

Skagit County Planning Commission's Recorded Motion Regarding the Amendments to Skagit County Code 14.04 and 14.16 Off-Site Mitigation on Agricultural Lands

Proposal publish date:	September 8, 2022
Proposal name:	Amendments to Skagit County Code 14.04 and 14.16 Off-Site Mitigation on Agricultural Lands
Documents available at:	www.skagitcounty.net/Departments/PlanningAndPermit/Mitigation2022.htm
Public hearing body:	Skagit County Planning Commission
Public hearing date:	Tuesday, September 27, 2022, at 6 p.m.
Written comment deadline:	Thursday, September 29, 2022, at 4:30 p.m.
PC deliberations:	Tuesday, October 11, 2022

The Planning Commission held one work session on the amendments to Skagit County Code 14.04 and 14.16, Off-Site Mitigation on Agricultural Lands, on Tuesday, September 13, 2022.

On September 8, 2022, the Planning and Development Services Department published a Notice of Availability (including SEPA determination of nonsignificance and notice of written comment period and public hearing) and staff report, and transmitted a 60-day Notice of Intent to Adopt to the Department of Commerce.

The staff report published on September 8, 2022, contains additional findings related to process, public notice, and department recommendations.

The public comment period was open from September 8, 2022, until September 29, 2022 at 4:30 p.m.

The Planning Commission deliberated on the proposal on October 11, 2022.

After considering the written and spoken comments and considering the record before it, the Planning Commission enters the following findings of fact, reasons for action, and recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners.

Findings of Fact and Reasons for Action

1. Critical mass of farmland is required to support farm practices including crop rotation and agricultural support businesses.

2. A pattern of steady loss of farmland has been documented due to development and other conversion.
3. The Board of County Commissioners found it absolutely necessary, "that any conversion of prime Skagit agricultural land be highly likely to deliver and increase in harvestable anadromous species while minimizing impacts to agriculture and farmland."
4. This amendment is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan by its vision statement to protect and conserve agricultural resource lands and to continue to be viable today and into the future with a goal to ensure the stability and productivity of agriculture in Skagit County. Included in the Comprehensive Plan there are guiding principles to protect agricultural land resources by minimizing the loss of the resource by preserving agricultural lands for agriculture purposes and by limiting new non-agricultural uses and activities on agriculture resource lands.
5. Skagit agricultural lands have a greater value than its dollar figure would indicate.
6. The amendment only prevents large scale habitat restoration projects done as offsite compensatory mitigation for environmental impacts occurring on non ag-NRL lands.
7. Large scale programmatic habitat enhancement often envisions the conversion of farmland adding to further loss of farmland.
8. The Growth Management Act and Countywide Planning Policies encourage the conservation of productive agricultural lands and discourage incompatible uses.
9. Farmland can be targeted for easy acquisition for mitigation by large outside entities, creating undesirable opportunities that lead to conversion of farmland for distant and offsite environmental impacts unrelated to farming.
10. A permanent amendment is needed to advance the County's obligation to protect Ag-NRL lands from inappropriate conversion to non-agricultural uses.


Recommendation

The Planning Commission recommends that the Board of County Commissioners **approve** the proposal without changes.

This recorded motion approved October 11, 2022:


Commission Vote	Support	Oppose	Absent	Abstain
Tim Raschko, Chair	x			
Tammy Candler, Vice Chair	x			
Kathy Mitchell	x			
Vince Henley	x			
Mark Knutzen	x			
Amy Hughes	x			
Martha Rose	x			
Joe Woodmansee	x			
Jennifer Hutchison	x			
Total	9	0	0	0

SKAGIT COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
SKAGIT COUNTY, WASHINGTON



Tim Raschko, Chair

10-11-22
Date



Hal Hart, Secretary

10-11-22
Date