



Comprehensive Plan Policy or Development Regulation Amendment Suggestion

Planning & Development Services · 1800 Continental Place · Mount Vernon WA 98273
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Per RCW 36.70A.470(2), this form is intended for use by any interested person, including applicants, citizens, hearing examiners, and staff of other agencies, to suggest amendments to Skagit County's Comprehensive Plan policies or its development regulations, which are contained in Skagit County Code Title 14. Please do not combine multiple unrelated Comprehensive Plan policy or development regulation amendments on a single form. This form is for policy or development regulation amendments; use the Comprehensive Plan Map Amendment Request form for changes to the land use/zoning map.

Submitted By

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Proposal Description

Please answer all of the questions below that are applicable to your suggestion.

1. Describe your proposed amendment.

Amend SCC 14.24.380 (Critical Areas Ordinance, Seawater Intrusion Areas) to require, prior to drilling, a permit application and County approval for any new well to be drilled on Guemes Island.

2. Describe the reasons your proposed amendment is needed or important.

The recently codified Seawater Intrusion Policy establishes design standards and siting requirements for wells located in seawater intrusion areas, aimed at mitigating impacts on groundwater resources and existing wells in the area. However, in cases where a new well is drilled prior to and without any link to a development permit, there is no mechanism to ensure County review and compliance with the Seawater Intrusion code. Under the current code, an associated development permit is the only trigger for County review. Given the extent of seawater intrusion on Guemes Island and the critical nature of Guemes' sole source aquifer, it is important that the County review well drilling plans in advance of any new well drilling on Guemes Island, so that the seawater intrusion standards can be applied.

3. If you are suggesting revision to a particular section of the Comprehensive Plan, please identify which section(s):

N/A

4. If you are suggesting revision to the Comprehensive Plan, would the revision create inconsistencies with existing sections of the Comprehensive Plan? If so, please list those sections:

N/A

5. If you are suggesting revision to the Comprehensive Plan, would the revision require corresponding amendments to the County's development regulations?

N/A

6. If you are suggesting revision to a particular section of Skagit County Code Title 14, please identify which section(s).

SCC 14.24.380 – Critical Areas Ordinance, Seawater Intrusion Areas

7. If you are suggesting this development regulation amendment as a result of a particular project or permit application, please identify which project or application:

Plans for a new well to be drilled on Guemes Island without reference to any proposed development permit recently brought this issue to the attention of GIPAC.

8. *If you are suggesting specific language as part of your amendment, please attach that specific language. Specific language is not required.*

We suggest the County consider language similar to that included in the San Juan County Code (modified as appropriate to apply to Guemes Island and to fit into the Skagit County Critical Areas Ordinance):

8.06.110 Site approval – Individual wells.

A. A well site inspection report must be filed with San Juan County health and community services (H&CS) prior to drilling all new wells. This report may be completed by the well driller, a certified designer, licensed engineer, or H&CS. This report will include a plot plan on a consistent and standard scale indicating: parcel number, well i.d. number, well location coordinates, property lines and easements, existing and proposed buildings, marine shorelines, bodies of fresh water (including seasonal streams), existing and proposed roads and driveways, existing and proposed septic systems, any potential or existing source of contamination, and adjacent public and private water sources.

9. *Describe why existing Comprehensive Plan policies should not continue to be in effect or why they no longer apply.*

N/A

10. *Describe how the amendment complies with the Comprehensive Plan’s community vision statements, goals, objectives, and policy directives.*

The proposed code amendment is consistent with and based upon the Guemes Island Subarea Plan, which is an adopted element of the County Comprehensive Plan. The Guemes Island Subarea Plan identifies protection of the island’s sole source aquifer as a key issue (#4 Environment Element) and calls for codification and updating of the County’s Interim Seawater Intrusion Policy (Policy 4.3). While the Seawater Intrusion Policy was recently codified as part of the 2016 County Comprehensive Plan Update, there remains an enforcement gap pertaining to new wells. The proposed code amendment is intended to plug this gap and ensure that the requirements of the new Seawater Intrusion Areas code are applied to all new wells on Guemes Island prior to drilling, regardless of whether they are proposed in conjunction with a development permit application.

11. *Describe the anticipated impacts to be caused by the change, including geographic area affected and issues presented.*

The proposed code amendment would apply to Guemes Island. It will have positive environmental impact by ensuring enforcement of the Seawater Intrusion Code. It will require discussion with well drillers operating on Guemes Island to make sure they understand the new requirement for County review of drilling plans in advance of well drilling.

12. *Describe how adopted functional plans and Capital Facilities Plans support the change.*

N/A

13. *Describe any public review of the request that has already occurred.*

The recently adopted Seawater Intrusion code (SCC 14.24.380) was subject to public review and hearings as part of the 2016 County Comprehensive Plan Update process. The proposed code amendment to plug the enforcement gap has not yet been subject to public review.

Fees. No fees are required for a policy or code change suggestion, per SCC 14.08.020(6).

Docketing. SCC Chapter 14.08 governs the process for docketing of Comprehensive Plan amendments; suggestions for changes to the development regulations are docketed following the same process. Docketing of a suggestion is procedural only and does not constitute a decision by the Board of County Commissioners as to whether the amendment will ultimately be approved. Amendments are usually concluded by the end of the year following the request. State law generally prohibits the County from amending its Comprehensive Plan more than once per year.

Submission deadline. Suggestions must be received by the last business day of July for docketing. Suggestions received after that date will not be considered until the following year's docket.

How to Submit. Submit your suggestion via email (preferred) to pdscomments@co.skagit.wa.us or to Planning & Development Services at the address above.