



Comprehensive Plan Policy or Development Regulation Amendment Suggestion

Planning & Development Services · 1800 Continental Place · Mount Vernon WA 98273
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Per RCW 36.70A.470(2), this form is intended for use by any interested person, including applicants, citizens, hearing examiners, and staff of other agencies, to suggest amendments to Skagit County’s Comprehensive Plan policies or its development regulations, which are contained in Skagit County Code Title 14. Please do not combine multiple unrelated Comprehensive Plan policy or development regulation amendments on a single form. This form is for policy or development regulation amendments; use the Comprehensive Plan Map Amendment Request form for changes to the land use/zoning map.

Submitted By

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Proposal Description

Please answer all of the questions below that are applicable to your suggestion.

1. Describe your proposed amendment.

Clarify the definition and function of the Conservation and Reserve Developments (CaRD) within the Comprehensive Plan and code. Reconcile the different definition in the Comprehensive Plan with the definition in the Code.

2. Describe the reasons your proposed amendment is needed or important.

CaRDs were originally proposed to promote cluster development in rural zones and reserve larger portions of the CaRDs as “reserved”. At least one former Planning Director stated that the “reserve” portion of the CaRD is for future development. Other staff have stated that the “reserve” section must have a permanent easement on that section of the CaRD that prohibits future development. The purpose of this request is to ask that staff and the Planning Commission clarify the historical intent of the CaRDs and make appropriate changes to the Comp Plan definition of CaRD so that the public fully understands its function and outcome.

3. If you are suggesting revision to a particular section of the Comprehensive Plan, please identify which section(s):

Current Definition in Comprehensive Plan: Conservation and Reserve Development (CaRD)

A technique of land division characterized by the placement of dwellings and accessory buildings in a pattern of development which reduces impervious surface area, lowers costs of development and maintenance and retains larger expanses of property available for agriculture, forestry, or continuity of ecological functions characteristic of the property to be developed.

The current definition does not state that it is not a zoning regulation, nor how a CaRD development interfaces with zoning. Nor does it state that in some instances the reserve parcels can be developed and how that might happen – a future Comprehensive Plan amendment or other mechanism.

Current definition in the Code:

Conservation and Reserve Development (CaRD): a technique of residential land development characterized by the placement of lots, dwellings and accessory buildings in a pattern of development which reduces impervious surface area, lowers costs of development and maintenance, and retains larger expanses of property available for agriculture, forestry, recreation, future development or continuity of open space or ecological functions characteristic of the property to be developed. A CaRD, in some cases, allows higher densities than normally permitted in the zone, but also has greater design requirements. A CaRD may also modify certain requirements of the zone, as specifically allowed by this Code. When the creation of lots is desired, a CaRD is done in conjunction with a land division.

4. If you are suggesting revision to the Comprehensive Plan, would the revision create inconsistencies with existing sections of the Comprehensive Plan? If so, please list those sections:

No, unless there is more than one purpose of the “reserve” parcels already in different sections of the Comprehensive Plan or code.

5. *If you are suggesting revision to the Comprehensive Plan, would the revision require corresponding amendments to the County's development regulations?*

Yes, if the Code is unclear about when the reserve portion is for future development and when it is for conservation.

6. *If you are suggesting revision to a particular section of Skagit County Code Title 14, please identify which section(s).*

Chapter 14.0.020 Definitions if a change is needed to clarify the function and outcome of a CaRD, relationship of its use to zoning, information on what the reserve portion is allowed as future development and when it is conserved, permanently or temporarily and any other information that allows the public to understand the outcomes of a CaRD land subdivision/development.

7. *If you are suggesting this development regulation amendment as a result of a particular project or permit application, please identify which project or application:*

No.

8. *If you are suggesting specific language as part of your amendment, please attach that specific language. Specific language is not required.*

9. *Describe why existing Comprehensive Plan policies should not continue to be in effect or why they no longer apply.*

CaRDs were proposed to manage rural sprawl, cluster housing and create a reserve portion of the development. Clarifying the definition using the language from the code and the Comprehensive Plan, historical ordinances and resolutions will determine the need to change the policies (or not).

10. *Describe how the amendment complies with the Comprehensive Plan's community vision statements, goals, objectives, and policy directives.*

The Comprehensive Plan and the County Planning Policies clearly emphasize identification and preservation of Natural Resource Lands including agriculture, forestry and mineral parcels. CaRDs on land that was used for agricultural purposes, in Ag-NRL zoning or in other rural zones, jeopardize the ability of the county to maintain an agricultural land base that is the foundation of Skagit's economic success. Prohibiting conversion of farmland (as well as forest and mineral lands) should be clear and uncompromised in the Comprehensive Plan.

11. *Describe the anticipated impacts to be caused by the change, including geographic area affected and issues presented.*

Clarifying the definition of the "reserve" section of CaRDs will determine the future uses of the reserved parcels in existing CaRDs in rural Skagit County. It may also affect the calculation of available future buildable lands in the County as well as ensure the acres available for future agricultural uses.

12. *Describe how adopted functional plans and Capital Facilities Plans support the change.*

N/A

13. *Describe any public review of the request that has already occurred.*

A similar, but more broad request was made in prior years as part of a proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendment request that was rejected by staff and not considered by the Planning Commission.

Fees. No fees are required for a policy or code change suggestion, per Skagit County Fee Schedule, SCC 14.08.030(3).

Docketing. SCC Chapter 14.08 governs the process for docketing of Comprehensive Plan amendments; suggestions for changes to the development regulations are docketed following the same process. Docketing of a suggestion is procedural only and does not constitute a decision by the Board of County Commissioners as to whether the amendment will ultimately be approved. Amendments are usually concluded by the end of the year following the request. State law generally prohibits the County from amending its Comprehensive Plan more than once per year.

Submission deadline. Suggestions must be received by the last business day of July for docketing. Suggestions received after that date will not be considered until the following year's docket.

How to Submit. Submit your suggestion via email (preferred) to pdscomments@co.skagit.wa.us or to Planning & Development Services at the address above.