

**Skagit County Planning Commission
Presentation: Transportation Improvement Plan
Public Hearing: 2023 Docket
Work Session: Capital Facilities Plan
October 24, 2023**

Planning

Commissioners: Kathy Mitchell (absent)
Vince Henley
Amy Hughes
Tim Raschko, Chair
Joe Woodmansee
Tammy Candler, Vice Chair
Martha Rose
Jen Hutchinson

Staff:

Jack Moore, Planning Director
Sarah Ruether, Senior Planner
Robby Eckroth, Senior Planner
Forrest Jones, Public Works Transportation Programs Section Manager
Torey Nelson, Public Works Engineering Technician

Public Hearing

Commenters: Jenna Friebel, Drainage Consortium (rescinded item)
Steve Orsini (C23-1)

Chair Tim Raschko: (gavel) Good evening and welcome to the October 24, 2023, meeting of the Skagit County Planning Commission. We are missing two Planning Commissioners, Commissioner Mitchell – oh, Commissioner Candler, you showed up. So please note Commissioner Mitchell will be absent tonight.

Then I have a short announcement to make. This is not from a fist fight. It was a basal cell carcinoma I had removed. So I'm telling you that so nobody has to wonder and I don't have to feel self-conscious anymore tonight. Okay, thank you.

So, I'd entertain a motion to approve our last meeting's minutes.

Commissioner Vince Henley: I so move.

Commissioner Martha Rose: I'll second.

Chair Raschko: It's been moved and seconded. Is there discussion of the minutes?

(silence)

Chair Raschko: All those in favor, please say "aye."

Multiple Commissioners: Aye.

Chair Raschko: Opposed?

(silence)

Chair Raschko: Okay. The minutes are approved. We have time tonight for Public Remarks. It's an opportunity for anybody to speak to the Planning Commission about any topic except items that have had a public hearing or are still under Planning Commission deliberation. Public Remarks, which is not part of the formal public participation process for any development regulation or Comprehensive Plan amendment project, is limited to three minutes per speaker and up to 15 minutes total. So you can talk about whatever you want except about tonight's agenda. So (does) anybody wish to speak to the Planning Commission?

Unidentified Female Voice: Is this the –

Sarah Ruether: Not for testimony.

Chair Raschko: This is not the public hearing.

Ms. Ruether: It's not the hearing.

Chair Raschko: Okay. We'll close the Public Remarks then and go to our first agenda item which is the Transportation Improvement Program. Is Mr. Jones –

Vice Chair Tammy Candler: He's here, I think.

Chair Raschko: Pardon.

Vice Chair Candler: He's here.

Chair Raschko: Mr. Jones?

Forrest Jones? Yes?

(laughter)

Chair Raschko: You're on!

Mr. Jones: All right. Good evening, Planning Commission. Are they going to put it up here? Knock on that window and tell them to put it up here.

(silence)

Mr. Jones: All right, there you go. Good evening, everybody. I'm Forrest Jones. I'm with Skagit County Public Works, Transportation Program Section Manager. So I'm here tonight to give a short presentation on the Six-Year Transportation Improvement Plan.

So the RCW, Revised Code of Washington, requires that all counties – and cities, for that matter – put together a transportation improvement program, basically the TIP, we'll call it. TIP is an advanced six-year plan. The coordination coordinates transportation program expenditures and

planning for roads, bridges, ferries, and other transportation facility construction projects. We base it on anticipated revenues versus desirable projects.

The strategy: When we were putting this together we tried to leverage our available road funds through grant requests, collaborate with regional funding partners, and apply project management principles to better define and track the project, and prioritize based on our project selection criteria. So our criterias – we try to address high risk collision locations, address infrastructure needs and repairs, and address level of service problems, and leverage grant funding opportunities.

So when determining the projects we look at an assortment of reports and assessments. I'll go over a few of those here – the Priority Array – and I'll go over – well, I'll just go through the list here, then I'll get into what the nuts and bolts of each report is.

See there the Priority Array? The Skagit County Safety Assessment, Concurrency Assessment, the Annual Bridge Report, and the 14-Year Capital Ferry Improvement Program. There's a kind of screen shot of those five reports I just went over.

So other sources we look at. We get with the capitals: the Parks Department and look at their Capital Facilities Plan; the Sheriff's Department. We look at different types of grants – does that grant work for what we're trying to do? And, of course, the public.

So, yeah, like I was talking about – the priority programming, Priority Array. Basically this report takes into consideration collisions, traffic volumes, roadway conditions, geometrics of the road, and matters of significant local importance. Some of the roads or areas that are on the Priority haven't been included in the TIP. For instance, Josh Wilson Road, Cook Road, Old Highway 99, Green Road, Bow Hill Road, Francis Road. Another plan we have is the Skagit County – we call it the Safety Plan, but it's the County Strategic Risk-Based Assessment. Basically what this is is the Public Works collects detailed crash information that allows us to review the data, determine crash trends within the county. And this allows us to compare crash types and predict where crashes may occur, and work to reduce crash types, the average crash rate of occurrence.

The next one is the County Concurrency. So the annual concurrency is basically in the Comp Plan. It lays out you can only have – you have to meet a certain level of service. So basically for all level of service segments that level of service is CA being the best, F being fail. So we have to meet C on all road segments. And in some cases, level of service of D if the volumes are greater than 7,000 or carry a Freight and Goods designation.

The next one we look at is the Annual Bridge Report. This is a written resume of findings of the bridge inspections. Federal law requires that all bridges over 20 feet in length be inspected at a minimum of every 24 months. This report is documented – is a document of those findings and is used to help determine the need for bridge projects. The annual report is typically completed in late February, early March. That's (when) all the inspections have been completed and the inspection report's finished.

And the last one we look at is the 14-Year Capital Ferry Plan, and this just reviews – this document discusses upcoming projects and needs of the ferry division manager and what is planned.

Like I said before, we also get with Brian in the Parks Department. The Sheriff's Department, they're out everyday so we take comments from them. Grants – there's specific grants that are out there. There's, like, grants for just bridges, grants for safety, grants for fish passage, stuff like that.

So the 2024-2029 TIP we have 51 projects. Nine new projects are being considered. We have 42 projects that will remain on the TIP or be carried over, and we're removing six projects from the TIP. The new projects we're adding, number one is abandoning railroad – and these aren't by priority; they're just in alphabetical order. We've got the abandoned railroad bridge. If you don't know where that is, that's if you're going on SR-9 going into Sedro-Woolley you'll see the old railroad bridge that's upriver of the Highway 9. That bridge collects debris on it so we're out there typically every year or every other year, trying to remove debris off that because it basically is going to eat away from the – on the bank and bank mat, so we want to get those off. The history of that bridge: The County purchased that bridge for one dollar from the railroad. It's the most expensive one-dollar bridge we've ever bought. So we're trying to find a way to actually remove that bridge out of the river. We've been – we got a letter of support from the Upper Skagit Tribe so hopefully we can find some grant funding to get that removed.

The second project we're adding is ADA Barrier Removal. So right now we're in the process of completing our – it's called the ADA Transition Plan, and this is just for, like, roads. And so any – like a sidewalk that doesn't have the ADA ramps and stuff like that, or sidewalks that aren't connected. So that plan's going to identify all those barriers. So we have this on the TIP so we'll be looking for funding to try to find funding to remove these barriers that are identified in that plan.

So then we have Butler Creek. These are fish passage projects, so we have Butler Creek Culvert Replacement on Old Highway 99; Butler Creek Replacement on Friday Creek Road; Gilligan Creek Culvert Replacement on South Skagit Highway; Hamilton Cemetery Road – if you don't know, back in the 2021 storms we had that culvert blow out, so that road is actually closed right now due to that culvert blowing out. So we're actually going through FEMA trying to find funding through FEMA to replace that culvert, which more than likely be a bridge.

Another one we just received actually grant funding for Marine Drive and Rosario Road, a Marine Y-drive intersection. So if you know that, it's basically three separate roads coming into one spot. So we're going to improve that intersection, put a roundabout in there. I think we received, like, 2.6 million dollars to do that upgrade. Then, like I said, we talked with Parks. Parks has a project called the Sharpe Road to Rosario Beach Park Connector Trail, so that's from Sharpe's Park on Rosario Road and then it will connect to the state park there right off SR-20 there. And another fish barrier project is Steven's Creek Culvert Replacement on South Skagit Highway.

Some notable projects – I'm not going to go through all 42 of them so I just listed the top eight here. Cook Road, I-5, and vicinity: We have grant funding that we have received for that – close to 10 million dollars – where we're going to add a lane to the offramp on the Cook Road overpass going northbound. Then we're going to try to add a lane on that and that lane will go through Old Highway 99 and will drop off. We're going to signalize all three of those intersections and coordinate them so they all kind of work together, then coordinate it with railroad crossings so when that gate comes down it's going to clear traffic. And so that's one.

Francis Road Segments 1, 3, and 4. Those are still on the TIP. Francis Road 1, we have the funding for that. We're actually going to go to construction on that this coming year in 2024. Francis 3, I think we have, like, five million dollars in funding on that. We're right in the middle of design. That's going to put a new bridge in there also. Francis 4, we currently *don't* have funding for that right now but we're seeking funding. I think in Francis 3 we're looking at construction in 2025, 2026.

And I don't know if you guys have heard about the ferry boat replacement. So we want to replace the current Guemes Island Ferry with an all-electric ferry. So that project actually went out to bid this month so we're waiting on bids. I think we get the bids back in December, so depending on the bid we'll award that contract to whatever shipyard. So that project actually has three different phases to it. One is the shoreside facilities, which will be all the electrical connections, battery storage, and stuff like that, and improvement of the terminal. Just kind of making it bigger and adding a few things here and there.

And the fourth one, Josh Wilson Road Phases 2, 3, and 4. If you've been on Josh Wilson Road, you see we've already upgraded a section of that. So we've got three more phases on that one from the roundabout on Chuckanut going to Avon Allen. Then we have the phase we just did to the bottom of the hill. That Phase 3 would be up the hill to Higgins and Phase 4 would be going from Higgins Airport Way to Farm to Market.

And Marblemount Bridge Rehabilitation – we actually just received 18 million dollars for that project so that project is in design right now, so we hope to construct that in 2025, 2026. And basically that project will be strengthening the bridge right now. Right now it's load-restricted so you can only have one vehicle at a time on that bridge truck-wise. So basically if you've been up in that area, we have that signalized so it's only one lane of traffic going both ways, so it's signalized to allow that traffic back and forth.

And another project is the North Osterman Creek Culvert. That blew out again in the 2021 storm. So that's going to be replaced with a bridge and again that's going to be FEMA-funded, so we're waiting on FEMA for those funds to come in. The design is, I think, 90% done. We're just waiting on the construction funds, so once those come in we'll schedule it for construction.

Peterson Road Urban Improvements. We just received funding for that project through the Surface Transportation Grant Block Program. So we do not have construction fundings but we have design and right-of-way fundings so we're going to be starting on that project for design this coming year.

So then Thomas Creek Bridge on Old Highway 99. That is a total bridge replacement. So that's just south of Kelleher Road, if you know where that's at. That was actually one of our few remaining old timber bridges, so everything on that bridge is timber except for the deck. Right now we have a couple bad piles on that. We actually have shoring up underneath that bridge to keep it open to legal loads. So we'll be replacing that bridge in the next – we're in design right now so we'll be replacing that in 2025, I believe.

So those are some of the projects that we are carrying over on the TIP. Projects being removed is the 2023 Asphalt Overlay. So we just overlaid Pioneer Highway – if you've been on Pioneer Highway. Then again, the ADA Transition Plan – that will be completed this year so that's dropping off. We just did some barrier protection, which is basically guardrail. We did Mud Lake Road, Baker Lake Road, and I think a section on South Skagit Highway. On Bayview-Edison, Joe Leary Slough, that project will be dropping off. We're done with design. We actually obligated construction funds for that project, so it should start going into construction at the end of this year, which we're there. And that will carry into 2024.

So then Cedardale Road and Starbird Road culvert replacement projects. Those are fish barrier removal projects. So we have all the funding for that project. That project, the funding has been obligated for construction. It should go to construction this coming year so that drops off the TIP. Once you obligate funding, it drops off the TIP.

So and another project is the Lane Departure Reduction and that's quite a few projects. It entails signing, like one location is Bow Hill Road at Ershig Road. We've had a few collisions right there so we're putting in LED stop signs so they'll flash when you're coming up to the intersection. And there's a couple other intersections like that – Avon Allen, Josh Wilson Road – so those are going to be switched out to LED stop signs also. And we also did some rumble striping on Pioneer Highway. I don't know if you've seen the profile striping where you kind of go over the striping and it makes that audible sound because it's got the little buttons kind of in the striping. So we did that on Pioneer Highway. We're working on Old Highway 99 right now, then I think Alger-Cain Lake Road is another road that we're working on. So that should be done this year. Those projects get dropped off once we start obligating funding for that.

So this is just – I know it's hard to see, but basically here's a map and all the little dots you see on there, those are the projects that are on the TIP. You can find this online if you want to go on and take a little closer look at it.

So, and again, where can I find the TIP? Basically go on our County website, go into the Public Works/Engineering website. There's Transportation Programs. You click on that link and it will take you there – you know, give you a list of all the reports and assessments that I went over. All those are on here, including the draft TIP and the past TIPS, so if you want to go on those past TIPS you can go look through those and compare them if you want.

I am taking comments on the TIP, so if you go onto that website you can see a link where you – if you want to make a comment. All those comments will come to me. I think I have the comments open until November 17th, I believe. But to date I've received 12 comments. Not all of them are county. They're in the county but they're in the cities too, so a lot of people comment on the cities. But I've gotten seven comments on pedestrian-bicycle safety. Some of those roads are on Josh Wilson Road, Farm to Market Road, Best Road, just to name a few. I've gotten two intersection improvement requests, and one bridge improvement which is on SR-9. That is a state facility so I really have no say over that, or the County has no say over that. We can pass that on to the state and let them know. Basically they're concerned about the bridge at Big Rock on SR-9. Then another one, someone was concerned on SR-20 about the – they think they need corridor improvements from Sedro-Woolley to Concrete. Again, that's state so we'll pass those on to the state. Then another one was Interstate 5 improvements on Mount Vernon through Burlington. If you've been on – which I know most of you have – been on I-5 going – especially going north in the afternoon, that tends to back up so the person who commented would like to see another lane there and maybe some alternate routes improved. So those are the comments I've received.

So that's it. Do you guys have any questions or want to discuss something? Please feel free to ask me.

Chair Raschko: Commissioner Candler, you have a question?

Vice Chair Candler: I have a question. You mentioned on the new additions the Rosario-Marine Y. There was some grant funding – 2.6 or something million, you said. I have no idea, but is that somewhere in the vicinity of what that would cost or is that going to require matching funds?

Mr. Jones: Yeah, we just – like I said, we received grant funding through the Highway Safety Improvement Program. So that's a federal program, so basically the County's safety plan that I talked about, so that identified that intersection as a need based on other criteria. So the cost estimate for that was 2.6 million and we got that fully funded with no match, so that's all federally

funded money. So basically we'll be – if you know the area, you've kind of got Rosario Road comes in in one section then you've got Marine Drive Y that comes into another section and you've got an intersection up here and an intersection down here. So we're just going to combine all three of those intersections and put it into a roundabout.

Vice Chair Candler: Thank you.

Chair Raschko: Other questions, comments?

Commissioner Joe Woodmansee: Is most of our grant writing done inhouse or is it out or –

Mr. Jones: Yeah, we do most of our grant writing inhouse. Actually, Mr. Nelson here – where's your hand, Torey? Him and I head up the grant writing department. Torey probably does more of it than I do right now.

Commissioner Woodmansee: The reason I ask the question is because I see a lot of funding showing up here.

Mr. Jones: Yeah.

Commissioner Woodmansee: And so I don't know how good we're doing or not, but it seems like we're doing pretty good and being successful at getting some grants.

Mr. Jones: Yeah, we do pretty good. I think part of that – I don't want to toot Torey's horn *too* loud but, yeah, we do really well and part of that is because when we do get grant funding we deliver that project. And like this highway safety money, that's one thing they look at, you know: Have you gotten funding and have you spent it? If you don't spend it, they won't give you – if you haven't spent what you have, they won't give you anymore.

Commissioner Woodmansee: Well, I guess I want to, you know, give you guys a shout-out because in listening to this, I felt like saying "funded, funded, funded" and so that's good. Sounds like you guys are doing a great job for us.

Mr. Jones: Thank you.

Chair Raschko: Commissioner Hughes?

Commissioner Amy Hughes: I have two questions, one regarding the I-5. I know that's Department of Transportation and they put out to public comments people who had comments from south Mount Vernon to Cook. Do you have conversations with Department of Transportation? You know where that's all –

Mr. Jones: Yeah, I was actually on the board that helped pick the consultant that was doing this study. So I haven't heard lately where we're at on that but we picked, I believe, it was the – Transpo is the consultant that they chose. So that was, like, a couple months ago.

Commissioner Hughes: Okay.

Mr. Jones: So I know they're getting started and they have to put together the contract. So I'm not exactly sure where they're at on that, but, yeah, they're studying that and trying to figure out what the needs are and –

Commissioner Hughes: Is there a timeline they try to adhere to, or is it just till it all gets figured out?

Mr. Jones: No, I think there *is* a timeline. I don't know what that is. I could probably – I'll send an email or something (and) I could probably find that out.

Commissioner Hughes: Okay. And then the other one, I think the North Fork Bridge got put on TIP last year?

Mr. Jones: Yeah, actually North Fork Bridge has been on the TIP for quite a few years. They call it the six-year TIP. It's been on longer than six years. Part of that is it's probably going to cost us, like, 40 million dollars to replace that bridge. So when you get funding through the local bridge program, they usually have a call for projects every two years. I think the max you can get on that – Torey, what is that?

Torey Nelson: Twenty-five.

Mr. Jones: Yeah, 25 million. So we would – if we got the 25 million we'd still be 20 million short. The bridge is safe. The main thing with that bridge right now it's just – they call it “functionally obsolete,” which basically means it doesn't meet today's standards. It's not wide enough. So that was actually one of the comments I got is up on Best Road – that bridge is on Best Road and bicyclists trying to ride that route going over the bridge, they don't feel safe crossing the bridge and the shoulders aren't that wide on the rest of the road.

Commissioner Hughes: I've noticed that federal funding used to put a priority on bridge replacement. Is that still an active –

Mr. Jones: Yeah, there are bridge grants out there. We actually looked at a recent grant that just came out for bridge projects but it was for large bridge projects which – in our world we would consider that a large bridge project but the bridge had to be – what was the cutoff? A hundred million dollars?

Mr. Nelson: Yeah, that was the minimum.

Mr. Jones: That was the minimum. But they're supposed to be coming out with another call for projects for lower-cost bridges. So hopefully we'll meet that criteria and we can apply for that grant.

Commissioner Hughes: Thank you.

Mr. Jones: Yeah.

Commissioner Rose: I have one. Speaking of bridges, the railroad bridge that you mentioned – isn't that in alignment with the future Centennial Path?

Mr. Jones: I think when we purchased that bridge that was the original thought, is that that would be part of the Centennial Trail and we're going to use that bridge as a trail. Joseph, correct me if I'm wrong, but I think they've determined that when they replace the SR9 bridge that they will add pedestrian facilities to that bridge. So, yeah, I'm pretty sure that bridge does nothing but collect wood!

Commissioner Rose: Yeah, I heard that loud and clear. Yeah. Thank you.

Chair Raschko: Anybody else? How long ago was that bridge purchased?

Unidentified Male Voice: It was in the late '70s. Or it was probably – it was during _____ 's tenure and I don't know who the Public Works director was at that time. But it was when all of the properties were being purchased along the Centennial Trail corridor, which was probably actually in the early '90s that that happened. So it was during his tenure but it was probably in the '90s.

Chair Raschko: It probably seemed like a really good idea at the time.

Same Unidentified Male Voice: It probably did, yeah.

Chair Raschko: I was wondering that myself. Anything else?

(silence)

Chair Raschko: Okay, well, thank you very much.

Mr. Jones: All right, you're welcome. Thanks for having me.

Chair Raschko: We'll turn now to a public hearing. The purpose of this public hearing is to receive testimony –

Ms. Ruether: (unintelligible)

Chair Raschko: Yeah, I was just going to announce that you were going to do that.

Ms. Ruether: Oh, okay.

Chair Raschko: That – okay. The purpose of the hearing is to hear testimony on the 2023 Docket, and before we begin we will have a presentation. Now *you're* on.

Ms. Ruether: Thank you, Tim. Good evening. Welcome to the public hearing for the 2023 Docket. I'm Sarah Ruether, senior planner with Development Services.

Just to do a quick overview of the process: We receive petitioners externally and internally, and those petitions go to the Board and they make a list and then you have a public hearing and they establish the docket, and then the Planning Commission has work sessions, which we had in May and September, and now we're here at the public hearing. And these documents can be found at www.skagitcounty.net/2023cpa. And these are the list. There were two citizen proposals, the Dunlap Rural Reserve Rezone, the Port of Skagit/Bayview Ridge Rezone, and then we had some County proposals. We have Saltwater Intrusion Well-Drilling Requirements; Qualified Professional Definition; OSRSI Allowed Uses Amendment; Master Planned Resort Designation; Fire Marshal Code Amendment; Temporary Manufactured Homes Title Notice Requirement; Primitive Campground Definition; Countywide Planning Policies Update; and General Code Language Clean-Up.

And then just for an update. One internal docket item, C23-7, Flow-Sensitive Basin Rules, is being rescinded. There're some additional changes that need to be made so Natural Resources asked that we rescind that. So that – we're not taking testimony on that one tonight, so that *is* a change.

And secondly, Fully Contained Communities/FCCs are not on the 2023 Docket. When I did the overview of the process, that was not included on the established list. So there's no testimony on that. We've gotten some emails so you don't need to worry about that. It has been removed already.

And how do you comment on these petitions? The public comment period is open for the 2023 Docket and will close on October 26th, 2023, at 4:30. There are three options for providing public comment. You can mail a letter to 1800 Continental Place, Mount Vernon, Washington 98273, with full name and address; you can email us at pdscomments@co.skagit.wa.us; you can provide testimony during today's hearing. You can also – there's a bin for written comments – you can also leave those if you have written comments. And if providing verbal testimony today, please state and spell your name and address before beginning your comments.

And the next steps after the hearing will be November 14th we will review comments at the Planning Commission and deliberations are tentatively scheduled for November 28th, 2023. And with that, I will _____.

Chair Raschko: Thank you. Everybody who wishes to will have an opportunity to speak tonight unless we have too many and we're going to go beyond 9:30, but I don't think that will happen. Written comments, as she said, are not limited in length and will be accepted until Thursday, October 26th, at 4:30 p.m. And comments will be recorded in the meeting transcript. We have a sign-up sheet and we also might have some people who are on Zoom that might wish to speak. So we'll take care of the people that signed up first and then go to the Zoom participants to see if anybody else wants to. Each person has three minutes, and please state your name and address for the record. So we have one person signed up and that's Jenna Friebe.

Jenna Friebe: You've rescinded the agenda item so I don't have anything to add. _____!

Chair Raschko: Oh, okay. You were going to speak to something – okay.

Ms. Friebe: But I've enjoyed my time here.

(laughter)

Chair Raschko: Well, we sure appreciate your coming and having the interest. So is there anybody online who wishes to speak?

Steve Orsini: This is Steve Orsini. I'd like to comment on the well issue on Guemes Island, if I may.

Chair Raschko: Go ahead, please.

Mr. Orsini: Can you hear me?

Vice Chair Candler: Yes.

Mr. Orsini: Okay, just very briefly: The language change requires a hydrogeologic review before a well is drilled now on Guemes. We've had 20 years of seawater intrusion and the phenomenon that we're up against is that if you drill a new well inland you can reduce the head height of these quite sensitive aquifers if the head height goes down one foot and the interior seawater comes up 40 feet along the edges of the island. So this proven model is continuing to wipe out the existing

wells close to the sea, and when you look at the process it is effectively transferring senior rights of longer term residents to newer residents who are building and drilling inland and/or concentrating a lot of wells in one area. So the language change would require a hydrogeologic review *before* a new well is drilled. There's a lot of confusion between who could certify a well, whether it's department of environment. If it's not related to a building permit, they certify well drilling and then the County gets involved if it's involving a building permit. But a lot of this is confusion that can be cleared up with the language changes that are proposed. So I'm very pleased to see the language changes. We've been working on this project problem for 20 years. I hope the Planning Commission can adopt these changes. Thank you.

Chair Raschko: Thank *you*. Is there anybody else on Zoom?

(silence)

Chair Raschko: Okay. If not, is there anybody who wished to sign up but it was too late to do so and still wishes to speak? Come on.

(silence)

Chair Raschko: Okay. So we will close the public hearing. I'd like to clarify one thing, though. Can you say for certain – because I've got two dates on my paperwork; I have one that written comments will be accepted through October 27th and the other side of the page says 26th.

Ms. Ruether: Okay, it's the Thursday. What's the Thursday? It's – the Thursday is the 26th, so my bad. Sorry.

Chair Raschko: No problem. Well, thank you and thank you for everybody for your participation. And we move on to a Work Session on the Capital Facilities Plan. And I apologize. We should have introduced you if you haven't been introduced to the Planning Commission yet.

Robby Eckroth: Yeah. My name is Robby Eckroth. I am the new senior long-range planner at Skagit Planning and Development Services. I was formerly in the current planning division doing land use permitting and subdivisions, so I'm very excited to be here and to be working in the long range capacity and look forward to working with you all in the future.

Okay, so today we are going to talk about the Capital Facilities Plan. I believe most of you have been through this process before but I will do a quick refresher just to let you all know or remind you what the Capital Facilities Plan is. So it's a six-year plan that we update every year and it is a component of our Comprehensive Plan.

So what is the purpose of a capital facility plan? So the County must 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. So the photo I have up here, I just wanted to bring to your attention. This is one of the more major items that we have in this year's update. The Public Health Department is actually moving location. I believe most of our Health Department employees are located in this building but I believe some of the employees are located in other buildings, so they'll all be consolidating into this new building at 301 Valley Mall Way, which is just south of Goodwill off of Riverside.

So what is capital facilities planning? So it's a requirement of our Comprehensive Plan and the Growth Management Act that supports the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Element. Broadly, capital facilities are the infrastructure needed to support development. It ensures that we don't build more than we can support and that we have the funding to build what is needed for future development.

The Capital Facility Plan addresses capital facilities planning within unincorporated areas of the county but outside of UGAs, with the exception of our Bayview Ridge area, which is an urban growth area but not associated with a city.

So impact fees can't be charged if projects are not identified in (the) Capital Facilities Plan or the Capital Improvements Plan so it's really important that the County is sure that they incorporate everything that is going to be needed as a capital facility in this plan over the next six years and any external agencies or special use or purpose districts need to put their plans in this Capital Facilities Plan as well.

So state law requires that the Capital Facilities Plan consist of an inventory of existing capital facilities owned by public entities showing the locations and capacities of the capital facilities; requires a forecast of the future needs for capital facilities, including the proposed locations and capacities expanded for new capital facilities. It requires at least a six-year plan that will finance such capital facilities within projected funding capacities and clearly identifies sources of public money for such purposes; and it requires that we reassess the Land Use Element if probable funding falls short of meeting existing needs and to ensure the Land Use Element, Capital Facilities Element, and Financing Plan within the Capital Facilities Plan Element are coordinated and consistent. And the Park and Recreation facilities have to be included in the Capital Facilities Plan Element.

So the Skagit County definition of a capital facility is any publicly-owned structure, improvement, or asset that meets all of the following criteria:

- It has to be related to providing facilities services that are related to development;
- It exists now or may need to be implemented during the 20-year planning period of this Comprehensive Plan, which is 2016 to 2036 – soon to change to 2025 to 2045 after we do our Comprehensive Plan update;
- It requires the expenditure of public funds over and above annual maintenance and operation expenses;
- And it has to cost more than \$10,000 and it has to have a life expectancy of 10 years or more;
- And it does not include existing vehicles and equipment funded by the County's Equipment Rental & Revolving Fund.

So what's in our Capital Facilities Plan? So just to make this clear, our policies are not located in the Capital Facilities Plan; it's all in the Comprehensive Plan. And this is the technical document, which gives funding. So both County-owned and special purpose districts include their funding in the Capital Facilities Plan so that includes dike and drainage districts; fire districts; school districts; public water systems, and then it also references our Transportation Improvement Plan, which Forrest just went over.

So the summary of this year's update: Like I discussed earlier, the Public Health Department is moving. The Public Health Department is also – they've also received a community development

block grant to improve the Concrete Community Center. And Public Health has received multiple grants toward construction of a Crisis Stabilization Center, a behavioral health facility that would be located on the County Stabilization Campus in Sedro-Woolley.

And then another change is the Ovenell Solid Waste Transfer Station is receiving upgrades to their stormwater system, which, I believe, is a requirement from the Department of Ecology.

A quick summary of some of our external changes from our special purpose districts: So every year we update the school enrollment numbers that are provided by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction for the 2022-23 school year.

The fire districts' updated facility needs and existing facilities: Fire District 4 may actually potentially build a new fire station on Gunderson Road near Clear Lake, but that is still in discussion at the moment. But we may see more details in next year's plan.

Skagit County Dike and Drainage Districts' updated facility needs and existing facilities.

And the Edison Water District – or System – completed a capacity study which identified likely sources of Infiltration and Inflow and the projects that are needed to address their needs.

And again, as I mentioned earlier, the Capital Facilities Plan references the Transportation Improvement Plan, which Forrest Jones just presented on.

So staff recommends that based on the projects, locations, and levels of service described in the Capital Facilities Plan a reassessment of the Land Use Element is *not* required. So we *don't* need a Comprehensive Plan amendment to adopt this Capital Facilities Plan.

So our timeline for this and next steps: We are scheduled to have a public hearing November 14th. We'll have deliberation on the 28th. And then Board consideration will be concurrent with the budget adoption which is anticipated to be scheduled December 11th, 2023. And if anyone has comments, they can email them to pdscomments@co.skagit.wa.us. They could mail them to our building here at 1800 Continental Place in Mount Vernon, Washington 98273. They can also submit them to our public comments basket in the back.

And that is all I have and I'm available for questions.

Chair Raschko: Are there any questions?

(silence)

Mr. Eckroth: All right.

Chair Raschko: Very good and complete. Thank you.

Mr. Eckroth: Thank *you*.

Chair Raschko: We'll turn now to our Director's Update. Mr. Moore, please.

Jack Moore: Thank you, Chair. I'll just share a few things that the Planning Department and County have been up to lately since last we met.

The Board of County Commissioners held – recently held an East County Community Meeting wherein we met up at the Concrete High School. I had a number of Department directors and other County staff there to just field any community concerns, questions, et cetera. A general meeting. These had been done in the past but hadn't been done since Covid – haven't been regularly occurring – so the Board is interested in doing those again. So it was a pretty decent turnout and a lot of – you know, it was up to the community to decide the focus of the conversation. There were many topics brought up. Interestingly – to me, at least – a lot of the questions and conversation focused around elk and grizzly bear reintroduction. But it was very good to attend and get to go up there where a lot of people felt comfortable coming in and just talking to us all about all kinds of different questions. That was one thing.

We did receive an appeal for one of our large projects we've been reviewing for a special use permit – Predators of the Heart. So there'll be an appeal on that – of the hearing examiner's decision.

Our department: We've worked this year with – just recently with DEM. The County participates in a FEMA program called the Community Rating System – primarily a pre-disaster mitigation and education program. It has been for some time managed by the Planning Department. This year it was transferred over – more appropriately, in my opinion – to the DEM. I spent a bit of time working with them to do the handoff this year. So the recertification should – I expect it to go well and I expect DEM will be able to do probably even a better job because of their focus and time available up there to work on that, on that very important program. I always like to remind everyone – for anyone who is not familiar with the program – that it's a voluntary program that the County participates in, and because of the job that Skagit County does in reviewing projects, doing outreach, warning people of flood hazards, it results in a 25% reduction in everyone's flood insurance rates in unincorporated Skagit County. And I do also like to point out that's not government money, that's not some credit to the County government. That's actually everybody who has a flood policy and goes to their local insurance agent and as soon as they pull it up and they see you're in unincorporated Skagit County – psh – you get 25% off the top right now. And I know the goal now is to bump our rating up and maybe even get a 30% discount for everyone. So that's something we're working on, and DEM will be the primary on it now.

I guess the last thing I'll mention is – so you know about the Comprehensive Plan update due in 2025. It's a large undertaking that Planning will be – has started on. There's another component to that that the state is requiring all local jurisdictions to consider climate resiliency. And so fortunately they have allocated some monies to do that work and the County is – we anticipate asking and receiving for that allocation so we could work on it as part of this overall Comp Plan update. So looking forward to that. I'm very thankful for the state to actually fund some of these new requirements. So I'm pretty excited for moving forward with that and, like I said, in conjunction with our Comp Plan update.

That's all I have.

Chair Raschko: Thank you. Are there questions for Mr. Moore?

(silence)

Chair Raschko: No? Comments?

Vice Chair Candler: I have a question. The East County meeting people were concerned about elk and grizzly bears' reintroduction. What about the wolves' reintroduction? Anything about that?

Mr. Moore: I didn't hear a lot of talk about that. I think only because the – I mean, the elk is a current problem in how to keep them off the highway and keep them from damaging crops and property. That's something that's just actively occurring right now. And then the grizzly bear reintroduction is quite a fresh topic at the moment.

Vice Chair Candler: Sure.

Mr. Moore: So it seemed there a lot of it was primarily focused around that.

Vice Chair Candler: Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Moore: Mm-hmm.

Chair Raschko: Well, I apologize. It's probably something I should already know, but does the County have an official stance on grizzly bears?

Mr. Moore: I don't know that I want to speak to the Commissioners – for the Commissioners on that because I'm not certain I could articulate it well enough. But I can certainly find out if they have a public statement on that –

Chair Raschko: No, you don't need to do that. I was just curious.

Mr. Moore: – and make sure to get that to you.

Chair Raschko: Okay. Well, thank you very much. Planning Commissioner Comments and Announcements. Jen, have you anything?

Commissioner Jen Hutchinson: Nothing, but thank you.

Chair Raschko: Okay. Vince?

Commissioner Henley: Yes. What's the status of agritourism? I half-expected we would address that tonight. So where do we stand on that subject?

Ms. Ruether: The proposed deliberations are for the first meeting in December.

Commissioner Henley: Say again.

Ms. Ruether: The deliberations are scheduled for the first meeting in December.

Commissioner Henley: Okay.

Chair Raschko: Anything else?

(silence)

Chair Raschko: No?

Commissioner Henley: That's it.

Commissioner Woodmansee: I don't have anything.

Vice Chair Candler: I don't have anything.

Commissioner Hughes: Nothing.

Commissioner Rose: I don't have anything.

Chair Raschko: It's been quick. Well, thank everybody for your preparation and participation, and have a very nice evening. The meeting'll be adjourned (gavel).