



# Planning & Development Services

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## Notice of Availability

*Including notice of written comment period and public hearing*

### Proposal Information

<b>Publish Date:</b>	July 10, 2025
<b>Proposal Name:</b>	Skagit County 2025 Critical Areas Ordinance Update
<b>Documents Available:</b>	<a href="https://skagitcounty.net/2025cpa">https://skagitcounty.net/2025cpa</a>
<b>Lead Agency:</b>	Skagit County Planning & Development Services
<b>Contact Person:</b>	Robby Eckroth, AICP, Senior Planner
<b>Public Hearing Body:</b>	Skagit County Board of County Commissioners
<b>Public Hearing Date:</b>	July 28, 2025 at 11:00 a.m.
<b>Written Comment Deadline:</b>	July 28, 2025 at 4:30 p.m.
<b>Deliberations Date:</b>	August 4, 2025 at 10:00 a.m.

### Proposal Description

The Growth Management Act (GMA) requires all cities and counties in Washington to adopt regulations protecting “critical areas”. Regulated critical areas include wetlands, aquifer recharge areas, fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas, frequently flooded areas, and geologically hazardous areas. The Critical Areas Ordinance updates generally fall into two categories, Best Available Science and Clarity and Efficiency which are listed below:

**Best Available Science (BAS) & The Growth Management Act (GMA)** – Washington State required changes resulting from the current and best available information that follows a valid scientific process. Proposed amendments based on Best Available Science include:

- Administrative Updates
  - Emphasis on no-net-loss of ecological functions
  - CAO relationship with state, federal, local agency regulations
  - PCA (Protected Critical Area) sign spacing
  - WAC and resource updates as applicable
  - Qualified professional clarifications as needed
- Wetlands
  - Designation & Classification – reference current manuals, Ecology publications
  - Buffer regulations – habitat score updates, vegetated condition, impact minimization measures, habitat corridors, small wetland exemption, and buffer modification
- Critical Aquifer Recharge Areas
  - Designation categories
  - Land use standards

- Site assessment & protection plans
- Stream Inflow Rules – WAC and WRIA references
- Seawater intrusion areas – DOH standards
- Geologically Hazardous Areas
  - Known or suspected hazards – descriptions
- Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas
  - Reference current WDFW Priority Habitats and Species List
  - Site assessment criteria – distance, bald eagle regulatory change
  - Streams: protection standards - functions, vegetated buffer condition, structure setback, buffer modifications

**Clarity and Efficiency** – The following changes are proposed to improve clarity for implementing the Critical Areas Ordinance (CAO):

- Readability and administration
- Reasonable Use and Variance language
- CARA section – improve content and organization

Project documents including the 2<sup>nd</sup> draft, staff report, and other materials may be found on the project website referenced above.

## **SEPA Threshold Determination**

Skagit County determined on May 15, 2025, that this proposal does not have a probable significant adverse impact on the environment and issued a SEPA Determination of Non-Significance (DNS). An environmental impact statement is not required under the State Environmental Policy Act, RCW 43.21C.030(2)(c). This determination was made after review of a completed environmental checklist and other information on file with the lead agency and is available upon request. Pursuant to SCC 16.12.210, no administrative appeal process is available for this legislative action.

## **How to Comment**

Option 1: Email comments are preferred and must be sent to [pdscomments@co.skagit.wa.us](mailto:pdscomments@co.skagit.wa.us) with the proposal name (“Skagit County 2025 Critical Areas Ordinance Update”) in the subject line. Include your comments in the body of your email message rather than as attachments.

Option 2: Paper comments must be printed on 8½x11 paper and mailed or delivered to:

Skagit County Planning and Development Services  
Comments on “Skagit County 2025 Critical Areas Ordinance Update”  
1800 Continental Place  
Mount Vernon WA 98273

All comments must be received by the deadline referenced above and include your full name and mailing address. Comments not meeting these requirements will not be considered.

Option 3: The Skagit County Board of County Commissioners is hosting meetings in the Skagit County Commissioners' Hearing Room at 1800 Continental Place, Mount Vernon, WA 98273. You may also comment in person or via Zoom. If you wish to provide verbal testimony, please send an email to [pdscomments@co.skagit.wa.us](mailto:pdscomments@co.skagit.wa.us), with your name, phone number, and include a request to be added to the speakers list in the body of the email. You can also sign up to testify in person at the hearing. Public hearing testimony is usually limited to three minutes, so written comments are preferred.

Anyone who plans to attend the public hearing and has special needs or disabilities should contact Planning and Development Services at (360) 416-1320 at least 96 hours before the hearing to discuss and arrange any special accommodations.

To view the live stream on Skagit21: <https://www.skagitcounty.net/Departments/TV21>

You may also attend the meeting remotely through your telephone or from your computer, tablet or smartphone with this link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87180001980?pwd=eEVGUGkxZ3NkQkhYSnhBMEO2RTQrdz09>

or by calling: 1 (253) 215-8782 (Tacoma)

Meeting ID: 871 8000 1980 Passcode: 143573

*Transmitted to Skagit Herald: July 8, 2025*

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