



Planning & Development Services

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Memorandum: Countywide Planning Policy Amendments

To: Planning Commission
From: Robby Eckroth, AICP, Senior Planner
Date: August 6, 2024
Re: 2024 Countywide Planning Policy Amendments

Recommendation

The Department recommends **adoption** of the proposed countywide planning policy amendments.

Summary

Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs) are “a written policy statement or statements used solely for establishing a countywide framework from which county and city comprehensive plans are developed and adopted pursuant to this chapter.”¹ CPPs are required for counties, in coordination with cities within their boundaries, planning under the Growth Management Act (GMA) to provide policies and guidance on how population growth and investment will be directed within a given county.

The following amendments are proposed to be consistent with new Growth Management Act requirements, specifically HB 1220² and HB 1181³. 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.

Analysis

The Skagit Council of Governments (SCOG) Technical Advisory Committee drafted CPPs to be considered by the SCOG Steering Committee. On, June 20, 2024, the SCOG Steering Committee forwarded amendments to member jurisdictions for public comment and to solicit input from city-town councils and Board of County Commissioners. Once public comment and input is received, the Steering Committee will provide a recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners. The following amendments to the Countywide Planning Policies are to be considered:

- A. **Housing** - Review and 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.

¹ RCW 26.70A.210(1) <https://app.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=36.70A.210>

² <https://app.leg.wa.gov/billssummary?Year=2021&BillNumber=1220>

³ <https://app.leg.wa.gov/billssummary?BillNumber=1181&Chamber=House&Year=2023>

- 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** - Review and 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.
- C. **Land Capacity Analysis** - Skagit County GIS requirement to store data is proposed to be removed. SCOG is proposing collect land and housing capacity reports.

Findings of Fact

Consistency Review with Skagit County Code 14.08

- 1. Is the amendment consistent with the vision statements, goals, objectives, and policy directives of the Comprehensive Plan and the does the proposal preserve the integrity of the Comprehensive Plan and assure its systematic execution?**

The Comprehensive Plan is based on the goals of the Countywide Planning Policies, so the amendment is consistent with all of the goals and vision statements of the Comprehensive Plan.

- 2. Is the proposal supported by the Capital Facilities Plan (CFP) and other functional Plans?**

The amendment to the Countywide Planning Policies will not have an impact on the Capital Facilities Plan or other functional plans.

- 3. Is the proposal consistent with the Growth Management Act (GMA), the Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs), and applicable provisions of the Comprehensive Plan?**

The purpose of the amendments to the CPPs is to bring consistency with the Growth Management Act, and so that all jurisdictions' comprehensive plan updates within Skagit County will be consistent with the CPPs once adopted.

- 4. Does the proposal bear a substantial relationship to the public general health, safety, morals, or welfare?**

The proposal does not bear a substantial relationship to the public general health, safety, morals, or welfare.

How to Comment

The public may submit written comments via email to pdscomments@co.skagit.wa.us (preferred) or via US mail starting **August 22nd**. All paper comments must be submitted on 8½" x 11" paper to the address below:

Skagit County Planning & Development Services
re: Comments "2024 Countywide Planning Policy Amendments"
1800 Continental Place
Mount Vernon, WA 98273

All comments must be received by **September 12, 2024, at 4:30 p.m.** and include (1) your full name, (2) your mailing address. Comments not meeting these requirements will not be considered.

You may also provide verbal comments at the Public Hearing. The public hearing is scheduled **September 10, 2024, at 6:00 p.m** in the Skagit County Commissioners Hearing Room at 1800 Continental Place, Mount Vernon, WA 98273.

If you wish to provide testimony via the online meeting option, please send an email to pdscomments@co.skagit.wa.us, with your name, phone number, and include a request to be added to the speakers list in the body of the email. All requests must be received 24 hours prior to the public hearing date. Public hearing testimony is usually limited to three minutes, so written comments are preferred.

Attachment 1 – Proposed Countywide Planning Policy Amendments

Attachment 2 – Skagit Council of Governments Technical Advisory Committee Recommendation