

**Skagit County Planning Commission**  
**Review: 2020-2025 Capital Facilities Plan Update**  
**November 5, 2019**

**Planning**

**Commissioners:**     **Tim Raschko, Chair**  
                                  **Kathy Mitchell, Vice Chair**  
                                  **Mark Lundsten**  
                                  **Annie Lohman**  
                                  **Amy Hughes (absent)**  
                                  **Joe Woodmansee (absent)**  
                                  **Tammy Candler**  
                                  **Martha Rose**

**Staff:**

**Hal Hart, Planning Director**  
**Mike Cerbone, Assistant Planning Director**  
**Forrest Jones, Public Works Transportation Program Section Manager**  
**Kayla Schott-Bresler, Deputy County Administrator**  
**Ken Hansen, Interim Facilities Director**

**Public**

**Commenters:**     **Ellen Bynum, Friends of Skagit County**

Chair Tim Raschko: (gavel) Good evening, everybody. Let's call to order the November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2019, meeting of the Skagit County Planning – not Planning – the Planning Commission. Any changes to the agenda?

Vice Chair Kathy Mitchell: Nope, looks good.

Chair Raschko: Okay. That being the case, we'll go to Public Remarks. Does anybody wish to address?

Ellen Bynum: Good evening. Ellen Bynum, Friends of Skagit County, 110 North First, Mount Vernon. Just a housekeeping point of order that needs to be noted. On the web the staff reports for the last meeting are posted, and internal to the staff reports are references to the meeting that took place on October 22<sup>nd</sup>. And since there was no meeting, I'd just like to request that either the staff report be revised or a notice put on the top of the documents saying the documents were not reviewed by the Planning Commission or will be taken up on whatever date you're going to take it up. Thanks.

Chair Raschko: Okay, thank *you*. Okay, we'll turn to our agenda item 3, a review of the Capital Facilities Plan Update. Mr. Cerbone?

Mike Cerbone: Thank you, sir. Mike Cerbone, assistant director of Planning and Development Services, Skagit County. I have with me this evening Forrest Jones from our Transportation/Public Works Department. He's going to help do a presentation. The intent of this item is just to give you an update to what the Capital Facilities Plan is. We had scheduled a hearing, which has been

noticed for the 19<sup>th</sup>, for this group to receive testimony, and then we have scheduled the 26<sup>th</sup> of November for deliberations. So that's the tentative schedule going forward for the Capital Facilities Plan. I'll give you an update on the docket with the director's update at the end of the meeting.

So why capital facilities planning? Capital facilities are infrastructure needed to support development. They're integral to part of the planning for the future. Supports the Comprehensive Plan Land Use element and ensures we don't build more than we can support. It's also \_\_\_ to the third promise of the GMA.

So Planning Goal 12 sets forth public facilities and services and ensures those public facilities and services necessary to support development shall be adequate to serve the development at the time development's available for occupancy and use without decreasing current service levels below locally establishment of standards. The GMA-required element of the Comprehensive Plan – the planning period, as with most planning long range documents, is a 20-year planning horizon and it has a rolling six-year financing plan. And so what we're here today is to update our Capital Facilities Plan to reflect the 2020 to 2025 six-year timeframe. The current adopted Capital Facilities Plan is 2019 to 2024. So what you have before you and I provided before the meeting is a track change document of the Capital Facilities Plan. You also have the Transportation Improvement Program for that same planning period. That Transportation Improvement Program is part of the actual Capital Facilities Plan but it's a process that Forest Jones has been fostering independent, and so he's going to come up and give you an overview of that. I also have in the audience representation from our Facilities Department, as well as the assistant director for the County. So if there's any questions that pop up on some of the program items that are in the Capital Facilities Plan, those folks will come up and answer those questions and \_\_\_\_\_.

RCW 36.78 says that we will have an inventory of existing capital facilities owned by public entities showing the locations and capacities of those facilities. We're supposed to have a forecast of the future needs for those facilities, including the proposed locations, capacities of expanded and new capital facilities. Many of the updates that you see in there are updating new projects, removing those projects from 2019, putting new projects in for 2025. In some instances you've seen a lot of amendments where estimates have changed or our anticipated spending timelines have changed across that six-year horizon. It says "...at least a six-year plan that will finance such capital facilities with their projected funding capacities and clearly identify sources of public money for such purposes." Some of the amendments that you have before you this evening have more clarity in terms of where that funding is coming from, so that's part of that. And it also has a requirement to reassess the Land Use element if probable funding shortfalls of meeting existing needs and to ensure that the Land Use element and Capital Facilities Plan element and financing plan within those elements are coordinated and consistent. Park and recreation facilities are also included within the Capital Facilities Plan element. Because we're a county, many of the items that we have in our Capital Facilities Plan don't address necessarily water capacity, sewer capacity, transportation capacity as the same that you would see inside a city. But we do reference the cities' documents and the towns' documents and the other districts that we work with, so the irrigation and drainage districts, public utility districts.

So a capital facility is things like streets, roads, highways, sidewalks, street and road lighting systems, traffic signals, domestic water supply, storm and sanitary sewer systems, park and recreation facilities, schools and other public services. At the bottom, like I said, we don't provide all of these services; however, we will talk about them and we do reference them in our plan.

So our definition of “capital facilities” is “any publicly-owned structure, improvement, or asset including land that meets all the following criteria: it’s related to providing facilities, services identified on a prior site. It exists now or may be needed during the current GMA 20-year planning period. So for us, that’s 2005 to 2025. It requires the expenditure of public funds over and above annual maintenance and operation expenses. It costs \$10,000 or more and has a life expectancy of 10 years or more. Existing vehicles and equipment funded by the County’s equipment rental repair fund are not included in here, but you do see vehicles for drainage districts, the fire department, things like that.

The entire CFP is in one element. It includes our six-year financing plan. Like I said, that Capital Facilities Plan is an element of our Comprehensive Plan so it’s part of our Comprehensive Plan.

Transportation Improvement Program, which Forrest is going to go over in more detail, is incorporated by reference into that document. You also have a copy of that that was included as well, as well as the three comments – the public comments – that have been received as of the date of posting the staff report.

The WAC recommends at least every two years that capital facilities plans be updated to reflect the funding sources and new project costs. The County elects to do that annually, so it *is* something we do on an annual basis.

Ordinarily in Washington you can only update your Comprehensive Plan once per year. That’s why we docket our items. We consider them at one time. There is a provision in state law that allows us to adopt a capital facilities plan if it’s done in conjunction with the budget adoption, and so that’s why this piece is before you this evening. What we’re trying to do is coordinate that adoption so this can be adopted with the actual budget, which is anticipated to occur at the beginning of December – on the 2<sup>nd</sup> or shortly thereafter.

So the general orientation of our capital facility plan: We break it out by general government; fungible office space; community services; law and justice; parks, trails, and recreation which, as I said earlier, is a rather large portion of it; solid waste; stormwater management; and transportation.

So the draft is posted online. These are the dates that we had previously talked about. Public hearing is advertised for November 19<sup>th</sup>. Again, that would be before this board in this room. Planning Commission deliberations are scheduled for November 26<sup>th</sup>. So the public record is going to remain open till the end of the week of the 19<sup>th</sup> until 4:30. And so you’ll be getting a revised staff report prior to the hearing. Or rather – sorry – you’ll get a revised staff report prior to the deliberations, and that will account for any additional testimony that we receive between that timeframe.

And, as I said, the Board is considering concurrent adoption with the budget and that’s anticipated for December 2<sup>nd</sup> or shortly thereafter.

So this is just a slide for folks who may be watching at home. You know, it is an open comment period. It is open until November 21<sup>st</sup> at 4:30 p.m. Those comments can be mailed to us at 1800 Continental Place with the following title. They can be emailed to [pdscomments@co.skagit.wa.us](mailto:pdscomments@co.skagit.wa.us). Either one is appropriate, or folks can come and testify in person at the public hearing, or you could do all of those things.

So what I was thinking was I would have Forrest come up here and provide you an overview, and then if you have specific questions in the documents that you've gotten or questions about what Forrest has, if you ask them we can get the appropriate staff member up here to answer those questions.

Forrest Jones: All right, good evening. As Michael said, my name is Forrest Jones. I'm with Skagit County Public Works. I'm the Transportation Program Section Manager, so one of my responsibilities is the Six-Year Transportation Improvement Program. RCW 36.81.21 requires that the County put together a potential six-year plan every year, so basically we update that every year. It includes projects that are regionally significant and federally funded: proposed road projects, bridge projects, ferry and other transportation facility construction projects. It includes non-motorized. (It's) based on anticipated revenues versus desirable projects.

So some of the strategies we take when determining how to get a project on there: We try to leverage available road funds through grant requests. We apply project management principles. We collaborate with regional funding partners and prioritize based on project selection criteria. Some of that criteria is: address high risk collision locations; infrastructure needs; level of service issues; and leverage grant funding opportunities.

When determining projects, we look at some of these things here. These are reports we do within Public Works in my section: a Priority Array; the Skagit County Safety Assessment Plan; a concurrency assessment; the Bridge Report; and the 14-year Capital Improvement Ferry Plan.

Here's a glance at the covers of these reports. So we put these reports all together, we – throughout the year. At the end of the year we look at all these and try to figure out, Okay, what projects do we want to put on the TIP, based on these reports? Other sources when we consider projects, we look at the Parks Capital Facilities Plan. Is there a trail, non-motorized, that we want to include? We take public comment throughout the year. The public – we have 800 miles of road so we can't be everywhere in one place so we take comments from the public. Sheriff Department, they're out there beating the roads so they see things. And also grants. A lot of times there are grants that they're for a specific thing – like for a bridge grant, a safety grant, maybe a fish barrier grant, a culvert, something like that.

That being said, the proposed 2020-2025 TIP currently has 44 projects. Of those proposed projects, four are new projects that are being considered, 42 projects will remain or be carried over from last year's TIP, and three projects are being removed.

The four new projects. These are all – a couple of them are the fish barrier removal projects. We've got the Cedar Grove fish passage. That's basically we are going to remove a culvert to improve fish barrier and we're going to install a pedestrian bridge. Another project is illumination of the channelized intersections of Best Road, Chilberg, Havekost/Marine Drive, and Concrete/Sauk Valley, and South Skagit Road. Another safety project is install a guard rail and update some guardrail that's substandard. There's four locations – two on South Skagit and two on Concrete/Sauk Valley Road. Another project is – safety project is the Prairie Road Guidance Improvements. So we've had an increase of crashes on Prairie Road in the recent years so we got some grant funding to go through that and look at signing, maybe put some reflectors in the roadway. Just try to improve the overall safety of the road.

42 projects will remain or be carried over. Some of these projects – the Guemes Ferry Boat Replacement, we're actually splitting that project into two projects. One is the actual ferry – building the ferry. The other was the shore side facilities. So we – and the shore side facilities we

have to do some retrofitting to charge the new boat when we actually build the boat. So it's going to be all electric so we're going to put a battery bank there. We had to do some revisions to the terminal and things like that. And the reason that we decided – it was one project – the reason we decided to split it, we have to go through a permitting process so on the shore side we're going to have to do some environmental stuff for the boat. Basically you're going to be building in a shipyard, so we didn't want one to hang up the other so that was the main reason for splitting it.

Farm-to-Market/Josh Wilson Road intersection: We're looking at safety improvements on that. We've had a couple crashes there, a couple fatalities, so we're trying to look at safety on that. We're looking at anywhere from a signal to possibly a roundabout, things like that. So we'll go through the design process and figure out what's the best fit for that intersection.

Josh Wilson Road Phase 1: Phase 1 is from the – if you're familiar with Josh Wilson Road, from Avon Allen Road to the base of the hill we're going to – that section of road is built on a peat bog so we're continually fighting that road. We're losing it. It sinks, it cracks, and we have the drainage ditch on the south side so when they clean that ditch they'll pull out the toe so it'll settle. So we're going to move that road over about 10 feet, widen it, and eventually we want to do that whole section of road – basically from Chuckanut all the way up to Farm-to-Market.

Francis Road Segment 1: If you've been out on Francis Road, a few years back we improved the curves section between Francis Lane and \_\_\_ Road. So we widened it to a 40-foot cross section – 12-foot lanes, 8-foot shoulders. We're going to do that from the end of that one going out to the new roundabout on SR9 – do the same thing. We're actually working on that whole corridor so we have Section 3, Section 4. We actually have funding for Section 3 that we're going to be starting on design on that fairly soon.

Upper Finney Creek Bridge: A few years back we had an incident where a piece of logging equipment went over. It popped one of the girders. So we're trying to get that fixed. We put in for some grant funding for seismic retrofitting, which will basically cover all the components with steel – strengthen the bridge overall so we can get logging trucks back up in there and using that.

That was just a few of the projects. Like I said, there's 42 so I don't want to go over all of them.

Projects being removed are the Active Warning Signs, Guardrail Installation, and Prevedell/Pipeline Emergency Access Road. These are all projects that were on last year's TIP, so once we obligate funding to construct these, they drop off the TIP. So these all should be built in 2019. We're working on – I don't know if you guys are familiar with Prevedell Road. We had a slide last year. So basically that whole (hole?) is a dead end road so all those people – I think there was, like – I want to say 42. Don't hold me to it, but, like, 42 homes up there. These people were basically trapped up there. So we built a bypass road from Prevedell over to Pipeline so those people could get in and out for emergencies and things like that. This is just to – so if something like that happens again, even on Pipeline or Prevedell, we have that road. It won't be open all the time but if there's an accident or something where we can just open that up and get people in and out.

Here's a map of all the projects. I know it's very difficult to see. I think you guys may have hard copies of that that might be a little easier. Just kind of give you an idea of where all the projects are there throughout the county.

Comments received to date: We've received four comments. Ellen had a comment – you know, maybe get out there a little more to some of the civic groups, like the rotaries, Lions, churches –

whatever. Give them a chance and let them know what's up. They can go out into the public and maybe get some more comments and more ideas. Randy and his wife, they both had suggestions. Randy suggested that \_\_\_ to hold more public comment periods in the state/county that this transportation project is proposed in so, basically, they don't have to go to Olympia to comment; they could do it right here in the county.

And Mrs. Good said, as a citizen, she appreciated Public Works holding the open house on the Six-Year TIP. Every year we hold an informal public comment period. I do it out here in the common area and just try to get comment from everybody. The public's all invited. Just try to get comments from them.

And another one, she encouraged Public Works to inform the Department of Fish and Wildlife the safety threat that the elk herd proposes (sic) on our roads and to school busses.

There's an adoption schedule that we go by. So basically in June we start reviewing the reports; try to add and remove projects; have discussions with the Public Works staff on ongoing projects and new projects coming up. In August I am required to submit a regional – any regionally-significant projects to SCOG, Skagit County (sic) of Governments, for inclusion into the regional TIP. In September I try to get you guys a copy of the TIP, get comments from you guys. And public outreach, we do that in September and later in September I do a work session and discussion with the Board and let them know what's going on with the TIP, what we have on it, what comments we've received so far. Then on October 29<sup>th</sup> we held a public hearing to take comment and public input. Then on November 5<sup>th</sup> I'm doing a presentation for you guys. Then on December 2<sup>nd</sup> – December 2<sup>nd</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup>! – final resolution and consideration for possible adoption of the TIP. And again, like the Capital Facilities Plan, the TIP must be adopted prior to the budget. That's one of the RCWs. So once that's adopted then they adopt the budget.

Do you have any discussions or comments?

Chair Raschko: Does anybody have any questions or comments?

(silence)

Vice Chair Mitchell: He did a good job.

Mr. Jones: So that spread – I had Michael hand out that spreadsheet. You probably have the big version with all the pages in it. That's just kind of a summary. A few years back I did a presentation to the Planning Commission and they basically came up with the idea, Hey, why don't you put this all on a couple pages so it's easier to read? So I did that. There it is, thanks to you guys.

Commissioner Tammy Candler: I have a question on the four new projects. Are those all sort of grant-driven? It sounded like maybe.

Mr. Jones: Yeah, all of them are grant-funded projects. They may not be regionally-significant in the big, wide scheme of things, but because they are federally-funded projects they are required to be on the TIP.

Chair Raschko: Would you say 100% of it is federally-funded?

Mr. Jones: Basically on the safety projects, they are 85% funded by federal and 13% by the County on just the design, and once we move into the construction if we obligate our funding in a certain date then those are 100% covered construction-wise.

Chair Raschko: Okay.

Mr. Jones: And on the fish barrier project, that's all – I'm pretty sure; I'm not positive, but I'm pretty sure it's all funded by the Salmon Recovery Board. There might be a little local funding in there just timewise for our time, but the majority of it is Salmon Recovery-funded.

Chair Raschko: I also have a question on the Cedar Grove/Ovenell Slough Restoration.

Mr. Jones: Yes?

Chair Raschko: I presume this is an old road with a culvert and you're pulling the culvert.

Mr. Jones: Yeah, if you're familiar with the Cedar Grove area, it is upriver in the Concrete area.

Chair Raschko: Yeah, it's on the south side just east of –

Mr. Jones: Yeah, it's on the south side of the river. So Cedar Grove actually goes in off the Concrete/Sauk Valley Road and it dead ends, and beyond that dead end there's a chunk of road that's not open to motorized vehicles – it's just pedestrians right now – and it accesses a Fish and Wildlife property where people like to go down and fish. And between the road and that property you have wetlands over here and a slough over here and there's a small culvert in there that kind of brings water back and forth. So they want to open that area all up to allow for better fish habitat.

Chair Raschko: Well, I guess the thrust of my question then is it must be some bridge because it won't take much to pull the pipe.

Mr. Jones: No. Yeah, they'll remove the culvert. They'll actually remove the majority of the road and put a pedestrian bridge over that.

Chair Raschko: It just – it's just a comment. It's just a half-million dollars seems like a pretty fancy bridge.

Mr. Jones: Yeah. I think they're working on the design. I think they're trying to kind of bring that cost down. And these are – a lot of these costs in here are estimated costs, so once they get the design going you start finiting the actual cost of construction.

Chair Raschko: Okay. And also I was just curious on the Peterson Road. Maybe I got the wrong one. The one referred to as Prairie Road.

Mr. Jones: Yeah.

Chair Raschko: And as I recall – I guess I pulled the wrong sheet of paper. I was just curious about what's going to happen there for the amount of money that's being spent.

Mr. Jones: On Prairie Road? That's a safety project.

Chair Raschko: Right.

Mr. Jones: Yeah, basically typically it's mostly low-cost, a low-cost solution. So what we will do we'll go out and we'll upgrade all the signing that needs to be upgraded, put a better sign face on there. We'll more than likely put raised pavement marking reflectors on the center line – kind of better guidance. We'll put posts on the outside on the curves. Just kind of better help guide people.

Chair Raschko: Well, I'm satisfied. What occurred was that in the handout it references – on the first page, Prairie Road Guidance Improvements, it says to look at page 35 and when you go to page 35 – I've looked at everything on it except – the title at the top of page 35 is "Peterson Road" with a 3.9-million-dollar cost! And so...

Mr. Jones: That was probably my mistake!

(cross-talking)

Chair Raschko: So it's only 70. So you can see why I was curious.

Mr. Jones: Yeah. No, that's a mistake!

Chair Raschko: All right. Is there anything else? Yes?

Commissioner Candler: On the Bow Hill Road project that's on the first page of this, is that just the area between Darrk Lane and the Highway 99 or does that include a roundabout or – do you know?

Mr. Jones: Yeah, it's from Darrk Lane to Old Highway 99 and it's – it really doesn't incorporate any improvements at either end of the intersections. It's just the area between. We're having issues where we're losing that road. We have a big embankment to the south of that and that keeps sloughing off. The road settles. We see cracking. We're always out there patching it. So we're going to rebuild that road. We're going to put in some shoulder pile, widen the whole area. Just basically reconstruct the whole road.

Commissioner Candler: Because that's at one of the – well, I don't know. I haven't compared them all, but it's a fairly high dollar amount so I didn't know.

Mr. Jones: Yeah, it's not cheap to stabilize that – the shoulder pile, so basically that's the major cost right there. So basically they have to come in and just basically it's a sheet of metal they drive into the ground. Then they've got to fill. Once they get that stabilized and filled in they'll fill in all the fill dirt. It's not cheap. A good portion of that is grant-funded. We got a lot of money from – it's called RAP, Rural Arterial Preservation – through the state CRAB board, which is the County Road Administration Board. So, yeah, I think we have 2.3 million through them. We had some federal funding that we spent for design on that.

Commissioner Candler: Are you able to say if there are any other roundabout – I can't remember.

Mr. Jones: Yeah, the Farm-to-Market. Farm-to-Market/Josh Wilson. That more than likely. My boss will yell at me for saying it but more than likely it will be a roundabout.

Commissioner Candler: Okay. Thank you.

Commissioner Annie Lohman: Can I? On the Josh Wilson/Farm-to-Market, what about just lowering the speed limit to, like, a 35 through that, like they do on other roads such as Best Road and other areas where they've just made a section a lower speed?

Mr. Jones: Yeah, we've looked at that. And I'll use Best Road and McLean as an example. If you've lived in the county for a while, Best Road and McLean Road, that was our worst intersection. We had like 26 crashes there over, like, a three-year period. Four or five fatalities there. We had the same thing there. As you came in on McLean – which in this case would be Farm-to-Market if you want to compare the two – where we reduced the speed, and what we found is people would slow down (and) the people that are at the stop were thinking that car was either turning or doing some other maneuvers or coming to a stop, if they weren't familiar, and we actually – we believe it actually *increased* crashes there just because of that 35. Again, we even actually had a blinking light on there. We ended up taking that down because people – I mean, the people that live there, they know. I think it was more the unfamiliar driver. They think, oh, it's a blinking light. Red for me so it's going to be blinking red for them, so people would actually pull out in front of people. So that's kind of one of the reasons we kind of resist doing that.

Commissioner Lohman: Thank you for that explanation. I've heard other people ask that question, so thank you.

Mr. Jones: Yeah. No problem.

Chair Raschko: Anyone else? Yeah.

Commissioner Mark Lundsten: Annie or you answered the question about the Josh Wilson roundabout (that) I was going to ask actually. I just have a jargon question here. The channelized intersections means turn-left lane?

Mr. Jones: Yes.

Commissioner Lundsten: Where you have a turn lane basically. Something where people will go out of the traffic and make a turn one way or the other. That's all that means.

Mr. Jones: Yeah, just there's a left-turn lane, a right-turn pocket or both. Basically, in today's design standard if we were to design that road today it would be required to have street lighting.

Commissioner Lundsten: So those channelized lanes or intersections were built before the standards of the lighting were instituted.

Mr. Jones: Yes.

Commissioner Lundsten: You're just making it whole now.

Mr. Jones: Exactly.

Commissioner Lundsten: Okay, thanks.

Chair Raschko: Commissioner Mitchell?

Vice Chair Mitchell: I ask this every once in a while. Which projects are going on this year that you really are glad to see happening?

Mr. Jones: Say again?

Vice Chair Mitchell: Which projects are you really glad to see happening this year?

Mr. Jones: I'm happy to see Bow Hill Road because we've been working on that for quite a while. We actually had to delay it because we originally were going to do it before the Burlington Northern Overpass. We had some design issues come up so we had to delay it so then we couldn't work on it because it was a detour route for that. So then we did the other two bridges on Old 99 and again we had to delay it. So I'm happy to see that.

From a safety standpoint, I'm happy to see Farm-to-Market/Josh Wilson. Francis Road, again, that's the one we've been working on for quite a while so...

Vice Chair Mitchell: Great. Thank you.

Mr. Jones: All right.

Chair Raschko: I just have one question more of curiosity. The Upper Finney Bridge –

Mr. Jones: Yes?

Chair Raschko: Normally you'd think of that as the United States Forest Service road, but – what is that? Mine-to-Market Road?

Mr. Jones: Yeah, I think exactly that's where it was, Mine-to-Market when \_\_\_\_ is the reason the County has it. But, yeah, you go I think it's – I think maybe a mile up past the bridge it does turn to Forest Service road. Yeah, I'm not sure of the history on why we have it or don't have it. It's a fairly narrow road. It does provide access to DNR property, Forest Service property, so there's a lot of recreational up there. There's a lot of tree harvesting going on up there. There's actually been some interest in some mining. \_\_ go up there for iron ore.

Chair Raschko: Well, I'm glad to see it happen.

Mr. Jones: Yeah.

Chair Raschko: Okay.

Mr. Jones: All right?

Chair Raschko: Thank you.

Mr. Jones: All right, no problem. Oh, I was going to show you too... You can contact me; there's my contact information. If you want to access the TIP, there's a website you can go to. Just go to Public Works/Programs. I have all the draft TIPs on there and all my reports that we talked about are on there. There's basically the website right there. I know it's easy to read...

(laughter)

Chair Raschko: Okay, thank you.

Mr. Cerbone: And all those links are also on our Capital Facilities website page. It links back to Forrest's webpage. So we do also have Ken Hansen, who's our interim facilities director here, if

there are any specific questions about the Capital Facilities Plan that didn't involve the TIP. And then Kayla Schott-Bresler, who's the deputy county administrator, is here as well. One of the biggest changes in the CFP this year was the addition of publicly-owned homeless facilities and affordable housing projects. So that's something that wasn't in the plan last year. And so Kayla is here and she can answer questions if you guys had questions about that as well. It's up to you. And then if anything pops up between now and the hearing, if you have questions you can email them to me. I can research and make sure I have that question answered for you at the hearing.

Vice Chair Mitchell: I do have a question for Kayla.

Kayla Schott-Bresler: Hi, good evening.

Vice Chair Mitchell: Hi. Thank you. With the new section on there – obviously it's an important thing – what was the impetus to take this step?

Ms. Schott-Bresler: Yeah, so a couple years ago the state legislature extended the allowable uses of part of the real estate excise tax to facilities to provide housing for the homeless. That went through June of 2019 and then during this last legislative session the legislature passed House Bill 1219 which extended that through 2025. So there's a longer period now that local jurisdictions can use real estate excise tax funds for affordable housing and homeless facilities. When the legislature passed that bill this last session they also instituted a requirement that any housing facilities funded with real estate excise taxes must be listed in the capital facilities plan; hence, why you see it in your plan.

The other thing that changed with that bill was under the prior sort of extension of use with REET, that was in effect through June, those were specific to facilities to provide housing for the homeless. With House Bill 1219, that's now broader and it can be any publicly-owned affordable housing facility.

Vice Chair Mitchell: Where can people find information about what the statistics are currently? For instance – I realize it's going to be an estimate kind of number – for what we have for homeless and how many will be able to be taken care of – what percentage? Those kinds of things.

Ms. Schott-Bresler: I don't have a good number on the percentage of people who are served who are experiencing homelessness. It's on the Skagit County Public Health website. There're some different handouts there. I unfortunately don't have it off the top of my head. I do know that over the course of 2018 there were over 1600 Skagit County residents who sought homeless services at the housing resource center at Community Action. Those are folks who proactively came in and sought services and qualified for services. Certainly there's more than 1600 people over the course of the year who are homeless and either do not seek services or do not meet the strict federal definitions of homelessness that are required to access services.

Vice Chair Mitchell: Are you guys finding short-term or long-term needs with most of the people?

Ms. Schott-Bresler: It really varies. I mean, there's people who I've talked to who are in their 50s and have been homeless since they were 18. There's also – the majority of folks, however, really have brief episodes of homelessness and need short-term assistance to get back on their feet. Those are the folks who fall into homelessness, you know, due to a rent hike on their apartment or a car breakdown, job loss, medical bills, those sorts of things that if they're able to get that assistance to be rehoused are able to get back on track and pay rent on a long-term basis.

Vice Chair Mitchell: Thank you.

Ms. Schott-Bresler: Sure.

Chair Raschko: Anything else? Thank you.

Ms. Schott-Bresler: Yeah.

Mr. Cerbone: So if there's no other questions, we'll move on to the next agenda. Is that okay?

Chair Raschko: Anything else for staff?

(silence)

Chair Raschko: Okay.

Mr. Cerbone: Like I said, if anything pops up, comes into your mind as you're reviewing the documents, go ahead and shoot me an email. I'll make sure we get the question answered and I'll work with Kayla to get the links to the Health Department website so we can get you some more information on the stats. Thanks, Kayla. Thanks, Ken. Thank you, Forrest.

So the last thing that we have here is going to be director's Update. Before Hal gets into actually giving his director's Update, I did want to give you an update of where we're at with the 2019 docket.

So what we had done is we had reached out to kind of get a feel for when folks would be available to review the CFP, the public hearing, and the deliberations. We have that locked in. My plan for moving forward with the docket is to have a formal staff report very similar to what you saw last year. It'll have recommendations for the staff-recommended amendments. It'll have options for you for the citizen-initiated amendments. I would have that available publicly by the 10<sup>th</sup> of December, is the plan. We would have a work session on December 17<sup>th</sup>, and so that work session would literally just be going through those recommendations, answer any questions that you have on those. And then I would propose to have the public hearing January 21<sup>st</sup>. And so what we would do is notice that well in advance. That information would be available to the public to be able to review during the holiday season. I think there would be a fair amount of time for them to be able to review and prepare their comments and testimony for you. The hearing, again, would be planned for January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2020, and then we would move into deliberations. If we could get the hearing taken care of with one meeting, you know, we could move into deliberations thereafter. If one meeting is not sufficient to hear everybody or hear concerns that folks have about the proposed docket, we would move that into the next meeting from the 21<sup>st</sup>. Does that sound reasonable to everybody? And what my goal is is to focus on making sure that what I'm preparing to put in front of you is very familiar and consistent with what you've seen in the past. And so that's what I'll be \_\_\_ for.

I was also hoping, with conversation with the Chair, December 3<sup>rd</sup> is something we've been looking at tentatively for having a retreat to basically have staff get together with the Planning Commission. We can talk more about how we interact and how we interact moving forward. We also have a new staff member that I'd like to introduce to you. His name is Peter Gill and he's going to be taking over the long range planning management role for the County. And so that would be a good opportunity. And then we've also invited our attorney, Julie Nicoll, so Julie would be there as well so that you guys could meet her. She did send some correspondence out to you

guys today. There were some questions that came up before the last meeting about access to the attorney and legal determinations and so she did send a formal email out to the Planning Commission. And so we would propose to have her at that December 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting as well so you get to know her, see what she looks like – ten toes, ten fingers, all that good stuff. But she did also give you a pathway if you have specific questions that you want to get her to weigh in on. She sent that email out to you guys this afternoon. Does that sound good moving forward? Awesome.

Commissioner Martha Rose: I have guests that week so it might be tough for me. That December week. That first week of December.

Mr. Cerbone: So, Commissioner, the intent really is there to relay the information to you, so you would be able to watch it. You'd have plenty of time before the hearing to be able to watch it, and then if you had specific questions that popped up, again, we could address those.

Commissioner Rose: Okay.

Commissioner Candler: I have a question about the retreat. Is that an evening meeting retreat or is that a day? What type of –

Mr. Cerbone: So we're still trying to pan it out. We have Julie looking into what the legal requirements are. I think if we meet as a group we still need to post that. We're still going to provide, you know, the public access. But the intent would be – what we're looking at right now would be to use kind of the same period but probably have some food involved in that as well. It would be less formal, not in this room, is what the Chair and I chatted about with the director. So we're not in the dais, you're not in your positions, and it's more of an informal conversation. Certainly the public would be available to attend and monitor and see what we're talking about, but the intent was to get us away from the bright lights to a space where, you know, we could talk about how we're going to interact moving forward and how the 2020 docket will lay out. The chair and Vice Chair had a lot of good ideas about how staff could fold back in the work that you're doing. Like, for instance, one of the things that was brought up by the Chair and Vice Chair was getting a report back. You guys make a recommendation, you know, to the Board and unless you go and attend the Board or watch the meeting you may not otherwise understand what happened with your recommendation. So that's something staff could do. One of the other things that we talked about doing was trying to be kind of forward thinking with the docket. So right now the 2020 docket, what's been submitted and requested at the County is posted on the website. And so maybe bringing that information into this group, sharing that information with this group before we have the docketing hearing so that if you want to participate in that you could, or if you want to share with your family, friends, neighbors, et cetera, you have that information and you can. But that's kind of some of the things – those were ideas that the Chair and Vice Chair had, but certainly part of the concept with December 3<sup>rd</sup> would be having a conversation about other things that other folks on the committee would like to see or are missing or things that, you know, staff could do a better job supporting you in your role. That would be the intent of that meeting.

Commissioner Candler: I just wanted to make sure I didn't need to worry about work conflicts.

Mr. Cerbone: Yeah. No, no, and that's why we thought about the evening.

Commissioner Candler: Thank you.

Mr. Cerbone: Most people work during the day.

Chair Raschko: Commissioner Lohman?

Commissioner Lohman: About the Comp Plan updates that we were working on at prior meetings. When are they going to be coming to us?

Mr. Cerbone: So that's the 2019 docket that I described, so that would be December 10<sup>th</sup>. You would have a formal Planning Commission staff report that identified each one – the P-1, P-2, P-4, the MRO proposed removal, and then C-1 through C-8, the County-initiated staff amendments.

Commissioner Lohman: Okay.

Mr. Cerbone: You'd have a staff report very familiar to what you've seen the last year.

Commissioner Lohman: I misheard you then –

Mr. Cerbone: Okay.

Commissioner Lohman: – because I heard “the 2020 docket.”

Mr. Cerbone: Oh, yeah, I'm sorry. Maybe I misspoke. The 2020 docket wouldn't come to you until after it was actually docketed by the Board. So the Board would review that and they would then adopt a resolution that sets the 2020 docket in play, and then that would be coming before you not until you finish with the 2019 docket. So I would anticipate that we would look at starting that work on the 2020 docket sometime towards the end of the first quarter of the year. But it depends how we move through the 2019 docket. And then we do also have some work plan items that we're going to be bringing before you after the 2019 docket as well, but we could talk more about those at the retreat. But there are some long-standing projects that I think several of you folks have seen maybe in work sessions previously – the stormwater updates, flood code updates – that we actually need to foster through the entire process. We would be bringing those back and they would kind of be intertwined with that 2020 docket. But December 10<sup>th</sup> would be when you have the staff report on the 2019 docket. We would have a work session on December 17<sup>th</sup> where we would – staff will just formally present that staff report to you; be available to answer questions; collect questions; go back and get those answered to you. And then that 21<sup>st</sup> would be the public hearing for the 2019 docket and that would be the first scheduled hearing. If we need to go into another meeting we would.

Chair Raschko: Anything else? Okay.

Commissioner Lundsten: I'd like to get a calendar of all the meetings we're going to have between now and the end of January. I'm a little confused about which dates we are meeting and which –

Mr. Cerbone: Sure. I will email them out to you guys tomorrow and I'll have a specific title describing what each one is. Is that –

(sounds of assent)

Commissioner Lundsten: And there's nothing scheduled for November 12<sup>th</sup>: Is that right?

Mr. Cerbone: There is nothing scheduled for November 12<sup>th</sup>.

Commissioner Lundsten: Good. Thank you.

Mr. Cerbone: November 19<sup>th</sup> is the public hearing.

Commissioner Lundsten: I'm just – totally personal issue – another big commitment.

Mr. Cerbone: No, I'll email that out to you tomorrow with the specific dates bolded, specific detail of what is going to occur on each day.

Commissioner Lundsten: Thank you.

Mr. Cerbone: Yeah. And we did also have – Commissioner Del Vecchio did resign so we'll be sending an email out tomorrow. They'll be posting that in the paper to try and fill that position. We'll also be sending an email out to the listserv to try and find a replacement for the Commissioner.

Chair Raschko: Okay. Anything else?

(silence)

Chair Raschko: Thank you.

Mr. Cerbone: Yep, and then Hal's got a –

Hal Hart: Well, as you can tell – I'm Hal Hart, Planning director – there's a lot going on in the County right now. One of the things I wanted to talk to you about tonight is follow-up from the housing summit or the housing conference and how – What are we doing as a County? I think the County's greatest role there is convenor, leader, be a voice of – this is a community issue. Housing is a community issue. It doesn't necessarily know the county/city boundaries. We've added 19,000 people since 2010 and a lot more are going to be, you know, coming. Businesses are expanding. It's a good economy. Cities are – what I got out of that conference was – listening to the Cities I thought, We'd better start building lots of bridges between the Cities' goals and objectives (and) the County's goals and objectives, and thinking about economic development, thinking about preservation of key things. Because if there's a lot of people coming you want to – how do you keep the County so great as those other people are coming?

And so a little bit of what I'm going to just bring to you is: Here's an update. This is right up there on the screen, and this is a 72-unit. This is tonight. There's a picture of it. And my thought process here is just tracking what's going on is important. Knowing what's going on on a regional scale. But no one's *really* doing that, right? SCOG is doing some of it – keeping population data – they're saying, People are going this way, people are going that way. But really you've got to keep track of the projects that are coming on. You have to know who's doing the projects and you have to understand what the projects are running into. Are they already leased up before they're built or, you know, what's going on? So this one is just – you know, on October 25<sup>th</sup> they were doing the footings. This is over on Burlington and George Hopper Road, right? And it's fun to watch, too – at least I think it's fun so maybe I'm a weirdo. I think you guys know that by now. I really like this stuff.

So but working – you know, the bridge I'm talking about is also – it's also knowing the people that are behind the investments, too – right? Why are they making this investment and what are they running into at the cities or the county and what's the demographic that they're each looking at? So tonight I was talking to a developer and his demographic really focusses more on the senior demographic. And he calls it the, you know, "silver tsunami." And for sure we see that. And we

have 55 and older communities here, but every once in a while there's people that aren't 55 and older that are getting into those communities. By design, they allow some of that to occur. But we're going to have to be looking at some other alternatives. We have currently and we heard this at the summit we were the number fifth worst housing county in America. And by that is the vacancy rate is the measure. We're at .2%. And so that's just amazing to me. I haven't seen that. And, you know, the previous year wasn't as bad but it was still – it was under 1% in the previous year. So it's going in the wrong direction. And this could just be a flash in the pan or something like that. But what I'm also tracking are all the companies that are talking to us right now. We have direct knowledge of companies because we see them every Thursday coming in, want to expand. And why are they coming to Skagit County? There's a lot of reasons. It's a great place. Sometimes the CEO just loves fishing nearby, or sometimes, you know, they want to locate their business up here. Other times, they're getting priced out of other markets. They may have a really good engineering company but that engineering company started in Kirkland back in the '70s or something and it's now next to Facebook and Google, and so their employees can't even afford to live there. And it's a very amazing time that we're seeing up and down the west coast and we're impacted by that.

Here's another little factoid. I went to school up in Canada and we had classes in Burnaby, and I was blown away by how much Burnaby has grown. Well, in the paper this week, Burnaby's going to have an 85-story tower. So it'll be the tallest on the west coast and it's all housing, and they have three more that are going to be in the 60 range. So just the region is changing. What happens to us in the middle of that? I don't know, but I would like to be part of charting that with you. You know, the choices that we're going to make are going to be here for another hundred years so....

So what are the bridges that we're building? Right now we're working with the Parks Department and the idea is to – Hey, let's look at the fairground. What's going to happen in the future of that fairgrounds? And so the Commissioners are talking about that, and so we're looking at potentially working with the City of Mount Vernon. We've begun meeting with the staff of the City of Mount Vernon, building that bridge with Mount Vernon, saying, Hey, if you guys would do a subarea plan for the south part of Mount Vernon, that might be really helpful to us looking at the long term for the fairgrounds. And could that fairgrounds be developed in such a way that would meet the neighborhood community objectives of, you know, probably not too big and – but also meet the area objectives of housing needs. And Growth Management said, Hey, put that growth in the cities. Primarily put that growth in the cities. So here's a way that the County and City by working together could move the dial and be innovative. And what I would do would be to encourage everybody to invite the local development community in and the local neighborhood to have that discussion over the next year. And so it'd be a year-long process. Updating the plan, we'd be working with the City building a cooperative approach that has a regional impact perhaps. Right? And so I'm not exactly sure of all the details. I think I would say this, that by the first quarter we would have somebody onboard working with the community by the end of the first quarter. And you spend the next three quarters working with the community – just getting down there and listening to what their needs would be and what they are right now, and then also doing a bit of a master plan overlay on the existing fairgrounds. And so you'd be saying, Okay, we'll look at the fairgrounds and do a what-if scenario and work with the community all the way through that. The same time we're going that, we would be looking for sites out in the county as well for a potential fairground location.

So I just want to kind of keep you in that loop every step of the process. And the other next thing is I think it's really important to involve stakeholders in our permit process. So we're looking at maybe permit process improvements over the next year. So one of the things the developers and the hundreds of families that come in and do permits with us say, Hey, here's some – we're

running into issues. And it may be in stormwater or critical areas or someplace in that process. And this year we had an issue and both – first it was stormwater and then it was in the critical areas where all the permits kind of come in at about the same time, and then because of that we get a backlog. So we're trying to work on strategies to eliminate the backlog, and so what we came up with stormwater this year was a strategy to shift resources over to stormwater so we can improve that. We created an outside line for permitting so that we can go to an engineering firm and keep the line going. The engineering firm will do 15 or 20 or 30 reviews so you don't have a 66-permit wait; you have a lot less of a permit wait than that. And then we did hire a second stormwater tech, too. And so what that did is that once we got that person onboard and we – then another really good strategy that Mike came up with was, Let's push the decision-making down to the front counter wherever we can, so that we can do the review of the stormwater – does this person need more review or is what they've given us adequate? Instead of passing that decision back to the stormwater tech in the back, who's out during the day and then comes back at the end of the day and starts looking at that, we're making those decisions now upfront. And so that was a lot faster improvement in the permit flow as well. So those three or four strategies really eliminated a lot of the backlog very quickly. And so we're going to try that again this next year with that group of strategies – and there may be others – to eliminate other backlogs in the permit system for the next year. And the idea is to provide good service, get people through as quickly as possible, but really do a good review at the same time so that they're protecting the resource when their house comes up for review and they're staying out of the wetland but they're meeting all the code requirements, and they're being communicated with right up front with the permit timelines are going to be. So we're going to continue working with the larger community on those kinds of improvements, communicating those kinds of successes and where we're having issues.

And so one of the ideas, both Burlington and the City of Mount Vernon have just started engaging in that. They're having more weekly talks with the building association, local builders, and others that are saying, Hey, we think there's some issues with your permit system. And what they really want – and I was talking to one tonight – was predictability. They want it predictable. When they come in, they want to know: How long are you going to have that for? So we want to be predictable that way and what the outcome's likely, but also how long it's going to take, too. So those are really kind of commonsense. And Mike, yeah, feel free to add any of the strategies. I'm thinking here. But this is a goal for the next year that we're setting. We have several, but that is one of them.

So it's engaging the stakeholders, and hopefully that will help in the rural element because we're – you know, the County, like I said, has grown by 19,000 in the last ten years or so. But in the rural area – you know, that's all I'm responsible for. In the cities where the real growth is supposed to happen under Growth Management, we can play a leadership role where we own the property. Right? So when we own big chunks of very valuable property then we can play a leadership role somehow in whatever way we can. Or we can be the convenor. And so – and we can count things with our Cities, as well.

So I've also engaged the state in this discussion, both the housing – the housing issue is impacted by a lot of different things in rural Skagit County: Water is one of the things that's impacting, right? So you have to prove your water availability. And so Big Lake was \_\_\_ but they created a Big Lake water bank this last year, and we're doing that with the Department of Ecology. Other area is the main stem of the Skagit. That's – a lot of people got stuck and couldn't realize their dreams. About 400 or so homes were stuck in the water issues of the past and so the water banking idea is a way of allowing those people to finally get their ability to build now because water would be available to them. So we're continuing to work with DOH and DOE on that. We did tell – I told the state legislative – Joint Legislative Task Force that housing really is our number one issue for this

county, given what is going on. So when you're working in water policy, be cognizant of that fact too, and then also help us out on – if you're sitting on economic development committees down at the state. So I was telling that to the legislatures so they just kind of keep it in front of them. Because these things are interconnected, and that's the planner in me saying that but I really think they are. I think these policies tend to – we can get lost in the trees sometimes. But this isn't a huge county and when you have 400 people stuck and not able to build on their properties \_\_, that's a pretty big impact over time. So engage the state. So that was \_\_. So we'll continue to do that.

Reach out to the real estate community and participate in regional dialogues. So I was given the chance by Commissioner Dahlstedt to attend coming up – I think it's in November; I think it's a couple weeks – there's going to be a regional dialogue about what's happening to our local economies. And I'm always scratching my head trying to figure it out. This one's going to be over in Oak Harbor. So, you know, Oak Harbor has issues about a lot of military families who can't afford it, but there's also linkages to Fidalgo Island, there's linkages to people in – who can't afford different places – right? – so they come over to work in one location but they're living in a different location. And so I'm hearing it from the mayors at that housing get together. And so we'll step and make it one bigger and think of Island County and Skagit County. What are those relationships and what are the real estate community – what are they seeing in terms of economic changes? And I'll bring whatever they're – you know, whatever they tell me back to you guys as a result of that and just give you some fresh information and a fresh look. Hopefully, it'll be good, and I'll be looking for other information from around the state as well.

So track what we are achieving and trying to understand the market issues is really, really important. So we can sense – you know, Cities have this problem, I think more than the County but they can look at their downtown and they can go, Wow, this downtown should be rocking and rolling. And it's complex. Why isn't it? Why hasn't somebody picked off that downtown location? And there could be lots of reasons. There could be contamination. There could be lots of red tape to get through that takes years to remove the contamination. So just helping to understand why our key property \_\_\_\_\_. That's one thing we'll try and do.

Capital facilities. Ken was here tonight and that was good. He's starting to make a connection and I want him to make a connection with you. One of the key things is preserving that courthouse over time, right? It's just a symbol. It's a pretty cool symbol of Skagit County and relates to a different time and place, but it still carries forth, you know, generations. And so I'm a big one for preservation.

Bringing new ideas to the table should be what we're trying to do. This is a new idea. The Victoria mayor off to the right here, so I'm engaging the real estate community in dialogue, both the real estate community and the developer community, the building community, and I'm thinking bigger than just who's here but also who's in the region doing stuff. \_\_\_ Apartment Homes is looking in downtown Mount Vernon. That's a – it's almost a global concern now. It's a national concern for sure. But they are big and they want to invest in this community. But here's a little vignette off to the right. When Victoria's mayor invited the private sector in for a discussion, they had been talking about their downtown. I'm watching this for about three or four years now. And this is all because I went to school in Canada, so I kind of clue in a little bit to what's going on in their big towns. Amazing growth. Victoria doesn't look like it did 20 years ago at all. But she invited them in and they came up with this innovative idea. They had to do a fire hall in the middle of their neighborhood and they said – so once they brought the developers in they said, Hey, let's do some sort of partnership between the City and somebody who wants to do mixed use development. And this is what they came up with. They came up with a multistory structure sitting

above a fire house. And I thought that's pretty cool, right? So now you have to figure out all the legal issues, right? So it's nice to think big but then you have to think about, Oh, well, okay, what does that actually mean in Washington state? Is it possible in Washington state? So there *are* examples of this kind of public-private partnership and they're actually on the website of Mount Vernon. So as I get to know what – you know, so it's also one of Mount Vernon's goal, is to be like what was just in the *Times* \_\_ newspaper this week. That's this story right here. So we can think innovatively. We can come up with solutions. It will require lots of study and analysis. It's complex because you don't want to gift any public – I'm not an attorney, so I want to say that first to anybody watching – but you just don't want to gift anything to the public. You have to figure out how not to gift stuff to them. But get equal value or get some sort of value recognition out of that. So we can go into that more.

So the other thing I'm worried about and working on is I'm looking at our permit data right now and, like I said, we want to improve our permit system. But I'm also watching the permits and so I'm looking at today, with our permit expeditor, 188 times we've been successful moving the ball forward in housing this year in rural Skagit County. 128 of those were new, single-family developments, 14 were mobile homes, 36 were ADUs, another 10 were mobile home replacements. So those don't really count because, you know, one's going out, but they do count because it's upgrading somebody a lot. I had family that lived in an old wooden mobile home so I know – I remember what that was like with six kids, right, and at the edge of an airbase too, on top of everything. But so I think it's important to track that and I'll keep that – we'll have a final report out. But the startling thing to me is we are down significantly from last year. As tight as the market is, unincorporated county's down, like, 50 homes from last year – what we did last year. And so I'm going to be asking the developers, people that own land and stuff, Why do you think that is? Is it that we're not producing? We're not doing the subdivisions out there? Because it's getting harder and harder, right? So if you do a CaRD –

Commissioner Rose: It's labor. Labor.

Mr. Hart: Could be.

Commissioner Rose: That's why I haven't started my next project.

Mr. Hart: Thank you! See, that's great. I think labor's definitely a big component.

Commissioner Rose: Me too. It's everything.

Mr. Hart: Thank you. That's probably one I would have got to but thank you. I really appreciate that. So we do – that's another issue. We've got to – we're in competition for labor, too. Right? And it's getting expensive. That competition is very expensive.

So anyway, that's my overview. I hope it wasn't too long, but I want to keep you up to date and anything that the Commissioners are telling me, I want to bring back down so that we can have a broader discussion about goals and objectives at some point. Yes?

Commissioner Rose: I have three comments, because I went to the housing summit and then the following week I went to housing week up in Bellingham, which was awesome as well. Marty Kooistra, who is part of the housing consortium in Seattle, brought up a statistic. I don't know where he got it but it seems accurate. He said every single day in the City of Seattle there's a shortage of 300 carpenters – every single day. And this is why, like for me, the housing affordability, slower starts – it's all tied to labor shortages because when the labor shortages are

that critical the price for labor goes up to an unmanageable amount to the point where I can't afford to build and sell for at the price point here because the labor's too high. So that's one thing.

Mr. Hart: Thank you.

Commissioner Rose: Another thing is a woman who presented up in Bellingham, she got hired by the City of Seattle to crack the nut with the NIMBYs for the upzone of the whole city, and you might want to reach out to her. I don't remember her name, but she's worked there for four or five years and her whole job was to navigate getting buy-in. And she described the whole process and it was amazing. It was so multifaceted. And she got the buy-in and learned – well, told us – that what she learned is that 80% of the people in Seattle wanted it and 20% didn't and it was the 20% that brought two lawsuits. They won their first lawsuit and lost the second one, but between the first lawsuit and the second one – the first time around, the judge said you have to do the full-blown environmental impact statement. That was basically the gist of the original lawsuit. So they did that and when they were doing that environmental impact statement was when this woman did all this outreach that was so multifaceted. I mean, like I said, you need to talk to her and find out what her strategy was because she did it. She got the buy-in and then they won the next lawsuit and now the rezone is in effect.

Okay, then the third thing I wanted to bring up was the table I sat out there were three commissioners from Mount Vernon sitting at my table. And there were those informal discussions and they are really closeminded about going higher than three stories. And they need to get over it. And, you know, I said, Well, you know – they said, Well, the developers want the sky. And I'm like, Well, what's the compromise? And they acted like there wasn't a compromise. So it may be that the way around all that, of course, is to get buy-in from the people. So I just wanted to share that with you. Because I don't know what your table was like, but that was what my table was like. I tried to explain to them that there's a – it's an economic problem. I said, You know, when you have bus corridors – transit corridors – it warrants going up six stories or whatever, you know. And at any rate, they were just having a difficult time with that.

And then I guess I'll add one more thing just for everybody to think about because we're living in one of the most favorable climate zones in the world, and this article I was reading yesterday by Bill McKibben, who's a famous author and has written a lot of books about climate change and stuff, but he's talking about how basically a new phenomenon has taken place right now, one that our human race hasn't experienced before, and that is we're in a – everything going forward – and it has been this way for a time – we're in a place of contraction as far as available space, because of the desertification and the rising sea level taking out our boundaries, and that we're not used to that. And we have to reframe all of our conversations about this because we have to learn to make more room in the sandbox, basically. We have to acknowledge the fact that we have to divide up our land into smaller pieces to make way for people that are being shoved out of other locations. Because some of the people that are coming here are coming here as climate refugees. They're not coming for the jobs. They're coming because it's a more stable environmental situation. So at any rate, that's just another aspect of the conversation that I think we need to start bringing up.

Mr. Hart: Thank you.

Commissioner Rose: That's all.

Chair Raschko: Any other comments or questions?

Commissioner Lundsten: I was going to make a comment at the end of the meeting, but it's apropos now. And that is that I appreciate how you have drawn us into a larger issue of housing. And it's easy to see right away that it's based on a demographic – a larger issue over population, which directly relates to other things that are beyond our control. Like I was going to bring up global warming and how it is an effect – it has an effect on all the standards that we use to make decisions in many ways and we barely know what they are. McKibben's a great source for just understanding how to put that in a frame of reference. Fortunately we have people like him who've – you know, who can present that to us. It doesn't make it simpler to make the decisions, and I think what you're talking about is potential mitigation techniques, maybe some solutions. And that's probably the best we can offer for global warming. We can't change the burning of fossil fuels around the world from Skagit County but we can mitigate it and we can play our role to enact those solutions. And I think – I would just – I would like to see not a program right now that we have, that we would produce for global or – yeah, climate change and the standards that we use to make decisions in Skagit County, but I would like to put it into our review for this next year. We've been playing catch up. We had six months off this year. We're trying to put everything together. We're behind. But that doesn't – as soon as we kind of get our heads above water, global warning needs to be on the docket and on our radar. I strongly feel that. And I know that the County really doesn't have a position on it right now, but I think I would like to see it.

Mr. Hart: If the Chair would allow, can I respond to that? I would just say that if the Planning Commission would like a presentation from somebody that is doing that work, I can look around for that and continue to work with the Planning Commission. I think it's an important issue because of sea level rise. If nothing else, we know sea level rise is coming up and will affect a lot of us. It will affect our agricultural lands. It will affect our dike districts. And so what do we see coming down the pike? I'd offer that as a starting point maybe. But if you have other ideas I'm willing to \_\_\_\_\_.

Commissioner Rose: Can I – I just want to add something to that. So I had been going – I've stopped now, but for about six years I went to the National Association of Homebuilder meetings. They call it "resilience." That's the way they're addressing it. They're calling it "resilience." And I think that that's a good term for this discussion because it doesn't have an – some people still don't believe that there's this thing called "climate change," but "resilience," it doesn't sound like you're taking a side in the discussion.

Mr. Hart: It acknowledges. I think it acknowledges that change is going to happen.

Commissioner Rose: Change is happening. But it also applies to things like earthquakes, which have nothing to do with climate change, right? In other words, the resilience – it's just a suggestion that we use that term somehow with this discussion.

Mr. Hart: So I think our first idea here is to – let's plan out the year ahead and what kind of time that we want to devote to anything in addition to. But I'm game to give you things that you think would help you frame policy for this county, because that's what you – that's how you help our Commissioners. That's how you help everybody that lives here. You are our conduit to – to say, Hey, I live here. This is important and I want you to go find some information about this so I can make a better policy recommendation. So that's what we – I want you to make the best policy recommendations you think we can do.

Chair Raschko: Any other comments? Annie?

Commissioner Lohman: I also went to the housing summit and I really appreciated – I’m terrible at names – the presentation that the – that was given by a person that was formerly homeless. What struck me is any one of us could fall on some kind of unforeseen circumstance. Because these people were not uneducated or illiterate or – they were very articulate. They had everything going for them and then all of a sudden they got hit by a meteor and they were homeless. And that – I’ve been thinking about that a lot. So it doesn’t happen to *other* people or *those* people; it could be anybody for a variety of reasons. And so I just wanted to make sure that that came out.

The other thing that I noticed is when the lady from the think tank was speaking, she was talking about ADUs. But her definition of ADUs was repurposing like the above area in your garage or a basement apartment or an extra area of your house. Where we seem to think of ADUs as a standalone structure with a – and then all of the accessory things that go along with that. And I wonder: How *does* the County think of ADUs, and are we maybe thinking about it more in an integral type thing rather than having to have a separate septic and a separate water and all those other separateness, where maybe we could look at ADUs a little more differently?

Mr. Hart: Why don’t we – why don’t I put together just a quick look at the ADUs that have been approved that people are doing in the rural county for you – I’ve been wanting to do that anyway – and then work with Jack, our building official, and our permit person, Gwen, to just take a look? Because it is – we’re seeing an increasing trend toward ADUs. I think, based on what I’ve heard today, that we are tracking the standalone ones. But I’d like to go back through the data and if we’re not tracking other – you know, within the basement kind of things, there may be a way to get at that number and get a better picture of what’s going on out there. Certainly it’s another way to make an income, too, for seniors, and we have – I’ve sat at the front counter three times this year when one example was my daughter was terribly injured and she’s coming back home. And so someone was rebuilding the house for that person. So that’s a, you know, invalid care. Second, the other two were: I need to make an income because I’m now on the farm and I want to stay on the farm but I need to augment my income. So those were the three that I happened, but there are 36 more and probably more that I’m not paying – you know, I didn’t hear beyond that of the mother-in-law apartment, you know, inside the basement or something like that. So, yes, I think it would be helpful. Okay. I’ll follow up on that. Thank you, and thank you for bringing that story. It comes rushing home. That was a really important story at the conference. I think it’s up on the website that you can watch now too. Thank you for your time. I really appreciate it.

Chair Raschko: Thank you. Okay, well, the final item on our agenda is Planning Commissioner Comments and Announcements. Annie, have you anything? Ms. Mitchell?

Vice Chair Mitchell: None here. Thank you.

Chair Raschko: I do have one final comment. Thank you very much for the presentation. I thought it was very interesting and time well spent. I don’t want to make a judgment on what people have called “global warming” or “climate change” or any of that, for or against or anything like that. But I would like for the Commission to stay within the bounds of what our mandate is and not get off on a big bird walk. I think if an issue comes up and the effects of global warming or climate change or whatever is an integral part of whatever that is, great; we should be discussing it. But I don’t feel that we need to have outside resources come in to special meetings or special agenda items to educate us on something with which we are inundated in news magazines and newspapers and television and everything else. That’s my feeling.

So, with that, I appreciate everybody’s time tonight and we’ll stand adjourned (gavel).