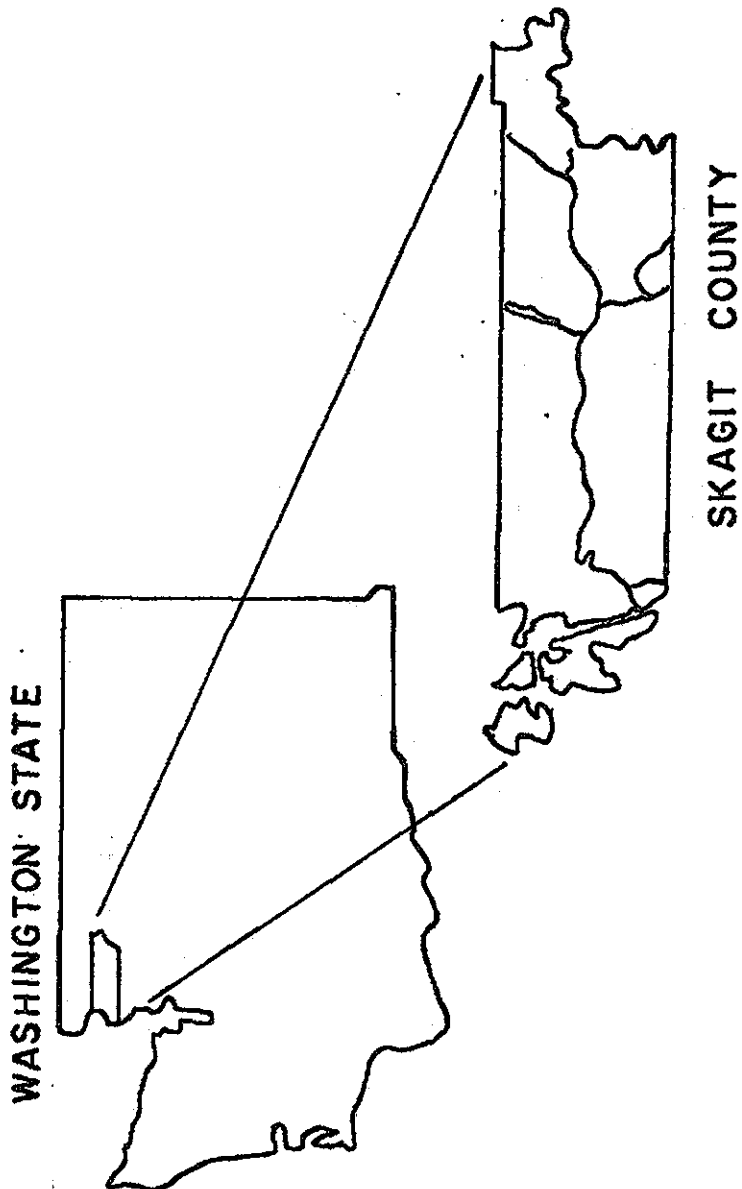


COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
FOR THE
EASTERN PLANNING DISTRICT
SKAGIT COUNTY, WASHINGTON

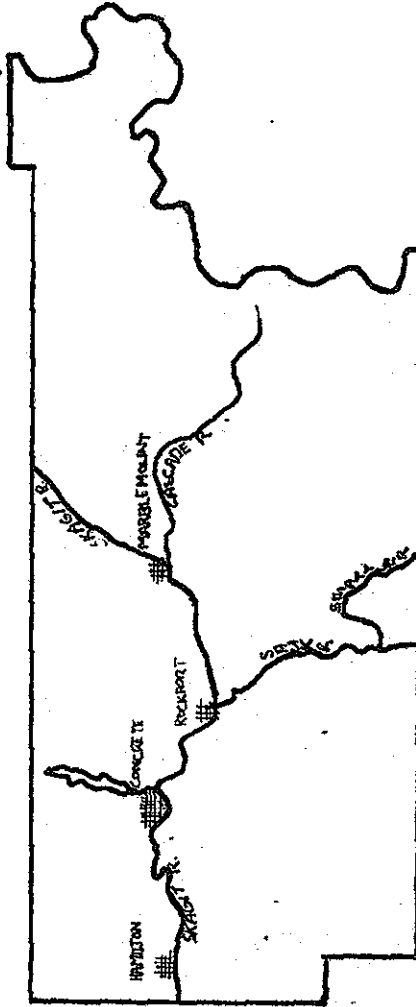
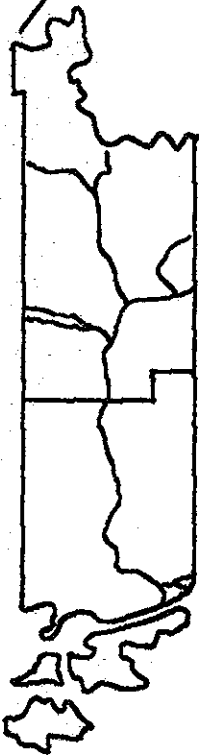
PREPARED BY THE SKAGIT COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT
MAY 1982

SKAGIT COUNTY LOCATION MAP

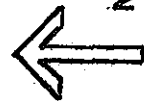


VICINITY MAP

SKAGIT COUNTY



EASTERN DISTRICT



NORTH

NO SCALE


EASTERN PLANNING DISTRICT - SKAGIT COUNTY, WASHINGTON
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Prepared by the Skagit County Planning Department


Robert Schofield, Director

This is to certify that the official Comprehensive Plan for the Eastern Planning District of Skagit County is hereby adopted by:

The Skagit County Planning Commission on May 3rd, 1982.


E. C. Comings, Chairman


Dan Peth, Vice Chairman

The Board of County Commissioners on May 18, 1982


Bud Norris, Chairman


Howard Miller, Commissioner


Jerry Mansfield, Commissioner

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SECTION ONE

INTRODUCTION

A. Description of the Eastern Planning District

The Eastern Planning District is the largest of the county's six planning districts, encompassing approximately 788,000 acres or 1,200 square miles in the eastern half of Skagit County.

The Planning District begins at the center of Range 6, East Townships 34, 35, 36 North and the boundary of Ranges 6 and 7 East, Township 33 North and extending eastward to the county limits. The district is bordered by Whatcom County on the north, Snohomish County on the south, and by Okanogan and Chelan Counties at the east at the crest of the Cascade Mountain Range. The Planning District is dominated by the rugged, sharp crested ridges and peaks of the Cascade Mountain Range. The Skagit River and main tributaries, the Sauk, Suiattle, Cascade and Baker Rivers, wind through the area forming narrow valleys where the majority of the District's population has settled. Approximately 68% of the District is under federal management within the Mount Baker National Forest, Glacier Peak Wilderness Area, and the North Cascades National Park. The District's major transportation routes are SR20, an east/west corridor along the Skagit River Valley, and Burlington Northern Railroad which terminates at Concrete.

SR20 offers the District regional significance in that it provides the most direct link between the metropolitan areas to the south and the North Cascades National Park and beyond. Within the District are two incorporated towns, Hamilton and Concrete, as well as numerous, distinct unincorporated towns and settlements.

B. History of Planning in the Eastern Planning District

The initial comprehensive planning studies for the District were done on a countywide basis by the consulting firm of M.G. Poole Associates and was completed in 1965. This plan was updated and revised in 1968. On December 18, 1973, the Board of County Commissioners approved the North Central District Comprehensive Plan, and in doing so, divided the county into six distinctive geographic planning areas or districts, of which the Eastern District is the sixth and final district to be amended. The 1968 "countywide" Comprehensive Plan, while it maps out proposed land uses for what is now known as the Eastern Planning District, makes little reference to the district within the text portion of the plan and, therefore, is considered marginal at best.

C. Purpose and Scope of Comprehensive Planning

The Comprehensive Plan for the Eastern Planning District is an official public document adopted by the Board of County Commissioners containing a compendium of goals, objectives, recommendations, graphs and maps, and is designed as a policy guide concerning desirable future physical development for this particular planning area.

The plan is intended to be comprehensive, general and long range. The plan is "comprehensive" in that it includes all geographical parts of the planning area and all functional elements which are relative to physical development. The plan is "general" in that it is designed as a public policy statement and is not intended to be a specific and detailed regulatory plan. The plan is "long range" in that it deals with long term situations and possibilities ten to twenty years into the future.

SECTION TWO

EASTERN DISTRICT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN DEVELOPMENT

A. Eastern Planning District Advisory Committee

The Skagit County Planning Department adopted a basic "grassroots" approach to developing the Eastern Planning District Comprehensive Plan of relying extensively upon citizen input and participation in the process. This approach was initiated in late spring of 1981 with the formation of an Eastern Planning District Advisory Committee. The committee consisted of seventeen individuals (see Contributors, page iv) representing a cross-section of area property owners, business people and agency people. The Planning Department staff and committee held a series of fifteen open meetings or workshops over a nine month period beginning in August, 1981. The meetings were usually held every other week in the Concrete High School Library and were often frequented by many non-committee citizens of the district, of which many actively participated in the process. The functions of the committee were to seek citizen input from their various areas and to play a major role in the development of the comprehensive land use plan map and subsequent implementing zoning map for the district. As a basis for the decision making that ensued, the committee developed the following three main goals and underscored these goals with nineteen complementing objectives:

Goals:

1. Preserve the resource productive areas of the planning area.
2. Maintain control over the costs associated with community growth and improvement.
3. Provide a variety of living environments for area residents.

Objectives:

1. Provide and maintain lifestyles which best preserve the natural beauty of

the area, minimize public investments and allow private investment the greatest possible latitude within the interests of community health, safety and welfare.

2. Preserve the agricultural and forestry base of the area so as to retain both the primary economic bases and the rural atmosphere of this area.
3. Protect forestry lands and encourage reforestation and sustained yield practices and policies.
4. Encourage the retention of agricultural lands for economic, safety and aesthetic reasons.
5. Discourage further construction in the floodway lands for economic, safety and aesthetic reasons.
6. Encourage the location of future development in suitable, well-planned upland areas, especially to areas near or adjacent to towns and incorporated cities.
7. The location and quantity of land designed for urban related uses, i.e. residential, commercial, industrial, should be based upon estimates of present and future needs, environmental impact, various private and public economic criteria and the resulting social ramifications.
8. Provide the public services required to fulfill state and federal regulations in a manner compatible with the general attitudes of the people of the planning area.
9. Municipal, public, quasi-public and private standards, plans, regulations and efforts should be coordinated with those of the area, the county and the region, realizing that successful interaction of development cannot be accomplished without coordination of efforts
10. Future annexations by municipalities should consider such elements as flood problems, drainage, topography, soils, septic suitability, population, energy, public safety, the ability of the city to provide proper sewer and other utilities and services, regional land use policies and future land use ramifications of the annexations.
11. Promote development policies and construction procedures which control soil erosion, streambank erosion and sedimentation; control increases in runoff volume and peak flows; and, control runoff pollution and flood damage.
12. Establish with municipalities a mutually agreed upon Urban Service Area and Comprehensive Plan, land use designations within, as well as a mutually

agreed upon Joint Sphere of Influence Area to facilitate a cooperative effort to manage growth in the best interest of all the citizens in Skagit County.

13. The tourism industry should be encouraged as a viable industry in this area.
14. The Wild and Scenic River Designation should be recognized as a resource to be conserved, enhanced and utilized.
15. The need for recreational property and recreational development should be recognized.
16. Recognizing the critical economic role energy resources will play in the future, energy conservation and the promotion of efficient energy utilization should be a feature of the plan.
17. It should be recognized that certain parts of the unincorporated areas perceive themselves as communities and the plan should allow them to develop as cohesive or integral entities rather than undifferentiated residential/agricultural/forestry areas as the plan might propose.
18. The plan should be flexible enough in application so that changes in our society or economic situation may influence future interpretations of the plan.
19. Unique and sensitive areas such as wetlands, archaeological/cultural/archaeological/cultural/historical sites, etc. should be recognized as a resource and be protected.

In addition to these goals and objectives, the committee and the Planning Department also employed the following decision making criteria:

1. Capabilities of the Land

Slope of the land, soil stability, soil septic suitability, flood proneness and water table characteristics are all factors that were considered in determining the type and intensity of human development appropriate for a given area.

2. Resource Preservation

The preservation of productive agricultural and forestry lands is one of the key goals identified by the Advisory Committee. Therefore, the presence or absence of highly productive agricultural and/or forestry soils were a factor considered in recommendations made for this element.

3. **Public Service Costs**

Another goal identified by the Advisory Committee was to maintain control over the costs associated with community growth and improvement. In other words, keep taxes down by extending public services in an economical fashion. With reference to existing city water, sewer and street plans, the land use recommendations propose the location and intensity of development in keeping with the cost feasibility of service delivery.

4. **Existing Land Use**

The existing pattern of development was recognized in land use recommendations.

5. **Citizen Preference**

To the degree that county residents and committee members have attended the advisory committee planning meetings and public meetings and voiced preferences regarding the type and density of development, and to the degree that there has been some concensus within the geographic area about such preferences, these preferences were taken into full account along with other criteria mentioned.

6. **Existing Regulations**

Conformance to existing controls and regulations such as the flood damage prevention ordinance, Shoreline Management Master Program were recognized in land use recommendations.

B. Informal Community Public Meetings

The Planning Department and Eastern District Advisory Committee held a series of three informal public meetings for the purpose of reviewing and receiving comment on the proposed draft Comprehensive Plan Map and draft Zoning Map for the planning area. Meetings were held at the Birdsvew Grange on February 9, 1982 and at the Marblemount Community Club on February 23, 1982. A public meeting was also held in Darrington on December 7, 1981, with discussion centering around the Bennettville/Sauk-Prairie area, prior to the preparation of draft proposals for the area. However, comment received at the Darrington meeting revealed an overwhelming consensus of opinion with regard to preferred land uses and densities which ultimately played a significant role in determining land use recommendations for their particular area.

Following the February public meetings, the Advisory Committee reconvened two more times to review the comments and recommendations received at the public meetings, made some final changes to the map and adjustments to the Comprehensive Plan text, and forwarded the proposals to the Skagit County Planning Commission for review and public hearings.

C. Skagit County Planning Commission Public Meetings and Hearings

The Skagit County Planning Commission first reviewed the proposals on March 15, 1982, at an informal public meeting or workshop. The staff described the proposals, reviewed the process of how the proposals were developed and conducted a question and answer period. The meeting was attended by all nine members of the Planning Commission.

On April 29, 1982, the staff and members of the Planning Commission conducted a day-long tour of the District to familiarize the Commission with the area they would soon be deliberating on.

At 8:00 p.m. on Monday, May 3, 1982, the Planning Commission held a formal public hearing to review the staff reports, findings, and recommendations, review correspondence and receive input from the public. After making a few minor changes to the map, the Planning Commission moved to recommend to the Board of County Commissioners, approval of the Eastern District Comprehensive Plan. The vote for approval was unanimous, 7-0.

D. Board of County Commissioner Review and Approval

On Tuesday, May 18, 1982, the Board of Skagit County Commissioners held a public meeting to review and deliberate on the recommendations received from the Planning Commission. After receiving a brief report from the staff and testimony from a few interested parties, the Board unanimously accepted the recommendation of the Planning Commission and formally adopted the Eastern District Comprehensive Plan.

SECTION THREE

THE EASTERN DISTRICT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

A. Purpose and Philosophy of Plan

The Eastern Planning District Comprehensive Plan consists of a set of goals, objectives, recommendations, statements, graphs, tables and maps and is designed to be the official policy guide and official statement of the Board of County Commissioners concerning the desirable future physical development for this area.

The philosophy of the plan can be best summed up by the three primary goals which act as the foundation of the plan:

1. Preserve the resource productive areas of the planning district;
2. Maintain control over the costs associated with community growth and improvement;
3. Provide a variety of living environments for area residents.

The Comprehensive Plan is not a static document; therefore, completion of this plan does not represent the completion of the planning process for the Eastern Planning District. The land use planning process for this area should be an on-going process. This plan should be revised and amended as the need arises to accommodate unforeseen changes in community needs, desires, conditions and/or technological advances. It is recommended that this plan be reviewed and updated on a regular basis in an open public process involving the citizens of the area, planning agency, and elected public officials.

B. Population

Analysis of the current population and its projection for an area is basic to the planning process. This analysis can be used to determine the need for various land uses and community facilities within a planning district. Analysis of the population of Skagit County and for each of its separate Planning Districts is limited by the frequency and manner in which the population is enumerated.

The United States Census is conducted every ten years. Between each census, major demographic changes on a county-wide or smaller scale may occur. The Washington State Office of Fiscal Management makes interim yearly estimates of the population for the county as a whole and incorporated places. These census enumerations and interim estimates are usually made for geographical areas whose boundaries do not correspond to the Planning District boundaries. The Eastern Planning District is no exception, therefore, it is necessary to interpolate some of the population information that is provided in this study.

1. Present Population and Projected Growth

The population of the Eastern Planning District, including the two incorporated areas of Hamilton and Concrete, is estimated to be 3,961 (see Table 1) and is expected to have a relatively vigorous growth rate through the year 2000 (see Table 2). This growth rate is based on a county-wide rate of 2.3% a year as is projected for the county by the State Office of Fiscal Management. This projected growth rate for the Planning District is recognized as a "high" forecast for the area, the actual growth rate for the area will probably be somewhat lower. However, activities and developments outside of the district such as High Ross Dam, Northern State Facility Development, continued expansion of workforce at the Skagit Bendix Plant, as well as construction and operation of the Lone Star Cement Plant at Concrete could produce ultimate population levels near or even above the forecast contained in this text.

2. Population Composition and Distribution

Another important element of population analysis aside from the numerical increases is the composition of this population and the impacts it will have on the physical development of the District. A significant portion of the anticipated increases in the Eastern District's population will result from in-migration as opposed to natural increases (excess of births over deaths). It is anticipated that these new people will be primarily of retirement age couples and school age families desiring an affordable rural or small town lifestyle. These new residents will be attracted to the area because of its relative close proximity to the Sedro

TABLE 1
1980 POPULATION OF THE EASTERN PLANNING DISTRICT

Concrete	592	15%
Hamilton	268	7%
Upper Skagit Census Division	2,639	
Remainder of District*	<u>462</u>	<u>78%</u>
Total	3,961	100%
Skagit County (April 1, 1981)	64,900	

*Portion of Lyman-Hamilton Census Division

TABLE 2
POPULATION FORECASTS

	<u>High Range Forecast*</u>			
	<u>1985</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>1995</u>	<u>2000</u>
Eastern District	4,416	4,872	5,327	5,783
Skagit County	71,300	79,300	86,500	93,400

*Based on countywide projected growth rate of 2.3% per year

Woolley/Burlington/Mount Vernon urban area, abundance of available land as well as the scenic and recreational qualities of the area. It is anticipated that the majority of these new people will settle in the western portion of the District from Hamilton to Concrete. These groups will create a higher demand for services and development than the other segments of population growth resulting from natural increase.

The distribution of population growth is directly linked to the allocation of future land uses and community facilities. The comprehensive plan map locates the greatest amounts of Residential (3-5 units/per acre) development in and around the incorporated towns of Hamilton and Concrete. Although these residential areas could potentially accommodate all of the Districts projected population growth, and, therefore, it is highly unlikely that all future residential development will occur in these specific areas. It is more likely that a majority of the new residents will locate in rural portions of the District in the areas designated as Rural Residential (1 unit/per acre) and Rural Open Space (1-2 units per 5 acres).

C. PLAN ELEMENTS

The Plan Elements represent the backbone of a comprehensive plan. Presently, State law specifies only two required elements that must be included in a comprehensive plan: a land use element, which designates the proposed general distribution, location and extent of uses of land for agriculture, housing, industry, commerce, etc., and a circulation or transportation element consisting of the general location, alignment and extent of major thoroughfares, major transportation routes, etc.

Beyond this, optional elements can be included in the plan at the discretion of the local jurisdiction. Optional elements for the comprehensive plan may include some of the following elements: conservation; recreation; housing; transit; public services and facilities; public buildings; renewal; and capital improvement program.

Each plan element deals with a specific functional aspect of area land use or natural resource development and includes goals and policy statements and discussions of significant issues, implications and recommendations related to that element.