

## Skagit County Planning Commission’s Recorded Motion Regarding the Conservation and Development Incentives (CDI) Program Comprehensive Plan Policies

<b>Proposal publish date:</b>	September 24, 2015
<b>Proposal name:</b>	Conservation and Development Incentives (CDI) Program Comprehensive Plan Policies
<b>Documents available at:</b>	<a href="http://www.skagitcounty.net/cdip">www.skagitcounty.net/cdip</a>
<b>Public hearing body:</b>	Skagit County Planning Commission
<b>Public hearing date:</b>	Monday, November 2, 2015, at 6 p.m.
<b>Written comment deadline:</b>	Thursday, November 5, 2015, at 4:30 p.m.
<b>PC deliberations:</b>	Tuesday, December 8, 2015, cont’d from Nov 17 and Dec 1

After considering the written and spoken comments and considering the record before it, the Planning Commission enters the following findings of fact, reasons for action, and recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners.

### Findings of Fact and Reasons for Action

1. There is public support for conservation of forest and agricultural land.
2. Skagit County recognizes the value and conserved significant portions of the county through the Farmland Legacy Program (FLP). Concern remains as to whether a CDI program will compromise the effectiveness of the FLP or not.
3. There may be small Ag-NRL parcels that should be conserved but may not qualify for Farmland Legacy.
4. The identification of rural Development Priority Areas, where more development would be allowed than under current code, has inspired opposition to the CDI program as a whole.
5. Any program must be GMA compliant.
6. Under the County’s Comprehensive Plan and the Growth Management Act, cities and urban growth areas are the logical and desirable places for additional residential development to occur, and for incentives to encourage such development.
7. Establishing a program would allow cities to partner with the County now or in the future. City commitment hinges on the eventual CDI program elements, leaving the City non-committal but willing to consider.

8. An important element of a program is close coordination between the County, participating cities, landowners, and the public to identify areas most suited for future growth, and areas best suited for long-term conservation.
9. Permanent conservation can become problematic for future generations of land users and planners, but it can also have benefits. The decision to permanently conserve land should be made carefully.
10. TDR programs do not reduce the need for planning; they only work in conjunction with strong zoning ordinances and good comprehensive planning.
11. TDR programs increase the need for administration to oversee the program, track deed restrictions, prepare easement documents, etc.
12. Receiving areas can only be successful where there is demand to build additional units, height, or density beyond what the base zoning allows. Currently this demand and interest is low.

### **Recommendation**

The Planning Commission recommends that the Board of County Commissioners reject the proposed CDI Comprehensive Plan policies.

The Planning Commission recommends the following:

1. Consider or explore establishing a Forest Legacy Program similar to the Farmland Legacy Program.
2. Consider establishing a Rural Legacy Program that does not compete with the Farmland Legacy Program.

Should the Board of County Commissioners decide to adopt the CDI policies, consider the following changes recommended by the Planning Commission:

1. Remove the following from the list of Development Priority Areas: Rural Intermediate infill, Rural Village Residential infill, Rural Reserve CaRDs, rural residential comprehensive plan amendments.
2. Remove the following from the list of Conservation Priority Areas: Ag-NRL.
3. Consider a geographic limitation for the remaining Conservation Priority Areas, such as those that are in close proximity to urban growth areas and growth corridors (I-5 and SR-20).
4. Consider applying additional criteria in establishing Conservation Priority Areas to ensure that the lands conserved under the program are high-valued conservation priorities to the County and the public.

5. Goal 2H should be modified to emphasize conservation before development and read as follows: "Implement a program that supports the voluntary conservation of farm, forest, and open space lands while providing incentives to guide development to areas best suited for additional growth."
6. The County should identify the administrative costs of the program before implementation.
7. The policies should not restrict the working of conserved lands.
8. A CDI program should start small, with limited areas where increased development is allowed, until any unintended effects of the program are known.
9. Other Conservation and Development Priority Areas could be added later (through legislative action) after the program is established and need or interest is identified.
10. A CDI program should include a monitoring program to keep close track of the program and should include some determination of what "success" of the program means and how to track that success.
11. In unincorporated Skagit County other than municipal UGAs, limit buying and selling development rights to a 1:1 ratio, consistent with the Department of Commerce recommendation. Inside cities and their UGAs, development priority areas could support more than a 1:1 ratio.
12. In the future, consider adding the following to the list of Development Priority Areas: areas within rural villages where a subarea plan for the rural village has identified appropriate locations for infill, and necessary infrastructure is planned.

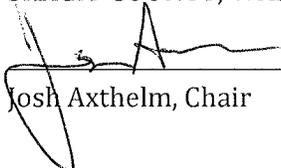
### **Additional Recommendations**

1. The County should re-evaluate its use of CaRDs.

**This recorded motion approved** December 8, 2015:

<b>Commission Vote</b>	<b>Support</b>	<b>Oppose</b>	<b>Absent</b>	<b>Abstain</b>
Josh Axthelm, Chair	✓			
Keith Greenwood, Vice Chair	✓			
Amy Hughes	✓			
Annie Lohman	✓			
Kathy Mitchell	✓			
Kevin Meenaghan		✓		
Tammy Candler	✓			
Hollie Del Vecchio		✓		
Total	6	2	0	0

SKAGIT COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION  
SKAGIT COUNTY, WASHINGTON

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Josh Axthelm, Chair

12/8/15  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Dale Pernula, Secretary

12/8/15  
Date