



Questionnaire

WHATCOM 2031 ■ Comprehensive Plan Update ■ October 2008

Demographics

Please respond to the questions below to help us understand more about you.

Which area do you live in or are you closest to (please check one)?

Community	Live In	Live Near
Bellingham		
Birch Bay		
Blaine		
Cherry Point		
Columbia Valley/Kendall		
Everson		
Ferndale		
Lynden		
Nooksack		
Sumas		
Rural area: _____		
Other: _____		
Zip Code: _____		

How long have you lived in Whatcom County (please check one)?

- 0–2 years
 6–9 years
 More than 20 years
 3–5 years
 10–19 years

Which area do you work in or are you closest to (please check one)?

Community	Work In	Work Near
Bellingham		
Birch Bay		
Blaine		
Cherry Point		
Columbia Valley/Kendall		
Everson		
Ferndale		
Lynden		
Nooksack		
Sumas		
Rural area: _____		
Other Inside County: _____		
Zip Code: _____		
Outside County: _____		

How old are you (please check one)?

- 17 years or younger
 45–64 years
 18–24 years
 65–74 years
 25–44 years
 75 years and over

Community Values

There are many factors that contribute to quality of life in Whatcom County including some listed below.

What do you value most about Whatcom County? Please check the five most important features to you.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community character | <input type="checkbox"/> Parks, trails, open spaces, and recreational opportunities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Availability of jobs | <input type="checkbox"/> Natural environment features |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial/shopping opportunities | <input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural activities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A variety of housing choices and prices | <input type="checkbox"/> Forest lands |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation system | <input type="checkbox"/> Rural character |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public safety services | <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural activities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Educational opportunities | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clean water and air | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Healthcare services | _____ |

Population Growth

Whatcom County is home to 191,000 persons as of April 1, 2008. Over the last 20 years (1988 to 2008) Whatcom County grew by over 71,000 persons or an average annual growth rate of 2.36%. The County is required by the Growth Management Act to update its Comprehensive Plan, and is planning for a 2031 horizon year. The State Office of Financial Management has forecast a low (218,981), medium (264,400), and high (329,759) population for the year 2031.

Conditions that could contribute to lower population growth may include: slow economic growth, constrained water or energy resources, and others. Conditions that could contribute to higher population growth may include: greater economic growth, Baby Boomer retirement, relative attractiveness of the County to other locations, and others.

Since citizens can choose where they wish to live, the projections are not exact targets that the County is attempting to achieve. Rather, selection of a projection can help the County guide and manage growth in a way that maintains the county's quality of life.

County and city representatives have preliminarily identified a Whatcom County forecast of 251,490 for the year 2031. This would be 60,490 more people than today, representing a growth rate of 1.2% per year. Do you think this level of growth is (please check one):

- Too little About right Too much
 Don't know

Why?

The Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan Update will need to be consistent with the State Growth Management Act (GMA), which guides population growth into urban areas and seeks to protect agricultural and forest lands, critical areas, open spaces, and rural character.

In rural areas would you say that population growth in the last 10 years has been (please check one):

- Too little About right Too much
 Don't know

Which urban growth scenario do you prefer (please check one)?

- Small cities and small urban areas in Whatcom County become their own economic centers so there would be less of a need to go to Bellingham. More population can locate in these small cities and small urban areas to be near jobs.
- Bellingham continues to be the primary job and population center in the County, and Bellingham's population grows at a faster rate than the rest of the county.
- Each community takes a share of future population growth that is similar to their share of existing population.
- Other: _____

Where are the best places for population growth (please check all that apply)?

- Bellingham Everson Sumas
 Birch Bay Ferndale Rural Areas
 Blaine Lynden Other:
 Columbia Nooksack _____
Valley/Kendall

Where are the worst places for population growth (please check all that apply)?

- Bellingham Everson Sumas
 Birch Bay Ferndale Rural Areas
 Blaine Lynden Other:
 Columbia Nooksack _____
Valley/Kendall

People have different housing preferences and needs over their lifetime—young adults, families, retirees, etc.

In 20 years, in what type of housing do you see yourself living (please check one)?

- single family apartment
 townhome mobile home
 condominium Other: _____

Economy

The Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan Update will need to be consistent with GMA goals to promote economic opportunity for all citizens. Most employment growth is likely to occur in cities and urban areas where services are available, but some employment growth is also expected in rural areas consistent with rural character and setting.

What type of job growth is needed in Whatcom County? (please check three that are most important to you)

- Retail/Commercial Tourism
 Office Farming
 Light Manufacturing Forestry
 Heavy Manufacturing Mining
 High Technology / Research and Development Cottage/ home based businesses
 Other: _____

Where are the best places for job growth (please check all that apply)?

- Bellingham Ferndale
 Birch Bay Lynden
 Blaine Nooksack
 Cherry Point Sumas
 Columbia Rural areas
Valley/Kendall
 Everson Other: _____

Where are the worst places for job growth (please check all that apply)?

- Bellingham
- Birch Bay
- Blaine
- Cherry Point
- Columbia Valley/Kendall
- Everson
- Ferndale
- Lynden
- Nooksack
- Sumas
- Rural areas
- Other: _____

Natural Environment

Whatcom County offers a beautiful and ecologically diverse natural environment that is to be protected in both urban and rural areas of the county.

What aspects of our County’s natural environment are you most concerned about? Please pick the five most important features to you.

- Air quality
- Flood hazard areas
- Forest lands
- Ground water/ aquifers
- Landslide hazard areas
- Marine waters and bays
- Rivers, streams, lakes
- Fish habitat
- Water quality
- Wetlands
- Wildlife habitat
- Scenic vistas
- Rural landscapes
- Other: _____

Transportation

Transportation systems have to ensure that people can move around by cars, public transit, bicycle, and on foot. Freight must also move efficiently via trucks and train. Transportation systems can affect the urban and rural landscape.

Please prioritize the following elements of the transportation system based on what you think needs the most improvement within your community and between communities.

Transportation System Feature	Within my community			Between communities		
	High Priority	Medium Priority	Low Priority	High Priority	Medium Priority	Low Priority
a. Bicycle Paths or Routes						
b. Pedestrian Paths, Trails, or Sidewalks						
c. Public Transit						
d. Roadway Connections (New)						
e. Increased Roadway Capacity						
f. Roadway Maintenance						
g. Freight Movement						
h. Commuter Trains						
i. Other:						

Please share with us any comments about the Whatcom County transportation system:

County Vision

Whatcom County will be revising its GMA Comprehensive Plan vision statement for a new planning horizon year of 2031.

To the right is Whatcom County’s current vision directed to the year 2022.

Whatcom County is a place where urban growth is concentrated in urban areas, where there is a distinct boundary between urban and rural uses, where agricultural use is encouraged, where resource lands and water resources are protected, and where land use changes are brought about through incentive programs. Rural areas are peaceful and quiet with less traffic and congestion than in urban areas. There is low-density development with open spaces allowing for privacy. A sense of community is retained and local control is exercised in land use decisions.

What do you like most about the vision statement?

What do you dislike about the vision statement?

What are we missing in the vision statement?

Envision Whatcom County in 2031. Imagine that your vision for Whatcom County has been realized. What is different? What makes it a better place to live?

Other Comments

If you have other comments about any topic, please write them below.

Please return the questionnaire to the address below by October 24, 2008. Thank you for your participation. For more information, contact: Kate Koch, Public Involvement Coordinator, Whatcom County Planning & Development Services (360) 676-6907, pds@co.whatcom.wa.us, www.co.whatcom.wa.us/pds/2031

Fold here.



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Place
Stamp
Here

Whatcom County, Planning & Development Services

Attention: Kate Koch

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Bellingham, WA 98226

Tape
here.