



# Planning & Development Services

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## Memorandum

To: Skagit Board of County Commissioners  
From: Robby Eckroth, AICP, Senior Planner  
Date: March 18, 2025  
Re: 2025 Countywide Planning Policy Amendments

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### Summary and Background

Planning and Development Services (PDS) is providing this staff report in advance of the March 25, 2025, meeting of the Board of County Commissioners to consider adoption of proposed Countywide Planning Policy updates (Exhibit A). The purpose of the CPP amendments is to bring the policies into consistency with new Growth Management Act Requirements.

The Skagit Council of Governments (SCOG) Growth Management Act Technical Advisory Committee (GMATAC) drafted Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs) to be considered by the SCOG Growth Management Act Steering Committee (GMASC). The Countywide Planning Policy amendments were distributed to all SCOG member jurisdictions for review and public comment. The response from each of the member jurisdictions can be found in the SCOG memo prepared for the December 18, 2024, GMASC meeting (Exhibit B). Minor changes were made from the first draft of the CPP amendments to address comments from member jurisdictions. The Skagit County Planning Commission's recommendation and recorded motion was transmitted to the County Commissioners on October 22, 2024 (Exhibit C). On December 18, 2024, the GMASC unanimously recommended the CPP amendments and final 2045 growth allocations to the Board of County Commissioners.

**SCOG Growth Management Steering Committee Recommendation:** Approve

**Staff Recommendation:** Approve

### Analysis

The amendments are proposed to align the CPPs with new Growth Management Act requirements, specifically HB 1220<sup>1</sup> and HB 1181<sup>2</sup>. The proposed CPP amendments will set the framework for the 2025 Skagit County Periodic Comprehensive Plan Update which is required to be consistent with Skagit County CPPs. The CPPs also include the population, housing, and employment allocations. Below is a summary of the amendments to the Countywide Planning Policies are to be considered:

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<sup>1</sup> <https://app.leg.wa.gov/billssummary?Year=2021&BillNumber=1220>

<sup>2</sup> <https://app.leg.wa.gov/billssummary?BillNumber=1181&Chamber=House&Year=2023>

- A. **Housing** - Update the CCPs to address recent legislative changes, such as HB 1220. In addition, consider amending the CCP's to address the following housing topics:
- Add policy language aimed at significantly increasing housing production within existing UGAs in areas with good access to transit, jobs, and services.
  - Add policy language addressing the siting of publicly funded or subsidized housing, including permanent supportive housing, transitional housing, shelters, and housing for populations with special needs.
  - Add policy language addressing coordination with publicly funded housing authorities.
- B. **Climate** - Update the CCP's to address recent legislative changes, such as HB 1181. GMA Goal 14 was adopted in 2023 Section 14: Climate Change and Resiliency. This GMA goal requires that comprehensive plans address development regulations, and regional policies, plans and strategies under RCW 36.70A.201 and Chapter RCW 47.80 adapt to and mitigate the effects of a changing climate, support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and per capita vehicle miles traveled; prepare for climate impact scenarios; foster resiliency to climate impacts and natural hazards; protect and enhance environmental, economic, and human health and safety; and advance environmental justice. Proposed revisions presented to the Countywide Planning policies in the linked document address these new legislative requirements under GMA goal 14.

### **Final Growth Allocations**

Included in the final CPP redlines are the final 2045 growth allocations. The GMATAC recommended adoption of the final 2045 growth allocations as part of the new redline document. These final growth allocations remove the 0-50% AMI from the rural and balance the allocations by shifting the 100% and above AMI allocations from the cities and towns and adding them to the rural allocations.

## **Public Notice and Participation**

On August 6, 2024, the Staff Report for the 2024 Countywide Planning Policy amendment was published to the County website. The public notice opened the comment period and noticed the public hearing.

Notice was published in the Skagit Valley Herald on August 22, 2024, the PDS email distribution list and posted to the PDS and legal notice webpage. On September 10, 2024, the Planning Commission held a public hearing on the Countywide Planning Policy amendments. No members of the public provided public testimony. A full transcript of the meeting can be found on the [Planning Commission Agenda and Archive page](#)<sup>3</sup>. A total of one comment was submitted during the comment period, August 22, 2024, to September 12, 2024. The one written comment can be found in Exhibit D.

Other SCOG member jurisdictions held their own comment periods to help inform their recommendations to the GMASC.

As minor amendments were made to the proposed CPPs, a second comment period was held from March 6, 2025, to March 21, 2025. No new comments were received as of March 18, 2025. A second public hearing will be held on the March 25, 2025, meeting prior to action by the Board of County Commissioners.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.skagitcounty.net/Departments/PlanningCommission/PCminutes.htm>

## **Staff Recommendation**

Skagit County PDS staff recommends approving the amendments to the CPPs and the 2045 growth allocations to align the policies with the state law changes outlined above.

## **County Commissioner Action**

The County Commissioners may take one of two actions on any CPP recommendation from the GMASC:

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

## **Exhibit List**

**Exhibit A** – Proposed Countywide Planning Policy Amendments

**Exhibit B** – Skagit Council of Governments Memo to GMASC

**Exhibit C** – Skagit County Planning Commission Recorded Motion

**Exhibit D** – Futurewise Public Comment