



# Planning & Development Services

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## Memorandum

To: Skagit County Planning Commissioners  
From: Robby Eckroth, AICP, Senior Planner  
Date: November 12, 2024  
Re: Summary of Public Comments Received for the 2024 Annual Docket

### Summary

Planning and Development Services (PDS) is providing this staff report in advance of the November 19, 2024 Planning Commission deliberations meeting to discuss public comments on the 2024 Docket. The comment period was from October 3rd to October 31<sup>st</sup> at 4:30pm. More information and supplemental documents for the proposed amendment can be found on the [2024 Docket Webpage](#). The comments on the 2024 Docket are presented in Exhibit C which includes a table of contents with each comment numbered.

### Public Notice and Participation

- On October 3rd, 2024, the Staff Report for the 2024 Docket was published to the County website. Skagit County published and gave notice of the opening of the comment period on the 2024 docket code changes.
- Notice was published on October 3rd, 2024, to the Skagit Valley Herald and the SEPA DNS was mailed to the SEPA distribution list and on the same date the notice was posted to the PDS and legal notice webpage.
- For the one rezone application: LR24-01 Washington State Parks Deception Pass OSRSI, notification of the SEPA DNS and comment period was mailed to all properties within 300 feet on October 2, 2024.
- On October 29, 2024, the Planning Commission held a public hearing on the proposed changes as authorized by Skagit County Code (SCC) 14.08.080. A full transcript of the meeting can be found on the [Planning Commission Agenda and Archive page](#).
- A total of 51 comments were submitted during the comment period.

## Public Comment Summary

The following section provides the number of comments, written and verbal, as well as the source of the comments and a basic overview. There is no attempt to capture all the comments made in this summary. All timely comments are provided to the Planning Commission which are attached in [Exhibit C](#).

### Citizen Petitions

#### **LR24-01 Deception Pass State Park Rezone**

##### **Comments Summary**

1 - Written Comments: Friends of Skagit County

0 - Hearing testimony

Friends of Skagit County commented that the proposed zone change would create more consistency in how Skagit County zones OSRSI properties but recommends that the zone change not affect property tax, assessment, and fees charged to the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission.

#### **LR24-02 Bayview Ridge Light Industrial Buffer Reductions**

##### **Comments Summary**

51 - Written Comments: Applicant, Port of Skagit, Friends of Skagit County, 49 Citizen Comments

5 - Hearing testimony

Skagit County received 48 comments and testimony from four citizens with concerns regarding amendments to the Bayview Ridge Light Industrial zoning buffer amendment. The comments emphasize the need for careful planning to balance growth with the protection of established neighboring residents' interests and for a reevaluation of the code amendments and greater consideration of community concerns. Specific concerns and recommendations include:

1. **Buffer Requirements:** Maintain the 250-foot buffer for loading operations to maintain noise mitigation from trucks and forklifts.
2. **Noise Mitigation:** Require stricter noise control measures and specifically reference the noise control requirements listed in SCC 9.50.
3. **Lighting Regulations:** Further limit outdoor lighting near residential boundaries. Examples included requiring full cut-off lighting unless located on the opposite side of an industrial building, a performance standard limiting lighting to 0 foot-candles near property lines and requiring photometric analysis.
4. **Mechanical Equipment:** Require equipment to be enclosed to block visibility and dampen noise.
5. **Landscaping Standards:** Require higher standards for tree sizes and the inclusion of berms for noise reduction. Examples provided include increasing landscape area widths to 50-feet and a requirement for landscaping to provide year-round screening.
6. **Fences:** Fences should be site obscuring and ensure security to residential properties. There should be no constructed gaps in fences.

7. **Building Setbacks to Residential Zones:** Increase the existing 50-foot building setback from residential zones to 100-feet.
8. **Building Height:** The existing 35-foot building height limit within 100-feet of the residential zoning boundary should be reduced as tall buildings near residential zones are visually obtrusive.
9. **Industrial Building Clustering:** Similar to Conservation and Reserve Developments (CaRD), clustering provisions of SCC 14.18.300 should apply to industrial land divisions as it would soften the impacts to surrounding residential properties.

The Port of Skagit submitted a comment on October 31, 2024, in support of the proposed amendments as the amendment will allow for more industrial development and economic productivity.

The petitioner's representative commented in support of the amendments. However, the petitioner does not believe that buffering between industrial uses to non-residential land uses is fairly addressed and there should be fewer buffering requirements to properties without residential uses. The property to the north of the petitioner's property has an agricultural processing use, and no residential use.

## **LR24-04 Airport Environs Overlay Disclosure Amendment**

### **Comments Summary**

2 - Written Comments: Port of Skagit, Friends of Skagit County  
0 - Hearing testimony

The petitioner, Port of Skagit submitted a comment letter on October 31, 2024, explaining the requested amendments and underscoring the significance of heightening awareness regarding the airport and ensuring compatibility with its surrounding land use.

Friends of Skagit County submitted comments asking if the amendments to the Airport Environs Overlay (AEO) will affect the Rural Reserve (RRv) or Bayview Ridge Residential (B-RR) zones, and if there are any conflicts with SCC 14.16.215 – Bayview Ridge Urban Growth Area.

## **County-Initiated Petitions**

### **C24-1 Countywide Planning Policies Update**

#### **Comments Summary**

1 - Written Comments: Friends of Skagit County  
0 - Hearing testimony

Friends of Skagit County commented questioning whether the disbandment removes one of the opportunities for citizen review and public comment on proposed boundary adjustments. Depending on the applicable state law in each boundary change scenario, opportunity for citizen review depends on the type of boundary change.

## **C24-2 Fences Section**

### **Comments Summary**

1 - Written Comments

1 - Hearing testimony

Friends of Skagit County submitted a comment asking if replacement of existing fencing would need to meet the new code requirements or if a fence could be replaced in the original configuration.

## **C24-3 Storage of Unlicensed and/or Inoperable Vehicles Amendment**

### **Comments Summary**

1 - Written Comments

0 - Hearing testimony

The Port of Skagit supports the amendment. The Port currently owns AVR and NRI zoned properties and understands that the use of storage of unlicensed and/or inoperable vehicles may be removed from these zones.

Friends of Skagit County submitted a comment noting that the amendment appears to require that vehicles must be stored inside of garages, barns or other closed structures in any zone other than RFS and URC-I zones.

## **C24-4 General Code Language Clean Up**

### **Comments Summary**

1 - Written Comment

0 - Hearing testimony

Friends of Skagit County commented and requested that the height limitation in the Guemes Island Overlay apply to future flood hazard areas.

## **Next Steps**

The Planning Commission is scheduled to deliberate the proposed 2024 docket petitions on November 19, 2024. Pursuant to SCC 14.08.080(4) and (5), the Planning Commission shall consider public comments and deliberate on any proposed plan, plan amendment, or development regulation. At the completion of deliberations, the Planning Commission shall vote to recommend adopting, not adopting, or amending the proposed amendments. Recommendations shall be by a recorded motion which shall incorporate findings of fact and the reasons for the recommendations.

## **Attachments**

**Exhibit A** – September 10, 2024, Staff Report

**Exhibit B** – Proposed Docket Amendments

**Exhibit C** – Compiled Public Comments