SUBJECT:
Proposed amendments to the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan, Chapter 6 and 7 goals and policies related to the Custer Provisional Urban Growth Area

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Proposed ordinance

SEPA review required? (x) Yes ( ) NO
SEPA review completed? (x) Yes ( ) NO
Should Clerk schedule a hearing? (X) Yes ( ) NO
Requested Date: 1/25/05
A hearing must be held if the Council changes the Planning Commission recommendation (WCC 20.10.110).

SUMMARY STATEMENT:
Pursuant to RCW 36.70A.130, Whatcom County is required to review and revise its comprehensive plan, as needed, by December 1, 2004. The proposed amendments constitute a portion of Whatcom County’s 7-year review. The amendments to the Transportation and Economic Chapter goals and policies were made by the County Council for consistency with other amendments adopted regarding the Custer Provisional Urban Growth Area. Alternate Exhibit A is recommended by staff to preserve the generic transportation policies and eliminate only those that pertain to the Custer UGA.

Note: The subject proposal is one of a number of comprehensive plan amendments initiated this year. These amendments must be considered concurrently by the County Council so that the cumulative effect of the various proposals can be evaluated (RCW 36.70A.130). Additionally, pursuant to the review schedule established in WCC 20.10.120, final Council action on these amendments should occur on or about November 30.

COUNCIL ACTION TAKEN:

1/11/2005: Introduced


Related County Contract #:  


Ordinance or Resolution Number (this item): Ord. #2005-023
ORDINANCE NO. 2005-023

AMENDING THE OFFICIAL WHATCOM COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, CHAPTER 6 – TRANSPORTATION AND CHAPTER 7 - ECONOMICS, TO REVISE GOALS AND POLICIES RELATING TO THE CUSTER PROVISIONAL URBAN GROWTH AREA

WHEREAS, the Growth Management Act requires counties and cities to review and, if needed, revise comprehensive plans to ensure continued compliance with the GMA (RCW 36.70A.130); and

WHEREAS, it is also appropriate to review the comprehensive plan in light of new information and changed County priorities; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to RCW 36.70.390, legal notice regarding the proposed Custer PUGA amendments was published in the Bellingham Herald on August 28, 2004; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission held a public hearing on the proposed amendments on Thursday, September 9, 2004 and a work session on October 14; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission has evaluated the proposed amendments and considered all testimony.

WHEREAS, the County Council has considered the Planning Commission’s Findings of Fact & Reasons for Action, Conclusions, and Recommendations; and

WHEREAS, after conducting an additional public hearing, the County Council has determined that a modified proposal would better serve the public interest;

WHEREAS, the County Council has adopted the following Findings and Conclusions:

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

1. Notice of the Planning Commission public hearing for the proposed amendments related to the Custer PUGA was published in the Bellingham Herald on August 28, 2004.

2. Notice was mailed to all property owners within 300 feet of the Provisional UGA on August 31, 2004.


4. A determination under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) was issued on September 30, 2004.

5. Pursuant to RCW 36.70A.110, counties are required to designate urban growth areas within which urban growth will be encouraged and outside of which growth can only occur if it is not urban in nature.

6. Pursuant to RCW 36.70A.040, Whatcom County adopted the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan on May 20, 1997, designating the Custer area as a Provisional Urban Growth Area, subject to review and reconsideration five years after adoption.
7. It has been over seven years since the adoption of the County Comprehensive Plan and an adequate master plan for the site has not been completed.

8. A Rural Comprehensive Plan designation would offer greater protection to the rural character and environmental features of the Custer area.

9. An analysis of industrial land supply concludes that there is an adequate supply of industrial land in Whatcom County without the Custer Provisional UGA.

10. Related goals and policies in the Transportation and Economics chapters of the Comprehensive Plan need to be amended for consistency with the decision to eliminate the Custer Provisional UGA.

11. The SEPA Official has reviewed the proposed additional amendments and determined that they will have no greater environmental impact, therefore no additional SEPA review is required.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Whatcom County Council that:

Section 1. The Official Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan be amended as shown in Exhibit A.

Section 2. Adjudication of invalidity of any of the sections, clauses, or provisions of the Comprehensive Plan shall not affect or impair the validity of the plan as a whole or any part thereof other than the part so declared to be invalid.

ADOPTED this 25 day of January, 2005.

[Signatures]

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Laurie Caskey-Schreiber, Council Chair

() Approved  () Denied

Pete Kremen, Executive

Date: 1-28-05
## EXHIBIT A

### GOAL 6P:
Provide for safe, efficient movement of commercial vehicles in Whatcom County.

**Policy 6P-1:** Support and participate in studies to evaluate freight movement which supports economic development.

**Policy 6P-2:** Investigate **Consider proposals for an east/west rail freight corridor.**

**Policy 6P-3:** Develop and implement a program of incentives such as fast-track permitting for truck/rail transfer facilities when they contribute to achievement of other transportation goals in this chapter and it can be shown that negative impacts from the facilities can be mitigated.

**Policy 6P-4:** Support commercial and industrial development adjacent to existing transportation corridors, including I-5 and rail and air facilities **as long as such facilities do not reduce safe, efficient movement of vehicles in Whatcom County.**

**Policy 6P-5:** To better facilitate dispersal of commercial truck traffic, support the Lynden border crossing to open 24 hours a day.

### GOAL 6Q:
Support intermodal connections (i.e., truck/rail facilities) that promote use of air, water, and/or rail freight where feasible.

**Policy 6Q-1:** Encourage education of the general public as to the value of intermodal facilities.

**Policy 6Q-2:** Encourage the location and design of intermodal facilities for efficient freight transfer and access to the state and interstate highway, rail and ferry systems.

**Policy 6Q-3:** Recognize the Custer area as a potential intermodal transportation site.

**Policy 6Q-4:** Support convenient access to ports, airports, other intermodal freight facilities, and international border crossings to enhance freight mobility.

**Policy 6Q-5:** Incorporate needs for access to ports and other intermodal freight facilities into capital facilities planning.

### GOAL 7C:
Ensure adequate infrastructure to support existing and future business development and evolving technology.

**Policy 7C-1:** Continue to work with all involved parties to ensure an adequate water supply and distribution system to support economic growth.

**Policy 7C-2:** Encourage the provision of adequate transportation infrastructure including roads to all industrial sites.

**Policy 7C-3:** Work with service providers for a dependable electric power supply, alternative energy sources, communications, and evolving technology to support existing and future business development.

**Policy 7C-4:** Encourage location of industrial areas especially where sewer and water service and all weather access can be readily provided when necessary.
Policy 7C-5: Support the efforts of the PUD #1 and area communication and cable companies to get a fiber optic network throughout Whatcom County.

Policy 7C-6: Investigate proposals for an east-west rail line between Cherry Point and Sumas, Abbotsford, B.C., including stops in Custer, Lynden, and Sumas.

Policy 7C-7: Participate in the ongoing, implementation and operation of the countywide water resources management body (WRIA #1) for Whatcom County.

Policy 7C-8: Recognize the importance of governmental services and facilities to support economic development. Update capital facility plans and appropriate adequate funding for public facility upgrade or expansion necessary to serve projected population and business growth.

Policy 7C-9: Recognize the importance of integrated transportation planning to economic development.