

Skagit County Planning Commission’s Recorded Motion Regarding the Comprehensive Plan 2016 Update

Proposal publish date:	March 3, 2016
Proposal name:	Comprehensive Plan 2016 Update
Documents available at:	www.skagitcounty.net/2016update
Public hearing body:	Skagit County Planning Commission
Public hearing date:	Tuesday, April 5, 2016, at 6 p.m.
Written comment deadline:	Thursday, April 14, 2016, at 4:30 p.m.
PC deliberations:	May 10, May 17, May 24, and Tuesday, May 31, 2016

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. In its resolution establishing the scope of the 2016 Update, the Board of County Commissioners expressed its satisfaction with the plan in general and its desire to keep the scope of the update narrow.
2. “Related Studies and Plans” are not incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan. These are reference material only to which the Comprehensive Plan refers and are not part of the Comprehensive Plan itself. These materials are subject to change or update outside the control of the Comprehensive Plan amendment process.
3. The map amendments as proposed, with the exception of the Sedro-Woolley southern UGA expansion, are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan designation criteria.
4. The Sedro-Woolley southern UGA expansion does not meet the criteria for de-designation of Ag-NRL land. Sedro-Woolley’s proposed use of the property in question as a stormwater management facility may be accomplished within the County’s Ag-NRL zoning as a Hearing Examiner Special Use Permit, which will allow for mitigation of impacts.
5. The latest Sedro-Woolley analysis demonstrates that almost 20 acres are not developable due to existing development and a utility easement for overhead power lines and therefore supports the full 149.3 acres in the city’s northern UGA expansion proposal.
6. The County must ensure all buildings requiring potable water can demonstrate a legal use of that water, so policies regarding ensuring legal use of water should refer to “all buildings requiring potable water” not just “residences.”

7. Rainwater catchment can be a valuable source of drinking water.
8. The Open Space Taxation Act, enacted in 1970, allows property owners to have their open space, farm, and agricultural and timber lands valued at their current use value as the basis for assessment of property taxes by the county assessor.
9. In its scoping resolution, the Board did not express a desire to update policy 2B-1.3 to “implement” the Skagit Countywide UGA Open Space Concept Plan. The plan was adopted in 2009; the existing policy to identify open space has been achieved. Implementation of the Open Space Concept Plan requires further work or study (e.g., funding, advisory committees, a tax levy).
10. There may be a future need to convert Ag-NRL land to an industrial use for creation of an industrial park to serve agricultural processing.
11. “Home-Based Business 3” in Ag-NRL duplicates “Farm-Based Business,” so should be deleted. HBB3 should not be loosened to allow non-agricultural home-based businesses in Ag-NRL to keep uses in Ag-NRL consistent with agricultural use.
12. NRL property owners have vested interests that are affected by neighboring setback variances.
13. GMA requires both a 6-year financial plan for transportation facilities and a 20-year plan for meeting transportation needs; the 20-year plan is necessarily more conceptual.
14. Prior versions of the Comprehensive Plan have lacked a 20-year transportation facilities list.
15. There has been considerable confusion regarding the public process for some of the projects listed in the Transportation Technical Appendix.
16. The various non-motorized projects in the Transportation Technical Appendix were not described consistently in the proposal.
17. Many of the non-motorized projects in the proposal’s 20-year list are only conceptual.
18. Projects should not be sent to SCOG for the regional TIP until they have been approved by the County.
19. Several of the non-motorized projects in the proposal were wholly new and had not previously been through any public vetting process or needs analysis.
20. The projects in the Planning Commission’s recommendation are either on an existing adopted County plan, are small safety projects, or have been specifically requested by the community (e.g., the Guemes Ferry trail).

21. The beginning of the Transportation Element describes the procedure for creating the 6-year TIP and should have included a description for the 20-year project list. The same explanations for the creation of the 20-year project list should also be included.
22. There are separate processes for adding projects to the Comprehensive Plan's 20-year project list and to the County's 6 year TIP. Both processes involve public hearings, and both require final decisions by the Board of County Commissioners. A project on the Comprehensive Plan's 20-year project list must go through the 6-year TIP process before it can also be placed on that list.
23. It is important to respect property that neighbors trails and other public access points with regard to trespass, trash, privacy, and animal waste.

Recommendation

The Planning Commission recommends that the Board of County Commissioners **approve** the proposal with the following changes:

1. Approve the Burlington UGA expansion without the Rohweder and Sager parcels that Burlington did not approve.
2. Approve the Concrete Concepts map amendment.
3. Approve the Edison Granary map amendment.
4. Approve the Lake Erie Trucking map amendment.
5. Approve the full 149.3-acre northern UGA expansion area, based on the further analysis provided by the City of Sedro-Woolley identifying what portion of the northern area is not available for further development.
6. Approve the western Sedro-Woolley UGA expansion.
7. Deny the southern Sedro-Woolley UGA expansion.
8. Remove references to the 6-year TIP and to the 2016–2021 vs. 2022–2036 time periods from the narrative, project list, and tables in the finance section (Sec. 8) of the Transportation Technical Appendix. Instead, this section should reference the County's 20-year transportation plan and projects and the 20-year planning period 2016-2036.
9. Replace the unnumbered non-motorized transportation projects on pages 58-60 and 91-92 of the proposed Transportation Technical Appendix with the information from the attached table [in supplemental staff report #4].
10. Rename project #38 in the Study list, currently labelled "South Skagit Highway Realignment" to "South Skagit Highway Mill Creek Savage Creek Habitat Restoration"; and move it to the Project list, with a reduced price tag of \$10 million.

11. Change policy 2B-1.3 to narrative and modify to reflect that the plan was adopted in 2009.
12. Revise Goal 2B to say “between” rather than “around” urban growth areas.
13. Revise policy 3A-2.1(a) to refer to “a building requiring potable water” rather than a “residential building,” and add language at the end of the policy stating that the water source meets drinking water standards.
14. Add a new policy comparable to policy 3A-2.1(a) that applies to land divisions but without language prohibiting rainwater catchment systems.
15. Revise applicable instances of “residential building” to “building requiring potable water.”
16. List approved rainwater catchment systems in Comp Plan policies and narrative where that is an available and legal option.
17. Revise policy 3A-3.6 by adding the following two additional conditions from GMA: urban services must be financially supportable at rural densities and will not permit urban development.
18. Retain Natural Resource Industrial (NRI) policy 3C-5.5 regarding establishment of an ag industrial park on Ag-NRL land.
19. Delete Home-Based Business 3 from Ag-NRL.
20. Amend policy 3C-1.7 to indicate that landowners and residents of an area being considered as a newly designated Rural Village should be involved in that planning.
21. Policy 4B-2.11 should be corrected to note NFPA not DNR.
22. Add Health’s suggested language to policy 7B-1.8 to focus efforts on expanding the supply of housing affordable at or below 50% of area median income.
23. In the Guemes Island Overlay, modify the height limit so that height is measured from the Base Flood Elevation.
24. Revise SCC 14.18.100(5)(i) to ensure the 200 ppm chloride limit applies to all seawater intrusion areas as defined in SCC 14.24.380.
25. Strike the proposed reference to TMDL plans in policy 5A-4.1.
26. Move text in policy 12A-4.1 about adopted subarea plans into narrative.
27. Move the Fidalgo Subarea Plan to existing policy 12A-4.2 as a future plan.
28. Strike the proposed descriptive language about the 2006 Fidalgo subarea planning process.

29. In policy 10A-1.4, reverse rural and urban water Level of Service so that they are listed in the correct columns.
30. In the Capital Facilities Profile, clarify the description of the relationship between the Capital Facilities Element and the annually updated Capital Facilities Plan.
31. Fix missing headings and goals and proofreading (e.g., “colocation”).
32. Relabel the “general policy goals” in Chapter 4 as “guiding principles.”
33. Replace the maximum lot coverage table in SCC 14.16.320, for Rural Reserve with a limit of 5,000 sq ft or 20%, whichever is greater, not to exceed 25,000 square feet.
34. Exempt agricultural accessory and processing uses from the Rural Reserve lot coverage maximum, up to 35%.
35. Retain the requirement in SCC 14.16.810(7) that for a NRL setback reduction through a waiver, the neighboring resource landowner’s approval is required; and require any variance from an NRL setback be a hearing examiner variance.
36. Revise 14.06.110(13) to clarify that the Hearing Examiner’s decision on the SEPA threshold determination is final and no appeals to the Board are allowed.
37. Renumber the lettered sub-policies in the Environment element consistent with the rest of the Comprehensive Plan.
38. Make very clear in the Introduction (and anywhere else) which documents are part of the Comprehensive Plan and which are not, and note that documents not part of the Comprehensive Plan are not subject to the Comprehensive Plan update process.

Additional Recommendations:

1. The Board should take public comment on Recommendation #8 (re TIP time periods).
2. The Board should create a steering and/or citizen advisory committee to assist the PC and BOCC in identifying and vetting non-motorized transportation projects for the 20-year transportation plan, including representatives from Parks, Planning, Public Works, user groups, property owners, and citizens.
3. Look into adding emergency markers and addresses for emergency situations for trails and public access points.
4. Look at the possibility of allowing rainwater harvesting as a water source for land divisions.
5. The matter of requiring permanent protection of open space created through CaRDs on Guemes Island should be taken up as part of a future development code amendment project.

6. Review the junk code with respect to art and historical displays and differentiation between trash and junk in the near future.
7. The Board should ensure needs analysis is performed on the 20-year non-motorized projects.
8. The Board should consider changing the terminology for the 20-year non-motorized projects to "conceptual projects" for those projects that are unfunded to flag them to be vetted, to have needs analysis, and to be prioritized.

This recorded motion approved May 31, 2016:

Commission Vote	Support	Oppose	Absent	Abstain
Josh Axthelm, Chair	✓			
Annie Lohman, Vice Chair	✓			
Tammy Candler	✓			
Hollie Del Vecchio	✓			
Amy Hughes	✓			
Kathi Jett	✓			
Kathy Mitchell	✓			
Tim Raschko	✓			
Martha Rose	✓			
Total	9	0	0	0

SKAGIT COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
SKAGIT COUNTY, WASHINGTON



Josh Axthelm, Chair

5/31/16
Date



Dale Pernula, Secretary

5/31/16
Date

Project	Location	Description	Project Cost	Recommendation & Rationale
Bicycle Route 5 (Coast Millennium Trail) Safety/Mobility Improvement Study ⁵	Southern County line to Bayview State Park	This is an existing A-north / south multimodal transportation corridor from the southern County line north to Bay View State Park which passes through the Town of La Conner and Bay View utilizing County roads and the existing Padilla Bay Trails . The projects would include paved shoulder widening, trail improvements, and signing along the corridor. Connects or will ultimately connect to bicycle routes in Whatcom and Snohomish Counties.	\$7,000,000 \$200,000	Retain, but change from project to study. There is already significant use of this corridor by bicyclists. The study would consider potential safety and mobility improvements to make the existing road more bicycle friendly, through shoulder and signage improvements. There is strong interest in Bicycle Route 5 in La Conner and Edison, as it brings many cyclists to the communities who frequent local businesses and services.
North Fork Bridge Safety Project	North Fork Bridge	Improvements to the bridge to increase driver awareness and bicyclist safety; located on Bicycle Route 5 (Coast Millennium Trail). The project would install rider activated flashing beacons and signs warning motorists of bicycles on the bridge.	\$7,000	Retain. This is a safety project on an existing bicycle route (BR 5) and road and bridge facility. It has been brought to the attention of Public Works staff by bicyclists who feel the narrow bridge is unsafe for bike passage. It is the only direct way to get from Fir Island to La Conner.
Existing Bicycle Route 14 Shoulder Enhancements	Mount Vernon to McLean Rd. Pock Park Rest Area	Bicycle Route 14 is an existing. A-east/west multimodal transportation corridor from Mount Vernon to the McLean Pocket Park and Bicycle Route 5 (Coast Millennium Trail) utilizing McLean Road. The project would include shoulder maintenance and widening where needed with the addition of signing.	\$100,000	Retain. This corridor is already heavily used by bicyclists. The project would involve improvements to the road shoulder and improved signage. Enhancements would be completed when the road is scheduled for general road improvements or rebuilding.

⁵ A designated regional bike route is a route that Skagit County in collaboration with cities, towns, and user groups identified as existing corridors that are used by non-motorized users, especially bicyclists. Following guidance from WSDOT, the routes are named and numbered to be consistent with what other counties and local jurisdictions had named the routes.

Project	Location	Description	Project Cost	Recommendation & Rationale
McLean Road Rest Area Pocket Park	Best Road and McLean Road	A rest stop with amenities for the bicycle/pedestrian community positioned at the intersection of Best Road and McLean Road and centrally located between Skagit County’s major destinations. This rest area project-park would include bicycle racks, picnic area, toilets, and informational signing of bicycle routes and trails in the area.	\$300,000	Retain. This project would be located on property already owned by Skagit County. Local area residents and property owners have expressed support for this project, which has been on the TIP in past years when the County was actively seeking grant funds.
Bayview Ridge Spur	City of Burlington to Bay View Ridge	An alternative parallel multimodal transportation corridor to USBR 10 that connects the City of Burlington to Bay View Ridge and Bicycle Route 5 (Coast Millennium Trail). This project would construct a multi-use trail connecting to other existing and planned routes and trails.	\$3,780,000	Remove. This project can be removed as a separate item, and can be considered as part of the US Bicycle Route 10 (Coast to Cascades) Corridor Study discussed below.
Swinomish Indian Tribal Community Safe Routes	Swinomish Indian Tribal Community to La Conner and La Conner Schools	Improvements to Tribal, Town, and County roads and sidewalks from the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community to La Conner and La Conner Schools to increase bicyclist and pedestrian safety for residents and students. This project would make pedestrian and bicycle improvements to the existing road system that include flashing crosswalks, bicycle lanes, signing, and pavement markings.	\$800,000	Remove. This is primarily a Town of La Conner, Swinomish Tribe, and La Conner Schools “safe routes to schools” project that includes only a small portion of County road. The project has already been funded, is being constructed this year, and can be removed from this list.
Burlington to Edison Multi-Modal Pathway (Tiger Trail)	City of Burlington to the Town of Edison	A separated non-motorized trail adjacent to State Route 11 connecting the City of Burlington to the Town of Edison and Bicycle Route 5 (Coast Millennium Trail). This project would acquire right-of-way/easement adjacent to SR 11 for a separated multi-use trail, connecting the Allen, Blanchard, Bow, Edison area to the City of Burlington and other planned bicycle routes and trails.	\$8,900,000	Remove. A study of this corridor may make sense in the future, given existing and future usage; however, this item should be removed at this time.

Project	Location	Description	Project Cost	Recommendation & Rationale
Avon Multimodal Cutoff	SR 20 east of Burlington	An east / west multimodal corridor from City of Burlington to the intersection of Higgins Airport Way and State Route 20, utilizing unopened county right-of-way. This project would construct a trail from the Pulver Road area to Higgins Airport Way connection to the Port trail system utilizing existing County owned right-of-way.	\$3,000,000	Remove. This project can be removed as a separate item, and can be considered as part of the US Bicycle Route 10 (Coast to Cascades) Corridor Study discussed below.
Peterson Road	Bayview Ridge from Avon Allen Rd to Higgins Airport Way	Improve/widen roadway to urban standards adding sidewalks or trail.	\$3,900,000	Add. This project is in the County's adopted 2016-2022 Six-Year TIP and the adopted SCOG Regional Transportation Plan ⁶ (project 55) but was inadvertently left off the 20-year project list.
Guemes Ferry Trail	Ferry terminal to Edens Rd	A separated trail located on Guemes Island, adjacent to Guemes Island Road, that connects the ferry landing to Schoolhouse Park. The project would improve safety and mobility for a growing number of bicyclists and pedestrians. This project would construct a multi-use trail connecting the Ferry Terminal to the Community Center and Park near Edens Road. Where possible it would utilize adjacent right-of-way along Guemes Island Road.	\$1,400,000	Retain. Guemes Island residents have expressed strong interest in this proposed trail, including more than 500 signatures in support, and have been working with the Parks and Public Works departments for the past year to move it forward. Several comments in support of the project were received through the 2016 Update public comment process, and none in opposition. See attachment.
Cascade Trail – Wiseman Creek Boardwalk	East County near Hamilton	Boardwalk through Wiseman Creek area to reduce impact to fish and increase recreational value of trail.	\$300,000	Add. This project is included in the County's adopted Parks and Recreation Plan and in the adopted Regional Transportation Plan (project #79) but was inadvertently left off the 20-year project list.

⁶ "Skagit 2040 [the Regional Transportation Plan] was developed through a cooperative process that involved the Skagit Council of Governments, as the Metropolitan Planning Organization and Regional Transportation Planning Organization, the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) Northwest Region, the public, the Technical Advisory Committee and ongoing transportation planning efforts of Skagit County's 8 cities and towns, 2 ports, transit agency and 4 tribal governments that constitute the MPO-RTPO planning area." Executive Summary, Skagit 2040, Skagit Council of Governments, p. 2.

As further described in the plan introduction: "Beginning in March 2015, public input to inform the Plan update was obtained through a series of meetings, information booths, consultations, briefings and other opportunities to provide input. SCOG's Technical Advisory Committee participated in the development of a draft Plan that was released to the public for further comment during a 14-day review period from January 26 – February 8, 2016. The final Skagit 2040 Regional Transportation Plan was formally adopted by the TPB on March 16, 2016."

Project	Location	Description	Project Cost	Recommendation & Rationale
US Bicycle Route 13 (Cascade Centennial Trail Corridor Study)	State Route 9 and County Roads	This is an existing A north/south multimodal transportation corridor from the southern County line to the northern County line adjacent or parallel to State Route 9 and County roads. The proposed project envisions path would consist of a 10-foot paved trail and a grass shoulder for equestrian use, consistent with the Snohomish County trail sections . The corridor study would consider issues including available right of way, property impacts, shoulder widths, and alignment . Coordination with Snohomish and Whatcom counties would also be appropriate to link to their facilities .	\$26,610,000 \$200,000	Retain, as a corridor study, with reduced dollar amount. This project is included in the adopted Skagit County Parks and Recreation Plan, in the adopted Capital Facilities Plan, and in the adopted Regional Transportation Plan (project #63). It ties to several City of Sedro-Woolley projects that are also in the RTP; and to existing or planned trails in Snohomish and Whatcom counties. The Centennial Trail in Snohomish County is extremely popular with the public. The Skagit County project would support pedestrian, bicycle and equestrian use, similar to the Centennial Trail in Snohomish County. This corridor study is distinguished from the Centennial Trail project (Big Rock to Clear Lake) already included in the adopted 2016-2022 Six-Year Tip (project #4) and the adopted Regional Transportation Plan (project #54).
US Bicycle Route 10 (Coast to Cascades Trail Corridor Study)	State Route 20 corridor	This is an An-existing east/west multimodal transportation corridor from Fidalgo Island to the Town of Concrete and east County line utilizing State Route 20, City and County roads and trails. The study is would consider include shoulder widening where necessary and trail construction and/or existing trail improvements.	\$20,000,000 \$200,000	Retain, as a corridor study, with reduced dollar amount. US Bike Route 10 is an existing cross-country bicycle facility recognized and authorized by local jurisdictions through which it passes, including Skagit County. The Cascade Trail portion of this project is included in the adopted Skagit County Parks and Recreation Plan and in the adopted Capital Facilities Plan. This entire corridor project is included in the adopted Regional Transportation Plan (project 62).