

SKAGIT COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Planning Commission Regular Meeting

July 23, 2024

6:00 PM – 7:25 PM

Please refer to transcript and video recording of the Planning Commission meeting for in-depth information about these meeting minutes. Meeting materials, the full transcript, meeting agenda, and referenced video recording of this meeting can be viewed at the Planning Commission Schedule and Agenda page:

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

Summary of Meeting

Roll Call

Tim Raschko, (Chair): present

Tammy Candler, (Vice Chair): present

Amy Hughes: present

Vincent Henley: present

Kathy Mitchell: absent

Martha Rose: present

Jen Hutchison: present

Joe Woodmansee: present

Angela Day: present

The Planning Commission Chair Tim Raschko called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

Chair Raschko asked if there was approval for the July 9, 2024, minutes. Commissioner Jen Hutchison moved to approve; Commissioner Vincent Henley seconded the motion. All present agreed, motion carried.

Public Remarks

Chair Raschko opened the public remarks section of the meeting and asked if there was anyone from the public who would like to address the Commission. Mike Fohn, resident of Bow, shared his concerns about the comprehensive plan survey that the response did not reflect all the population in Skagit County.

2025 Comprehensive Plan Update – Project Overview

Lead project consultant Clay White, with Kimley-Horn, presented a general overview of the project. Mr. White emphasized the significant community engagement involved and that this involvement would continue throughout the project. The process will unfold in two steps: an initial review of current elements followed by preliminary draft releases with a 30-day comment period. These steps will culminate in an initial comprehensive plan to be reviewed this winter.

To ensure community participation, the team attended local events, conducted stakeholder interviews, and hosted three open houses, providing opportunities for the public to ask questions and offer input. Additionally, there will be another open house and a survey focusing on climate and environmental elements. There will be a summary soon of the public engagement summary.

The policy revision approach aims to create a roadmap to be adopted in 2025, guiding progress through to 2045. The goal is to transform policies into actionable plans rather than maintaining a list of policies. The approach will also ensure compliance with GMA updates while addressing what needs to be accomplished during this planning period.

2025 Comprehensive Plan Update – Preliminary Draft Policy Amendments for the Rural and Natural Resource Lands Elements

Sub-consultant Lisa Grueter from BERK Consulting presented the initial key recommendations for the Rural Element, developed from the initial analysis. These recommendations included offering more options for development and redevelopment within Limited Areas of More Intense Rural Development (LAMIRD) boundaries per new state legislation. Another key recommendation was to move detailed language from plan policies to development regulations. Removing them from draft policies does not mean they can be ignored; state laws must still be met. The lack of affordable housing emerged as the main issue and whether more options could provide housing while maintaining the rural character of the community.

Ms. Grueter presented the findings from the initial review of the Natural Resource Lands Element. The key recommendations include developing a countywide evaluation of potential de-designation requests for agriculture and forestry to understand their cumulative effects, as required by state law. For mineral lands, the evaluation should consider flexibility for lands under reclamation. Other key recommendations were to evaluate designation criteria to consider farmlands of statewide importance as well as prime and unique lands per recent state

rule amendments. HB1181 requires jurisdiction to address Wildlife Urban Interface (WUI) in rural densities or Urban Growth Area (UGA) changes.

There was a discussion about simplifying policy language by transferring regulatory details into the code while preserving the objectives and history of the policies. The intent is to establish goals with actionable and achievable policies that integrate with existing documents, such as the Countywide Planning Policies and the Skagit County Strategic Plan.

The project team is in the process of taking comments and will summarize what was heard from the public. Next month will be a work session on land use, housing, and economic development elements. Public meetings and hearings will be held in the winter.

Planning Commission Comments/Announcements

Commissioners had no comments.

Adjourned at 7:25 PM

[A full transcript of the discussion is available on our website:](https://www.skagitcounty.net/Departments/PlanningCommission/PCminutes.htm)

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

Tim Raschko, Planning Commission Chair

Date

Jack Moore, Secretary

Date