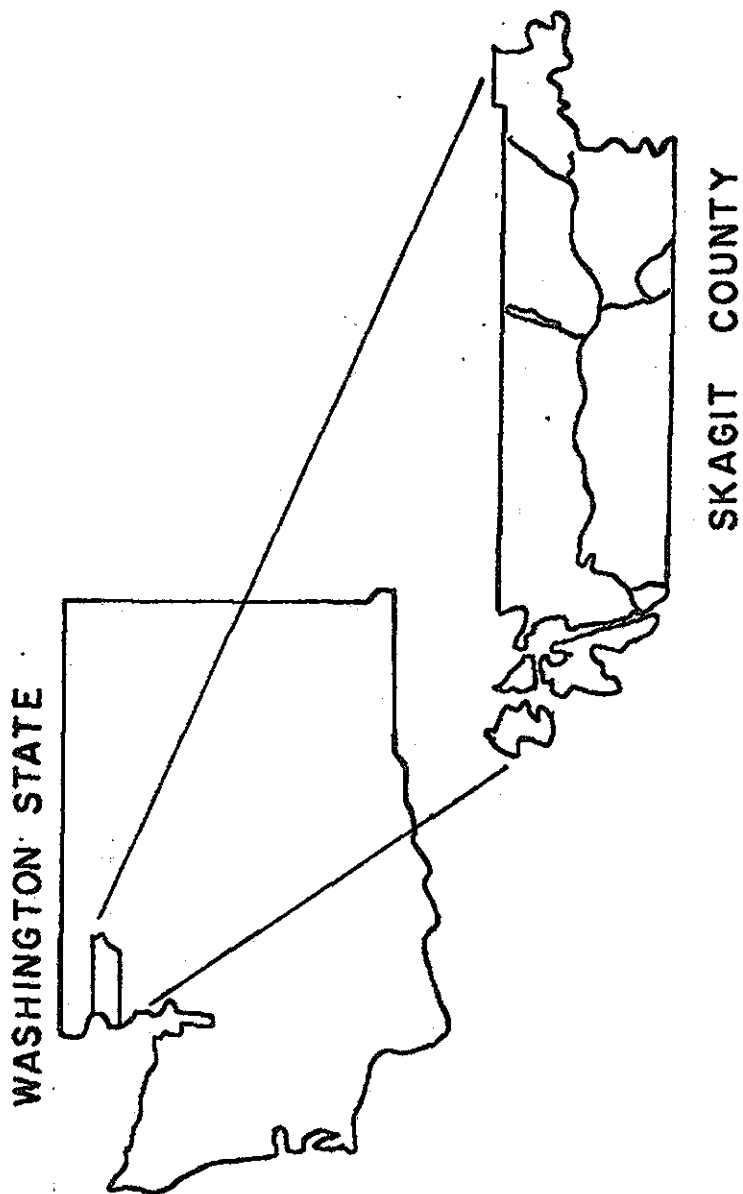


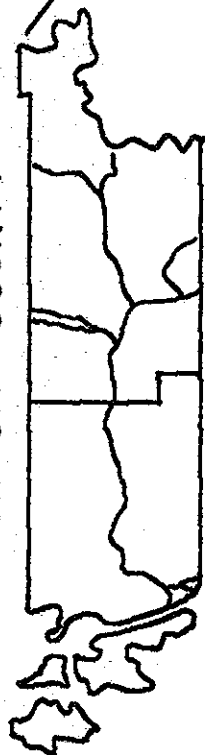
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
FOR THE
EASTERN PLANNING DISTRICT
SKAGIT COUNTY, WASHINGTON

PREPARED BY THE SKAGIT COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT
MAY 1982

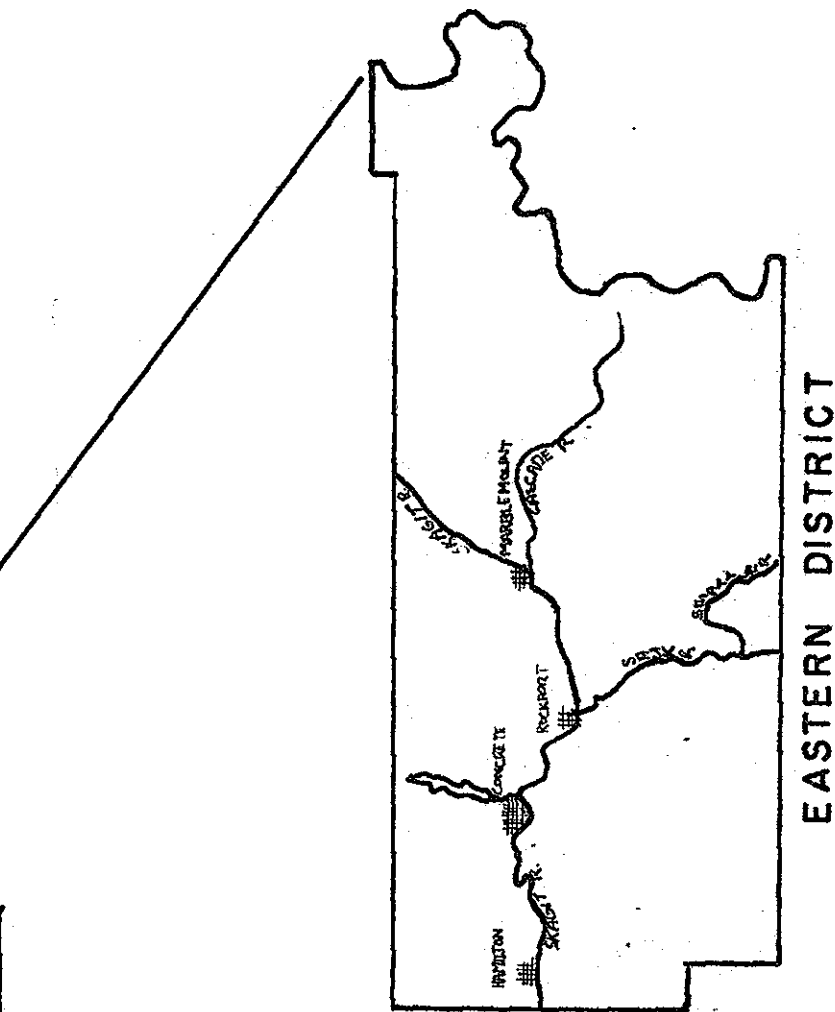
SKAGIT COUNTY LOCATION MAP



SKAGIT COUNTY



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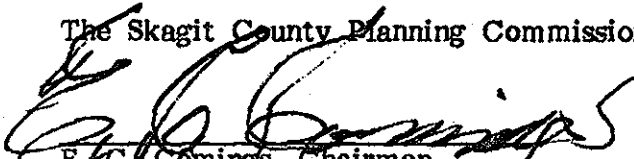
EASTERN PLANNING DISTRICT - SKAGIT COUNTY, WASHINGTON
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Prepared by the Skagit County Planning Department


Robert Schofield, Director

This is to certify that the official Comprehensive Plan for the Eastern Planning District of Skagit County is hereby adopted by:

The Skagit County Planning Commission on MAY 3RD, 1982.


E. C. Comings, Chairman


Dan Pett, Vice Chairman

The Board of County Commissioners on May 18, 1982


Bud Norris, Chairman


Howard Miller, Commissioner


Jerry Mansfield, Commissioner

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SECTION ONE

INTRODUCTION

A. Description of the Eastern Planning District

The Eastern Planning District is the largest of the county's six planning districts, encompassing approximately 768,000 acres or 1,200 square miles in the eastern half of Skagit County.

The Planning District begins at the center of Range 6, East Townships 34, 35, 36 North and the boundary of Ranges 6 and 7 East, Township 33 North and extending eastward to the county limits. The district is bordered by Whatcom County on the north, Snohomish County on the south, and by Okanogan and Chelan Counties at the east at the crest of the Cascade Mountain Range. The Planning District is dominated by the rugged, sharp crested ridges and peaks of the Cascade Mountain Range. The Skagit River and main tributaries, the Sauk, Suiattle, Cascade and Baker Rivers, wind through the area forming narrow valleys where the majority of the District's population has settled. Approximately 68% of the District is under federal management within the Mount Baker National Forest, Glacier Peak Wilderness Area, and the North Cascades National Park. The District's major transportation routes are SR20, an east/west corridor along the Skagit River Valley, and Burlington Northern Railroad which terminates at Concrete.

SR20 offers the District regional significance in that it provides the most direct link between the metropolitan areas to the south and the North Cascades National Park and beyond. Within the District are two incorporated towns, Hamilton and Concrete, as well as numerous, distinct unincorporated towns and settlements.

B. History of Planning in the Eastern Planning District

The initial comprehensive planning studies for the District were done on a countywide basis by the consulting firm of M.G. Poole Associates and was completed in 1965. This plan was updated and revised in 1968. On December 18, 1973, the Board of County Commissioners approved the North Central District Comprehensive Plan, and in doing so, divided the county into six distinctive geographic planning areas or districts, of which the Eastern District is the sixth and final district to be amended. The 1968 "countywide" Comprehensive Plan, while it maps out proposed land uses for what is now known as the Eastern Planning District, makes little reference to the district within the text portion of the plan and, therefore, is considered marginal at best.

C. Purpose and Scope of Comprehensive Planning

The Comprehensive Plan for the Eastern Planning District is an official public document adopted by the Board of County Commissioners containing a compendium of goals, objectives, recommendations, graphs and maps, and is designed as a policy guide concerning desirable future physical development for this particular planning area.

The plan is intended to be comprehensive, general and long range. The plan is "comprehensive" in that it includes all geographical parts of the planning area and all functional elements which are relative to physical development. The plan is "general" in that it is designed as a public policy statement and is not intended to be a specific and detailed regulatory plan. The plan is "long range" in that it deals with long term situations and possibilities ten to twenty years into the future.

SECTION TWO

EASTERN DISTRICT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN DEVELOPMENT

A. Eastern Planning District Advisory Committee

The Skagit County Planning Department adopted a basic "grassroots" approach to developing the Eastern Planning District Comprehensive Plan of relying extensively upon citizen input and participation in the process. This approach was initiated in late spring of 1981 with the formation of an Eastern Planning District Advisory Committee. The committee consisted of seventeen individuals (see Contributors, page iv) representing a cross-section of area property owners, business people and agency people. The Planning Department staff and committee held a series of fifteen open meetings or workshops over a nine month period beginning in August, 1981. The meetings were usually held every other week in the Concrete High School Library and were often frequented by many non-committee citizens of the district, of which many actively participated in the process. The functions of the committee were to seek citizen input from their various areas and to play a major role in the development of the comprehensive land use plan map and subsequent implementing zoning map for the district. As a basis for the decision making that ensued, the committee developed the following three main goals and underscored these goals with nineteen complementing objectives:

Goals:

1. Preserve the resource productive areas of the planning area.
2. Maintain control over the costs associated with community growth and improvement.
3. Provide a variety of living environments for area residents.

Objectives:

1. Provide and maintain lifestyles which best preserve the natural beauty of

the area, minimize public investments and allow private investment the greatest possible latitude within the interests of community health, safety and welfare.

2. Preserve the agricultural and forestry base of the area so as to retain both the primary economic bases and the rural atmosphere of this area.
3. Protect forestry lands and encourage reforestation and sustained yield practices and policies.
4. Encourage the retention of agricultural lands for economic, safety and aesthetic reasons.
5. Discourage further construction in the floodway lands for economic, safety and aesthetic reasons.
6. Encourage the location of future development in suitable, well-planned upland areas, especially to areas near or adjacent to towns and incorporated cities.
7. The location and quantity of land designed for urban related uses, i.e. residential, commercial, industrial, should be based upon estimates of present and future needs, environmental impact, various private and public economic criteria and the resulting social ramifications.
8. Provide the public services required to fulfill state and federal regulations in a manner compatible with the general attitudes of the people of the planning area.
9. Municipal, public, quasi-public and private standards, plans, regulations and efforts should be coordinated with those of the area, the county and the region, realizing that successful interaction of development cannot be accomplished without coordination of efforts
10. Future annexations by municipalities should consider such elements as flood problems, drainage, topography, soils, septic suitability, population, energy, public safety, the ability of the city to provide proper sewer and other utilities and services, regional land use policies and future land use ramifications of the annexations.
11. Promote development policies and construction procedures which control soil erosion, streambank erosion and sedimentation; control increases in runoff volume and peak flows; and, control runoff pollution and flood damage.
12. Establish with municipalities a mutually agreed upon Urban Service Area and Comprehensive Plan, land use designations within, as well as a mutually

agreed upon Joint Sphere of Influence Area to facilitate a cooperative effort to manage growth in the best interest of all the citizens in Skagit County.

13. The tourism industry should be encouraged as a viable industry in this area.
14. The Wild and Scenic River Designation should be recognized as a resource to be conserved, enhanced and utilized.
15. The need for recreational property and recreational development should be recognized.
16. Recognizing the critical economic role energy resources will play in the future, energy conservation and the promotion of efficient energy utilization should be a feature of the plan.
17. It should be recognized that certain parts of the unincorporated areas perceive themselves as communities and the plan should allow them to develop as cohesive or integral entities rather than undifferentiated residential/agricultural/forestry areas as the plan might propose.
18. The plan should be flexible enough in application so that changes in our society or economic situation may influence future interpretations of the plan.
19. Unique and sensitive areas such as wetlands, archaeological/cultural/archaeological/cultural/historical sites, etc. should be recognized as a resource and be protected.

In addition to these goals and objectives, the committee and the Planning Department also employed the following decision making criteria:

1. Capabilities of the Land

Slope of the land, soil stability, soil septic suitability, flood proneness and water table characteristics are all factors that were considered in determining the type and intensity of human development appropriate for a given area.

2. Resource Preservation

The preservation of productive agricultural and forestry lands is one of the key goals identified by the Advisory Committee. Therefore, the presence or absence of highly productive agricultural and/or forestry soils were a factor considered in recommendations made for this element.

3. **Public Service Costs**

Another goal identified by the Advisory Committee was to maintain control over the costs associated with community growth and improvement. In other words, keep taxes down by extending public services in an economical fashion. With reference to existing city water, sewer and street plans, the land use recommendations propose the location and intensity of development in keeping with the cost feasibility of service delivery.

4. **Existing Land Use**

The existing pattern of development was recognized in land use recommendations.

5. **Citizen Preference**

To the degree that county residents and committee members have attended the advisory committee planning meetings and public meetings and voiced preferences regarding the type and density of development, and to the degree that there has been some concensus within the geographic area about such preferences, these preferences were taken into full account along with other criteria mentioned.

6. **Existing Regulations**

Conformance to existing controls and regulations such as the flood damage prevention ordinance, Shoreline Management Master Program were recognized in land use recommendations.

B. Informal Community Public Meetings

The Planning Department and Eastern District Advisory Committee held a series of three informal public meetings for the purpose of reviewing and receiving comment on the proposed draft Comprehensive Plan Map and draft Zoning Map for the planning area. Meetings were held at the Birdsvew Grange on February 9, 1982 and at the Marblemount Community Club on February 23, 1982. A public meeting was also held in Darrington on December 7, 1981, with discussion centering around the Bennettville/Sauk-Prairie area, prior to the preparation of draft proposals for the area. However, comment received at the Darrington meeting revealed an overwhelming consensus of opinion with regard to preferred land uses and densities which ultimately played a significant role in determining land use recommendations for their particular area.

Following the February public meetings, the Advisory Committee reconvened two more times to review the comments and recommendations received at the public meetings, made some final changes to the map and adjustments to the Comprehensive Plan text, and forwarded the proposals to the Skagit County Planning Commission for review and public hearings.

C. Skagit County Planning Commission Public Meetings and Hearings

The Skagit County Planning Commission first reviewed the proposals on March 15, 1982, at an informal public meeting or workshop. The staff described the proposals, reviewed the process of how the proposals were developed and conducted a question and answer period. The meeting was attended by all nine members of the Planning Commission.

On April 29, 1982, the staff and members of the Planning Commission conducted a day-long tour of the District to familiarize the Commission with the area they would soon be deliberating on.

At 8:00 p.m. on Monday, May 3, 1982, the Planning Commission held a formal public hearing to review the staff reports, findings, and recommendations, review correspondence and receive input from the public. After making a few minor changes to the map, the Planning Commission moved to recommend to the Board of County Commissioners, approval of the Eastern District Comprehensive Plan. The vote for approval was unanimous, 7-0.

D. Board of County Commissioner Review and Approval

On Tuesday, May 18, 1982, the Board of Skagit County Commissioners held a public meeting to review and deliberate on the recommendations received from the Planning Commission. After receiving a brief report from the staff and testimony from a few interested parties, the Board unanimously accepted the recommendation of the Planning Commission and formally adopted the Eastern District Comprehensive Plan.

SECTION THREE

THE EASTERN DISTRICT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

A. Purpose and Philosophy of Plan

The Eastern Planning District Comprehensive Plan consists of a set of goals, objectives, recommendations, statements, graphs, tables and maps and is designed to be the official policy guide and official statement of the Board of County Commissioners concerning the desirable future physical development for this area.

The philosophy of the plan can be best summed up by the three primary goals which act as the foundation of the plan:

1. Preserve the resource productive areas of the planning district;
2. Maintain control over the costs associated with community growth and improvement;
3. Provide a variety of living environments for area residents.

The Comprehensive Plan is not a static document; therefore, completion of this plan does not represent the completion of the planning process for the Eastern Planning District. The land use planning process for this area should be an on-going process. This plan should be revised and amended as the need arises to accommodate unforeseen changes in community needs, desires, conditions and/or technological advances. It is recommended that this plan be reviewed and updated on a regular basis in an open public process involving the citizens of the area, planning agency, and elected public officials.

B. Population

Analysis of the current population and its projection for an area is basic to the planning process. This analysis can be used to determine the need for various land uses and community facilities within a planning district. Analysis of the population of Skagit County and for each of its separate Planning Districts is limited by the frequency and manner in which the population is enumerated.

The United States Census is conducted every ten years. Between each census, major demographic changes on a county-wide or smaller scale may occur. The Washington State Office of Fiscal Management makes interim yearly estimates of the population for the county as a whole and incorporated places. These census enumerations and interim estimates are usually made for geographical areas whose boundaries do not correspond to the Planning District boundaries. The Eastern Planning District is no exception, therefore, it is necessary to interpolate some of the population information that is provided in this study.

1. Present Population and Projected Growth

The population of the Eastern Planning District, including the two incorporated areas of Hamilton and Concrete, is estimated to be 3,961 (see Table 1) and is expected to have a relatively vigorous growth rate through the year 2000 (see Table 2). This growth rate is based on a county-wide rate of 2.3% a year as is projected for the county by the State Office of Fiscal Management. This projected growth rate for the Planning District is recognized as a "high" forecast for the area, the actual growth rate for the area will probably be somewhat lower. However, activities and developments outside of the district such as High Ross Dam, Northern State Facility Development, continued expansion of workforce at the Skagit Bendix Plant, as well as construction and operation of the Lone Star Cement Plant at Concrete could produce ultimate population levels near or even above the forecast contained in this text.

2. Population Composition and Distribution

Another important element of population analysis aside from the numerical increases is the composition of this population and the impacts it will have on the physical development of the District. A significant portion of the anticipated increases in the Eastern District's population will result from in-migration as opposed to natural increases (excess of births over deaths). It is anticipated that these new people will be primarily of retirement age couples and school age families desiring an affordable rural or small town lifestyle. These new residents will be attracted to the area because of its relative close proximity to the Sedro

TABLE 1
1980 POPULATION OF THE EASTERN PLANNING DISTRICT

Concrete	592	15%
Hamilton	268	7%
Upper Skagit Census Division	2,639	
Remainder of District*	<u>462</u>	<u>78%</u>
Total	3,961	100%
Skagit County (April 1, 1981)	64,900	
*Portion of Lyman-Hamilton Census Division		

TABLE 2
POPULATION FORECASTS

	<u>High Range Forecast*</u>			
	<u>1985</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>1995</u>	<u>2000</u>
Eastern District	4,416	4,872	5,327	5,783
Skagit County	71,300	79,300	86,500	93,400

*Based on countywide projected growth rate of 2.3% per year

Woolley/Burlington/Mount Vernon urban area, abundance of available land as well as the scenic and recreational qualities of the area. It is anticipated that the majority of these new people will settle in the western portion of the District from Hamilton to Concrete. These groups will create a higher demand for services and development than the other segments of population growth resulting from natural increase.

The distribution of population growth is directly linked to the allocation of future land uses and community facilities. The comprehensive plan map locates the greatest amounts of Residential (3-5 units/per acre) development in and around the incorporated towns of Hamilton and Concrete. Although these residential areas could potentially accommodate all of the Districts projected population growth, and, therefore, it is highly unlikely that all future residential development will occur in these specific areas. It is more likely that a majority of the new residents will locate in rural portions of the District in the areas designated as Rural Residential (1 unit/per acre) and Rural Open Space (1-2 units per 5 acres).

C. PLAN ELEMENTS

The Plan Elements represent the backbone of a comprehensive plan. Presently, State law specifies only two required elements that must be included in a comprehensive plan: a land use element, which designates the proposed general distribution, location and extent of uses of land for agriculture, housing, industry, commerce, etc., and a circulation or transportation element consisting of the general location, alignment and extent of major thoroughfares, major transportation routes, etc.

Beyond this, optional elements can be included in the plan at the discretion of the local jurisdiction. Optional elements for the comprehensive plan may include some of the following elements: conservation; recreation; housing; transit; public services and facilities; public buildings; renewal; and capital improvement program.

Each plan element deals with a specific functional aspect of area land use or natural resource development and includes goals and policy statements and discussions of significant issues, implications and recommendations related to that element.

1. Land Use

a. Residential Land Use

Goal: Affordable, quality residential development that is appropriate to the rural character of the Eastern Planning District should be encouraged and maintained.

Policies:

1. New residential development should be compatible with the natural constraints of slope, soils, geology, vegetation, and drainage.
2. Residential development should not conflict with agricultural or forestry production or operations.
3. Whenever possible, Planned Unit Developments should be encouraged to accommodate residential expansion.
4. The areas designated for high density residential development (3-5 units per acre) should only be fully developed when all urban services are available.
5. The improvement and rehabilitation of existing housing and established located out of the floodplain should be encouraged and supported.
6. Low residential densities should be assigned to areas where sewer and water systems are not planned. Lot sizes should be large enough to safely accommodate onsite sewage disposal systems and water supply (wells) and should be related to availability of services, need and natural constraints.
7. A broad range of housing types and densities should be encouraged to provide a flexible choice of housing to all Eastern District residents.
8. Residential development should be related to existing and planned service centers, public facilities, and transportation systems.
9. Residential development should take into consideration

the natural resources of the area, avoiding wasteful use of prime agricultural land conserving our finite and valuable land/water resources for the future.

10. Mobile home parks should be located adjacent to the town of Concrete where urban services and utilities are available and should be well planned and designed to blend harmoniously with adjacent residential areas.

Issues/Recommendations:

The location, type and quality of residential development in the Eastern Planning District to the year 2000 will have a significant effect on its future character.

Planning District residents have expressed a desire to locate higher density development (3-5 units/acre) in areas adjacent to the two incorporated towns of Hamilton and Concrete. The proposed land use designations adjacent to the town of Concrete, within the Joint Sphere of Influence area, coincides very closely with the town's comprehensive plan for the area. Thus, orderly and coordinated growth should evolve for this area around the "urban center" of the Planning District.

The residents of the District have also expressed a strong desire for low (1-2 units/5 acre) and moderate (1 unit/acre) densities in other buildable areas out of the floodplains, relatively near to services and transportation facilities, and generally out of resource productive areas (timber and agriculture).

By following this approach, the present rural character of the Planning Districts outlying areas should be protected from incompatible types of residential development. It should be noted that because of the strong citizen preference for one unit/acre densities in and around the Birdview area, residential and parcelization patterns may evolve differently or more rapidly here than other rural areas of the District, however, still not to a high density, urban-type degree.

The Eastern District Comprehensive Plan distinguishes four levels of residential densities (not including forestry and agriculture). A conversion

table (Table 3) to translate the comprehensive plan residential designations to implementing zoning districts is offered on Page 16. Each residential designation has a specific purpose, intent and location rationale and, therefore, deserves individual attention.

Multi-Family Residential - Multi-Family Residential designation is intended to provide for the increasing need for multi-family uses. Areas designated as such should be located near, or adjacent to, population centers and should be served by a system of adequate public and private roads, community water and public sewers. Citizen preference to this designation was given to only one small area located in the unincorporated community of Rockport. The site proposed is typified by fairly dense single family dwellings on pre-existing, substandard lots. This designation should be viewed as a long-range possibility as many of the above-mentioned development criteria are not presently available or planned for in the near future.

Residential - The Residential designation is intended to provide certain areas for high density residential development with a minimal negative impact on natural resources, rural atmosphere and service costs to the county. As was mentioned earlier, most of the Residential areas planned for the District are adjacent to the towns of Hamilton and Concrete. Additional areas of Residential are planned at a somewhat smaller scale for certain areas of Rockport as well as to some existing outlying platted areas.

Rural Residential - The Rural Residential designation is intended to provide certain areas for moderate residential development with a minimal negative impact on natural resources, rural atmosphere, service costs to the County and where the lack of urban level public services will not cause public health hazards.

Area residents have expressed a strong desire to remain rural and relatively undeveloped, and would like to maintain independent and self-sufficient lifestyles. Also a strong desire was expressed that minimal land use restrictions be imposed on traditional and appropriate rural land use

TABLE 3

EASTERN PLANNING DISTRICT

RESIDENTIAL DENSITIES

Comp Plan Designation	Density (Dwelling Unit/Acre) Du/Acre	Zoning Equivalent	Minimum Lot Size
Agriculture	1-2 Du/40 Acres	Agricultural (A) Agricultural Reserve (AR)	40 acres 20 acres
Forestry	1 Du/20 Acres	Forestry (F)	20 acres
Rural Open Space	1-2 Du/5 Acres	Rural (RU) Rural Intermediate (RI)	5 acres 2.5 acres
Rural Residential	1 Du/Acre	Residential Reserve (RR)	1.0 acre
Residential	3-5 Du/Acre	Residential (R)	12,500 sq. ft.* 8,400 sq. ft.** 13,000 sq. ft.***
Multi-family	10 Du/Acre	Multi-family Residential (MFR)	13,000 sq. ft. for first two units, plus 3,000 sq. ft. per additional unit

*Septic tank, public or community water

**Public water and sewer

***Duplex, subject to health unit approval

activities, particularly those which allow area residents to earn a satisfactory or supplemental living on their own land. Consequently, the Rural Residential designation and the comparable Residential Reserve zoning district were desired by many area residents and was seen as the best way to preserve their desired flexible, independent, self-sufficient lifestyles.

The Rural Residential designation is found primarily in the western third of the district between the floodplain of the Skagit River and the forestry fringe areas.

Rural Open Space - The purpose of the Rural Open Space designations is to provide areas for low density development and to preserve the open space character of the land in those areas that are not considered as major resource areas, but are so situated that they provide limited agricultural/timber resource value. This designation is also employed to act as a buffer or interface area between commercial forest lands and areas designated for more intensive residential uses. The Rural Open Space areas are located adjoining commercial forest lands, floodplain areas and on outlying private lands that are generally away from adequate service levels.

For a more detailed description of location of Residential and other land use designations, see the accompanying comprehensive land use map.

b. Agricultural Land Use

Goal: Prime agricultural lands and agricultural lands of local importance should be protected and preserved as a renewable food production resource to benefit present and future generations and help to fulfill local and national food and fiber needs.

Policies:

1. Urban or non-compatible uses should be prohibited from expanding into agricultural lands for economic, safety

- and aesthetic reasons.
2. The use of Open Space Taxation Laws should be encouraged as a useful method of land use control and resource preservation.
 3. Agricultural practices which contribute to more efficient agricultural production should be encouraged.
 4. Provisions should be developed for individual site analysis to enable exceptions to the minimum lot size requirements such as:
 - i. retirement of a farmer in his existing home and sale of the remainder of the farm;
 - ii. addition of small acreage to an existing farm;
 - iii. provision of housing for members of immediate family or agricultural employees.
 5. Wherever possible, buffers between agricultural and potentially conflicting uses should be established.
 6. Public awareness of agricultural land resource contribution to the County should be promoted.
 7. Agricultural lands should not be reclassified to other uses unless the proposed use is determined to be an agricultural related use. Reclassification to an agricultural-related use should also be dependent on the necessity, location, impact on adjacent land and health/safety factors.

Issues/Recommendations

Agriculture has historically and continues to be one of the County's principal industries. The income of thousands of Skagit County families is received from employment in agriculture and processing and secondary employment opportunities. Agriculture is an economic mainstay and is a growing business in this county. It is estimated that one in every three dollars in the county economy is an "agricultural dollar."* The necessity and importance of preserving prime agricultural lands for economic reasons and non-economic

value in the form of maintenance of open space, work opportunities for youth and social traditions cannot be overestimated. It has been the policy of Skagit County to encourage the preservation of prime agricultural lands having Class I, II, and III soils.

In reviewing the recently revised Soil Conservation Service Soil Maps for Skagit County, approximately 11,650 acres of Class II and III soils are identified in the Eastern District. These soils are located primarily in the floodplain of one of the area's rivers.

In discussing the role of agriculture in the upper valley region with area residents and committee members, the following constraints and/or concerns surfaced:

1. Distance from markets and processors;
2. Shorter growing season compared to lower valley;
3. Large lot sizes of Agricultural designations are too restrictive for area;
4. Lack of protection of agricultural lands from floodwaters;
5. Prime lands located out of floodplains are also prime building and residential areas.

Conversely, the following concepts were also apparent:

1. Our prime agricultural lands are finite and irreplaceable natural resources and are essential for future generations;
2. The concept of "prime land" is relative and as demand for food increases and the supply of land fit for cultivation diminishes, that land which is not in production today or is

*Skagit Regional Planning Council, Overall Economic Development Program, 1978.
considered uneconomical to farm today, may be farmed in the future.

This plan recommends that approximately 3,400 acres be designated as Agricultural. These are prime agricultural lands that are presently used for agricultural purposes and are located primarily in the

floodplains.* The areas recommended for Agricultural designation are primarily located in the following general areas: Cockerham Island; Shangri-la area east of Hamilton; the Boetcher farm south of Hamilton on South Skagit Highway; east of Concrete in the Thunderbird and Cedargrove areas; Cascadian Farms' property east of Rockport; Martin Road area; Illabot Creek area near Barnaby Slough; the Glacier View Ranch area near Corkindale and an area east of Marblemount near the confluence of the Cascade and Skagit Rivers.

It is also the recommendation of this plan that:

1. Potentially farmable lands of Class II and III soils be used in such a manner not to prevent their potential future use for food production;
2. The County should investigate the potential and feasibility of implementing the concept of Purchase of Development Rights (PDR).
3. The County should investigate the potential and feasibility of implementing the concept of Transfer of Development Rights (TDR).
4. The County should investigate the potential and feasibility of implementing the concept of dwelling units per acre as opposed to the present minimum lot size requirement to regulate density for individual land use zones or districts.

*This plan also recommends many acres of "prime lands" to be designated as Forestry. These are primarily lands being used for commercial timber practices.

c. Forestry Land Use

Goal: The timber resource of the Eastern District should be protected, enhanced and appropriately utilized.

Policies:

1. Sustained yield practices and policies of forestry management should be utilized and encouraged.
2. The multiple use concept (i.e., timber harvest, recreation, watershed management, habitat, fish and wildlife management, etc.) of forest management should be encouraged and utilized in appropriate areas.
3. Commercial timber lands should be protected from non-compatible land uses for economic, safety and aesthetic reasons.
4. Recreational uses and areas should be encouraged in appropriate forest areas provided they do not conflict with or become burdensome to commercial timber operations.
5. The area watersheds should be managed to the highest levels possible to maintain the integrity of our water resources.

Issues/Recommendations

Forest lands dominate the Eastern Planning District. Of the District's 768,000 acres, approximately 98% are covered with forests. For this area of the county, the timber industry has been and still is the economic mainstay, the basic resource that supports the community's population. Forests not only provide the raw materials for the wood product's industries, they also directly or indirectly affect man and the environment in many ways. Commercial and sports fisheries can be affected by the condition of watersheds which are primarily the forest lands of the District. Many species of animal are sensitive to changes made in forests and some could not survive without the forest as a source of food and cover. Also, as population increases, forests are of increasing importance because of their natural beauty and as passive recreation areas where people can escape from the urban environments.

With this in mind it is an essential part of this plan to emphasize the management practices which will protect the long-term productivity and enhance the integrity of other vital components of

the forest. Consequently, it is important that we identify and become more aware of some of the problems facing the forest products industry today. (This plan does not attempt to deal with the economic problems facing the timber industry.)

The most critical problem facing the industry today is the continuing conversion of forest lands to other uses. The primary causes of forest land conversion are the building of roads, urban expansion, conversion to agricultural use, powerline and other transmission corridors and the creation of reservoirs and other impoundments. Also, urban encroachment and increased settlement and development near and adjacent to commercial forest lands create day-to-day problems such as increased private automobile interaction with logging vehicles, objections from the homeowners concerning logging operations (i.e. dust, noise, slash burns, spraying, etc.).

In light of these problems identified in this section, the following recommendations are included in this plan:

1. Existing roads, utility easements, etc., should be used wherever possible to prevent further conversion of forest lands.
2. State and federal agencies should be encouraged to promote faster site reforestation programs.
3. A low density, large lot interface or buffer should be established between commercial forest lands and more intensive urban-type development.

d. **Commercial Land Use**

Goal: Commercial development should be carefully planned, designed and

located to ensure optimal service to the district's residents and tourists in an attractive and safe manner.

Policies:

1. Regional scale commercial uses should be located in the town of Concrete's existing business and commercial areas.
2. Commercial development should be directed away from resource productive areas.
3. Agricultural related commercial activities should be allowed in agricultural areas provided they can justify their location and existence.
4. Strip commercial development should be discouraged.
5. Commercial areas and activities should be adequately buffered and landscaped to avoid potential conflict with adjacent land uses.
6. Commercial development should only occur on soils suitable for such development.
7. Highway-related and neighborhood commercial services should be located at major intersections and should be designed to minimize interference with through traffic.
8. Commercial areas should be aggregated in cluster form with specific design standards.
9. "Home" or "cottage" occupations that do not change or impact the character of the neighborhood should be allowed.

Issues/Recommendations

Within the Eastern District are several incorporated and unincorporated communities located on the very scenic SR20 Highway. Within the communities are the majority of the developed commercial areas serving the area residents and tourists. The use of SR20 is increasing each year, and as gasoline costs continue to rise, use of this highway is anticipated to increase even more as consumers from the metropolitan areas north and south of the District seek to take advantage of attractive, short distance vacation destinations that can be reached on one to two tanks of fuel. Increased tourist commercial activity for the Eastern District is

expected as a result.

In light of this it is essential that this plan emphasize that future commercial development must be carefully planned and located to maintain the present rural and scenic qualities of the District and to ensure that the area remains an attractive place for people to come and stay during their vacations and holidays. It should also be recognized that additional services and activities are needed in the area to fully accommodate and take advantage of this tourist commercial potential.

In addition to the goal and policies, this plan recommends the following:

1. The communities of the District should expand and create new "destination-type" services or activities to attract tourists to the area. Destination-type services and uses could include: camping areas, parks, restaurant/motels, interpretive center, inns, etc.
2. A coordinated tourist/recreation strategy should be developed to promote the recreational benefit of the area.
3. Commercial activities should be clustered with coordinated design standards such as parking, signing, landscaping, colors, etc.

e. Industrial Land Use

Goal: Industrial areas should be developed and located near or adjacent to the towns in a manner that is compatible with adjacent uses.

Policies:

1. Industrial development should be directed to upland areas away from resource productive areas and the floodplain.
2. Industrial development should only occur on soils suitable for such development.
3. The clustering of industrial uses in planned industrial parks should be encouraged.
4. Industrial areas should be adequately buffered from surrounding land

uses by means of landscaping, compatible transitional land uses and open space.

5. Industrial areas should be located adjacent to or near major transportation systems such as highways and railroads.
6. Existing and known potential extractive industry areas should be protected from encroachment by incompatible, non-industrial activities.

Issues/Recommendations

Industrial land uses and allocations in the District primarily are related to the forest products industry. These uses include sawmills, shake and shingle mills, log dump and sorting areas, and many accessory uses.

Extractive industries are also present in the District to a significant degree. The area has large quantities of quality sand, gravel and rock deposits. North of Concrete are significant deposits of limestone which Lone Star Industries plans to resume extraction of in the near future and will employ in excess of 100 people once completed and on line.

The primary industrial need of the area is additional and diversified industrial development. The construction and operation of the Lone Star Clinker Plant is a positive step in the right direction; however, the majority of the area industry is still related to the forest products industry which makes many area residents dependent on periodic economic fluctuations of the industry.

New industrial development locations are principally planned west of Concrete in the Grassmere area. This area is near potential utility services and has access to highway and rail. The other significant industrial area in the District is the existing Scott Paper Company Operation at Hamilton.

Because almost all of the District industrial areas are near or adjacent to SR20, this plan recommends the following:

1. To protect the rural and scenic quality of this highway corridor, a minimum 50 foot wide permanent, sight obscuring buffer be provided or retained adjacent to SR20.
2. Access to and from SR20 should be well planned and engineered to ensure safe interaction of industrial and private vehicles.

f. Public Land Uses and Services

Goal: High quality public services should be provided in a manner compatible with the general attitudes and needs of the residents of the District.

Policies:

1. The extension of urban services and utilities should be confined to areas adjacent to the town of Concrete within the joint sphere of influence.
2. Public services such as adequate police and fire protection, road maintenance and snow removal, health care and solid waste disposal should be available to all Eastern District residents.
3. Public facilities and utilities should be designed, located and constructed in a manner which will preserve the integrity of the existing landforms, drainage ways, and natural systems.
4. Wherever possible, new utility systems should be incorporated into existing easements and rights of way.
5. Surface water runoff and drainage facilities should be designed and utilized in a manner which protects against the destruction of private property, disruption of natural drainageways and the degradation of water quality.

EASTERN DISTRICT UTILITIES AND SERVICES

The following is a brief discussion on the level and availability of services and utilities in the Eastern District.

Fire

Fire stations in this rural area are manned entirely by volunteers and, typically, have two or three pieces of equipment and 20-25 volunteers. Fire stations are located in the following areas: Hamilton, Birdview, Grassmere, Concrete, Rockport and Marblemount. The Sauk Prairie/Bennettville area is serviced from Darrington in Snohomish County.

Police

Presently, two police officers provide protection to the Town of Concrete, while the Skagit County Sheriff has one deputy assigned to the area. The Washington State Patrol has one trooper assigned to patrol S.R. 20 east of Concrete and another trooper covers the area west of Concrete. There presently is no detention facility in Concrete or the remainder of the District.

Schools

One school district is located completely in the District (Concrete) while two others, Sedro Woolley and Darrington, are partially within the Eastern District. The Sedro Woolley and Darrington Districts have no school facilities within the study area and no specific information concerning the number of students, etc., that reside in the Eastern District from these school districts is available. However, the following information is known about the Concrete School District #11.

Enrollment

1981-82	K - 12	570
1982-83	K - 12	585
1983-84	K - 12	610
1984-85	K - 12	625
1985-86	K - 12	640

The average class size ratio is approximately 30 to 1. However, this will decrease somewhat from year to year depending on the level of financial support from the state.

Increases could come with the possible development of Lone Star Cement Plant and the High Ross Dam project. However, the increases, if any, are not known at this time.

The Concrete School District consists of two schools located on the same site. The elementary school (Grades K - 8) has 19 general classrooms, two specialty classrooms

(Science and Economics), library, multi-purpose, music and general office area. The Concrete High School has 19 classrooms including specialized classes, in addition to gym, cafeteria, library and general office, and an enclosed swimming pool area.

Projected capital improvements are \$60,000 for the 1982-1983 year.

Parks

Parks and other recreational facilities will be discussed under the recreation element.

Energy

Electrical energy is provided by Puget Sound Power and Light Company. Puget Power also operates the electrical generation and distribution system at the Upper and Lower Baker Dams. Home fuels are provided through private dealers.

Water

The majority of the District is unserved by public systems and rely on individual wells or community water systems. The Town of Concrete and Grassmere areas are serviced from a water supply known as Grassmere Springs.

Sewer

The Town of Concrete is serviced with a sanitary sewer treatment facility that was built in 1972. The facility is designed for a population of 1,000. The remainder of the District is not served by public sewer and relies on septic tanks as the principal form of waste disposal.

Stormwater

There are no storm sewer systems in the Eastern District.

Solid Wastes

The Skagit County Public Works Department operates and maintains two trash compactors (green boxes) in the District at Birdsvlew and Marblemount.

Rural Sanitation Service provides collector service or rural residents can take their garbage directly to the Sauk landfill site. An independent contractor collects garbage in the Town of Concrete and takes it to the Sauk landfill.

Communications

Continental Telephone Company provides telephone service to most of the District. Telephone service is presently being extended to areas of the lower Sauk River.

Human Health

Skagit County is divided into three hospital districts and is served by Island General Hospital in Anacortes, United General Hospital in Sedro Woolley and Skagit Valley Hospital in Mount Vernon. There are a total of 283 beds in the three facilities and ambulance service is available from all three hospitals.

There is also a clinic located in the Town of Concrete which is staffed by several doctors who commute on a rotating basis from practices located elsewhere. Several Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT) are in the volunteer fire department. There is an ambulance stationed in Concrete and an emergency vehicle which contains first aid equipment and breathing apparatus and is used for firefighting.

2. Transportation

Goal: A transportation network should be provided that will adequately satisfy the demands created by increased population growth and tourism in a safe, economical and effective manner.

Policies:

1. New transportation routes and improvement to existing routes should take into consideration environmental, social and aesthetic values.
2. Transportation routes should provide adequate rights-of-way to accommodate anticipated traffic volumes.
3. Transportation routes and facilities should be designed to adequately meet projected needs with the minimum of infringement on the rights and properties of District residents.
4. The location and number of new access points onto primary arterials (especially S.R. 20) should be well planned and reviewed to insure maximum safety, efficiency and economy.
5. The disruption of established communities and residential areas by new transportation facilities should be avoided.

Issues/Recommendations

Roadways and the resultant circulation system must be a critical part of a comprehensive planning effort. In this plan element, the existing road system will be examined as well as concerns, problems and constraints relative to District Transportation facilities will be analyzed.

Roadway Classification System

In 1972, the County Road System was surveyed and classified by VTN of Washington, Inc. At that time, a number of roads were given higher classifications. Since that time, a number of developments have occurred which have pointed out the need to develop a more compact road system. These factors were as follows:

1. Development patterns were inconsistent with the predictions of the study;
2. The failure of road improvement and maintenance revenues to keep pace with inflation;
3. Decline in Federal assistance for road improvements;
4. Heavy flood damage in 1975, 1979 and 1980 to the county road system, particularly in the District. This was aggravated by a decline in Federal assistance for road repair.

In light of these developments, a study is underway in the County Public Works Department to redefine the Arterial System. The following information is based on the present systems and it should be recognized by the reader that these classifications reflect the relative importance of the roads in the District, but that some of the roads in the Collector System may be downgraded to a lower classification. There is no upgrading planned in the District.

Rural Statewide Functional Classification System

Minor Arterial—There is only one primary arterial in the District so the definition will not be dwelled upon. The purpose of an arterial is to carry through traffic from major traffic generators (i.e. cities, towns, recreation areas) to another. State Route 20 is the only Minor Arterial in the District.

Rural Collector Road System

The rural collector routes generally serve travel of primarily intracounty rather than statewide importance and constitute those routes on which (regardless of traffic volume) predominant travel distances are shorter than on arterial routes. Consequently, more moderate speeds may be typical, on the average.

In order to define more clearly the characteristics of rural collectors, this system should be subclassified according to the following criteria:

Major collector roads—These routes should: (1) Provide service to any county seat not on an arterial route, to the larger towns not directly served by the

higher systems, and to other traffic generators of equivalent intracounty importance, such as consolidated schools, shipping points, county parks, important mining and agricultural areas, etc.; (2) link these places with nearby larger towns or cities, or with routes of higher classification; and (3) serve the more important intracounty travel corridors

Minor collector roads—These routes should: (1) Be spaced at intervals, consistent with population density, to collect traffic from local roads and bring all developed areas within a reasonable distance of a collector road; (2) provide service to the remaining smaller communities; and (3) link the locally important traffic generators with their rural hinterland.

Rural Local Road System (Access Roads)

The rural local road system should have the following characteristics: (1) Serve primarily to provide access to adjacent land; and (2) provide service to travel over relatively short distances as compared to collectors or other higher systems. Local roads will, of course, constitute the rural mileage not classified as principal arterial, minor arterial road, or collector road.

Primitive Roads

SHB #1575 in 1980 established a new classification of roads known as "Primitive." This class of roads is distinguished by low traffic volumes (Average Daily Traffic (A.D.T.) less than 100), and an unsurfaced condition. These form the lowest classification of road and generally have little or no safety features involved with them.

Road Classifications and Planning Concerns

Minor Arterial—This class of road is designated for inter-county and intra-county trips. It is characterized by high speeds and high traffic volumes. Development along arterial corridors should be restricted. Wherever possible, access should be diverted to lower classification roads to reduce conflicts and confine conflict points.

Major Collectors—This class of road is meant for limited access. In general, developments fronting on these roads should internally collect traffic so that interference with through traffic is kept to a minimum. Development along this class should be low density so that moderate to high volumes of traffic at high speeds do not conflict with residential environment.

Minor Collectors—This is an intermediate classification between local systems and major collectors. This class of roadway also has through characteristics so that the limitations stated above should still apply.

Local Roads—Residential concentrations should be allowed on these streets. These are classed as low volume, low speed streets. The need for combining access is still necessary in large subdivisions.

Primitive Roads—No development whatsoever should be allowed on these roads without the contribution or commitment by the developer for the improvement of the road. These roads are inherently substandard and the addition of traffic to them greatly increases accident potential.

CURRENT CLASSIFICATIONS OF EASTERN DISTRICT ROADS

Minor Arterial

State Route 20

Major Collectors

0700	South Skagit Highway
0860	East Sauk Road
9700	Baker Lake Road
0800*	Concrete-Sauk Valley Road

*From SR20 to South Skagit Highway

Minor Collectors

0800	Concrete-Sauk Valley Road (remainder)
9795*	Cascade River Road
9640	Grassmere Road
9402	Lyman-Hamilton Road

*To Primitive Road Boundary

Primitive Roads

0795	Sauk River Park Road
0802	S. Concrete Sauk Valley Road
0805	Old Concrete Sauk Valley Road
0851	Forest Road
0855	Zyman Road
9575	Pressentin Road
9720	Baker River Road
9740	Sauk City Road
9795	Cascade River Road
9325	Pipeline Road

Local Roads

All other roads.

No conditions remain static and road conditions, accident patterns, and availability of funds are in constant flux. Annually, the Six Year Road Improvement Program and three year accident rates are updated. Bi-annually, the priority array is updated. At the present time, the following is pertinent information relative to the Eastern Planning District.

Six Year Road Improvement Program

No major projects are planned for the Eastern District.

Priority Array

The Priority Array is a reflection of the current condition of a road compared to the standard it should meet. Roads ranking in the top 100 are generally not up to county standard. The higher a road ranks, the worse condition it is in. The following roads ranked high in the Eastern District:

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Road Name</u>	<u>Road #</u>	<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>
20*	Lyman-Hamilton	9402	Lyman	Hamilton
31	Cascade River	9795	SR 20	Rockport-Cascade
33	Concrete-Sauk Valley	0800	Dalles Br.	Finney Creek Timber Access
47	Concrete-Sauk Valley	0800	Finney Cr.	
			Timber Acc.	E. Sauk
65	Russell	9545	SR 20	N. End
68	Baker Lake	9700	Bear Creek	County Line
77*	Baker Lake	9700	SR 20	Burpee Hill
79	Concrete-Sauk Valley	0800	SR 20	Dalles Br.

*Major project, summer 1982

Accident Rates

The following road segments were identified as high accident locations from 1978-1980. The introduction of additional traffic burden on these road segments could aggravate their accident rates. As a guide, the countywide accident rate was 3.11/million miles during this period.

<u>Road #</u>	<u>Road Name</u>	<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>	<u>Accident Rate</u>
0860	East Sauk	Fortner	W. Sauk	3.27
9700	Baker Lake	Bear Creek	County Line	3.65
0800	Concrete-Sauk	Gordon	Hawthorne	4.34
9701	Burpee Hill	Concrete	Baker Lake	5.25
0800	Concrete-Sauk	Spruce	Gordon	9.08
9402	Lyman-Hamilton	Cabin Cr.	Healy	9.18
9680	Dalles	Concrete-Sauk	Grassmere	22.80
9321	Pressentin	Cape Horn	End	26.81
9732	Moen	S.R. 20	Thunderbird	39.53

Other Concerns and Constraints

In the Eastern District a number of factors serve to limit the road network. The Skagit River and its principal tributaries form geographical boundaries requiring bridge crossings to traverse from one side to the other. Topography also is a factor as this area is dominated by the Cascade Range and foothills. Other factors which serve to limit the District road network are large ownership of land by Federal and State Governments and private timber companies. The low population density of the District also inhibits the road network. Population is concentrated in a narrow east-west corridor centering on SR 20 with the Skagit River serving as a southern boundary. Areas of low relief that are prone to flooding is another limiting factor in the development of a transportation network in this area. Maintenance of roads in these areas is extremely expensive due to the high costs of flood repair.

Alternate Transportation Modes

The current situation concerning worldwide energy resources and resource distribution has placed an increasingly greater emphasis on development of alternate transportation systems.

The alternate modes most often proposed are mass transit, by either rail or bus, carpools and bicycles. All of these systems can be integrated into area transportation/circulation system with varying degrees of success and expense.

The Eastern Districts low population densities and great travel distances are not supportive to rural mass transit at this time. Carpooling can and should be utilized in the District as a means to reduce both energy consumption and traffic congestion. Bicycling is becoming an active part of our transportation system, although it is not growing as fast as projected a few years ago. Future road projects should consider bicycle needs, and when possible, incorporate them into project planning.

Rail transportation, in years past, used to be an important part of Skagit County's and the Eastern District's transportation system for commuters and commercial/industrial concerns. Presently, the rail transportation system in the District has been reduced to a single line operated by Burlington Northern that runs east/west through the District and terminates at Concrete. Unless current trends for rail use reverse, it is likely that the future role of the rail system in the District will be the use of rail right-of-ways for other uses (i.e. bicycle paths and trails.)

Air transportation is a minor element of the Districts system made up primarily by private aircraft use, forest service use, with some commercial related use. The airport located south of Concrete is the primary air transportation facility in the District.

3. Housing

Goal: All Eastern Planning District residents should have the opportunity to live in a suitable, safe and sanitary dwelling unit.

Policies:

1. Housing diversity of the broadest possible type should be available to residents of the District.
2. Affordable housing opportunities for the elderly and young families just entering the housing market should be encouraged.
3. To the extent feasible, efforts to rehabilitate older and substandard housing, located out of the floodplain, should be encouraged.

4. Energy efficient construction for new housing and habilitation projects should be promoted and encouraged.
5. The private sector should be encouraged to fulfill the demands of the housing market.

Issues/Recommendations

Analysis of housing of the Eastern District is limited by the manner in which housing is enumerated by the Bureau of Census. These enumerations are made for County Census Divisions whose boundaries do not always correspond to Planning Districts. Unfortunately, this is the case with the Eastern District as a portion of the Lyman-Hamilton C.C.D. is within the boundaries of the District. As a result, in some instances, estimates are made for certain statistics for the Lyman-Hamilton Division while in other cases, certain statistics for this area of the District unfortunately are omitted.

Also, it is not the purpose of this plan to duplicate information that is regularly published by the Skagit Council of Governments Housing and Housing Assistance Studies and Plans.

The figures used in this element are from or are extrapolated from the 1980 census.

Housing Types

Housing in the Eastern District is composed primarily of detached single family residential structures occupying separate and legally defined parcels of property. Housing in the District occupies larger lots than does housing in the State of Washington or the United States, as would be expected in a rural area. At the national and state level, housing is undergoing a substantially more rapid change than is housing in the area. The greatest areas of change appear to be in the rate of economic growth and the rate of change in the number of persons per household. This area is not experiencing the same rate of economic growth as the State of Washington or the United States; our economy is expanding at a slower rate of increase than the state or the nation. The number of persons per household for the state and nation are decreasing more rapidly than average household size for this area. These two factors have a stabilizing effect on the

housing market of the planning area and on the lifestyle of the residents of the area. This stability will allow for a steady and measured improvement in the housing inventory of the study area.

Housing Characteristics

The following tables represent selected housing characteristics on a District, County and State level.

TABLE 4

Housing

	<u>Total Housing Units</u>	<u>Year Round Housing Units</u>	<u>Average Pop/Unit</u>	<u>Occupancy Rate</u>
Eastern District	2,125	1,910	2.72	.85
Skagit County	27,775	26,552	2.58	.92
Washington State	1,689,450	1,650,411	2.61	.93

TABLE 5
HOUSING VALUES AND RENTAL RATES

Value Specified Owner-Occupied Non-Condo Housing Units	Eastern District*	County	State
Less than \$10,000	51	164	6,810
\$10,000 to \$14,999	31	210	11,285
\$15,000 to \$19,999	38	370	18,040
\$20,000 to \$24,999	72	598	26,928
\$25,000 to \$29,999	61	673	30,478
\$30,000 to \$34,999	70	893	39,991
\$35,000 to \$39,999	67	990	43,568
\$40,000 to \$49,999	90	2,284	107,930
\$50,000 to \$79,999	97	4,795	315,822
\$80,000 to \$99,999	19	1,165	96,472
\$100,000 to \$149,999	7	794	69,644
\$150,000 to \$199,999	2	150	17,305
\$200,000 or more	2	95	12,014
Total	607	13,181	796,287
Medium Value	\$33,700	\$52,600	\$60,700
<hr/>			
Contract Rent Specified Renter Occupied Housing			
Less than \$50	9	156	6,165
\$50 to \$99	49	556	39,417
\$100 to \$119	27	338	19,591
\$120 to \$139	39	399	24,678
\$140 to \$149	6	179	10,249
\$150 to \$159	44	425	23,596
\$160 to \$169	18	268	16,711
\$170 to \$199	27	928	60,998
\$200 to \$249	35	1,336	101,069
\$250 to \$299	9	952	81,994
\$300 to \$399	1	439	74,256
\$400 to \$499	0	53	19,218
\$500 or more	0	32	7,115
Total	264	6,061	485,066
No Cash Rent	34	371	21,094
Median Contract Rent	\$148	\$193	\$220

*Less that portion of the Lyman-Hamilton Division in the Eastern District.



To date, no census information has been received concerning the condition of housing for the District and County.

The rapidly escalating cost of new home construction which has occurred in the last decade has increased the need to provide expand, affordable housing opportunities for a growing number of elderly, handicapped, and low to moderate income people. Not only must sufficient numbers of new housing of all types and in all price ranges be provided but emphasis must be given to rehabilitating the existing stock of older housing. This plan cannot over-emphasize these recommendations.

4. Recreation

Goal: Eastern District residents and non-resident users should be provided with adequate park and recreation facilities, trails and open space areas.

Policies

1. New park and recreation facilities should be located and developed in a manner which takes into consideration and protects the interests of adjoining property owners.
2. New park and recreation facilities should take into consideration natural features, topography, floodplains, relationship to population, types of facilities, various user group needs, and standards of access including travel time.
3. The use of school land, utility rights-of-way, and other public lands for parks, recreation and open space should be encouraged.
4. Park and recreational activities should be promoted provided they do not conflict with resource production and operation.
5. The need for recreational property and recreational development should be recognized and encouraged, provided consideration is given to natural constraints, resource productive areas and the natural environment.
6. The Wild and Scenic River designation for a portion of the Skagit River System should be recognized as a resource to be conserved, enhanced and utilized.

Issues/Recommendations

In recent years, there has been a rapidly growing demand for outdoor recreation by the general public. To help prepare for this increasing demand, the Skagit County Parks, Recreation and Senior Services Department implemented a countywide Comprehensive Plan in June 1980. It should be recognized that the Recreation Element of this plan is intended to support this existing plan and not to replace it.

The following is a summary or inventory of existing park and recreational facilities in the District.

Ann Wolford Park. This is a 69 acre county park located three miles west of Concrete between SR 20 and the Skagit River. The park is undeveloped with no future plans for development. This facility offers fishing, nature trails and viewing areas.

Eagleview County Park. This is a .5 acre county park located one mile east of Rockport adjacent to SR 20. Hiking trails, nature trails and viewing areas are offered at this site.

Grandy Lake County Park. This is an eighteen acre facility (14 acres undeveloped) located on the Baker Lake Road approximately three miles northwest of Concrete. This site offers fishing, boat launching, hiking trails, seasonal toilets and viewing areas.

Sauk River County Park. Located on the Concrete-Sauk Valley Road .25 miles north of the Lower Government Bridge. This park totals thirty-six acres in size, of which nine acres are developed. Fishing, hiking and nature trails, pit toilets, tent and trailer camping and viewing areas are available at this facility.

Steelhead County Park. Located at Rockport, this facility is the most complete County Park in the District. The Park totals 24 acres with 9 acres that are developed. This facility offers fishing opportunities, boat launching, barbecue and picnic areas, restrooms with showers, hiking and nature trails, tent and trailer camping areas and nature viewing areas.

Rockport State Park. This Park is located on both sides of SR 20 just west of Rockport. This facility totals 457 acres and includes 50 full service camping areas (water, electricity, sewer), 8 walk-in tent sites, 4 adirondack shelters, restrooms with showers and 5 miles of trails.

In addition to these facilities are 366,523 acres included in the Mount Baker National Forest and 128,792 acres in the North Cascades National Park. The U.S. Forest Service maintains several primitive and improved campgrounds and picnic areas through the District. At the State level, the Department of National Resources and Game Department provide several primitive campgrounds and public accesses on the Skagit River System and lakes, respectively.

National Wild and Scenic River System

The National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, Public Law 90-542, was enacted by Congress on October 2, 1968. The Act established a National Wild and Scenic River System to preserve the outstanding values of selected free flowing rivers across the nation. The Act named eight rivers as components of the National Systems and identified 27 study rivers, including the Skagit as potential additions. On November 10, 1978, Congress added the Skagit River, along with the Cascade, Sauk, and Suiattle Rivers, to the National System.

The Act and the Draft Wild and Scenic River Management Plan stress preservation of the existing character of the landscape. A goal of the Draft Management Plan is to provide for the conservation and continuation of the patterns of agriculture, forests, and structures to retain the environments of primitive, rural, and pastoral landscapes. The Skagit River segment of the Wild and Scenic River is classed as "Recreation." Such rivers are readily accessible by roads and some development of the shorelines exists.

The Cascade, Sauk and Suiattle Rivers are classed as "Scenic." These are rivers or segments of rivers that are free of improvements, with shorelines or watersheds still largely primitive and shorelines largely undeveloped, but accessible in places by roads.

The United States Department of Agriculture (Forest Service) is the lead agency responsible for the development of management plans for the subject rivers.

Private Recreational Lands

The Eastern District also has several private camping areas and rental cabins available. Also, many "pre-existing, non-conforming" camping or recreational subdivisions exist in the District. These are tracts primarily located in the floodways of the rivers that were platted prior to present day floodplain and subdivision regulations that now prohibit the division of land if it is determined to be "unbuildable." Generally, lands located in the floodways of the river floodplains are considered to be unbuildable.

Throughout the public involvement process with the District residents it was very evident that affected floodway landowners felt that present regulations were unfair and created an economic burden for them to shoulder.

In addition to stated goals and policies, the following section is presented as plan recommendations.

1. A system of public trails and access points along the shorelines of the planning area's major rivers and streams should be developed in order to allow the public to better utilize these attractive areas for fishing and general recreation purposes. However, great care should be taken not to infringe on the rights of the adjoining private property owners.
2. The Wild and Scenic River Management Plan should not usurp the rights of the private property owners.
3. Skagit County should implement an ordinance or amend the Zoning Ordinance to allow for the division of nonbuildable lands. This ordinance or amendment would allow the division of lands presently

precluded from subdivision because of natural constraints such as poor percability or location in floodway and would permit creation of recreational subdivision and allow other uses such as woodlot and farming activities. This ordinance or amendment would remove an economic burden experienced by landowners negatively affected by present day regulations.

4. East of Rockport, additional "destination type" public or private campgrounds and/or parks should be developed to meet the growing demand for outdoor recreation and increasing tourism to the area.
5. Energy efficient recreational opportunities should be promoted and given increased attention.
6. Efforts should be made by Federal, State and local governments to cooperatively fund facilities such as trails, bicycle routes and public accesses.

SECTION FOUR

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Specific implementation tools are necessary to transfer the policies, plan map and other test recommendations of the comprehensive plan into reality. The significance of a comprehensive plan should be judged by its usefulness as a policy guide to public officials and private developers who are responsible for making recommendations and decisions on land use development proposals. Interested residents and community groups should also be able to effectively utilize the plan to protect and provide for their particular needs and interests. The following is a brief discussion of the principal implementation tools available in Skagit County.

A. Land Use Regulations

1. Zoning

Zoning is one of the principal land use controls delegated to the County Commissioners by state law, to promote and maintain the public health, safety, and general welfare. Zoning decisions by the law are to be based on the adopted comprehensive plan and potentially represent the best assurance that the comprehensive plan will be effectuated. Recognizing the potential pitfalls of zoning, not only are development policies and performance criteria stipulated in the text of this plan, but also it is the purpose of this section to indicate how zoning can become a more effective implementing tool. The first way to achieve effective plan implementation is to utilize the goals, policies, and performance criteria in the adopted plan as the controlling factors in zoning decisions.

Another way by which zoning can become a more effective implementation tool is to involve the various community groups, special districts and the towns of the District in the land use decision making process. It is the policy of Skagit County to notify such groups of any zoning application effecting their geographic area or with the towns, their joint sphere of influence area. The involvement of such groups and entities should provide

District residents with greater influence in the land use decision making process.

A third means by which zoning can be improved as an implementation tool if for Skagit County to immediately initiate action to revise the zoning map upon adoption of the comprehensive plan.

2. Land Subdivision Regulations

Land subdivision regulations pertain to the platting of land and thereby have a substantial impact upon implementation of the comprehensive plan. Controls have been established for lot arrangement, road systems, and provision of public facilities. Once the decision is made to subdivide the land, subdivision regulations provide reasonable assurance for the orderly development of the land at the densities allowed by the applicable zoning and provide an additional vehicle to implement many of the goals, policies and performance criteria of the plan.

In Skagit County, four ordinances govern the way land can be divided. The Short Plat Ordinance regulates divisions that do not create more than 4 lots. The Medium Plat Ordinance governs land divisions that create 5 or more lots with said lots being 5 acres or larger. The Long Plot Ordinance regulates subdivisions of 5 or more lots with said lots being less than 5 acres in size, and the County Zoning Ordinance contains provisions for Planned Unit Developments.

3. Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance

It is the purpose of the ordinance to promote the public health, safety and general welfare and to minimize public and private losses due to flood conditions in flood hazard areas. In addition, federal and state regulations exist which are designed to prevent incompatible land use development from locating in flood hazard areas. Properly applied, these regulations can be very useful in implementing the objectives of the comprehensive plan which identifies all existing and potential flood hazard areas.

4. Shoreline Management Master Program

The Skagit County Shoreline Management Master Program, developed under the authority of the State Shoreline Management Act of 1971, is intended to guide the future conservation and development of the County's major shoreline areas. The Master Program, which combines the elements of a long-range plan with a detailed regulatory permit system, contains some major land use planning implications for the extensive shoreline areas found within the Eastern Planning District. It should be recognized that because Skagit County's Shoreline Management Master Program has been adopted as a part of state law, the provisions of the Eastern District Comprehensive Plan must be consistent with the goals, policies, planning environment designations and regulations of the Master Program. As is proposed, the land use and shoreline designations appear to be complimentary.

The Master Program is only applicable to those water bodies which have a surface area of 20 acres or a mean annual flow of 20 cubic feet per second and the land within 200 feet of the ordinary high water mark of these lakes and streams. The Master Program and its permit system should be a useful tool in achieving the goals, policies and recommendations of the Eastern District Comprehensive Plan.

B. State Environmental Policy Act.

The primary purpose of the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) is to insure that adequate information regarding the potential environmental impact of any proposed public or private development action is provided to all effected public agencies, private businesses and general public before that proposal receives final approval. In itself SEPA is not a land use regulation. However, it does require that any major proposed development action be carefully evaluated to determine whether it will have any significant impact on existing or potential land use patterns, important environmental systems or valuable natural resources. The compatibility of such proposed development actions with applicable county and city comprehensive plans and land use regulations must also be addressed. Although under the provisions of SEPA, public decision-makers are not required to withhold approval of projects or actions which have a substantial adverse

impact on the environment or are not compatible with local comprehensive land use plans and regulations, courts of law have consistently ruled that public officials have the legal right to do so. In most instances, public decision makers will want to compare the potential benefits provided to the public by a proposed project or action against the possible costs or adverse impacts it will impose on the community before making any final project approval decision.

C. Coordination With Related Public Agency Plans

Although a comprehensive land use plan adopted by the County Planning Commission and the Board of County Commissioners has the greatest direct influence on land use matters within a given portion of the County, certain other plans adopted by various public agencies also have a significant impact on land use decision-making within Skagit County. Such plans include the Town of Hamilton and Town of Concrete Comprehensive Plans, Skagit County Parks, Recreation and Senior Services Comprehensive Plan, and the Wild and Scenic River Management Plan. If properly utilized and coordinated, these plans can provide valuable assistance in implementing this land use plan.

D. Skagit County Growth Management Policies

Another effective means of implementing the goals, policies and recommendations could be accomplished by adherence to the following policies when future land use decisions must be made.

1. The County's primary land use management objective is to protect the resource productive areas of the County.
2. A secondary County land use management objective is to facilitate growth in and by the cities.
3. To work successfully this philosophy depends on recognition by the cities that they must cooperate with the county in adopting a reasonable attitude toward growth in and adjacent to the city, and in providing services, primarily sewers, in and adjacent to the cities. Otherwise, the County will be forced to provide urban development areas and services to accommodate projected growth.
4. The County will not compete with the cities in supplying municipal

services to urban type developments.

5. The County will attempt to direct urban type development to areas near or adjacent to the cities.
6. The County does not encourage urban type growth in rural areas and must control the extension of municipal services to the extent necessary to protect the resource areas of the County.
7. To implement this philosophy we are proposing the following policies:
 - a. Residential type subdivision (Residential, Residential Reserve, and Multi-Family) shall be limited to areas within the Urban Service Areas of the cities to areas near or adjacent to the Urban Service Areas, the cities, or to areas presently served by municipal or community sewer systems.
 - b. Rural type developments (Rural, Rural Intermediate, Agriculture Reserve) shall be limited to areas outside the Urban Service Areas having limited resource production value (i.e. agriculture, timber) and having reasonable access to public services. Rural type developments should have reasonable access through suitable county roads, have limited impact on agricultural or timber lands, and must make provisions to solve, mitigate or minimize sewage, drainage and ground water problems.
 - c. Development of all kinds should be discouraged in floodplain areas, agricultural areas, and in or adjacent to commercial forest lands.
 - d. All proposed urban type development activities shall be directed toward areas in or near the cities, the proposals coordinated with the cities, and approved only after attention has been given to the mitigation of concerns and compliance with the requirements of the cities, provided these concerns and requirements are reasonable and objective.
 - e. The Sphere of Influence Agreement outline the scope and general procedure for the joint County-City cooperation

effort. The County intends to approach this agreement with good faith and expects the cities to do the same, believing that an objective, cooperative effort to manage growth is in the best interests of all the citizens of Skagit County.

E. Plan Amendments and Review

Comprehensive Plans are not static documents and are, therefore, subject to change. Comprehensive planning is an on-going process that must provide constant re-evaluation and revision of the Plan in relation to changing community standards and goals, new technology or other data which indicates that the best interest of the District and County will be better served. Plan changes should be made only after careful re-evaluation of goals and policies. If the change of circumstance is so substantial that an amendment will not be adequate, then a complete plan update and revision should be undertaken. It is critical to the integrity of the plan that modification not be used as a means to circumvent the plan's intent and that changes, when made, only occur within the context of improving the entire plan. In order to insure that the Plan is effectively current, the plan should be reviewed at least every three years by the Planning Agency. Furthermore, any plan amendments or revisions should be submitted to the Eastern Planning District Advisory Committee for review and comment prior to any formal public hearings. Major plan revisions should always include an extensive citizen participation program.