

Selection and Prioritization of TDR Sending Areas

For March 13 TDR Advisory Committee Discussion

Discussion of potential sending areas has focused primarily on natural resource lands, in part because they are clearly defined and mapped through the Skagit County Comprehensive Plan, and because TDR is a particularly good mechanism for natural resource land conservation. That's because it retires a property's residential development right while leaving the land in private ownership and continuing to allow farming, forestry, and other natural resource uses on the land.

The Committee held some discussion on possible environmental and open space conservation priorities that might be pursued through TDR. One general challenge with environmental and open space conservation through TDR is the general lack of clear delineation and mapping of priority environmental and open space conservation areas. The area with perhaps the most definitive mapping is the floodplain and high flood risk areas within it.

Please review pages 2-3 and 6-9 of the following linked document for a summary of the committee's previous discussion of this issue: [Summary of TDR Discussions to Date](#); (document also posted on TDR project website under May 9, 2013 Committee meeting).

Potential TDR sending areas include the following: (*= strongest rationale for inclusion)

Land Type	Rationale
1. Secondary Forest-NRL*	Designated resource land of long-term commercial significance. Residential density of 1 du/20 acres.
2. RRc-NRL* (forest, ag or mineral resource lands)	Designated resource land of long-term commercial significance. Residential density of 1 du/40 acres, or 4 du/40 acres with CaRD.
3. Land in active ag, forest, or mineral use (these will mostly be in Rural Reserve)	Allows owners of land in active natural resource use to opt in to natural resource designation. Residential density in Rural Reserve is 1 du/10 acres or 2/10 with CaRD. These lands lack protections of designated resource lands.
4. Industrial Forest-NRL options:	Designated resource land of long-term commercial significance. Residential density is 1 du/80 acres; development only allowed if located within a fire district.
a. Inside fire district	Market analysis suggested these would probably be the least expensive DR purchases.
b. Outside fire district	Residential development not permitted. Does not meet the "Boon Test." Inclusion in TDR not recommended.
5. Ag-NRL options:	Designated resource land of long-term commercial

	significance. Density is 1 du/40 acres for residences that are accessory to an agricultural use.
a. Include all Ag-NRL lands	Provides option to landowner. Complements Farmland Legacy Program. Nearly all Ag-NRL is in floodplain so also benefits floodplain conservation.
b. Include selected Ag-NRL lands, for example those outside of the Farmland Legacy Program “footprint” (generally east of Sedro-Woolley)	Provides option to landowner not likely to be selected for Farmland Legacy Program purchase. Complements Farmland Legacy Program. Helps conserve floodplain.
c. Do not include any Ag-NRL lands	Eliminates concerns over potential negative interaction between Farmland Legacy and TDR. Ag development rights are most expensive of all Resource Lands, therefore TDR is better applied elsewhere. Residential development already tightly restricted in Ag-NRL therefore TDR not needed.

Prioritization of Sending Areas

Should all lands of a particular type (say Secondary Forest) be designated as sending areas, or should additional prioritization be applied so that a TDR program is more focused in its application. Treating all lands equally is arguably more fair to all landowners (avoids “winners and losers”). Further prioritizing sending areas would help to achieve more measurable conservation results within a given area, rather than having a potentially very dispersed pattern of conservation.

Possible prioritization criteria:

Criteria	Rationale
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Proximity to urban growth areas or development corridors	There will likely be greater public support in TDR receiving areas for conservation of nearby lands. Areas closer to existing development are likely to face stronger development pressure than more distant areas.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Areas with the “most valuable” natural resource lands or those most important to the resource industry’s long-term viability	Conservation efforts should focus on areas with the most strategic importance to the resource industry; for instance, larger blocks of undeveloped land. (It may be difficult to achieve consensus on which lands are most valuable or most strategically important.)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Resource lands with overlapping environmental conservation values. These might include lands containing priority species habitat; watersheds where significant restoration activity is underway (e.g. Hansen Creek); and areas of high floodplain value and/or high flood risk.	This type of an approach would provide overlapping public benefits (natural resource and environmental conservation).