



# Planning & Development Services

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## Staff Report

To: Board of County Commissioners  
From: Ryan Walters, Assistant Director  
Re: Building Code and Fee Schedule Update  
Date: June 2, 2016

### Summary

State law requires cities and counties to adopt the state building codes as adopted by the State Building Code Council (SBCC). This proposal would amend Skagit County Code Title 15 to update the County's adoption of the International Building Code, International Residential Code, International Mechanical Code, Uniform Plumbing Code, International Fire Code, and International Energy Conservation Code to the 2015 versions adopted by the SBCC, with local exceptions. It would also adopt the 2012 Green Plumbing & Mechanical Code Supplement Appendix B for potable rainwater catchment systems, and portions of the 2015 International Property Maintenance Code for abatement of rundown and dangerous buildings.

The proposal would update by resolution the Planning & Development Services department fee schedule to establish fees for Fire Marshal services, move water review fees from Health to Planning, and adjust certain other fees.

### Detailed Proposal Description

#### Building Codes

Besides performing the required updates to the uniform building codes, the proposal would make the following changes:

- Limits the building code permit exemption for buildings under 200 sq ft to allow the permit exemption only when the building contains no plumbing.
- Limits the building code permit exemption for membrane structures to allow the permit exemption only when the building is not used for marijuana and the membrane is less than 20 mil thickness.
- Limits the fire flow exemption for agricultural buildings to only apply to agricultural *storage* buildings.
- Creates a new building permit exemption for most residential rooftop solar panel installations.
- Modifies the standards for when driveway grades trigger fire suppression requirements.

- Adopts Appendix B of the Uniform Green Plumbing & Mechanical Code Supplement 2012. This appendix provides standards for construction and operation of Potable Rainwater Catchment Systems. Although non-potable rainwater catchment is addressed by the state Uniform Plumbing Code, Skagit County currently has no technical standards for potable rainwater catchment. Adoption of this code in no way alters the standards for *when* rainwater catchment would be accepted by the County as an approved water source, which is currently governed by SCC Chapter 12.48.
- Adopts the International Property Maintenance Code 2015, except not sections 302 and 303. Many jurisdictions have adopted this code to aid in enforcement of dangerous and abandoned properties. Skagit County currently has no mechanism to prevent life/safety hazards at motels in unincorporated Skagit County, for which we have received complaints.
- Deletes the archaic provision in SCC 15.16.010 referencing the “Assistant Public Works Director for Community Development.”

### **Fee Schedule**

The Department proposed updates to the fee schedule periodically in response to changes in Skagit County Code, changes in the development industry, and changes in the Department. The last update to the Department’s fee schedule was in 2011.

The proposed fee schedule amendments would accomplish the following:

- Increase the valuation assigned to post frame buildings to reflect a minimum market value;
- Add new fees associated with permits and review by the Fire Marshal;
- Assess fees for Rezones as Comprehensive Plan Amendments, as directed by Skagit County Code 14.08.020(7);
- Moves fees for water review from the Health Department to Planning and Development Services.

### **Process**

#### **Public Notices**

Skagit County published a Notice of Availability for this proposal on June 2, 2016.

#### **SEPA Threshold Determination**

The Skagit County SEPA Responsible Official has issued a Determination of Non-Significance for this non-project legislative proposal.

#### **Public Comment**

The proposal will receive at least one public hearing and written comment period before the Board of County Commissioners, which must approve the final adoption.

#### **For More Information**

Please see the Notice of Availability on the project website at [www.skagitcounty.net/planning](http://www.skagitcounty.net/planning).