Ling Zhao, Leah Wainman, Christine Espina, Guy Occhiogrosso, Robyn Phillips-Madson
- Absent:** Teri Bryant, Jeffery Hart, Joni Hensley, Adrienne Renz, Edna Revey, Vesla Tonnessen, Michael Massanari

Topic	Discussion/Outcome
Call to Order	Sterling Chick presented a land acknowledgment. Roll call of Public Health Advisory Board (PHAB) members.
Approve Minutes	Minutes from the March 7, 2024 meeting were approved by unanimous consent with the following correction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statistic shared by Greg Thompson during discussion of fentanyl emergency was that there is a 40-fold (not 40 percent) increase in death rate within the first 2 weeks of being released from prison.
Fentanyl Emergency – County Council Resolution and Executive Order Update	<p>Deputy Executive Kayla Schott-Bresler addressed concerns about the scale of the executive order. She indicated we already have resources to implement some of the actions listed in the order, but we will need to find additional resources for others. She also invited feedback from PHAB and other groups on where they'd like to see more or less investment of existing resources.</p> <p>Whatcom County Health and Community Services (HCS) Director Erika Lautenbach acknowledged that not all 47 items on the executive order can be accomplished at once. She detailed some of the continuing and upcoming work, as well as medium/long-term work. For continuing work, she noted evidence-based prevention in Whatcom County schools and litter clean up in public spaces, particularly sensitive areas like the creek behind the HCS building on Girard Street. She also mentioned the institution of an internal readiness group, which will focus on the executive order and involve extensive coordination between the city, the county, tribal governments and other partners. Coming soon will be a multi-jurisdiction/multi-media substance use disorder and overdose prevention education campaign. There is already a contract in place and the campaign will be rolled out before June 30.</p> <p>Leah Wainman mentioned that the city is moving its tiny village, which is currently located by the Sportsplex. She expressed concerns that the new location is less safe/clean and asked if the people transitioning will receive support. Erika indicated that the county is not involved in this process, but does provide funding for the city to use however needed.</p> <p>Erika also announced that HCS will be purchasing additional lock bags for personal safe storage of prescriptive opioids and will be working with pharmacies and primary care providers to distribute those. In addition, they will be installing a Naloxone vending machine outside the HCS building on Girard Street to expand community wide access. This will be moved to the Way Station when it opens in September. The machine will be funded by a grant from the state and will also be outfitted with other personal health items like</p>

condoms and respiratory virus supplies. Erika also mentioned that HCS has access to another \$40,000 in an ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) allocation for Naloxone and hopes to deploy more of it into the community.

Christine Espina asked if there had been discussion about including fentanyl test strips in the vending machine and Erika indicated that the communicable disease team is looking to increase purchasing of these, as our current supply would not keep up with demand. However, she said fentanyl test strips are currently available through the Syringe Services Program (SSP).

Erika said HCS will also be ramping up education around the proper disposal of unused medication and indicated that there is currently a request for proposal (RFP) out to create an online community resource website or expand the existing one. This will provide service and treatment options for those who use fentanyl. In addition, the educational campaign will promote protections of the Good Samaritan Overdose Law.

Erika also emphasized the need to develop additional emergency shelter options by next winter and indicated HCS is working on that, along with the After Action Report (AAR) for last winter. As well, they are looking to increase transportation services for the jail hospital, as there has been high demand for that. She also said that a new grant from the state will allow HCS to add one additional team member to the LEAD (Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion) program. And, HCS will be partnering with Lummi Nation to support their secure stabilization and withdrawal management recovery center.

By the end of the month, Erika said HCS will submit an operational plan to the County Council and Executive to outline how they will implement all of this. She said it will require significant staff and resources, including partners outside of the department. She emphasized the need to sequence and staff it appropriately in order to have good outcomes. She also mentioned the importance of having success metrics in place.

Leah asked for clarification as to whether all of this information is intended to update PHAB or if action is being requested. Erika responded that it is just an update, but indicated that she thinks there will be opportunities for PHAB to engage. She said the Opioid Task Force and Multi-Agency Coordination (MAC) Group are the primary ones working on the plan, but wanted PHAB to be aware of the priorities. Leah asked if any members of those groups were present and could share. Chris Kobdich responded, saying education is important and grants/funding are critical as we don't have enough resources. She indicated workforce development is the biggest component for success. She also said it is difficult to staff non-profits as wages are not competitive, so it's hard to stay ahead of the work.

Erika then shared some long-term goals, including increasing recovery housing and implementing strategies to reduce the number of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness. She said the executive order includes more than we can address by the end of this year. She also emphasized the need to think more holistically about the drivers of substance abuse disorder and how we can tackle both the prevention work and the community factors that impact it.

Councilmember Jon Scanlon shared that he's been focusing on the revenue part of it. He invited feedback from PHAB regarding anything they think can help from the state or federal government. He said he would like to put together a letter from the County Council and Executive with some specific requests, as we can't do this alone and will need state and federal funding.

Shu-Ling Zhao noted that there are a lot of actions needed to allow the work to move forward efficiently and asked how PHAB can meet its public charge to review certain things without being a barrier to the process. She asked if they should expect to review some of the budget recommendations, performance metrics, etc. Erika responded that it would be helpful for the Communications subgroup to be involved in the public education campaign review to make sure materials will make sense to the community. She said they will also

	<p>send the operational plan to PHAB once complete. She invited PHAB members to share their feedback on this, particularly if they find that anything is missing. In addition, she would like their feedback on metrics.</p> <p>Erika also said HCS will likely form a work group around what the therapeutic campus at Division Street will look like, including the 23-hour crisis facility, and would like PHAB to be represented in that group. She concluded by saying there will be a range of asks for PHAB, from reviewing to actively participating in the creation of plans.</p> <p>Kayla noted that with the fast timeline, it is unlikely PHAB will have a formal opportunity to review the operational plan before HCS submits it to the Executive. However, she said if PHAB feels there needs to be a phase of review, there's a possibility they could build that into the timeline after HCS submits the plan to the Executive. Since it is a long-term plan, she said it will be continuously revised and PHAB policy input is always welcome, especially in regard to what might be missing.</p> <p>Greg Thompson noted that Ashley Thomasson asked what the timeline for approval was, once the plan is submitted on May 31. Kayla said she expects the timeline for approval to be very quick since the Executive's Office will be working closely with HCS throughout the month and continuously looking at the plan as it develops. But, she said they can build in more process time if necessary.</p> <p>Councilmember Scanlon indicated that information is helpful, but he doesn't want to slow anything down. He said he could add an agenda item to the next Health Board meeting or Public Works and Health Committee meeting if an informational update is needed. He also mentioned he spoke with Congressman Larson last week, who indicated he is working on 3 or 4 pieces of legislation regarding fentanyl. Jon expressed that this would be a great time to communicate with Congressman Larson's office regarding barriers like workforce issues, so they can work those into the legislation from the start.</p> <p>Sterling pointed out that methamphetamine contamination and xylazine are also things we need to think about.</p>
<p>Health Director/Health Officer Update</p>	<p>Erika announced that there are 2 joint Health Board/PHAB meetings this year that have significant scheduling conflicts. The June 25 meeting conflicts with the All Hands Whatcom Opioid Summit. Erika will work with Councilmember Buchanan and the clerk of the Council to try and find an alternative date. Emily O'Connor agreed it would be great if PHAB and Council members were able to attend the All Hands event. Erika said there is also a conflict with the October 1 meeting because the Local Board of Health (BOH) training is the same week in Leavenworth. She indicated those 2 calendar appointments might change in the coming weeks.</p> <p>Erika also addressed the recent news articles regarding a sexual harassment lawsuit involving a former employee of Whatcom County. She indicated that the HCS management team will be meeting with Executive Sidhu to talk about the incident and make sure that we have the right pathways in place so staff know how and where to report misconduct.</p> <p>Leah thanked Erika for brining this up and said it would be great to have continued conversation around this issue throughout the year, not just when an incident occurs. She suggested providing further training opportunities.</p> <p>Greg announced that he will be resigning from his position as Co-Health Officer for HCS at the end of June to pursue a unique job opportunity overseas. He expressed his gratitude for getting to work with HCS, PHAB and the community as a whole. He indicated that Dr. Amy Harley will continue in her role as Co-Health Officer and will be working to secure additional support in order to continue the work that he has been doing.</p>

	<p>In addition, Dr. Thompson shared a graph from the Whatcom Overdose Prevention website regarding overdose related deaths in Whatcom County. He concluded that, so far, 2024 is looking better than 2023, with fewer overdose related deaths. The data that was shared is available at:</p> <p>https://whatcomoverdoseprevention.org/data/</p> <p>Sterling asked if this improvement could be related to Naloxone becoming widely available and Dr. Thompson agreed that was a possibility. Dr. Thompson also clarified that people are accessing healthcare just as much for overdose, but we are seeing fewer deaths.</p> <p>Julie Terry agreed that Naloxone is very likely making a difference since responses to overdoses remain high, but deaths are dropping. She noted that Naloxone has often already been administered by the time EMS arrives. Erika mentioned that there has been a lot of messaging about not using substances alone so that Naloxone can be administered by someone else if necessary.</p>
<p>Discuss PHAB Subgroup Next Steps</p>	<p>Sterling shared that part of the reason for doing subgroups is that we don't have enough meetings of PHAB as a whole to accomplish all the work. He indicated that some of the subgroups have already met.</p> <p>Christine confirmed that the Board/Commission Assessment Implementation subgroup met a few weeks ago and discussed how to coordinate with the other subgroups to learn more about the hub and spoke model. She acknowledged the capacity issue and expressed the need to solidify what each of the spokes are doing and how to best communicate between the groups. Sterling mentioned the possibility of combined meetings between some of the subgroups and suggested setting aside some time at the next PHAB meeting to present some of what they've done so far.</p> <p>Sterling also indicated that the Communications subgroup has not yet met and the Equity subgroup has a meeting scheduled later this month. Shu clarified that the Equity group will be meeting the first week of June. She also suggested taking some time at the next PHAB meeting to think about the work plan for 2025. She proposed coming up with a strategic plan as an advisory group. Emily agreed it would be helpful to have a good chunk of time together to talk about how we are operationalizing the new RCW requirements for PHAB.</p> <p>Leah mentioned that PHAB has historically had a day-long retreat. She said she would love to hear from members of the other groups about the work they're doing and get regular updates. Sterling mentioned the idea of a dashboard where members could go to get that information without having to use up too much time during meetings to share updates. Leah clarified that she'd like to hear more topic-specific updates directly from the community members who are working on them.</p> <p>Sterling also announced that they have formed another ad hoc subgroup involving a data platform that HCS is putting together called Whatcom Community Health Insights (WCHI). He asked Amy Hockenberry, Health Information & Assessment (HIA) Supervisor, to share about WCHI, but she was unavailable to comment. Sterling said the ad hoc subgroup is going to look at the data platform and encouraged PHAB members to send feedback to Amy.</p> <p>Councilmember Scanlon addressed some of the questions previously brought up regarding subgroups and quorums and the Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA). He is putting together a questionnaire for advisory groups regarding experience with OPMA because other counties and cities apply it in different ways to advisory groups. He will be sending that out and then using the feedback to develop whatever is needed.</p> <p>Councilmember Scanlon also indicated he has gotten a lot of questions around OPMA and how it works. He suggested bringing in one of the County's lawyers to a future PHAB meeting to answer some of these questions. He also mentioned that the Child and Well Being Task Force has used subgroups very effectively</p>

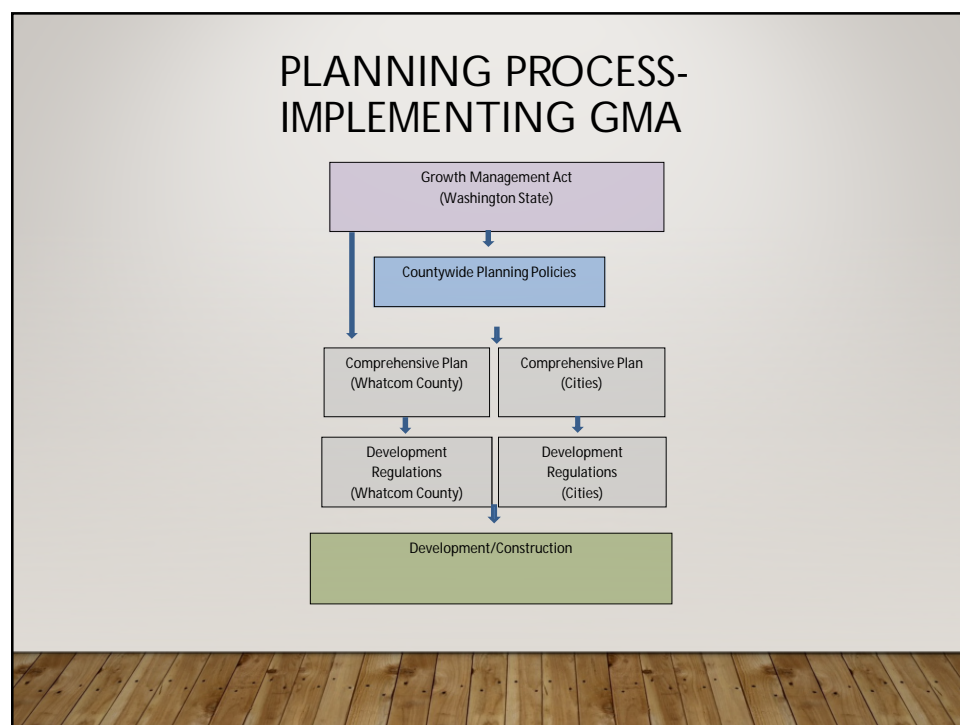

	<p>and would be a good model to follow. He said our lawyers have indicated that as long as it is not a quorum of the overall group, subgroups can meet. Sterling explained that subgroups act as a funnel to get things to the larger group so everything eventually ends up in the quorum, but subgroups make things go faster.</p> <p>Christine reiterated the value of a PHAB retreat. Sterling supported this idea and proposed putting together a survey to figure out when a good time might be. Erika indicated that HCS staff can work on this.</p>
2025 Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan Update	<p>Matt Aamott with Planning & Development Services presented an update on the 2025 Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan. Slides are appended to these minutes.</p> <p>Sterling mentioned that Erika suggested having some volunteers from PHAB come up with a set of expectations and priorities on health-related issues for the Comprehensive Plan.</p>
Public Comment	<p>The following people spoke:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natalie Chavez • Misty Flowers
Final Comments/Next Steps	<p>Sterling closed with three reminders:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If PHAB members want to give feedback on WCHI, email Amy Hockenberry. 2. If PHAB members want to be part of the ad hoc subgroup or give feedback on the Comprehensive Plan, email Erika Lautenbach. 3. We will work on putting together a PHAB retreat
Adjourn	<p>The meeting adjourned at 8:31 AM.</p>
Next Meeting	<p>The next PHAB meeting is currently scheduled for June 6, 2024 at 7 AM</p>

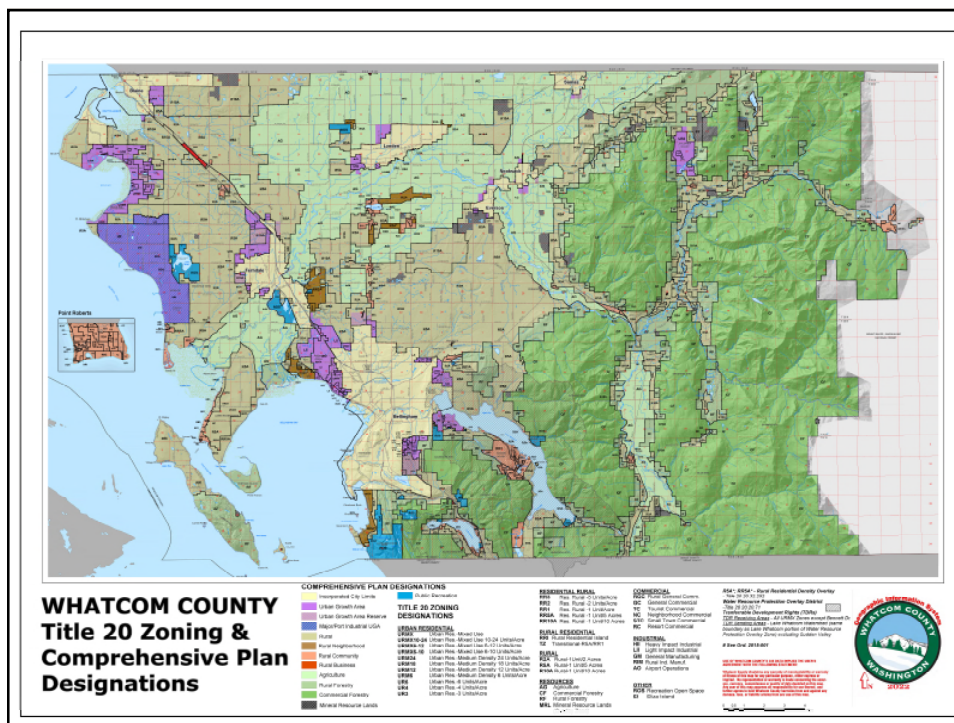
**WHATCOM COUNTY
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
2025 UPDATE**

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT
SERVICES

PRESENTATION TO THE
PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY
BOARD

MAY 2, 2024

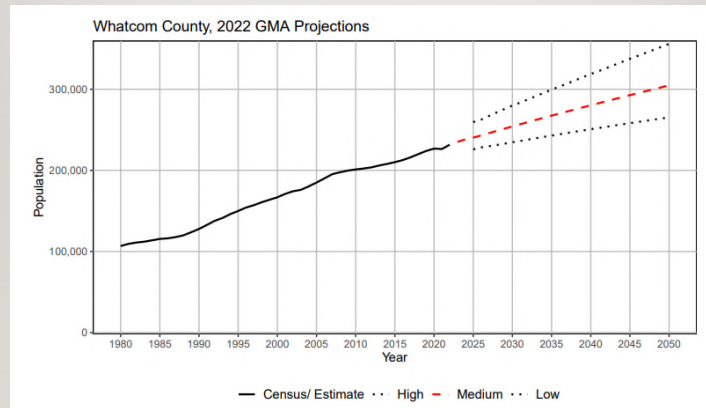




COMP PLAN CHAPTERS

- Introduction (includes population and employment projections)
- Land Use
- Housing
- Capital Facilities
- Utilities
- Transportation
- Economics
- Resource Lands
- Recreation
- Environment
- NEW Climate Change and Resiliency (required by a 2023 GMA amendment)

POPULATION PROJECTIONS



CURRENT COMP PLAN DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION GROWTH

- 74.4% in the seven city UGAs;
- 9.5% in the two non-city UGAs (Birch Bay and Columbia Valley); and
- 16.1% outside of UGAs (in rural and resource lands).

COMP PLAN UPDATE PROCESS

Plan Adoption Process

- Public participation
- Advisory Committee review
- Environmental Impact Statement
- Planning Commission review
- County Council adoption

Plan Updates

- Docket of annual amendments
- Periodic Update every 10 years (2025, 2035, etc)

SCOPE OF WORK FOR CONSULTANT SERVICES

1. Population and housing projections
2. Employment projections
3. Land capacity analysis
4. SEPA environmental analysis
5. Housing element revisions
6. Tribal cultural resources and participation
7. Climate Change
8. 40-Year planning strategy
9. **Whatcom County Council priorities (Resolution 2022-036)**
10. Mineral Resource Lands assessment
11. Whatcom County 20-Year Capital Facilities Plan update
12. Subarea plans
13. The Columbia Valley UGA – Planned Light Impact Industrial area
14. Open space within and between UGAs
15. Limited areas of more intensive rural development
16. Essential public facilities
17. Public participation plan

COUNTY COUNCIL RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION NO. 2022-036

ESTABLISHING PRIORITIES FOR WHATCOM COUNTY'S 2025 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

WHEREAS, the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA) requires Whatcom County to develop a Comprehensive Plan for managing population growth and development, which was adopted in May of 1997; and

WHEREAS, the GMA requires Whatcom County to review urban growth areas (UGAs) under RCW 36.70A.130(3) to be able to accommodate population and employment growth projected for the 20-year planning period; and

WHEREAS, the GMA requires Whatcom County to periodically review and revise its Comprehensive Plan and development regulations under RCW 36.70A.130(1); and

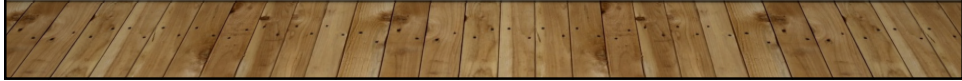
WHEREAS, on August 9, 2016, Whatcom County adopted Ordinance 2016-034 updating the Comprehensive Plan; and

WHEREAS, Whatcom County should conduct an evaluation of the current Comprehensive Plan outlining progress made towards achieving goals and policies, and identify remaining areas of opportunity for improvement; and

WHEREAS, the GMA requires Whatcom County to review, and if needed, revise its Comprehensive Plan and development regulations on or before June 30, 2025, and every ten years thereafter; and

WHEREAS, the current Comprehensive Plan contains chapters on many intersectional issues impacted by climate change, equity, and economic security including Land Use, Housing, Capital Facilities, Utilities, Transportation, Economics, Resource Lands, Recreation, and Environment; and

[Resolutions | Whatcom County WA - Official Website](#)



**COUNTY COUNCIL PRIORITIES
RESOLUTION 2022-036**

1. Equity, Environmental Justice, and Economic Security
2. Climate Change (County Resolution and Climate Action Plan)
3. Habitats for Fish and Wildlife
4. Economic Security and Affordable Housing
5. Agriculture, Food System, and Food Security
6. Forests, Timber Economy, and Healthy Ecosystems
7. Natural Hazards Mitigation and Emergency Response
8. Urban Growth Areas / Growth Patterns
9. Wetland Mitigation
10. Impact fees (may be addressed separately)



HOUSE BILL 1220

Housing and Emergency Shelters

Requires planning for

- Moderate, low, very low, and extremely low-income households
- Emergency housing, emergency shelters, and permanent supportive housing

RCW 36.70A.070(2)(a)

HAPT

State Housing for All Planning Tool (HAPT)

In response to HB 1220, the State Department of Commerce developed the HAPT

- Local jurisdictions enter an overall Countywide population projection for 2045
- The HAPT tool calculates each jurisdictions share of low, moderate, and higher income housing and emergency housing/shelters
- Local jurisdictions can modify the allocations to various urban growth areas and rural areas, but must accommodate the overall needed housing in each income category

HOUSE BILL 1181

Climate Change

Requires a new climate change and resiliency chapter in the Comp Plan

- Greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) reduction sub-element
- Resiliency sub-element

RCW 36.70A.070(9)

HOUSE BILL 1181

GHG Reduction Sub-element

- Reductions in overall GHG emissions generated by transportation and land use within the jurisdiction
- Reductions in per capita vehicle miles traveled within the jurisdiction
- Prioritize reductions that benefit overburdened communities in order to maximize the co-benefits of reduced air pollution and environmental justice

RCW 36.70A.070(9)(d)

HOUSE BILL 1181

Resiliency sub-element

- Protect and enhance natural areas to foster resiliency to climate impacts
- Protect, and enhance community resiliency to climate change impacts, including social, economic, and built environment factors, that support adaptation
- Address natural hazards created or aggravated by climate change, including sea level rise, landslides, flooding, drought, heat, smoke, wildfire

RCW 36.70A.070(9)(e)

QUESTIONS?

**Whatcom County
Comprehensive Plan**

Adopted August 9, 2018
Whatcom County Planning and Development Services
Updated November 2022

