

**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, AICP**  
Director

SEPA Distribution List  
SEP2021-00049  
Date of Issuance: May 20, 2021

Please review this determination. If you have further comments or questions, phone the responsible official at (360) 778-5900. Please submit your response by the comment date noted on the attached notice of determination.

WA State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation via email  
Stephanie Jolivet, [stephanie.jolivet@dahp.wa.gov](mailto:stephanie.jolivet@dahp.wa.gov)  
[SEPA@dahp.wa.gov](mailto:SEPA@dahp.wa.gov)

SEPA Unit, WA State Department of Ecology, Olympia via email  
[sepaunit@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:sepaunit@ecy.wa.gov)

WA State Department of Fish and Wildlife  
Wendy D. Cole via email [wendy.cole@dfw.wa.gov](mailto:wendy.cole@dfw.wa.gov)

WA State Department of Natural Resources via email  
Rochelle Goss, [sepacenter@dnr.wa.gov](mailto:sepacenter@dnr.wa.gov)  
Brenda Werden, [Brenda.werden@dnr.wa.gov](mailto:Brenda.werden@dnr.wa.gov)

SEPA Unit, WA State Department of Transportation, Burlington via email  
Roland Storme, [stormer@wsdot.wa.gov](mailto:stormer@wsdot.wa.gov)  
Judy Johnson, [JohnsJu@wsdot.wa.gov](mailto:JohnsJu@wsdot.wa.gov)

Lummi Nation Natural Resources  
Merle Jefferson, Sr. via email - [merlej@lummi-nsn.gov](mailto:merlej@lummi-nsn.gov)  
Tamela Smart - [tamelas@lummi-nsn.gov](mailto:tamelas@lummi-nsn.gov)

Nooksack Indian Tribe  
George Swanaset, JR via email - [george.swanasetjr@nooksack-nsn.gov](mailto:george.swanasetjr@nooksack-nsn.gov)  
Trevor Delgado via email - [tdelgado@nooksack-nsn.gov](mailto:tdelgado@nooksack-nsn.gov)

Skagit River System Cooperative  
Nora Kammer via email – [nkammer@skagitcoop.org](mailto:nkammer@skagitcoop.org)

City of Bellingham  
Kurt Nabbeffeld via email - [knabbefeld@cob.org](mailto:knabbefeld@cob.org)  
Brent Baldwin via email - [bbaldwin@cob.org](mailto:bbaldwin@cob.org)  
Clare Fogelsong via email - [cfogelsong@cob.org](mailto:cfogelsong@cob.org)

City of Ferndale  
Haylie Miller via email – [hayliemiller@cityofferndale.org](mailto:hayliemiller@cityofferndale.org)

Applicant  
Cliff Strong via email - [cstrong@whatcomcounty.us](mailto:cstrong@whatcomcounty.us)

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**Mark Personius, AICP**  
Director

## SEPA Determination of Nonsignificance (DNS)

**File:** SEP2021-00049

**Project Description:** Proposed amendments to the Whatcom County Code Title 20 (Zoning) to allow and regulate tiny homes & to allow duplexes in planned unit developments.

**Proponent:** Whatcom County

**Address and Parcel #:** Countywide

**Lead Agency:** Whatcom County Planning & Development Services

**Zoning:** Multiple Zones

**Comp Plan:** Multiple Land Use Designations

**Shoreline Jurisdiction:** Multiple Shoreline Designations

The lead agency for this proposal has determined that no significant adverse environmental impacts are likely. This proposal will also be reviewed for compliance with all applicable Whatcom County Codes (WCC) which regulates development activities, including but not limited to: WCC 15 – Buildings and Construction, WCC 16.16 – Critical Areas, WCC 17 – Flood Damage Prevention, WCC 20 – Zoning, WCC 21 - Land Division Regulations, WCC 23 – Shoreline Management Program, the Whatcom County Development Standards and/or the Washington State Stormwater Manual. Mitigation may be a requirement of Whatcom County Code. Pursuant to RCW 43.21C.030(2)(c), an environmental impact statement (EIS) is not required. This decision was made following review of a completed SEPA environmental checklist and other information on file with the lead agency. This information is available to the public on request.

Pursuant to WAC 197-11-340(2), the lead agency will not act on this proposal for 14 days from the date of issuance indicated below. Comments must be received by 4:00 p.m. on June 3, 2021 and should be sent to: Cliff Strong via email at CStrong@co.whatcom.wa.us

**Responsible Official:** Mark Personius, mpersoni@co.whatcom.wa.us

**Title:** Director

**Telephone:** 360-778-5937

**Address:** 5280 Northwest Drive  
Bellingham, WA 98226

**Date of Issuance:** May 20, 2021

**Signature:** 

An aggrieved agency or person may appeal this determination to the Whatcom County Hearing Examiner. Application for appeal must be filed on a form provided by and submitted to the Whatcom County Current Planning Division located at 5280 Northwest Drive, Bellingham, WA 98226, during the ten days following the comment period, concluding June 14, 2021.

You should be prepared to make a specific factual objection. Contact Whatcom County Current Planning Division for information about the procedures for SEPA appeals.

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**Mark Personius, AICP**  
Director

SEPA Determination of Nonsignificance (DNS)  
Legal Notice

To be published one time only on: **May 20, 2021**

CHARGE TO: Whatcom County Planning & Development Services  
5280 Northwest Drive  
Bellingham, Washington 98226  
**Acct #AP25580**

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**WHATCOM COUNTY GIVES PUBLIC NOTICE THAT THE FOLLOWING SEPA THRESHOLD DETERMINATION OF NON-SIGNIFICANCE (DNS) HAS BEEN ISSUED TODAY SUBJECT TO THE 14 DAY COMMENT PERIOD CONCLUDING ON JUNE 3, 2021.**

**File:** SEP2021-00049

**Project Description:** Proposed amendments to the Whatcom County Code Title 20 (Zoning) to allow and regulate tiny homes and to allow duplexes in planned unit developments.

**Proponent:** Whatcom County

**Address and Parcel #:** Countywide

**Lead Agency:** Whatcom County Planning & Development Services

**Zoning:** Multiple Zones

**Comp Plan:** Multiple Land Use Designations

**Shoreline Jurisdiction:** Multiple Shoreline Designations

**ANY PERSON OR AGENCY MAY APPEAL THE COUNTY'S COMPLIANCE WITH WAC 197-11 BY FILING AN APPEAL WITH THE WHATCOM COUNTY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES LOCATED AT 5280 NORTHWEST DRIVE, BELLINGHAM, WA 98226. APPEALS MUST BE MADE WITHIN 10 DAYS AFTER THE END OF THE COMMENT PERIOD.**



SEP 2021 - 00049

## SEPA Environmental Checklist

### Purpose of Checklist:

Governmental agencies use this checklist to help determine whether the environmental impacts of your proposal are significant. This information is also helpful to determine if available avoidance, minimization or compensatory mitigation measures will address the probable significant impacts or if an environmental impact statement will be prepared to further analyze the proposal.

### Instructions for Applicants:

This environmental checklist asks you to describe some basic information about your proposal. Please answer each question accurately and carefully, to the best of your knowledge. You may need to consult with an agency specialist or private consultant for some questions. You may use "not applicable" or "does not apply" only when you can explain why it does not apply and not when the answer is unknown. You may also attach or incorporate by reference additional studies reports. Complete and accurate answers to these questions often avoid delays with the SEPA process as well as later in the decision-making process.

The checklist questions apply to all parts of your proposal, even if you plan to do them over a period of time or on different parcels of land. Attach any additional information that will help describe your proposal or its environmental effects. The agency to which you submit this checklist may ask you to explain your answers or provide additional information reasonably related to determining if there may be significant adverse impact.

### Use of Checklist for Non-Project Proposals:

For non-project proposals (such as ordinances, regulations, plans and programs), complete the applicable parts of sections A and B plus the Supplemental Sheet for Non-project Actions (Part C). Please completely answer all questions that apply and note that the words "project", "applicant", and "property or site" should be read as "proposal", "proponent" and "affected geographic area", respectively. The lead agency may exclude (for non-projects) questions in Part B – Environmental Elements that do not contribute meaningfully to the analysis of the proposal.

**A. Background**

1. Name of proposed project, if applicable: Affordable Housing Amendments (Tiny Homes/Duplexes in PUDs)
2. Name of applicant: Whatcom County  
Applicant phone number: 360.778.5942  
Applicant address: 5280 Northwest Drive  
City, State, Zip or Postal Code: Bellingham, WA 98226  
Applicant Email address: [cstrong@co.whatcom.wa.us](mailto:cstrong@co.whatcom.wa.us)
3. Contact name: Cliff Strong, Senior Planner  
Contact phone number: 360.778.5942  
Contact address: 5280 Northwest Drive  
City, State, Zip or Postal Code: Bellingham, WA 98226  
Contact Email address: [cstrong@co.whatcom.wa.us](mailto:cstrong@co.whatcom.wa.us)
4. Date checklist prepared: 5/12/2021
5. Agency requesting checklist: Whatcom County
6. Proposed timing or schedule (including phasing, if applicable): The Planning Commission is tentatively scheduled to hold a public hearing and consider the proposed code amendments on 6/24/21. The County Council will then hold a public hearing and consider the amendments sometime in July/Aug 2021.
7. Do you have any plans for future additions, expansion, or further activity related to or connected with this proposal? Yes  No   
If yes, explain:
8. List any environmental information you know about that has been prepared, or will be prepared, directly related to this proposal:  
None.
9. Do you know whether applications are pending for governmental approvals of other proposals directly affecting the property covered by your proposal?  
Yes  No   
If yes, explain.
10. List any government approvals or permits that will be needed for your proposal, if known.  
Adoption of an ordinance by the County Council adopting the code amendments. - Project#: PLN2021-00011 (RE)
11. Give brief, complete description of your proposal, including the proposed uses and the size of the project and site. *There are several questions later in this checklist that ask you to describe certain aspects of your proposal. You do not need to repeat those answers on this page.* (Lead agencies may modify this form to include additional specific information on project description.)  
Proposed amendments to the Whatcom County Code Title 20 (Zoning) to allow and regulate tiny homes & to allow duplexes in planned unit developments.

12. Location of the proposal. Give sufficient information for a person to understand the precise location of your proposed project, including a street address, if any, and section, township, and range, if known. If a proposal would occur over a range of area, provide the range or boundaries of the site(s). Provide a legal description, site plan, vicinity map, and topographic map, if reasonably available. While you should submit any plans required by the agency, you are not required to duplicate maps or detailed plans submitted with any permit applications related to this checklist.

Countywide

## B. Environmental Elements

### 1. Earth

- a. General description of the site:

- Flat  
 Rolling  
 Hilly  
 Steep Slopes  
 Mountainous  
 Other

- b. What is the steepest slope on the site (approximate percent slope)?

N/A

- c. What general types of soils are found on the site (for example, clay, sand, gravel, peat, muck)? If you know the classification of agricultural soils, specify them and note any agricultural land of long-term commercial significance and whether the proposal results in removing any of these soils. N/A

- d. Are there surface indications or history of unstable soils in the immediate vicinity? Yes   
No

If so, describe. N/A

- e. Describe the purpose, type, total area, approximate quantities and total affected area of any filling excavation or grading proposed. N/A

Indicate source of fill. N/A

Indicate where excavation material is going. N/A

- f. Could erosion occur as a result of clearing, construction, or use?

Yes  No

If so, generally describe. N/A

- g. About what percent of the site will be covered with impervious surfaces after project construction (for example, asphalt or buildings)? N/A

- h. Proposed measures to reduce or control erosion, or other impacts to the earth, if any: None

### 2. Air

- a. What types of emissions to the air would result from the proposal during construction, operation and maintenance when the project is completed (i.e., dust, automobile, odors, or industrial wood smoke)? N/A

If any, generally describe and give approximate quantities if known. N/A

- b. Are there any off-site sources of emissions or odor that may affect your proposal? Yes   
No

If so, generally describe. N/A

- c. Proposed measures to reduce or control emissions or other impacts to air, if any: None

3. Water

a. Surface:

- (1) Is there any surface water body on or in the immediate vicinity of the site (including year-round and seasonal streams, saltwater, lakes, ponds, wetlands)?

Yes  No

If yes, describe type and provide names. If appropriate, state what stream or river it flows into. N/A

- (2) Will the project require any work over, in, or adjacent to (within 200 feet) the described waters? Yes  No

If yes, please describe and attach available plans. N/A

- (3) Estimate the amount of fill and dredge material that would be placed in or removed from surface water or wetlands and indicate the area of the site that would be affected.

Indicate the source of fill material. N/A

- (4) Will the proposal require surface water withdrawals or diversions?

Yes  No

Give general description, purpose, and approximate quantities if known. N/A

Does the proposal lie within a 100-year floodplain? Yes  No

If so, note location on the site plan. N/A

- (5) Does the proposal involve any discharges of waste materials to surface waters?

Yes  No

If so, describe the type of waste and anticipated volume of discharge. N/A

b. Ground Water:

- (1) Will ground water be withdrawn from a well for drinking water or other purposes? Yes  No

If so, give a general description of the well, proposed uses and approximate quantities withdrawn from the well. Will water be discharged to groundwater? Give general description, purpose, and approximate quantities if known. N/A

- (2) Describe waste material that will be discharged into the ground from septic tanks or other sources, if any (for example: Domestic sewage; industrial, containing the following chemicals...; agricultural; etc.). Describe the general size of the system, the number of houses to be served (if applicable), or the number of animals or humans the system(s) are expected to serve. N/A

c. Water runoff (including stormwater):

- (1) Describe the source of runoff (including storm water) and method of collection and disposal, if any (include quantities, if known).

Where will this water flow? N/A

Will this water flow into other waters? Yes  No

If so, describe. N/A

- (2) Could waste materials enter ground or surface waters?

Yes  No

If so, generally describe.

- (3) Does the proposal alter or otherwise affect drainage patterns in the vicinity of the site:

Yes  No

If so, describe.

- d. Proposed measures to reduce or control surface, ground, and runoff water impacts, if any:  
None

4. Plants

- a. Check types of vegetation found on the site:

- Deciduous tree: alder, maple, aspen, other  
 Evergreen tree: fir, cedar, pine, other  
 Shrubs  
 Grass  
 Pasture  
 Crop or grain  
 Orchards, vineyards or other permanent crops  
 Wet soil plants: cattail, buttercup, bullrush, skunk cabbage, other  
 Water plants: water lily, eelgrass, milfoil, other  
 Other types of vegetation

- b. What kind and amount of vegetation will be removed or altered? N/A

- c. List threatened or endangered species known to be on or near the site. N/A

- d. Proposed landscaping, use of native plants, or other measures to preserve or enhance vegetation on the site, if any: N/A

- e. List all noxious weeds and invasive species known to be on or near the site. N/A

5. Animals

- a. Check any birds and animals, which have been observed on or near the site or are known to be on or near the site:

Birds:

- Hawk,  Heron,  
 Eagle,  Songbirds;  
 Other:

Mammals:

- |                                 |                                  |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Deer,  | <input type="checkbox"/> Bear,   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Elk,   | <input type="checkbox"/> Beaver; |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: |                                  |

Fish:

- |                                     |                                   |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bass,      | <input type="checkbox"/> Salmon,  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trout,     | <input type="checkbox"/> Herring, |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shellfish; | <input type="checkbox"/> Other:   |

- b. List any threatened or endangered species known to be on or near the site. N/A
- c. Is the site part of a migration route?    Yes        No
- If so, explain. N/A
- d. Proposed measures to preserve or enhance wildlife, if any: None
- e. List any invasive species known to be on or near site. N/A
6.    Energy and Natural Resources
- a. What kinds of energy (electric, natural gas, oil, wood stove, solar) will be used to meet the completed project's energy needs? Describe whether it will be used for heating, manufacturing, etc. N/A
- b. Would your project affect the potential use of solar energy by adjacent properties?
- Yes     No
- If so, generally describe. N/A
- c. What kinds of energy conservation features are included in the plans of this proposal? List other proposed measures to reduce or control energy impacts, if any: None
7.    Environmental Health
- a. Are there any environmental health hazards, including exposure to toxic chemicals, risk of fire and explosion, spill, or hazardous waste that could occur as a result of this proposal?
- Yes     No
- If so, describe. N/A
- (1) Describe any known or possible contamination at the site from present or past uses. N/A
- (2) Describe existing hazardous chemicals/conditions that might affect project development and design. This includes underground hazardous liquid and gas transmission pipelines located within the project area and in the vicinity. N/A
- (3) Describe any toxic or hazardous chemicals that might be stored, used, or produced during the projects development or construction, or at any time during the operating life of the project. N/A
- (4) Describe special emergency services that might be required. N/A
- (5) Proposed measure to reduce or control environmental health hazards, if any: None
- b. Noise
- (1) What types of noise exist in the area which may affect your project (for example: traffic, equipment, operation, other)? N/A

(2) What types and levels of noise would be created by or associated with the project on a short-term or a long-term basis (for example: traffic, construction, operation, other)? Indicate what hours noise would come from the site. N/A

(3) Proposed measures to reduce or control noise impacts, if any: None

8. Land and Shoreline Use

a. What is the current use of the site and adjacent properties? N/A

Will the proposal affect current land uses on nearby or adjacent properties? Yes  No

If so, describe. N/A

b. Has the project site been used as working farmlands or working forest lands? Yes   
No

If so, describe. N/A

How much agriculture or forest land of long-term commercial significance will be converted to other uses as a result of the proposal, if any? N/A

If resource lands have not been designated, how many acres in farmland or forest land tax status will be converted to non-farm or non-forest use? N/A

c. Will the proposal affect or be affected by surrounding working farm or forest land normal business operations, such as oversize equipment access, the application of pesticides, tilling and harvesting? Yes  No

If so, how: N/A

Describe any structures on the site. N/A

d. Will any structures be demolished? Yes  No

If so, what? N/A

e. What is the current zoning classification of the site? N/A

f. What is the current comprehensive plan designation of the site? N/A

g. If applicable, what is the current shoreline master program designation of the site? N/A

h. Has any part of the site been classified as a critical area by the city or county? Yes   
No

If so, specify. N/A

i. Approximately how many people would reside or work in the completed project? N/A

j. Approximately how many people would the completed project displace? N/A

k. Proposed measures to avoid or reduce displacement impacts, if any: N/A

l. Proposed measures to ensure the proposal is compatible with existing and projected land uses and plans, if any: None

m. Proposed measures to ensure the proposal is compatible with nearby agricultural and forest lands of long-term commercial significance, if any? None

9. Housing

a. Approximately how many units would be provided, if any? Indicate whether high, middle, or low-income housing.

- High
- Middle
- Low-income

b. Approximately how many units, if any, would be eliminated? Indicate whether high, middle, or low-income housing.

- High
- Middle
- Low-income

c. Proposed measures to reduce or control housing impacts, if any: N/A

10. Aesthetics

a. What is the tallest height of any proposed structure(s), not including antennas; what is the principal exterior building material(s) proposed? N/A

b. What views in the immediate vicinity would be altered or obstructed? N/A

c. Proposed measures to reduce or control aesthetic impacts, if any: None

11. Light and Glare

a. What type of light or glare will the proposal produce? What time of day would it mainly occur? N/A

b. Could light or glare from the finished project be a safety hazard or interfere with views? N/A

c. What existing off-site sources of light or glare may affect your proposal? N/A

d. Proposed measures to reduce or control light and glare impacts, if any: None

12. Recreation

a. What designated and informal recreational opportunities are in the immediate vicinity? N/A

b. Would the proposed project displace any existing recreational uses? If so, describe. N/A

c. Proposed measures to reduce or control impacts on recreation, including recreation opportunities to be provided by the project or applicant, if any: None

13. Historic and Cultural Preservation

a. Are there any buildings, structures, or sites, located on or near the site that are over 45 years old listed in or eligible for listing in national, state or local preservation registers located on or near the site? Yes  No

If so, specifically describe. N/A

b. Are there any landmarks, features, or other evidence of Indian, historic use or occupation, this may include human burials or old cemeteries? Yes  No

Are there any material evidence, artifacts, or areas of cultural importance on or near the site? Yes  No

Please list any professional studies conducted at the site to identify such resources. N/A

c. Describe the methods used to assess the potential impacts to cultural and historic resources on or near the project site. Examples: Include consultation with tribes and the Department of Archeology and Historic Preservation, archaeological surveys, historic maps, GIS data, etc. N/A

- d. Proposed measures to avoid, minimize, or compensate for loss, changes to, and disturbance to resources. Please include plans for the above and any permits that may be required.  
None

14. Transportation

- a. Identify public streets and highways serving the site or affected geographic area and describe proposed access to the existing street system. Show on site plan, if any. N/A
- b. Is site or geographic area currently served by public transit? Yes  No   
If not, what is the approximate distance to the nearest transit stop? N/A
- c. How many parking spaces would the completed project have? How many would the project eliminate? N/A
- d. Will the proposal require any new or improvements to existing roads, streets, pedestrian, bicycle or state transportation facilities, not including driveways? Yes  No   
If so, generally describe (indicate whether public or private). N/A
- e. Will the project use (or occur in the immediate vicinity of)
- Water,
  - Rail, or
  - Air transportation?
- If so, generally describe. N/A
- f. How many vehicular trips per day would be generated by the completed project or proposal? If known, indicate when peak volumes would occur and what percentage of the volume would be trucks (such as commercial and non-passenger vehicles). What data or transportation models were used to make these estimates? N/A
- g. Proposed measures to reduce or control transportation impacts, if any: None

15. Public Services

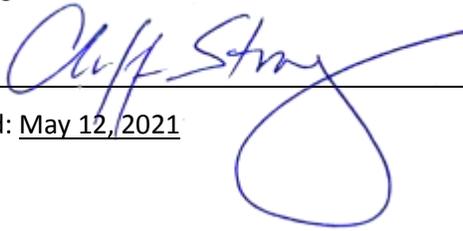
- a. Would the project result in an increased need for public services (for example: fire protection, police protection, health care, schools, other)? Yes  No   
If so, generally describe. N/A
- b. Proposed measures to reduce or control direct impacts on public services, if any. None

16. Utilities

- a. Check utilities currently available at the site:
- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Electricity,   | <input type="checkbox"/> Natural gas,    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Water,         | <input type="checkbox"/> Refuse service, |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Telephone,     | <input type="checkbox"/> Sanitary sewer, |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Septic system, | <input type="checkbox"/> Other           |
- b. Describe the utilities that are proposed for the project, the utility providing the service, and the general construction activities on the site or in the immediate vicinity which might be needed.  
N/A

**Signature**

The above answers are true and complete to the best of my knowledge. I understand that the lead agency is relying on them to make its decision.

Signature:   
Date Submitted: May 12, 2021

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**FOR OFFICE USE ONLY**

Reviewed by Whatcom County Planning & Development Services Staff

, Robby Eckroth  
Staff Signature

05/14/2021  
Date

### C. Supplemental Sheet for Non-project Actions

*(It is not necessary to use this sheet for project actions)*

Because these questions are very general, it may be helpful to read them in conjunction with the list of the elements of the environment. When answering these questions, be aware of the extent the proposal or the types of activities likely to result from the proposal, would affect the item at a greater intensity or at a faster rate than if the proposal were not implemented. Respond briefly and in general terms.

1. How would the proposal be likely to increase discharge to water; emissions to air; production, storage, or release of toxic or hazardous substances; or production of noise?

None of the proposed amendments are likely to increase discharge to water; emissions to air; production, storage, or release of toxic or hazardous substances; or production of noise.

Proposed measures to avoid or reduce such increases are: None

2. How would the proposal be likely to affect plants, animals, fish, or marine life?

None of the proposed amendments are likely to affect plants, animals, fish, or marine life.

Proposed measures to protect or conserve plants, animals, fish, or marine life are: None

3. How would the proposal be likely to deplete energy or natural resources?

None of the proposed amendments are likely to deplete energy or natural resources.

Proposed measures to protect or conserve energy and natural resources are: None

4. How would the proposal be likely to use or affect environmentally sensitive areas or areas designated (or eligible or under study) for governmental protection; such as parks, wilderness, wild and scenic rivers, threatened or endangered species habitat, historic or cultural sites, wetlands, floodplains, or prime farmlands?

None of the proposed amendments are likely to use or affect environmentally sensitive areas or areas designated (or eligible or under study) for governmental protection.

Proposed measures to protect such resources or to avoid or reduce impacts are: None

5. How would the proposal be likely to affect land and shoreline use, including whether it would allow or encourage land or shoreline uses incompatible with existing plans?

None of the proposed amendments are likely to affect land and shoreline use.

Proposed measures to avoid or reduce shoreline and land use impacts are: None

6. How would the proposal be likely to increase demands on transportation or public services and utilities?

None of the proposed amendments are likely to increase demands on transportation or public services and utilities.

Proposed measures to reduce or respond to such demand(s) are: None

7. Identify, if possible, whether the proposal may conflict with local, state, or federal laws or requirements for the protection of the environment.

None of the proposed amendments are likely to conflict with local, state, or federal laws or requirements for the protection of the environment.