

Skagit County

Countywide Planning Policies

January 2024 Proposed Revisions to include
Housing (HB1220) and Climate (HB 1181) 2024

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GMA Goal 14 added (2023) Section 14: Climate Change and resiliency. Ensure that comprehensive plans, 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.

The greenhouse gas emissions reduction sub- element and resiliency element is mandatory for the jurisdictions specified in **RCW 36.70A.95**

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”) 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.
- v All Elements of Comprehensive Plans, including maps and procedures, shall comply with these policies. Amendments to the other components of Comprehensive Plans shall conform to these policies.
- vi As required by RCW 36.70A.120, 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 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.
- ix Local governments shall pursue methods of collecting and displaying statistics, maps and other information necessary for government.

- x Upon adoption of Comprehensive Plans, sub-area plans will be considered to address homogeneous natural features and communities.

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 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, greenspace ~~and~~ open space, and encourage the preservation of wildlife habitat areas and healthy urban community forests.
- 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

HB 1220 added new housing allocations, now included in **RCW 36.70A.070** Comprehensive Plans-Mandatory Element

d. Allocation Adjustment.

1.8 Skagit County, the cities and towns shall use consistent development and housing land capacity analysis methods ~~as approved by the GMASC~~ to determine the capacity of Urban Growth Areas to accommodate population and employment growth and housing produced in the different AMI categories provided by the Department of Commerce. ~~Jurisdictions will supply a capacity amount of undeveloped buildable urban land needed, inventory done as part of their periodic updates, to the Skagit Council of Governments. 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 and housing development to evaluate the rate of growth and maintain an inventory of the amount of buildable land remaining and the amount of housing produced in the different AMI categories provided by the Department of Commerce. 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

1.11 Prior to altering urban growth areas, or as part of a periodic update, a climate impact analysis shall be completed. The climate impact analysis shall evaluate the greenhouse gas (GHG) and vehicle miles traveled (VMT) impacts associated with the proposed change and consider climate vulnerability and resilience scenarios created by the change. The analysis shall also consider the GHG and VMT impacts associated with other feasible alternatives for accommodating projected growth. Preference shall be given to alternatives that reduce per capita VMT and GHG emissions and changes that increase climate resilience and protect vulnerable populations and overburdened communities.

1.10

1.8 Added housing capacity analysis to the existing land capacity analysis. Removed GMASC requirements for methodology approval. Removed Skagit County GIS requirement to store data. SCOG will collect land and housing capacity reports.

1.9 Department of Commerce AMI categories for different types of housing will be used for reconciliation and monitoring reports

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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.

- 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 2002 Framework Agreement 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 Skagit County's development regulations established for the protection of critical areas; and

9. An inventory of developable land has been conducted and 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 will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and per capita vehicle miles traveled and are based on regional priorities and coordinated with county and city comprehensive plans.

- 3.1 ~~Multi-purpose Multimodal~~ 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 be consistent with VMT and GHG reduction targets and shall minimize adverse social, economic and environmental impacts and costs, especially those impacts to vulnerable populations and overburdened communities.
- 3.4 Transportation elements of 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; be based upon an inventory of the existing Skagit County transportation network and needs; and encourage the conservation of energy and reduction of VMT and GHG with the goal of meeting or exceeding Washington State targets.
- 3.5 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 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 Transportation services for seniors and individuals with disabilities shall be provided by public transportation operators to provide for those who, through age and/or disability, are unable to transport themselves.
- 3.8 Multi-modal ~~H~~-level of service (LOS) standards and safety standards shall be established that coordinate and link with the urban growth and urban areas to coordinate optimize land use and transportation traffic compatibility over the long term. New development shall mitigate multimodal LOS deficiencies transportation impacts concurrently with the development and occupancy of the project. Acceptable mitigation may include active transportation facility improvements, increased or enhanced public transportation service, ride-sharing programs, demand management, or transportation systems management strategies funded by the development.
- 3.9 An all-weather arterial road system shall be coordinated with industrial and commercial areas.

Countywide Planning Policies, January 20242024Proposed Revisions to include Housing (HB 1220) and Climate (HB 1181) 8

The greenhouse gas emissions reduction sub-element and resiliency sub-element is mandatory for the jurisdictions specified in **RCW 36.70A.95** The greenhouse gas emissions sub-element of the Comprehensive plan must identify actions consistent with guidelines published pursuant to **RCW 70A.45.120** that will:

- (a) Result in reductions in overall GHG emissions generated by transportation and land use within the jurisdiction but without increasing GHG elsewhere in the state;
- (b) Result in reductions in per capita VMT within the jurisdiction but without increasing VMT in the state
- (c) Prioritize reductions that benefit overburdened communities in order to maximize the co-benefits of reduced air pollution and environmental justice.

WAC 365-196-840 Concurrency - In urban areas, the department recommends counties and cities adopt methodologies that analyze the transportation system from a comprehensive multi-modal perspective authorized by **RCW 36.70A.108**

- 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, including a reduction of vehicle related greenhouse gas emissions and reduction of vehicle miles travelled by promoting the use of alternative transportation modes, reducing vehicular traffic, maintaining acceptable multimodal levels of service, traffic flow, and siting of facilities.
- 3.12 All new and expanded transportation facilities and transportation system improvements shall be sited, constructed and maintained to minimize noise levels and shall not have the effect of increasing per capita VMT or greenhouse gas emissions.
- 3.13 Increase the percentage of trips made using transit by prioritizing transit service hours and capital investments for routes serving urban corridors with high levels of ridership potential where dense concentrations of housing, employment, or services exist or are planned.
- 3.14 Develop a regional network of active transportation facilities and connect major regional cities with a multi-use path system.

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4. Housing

~~Plan for and accommodate~~ ~~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 Allow for an adequate supply of land use options to provide housing for a wide range of incomes, housing types and densities. Comprehensive Plans must include a housing element that plans for and accommodates housing affordable to all economic segments of the population. The housing element must include an inventory and analysis of existing and projected housing needs that identifies the number of housing units necessary to manage projected growth, including units for low, very low and extremely low-income households, and emergency housing, emergency shelters and permanent supportive housing (PSH).~~

~~4.2 At a minimum, each jurisdiction shall provide sufficient capacity to accommodate the number and type of units allocated to the jurisdiction through regional allocation process described in Appendix B. Comprehensive plans, development regulations, and funding mechanisms shall also be consistent with the following housing allocation policies:~~

- ~~a. Housing allocations including PSH, low, very low and extremely low-income households shall be prioritized in, and shall be primarily allocated to, urban areas with good access to transit and services.~~
- ~~b. Rural areas typically lack access to transit and services, but may have localized or unique housing needs, such as housing for rural resource employees or housing for extended family members. In such areas, accessory dwelling units may be considered.~~
- ~~c. Consistent with the process described in Appendix B, locations without access to transit or services, including rural areas and towns, may have some of their allocation of low, very low and extremely low-income households, emergency shelters and PSH given by the Department of Commerce methodology or an approved equivalent quantitative method, reallocated to urban areas in cities with more access to services and transit.~~
- ~~d. The reconciliation process described in Appendix B may be used to reallocate housing numbers if needed, in coordination with land capacity analysis and population and employment allocation reconciliation processes.~~
- ~~e. Avoid further concentrations of low-income, PSH and emergency shelter housing.~~
- ~~f. Increase opportunities and capacity for housing that is affordable and close to employment, education, shopping, public services and public transit.~~

HB 1220 resulted in new required housing allocations as part of **RCW 36.70A.070** Comprehensive Plans-Mandatory elements in order to plan for and accommodate housing for different area median incomes (AMI)

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RCW 36.70A.070 Comprehensive Plans Mandatory Elements includes consideration of the role of accessory dwelling units.

4.1g. To provide equal access and to equitably meet the needs of Skagit County's vulnerable populations, PSH and emergency shelter capacity will be allocated to urban areas in a geographically balanced fashion and proportionate to each UGA's population.

4.24.3 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.

4.34.4 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.

4.44.5 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.

4.54.6 The construction of housing that promotes innovative, energy efficient and less expensive building technologies shall be encouraged.

4.64.7 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.

4.8 ~~The County and Cities, and public housing authorities, should participate in multi-jurisdictional affordable housing programs with the goal to increase housing for low-income, PSH and emergency shelters. These programs will be cooperative efforts that include public agencies, non-profits, and other providers of housing. Manufactured home parks shall be allowed only within urban or urban growth areas.~~

4.9 ~~The County and Cities, in cooperation with housing and human services providers should create an actionable countywide strategy to coordinate the development of public supported housing projects which includes a funding strategy addressing capital and operating.~~

4.74.10 ~~Regional funding mechanisms and the capital plans of public housing providers should be consistent with the housing allocations established through each jurisdiction's Comprehensive Plan.~~

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4.7 Removal of requirements for mobile home parks only within urban or urban growth areas. Allows for more flexibility in LAMIRDS if services are available.

4.8, 4.9 and 4.10 - ensure that housing elements of jurisdictions are consistent with North Star initiative.

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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 Comprehensive Plans shall support and encourage economic development and employment to provide opportunities for prosperity.

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 that would create a policy violation of a jurisdiction's comprehensive plan 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

Retain open space and green space, enhance recreational opportunities, ~~conserve~~ enhance 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 Comprehensive Plans.
- 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.

Revised to be consistent with **RCW 36.70A.070** Planning Goals

- 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, 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.

10. Environment

Protect **and enhance** 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 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 Recognize the river systems within Skagit County as pivotal freshwater resources and 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 Comprehensive Plans 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 effect 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.

Revised to be consistent with
RCW 36.70A.070 Planning Goals

- 10.11 When evaluating and conditioning commercial, industrial or residential development, local governments shall consider threatened or endangered wildlife.
- 10.12 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 Cooperate with appropriate local, state and Federal agencies, to develop and implement flood hazard reduction programs, consistent with and supportive of the Corps Feasibility Study and consistent with the Climate Chapters of Comprehensive Plans and Hazard Mitigation Plans.
- 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 Work together to provide ongoing public education about flooding in a coordinated and consistent program, and adopt a flood hazard reduction plan, that works together with the natural and beneficial functions of floodplains.

RCW 36.70A.070- internal consistency required among components within comprehensive plan

RCW 36.70A.100 -consistency required between neighboring jurisdictions

RCW 36.70A.070(6) -consistency between State and local

11. Citizen Participation and Coordination

Encourage the involvement of citizens in the planning process, including the participation of vulnerable populations and overburdened communities, and ensure coordination between communities and jurisdictions to reconcile conflicts.

- 11.1 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 locally adopted comprehensive plans.
- 11.2 Continue to encourage public awareness of Comprehensive Plans by providing for public participation opportunities and public education programs that include ways to solicit participation from vulnerable populations and overburdened communities designed to promote a widespread understanding of the Plans' 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 Provide regular and ongoing opportunities for public review and comment throughout the development process of Comprehensive Plans.
- 11.5 Encourage citizen participation throughout the planning process as mandated by Washington state statute and codes for environmental, land use, and development permits.
- 11.6 Utilize broad based Citizen Advisory Committees to participate and assist in the Element development of the Comprehensive Plans, sub-area plans and functional plans.

HB 1181 Requires a climate chapter for jurisdictions specified in **RCW 36.70A.095** and is encouraged for all other jurisdictions. A climate change and resiliency sub-element is required for jurisdictions in Skagit County with populations greater than 6,000. This includes new public outreach requirements to include participation from vulnerable populations and overburdened communities.

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. 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, 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. 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 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 Skagit County should be developed and coordinated to assure the delivery of comprehensive services throughout the county, with Skagit County, cities and towns fairly sharing the burden.
- 12.13 A county-wide recycling program shall be maintained.
- 12.14 Public drainage facilities shall be designed to control both stormwater quantity and quality impacts.
- 12.15 Provide results of the required six-year capital facilities plan, including a financing plan, and 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 Cooperate with local historic preservation groups to ensure coordination of plans and policies by the Washington state Department of Archeology and Historic Preservation.
-

14. Climate Change and Resiliency

Ensure that Comprehensive Plans, development regulations, and regional policies, plans, and strategies under RCW 36.70A.210 and 47.80 RCW adapt to and mitigate the effects of a changing climate; support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and per capita vehicle miles travelled; prepare for climate impacts and natural hazards; protect and enhance environmental, economic, human health and safety; and advance environmental justice.

14.1 VMT reduction targets will meet or exceed Washington State VMT reduction targets and be consistent with Washington State law.

- a. Direct the majority of urban population growth to mixed use transit accessible corridors.
- b. Prioritize transit service in urban corridors with high ridership potential or where dense concentrations of housing, employment, and services exist or are planned, and as a means of providing frequent, reliable, and direct connections between regional centers.
- c. Local and regional plans shall include multimodal level of service standards and measures to ensure growth related transportation system impacts are mitigated through active transportation improvements, increased or enhanced public transportation service, ride sharing programs, demand management, or other appropriate measures that can be shown to reduce VMT.

14.2 GHG reduction targets will be consistent with Washington State reduction targets as part of the State adopted Transportation Carbon Reduction Strategy per RCW 70A2.45.020.

14.3 Comprehensive Plans, capital plans, and the regional transportation plan, will consider the effects of climate change. Effects could include riverine flooding, coastal flooding due to sea level rise, wildfire risk, extreme heat, and impacts to water resources such as reduced instream flows, seawater intrusion, and decreased groundwater availability. Preference will be given to policies, actions and strategies that avoid, minimize or mitigate the impacts of climate change on human health or the natural environment, and that reduce VMT and GHG.

14.4 Comprehensive Plans, capital plans and the regional transportation plan shall include measures that address the impacts of climate change on vulnerable populations and overburdened communities.

HB 1181 requires a climate chapter for jurisdictions specified in **RCW 36.70A.095** and is encouraged for all other jurisdictions. The climate change chapter requires a greenhouse gas reduction sub-element and resiliency sub-element. This is required for jurisdictions in Skagit County with populations greater than 6,000

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GHG and VMT reduction targets align with State carbon reduction strategy per **RCW 70A2.45.020**

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

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Table 1 Approved (December 2023) Projected Population Growth

Urban Growth Areas	2022 Population Estimates	2045 Initial Population Allocations	2022-2045 Projected Population Growth		
			Amount	Percent of Total Growth	Percent Growth by Area
Anacortes	17,983	22,971	4,988	16.9%	27.7%
Burlington	12,111	16,930	4,819	16.3%	39.8%
Mount Vernon	37,679	46,460	8,781	29.7%	23.3%
Sedro- Woolley	14,096	18,582	4,486	15.2%	31.8%
Concrete	949	1,130	181	0.6%	19.1%
Hamilton	302	302	0	0.0%	0.0%
La Conner	980	1,191	211	0.7%	21.5%
Lyman	425	425	0	0.0%	0.0%
Bayview Ridge	1,694	1,694	0	0.0%	0.0%
Swinomish	2,565	2,764	199	0.7%	7.8%
UGA Subtotal	88,784	112,449	23,665	80.0%	N/A

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Rural (outside UGAs)	42,465	48,381	5,916	20.0%	13.9%
Grand Total	131,249	160,830	29,581	100.0%	N/A

Table 2. Approved (December 2023) Allocations of Net New Housing								
Initial Allocations of Net New Housing Needed (2020-2045)								
Urban Growth Areas		0-30% AMI*	31-50% AMI	51-80% AMI	81-100% AMI	101-120% AMI	Above 120% AMI	Total
Anacortes		924	592	422	226	201	577	2,942
Burlington		893	572	408	218	194	558	2,843
Mount Vernon		1,627	1,043	743	398	353	1,016	5,180
Sedro-Woolley		831	533	380	203	180	519	2,646
Concrete		34	22	15	8	7	21	107
Hamilton		0	0	0	0	0	0	0
La Conner		39	25	18	10	8	24	124
Lyman		0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bayview Ridge		0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Swinomish		37	24	17	9	8	23	118
	UGA Subtotal	4,385	2,811	2,003	1,072	951	2,738	13,960
Rural (outside of UGA's)		89	57	501	268	238	2,337	3,490
	Grand Total	4,474	2,868	2,504	1,340	1,189	5,075	17,450

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- Notes:
- 1.) Figures may vary from Skagit County Population, Housing and Employment Growth Allocations Methodology findings due to rounding.
 - 2.) UGA is "Urban Growth Area"
 - 3.) AMI is "Area Median Income"
 - 4.) Emergency housing needs are documented in the Skagit County Population, Housing and Employment Growth Allocations Methodology.
- *0-30% AMI includes permanent supportive housing and non-permanent supportive housing.

Table 3: Approved (December 2023) 2022-2023 Projected Employment Growth						
<u>Urban Growth Areas</u>		<u>2022 Employment Estimates</u>	<u>2045 Initial Employment Allocations</u>	<u>2022-2045 Projected Employment Growth</u>		
				<u>Amount</u>	<u>Percent of Total Growth</u>	<u>Percent Growth by Area</u>
<u>Anacortes</u>		9,503	12,648	3,145	15.3%	33.1%
<u>Burlington</u>		11,640	17,410	5,770	28.1%	49.6%
<u>Mount Vernon</u>		18,781	23,559	4,778	23.3%	25.4%
<u>Sedro-Woolley</u>		4,640	7,040	2,400	11.7%	51.7%
<u>Concrete</u>		391	506	115	0.6%	29.4%
<u>Hamilton</u>		466	489	23	0.1%	4.9%
<u>La Conner</u>		1,020	1,905	885	4.3%	86.8%
<u>Lyman</u>		56	76	20	0.1%	35.7%
<u>Bayview Ridge</u>		2,962	4,901	1,939	9.4%	65.5%
<u>Swinomish</u>		1,140	1,579	439	2.1%	38.5%
	<u>UGA Subtotal</u>	50,599	70,113	19,514	95.1%	N/A
<u>Rural (outside of UGA's)</u>		8,972	9,987	1,015	4.9%	11.3%
	<u>Grand Total</u>	59,571	80,100	20,529	100.0%	N/A

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Notes:

- 1.) Percentages may not sum due to rounding.
- 2.) Figures may vary from Skagit County Population, Housing and Employment Growth Allocations Methodology findings due to rounding.
- 3.) UGA is "Urban Growth Area"
- 4.) The 2015 Planned Action Environmental Impact Statement for the SWIFT Center (formerly known as the "North Cascades Gateway Center") in Sedro-Woolley anticipates 2,855 additional jobs from 2016-2036. These additional jobs are not explicitly included with the 2045 initial employment allocation, though the land capacity conducts, and regional reconciliation process expected to begin late 2024 can account for additional planned employment.

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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, and housing allocations for review and adoption by the GMASC.

- a. The initial population allocations will be based on the most recently published official 20-year population projections for Skagit County from the Office of Financial Management.

- a-b. The initial housing allocations for review and adoption by the GMASC will be based on the Department of Commerce methodology or an approved equivalent quantitative methodology and be consistent with Countywide Planning Policy 4.

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

2. **Reconciliation for Population and Employment Allocations:** 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 GMASC will review and, if necessary, recommend adjusting the population and employment growth allocations to be included in the CPPs.
 - a. 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 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. Reconciliation for Housing Allocations: Once the GMA comprehensive plan updates of jurisdictions have identified a preferred growth plan including housing allocations based on Department of Commerce guidelines and methodology, or a Commerce approved alternative quantitative method: the GMASC will review and, if necessary, recommend adjusting the housing allocations to be included in the CCP's.

- a. Skagit County and the cities and towns shall jointly review the preferred housing

Countywide Planning Policies, January 2024~~2021~~Proposed Revisions to include Housing (HB 1220) and Climate (HB 1181).

HB 1220 housing allocations added to growth allocation procedures. Includes using Department of Commerce methodology for housing AMI categories and housing types for the reconciliation process.

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allocations proposed in local comprehensive plans for discrepancies with the allocations associated with Skagit County's preferred plan alternative and Department of Commerce requirements.

b. This will be based on land capacity, permitted densities, transit availability, urban services provided, locations with good proximity to employment centers, alignment with the countywide strategy for development of public supported housing projects and assurance that low income and emergency shelter housing options are dispersed countywide. And any other information provided with the preferred housing alternatives of local comprehensive plans. The Planners Committee shall recommend to the GMASC a reconciled 20-year housing allocation.

c. The GMASC shall review and recommend to the Board of County Commissioners a reconciled 20-year housing allocation. Substantial consideration shall be given to the plan of each jurisdiction, and the recommendation shall be consistent with the adopted population and employment allocations, the GMA, Department of Commerce requirements and the CCP's.

d. The Board of County Commissioners shall consider the recommendation of the GMASC and shall replace the allocations in the CCP with a reconciled 20-year housing allocation parallel to the reconciliation process done for population and employment allocations.

d.e. The reconciliation process for population, employment and housing are all done together as part of the overall reconciliation and will follow the process and procedures in the 2002 framework agreement.

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3.4 Long Term Monitoring: Subsequent to reconciliation, the GMASC shall maintain a long-term monitoring process to review annually ~~the~~ population, and employment and housing growth allocations contained in the CPPs.

- a. Skagit County, 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,
 - iv. Estimated housing constructed per area median income (AMI) categories determined by the Department of Commerce requirements for housing allocations.
- 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.

4.5. 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 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.