



Skagit County Planning Commission

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Chair Tim Raschko **Vice Chair** Tammy Candler
Members Angela Day, Amy Hughes, Jed Holmes, Kiera Wright, Joe Woodmansee, Patsy Good, Xuhua Mu

Tuesday, January 27, 2026

Skagit County Planning Commission's Recorded Motion regarding Agritourism Code Amendments

Proposal publication date: September 25, 2025

Proposal name: Agritourism Code Amendments

Project Website: <https://www.skagitcounty.net/departments/planningandpermit/agtoursmmmain.htm>

Public hearing body: Skagit County Planning Commission

Public hearing date: Tuesday, October 14, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.

Written comment deadline: Thursday, October 16, 2025 at 4:30 p.m.

PC deliberations (closed record public hearing): Tuesday, November 18, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.
Continued on Tuesday, January 27, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.

After considering the written and spoken comments and considering the record before it, the Planning Commission enters the following findings of fact, reasons for recommendation, and recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners on the proposed Agritourism code amendments.

Findings of Fact and Reasons for Recommendation

1. **Farmland Preservation.** Preserving agricultural land has been a land use planning priority in Skagit County since adoption of the first Skagit County Comprehensive Plan in 1965.
2. **Growth Management Act.** The Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA) promotes agricultural land preservation by requiring local governments to designate and protect natural resource lands, including farmlands of long-term commercial significance.

3. **Agricultural Advisory Board and Agritourism Community Advisory Group**
Recommendations. Planning and Development Services established a Community Advisory Group to develop Agritourism policy recommendations. Based on input from the Community Advisory Group and the Agricultural Advisory Board, PDS developed a rough draft of the revised code and shared it for further review. The current draft of the agritourism code amendment, reflects recommendations received throughout this process.
4. **Purpose and Intent of Draft Amendments.** The proposed amendments are intended to help preserve working farmland, diversify farm income, increase public awareness and appreciation of agriculture, and enhance farm viability. The amendments place limitations on agritourism in order to preserve the area's rural agricultural character, prevent the permanent conversion of farmland, and prevent interference with surrounding farming operations and practices.
5. **2025 Skagit County Comprehensive Plan Natural Resources Element.** The Agricultural Resource Lands section of the 2025 Skagit County Comprehensive Plan establishes policies that ensure the long-term stability and productivity of the county's agricultural lands and industries. The following Comprehensive plan goals and policies support staff's development of the draft code recommendations:
 - a. **Goal 4-3.** Promote preservation of agricultural land for agricultural uses, minimize non-farming uses on agricultural lands; and develop incentive programs to promote farming.
 - b. **Goal 4A-4.** Land uses allowed on designated agricultural land shall promote agriculture, agricultural support services, and promote diverse agricultural industries.
 - c. **Policy 4A-4.5 Special Events and Activities:** Special events and activities on agricultural lands shall be conducted in ways that reduce potential impacts resulting from the activity. Those impacts include but are not limited to traffic, litter, trespass, and sanitation.
 - d. **Goal 4A-5.** Minimize land use conflicts and promote mitigation of conflicts on the lands adjacent to agricultural resource lands.
6. **Consistency with Growth Management Hearings Board decisions and court decisions.** The proposed Agritourism amendments were reviewed by Skagit County staff for consistency with applicable Growth Management Hearings Board and court decisions.
7. **Public Comment and Public Hearings.** The draft Agritourism amendments were released to the public for comment from September 25, 2025, to October 16, 2025. A public hearing was held by the Planning Commission to receive public testimony on October 14, 2025. All comments received and information shared to the Planning

Commission are found on the project website. Public comments and testimony were recorded, and the Department provided a written response to the comments received.

8. The Planning Commission acknowledges unintended negative consequences to local community events promoting agriculture by now requiring them to obtain permits.
9. The Planning commission acknowledges the importance of restricting agricultural accessory uses and activities to those that are consistent with the size, scale and intensity of the existing agricultural use of the property and existing buildings on the site.

Recommendation

The Planning Commission recommends that the Board of County Commissioners **approve** the proposed Agritourism Code Amendments with the following recommended changes:

1. The Planning Commission recommends amending a portion of the Agritourism definition in SCC 14.18.407(1)(a) and recommends replacing it with the following language:

Agritourism provides opportunities for working farms and ranches to preserve and promote Skagit County's agricultural lands. Agritourism allows for educational and experiential activities that are related to, and supportive of, agricultural production. Agritourism activities must have a direct connection to an actively managed, ongoing agricultural operation. Agritourism helps agricultural producers keep working lands in production by diversifying and enhancing their income. Agritourism activities must be incidental and subordinate to existing agricultural operations.


2. Require Agritourism 1 uses to obtain approval of an Administrative Use Permit.
3. Remove SCC 14.18.407(3)(a)(x), which allows activities that are associated with the Skagit Valley Tulip Festival to run for 30 consecutive-days in addition to the allowed days specified below for Agritourism 1, 2, and 3 between March 15 and May 15.
4. Add music venues and concerts to the list of prohibited uses under SCC 14.13.100(2)(d) for the Agricultural–Natural Resources Zone.
5. The Planning Commission recommends that the department bring Limited Event Venues back to the Planning Commission for further consideration removing the use from rural zones.

Commission Vote	Support	Oppose	Absent	Abstain
Tim Raschko, Chair	X			
Tammy Candler, Vice Chair	X			
Amy Hughes	X			
Xuhua Mu		X		
Jed Holmes		X		
Angela Day	X			
Joe Woodmansee			X	
Kiera Wright		X		
Patsy Good	X			
Total	5	3	1	0

The Planning Commission recommends that the Board of County Commissioners adopt the proposed Agritourism code amendments.


This recorded motion **is approved** on this 27th day of January, 2026.

SKAGIT COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
SKAGIT COUNTY, WASHINGTON



Tim Raschko, Chair

1-27-26
Date



Jack Moore, Secretary

2-9-26
Date