

MAIN OFFICE  
901 5th Ave, Ste 2200  
Seattle, WA 98164

T 206 292 5907  
F 206 292 4765  
E info@forterra.org



Submitted 8-6-2014- TDR Special Meeting

**FORTERRA**

CREATING GREAT COMMUNITIES  
AND CONSERVING GREAT LANDS

August 6, 2014

Dear Skagit County Board of Commissioners,

Thank you for offering Forterra the opportunity to comment on the Skagit County transfer of development rights advisory committee process. The county hired Forterra as a consultant to provide strategic guidance for designing a framework for a potential transfer of development rights (TDR) program. Prior to partnering with Skagit County on this project, Forterra had worked with Pierce, Snohomish, Kittitas, and Clark Counties to design or update TDR programs. Forterra has also helped create two pieces of state legislation expanding opportunities for TDR and has been involved in the creation of TDR programs in 10 cities.

In the spirit of our advisory role, Forterra offers these comments on the process through which the advisory committee reached its recommendations. In our experience, broad stakeholder input is essential to designing TDR programs. From our work with the Skagit TDR advisory committee we observed that the group was representative of a wide range of backgrounds that would use, or have an interest in, a TDR program. Meetings were open to the public who were welcome to give input. Overall the dialog was transparent, inclusive of diverse views, and rich with thoughtful contributions.

To help frame the committee's discussions, Skagit County staff conducted thorough analyses of policy options for how TDR could be used to support the county's specific growth management and conservation objectives. Forterra commends the county for its systematic and comprehensive examination of challenging design considerations and for helping the committee to understand the issues and choices related to each. The resulting recommendations included in the report emerged from a process of methodical evaluation and robust dialog. Forterra commends Skagit County for the approach it took in managing and informing the stakeholder committee and believes that the conclusions accurately represent the members' views.

Designing a TDR program is a complex and nuanced process. The challenges of creating a new market, establishing an administrative structure, and defining conservation priorities can be difficult to resolve. Skagit County staff and the advisory committee have asked the right questions and collaborated effectively to answer them. Whatever policy direction the county chooses to pursue Forterra is happy to provide further assistance as requested and thanks staff, advisory committee members and the Board of Commissioners for the opportunity to participate in this productive process.

Sincerely,

Nicholas Bratton  
Policy Project Manager

cc: Kirk Johnson