

CP AMENDMENT PROPOSAL: Create and implement standing Citizen Advisory Committees (CACs) to assist in updating the Skagit County Comprehensive Plan, policies and codes and address other planning activities working with staff and elected officials.

REASON/JUSTIFICATION:

The process of updating the County's Comprehensive Plan requires early and ongoing public participation. Countywide Planning Policy - Citizen Participation - 11.6 Skagit County **shall** utilize broad based **Citizen Advisory Committees** to participate and assist in the development of the Comprehensive Plan Elements, sub-area plans and functional plans. **(emphasis added)**.

DISCUSSION:

While the annual updates may be noticed and a public hearing held to give ample time for review of the proposed changes, the eight year update process used in the last update did not provide ample public involvement. We question the BOCC's appointment of the Planning Commission as the Citizen Advisory Committee for the update process as it creates a conflict of interest for the Planning Commission members should they then be asked to make a judicial evaluation of their recommended changes.

To create a more fair and transparent process for the 8 year update, we recommend creating a standing Citizen Advisory Committee that can also assist the Planning Commission in the annual review and update. The CAC can be created by calling for volunteer members and/or by appointing members who reside and represent rural Skagit County, across districts.

We suggest that the CAC members, as well as the Planning Commission, receive background, training and assistance in the update process and that the CAC itself determine the scope of work with the PC and staff.

We encourage that a training session is provided to all CAC members on their responsibilities and duties to serve on a properly functioning CAC representing the citizens.

The CAC can also serve to assist the PC and/or the PD&S or other county staff with projects that provide data, analysis, history or other research that increases the efficiency of the PC and PD&S. Other duties of the CAC might include to create public education programs in each district on the planning process including the updates, and gather feedback from citizens to identify community planning needs for the future.

The CAC could create a way to involve citizens early and educate them so that participation in the update process is more effective and increases the citizens involved.