



Comprehensive Plan Policy or Development Regulation Amendment Suggestion

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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

Name	<u>Phil Shephard, President</u>	Organization	<u>Island Grown Farmers Cooperative (IGFC)</u>	
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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 “Agricultural and food processing, storage and transportation”, a permitted use in *Bayview Ridge Light Industrial (BR-LI)* zone, by adding **Agricultural slaughtering facilities** as an accessory use incidental to Agricultural and food processing, storage and transportation facilities, provided that the portion of the premise dedicated to slaughtering is (1) entirely enclosed within the interior of the facility, and (2) occupies less than 5,000 square feet of the total processing facility.

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

IGFC, a five county farmer-owned cooperative requests the clarification of the Skagit County Code 14.16.180 by adding “Agricultural slaughtering facilities” as a accessory use in the BR-LI to allow USDA inspected local meat production and distribution to ensure cost effective production. This change is needed to allow businesses that process local meat to slaughter animals at food processing businesses located at the Port of Skagit Bayview Business Park within the Bayview Ridge Light Industrial zone (BR-LI). The indoor slaughter facility will be connected to the meat processing plant, the most cost effective way to process local meat. There is no significant impact to adjacent businesses as modern practices dictate receiving and processing a daily supply of animals in indoor, low stress conditions. Live animals will not be held overnight at this site.

Agricultural slaughtering facilities are allowed in the Hamilton Industrial (H-I) zone and the Natural Resource Industrial zone (Ag-NRL). The locations of properties with these zoning designations are too far from the center of production and the major transportation corridor and/or are being fully used by ongoing businesses.

The industrial sites in the Bayview Business Park are ready for development and use by IGFC, with utilities, roads, and industrial zoning. The location is adjacent or near other agricultural processing facilities and will be part of the Port of Skagit “ag business park” strategies.

With expanded processing capacity IGFC can increase its membership and provide additional livestock producers in the region with affordable access to livestock processing. IGFC was founded 20 years ago and has been based here in Skagit County the entire time. There are now 77 member farms that are part of the co-op, across the five northwest Washington counties. There are only a handful of slaughter options for local livestock producers and IGFC has been instrumental in the economic sustainability of these 77 farms by providing USDA inspected meat processing the past 15 years. By 2024, the cooperative will support an expanded membership of over 130 member farms with a 70% increase over 2019 revenue. Expanded livestock processing will help sustain even more small livestock farms in Northwest Washington State, support small and large producers and provide additional stability to the Northwest farm economy.

Livestock production is important to Northwest Washington. The farm gate value of livestock produced for meat is over \$45 million. Beef cows, hogs, sheep, and goats are produced in our region. Many of these animals are processed out of our region.

Summary of farm gate values:

County	Number of Farms	Total Farms (Acres)	Total Farm-Gate Value	Livestock Production*
Skagit	1,041	97,664	\$ 287,096,000	\$ 10,026,000
Whatcom	1,712	102,523	\$ 372,850,000	\$ 25,658,000
Snohomish	1,558	63,671	\$ 157,565,000	\$ 7,427,000
Island	390	15,850	\$ 12,002,000	\$ 2,719,000
San Juan	316	18,402	\$ 4,119,000	\$ 1,113,000
Total	5,017	298,110	\$ 833,632,000	\$ 46,943,000

* Not including dairy

Source: USDA NASS 2017 Census of Washington

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

n/a

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. This will not create inconsistencies with existing sections of the Comprehensive Plan. This as clarification of an existing use. Slaughtering will be an accessory use to meat processing and fall under a permitted use: **Agricultural and food processing, storage, and transportation**, by providing additional product to process at meat processing facilities.

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

n/a

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

14.16.180 Bayview Ridge Light Industrial (BR-LI)

(2) Permitted Uses

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:*

Island Grown Farmers Cooperative meat processing plant in the Bayview Business Park

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

Add to the accessory uses:

Agricultural slaughtering facilities

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

n/a

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

The elements of the **Skagit County Comprehensive Plan** fully support this type of development in industrial zones. The following are excerpts from the plan:

Introduction & Summary

Agriculture is a dominant factor in Skagit County's economy and community character. Farming and ranching have been an important part of the community's heritage since early settlement in the 1800's. The Skagit Valley is regarded as one of the most fertile valleys in the world, producing major commodities, specialty crops, and vegetable seeds and flowers with unique market niches.

[This clarification will support the continued success of agriculture in Skagit County.]

Major Themes of the Community Vision

Strive for government efficiency: This plan calls for efficient delivery of services in a cost-effective way by: relying primarily upon cities, towns and special purpose districts as the providers of local facilities and services appropriate to serve those local needs, except where the County is a local service provider.

[The Port of Skagit, as a special purpose district, provides an appropriate location within an industrial zone in developing the Agricultural Business Park.]

Support economic opportunities:

This plan strives to promote a strong and diverse economy for Skagit County residents through policies and programs that promote new business opportunities, increase family wage jobs and create a predictable regulatory environment for businesses and citizens. Sustainable economic development efforts will focus on providing all communities with a balance of jobs and housing and helping communities with redevelopment or new economic initiatives.

[This clarification will add a accessory use that will create family wage jobs through sustainable economic development]

Protect and retain rural lifestyles: This plan seeks to maintain the unique rural lifestyle for which Skagit County is widely known and cherished. Skagit County's rural communities and open spaces require protection and conservation from urban sprawl and suburban development patterns. Rural community character and open spaces are a valued part of Skagit County's diversity.

Protect and conserve agriculture, forest and mineral resource lands: Natural resource lands, such as farms and timber lands, provide economic, social, cultural and environmental benefits. This plan ensures that these areas, including mineral resource lands, continue to be viable today and into the future.

[Locating these facilities in an industrial zone will insure that natural resource lands are not converted to industrial uses.]

Respect property rights: This plan respects private property rights by assuring that regulatory and administrative actions do not result in an unconstitutional taking of private property. Skagit County, in exercising its land use regulatory authority to protect the public health, safety and general welfare (Article XI Section 11 of the State Constitution), must respect private property rights by not exceeding the constitutional limits on its authority. Planning, land use regulations and zoning protect individual and community rights in the following ways:

- *by providing codes, ordinances and regulations that organize a community's physical layout;*
- *by attaining the widest range of land uses without degradation, risk to health or safety, or other undesirable and unintended consequences; and*
- *by protecting and conserving the natural resources that provide us with clean air and water*

[Locating these facilities in an industrial zone align with these principles.]

Chapter 2 Urban, Open Space, and Land Use

GMA Mandate

The following GMA Planning Goals are directly relevant to the urban, open space and land use matters addressed in this chapter:

- *Commercial, industrial and residential acreage shall be designated to meet future needs without adversely affecting natural resource lands, critical areas, and rural character and life styles.(CPP 5.6)*
- *Lands within designated agricultural resource areas should remain in large parcels and ownership patterns conducive to commercial agricultural operations and production. (CPP 5.10)*

[The current permitted uses have the impact of not allowing for practical location of agricultural slaughtering facilities in Skagit County. Without slaughtering capacity, it is difficult to operate meat processing facilities at a scale that can meet the needs of the local producers and meet the demand of the regional market for local, sustainably produced meat. More meat processing capacity will support commercial agricultural operations and the larger parcels livestock production requires.]

Chapter 3, Rural

Natural Resource Industrial

The Natural Resource Industrial (NRI) designation is intended to support the production of agricultural, forest, and aquatic products by allowing processing facilities, limited direct resource sales, and limited natural resource support services. Examples of typical NRI uses include saw mills, agricultural or forest industry equipment maintenance, agricultural processing plants, and

seafood processing and on-site sales. Mineral processing activities are generally guided by separate policies found in the Natural Resource Lands Element of the Comprehensive Plan. The NRI designation provides a location for natural resource processing and support services that does not remove designated natural resource lands from production. The NRI designation may qualify as a LAMIRD under RCW 36.70A.070(5)(d)(i), if the site has been in industrial use since 1990, or under RCW 36.70A.070(5)(d)(iii), if the use is new.

Priority consideration will be given to siting of new rural commercial and industrial uses in areas of existing development, including existing Rural Villages and existing Rural Centers, followed by already developed sites in the rural area, and only lastly to wholly undeveloped sites in the rural area. (CPP 2.6)

Value added natural resource industries shall be encouraged. (CPP 5.12)

The Comprehensive Plan shall support and encourage economic development and employment to provide opportunities for prosperity. (CPP 5.15)

Goal 3A Protect the rural landscape, character, and lifestyle by:

- (c) Maintaining the character and historic and cultural roles of existing rural communities;
- (d) Allowing land uses which are compatible and in keeping with the protection of important rural landscape features, resources, and values;
- (e) Encouraging economic prosperity for rural areas;

[Meat processing facilities that are located in designated industrial zones are in total alignment with Chapter 4. Meat processing is a value-added economic development activity that supports agriculture and creates family-wage jobs. There are no negative impacts when locating within existing industrial zones. There are no locations available with Natural Resource Industrial zoning designation]

Chapter 4 Natural Resource Lands

Guiding Principles: Agricultural Resource Lands

Protect the agricultural land resource and farming in Skagit County; endeavor to minimize the loss of the resource; mitigate unavoidable losses; and replace lost resources whenever possible.

These principles shall guide Skagit County's actions to:

- Preserve agricultural land for agricultural uses;
- Limit new non-agricultural uses and activities on agricultural resource lands;

Goal 4A-3 Promote preservation of agricultural land for agricultural uses, minimize non-farming uses on agricultural lands; and develop incentive programs to promote farming.

[The IGFC meat processing program currently contributes to the economic sustainability of farms in Skagit County. Locating this project in current industrial sites prevents conversion of farm land for these uses.]

11 Economic Development

Employment

Goal 11A Encourage the creation and retention of diverse employment opportunities.

Goal 11B Economic Viability: Promote the continued economic viability of Skagit County's natural resources and encourage related value-added production of agricultural, fishery, and forestry resources.

Diversity

Goal 11B-1 Complement Skagit County's natural resource industries by encouraging a diversified base of non-resource businesses and industries.

Capacity

Goal 11B-2 Plan for sufficient buildable industrial lands with access to infrastructure and services to meet the evolving needs of industry.

Redevelopment

Goal 11B-3 Encourage the re-use of existing industrial sites that have potential for reuse or redevelopment.

Infrastructure

Goal 11F-1 Work with ports, economic development organizations, cities, transportation providers, and agencies to provide the infrastructure necessary to facilitate a sustainable county economy.

[This proposed clarification of the BVR-IL zone uses supports the goals of Skagit County's Comprehensive Plan's economic development element.]

The Bayview Ridge Subarea Plan (2014)

The subarea plan was reviewed and is consistent with and is an adopted part of the Skagit County Comprehensive Plan. The proposed changes align with the elements of this plan and have no adverse impacts. Specific citations:

Chapter 2 Land Use, Community Character, and Design

The Light Industrial (BR-LI) zone provides for light manufacturing and related uses, encompasses the majority of the Port of Skagit ownership and additional properties east and south of the airport. This zone is designed for compatibility with the Skagit Regional Airport and establishes performance standards, including restrictions on building height and particulate and smoke emissions. Where the BR-LI zone abuts residential properties, buffers are required to protect the residential development.

[This accessory use is compatible with Skagit Regional Airport operations and conforms to building height standards and emission restrictions. The site of the IGFC project does not border residential property.]

Chapter 3 Business & Industrial Development

Objective 3A-1 Create and maintain diverse employment opportunities that meet the changing income needs of Skagit County residents.

Policy 3A-1.1 Facilitate the creation and retention of family wage jobs to meet the needs and demands of Skagit County households.

Policy 3A-5.6 Encourage economic development that creates a net positive fiscal impact for Skagit County and local communities.

[IGFC will create new family wage jobs through completion of this project and will have a net positive impact on the economy of Skagit County.]

Policy 3A-2.1 Plan for a diversity of ready-to-build sites with sufficient infrastructure and support services needed to meet demand for industrial land.

[IGFC will utilize an industrial site that is part of the Port of Skagit's inventory of developed lots.]

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

The addition of the agricultural slaughtering facility will provide a larger quantity of Skagit County meat to be processed and sold within the region. The added processing service will ensure current and future producers can raise, process, package and distribute locally, without added shipping costs.

At least 10 new jobs will be created over 5 years.

Projections show that regional producer/member gross income will increase by over \$3 million during the first five years of implementation of this project. This will support the preservation of Skagit County farm land.

Plans call for by-products to be processed by a bio-digester to create energy.

Industrial land will be used for the project, there will be no conversion of natural resource lands.

No significant negative impacts have been identified.

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

This zoning change will not create a need for changes to capital facilities at the Port of Skagit Bayview Business Park. Planning and implementation for development in the business park are in place. Development of meat processing facilities will not require increasing capacity of facilities at the business park (water, streets, wastewater, fire suppression, law enforcement, education, and parks).

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

n/a

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.