



Staff Report

To: Planning Commission
From: Peter Gill, Long Range Planning Manager
Date: March 9, 2020
Re: **Countywide Planning Policy Clean-up**

Summary

The Skagit County Countywide Planning Policies are used solely for establishing a countywide framework from which county and city comprehensive plans are developed and adopted. The proposed changes were limited in scope to cleaning up references, comparing with the current Growth Management Act (GMA), RCW 36.70A. No new policy direction or substantial changes to policies were considered.

As the recommending authority for proposed Countywide Planning Policies, the GMA Steering Committee¹ approved the changes on December 18, 2019. Following a recommendation by the Planning Commission, the Board of County Commissioners may take one of two actions on any countywide planning policy (CPP) recommendation from the GMA Steering Committee:

1. Adopt any new CPP or CPP amendment proposed by the Steering Committee, but not change the proposed CPP or CPP amendment in any manner whatsoever; or
2. Decline to adopt any new CPP or CPP amendment proposed by the Steering Committee.

Following a public hearing the Planning Commission will make a recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners.

¹ 2002 Framework Agreement, Section 5
(https://www.skagitcounty.net/Departments/PlanningAndPermit/comp_toc.htm)

Background

The Growth Management Act (GMA) requires that cities and counties develop, maintain, and update their comprehensive land use plans consistent with statewide goals and minimum requirements as established by the statute, and coordinate their planning efforts with each other.

To assure that this principle is carried out, the 1991 State Legislature passed companion legislation requiring counties and cities to coordinate their independent development of local comprehensive plans through a set of mutually developed county-wide planning policies.² These written policy statements are to address eight (8), non-prioritized, subject areas:

1. The designation of urban growth areas;
2. Promotion of contiguous and orderly development and provision of urban services to such development;
3. The siting of public capital facilities of a countywide or statewide nature;
4. Countywide transportation facilities and strategies;
5. The need for affordable housing for all segments of the population;
6. Joint city and county planning within urban growth areas;
7. County-wide economic development and employment; and
8. Analysis of fiscal impact.

Skagit County-Wide Regional Planning Policies³ were initially adopted in July, 1992, after Skagit County conducted twenty-six (26) county-wide community meetings that generated approximately 1,500 community values, statements and proposed county-wide planning policies. Amendments to the original CPP were made in August 1996, July 2000, September 2007, and June 2016. The Skagit County CPPs now consist of thirteen (13) policies.

Work on these amendments began in February 2019 as Task 3 of Skagit Council of Governments approved work plan. The proposed changes were reviewed with the Technical Advisory Committee meetings in February, April, August, May, November, and December. The GMA Steering Committee reviewed the Technical Advisory Committee's recommended draft on October 16, 2019, and approved the final amendments on December 18, 2019.

The amendment to Countywide Planning Policy 1 approved by the Board of Skagit County Commissioners on June 30, 2016, but was never incorporated into the 2007 version of CPPs. The

² GMA Countywide Planning Policies, RCW 36.70A.210

³ County-wide Regional Comprehensive Plan Policies. July, 1992. Resolution #14378.

proposed version incorporates the 2016 amendments, but they do not appear as a recommended amendments since they were already adopted.

Proposed Amendments

The proposed changes were limited in scope to technical corrections, for example where the current Countywide Planning Policies (CPP) reference the “County comprehensive plan”, it is proposed to be changed to “the comprehensive plans of the County, Cities and Towns”. These changes are intended to clean up references and compare with 2019 Growth Management Act. Attachment A provides a copy of the December 2019 Draft Countywide Planning Policies. The proposed changes are summarized below.

Many of the changes remove the reference to Skagit County in order to clarify that these policies apply to all jurisdictions that are party to the Framework Agreement. An example of this type of changes is:

10.3 ~~The County shall reduce~~ Reduce the loss of critical aquatic and terrestrial habitat by minimizing habitat fragmentation.

A couple of changes are needed to reflect changes in the Growth Management Act. These county-wide planning policies are reconciled to reflect new GMA language:

5. Economic Development

Encourage economic development throughout the state that is consistent with adopted comprehensive plans, promote economic opportunity for all citizens of this state, especially for unemployed and for disadvantaged persons, promote the retention and expansion of existing businesses and recruitment of new businesses, recognize regional differences impacting economic development opportunities, and encourage growth in areas experiencing insufficient economic growth, all within the capacities of the state's natural resources, public services, and public facilities.

9. Open Space and Recreation

~~Encourage the retention of~~ Retain open space ~~and development of,~~ enhance recreational opportunities, conserve fish and wildlife habitat, increase access to natural resource lands and water, and develop parks and recreation facilities.

Other changes are intended to make the document reflect current conditions and documents.

12.13 A county-wide recycling program shall be ~~developed~~ maintained.

A change to Policy 7.3 clarifies that variances need to be consistent with each jurisdiction’s comprehensive plan, instead of consistent with all the comprehensive plans in the County.

Variances ~~which would allow for that would create a policy violation of a jurisdiction’s~~

comprehensive plan ~~Comprehensive Plan policies~~ shall not be permitted.

The complete set of amendments can be found on Appendix A of this Staff Report.

Consistency

The proposed changes to the County-wide Planning Policies are intended to clean up references and improve consistency with the current Growth Management Act. These technical changes bring the CPP more in line with the 2016 Skagit County Comprehensive plan by updating the County-wide Planning Policy five and Policy nine as described above.

Next Steps

Staff is proposing an approximately two-month process to review the code and draft revisions by the Planning Commission and the Board of County Commissioners. Other tasks included in the scope of the project include, public notification, SEPA, Commerce 60 day review, public hearing, deliberation, Board of County Commissioners vote.

For More Information

Please visit the project website at www.skagitcounty.net/planning.

Attachments:

- A. Countywide Planning Policies, Draft December 18, 2019.

Attachment A: Draft Countywide Planning Policies

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Skagit County

Countywide Planning Policies

~~June 30, 2016~~

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Skagit County Countywide Planning Policies

The Role of the Skagit County Countywide Planning Policies and the Comprehensive Plans

- i Pursuant to RCW 36.70A.210, ~~these Skagit County Countywide Planning Policies (“Countywide Planning Policies” or “CPPs”)~~ countywide planning policies shall be the foundation for the Skagit County Comprehensive Plan. establish a countywide framework for developing county, city and town comprehensive plans (collectively “Comprehensive Plans”).
- ii ~~Except as otherwise provided for by law, Skagit County, municipalities, and state agencies are subject to the Countywide Planning Policies. The Skagit County Comprehensive Plan, and the comprehensive plans of the cities and towns within Skagit County shall be consistent with these policies.~~
- iii ~~The 2002 Framework Agreement – executed by Skagit County and every city and town within the county – guides the process for adoption and amendment of Countywide Planning Policies.~~
- iv ~~The Board of County Commissioners adopt and amend Countywide Planning Policies in cooperation with the cities and towns, consistent with RCW 36.70A.210 and the 2002 Framework Agreement.~~
- iv ~~All Elements of the Comprehensive Plans, including maps and procedures, shall comply with these policies. Amendments to the other components of the comprehensive Comprehensive plan Plans shall conform to these policies.~~
- iii ~~As required by RCW 36.70A.120, all implementing regulations, including zoning maps and zoning regulations, shall be consistent with and implement these policies. Amendments to the implementing regulations shall conform to these policies.~~
- iv ~~As required by RCW 36.70A.120, all planning, land use permitting actions and activities and capital budgeting decisions made by Skagit County, and all cities and towns located within the county, shall be made in conformity with the locally adopted comprehensive plan.~~
- vii The Skagit County Comprehensive Plan adopts by reference the following functional plans: Shoreline, Drainage, Floodplain, Schools, Special Districts, Parks and Recreation, Transportation, Watershed, the Coordinated Water System Plan and any other functional plans adopted by Skagit County. Each referenced plan shall be coordinated with, and consistent with, the Skagit County Comprehensive Plan.

~~viii~~ viii All disputes over the proper interpretation of other functional plans and all implementing regulations, including zoning maps and zoning regulations, shall be resolved in favor of the interpretation which most clearly achieves Countywide Planning Policies.

~~viii~~ viii ~~Skagit County~~ Local governments shall pursue methods of collecting and displaying statistics, maps and other information necessary for government.

~~viii~~ viii Upon adoption of ~~the county-wide~~ Comprehensive Plans, sub-area plans will be considered to address homogeneous natural features and communities.

~~ix~~ ix ~~A definition section will be incorporated into the final Comprehensive Plan document. Some definitions are clearly articulated in state statutes and local government implementing ordinances or regulations. Other words which are undefined at this time will be clarified through the Element development process.~~

1. Urban Growth

Encourage urban development in urban areas where adequate public facilities and services exist or can be provided in an efficient manner.

- 1.1 Urban growth shall be allowed only within cities and towns, their designated Urban Growth Areas (“UGAs”) and within any non-municipal urban growth areas already characterized by urban growth, identified in the Skagit County Comprehensive Plan with a Capital Facilities Plan meeting urban standards. Population and employment land allocations for each UGA shall be consistent with ~~those~~ the allocations shown in Appendix A.
- 1.2 Cities and towns and their urban growth areas, and non-municipal urban growth areas designated pursuant to CPP 1.1, shall include areas and densities sufficient to accommodate as a target 80% of the county's 20-year population projection.
- 1.3 Urban growth areas shall provide for urban densities of mixed uses and shall direct development of neighborhoods which provide adequate and accessible urban governmental services concurrent with development. The Growth Management Act (“GMA”) defines urban governmental services as those governmental services historically and typically delivered by cities, including storm and sanitary sewer systems, domestic water systems, street cleaning services, fire and police protection services, public transit services, and other public utilities associated with urban areas and normally not associated with nonurban areas.
- 1.4 Urban growth areas shall include greenbelts and open space, and encourage the preservation of wildlife habitat areas.
- 1.5 Cities and towns shall encourage development, including greenbelt and open space areas, on existing vacant land and in-fill properties before expanding beyond their present corporate city limits towards urban growth boundaries.
- 1.6 Annexations beyond urban growth areas are prohibited.
- 1.7 The baseline for 20-year countywide population forecasts shall be the official Growth Management Act Population Projections from the State of Washington’s Office of Financial Management. The Growth Management Act Technical Advisory Committee (“Planners Committee”) shall recommend the process for allocating forecasted population and employment, which shall be cooperatively reviewed by the Growth Management Act Steering Committee (“GMASC”), consistent with the 2002 Framework Agreement. Final growth allocations will be ratified by each government’s legislative body. The growth allocation process shall use the procedures in Appendix B, which calls

for the following steps:

- a. Initial Growth Allocations;
- b. Reconciliation;
- c. Long Term Monitoring; and
- d. Allocation Adjustment.

- 1.8 Skagit County, the cities and towns shall use consistent land capacity analysis methods as approved by the GMASC to determine the amount of undeveloped buildable urban land needed. The inventory of the undeveloped buildable urban land supply is to be maintained by Skagit County in a Regional Geographic Information Systems database.
- 1.9 Skagit County, the cities and towns will establish a common method to monitor urban development to evaluate the rate of growth and maintain an inventory of the amount of buildable land remaining. The Planners Committee shall develop a monitoring process, prepare annual monitoring reports and present the reports to the Growth Management Act Steering Committee annually.
- 1.10 All growth outside the urban growth boundary shall be rural in nature as defined in the Rural Element, not requiring urban governmental services, except in those limited circumstances shown to be necessary to the satisfaction of both Skagit County and the affected city/town to protect basic public health, safety and the environment, and when such services are financially supportable at rural densities and do not permit urban development.

2. Reduce Sprawl

Reduce the inappropriate conversion of undeveloped land into sprawling, low-density development.

- 2.1 Contiguous and orderly development and provision of urban services to such development within urban growth boundaries shall be required.
- 2.2 Development within the urban growth area shall be coordinated and phased through inter-agency agreements.
- 2.3 Rural development shall be allowed in areas outside of the urban growth boundaries having limited resource production values (e.g. agriculture, timber, mineral) and having access to public services. Rural development shall have access through suitable county roads, have limited impact on agricultural, timber, mineral lands, critical areas, shorelands, historic landscapes or cultural resources and must address their drainage and ground water impacts.
- 2.4 Rural commercial and industrial development shall be consistent with that permitted by the Growth Management Act, specifically including RCW 36.70A.070(5)(d) and related provisions and the 1997 ESB 6094 amendments thereto. This development shall not be urban in scale or character or require the extension of urban services outside of urban growth areas, except where necessary to address an existing public health, safety or environmental problem.
- 2.5 Rural commercial and industrial development shall be of a scale and nature consistent and compatible with rural character and rural services, or as otherwise allowed under RCW 36.70A.070(5)(d), and may include commercial services to serve the rural population, natural resource-related industries, small scale businesses and cottage industries that provide job opportunities for rural residents, and recreation, tourism and resort development that relies on the natural environment unique to the rural area.
- 2.6 Priority consideration will be given to siting of new rural commercial and industrial uses in areas of existing development, including existing Rural Villages and existing Rural Centers, followed by already developed sites in the rural area, and only lastly to wholly undeveloped sites in the rural area.
- 2.7 Master planned sites designated for industrial and large-scale commercial uses shall be clustered, landscaped, and buffered to alleviate adverse impacts to surrounding areas.
- 2.8 Commercial areas should be aggregated in cluster form, be pedestrian oriented, provide adequate parking and be designed to accommodate public transit. ~~Strip commercial development shall be prohibited.~~

- 2.9 Urban commercial and urban industrial development, except development directly dependent on local agriculture, forestry, mining, aquatic and resource operations, and major industrial development which meets the criteria contained in RCW 36.70A.365, should be restricted to urban or urban growth areas where adequate transportation networks and appropriate utility services are available.

The process to consider siting of specific major industrial developments outside of urban growth areas shall follow the process included in the ~~Memorandum of Understanding 2002 Framework Agreement between the County and the cities~~ for adoption of Countywide Planning Policies. Major industrial developments shall mean a master planned location for specific manufacturing, industrial, or commercial business that:

1. Requires a parcel of land so large that no suitable parcels are available within an urban growth area; or
2. Is a natural resource-based industry requiring a location near agricultural land, forest land, or mineral resource land upon which it is dependent. The major industrial development shall not be for the purpose of retail commercial development or multi-tenant office park.

A major industrial development may be approved outside an urban growth area if the following criteria are met:

1. New infrastructure is provided for and/or applicable impact fees are paid;
2. Transit-oriented site planning and traffic demand management programs are implemented;
3. Buffers are provided between the major industrial development and adjacent non-urban areas;
4. Environmental protection including air and water quality has been addressed and provided for;
5. Development regulations are established to ensure that urban growth will not occur in adjacent non-urban areas;
6. Provision is made to mitigate adverse impacts on designated agricultural lands, forest lands, and mineral resource lands;
8. The plan for the major industrial development is consistent with ~~the~~ Skagit County's development regulations established for the protection of critical areas; and

9. An inventory of developable land has been conducted and ~~the~~ Skagit County has determined and entered findings that land suitable to site the major industrial development is unavailable within the urban growth area. Priority shall be given to applications for sites that are adjacent to or in close proximity to the urban growth areas.

Final approval of an application for a major industrial development shall be considered an adopted amendment to the Skagit County Comprehensive Plan adopted pursuant to RCW 36.70A.070 designating the major industrial development site on the land use map as an urban growth area. Final approval of the application shall not be considered an amendment to the Skagit County Comprehensive Plan for the purposes of RCW 36.70A.130(2) and may be considered at any time.

- 2.10 Establishment or expansion of local improvement districts and special purpose taxing districts, except flood control, diking districts and other districts formed for the purpose of protecting water quality, in designated commercial forest resource lands shall be discouraged.

3. Transportation

Encourage efficient multimodal transportation systems that are based on regional priorities and coordinated with county and city comprehensive plans.

- 3.1 Multi-purpose transportation routes and facilities shall be designed to accommodate present and future traffic volumes.
- 3.2 Primary arterial access points shall be designed to ensure maximum safety while minimizing traffic flow disruptions.
- 3.3 The development of new transportation routes and improvements to existing routes shall minimize adverse social, economic and environmental impacts and costs.
- 3.4 ~~The Transportation Element elements of the Comprehensive Plans~~ shall be designed to; facilitate the flow of people, goods and services so as to strengthen the local and regional economy; conform with the Land Use Element ~~of the Comprehensive Plan~~; be based upon an inventory of the existing Skagit County transportation network and needs; and encourage the conservation of energy.
- 3.5 ~~Comprehensive Plan provisions~~ Provisions in Comprehensive Plans for the location and improvement of existing and future transportation networks and public transportation shall be made in a manner consistent with the goals, policies and land use map of the ~~Comprehensive Plan~~ locally adopted comprehensive plan.
- 3.6 The development of a recreational transportation network shall be encouraged and coordinated between state and local governments and private enterprises.
- 3.7 ~~The Senior Citizen and Handicapped transportation~~ Transportation system services for seniors and individuals with disabilities shall be provided ~~with an adequate budget by public transportation operators~~ to provide for those who, through age and/or disability, are unable to transport themselves.
- 3.8 Level of service (LOS) standards and safety standards shall be established that coordinate and link with the urban growth and urban areas to optimize land use and traffic compatibility over the long term. New development shall mitigate transportation impacts concurrently with the development and occupancy of the project.
- 3.9 An all-weather arterial road system shall be coordinated with industrial and commercial areas.

- 3.10 Cost effectiveness shall be a consideration in transportation expenditure decisions and balanced for both safety and service improvements.
- 3.11 An integrated regional transportation system shall be designed to minimize air pollution by promoting the use of alternative transportation modes, reducing vehicular traffic, maintaining acceptable traffic flow, and siting of facilities.
- 3.12 All new and expanded transportation facilities shall be sited, constructed and maintained to minimize noise levels.

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4. Housing

Encourage the availability of affordable housing to all economic segments of the population of this state, promote a variety of residential densities and housing types, and encourage preservation of existing housing stock.

- 4.1 ~~Local governments shall allow~~ Allow for an adequate supply of land use options to provide housing for a wide range of incomes, housing types and densities.
- 4.2 Public/private partnerships shall be encouraged to build affordable housing and devise incentives for innovative and environmentally sensitive design to meet the housing needs of people with low and moderate incomes and special needs populations.
- 4.3 ~~The Comprehensive Plans~~ should support innovative land use management techniques, including, but not limited to, density bonuses, cluster housing, planned unit developments and the transfer of development rights.
- 4.4 The existing affordable housing stock should be maintained and efforts to rehabilitate older and substandard housing, which are otherwise consistent with comprehensive plan policies, should be encouraged.
- 4.5 The construction of housing that promotes innovative, energy efficient and less expensive building technologies shall be encouraged.
- 4.6 ~~Comprehensive Plan provisions~~ Provisions in Comprehensive Plans for the location of residential development shall be made in a manner consistent with protecting natural resource lands, aquatic resources, and critical areas.
- 4.7 Manufactured home parks shall be allowed only within urban or urban growth ~~boundary~~ areas.

5. Economic Development

Encourage economic development throughout the state that is consistent with adopted comprehensive plans, promote economic opportunity for all citizens of this state, especially for unemployed and for disadvantaged persons, promote the retention and expansion of existing businesses and recruitment of new businesses, recognize regional differences impacting economic development opportunities, and encourage growth in areas experiencing insufficient economic growth, all within the capacities of the state's natural resources, public services, and public facilities.

- 5.1 The development of environmentally sensitive industries shall be encouraged.
- 5.2 Home occupations that do not significantly change or impact neighborhood character shall be permitted.
- 5.3 Economic diversity should be encouraged in rural communities where special incentives and services can be provided.
- 5.4 Commercial and industrial activities directly related to local natural resource production may be allowed in designated natural resource areas provided they can demonstrate their location and existence as natural resource area dependent businesses.
- 5.5 A diversified economic base shall be encouraged to minimize the vulnerability of the local economy to economic fluctuations.
- 5.6 Commercial, industrial and residential acreage shall be designated to meet future needs without adversely affecting natural resource lands, critical areas, and rural character and life styles.
- 5.7 Tourism, recreation and land preservation shall be promoted provided they do not conflict with the long-term commercial significance of natural resources and critical areas or rural life styles.
- 5.8 Agriculture, forestry, aquatic resources and mineral extraction shall be encouraged both within and outside of designated resource lands.
- 5.9 The primary land use within designated forest resource lands shall be commercial forestry. Residential development shall be strongly discouraged within designated forest resource lands.
- 5.10 Lands within designated agricultural resource areas should remain in large parcels and ownership patterns conducive to commercial agricultural operations and production.

- 5.11 Skagit County shall conserve agriculture, aquaculture, forest and mineral resources for productive use by designating natural resource lands and aquatic resource areas, where the principal and preferred land uses will be long term commercial resource management.
- 5.12 Value added natural resource industries shall be encouraged.
- 5.13 Skagit County shall increase the availability of renewable resources and encourage the maximum attainable recycling of non-renewable resources.
- 5.14 Commercial and industrial activities directly related to or dependent on local aquatic resource areas should be encouraged in shoreline areas provided they are shoreline dependent and/or related.
- 5.15 ~~The~~ Comprehensive Plans shall support and encourage economic development and employment to provide opportunities for prosperity.

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6. Property Rights

Private property shall not be taken for public use without just compensation having been made. The property rights of landowners shall be protected from arbitrary and discriminatory actions.

- 6.1 Proposed regulatory or administrative actions shall not result in an unconstitutional taking of private property.
- 6.2 The rights of property owners operating under current land use regulations shall be preserved unless a clear public health, safety or welfare purpose is served by more restrictive regulation.
- 6.3 Surface water runoff and drainage facilities shall be designed and utilized in a manner which protects against the destruction of private property and the degradation of water quality.

7. Permits

Applications for both state and local government permits should be processed in a timely and fair manner to ensure predictability.

- 7.1 Inter-agency agreements with other agencies to facilitate multi-agency permits shall be pursued to better serve the public.
- 7.2 Upon receipt of a complete application, land use proposals and permits shall be expeditiously reviewed and decisions made in a timely manner.
- 7.3 Variances ~~which would allow for~~ that would create a policy violation of a jurisdiction's comprehensive plan ~~Comprehensive Plan policies~~ shall not be permitted.
- 7.4 New implementing codes and amendments shall provide clear regulations to reduce the possibility of multiple interpretations by staff and applicants.
- 7.5 Impact fees shall be imposed through established ordinances, procedures and criteria so that specific developments do not pay arbitrary fees or duplicative fees for the same impact.
- 7.6 Special purpose districts permitted by statute to request impact fees shall to the extent possible utilize similar formulas to calculate costs of new development.

8. Natural Resource Industries

Maintain and enhance natural resource-based industries, including productive timber, agricultural, and fisheries industries. Encourage the conservation of productive forest lands and productive agricultural lands, and discourage incompatible uses.

- 8.1 Identified critical areas, shorelands, aquatic resource areas and natural resource lands shall be protected by restricting conversion. Encroachment by incompatible uses shall be prevented by maintenance of adequate buffering between conflicting activities.
- 8.2 Land uses adjacent to agricultural, forest, or mineral resource lands and designated aquatic resource areas shall not interfere with the continued use of these designated lands for the production of food, agricultural and aquatic based products, or timber, or for the extraction of minerals.
- 8.3 Forest and agricultural lands located within urban growth areas shall not be designated as forest or agricultural land of long-term commercial significance unless a program authorizing transfer or purchase of development rights is established.
- 8.4 Mining sites or portions of mining sites shall be reclaimed when they are abandoned, depleted, or when operations are discontinued for long periods.
- 8.5 Long-term commercially significant natural resource lands and designated aquatic resource areas shall be protected and conserved. Skagit County shall adopt policies and regulations that encourage and facilitate the retention and enhancement of natural resource areas in perpetuity.
- 8.6 When plats, short plats, building permits and development permits are issued for development activities on or adjacent to natural resource lands and aquatic resource areas, notice shall be provided to those seeking permit approvals that certain activities may occur that are not compatible with residences.
- 8.7 Fishery resources, including the county's river systems inclusive of their tributaries, as well as the area's lakes, associated wetlands, and marine waters, shall be protected and enhanced for continued productivity.
- 8.8 Skagit County shall encourage sustainable use of the natural resources of the County, including but not limited to agriculture, forestry, and aquatic resources.
- 8.9 Skagit County shall conserve agricultural, aquatic based, forest and mineral resources for productive use by designating natural resource lands and aquatic resource areas where the principal and preferred land uses will be long-term commercial resource management.

9. Open Space and Recreation

~~Encourage the retention of~~Retain open space ~~and development of,~~ enhance recreational opportunities, conserve fish and wildlife habitat, increase access to natural resource lands and water, and develop parks and recreation facilities.

- 9.1 Open space corridors within and between urban growth areas shall be identified. These areas shall include lands useful for recreation, fish and wildlife habitat, trails, and connection of critical areas.
- 9.2 To preserve open space and create recreational opportunities, innovative regulatory techniques and incentives such as but not limited to, purchase of development rights, transfer of development rights, conservation easements, land trusts and community acquisition of lands for public ownership shall be encouraged.
- 9.3 The use of Open Space Taxation Laws shall be encouraged as a useful method of land use control and resource preservation.
- 9.4 Expansion and enhancement of parks, recreation and scenic areas and viewing points shall be identified, planned for and improved in shorelands, and urban and rural designated areas.
- 9.5 Property owners shall be encouraged to site and design new construction to minimize disruption of visual amenities and solar resources of adjacent property owners, public road ways, parks, lakes, waterways and beaches.
- 9.6 Development of new park and recreational facilities shall adhere to the policies set out in ~~this~~ Comprehensive Plan ~~document.s~~.
- 9.7 The Skagit Wild and Scenic River System (which includes portions of the Sauk, Suiattle, Cascade and Skagit Rivers) is a resource that should be protected, enhanced and utilized for recreation purposes when there are not potential conflicts with the values (fisheries, wildlife, and scenic quality) of the river system.
- 9.8 Incompatible adjacent uses including industrial and commercial areas shall be adequately buffered by means of landscaping, or by maintaining recreation and open space corridors.
- 9.9 A park and recreation system shall be promoted which is integrated with existing and planned land use patterns.
- 9.10 Indoor and outdoor recreation facilities shall be designed to provide a wide range of opportunities allowing for individual needs of those using these facilities.

- 9.11 School districts, public agencies and private entities should work together to develop joint inter-agency agreements to provide facilities that not only meet the demands of the education for our youth, but also provide for public recreation opportunities that reduce the unnecessary duplication of facilities within Skagit County.
- 9.12 In planning new park and recreation facilities, ~~Skagit County shall take into~~ consideration shall be given to natural features, topography, floodplains, relationship to population characteristics, types of facilities, various user group needs and standards of access, including travel time.

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10. Environment

Protect the environment and enhance the state's high quality of life, including air and water quality, and the availability of water.

- 10.1 Natural resource lands, including aquatic resource areas and critical areas shall be classified and designated, and regulations adopted to assure their long-term conservation. Land uses and developments which are incompatible with critical areas shall be prohibited except when impacts from such uses and developments can be mitigated.
- 10.2 Land use decisions shall take into account the immediate and long-range cumulative effects of proposed uses on the environment, both on- and off-site.
- 10.3 ~~The County shall reduce~~Reduce the loss of critical aquatic and terrestrial habitat by minimizing habitat fragmentation.
- 10.4 Wetlands, woodlands, watersheds and aquifers are essential components of the hydrologic system and shall be managed to protect surface and groundwater quality.
- 10.5 ~~Skagit County shall recognize~~Recognize the river systems within ~~the Skagit~~ County as pivotal freshwater resources and ~~shall~~manage development within the greater watershed in a manner consistent with planning practices that enhance the integrity of the aquatic resource, fish and wildlife habitat, and recreational and aesthetic qualities.
- 10.6 Rural character shall be preserved by regulatory mechanisms through which development can occur with minimal environmental impact.
- 10.7 Development shall be directed away from designated natural resource lands, aquatic resource areas and critical areas.
- 10.8 The conversion of tidelands to uplands by means of diking, drainage and filling shall be prohibited, except when carried out by a public body to implement ~~a Comprehensive Plan~~s for flood plain management or to respond to a natural disaster threatening life and property.
- 10.9 Septic systems, disposal of dredge spoils and land excavation, filling and clearing activities shall not have an adverse significant ~~affeteffect~~ on Skagit County waters with respect to public health, fisheries, aquifers, water quality, wetlands, wildlife habitat, natural marine ecology and aquatic based resources.
- 10.10 Usual and accustomed activities on natural resource lands and aquatic resource areas shall be protected from interference when they are conducted in accordance with best management practices and environmental laws.

- 10.11 When evaluating and conditioning commercial, industrial or residential development, ~~Skagit County~~local governments shall consider threatened or endangered wildlife.
- 10.12 ~~Skagit County shall enter~~Enter into inter-agency agreements with appropriate state and local agencies and Native American Tribes for compliance with watershed protection, including but not limited to, the cumulative effects of construction, logging and non-point pollution in watersheds.
- 10.13 ~~Skagit County and Cities and Towns, in cooperation~~Cooperate with appropriate local, ~~state~~ and Federal agencies, ~~shall to~~ develop and implement flood hazard ~~reduction~~ programs, consistent with and supportive of the Corps Feasibility Study.
- 10.14 The Skagit River Floodway and the Skagit River Floodplain shall be regulated to protect human life, property and the public health and safety of the citizens of Skagit County; minimize the expenditure of public money; and maintain flood insurance eligibility while avoiding regulations which are unnecessary restrictive or difficult to administer.
- 10.15 ~~Skagit County and Cities and Towns shall work~~Work together to provide ongoing public education about flooding in a coordinated and consistent program, ~~and shall~~ adopt a flood hazard reduction plan, that works together with the natural and beneficial functions of floodplains.

11. Citizen Participation and Coordination

Encourage the involvement of citizens in the planning process and ensure coordination between communities and jurisdictions to reconcile conflicts.

- 11.1 ~~Skagit County shall maintain~~ Maintain procedures to provide for the broad dissemination of proposals and alternatives for public inspection; opportunities for written comments; public hearings after effective notice; open discussions; communication programs and information services; consideration of and response to public comments; and the notification of the public for the adoption, implementation and evaluation of ~~the Comprehensive Plan~~ locally adopted comprehensive plans.
- 11.2 ~~Skagit County shall continue~~ Continue to encourage public awareness of ~~the Comprehensive Plans~~ by providing for public participation opportunities and public education programs designed to promote a widespread understanding of the Plan's' purpose and intent.
- 11.3 For land use proposals, including those within the marine environment, all applicants shall bear the costs for public notification, by mail, and by posting of signs. Affected neighbors and surrounding shoreline owners shall be notified as prescribed by ordinance.
- 11.4 ~~Skagit County shall provide~~ Provide regular and ongoing opportunities for public review and comment throughout the ~~Comprehensive Plan~~ development process of Comprehensive Plans.
- 11.5 ~~Skagit County shall e~~ Encourage citizen participation throughout the planning process as mandated by Washington state statute and codes for environmental, land use, and development permits.
- ~~11.6~~
- ~~11.7~~ 11.6 ~~Skagit County shall u~~ Utilize broad based Citizen Advisory Committees to participate and assist in the Element development of the Comprehensive Plans- ~~Elements~~, sub-area plans and functional plans.

12. Public Facilities and Services

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.

- 12.1 Public facilities and services shall be integrated and consistent with locally adopted comprehensive plans and implementing regulations.
- 12.2 All communities within a region shall fairly share the burden of regional public facilities. (The GMA defines regional public facilities as streets, roads, highways, sidewalks, street and road lighting systems, traffic signals, domestic water systems, storm and sanitary sewer systems, parks, recreational facilities and schools.)
- 12.3 A process shall be developed for identifying and siting essential public facilities. ~~The~~ Comprehensive Plans may not preclude the siting of essential public facilities. (The GMA defines essential public facilities as those facilities that are typically difficult to site, such as airports, state education facilities and state or regional transportation facilities, state and local corrections facilities, solid waste handling facilities, and in-patient facilities including substance abuse facilities, mental health facilities ~~and~~, group homes, and secure community transition facilities.)
- 12.4 Lands shall be identified for public purposes, such as: utility corridors, transportation corridors, landfill, sewage treatment facilities, recreation, schools, and other public uses. ~~The~~ Skagit County shall work with the state, cities, towns, communities and utility providers to identify areas of shared need for public facilities.
- 12.5 Lands designated for urban growth by ~~this~~ Comprehensive Plans shall have an urban level of regional public facilities prior to or concurrent with development.
- 12.6 Development shall be allowed only when and where all public facilities are adequate, and only when and where such development can be adequately served by regional public services without reducing levels of service elsewhere.
- 12.7 Public facilities and services needed to support development shall be available concurrent with the impacts of development.
- 12.8 The financing for system improvements to public facilities to serve new development must provide for a balance between impact fees and other sources of public funds and cannot rely solely on impact fees.

- 12.9 New development shall pay for or provide for its share of new infrastructure through impact fees or as conditions of development through the environmental review process.
- 12.10 Public water supply for new development shall conform to or exceed the Coordinated Water System Plan for public water systems.
- 12.11 Future development of land adjacent to existing and proposed schools and other public facilities shall be compatible with such uses.
- 12.12 Library services within ~~the county~~ Skagit County should be developed and coordinated to assure the delivery of comprehensive services throughout the County, with ~~the county~~ Skagit County, cities and towns fairly sharing the burden.
- 12.13 A county-wide recycling program shall be ~~developed~~ maintained.
- 12.14 Public drainage facilities shall be designed to control both stormwater quantity and quality impacts.
- 12.15 ~~Skagit County shall provide~~ Provide results of the required ~~six-six~~-year capital facilities plan, including a financing plan, and ~~these shall be consistent~~ ensure consistency with land use designations.
- 12.16 Citizens shall have the opportunity to participate in and comment on ~~proposed~~ capital facilities financing.
- 12.17 The Washington State Boundary Review Board for Skagit County should be disbanded pursuant to RCW 36.93.230 provided that the following tasks are accomplished: (a) that ALL cities and the County have adopted comprehensive plans and development regulations consistent with the requirements of these Countywide Planning Policies and RCW 36.70A, including appropriate urban levels of service for all public facilities and services; (b) that ALL cities and the County have adopted a concurrency ordinance that requires the adopted urban levels of service addressed in (a) above be accomplished in time frames that are consistent with RCW 36.70A.; (c) that special purpose districts that serve UGAs have adopted urban levels of service standards appropriate for their service areas; (d) that ALL cities and the County have an adopted capital facility plan for urban levels of service that indicates sources of revenue and a timeline for meeting such service; and (e) that ALL cities and special purpose districts have in place adopted “interlocal agreements” that discuss arrangements for transfer of assets and obligations that may be affected by transference of governance or annexation of the service area consistent with the requirements of applicable RCWs.

13. Historic Preservation

Identify and encourage the preservation of lands, sites, and structures, that have historical or archaeological significance.

- 13.1 ~~Skagit County shall cooperate~~ Cooperate with local historic preservation groups to ensure coordination of plans and policies by the ~~State Washington state Office~~ Department of Archeology and Historic Preservation.

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Appendix A. Growth Allocations

Table 1: 2036 Initial Growth Allocations				
Urban Growth Areas	2015 – 2036 Forecast Population Growth	Total 2036 Population	2015 – 2036 Forecast Employment Growth	Total 2036 Employment
Anacortes	5,895	22,293	2,076	10,480
Burlington	3,808	14,272	3,516	13,412
Mount Vernon	12,434	47,403	4,785	21,288
Sedro-Woolley	4,555	17,069	4,427	9,179
Concrete	320	1,193	109	467
Hamilton	114	427	66	288
La Conner	329	1,226	329	1,420
Lyman	162	605	9	38
Bayview Ridge	72	1,883	1,799	3,455
Swinomish	912	3,416	290	1,247
UGAs Subtotal	28,601	109,787	17,406	61,274
Rural (outside UGAs)	7,150	45,665	1,447	9,343
County Total	35,751	155,452	18,853	70,617

Appendix B. Growth Allocations Procedures

The process of setting and reviewing growth allocations shall be consistent with the 2002 Framework Agreement among Skagit County, the cities and towns as currently adopted or amended.

1. **Initial Growth Allocations:** The Planners Committee will develop initial population and employment allocations for review and adoption by the GMASC.
 - a. The initial allocations will be based on the most recently published official 20-year population projections for Skagit County from the Office of Financial Management(~~OFM~~).

Jurisdictions shall use these initial allocations for at least one of the plan alternatives they evaluate for their GMA plan updates.

2. **Reconciliation:** Once the GMA comprehensive plan updates of jurisdictions have identified a preferred growth plan with sufficient detail to determine if the population and employment allocation can be accommodated, the ~~Growth Management Act Steering Committee~~ (GMASC) will review and, if necessary, recommend adjusting the population and employment growth allocations to be included in the CPPs.
 - a. ~~The Skagit~~ County, ~~the~~ and cities ~~and~~ towns shall jointly review the preferred growth alternatives proposed in local comprehensive plans for discrepancies with the allocation associated with ~~the Skagit~~ County's preferred plan alternative.
 - b. Based on the land supply, permitted densities, capital facilities, urban service capacities and other information associated with the preferred growth alternatives of proposed local comprehensive plans, the Planners Committee shall recommend to the GMASC a reconciled 20-year population and employment allocation.
 - c. The GMASC shall review and recommend to the Board of County Commissioners a reconciled 20-year population and employment allocation. Substantial consideration shall be given to the plan of each jurisdiction, and the recommendation shall be consistent with the GMA and the CPPs.
 - d. The Board of County Commissioners shall consider the recommendation of the GMASC and shall replace the allocations in the CPPs with a reconciled 20-year population and employment allocation.
3. **Long Term Monitoring:** Subsequent to reconciliation, ~~the~~ GMASC shall maintain a long-term monitoring process to review annually the population and employment growth allocations contained in the CPPs.
 - a. Skagit County, ~~and~~ the cities ~~and towns~~ shall jointly monitor the following:
 - i. Estimated population and employment growth;
 - ii. Annexations and incorporations; and
 - iii. Residential and non-residential development trends.
 - b. Results of the monitoring program shall be published in a growth monitoring report developed by the Planners Committee and recommended to the GMASC.
 - c. ~~The~~ GMASC shall review and approve the annual report by resolution.

4. **Allocation Adjustment:** The GMASC may consider adjustments to the population and employment growth allocations contained in Appendix A of CPPs in the years between Washington state-required updates. The following steps shall be used:
- a. Based on the results of the long-term monitoring process, the Planners Committee may review and recommend to the GMASC an adjustment to the population and employment allocations.
 - b. The GMASC shall review the Planners Committee recommendation to adjust growth allocations and may recommend to the Board of County Commissioners an adjustment to the population and employment allocations. Adjustments to the growth allocations shall be based on the results of the monitoring program and shall be consistent with the GMA and the CPPs.
 - c. The Board of County Commissioners shall consider the recommendation of the GMASC and may amend the CPPs with adjusted population and employment allocations for cities and towns, UGAs, and rural areas.

Any disputes regarding the roles and responsibilities of the Board of County Commissioners, the ~~GMA Steering Committee~~ GMASC, and individual jurisdictions in reviewing and approving amendments to the Countywide Planning Policies shall be resolved in accordance with the procedures established by the 2002 Framework Agreement.