



# Comprehensive Plan Policy or Development Regulation Amendment Suggestion

Planning & Development Services · 1800 Continental Place · Mount Vernon WA 98273

voice 360-416-1320 · www.skagitcounty.net/planning

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

Name Hal Rooks

Organization Guemes Island Planning Advisory Committee (GIPAC)

Address 1219 10th St.

City, State Anacortes, WA Zip 98221

Email hsredfield@gmail.com

Phone 360-391-8400

## Proposal Description

Please answer all of the questions below that are applicable to

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By Stacie Pratschner at 10:39 am, Jul 30, 2018

1. Describe your proposed amendment.

Amend SCC 14.24.380 to read as follows: New sub-section (5). Within 60 days of adoption of this section, the Department of Planning and Development Services shall promulgate a rainwater catchment template that can be used in lieu of an engineer-designed system for rainwater catchment. This template should follow guidelines in the WA Dept. of Ecology's Rainwater Harvesting Calculator for determining size and capacity of the system.

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

Western Washington University has researched such a rainwater catchment template since last year but it has not been published in final form. A standardized rainwater catchment template that does not need an engineer's stamp would be helpful to all of Skagit County, especially those areas closed to development because of restrictions on well drilling. PDS could adopt the template, administratively, which would negate the code amendment.

Please see the attached letter to the Board of County Commissioners also.

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).

See #1 above.

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:*

N/A

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

See #1 above.

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 the Guemes Island Subarea Plan, which is an adopted element of the County's Comprehensive Plan. Guemes Island has been designated as a "sole source aquifer" by the federal Environmental Protection Agency and the entire island falls under the Critical Areas Ordinance as a Category I aquifer recharge area. The Guemes Island Subarea Plan identifies protection of the aquifer as a key issue and implementation of a rainwater catchment template and standardized permitting system would be a major step in protecting the aquifer. Rainwater collection should be the preferred water source on Guemes Island.

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

A standardized rainwater catchment template would benefit many property owners in Skagit County by providing an alternative source of potable water to places where new wells either cannot be drilled, or seawater intrusion has become a problem. On Guemes Island, making rainwater catchment easier to permit and less expensive by use of an officially-approved template would slow seawater intrusion and well failure along the shorelines, and provide increased protection for existing wells with senior water rights.

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.*

A similar proposed code amendment promoting rainwater catchments as an alternative to drilled wells was submitted in 2016 but not docketed because the PDS Department said it would adopt a template design administratively. It has not done so. Members of the Skagit Board of County Commissioners, the County Planning Commission, and officials in the Planning Department have all said they support rainwater catchment, but that support has not been codified. Translating those statements of support into a standardized template and code, in a timely fashion, is the purpose of this request.

## Notices

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**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](mailto:pdscomments@co.skagit.wa.us) or to Planning & Development Services at the address above.