

# PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date		Staff Contact	
11/12/2009		GREG AUCUTT	
Subject:			
Review of the proposed scope and content of the next Bellingham Comprehensive Plan update process.			
Attachments:			
1. Staff Memo			
2. Staff Proposal			
3.			
4.			
5.			
Meeting Type		Category	
<input type="checkbox"/> Public Hearing		<input type="checkbox"/> Legislative	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public Meeting		<input type="checkbox"/> Quasi-judicial	
<input type="checkbox"/> Work Session		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Only	
<input type="checkbox"/> Briefing			
Clearances		Initials	Date
Tim Stewart, Director		GA for TS	10-29-09
Alan Marriner, Legal		AMM	11/2/09
Previous Commission Meeting or Action:			
Recommended Action:			
Review staff proposal and provide comments and direction for review by the City Council.			



## PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

Planning Division

210 Lottie Street, Bellingham, WA 98225

Telephone: (360) 778-8300 Fax: (360) 778-8302

### MEMORANDUM

Date: October 29, 2009

To: Bellingham Planning Commission

From: Greg Aucutt, Senior Planner *GA*

**RE: Nov. 12 Public Meeting on 2011 Comprehensive Plan Update**

---

State law requires the City to update our 2006 Comprehensive Plan by December 1, 2011. The current plan was completely rewritten in 2002-2005 and adopted in June 2006. It is fully GMA compliant.

Staff intends to begin the update process in the first half of 2010. Before beginning, we want to provide the Planning Commission, City Council and the public with opportunities to review the proposed scope of the update and the process that we propose to use. This is being done so that all stakeholders are clear about the scope of the update and the process that will be used to complete the project by the GMA deadline.

The 2011 plan update will need to address, at a minimum, the following issues:

- a new 20-year planning period, 2011 to 2031
- new 2031 population, housing and employment growth forecasts
- a revised urban growth area boundary
- new policies related to land uses near the Bellingham International Airport
- new Shoreline Master Program goals

The attached document contains staff's proposal for the comprehensive plan update – content and process. The scope and process was developed by staff to reflect current limits on staff resources and other work program priorities that focus on implementing the current plan goals and policies.

## 2011 BELLINGHAM COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE CONTENT AND PROCESS PROPOSAL

### I. Why are we updating the 2006 Comprehensive Plan?

Cities and counties are required to update comprehensive plans every seven years. In our case, an updated plan must be approved by December 1, 2011 to comply with State Growth Management Act.

### II. What GMA requirements must be included in the updated Comprehensive Plan?

The City has done a good job updating our plan to incorporate changes in the GMA over the years. Even so, there are some changes that must be reflected in the next plan update, including:

- a new 20-year planning period (2011-2031);
- new 2031 population, housing and employment growth forecasts;
- new Shoreline Master Plan goals;
- changes to the city's urban growth area boundary.

### III. What are the key assumptions that staff has used to develop the scope of the update process?

Assumption 1. Staff considers this project to a minor update to the 2006 plan, focusing on implementation of the existing goals and policies.

Assumption 2. The 2006 plan was developed over a 3-year period (2002-2005) with extensive public participation. The foundation of the plan is still appropriate, including:

- moderate growth forecasts, focusing on infill and development at the edge as annexations occur to accommodate population/employment growth;
- protection of neighborhood character;
- goals and policies for urban village planning/development;
- protection of environmentally sensitive areas (including Lake Whatcom);
- transportation mode split goals and policies that emphasize walking, biking and public transportation, and
- capital facilities planning for public services such as police, fire, library, etc., and public facilities such as parks, trails and open spaces.

Assumption 3. Environmental review for the project will rely in large part on the City's 2004 Comprehensive plan EIS and on the County's 2009 EIS for the urban growth areas, supplemented by additional studies as needed. This is appropriate because: 1) the planning area that we are looking at has actually gotten smaller since the last plan update in 2006;

2) the City's share of total county growth is significantly less than in the current plan; 3) the employment growth forecast is slightly less than the number used in the current plan.

Assumption 4. Because the scope of the update is relatively minor, the review process will focus on the Planning Commission and City Council. The public will be able to provide comments at hearings before both bodies.

In addition, staff will use the Department's web site to disseminate information about the project, including meeting schedules, meeting agendas, and other project materials. The web site will also provide an opportunity for the public to provide comments to staff, the Planning Commission and City Council through use of a "comment tracker".

Staff will be available to attend MNAC and neighborhood association meetings.

#### IV. Proposed Update Scope

Some actions are needed throughout the plan to meet the GMA update requirements. These include:

- *updating all the general information throughout the plan;*
- *using the new planning period, 2011 to 2031. (current plan covers 2002-2022);*
- *including the adopted population (116,200) growth forecasts throughout the plan; NOTE: the County has not yet formally adopted new population growth forecasts. They are expected to do so by December 1.*
- *including new employment growth forecast throughout the plan; and*
- *updating all maps and text related to the urban growth area boundary to be consistent with County decisions made this year.*

In addition to the general actions shown above, the individual chapters will be updated as follows:

##### Chapter 1, Framework Goals and Policies:

- *Update general text*
- *Add new SMP goals and policies*
- *Delete outdated goals and policies*

##### Chapter 2, Land Use:

- *Update general information*
- *Include new population, housing, employment growth forecasts*
- *Show where and how we will accommodate about 3,200 more new residents than the current plan.*
- *Include a summary of the County-wide land capacity analysis*

- *Incorporate information and policy direction from the Airport Annexation Study and the Urban Services and Annexation Phasing Plan*
- *Update Lake Whatcom goals and policies*
- *Add policies related to land uses next to Bellingham International Airport.*
- *Delete outdated goals and policies*

#### Chapter 3, Transportation:

- *Update inventory of facilities section*
- *model impacts of new population/employment growth forecasts and revised UGA boundary*
- *Incorporate new urban village plans*
- *Update cost estimates for facilities improvement projects*
- *Delete outdated goals and policies*

#### Chapter 4, Housing:

- *Update population and economic information*
- *Update housing supply and affordability information*
- *Update 'special needs' information*
- *Delete outdated goals and policies.*

#### Chapter 5, Capital Facilities:

- *Update facility needs based on new planning period, new population and employment growth forecasts and new UGA boundary*
- *Refine and adopt Urban Services and Annexation Phasing Plan*
- *Update inventory of public facilities to reflect changes since 2006*
- *Update six-year Capital Facilities Plan to be consistent with 2010 budget*
- *Delete outdated goals and policies*

#### Chapter 6, Private Utilities and Services

- *Update inventory of existing service providers to reflect changes since 2006*
- *Delete outdated goals and policies*

#### Chapter 7, Parks, Recreation and Open Space: *(Note this chapter was completely updated in 2008)*

- *Revise plan to reflect new planning period, new population and employment growth forecasts and new UGA boundary*

## Chapter 8, Community Design:

- *Revise information to reflect new planning period, new population and employment growth forecasts and new UGA boundary*
- *Update community design "issues" section to include new design review board, multifamily and City Center design guidelines, urban village planning.*
- *Delete outdated goals and policies.*

DRAFT