



Memorandum

July 9, 2021

To: The Whatcom County Planning Commission
From: Matt Aamot, Senior Planner
Through: Mark Personius, Director
RE: Temporary Homeless Facility Regulations (PLN2021-00003)

The Whatcom County Council adopted interim zoning regulations for the siting, establishment, and operation of temporary homeless facilities (Ordinances 2018-039, 2018-041, 2019-074, and 2020-053). These ordinances established interim rules for temporary homeless facilities and requested County staff to prepare a draft ordinance and proposed revisions to the County's land use regulation relating to these facilities.

The subject proposal would amend the Whatcom County Zoning Code (Title 20) by:

- a. Adding a new chapter entitled "Temporary Homeless Facilities" (WCC 20.17). This new chapter includes requirements for temporary homeless facilities, capacity and duration of temporary homeless facilities, application procedures, and permit procedures.
- b. Adding definitions of "Temporary Homeless Facility" and related terms (WCC 20.97).

Under the proposed regulations, temporary homeless facilities would normally be allowed only within urban growth areas, where more intensive land uses are permitted, services typically exist nearby, and transportation options are more readily available. However, under state law, this provision cannot be applied to facilities on property owned or controlled by religious organizations (RCW 36.01.290). Therefore, such temporary homeless facilities could be located anywhere throughout the County.

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