



SKAGIT COUNTY 2025 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

September Planning Commission to Discuss Preliminary Draft Policies





Agenda

- Project overview
 - Project schedule overview and update
 - Community engagement overview
- Policy revision approach introduction
- Preliminary draft policy amendments for the Transportation Element
- Preliminary draft policy amendments for the Transportation Element
- Questions and early feedback from the Planning Commission

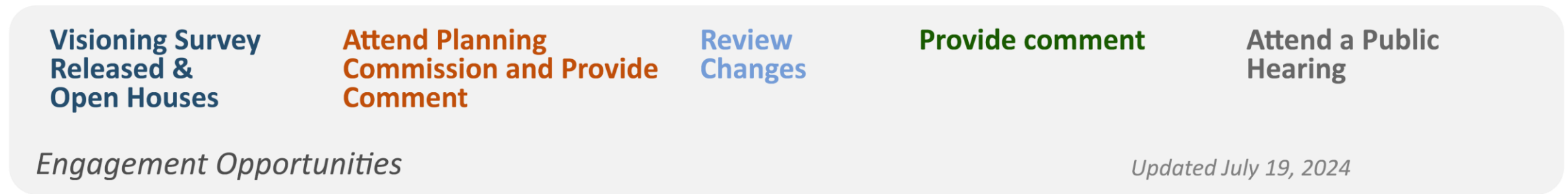
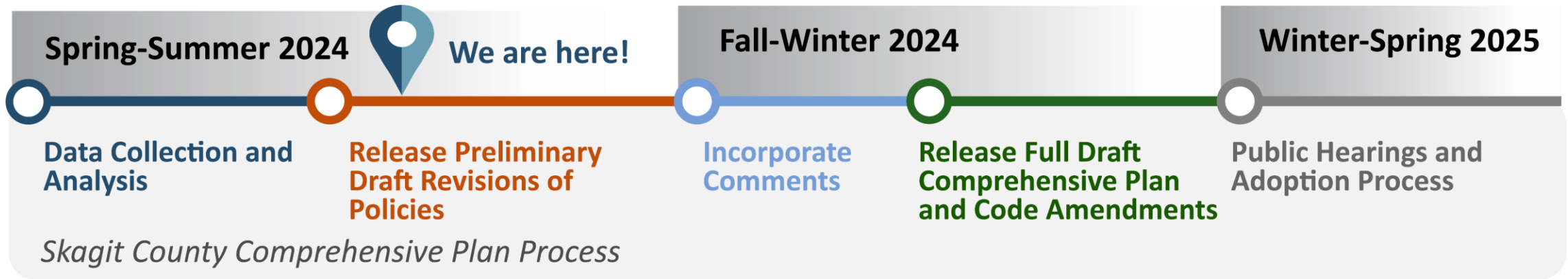
Project Overview





Project and Schedule Overview

- Project is nearing completion of data collection and analysis and moving on to policy drafting.



Updated July 19, 2024



Preliminary Policy Drafting Schedule

- Visit <https://skagitcounty.net/2025cpa> to learn about how to provide public comment.
- Email pdscomments@co.skagit.wa.us with the proposal name “Skagit County’s Comprehensive Plan Draft Policies” in the subject line. Include your comments in the body of your email.

| Topic | Planning Commission – Preliminary Review | Comment Period | Planning Commission Second Review |
|--|--|--|-----------------------------------|
| Rural (Complete) Natural Resource Lands (Complete) | July 23, 2024 | 7/23/2024 to 08/22/2024 4:30 p.m. | Early 2025 |
| Land Use (Complete) Housing (Complete) Economic Development (Complete) | August 13, 2024 | 8/13/2024 to 09/12/2024 4:30 p.m. | Early 2025 |
| Transportation Capital Facilities, and Utilities | September 24, 2024 | 9/24/2024 to 10/24/2024 4:30 p.m. | Early 2025 |
| Climate & Resiliency Environment | October 22, 2024 | 10/22/2024 to 11/14/2024 4:30 p.m. | Early 2025 |



Community Engagement overview



Community Engagement Summary

- Visit <https://skagitcounty.net/2025cpa> to download the public participation program and community engagement reports.

| Engagement | Completed On | Summary |
|------------------------|---------------------------|---|
| First Community Survey | May 14, 2024 | The first survey collected over strengths, weaknesses, and future focus areas for the County. Download the report online. |
| Pop-Ups | Ongoing | County staff participated in multiple community events to advertise the first survey, educate the public on the comprehensive plan process. Download the report online. |
| Stakeholder Interviews | July 10, 2024 | The County hosted eight stakeholder interviews with groups focusing on agriculture, environment, housing, and economic development. Download the report online. |
| Open Houses | June 27, 2024 | Open houses were completed at the end of June to educate the public and collect early feedback on specific topics. Download the report online. |
| Public Comment Periods | In Process | 30-Day public comment periods will be included with every draft release of policies. |
| Climate Open House | Scheduled October 1, 2024 | Open House for Climate Element of 2025 Comprehensive Plan Update will be held at Jefferson Elementary School (1801 E Blackburn Rd, Mount Vernon, WA 98274) on October 1 st at 5:30 PM – 7:00 PM. |
| Climate Survey | Upcoming | Details will be provided at a later date. |



High Level Summary

- Visit <https://skagitcounty.net/2025cpa> to download the public participation program and community engagement reports.

| Maintain | Improve | Reduce |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| Agricultural lands and industries | Housing options | Risk from hazards |
| Environmental preservation | Transportation options | |
| Rural character | Facilities and services | |
| | Community resiliency | |
| | Public safety | |

Proposed Policy Revisions





Approach

- Goal and policy changes which reflect the community voice.
- Consistency with the Growth Management Act (GMA) and state law changes since last Comprehensive Plan update
- Consistency with Regional Transportation Plan administered by Skagit Council of Governments (SCOG)
- Consistency with Countywide Planning Policies
- Streamlining of policy language
- Use of active verbs to enhance readability and engagement
- Focus on creating “action” policies to provide direction and implementation for the future

Transportation Element Preliminary Draft Policy Amendments



Transportation Policies

- GMA transportation requirements have changed from auto-oriented to **multimodal** with an emphasis on active/human-powered modes, such as walking, biking, and rolling (wheelchairs, mobility devices, etc.)
- ADA Transition Plans
- Multimodal Level of Service (MMLOS)
- Active transportation networks
- Complete Streets for State highways
- Safety for Vulnerable Road Users
- Equity in transportation investments
- Transportation/Land Use integration
- Reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)
- Reduce Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions

Key Recommendations

- SB 1181 Climate Element. Requires MMLOS standards in Transportation Element and policies to reduce VMT and GHG
- SB 5452 pedestrian and bikeway facilities on TIF project lists
- RCW 47.04.035 Complete Street Principals for State highways
- 2021 WSDOT Active Transportation Plan for State highways
- Most transportation grant funding now prioritizes active transportation and safety for vulnerable road users.



Growth Management Act (GMA)

Transportation Requirements

RCW 36.70A.070 Comprehensive Plans – Mandatory Elements - *2023 amendments from ESSHB 1181*

“The plan shall be an internally consistent document and all elements shall be consistent with the future land use map.”

(6) “A transportation element that implements, and is consistent with, the land use element.”

(A) “Inventory of *active transportation facilities, ...*”
(sidewalks, bikeways, trails)

(B) “*Multimodal* level of service [LOS] standards for all locally owned arterials, *local & regional* transit routes *in urban areas* ... *and active transportation facilities* to serve as a gauge to judge performance of the system.”

(C) For State-owned transportation facilities, *multimodal LOS standards for highways* ...

(b) “Local jurisdictions must adopt and enforce [concurrency] ordinances to prohibit development that causes the level of service to decline below adopted standards” *[However, agency can't deny development if it agrees to fund adequate active transportation, transit service, or TDM measures that mitigate the impacts to MMLoS]*

**IF land use goals = higher density infill,
THEN LOS & concurrency ordinance should
allow infill served by adequate transportation**



Measures of Vehicle Capacity vs. Person-Moving Capacity

HCM LOS measures count individual vehicles; not human occupants in the vehicles



Avg vehicle capacity = 4 people
Avg vehicle occupancy = +/- 1.25 persons/vehicle →



LOS "F" = 100% capacity for vehicles, but only 20% - 25% capacity for moving people





Proposed/Amended Policies - MMLoS

- LOS standards for pedestrian and bicycle facilities are based on the completeness of a defined and planned active transportation network.
GREEN LOS indicates a complete segment.
ORANGE LOS indicates an incomplete or substandard segment.
RED LOS indicates a gap or missing segment.
- LOS standards for transit in the public right-of-way are based on the ADA accessibility and upgrades for connectivity to the Skagit Transit network.
- Monitor the capacity and completeness of the multimodal transportation system to meet adopted LOS level of service standards **and** in an effort to manage traffic congestion and provide safe and complete active transportation connections.
- Publish an Annual Concurrency Report for County road segments, intersections, and active transportation network completeness to inform the six-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) process.



■ MMLOS Concepts

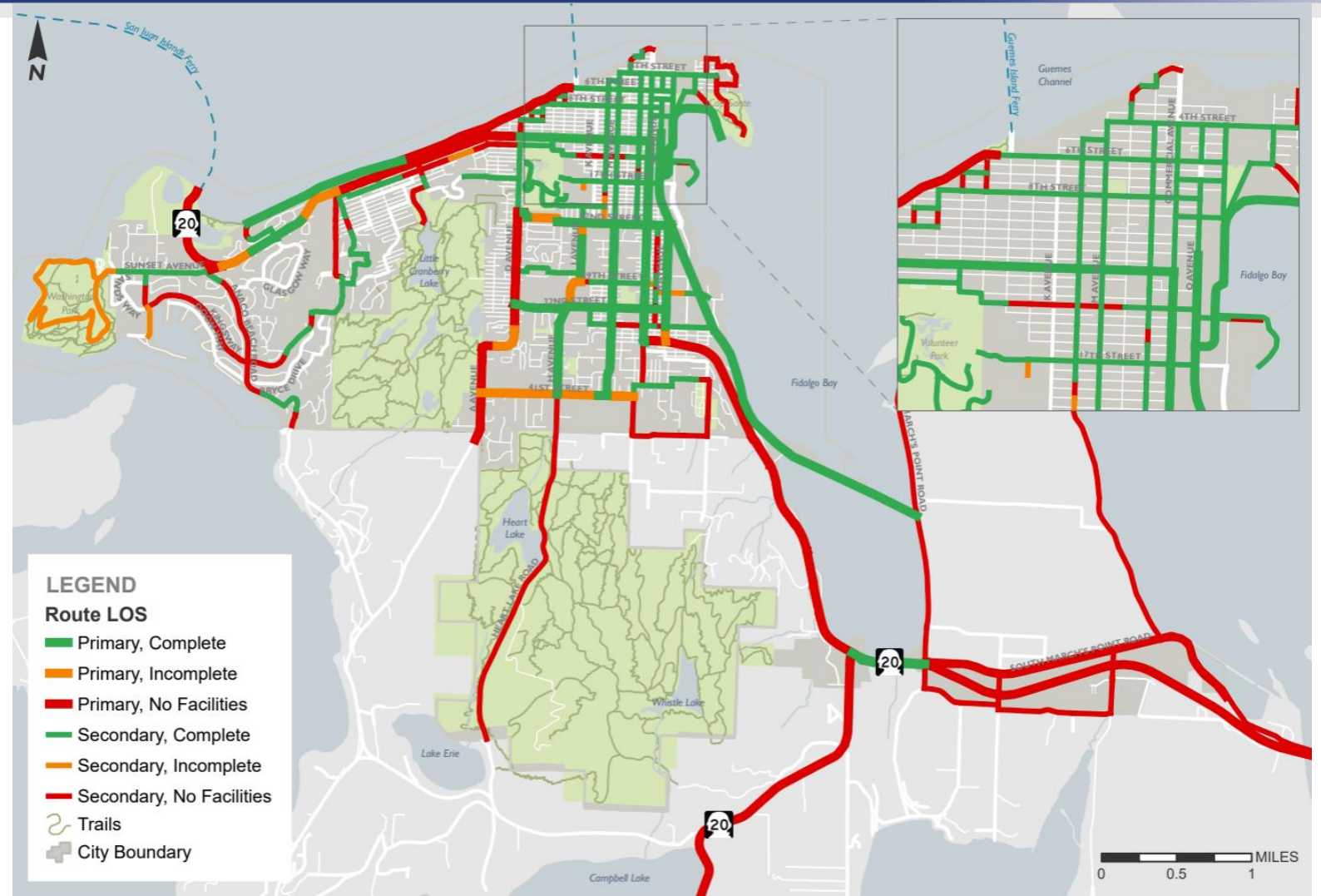
- [LOS standards for pedestrian and bicycle facilities are based on the completeness of a defined and planned active transportation network.](#)

GREEN LOS = complete segment.

ORANGE LOS = incomplete or substandard segment.

RED LOS = missing segment.

- [LOS standards for transit in the public right-of-way are based on the ADA accessibility and upgrades for connectivity to the Skagit Transit network.](#)



WSDOT STATE HIGHWAYS PLANS & RCW AMENDMENTS



[RCW 47.04.035 Complete Streets](#)

All WSDOT state highway projects costing \$500,000 + (*Ex: Signal*) near population centers must include facilities for users of all ages and abilities per Complete Street principals

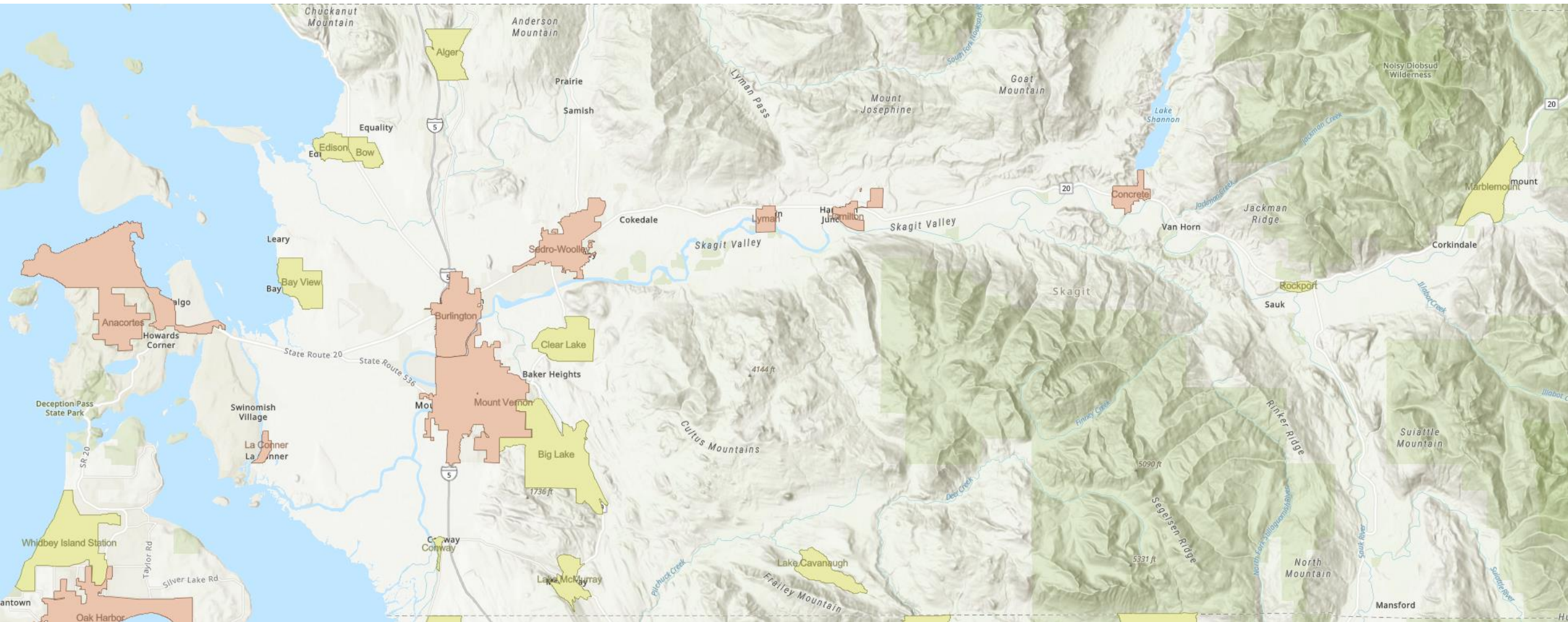
[WSDOT Active Transportation Plan 2020 & Beyond](#)

Requires WSDOT to work with cities and counties to ensure that state highways include active transportation facilities that are well-connected to local pedestrian, bicycle, and trail networks

Required in all "Census Designated Places" according to [WSDOT population centers map](#)

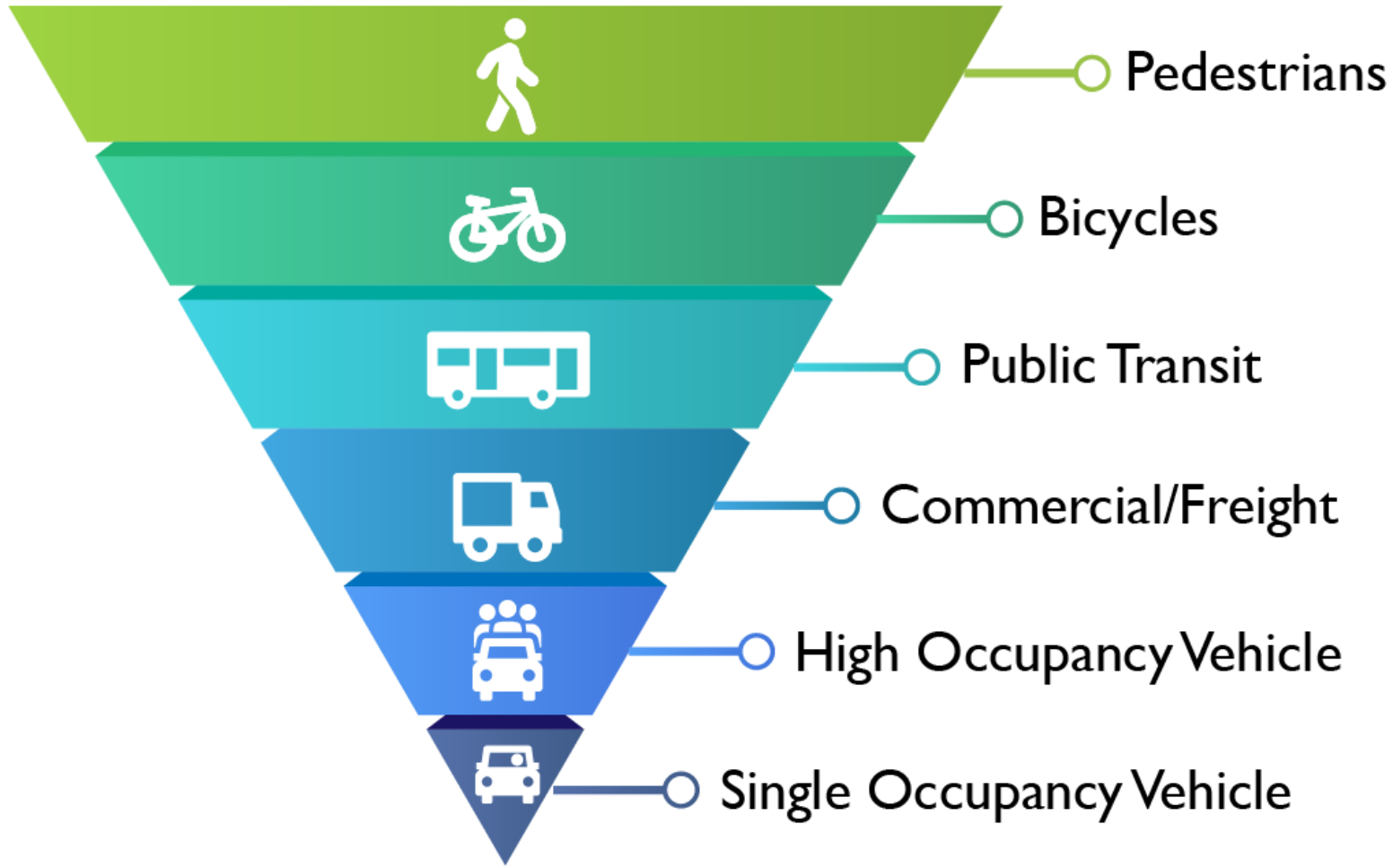


WSDOT Population Centers – Skagit County



Incorporated Cities/Towns = Red
Census Designated Places = Yellow
WSDOT Population Centers Map

Complete Streets: Who Are We Planning For?



BALANCE

ALL mobility needs for ALL modes must be carefully considered, balanced, and implemented for the MULTIMODAL transportation system to provide space and safety for EVERYONE.



Proposed/Amended Policies – Complete Streets and multimodal transportation investments

- Develop and adopt a Skagit County Complete Streets ordinance to ensure that context-sensitive multimodal transportation improvements can be made and, where possible, funded by grants.
- ~~SR-20~~ Encourage the state to provide facilities for ~~non-motorized~~ active transportation as part of improvements to ~~SR20~~ all state highways, consistent with RCW 47.04.035 Complete Street Principals.
- Vehicular LOS Standards shall not be the overriding factor when the County is considering road improvements. Other factors such as safety, active transportation needs, the Priority Array, and the Comprehensive Plan policies shall be given equal consideration with ~~the~~ vehicular LOS.
- The County's ~~Non-Motorized~~ Active Transportation Plan ~~should identify non-motorized~~ identifies County needs ~~in the County. Based on those needs, the plan should then identify and prioritize~~ priorities, and potential ~~non-motorized~~ projects.
- *See policy regarding Annual Concurrency Report to inform six-year TIP investments*



Proposed/Amended Policies – Land Use and development impact mitigation

- Right-of-Way Dedication – The County shall require dedication of right-of-way for [multimodal transportation improvements](#) needed ~~roads~~ in conjunction with the approval of development projects.
- ~~Transportation facility standards~~ – Incorporate [Complete Street](#) standards within the land development regulations to ensure that new development and redevelopment provide adequate ~~motorized and non-motorized~~ [multimodal](#) transportation facilities within and adjacent to the development.
- [Promote transportation improvement strategies that support future densification of urban growth areas while transitioning and connecting seamlessly to rural areas.](#)
- ~~Public Transportation Accessibility~~ – Require new development and redevelopment to provide [ADA upgrades and](#) adequate ~~motorized and non-motorized~~ [multimodal](#) transportation facilities within and adjacent to the development, and to provide access [and connectivity](#) to public transit, where available.
- When a development project has a particular impact on the safety, structure or capacity of the County's road system, suitable mitigation shall be required in the form of improvements or through the use of adopted impact fees, [which may include pedestrian and bikeway projects.](#)



Capital Facilities & Utilities Element Preliminary Draft Policy Amendments

Capital Facilities & Utilities Element

- Policies were revised to be compatible with Countywide Planning Policies.
- Removed time-bound policies that have been implemented or are no longer applicable.
- Language was modified to make policies in the active voice instead of passive voice, following best practices.

Key Recommendations

- Recommend reducing policies further to improve feasibility and implementation.





Example: Policy Changes to Align with CPPs

Ensure that adequate public facilities are provided to accommodate the needs of Skagit County citizens for the next 20 years by:

- maintaining level of service standards for capital facilities;
- providing consistency among functional plans;
- ensuring timely provision and financing of facility improvements; and
- taking advantage of revenue sources such as impact mitigation, grants, and loans.

Ensure that adequate public facilities are provided to accommodate the needs of Skagit County citizens for the next 20 years by:

- maintaining level of service standards for capital facilities;
- providing consistency among functional plans;
- **ensuring compatibility of development adjacent to public facilities;**
- ensuring timely provision and financing of facility improvements; and
- taking advantage of revenue sources such as impact mitigation, grants, and loans.

CPP 12.11: Future development of land adjacent to existing and proposed schools and other public facilities shall be compatible with such uses.



Further Policy Considerations

- Policies will continue to be reviewed to establish specific, measurable, actionable, policies and may be revised upon completion of the updated capital facilities plan.



Questions & Discussion

