



Planning & Development Services

1800 Continental Place ▪ Mount Vernon, Washington 98273
office 360-416-1320 ▪ pds@co.skagit.wa.us ▪ www.skagitcounty.net/planning

Public Participation Plan

2021 Planning Docket

May 27, 2021

Purpose

The purpose of this Public Participation Plan is to describe how the County will encourage early and continuous public input throughout the annual Comprehensive Plan Amendment process, including the steps that the County will take to provide opportunities for public engagement and public comment. This plan is to be used by staff to guide public engagement and to help the public know how to be more involved in the planning process.

The Proposal

Skagit County received thirteen timely petitions for consideration through the annual Comprehensive Plan, Map, and Development Regulation Docket, another five petitions were proposed by the County. Following a public comment period, petitioner presentations, a public hearing, and consideration of nearly 800 comments the Board of County Commissioners established a docket. This was established by resolution [R20210084¹](#), on May 11, 2021, to include twelve petitions for further review.

The legislative process typically takes eight to twelve months, and can be longer depending on the complexity and interest in the proposal. The Staff Report, public comments, and full text of each petition is available on the [2021 Docket webpage²](#).

Petitions included in the 2021 Docket include:

Public Initiated:

- Nielsen Brothers Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Map Amendment
- Small Scale Business Zone Use Modification
- Fully Contained Community proposal (Comprehensive Plan Policies only)
- Public Notice Amendment for Mineral Resource Overlay
- Accessory Dwelling Unit Code Amendment
- Agricultural processing facilities in Bayview Ridge-Light Industrial zone
- Clarify CaRD Land Divisions and the "Reserve" Function

County initiated proposals:

- 2020 Comprehensive Parks & Recreation Plan
- SEPA Determination Review Timing
- Hamilton Zoning & Comprehensive Plan Updates

¹ <http://www.skagitcounty.net/Common/Documents/LFDocs/COMMISSIONERS000017/00/00/4d/00004d49.pdf>

² <https://www.skagitcounty.net/Departments/PlanningAndPermit/2021CPA.htm>



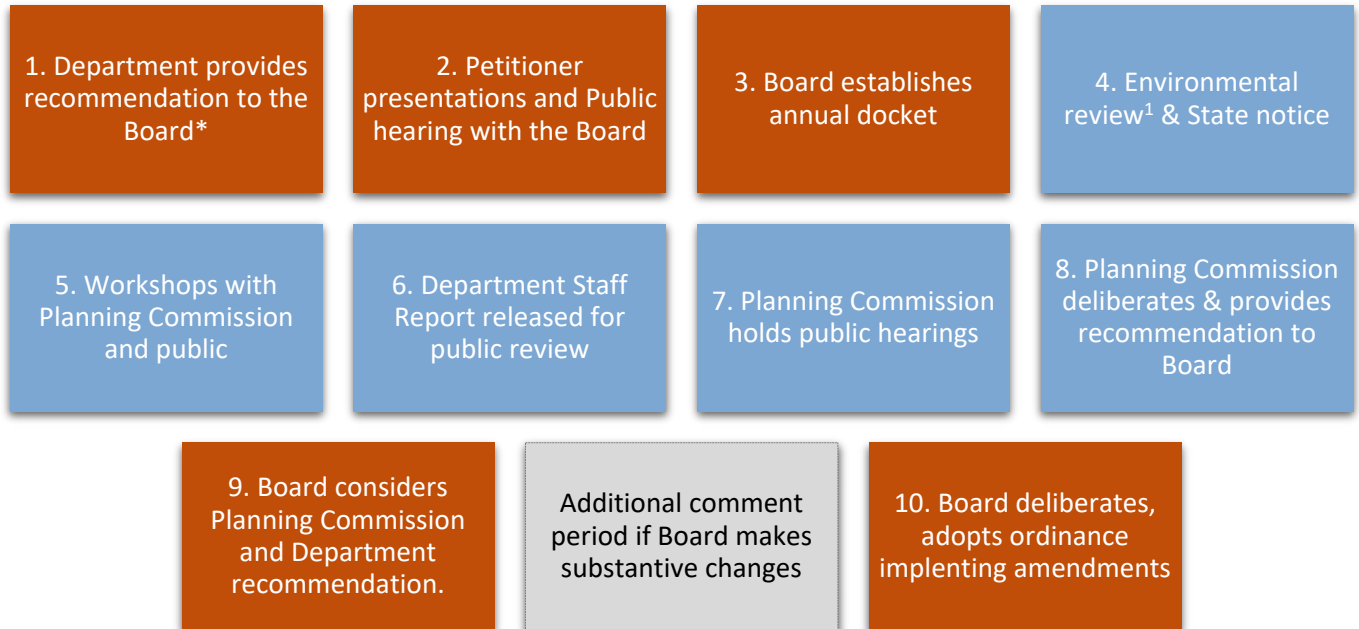
- Reduced setbacks to Include Class 19 Roads in the Bayview Ridge Residential zone
- Pre-application requirement

Public Participation Goals

- Provide for early and continuous public participation
- Broad dissemination of proposals and information in accessible formats
- Provide clear and accurate information regarding proposals
- Receive well informed public input that improves the outcome of the proposals
- Provide interested parties with timely information, an understanding of the process, and multiple opportunities to review and comment
- Build community engagement and investment in its future
- Consider input from State, Federal and Native American Tribes and Nations

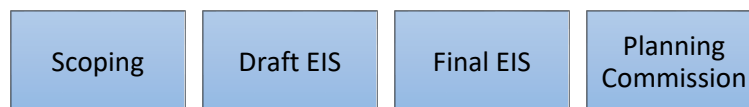
Approach/Process

If a petition is accepted by the Planning and Development Services Department (Department) it will go through the public process: Board of County Commissioners, followed by additional public hearings and notices with the Planning Commission, for deliberation. They will evaluate the change based on the evidence and exhibits provided as compared to the criteria found in Skagit County Code 14.08 and the Comprehensive Plan. The Planning Commission recommendation then goes back to the Board for final action. A simplified version of the process is shown below.



*Skagit County Board of County Commissioners

1. If Environmental Impact Study (EIS) is required, additional public process includes:



Public Participation Opportunities and Methods

Open Houses

The County anticipates developing an online open house platform to help inform the public about the process. The open house would include information regarding key amendments, the timeline, and future opportunities for public comment and engagement.

Formal and informal comments will be collected through the online open house. The public comments received during the official comment period will be compiled and posted online.

Website

The County will continue to feature information about the 2021 Docket on its webpage. This webpage can be found at 2021 Comprehensive Plan Amendments, under [Community Planning](#)³. The webpage is the primary repository of all information related to the Comprehensive Plan Amendments, including draft documents, notices, and other project information.

Media

Notices are required 15 days prior to any public meeting, published via Skagit Valley Herald. The key print media sources in Skagit County include the Skagit Valley Herald, Anacortes American, The Argus, Courier-Times, and the La Conner Weekly News. Radio outlets include stations KAPS, KBRC, KLKI, and KSVR (bilingual). Local television Station 21 may be used for public service announcements as needed. Other internet sources and social media will also be considered for notification, if deemed appropriate.

Planning Commission

The Planning Commission serves as the County's principal citizen advisory body on land use regulations. It is responsible for assisting the Department in land use decisions and will be a primary source for public involvement in the 2021 Comprehensive Plan Amendment process. All meetings are open to the public and interested residents are encouraged to attend. Meetings are held twice a month on Tuesday at 6:00 PM. An opportunity for public remarks is given once a month. At least one public hearing will be held by the Planning Commission on docketed petitions.

The Planning Commission meeting schedule, agenda, and other information can be found under the [Skagit County Planning Commission](#)⁴ page.

Board of County Commissioners

The Board of County Commissioners (Board) heard from the Planning Department in a public meeting on May 3, 2021 regarding the proposed petitions, and on May 11, 2021 the Board of County Commissioners passed a resolution ([R20210084](#)) to include twelve petitions for further review in the 2021 docket. Following the Planning Commission review and recommendation the Board will have a chance to amend or adopt the proposal. If significance changes are proposed by the Board, they can open up the public comment period for further input.

Hearings

³ <https://www.skagitcounty.net/Departments/PlanningAndPermit/communplan.htm>

⁴ <https://www.skagitcounty.net/Departments/PlanningCommission/main.htm>

The public hearing to docket petitions took place on May 3, 2021. The video of the hearing can be found online at: <https://www.skagitcounty.net/Departments/CountyCommissioners/agendaarchive21.htm>

There will be additional public hearings held in the fall following public work sessions with the Planning Commission. All public hearings will be noticed at least 15 days in advance of the hearing in the Notice of Availability, posted in the local paper, and on the County website. Testimony will be recorded and made available to the public, the Planning Commission, and the Board.

Written Comments

The next formal comment period will be following Planning Commission work sessions and public notice. All public comment periods will be at least 15 days long, published in the Notice of Availability, posted in the local paper, and on the County website. Comments received during the formal comment period will be compiled and made available to the public, the Planning Commission, and the Board.

Public comments on these proposals were received from April 15th to May 5th. All comments are available on the [2021 Docket website](#)⁵.

Schedule

Date	Hearing Body	Meeting Type	Actions
Spring 2021	Board*	Public Hearing	Accept testimony on which proposals merit inclusion in the Docket.
Spring 2021	Board	Deliberations	Docket established via Resolution.
Summer 2021	Planning Commission	Workshop(s)	Discussion of upcoming Docket public hearing.
Summer/Fall 2021	Planning Commission	Public Hearing	Accept testimony on the proposals included in the Docket.
Fall 2021	Planning Commission	Deliberations	Recorded motion with recommendations to the Board.
Winter 2021	Board	Deliberations	Deliberate on whether to adopt, not adopt, or defer amendments on the Docket.

*Skagit County Board of County Commissioners

Stakeholders and Public Participants

This plan is designed to reach all audiences that may have an interest in the items included in the docket. The public, property owners, community organizations and any other interested groups or individuals are invited to participate in this planning process, including but not limited to:

- Rural Residents
- Interested property owners and neighbors
- Trade, agriculture, forestry, tourism, Chambers of Commerce, and economic development organizations
- Community organizations and Skagit County advisory boards

⁵ <https://www.skagitcounty.net/Departments/PlanningAndPermit/2021CPA.htm>

- Local governments, Port of Skagit, Skagit PUD, Diking and Drainage Utilities and other service providers
- Appointed and elected officials

Statutory Requirements

This public participation plan identifies procedures providing for early and continuous public participation in the development and amendment of comprehensive land use plans and development regulations implementing such plans⁶. These code provisions establish the following major steps the County will follow for the Comprehensive Plan Amendments:

- Initiation of review of amendments (SCC 14.08.030)
- State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) Review (SCC 14.08.040)
- Public notification (SCC 14.08.070(9) and (10))
- Public participation (SCC 14.08.070(11))
- Review by Planning Commission (SCC 14.08.080), and
- Review and decision by Board of County Commissioners (SCC 14.08.090)

Conclusion

The Public Participation Plan will be updated as new methods of participation are discovered and as conditions change. This plan encourages participation among groups⁷ that have previously not been involved in planning.

⁶ RCW 36.70A.040

⁷ WAC 265-196-600(4)