



Lake Whatcom Policy Group

July 10, 2024 Meeting

Brief Digest of Presentations and Discussion

Policy Group members in attendance: Hannah Stone, Skip Williams (Bellingham City Council); Kaylee Galloway, Todd Donovan (Whatcom County Council); Bruce Ford (Lake Whatcom Water and Sewer District Commission); Nancy Alyanak (Sudden Valley Community Association).

1. 2025-2029 Work Plan Update

Timeline

- Staff will hold a public comment period over summer, then present public comments and a final draft at the September Policy Group meeting. Then each jurisdiction will undergo a formal adoption process.
- Staff will email public comment info to the Policy Group email list.
- Staff will present draft work plan to city's Water Resources Advisory Board in July.
- A Policy Group member recommends that staff also present to county's Climate Impact Advisory Committee and Forest Resilience Task Force, as well as hold an open house or town hall meeting.

Draft Work Plan

Staff gave an overview of the draft work plan. Two new program areas have been added: Climate Action and Forest Management.

Staff then presented changes between the last work plan and this draft work plan:

- Land Preservation
 - Continue to: acquire land and manage properties.
 - New: update property maintenance guidelines for city properties (originally adopted in 2012), evaluate use of other county programs to augment acquisitions, and moved some items to Forest Management section.
 - LWUSD mentioned they are a proponent of buying developed land, while city and county have concern over removing housing.
 - The listed budget comes from city watershed fund (from utility bill).
- Stormwater Management
 - Continue to: build and maintain stormwater treatment facilities and partner with residents.
 - New: PBOOM Assessment to look to improve operations and maintenance and evaluate ways we calculate Phosphorus-reduction estimates (for all actions, not just stormwater treatment).
 - Budget is mostly for capital construction projects.
 - Data from assessments will be publicly available and included in annual reports, as well as will highlight future actions.
 - City and county calculate reductions the same, but have different landscapes (urban vs. residential and forested).
 - Includes county subwatershed management master plans (one completed

and about to complete a second one).

- Land Use
 - Continue to: enforce development regulation and update regulations.
 - New: evaluate effectiveness of regulations and move forestry section to Forest Management section.
 - Budget is for staff reviewing permits and enforcing regulations.
- Monitoring and Data
 - Continue to: collect data to monitor water quality and provide data analysis.
 - New: Lake Whatcom Climate Vulnerability Assessment and studies to fill in gaps from CE-QUAL modeling (such as groundwater or urban runoff)
 - LWUSD wants to have more focus on source ID monitoring. Staff stated that a groundwater study will help with source ID.
 - Bulk of budget is for the monitoring contract with Western Washington University Institute for Watershed Studies.
- Hazardous Materials
 - Continue to: prevent spills and respond to spills.
 - New: update protocols for spill response and increase field staff training.
- Recreation
 - Continue to: maintain recreational facilities and trails.
 - New: implementation of Lake Whatcom Park improvements and trail management.
 - County funding is for Lookout Mountain trailhead improvements and staff costs.
- Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS)
 - Continue to: staff four boat inspection stations and monitor waterbodies for AIS.
 - New: Lake Whatcom Rapid Response Plan and evaluate operational protocols.
 - Funding from county and LWUSD ILAs and permit revenue.
 - AIS fees were last adjusted around 2019. City will look at fee structure this year.
 - City has sampled for BTEX and it has been at a non-detectable level, indicating that gasoline is not an issue.
- Utilities and Transportation
 - Continue to: maintain water, sewer, and transportation infrastructure and promote water conservation.
 - New: city is updating their Water System Plan.
 - The budget focuses on maintenance and water conservation program.
- Education and Engagement
 - Continue to: educate residents and visitors to protect water quality (using websites, newsletter).
 - New: update outreach strategies based on 2023 survey results (such as more focus on wildfire preparedness and risk reduction and phosphorus regulations).
- Administration
 - Continue to: run meetings and manage budget.
 - New: none
 - Budget is for staff time.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate Action <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ New program area to build resiliency to climate impacts. Includes Lake Whatcom Climate Vulnerability Assessment and incorporating climate action into other program areas. ○ Follow both city and county climate action plans. ○ Budget is for staff and consultant costs. • Forest Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ New program area that includes FPA review and management of forest roads. Also includes completing a forest management plan for county and city lands and encourage wildfire preparedness and risk assessments. ○ Budget includes implementation of forest management plan. ○ County has a Wildland Fire Action Plan and is also looking at developing a Community Wildfire Protection Plan. <p>Policy Group members also inquired about reporting metrics and whether we need to include a comparison overtime when reporting or state a goal we are trying to meet.</p>
	<p>Future topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OSS update from County Health and follow up of Herrera study (September) • Draft Work Plan and Public Comments (September)

The next Policy Group meeting is September 4, 2024 at 3:00PM