

**FINAL
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

For Required Update of:

**Bellingham Comprehensive Plan
Bellingham Urban Growth Area Boundary
Five Year Review Areas and
Whatcom County Urban Fringe Subarea Plan**

Prepared for Review and Comments
by Citizens and Government Agencies
in Compliance With

The State Environmental Policy Act of 1971 (SEPA)
Chapter 43.21C, Revised Code of Washington

and

SEPA RULES, Effective April 4, 1984
Chapter 197-11, Washington Administrative Code (as revised)

and

Bellingham Municipal Code, Chapter 16.04
Whatcom County Code, Chapter 16.08

Bellingham Planning and Community Development Department
210 Lottie Street
Bellingham, WA 98225
(360) 676-6982

Whatcom County Planning & Development Services
Land Use Division
5280 Northwest Road, Suite A
Bellingham, Washington 98226-9099
(360) 676-6907

Date of Issuance: July 1, 2004

FACT SHEET

PROJECT TITLE

Update of Bellingham Comprehensive Plan, Bellingham Urban Growth Area Boundary, Five-Year Review Areas, and Whatcom County Urban Fringe Subarea Plan.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSAL

The proposed action is adoption of an updated Bellingham Comprehensive Plan, Bellingham Urban Growth Area Boundary, Five-Year Review Areas, and Whatcom County Urban Fringe Subarea Plan. All plans must be updated and adopted simultaneously because they are all integrated and interrelated. The update is required to accommodate projected population growth of 31,600 new residents in Bellingham and its UGA over the next 20 years. Adoption of these plans constitute non-project actions under SEPA (WAC 197-11-704(b)).

The PROPOSED ACTION may include consideration of the following:

1. Revising the Bellingham Comprehensive Plan and the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan applicable to the Bellingham UGA.
2. Revising those portions of Whatcom County's Urban Fringe Subarea Plan, Chuckanut Lake Samish Subarea Plan and Lake Whatcom Subarea Plan applicable to Bellingham's UGA.
3. Adjusting Bellingham's UGA boundaries and rezoning appropriate areas within Bellingham's UGA.
4. Revising zoning maps and text for some parts of Bellingham's UGA to provide for urban land uses, including higher density residential use.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ALTERNATIVES

This Final Environmental Impact Statement examines 4 alternatives.

1. No action: Assumes existing plans and zoning regulations will accommodate projected growth.
2. Infill: Increase density in Bellingham and the existing UGA to accommodate projected growth.
3. Adjusted UGA: Assumes existing plans and zoning regulations within the City and UGA and an adjustment of UGA boundaries to increase the land supply to accommodate projected growth.
4. Infill and Adjusted UGA: Increase density in Bellingham and the existing UGA and adjust UGA boundaries to accommodate projected growth.

LOCATION

The planning area is the incorporated City of Bellingham and Whatcom County's Urban Fringe Subarea, which includes Bellingham's designated Urban Growth Area

north of the city plus those parts of Bellingham's UGA in the Lake Whatcom and Chuckanut-Lake Samish Subareas southeast of the city and smaller adjacent sites.

IMPLEMENTATION DATE

It is anticipated that the updated plans will be adopted by the Bellingham City Council and the Whatcom County Council by December 31, 2004.

SEPA LEAD AGENCY

City of Bellingham Planning and Community Development Department

SEPA RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL

Chris Spens, AICP, Senior Environmental Planner
Bellingham Planning and Community Development Department
210 Lottie Street
Bellingham, WA, 98225
(360) 676-6982

PROJECT INFORMATION CONTACT PERSONS

Chris Comeau, Planner II, EIS Project Coordinator
Bellingham Planning and Community Development Department
210 Lottie Street
Bellingham, WA, 98225
(360) 676-6982

Carl Batchelor, Senior Planner and
John Guenther, Deputy SEPA Responsible Official
Whatcom County Planning and Development Services
Land Use Division
5280 Northwest Drive, Suite B
Bellingham, WA, 98226
(360) 676-6907

APPROVALS REQUIRED

Adoption of an updated Bellingham Comprehensive Plan, Bellingham Urban Growth Area Boundary, Five-Year Review Areas, and Whatcom County Urban Fringe Subarea Plan will require approval from both the Bellingham City Council and the Whatcom County Council.

PUBLIC MEETING TO RECEIVE COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT EIS

Bellingham and Whatcom County Planning staff held a public hearing on the Draft EIS on April 21, 2004 at 7:00pm in the Bellingham Municipal Court building, 2014 C Street, Bellingham, WA 98225.

DATE OF ISSUANCE

Draft EIS: March 26, 2004
Final EIS: July 1, 2004

AUTHORS AND PRINCIPAL CONTRIBUTORS

CITY OF BELLINGHAM:

Planning and Community Development Department

Greg Aucutt, Senior Planner

Pat Carman, Planner II

Chris Comeau, Planner II

Darby Galligan, Planner I

Chris Behee, GIS Specialist

Public Works Department

Clare Fogelsong, Superintendent of Environmental Resources

Cathy Craver, Environmental Resources Intern

William Reilly, Stormwater Utility Manager

Geoff Smyth, Superintendent of Utilities

Martin Kjelstad, Sewer and Water Utility Engineer

Brent Baldwin, Transportation Planner

Parks Department

Leslie Bryson, Design Development Manager

Information Technology Services Department

Mary Vonk, Word Processing Technician

WHATCOM COUNTY:

Planning and Development Services Department

Sylvia Goodwin, Planning Division Manager

Carl Batchelor, Senior Planner

Jeff Chalfant, Senior Natural Resources Planner

Sharon Digby, Planning Technician

Troy Holbrook, Program Specialist, Open Space

Kraig Olason, Senior Planner

Kassie Olin, SEPA Intern

Sarah Watts, GIS Specialist

Mike Pelala, GIS Specialist

Public Works Department

Mike Donahue, Engineering Manager, Traffic/Development

Rodney Vandersypen, Engineering Technician III

LOCATIONS TO OBTAIN COPIES OF THE FINAL EIS

This FEIS is available to the public on the world wide web (aka "Internet") at City and County web sites for no charge, on compact disc by request for a cost of \$2.00, and reference copies will be available at locations listed below. Bound paper copies may be obtained from the publisher for the actual cost of production.

This FEIS is available online at the following web sites:

City = <http://www.cob.org/pcd/planning/growth/eis.htm>

County = http://www.co.whatcom.wa.us/pds/planning/projects/urban_fringe.jsp

This FEIS is also available on compact disc from the following locations:

Bellingham Planning and Community Development Department
City Hall, 210 Lottie Street
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(360) 676-6907

FEIS Reference copies are available for review at the following locations:

Bellingham Public Library;
Fairhaven Public Library;
Whatcom County Public Library;
Western Washington University Library;
Whatcom Community College Library;
City of Bellingham Planning and Community Development Department;
Whatcom County Planning and Development Services Department;

SUBSEQUENT ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

This is a non-project, programmatic environmental impact statement. Additional environmental analysis will be required as specific development projects are proposed and supplements may be necessary for some unanticipated UGA and development regulation changes.

Note: Documents noted in the reference Section with an asterisk (*) are incorporated by reference into this FEIS.