

WHATCOM COUNTY
Planning & Development Services
5280 Northwest Drive
Bellingham, WA 98226-9097
360-778-5900, TTY 800-833-6384
360-778-5901 Fax



Mark Personius
Director

Memorandum

March 29, 2021

To: The Whatcom County Planning Commission
From: Matt Aamot, Senior Planner
Through: Mark Personius, Director
RE: Six-Year CIP Amendment (PLN2021-00010)

The Six-Year Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for Whatcom County Facilities addresses County parks, trails, activity centers, maintenance & operations, general government buildings and sites, Sheriff's Office, emergency management, adult corrections, juvenile detention, transportation, and stormwater facilities. The Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan indicates that the Six-Year CIP should be updated every two years. The last CIP update was approved by the County Council in 2020. The next comprehensive update is scheduled for 2022. However, the County has identified an Emergency Management project it wants to complete before the next CIP update in 2022.

The subject proposal is to amend the Six-Year Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for Whatcom County Facilities 2021-2026 (Appendix F of the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan) as follows:

- Add the Whatcom Unified Emergency Coordination Center Re-Roof Project.

Planning & Development Services is requesting Planning Commission consideration of this amendment on April 8, 2021.

Thank you for your review and consideration of this matter. We look forward to discussing it with you.

**WHATCOM COUNTY
PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT SERVICES**

**Capital Facility
Comprehensive Plan Amendments**

PROPOSED FINDINGS OF FACT AND REASONS FOR ACTION

Background Information

1. The proposal is to amend the Six-Year Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for Whatcom County Facilities 2021-2026 (Appendix F of the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan) as follows:
 - a. Add the Whatcom Unified Emergency Coordination Center Re-Roof Project.
2. Notice of the subject amendments was submitted to the Washington State Department of Commerce on March 22, 2021.
3. The SEPA Official determined on March 22, 2021 that the amendment is within the scope and intent of the determination of non-significance (DNS) issued in 2020 for the Six-Year CIP update.
4. Notice of the Planning Commission hearing for the subject amendments was published in the Bellingham Herald on March 25, 2021.
5. Notice of the Planning Commission hearing was posted on the County website on March 26, 2021.
6. Notice of the Planning Commission hearing was sent to the County's e-mail list on March 26, 2021.
7. The Planning Commission held a public hearing on the subject amendments on April 8, 2021.
8. Pursuant to WCC 22.10.060(1), in order to approve the proposed comprehensive plan amendments the County must find all of the following:

- a. The amendment conforms to the requirements of the Growth Management Act, is internally consistent with the county-wide planning policies and is consistent with any interlocal planning agreements.
- b. Further studies made or accepted by the Department of Planning and Development Services indicate changed conditions that show need for the amendment.
- c. The public interest will be served by approving the amendment. In determining whether the public interest will be served, factors including but not limited to the following shall be considered:
 - i. The anticipated effect upon the rate or distribution of population growth, employment growth, development, and conversion of land as envisioned in the comprehensive plan.
 - ii. The anticipated effect on the ability of the county and/or other service providers, such as cities, schools, water and/or sewer purveyors, fire districts, and others as applicable, to provide adequate services and public facilities including transportation facilities.
 - iii. Anticipated impact upon designated agricultural, forest and mineral resource lands.
- d. The amendment does not include or facilitate spot zoning.

Growth Management Act

9. The Growth Management Act (GMA) establishes planning goals in RCW 36.70A.020 to guide adoption of comprehensive plan amendments.
10. GMA planning goal # 12 is to "Ensure that those public facilities and services necessary to support development shall be adequate to serve the development at the time the development is available for occupancy and use without decreasing current service levels below locally established minimum standards" (RCW 36.70A.020(12)).
11. The subject amendments consist of updating the Six-Year CIP for Whatcom County Facilities for the 2021-2026 planning period by adding an emergency management re-roofing project. Updating the CIP is one step in the process of planning capital facilities, including emergency management facilities, to serve the people of Whatcom County.

County-Wide Planning Policies

12. County-Wide Planning Policy K-1 indicates that, as part of the comprehensive planning process, the County must identify appropriate land for public facilities that meets the needs of the community including recreation, transportation and human service facilities.
13. The Six-Year CIP identifies such improvements as contemplated by the County Wide Planning Policies.

Interlocal Agreements

14. An interlocal agreement between the Port of Bellingham, the City of Bellingham, and Whatcom County entitled "Interlocal Agreement for the Exclusive Use of the Special Purpose Facility at the Airport Industrial Park" (County contract # 201312007) governs use of Whatcom Unified Emergency Coordination Center, including roof replacement or repair.

Further Studies/Changed Conditions

15. An updated Six-Year CIP was adopted for County owned or operated facilities in 2020. The subject proposal is a minor amendment to the CIP to address an identified need to re-roof an emergency management facility.

Public Interest

16. The goal of the Six-Year CIP for Whatcom County Facilities is to plan for County owned or operated facilities, including emergency management buildings. Maintaining emergency management facilities is in the public interest.

Spot Zoning

17. The subject proposal does not involve rezoning property.

PROPOSED CONCLUSION

The subject Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan amendments are consistent with the approval criteria in WCC 22.10.060.

RECOMMENDATION

Based upon the above findings and conclusions, staff recommends Approval of Exhibit A, amending the Emergency Management Chapter of the Six-Year Capital Improvement Program for Whatcom County Facilities 2021-2026 (Appendix F of the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan).

Chapter 6 – Emergency Management

Existing Emergency Management Space

The 2020 inventory of Sheriff’s Office, Division of Emergency Management space is 24,000 square feet, located at the Whatcom Unified Emergency Coordination Center (WUECC). Rented by and shared between both Whatcom County and the City of Bellingham, the WUECC is comprised of 2,000 square feet of office space and an additional 22,000 square feet of support facilities (used for meetings, training, exercises, and during emergencies). The WUECC serves as the Emergency Operations Center for both the County and the City.

Table 11. Existing Emergency Management/EOC Facilities

Site No.	Facility Name	Square feet
1	Whatcom Unified Emergency Coordination Center 3888 Sound Way, Bellingham	24,000

Future Needs

The Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan does not contain a level of service standard for emergency management facilities. Rather, Comprehensive Plan Policy 4D-4 is to:

Maintain adequate facilities for daily emergency management activities and, during an emergency or disaster, for the emergency operations center. The facilities will provide sufficient space for activities relating to emergency/disaster planning, mitigation, response and recovery. Existing facilities may be expanded, remodeled, and/ or new facilities developed in response to changing need.

The County will budget for improvements to such facilities as needed.

Proposed Improvement Projects

There ~~is one~~ ~~are no~~ emergency management capital improvement projects planned over the next six years, as shown below.

<u>Emergency Management</u>	<u>Funding Source</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2024</u>	<u>2025</u>	<u>2026</u>	<u>Total Cost</u>
<u>1. Whatcom Unified Emergency Coordination Center Re-Roof Project</u>	<u>1, 2, 3</u>	<u>405,842</u>						<u>405,842</u>
	<u>TOTAL</u>							

Funding Sources

- 1. Real Estate Excise Tax (REET)
- 2. City of Bellingham
- 3. Port of Bellingham

Chapter 11 – Total Costs

Total Costs for the six-year planning period are shown below.

Table 17. Total Costs for the Six-Year Planning Period

	Total Costs 2021-2026	Percent of Total Costs
Parks, Trails, and Activity Centers	11,869,457	4.78%
Maintenance and Operations	812,375	0.33%
General Government Buildings and Sites	52,528,865	21.13%
Sheriff's Office	21,730,000	8.74%
Emergency Management	<u>405,842</u>	<u>0.16%</u>
Adult Corrections	ϕ	<u>0.00%</u>
Juvenile Detention	0	0.00%
Transportation	53,797,000	21.64%
Stormwater Facilities	<u>12,213,000</u>	<u>4.91%</u>
TOTAL	<u>248,554,461</u> 248,148,619	100.00%

The County plans to undertake capital improvement projects costing approximately \$248 million between 2021 and 2026, which will be financed with a combination of local, state, federal, and other funding sources.