

ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

A. BACKGROUND

1. Name of proposed project, if applicable:

Two Skagit County-initiated comprehensive plan policy/text amendments being considered as part of the 2011 Comprehensive Plan Amendment Docket.

2. Name of Applicant:

Skagit County Planning & Development Services

3. Address and phone number of applicant and contact person:

Skagit County Planning & Development Services
1800 Continental Place
Mt. Vernon, WA 98273
(360) 336-9410, ext. 5916
Contact: Kirk Johnson, Senior Planner/Team Leader

4. Date checklist prepared:

February 14, 2012

5. Agency requesting checklist:

Skagit County Planning & Development Services

6. Proposed timing or schedule (including phasing, if applicable):

The 2011 Comprehensive Plan Amendment Docket will be sent to the Department of Commerce 60-day review pursuant to RCW 36.70A.106. There will be a public comment period and public hearing before the Skagit County Planning Commission in 2012. Skagit County Planning and Development Services (the Department) intends to bring the proposal forward to the Board of County Commissioners in time for final action before the end of 2012.

7. Do you have any plans for future additions, expansion or further activity related to or connected with this proposal? If yes, explain.

The language of the two proposed comprehensive plan policy/text amendments may be revised during the public review and comment process.

A county-initiated proposal that may affect the Skagit County Comprehensive Plan and Bayview Ridge Subarea Plan policies, text and related maps is not covered by this DNS but may be the subject of later State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) review by Skagit County.

8. List any environmental information you know about that has been prepared, or will be prepared, directly related to this proposal.

The following are SEPA environmental documents prepared for various proposed amendments and updates to the Skagit County Comprehensive Plan leading to the current version of the Skagit County Comprehensive Plan:

1. Addendum (Proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendments and Development Regulations Intended to Satisfy Skagit County's Outstanding GMA Obligations, Including Resolution of Issues Connected to Pending Appeals before the Western Washington Growth Management Hearings Board) to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, Final Environmental Impact Statement, Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement, and Supplement Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Skagit County Comprehensive Plan, February 3, 2000.
2. Addendum to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, Final Environmental Impact Statement, Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement, and Supplemental Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Skagit County Comprehensive Plan. Integrated SEPA/GMA Report, 2005 Growth Management Act Update, February 17, 2006.

9. Do you know of pending applications for governmental approvals of other proposals directly affecting the property covered by your proposal? If yes, explain.

There are three citizen-initiated site-specific Comprehensive Plan Land Use and Zoning Map amendment proposals on the 2011 Comprehensive Plan Amendment Docket that could be affected by this proposal. These are addressed under separate SEPA environmental checklists.

10. List any government approvals of permits that will be needed for your proposals, if known.

A public hearing before the Skagit County Planning Commission will be held and a recommendation from the Planning Commission will be forwarded to the Board of County Commissioners. Board of County Commissioner approval is required before any change to the Comprehensive Plan. The Board of County Commissioners' action, if appealed, is subject to review by the Western Washington Growth Management Hearings Board.

11. Give a complete description of your proposal, including the proposed uses and the size of the project and site. There are several questions later in this checklist which ask you to

describe certain aspects of your proposal. You do not need to repeat those answers of this page.

The proposal consists of two (2) county-initiated comprehensive plan policy/text amendments:

- C-1. Policy amendment proposal to further refine rezone requirements for Rural Intermediate and Rural Village land use designations.
- C-2. Minor “housekeeping” policy and text amendments to correct scrivener’s errors.

C-1. Rural Intermediate (RI) and Rural Village (RV) Comprehensive Plan Policy Amendments

This first amendment would address the issue of potential Rural Intermediate (RI) and Rural Village (RV) expansions. These two land use designations are considered limited areas of more intensive rural development (LAMIRDs) under the Skagit County Comprehensive Plan and the Growth Management Act. This amendment would revise the policies regarding expansions of Rural Intermediate (RI) and Rural Village (RV) areas in the Comprehensive Plan. A new policy would allow Rural Intermediate zone expansions only “if and when proposed as part of a community subarea plan.” Under current policy, the outer boundaries of Rural Villages may only be expanded through a community plan or through a state-required, periodic comprehensive plan update.

The proposed policy amendment would also require any proposed Rural Intermediate or Rural Village boundary expansion “to consider and evaluate the use of transfer of developments, conservation easements or other mechanisms to facilitate density transfer or extinguishment of an equivalent number of rural or resource land development rights...”

The purpose of this amendment proposal is to protect the county’s long-term rural character, productive natural resource lands, and environmental quality and to mitigate LAMIRD expansions.

C-2 Housekeeping Revisions to Comprehensive Plan Policies and Text

This amendment proposes to review and make minor non-substantive revisions to Comprehensive Plan policies and text to correct inconsistencies in policy enumeration, Skagit County Code references, and/or to update policy language references to GMA requirements that have changed since the 2005 Comprehensive Plan Update (e.g., change “7 year GMA Updates” to “GMA-Mandated Updates,” etc.).

12. Location of the proposal. Please give sufficient information for a person to understand the precise location of your proposed project, including a street address, if any. If a proposal would occur over a range of area, please provide the range or boundaries of the site(s). Please provide a legal description, site plan, vicinity map, and topographic map if possible. While you should submit any plans required by the agency, you are not required to duplicate maps

or detailed plans submitted with any permit applications related to this checklist. (Indicate if maps or plans have been submitted as part of a permit application.)

Proposed policy amendment C-1 could affect rural properties in the Rural Intermediate (RI), Rural Village Residential (RVR), and Rural Reserve (RRv) zones in various parts of Skagit County. See the Skagit County Comprehensive Plan Land Use and Zoning Map for the applicable locations of these zones.

B. ENVIRONMENTAL ELEMENTS

1. EARTH

- a. General description of the site (circle one): Flat, rolling, hilly, steep slopes, mountainous, other.**
Not applicable. This is a non-project proposal.
- b. What is the steepest slope on the site (approximate percent slope)?**
Not applicable. This is a non-project proposal.
- c. What general types of soils are found on the site (for example, clay, sand, gravel, peat, muck)? If you know the classification of agricultural soils, specify them and note any prime farmland.**
Not applicable. This is a non-project proposal.
- d. Are there surface indications or history of unstable soils in the immediate vicinity? If so, describe.**
Not applicable. This is a non-project proposal.
- e. Describe the purpose, type, and approximate quantities of any filling or grading proposed. Indicate source of fill.**
Not applicable. This is a non-project proposal.
- f. Could erosion occur as a result of clearing, construction, or use? If so, generally describe.**
Not applicable. This is a non-project proposal.
- g. About what percent of the site will be covered with impervious surfaces after project construction (for example, asphalt or buildings)?**
Not applicable. This is a non-project proposal.
- h. Proposed measures to reduce or control erosion, or other impacts to the earth, if any:**
Not applicable. This is a non-project proposal.

2. AIR

- a. **What types of emissions to the air would result from the proposal (i.e., dust, automobile, odors, industrial wood smoke) during construction and when the project is completed? If any, generally describe and give approximate quantities if known.**

Not applicable. This is a non-project proposal.

- b. **Are there any off-site sources of emissions or odor that may affect your proposal? If so, generally describe.**

Not applicable. This is a non-project proposal.

- c. **Proposed measures to reduce or control emissions or other impacts to air, if any:**

Not applicable. This is a non-project proposal.

3. WATER

a. **Surface:**

- 1) **Is there any surface water body on or in the immediate vicinity of the site (including year-round and seasonal streams, saltwater, lakes, ponds, wetlands)? If yes, describe type and provide names. If appropriate, state what stream or river it flows into.**

Not applicable. This is a non-project proposal.

- 2) **Will the project require any work over, in, or adjacent to (within 200 feet) the described waters? If yes, please describe and attach available plans.**

Not applicable. This is a non-project proposal.

- 3) **Estimate the amount of fill and dredge material that would be placed in or removed from surface water or wetlands and indicate the area of the site that would be affected. Indicate the source of fill material.**

Not applicable. This is a non-project proposal.

- 4) **Will the proposal require surface water withdrawals or diversions? Give general description, purpose, and approximate quantities if known.**

Not applicable. This is a non-project proposal.

- 5) **Does the proposal lie within a 100-year floodplain? If so, note location on the site plan.**

Not applicable. This is a non-project proposal.

- 6) **Does the proposal involve any discharges of waste materials to surface waters? If so, describe the type of waste and anticipated volume of discharge.**

Not applicable. This is a non-project proposal.

b. **Ground:**

- 1) **Will ground water be withdrawn, or will water be discharged to ground water? Give general description, purpose, and approximate quantities if known.**

Not applicable. This is a non-project proposal.

- 2) **Describe waste material that will be discharged into the ground from septic tanks or other sources, if any (for example: Domestic sewage; industrial, containing the following chemicals; agricultural; etc.). Describe the general size of the system, the number of such systems, the number of houses to be served (if applicable), or the number of animals or humans the system(s) are expected to serve.**

Not applicable. This is a non-project proposal.

c. Water runoff (including stormwater):

- 1) **Describe the source of runoff (including storm water) and method of collection and disposal, if any (include quantities, if known). Where will this water flow? Will this water flow into other waters? If so, describe.**

Not applicable. This is a non-project proposal.

- 2) **Could waste materials enter ground or surface waters? If so, generally describe.**

Not applicable. This is a non-project proposal.

d. Proposed measures to reduce or control surface, ground, and runoff water impacts, if any:

Not applicable. This is a non-project proposal.

4. PLANTS

- a. **Check or circle types of vegetation found on the site:** N/A non-project.

deciduous tree: alder, maple, aspen, other

evergreen tree: fir, cedar, pine, other

shrubs:

grass:

pasture:

crop or grain:

wet soil plants: cattail, buttercup, bullrush, skunk cabbage, other

water plants: water lily, eelgrass, milfoil, other

other types of vegetation:

- b. **What kind and amount of vegetation will be removed or altered?**

Not applicable. This is a non-project proposal.

- c. **List threatened or endangered species known to be on or near the site.**
Not applicable. This is a non-project proposal.
- d. **Proposed landscaping, use of native plants, or other measures to preserve or enhance vegetation on the site, if any:**
Not applicable. This is a non-project proposal.

5. ANIMALS

- a. **Circle any birds and animals which have been observed on or near the site or are known to be on or near the site:** Not applicable. This is a non-project proposal.

birds: hawk, heron, eagle, songbirds, other
mammals: deer, bear, elk, beaver, other
fish: bass, salmon, trout, herring, shellfish, other

- b. **List any threatened or endangered species known to be on or near the site.**
Not applicable. This is a non-project proposal.
- c. **Is the site part of a migration route? If so, explain.**
Not applicable. This is a non-project proposal.
- d. **Proposed measures to preserve or enhance wildlife, if any:**
Not applicable. This is a non-project proposal.

6. ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

- a. **What kinds of energy (electric, natural gas, oil, wood stove, solar) will be used to meet the completed project's energy needs? Describe whether it will be used for heating, manufacturing, etc.**
Not applicable. This is a non-project proposal.
- b. **Would your project affect the potential use of solar energy by adjacent properties? If so, generally describe.**
Not applicable. This is a non-project proposal.
- c. **What kinds of energy conservation features are included in the plans of this proposal? List other proposed measures to reduce or control energy impacts, if any:**
Not applicable. This is a non-project proposal.

7. ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

- a. **Are there any environmental health hazards, including exposure to toxic chemicals, risk of fire and explosion, spill, or hazardous waste, that could occur as a result of this proposal? If so, describe.**

Not applicable. This is a non-project proposal.

- 1) **Describe special emergency services that might be required.**

Not applicable. This is a non-project proposal.

- 2) **Proposed measures to reduce or control environmental health hazards, if any:**

Not applicable. This is a non-project proposal.

b. Noise

- 1) **What types of noise exist in the area which may affect your project (for example: traffic, equipment, operation, other)?**

Not applicable. This is a non-project proposal.

- 2) **What types and levels of noise would be created by or associated with the project on a short-term or a long-term basis (for example: traffic, construction, operation, other)? Indicate what hours noise would come from the site.**

Not applicable. This is a non-project proposal.

- 3) **Proposed measures to reduce or control noise impacts, if any:**

Not applicable. This is a non-project proposal.

8. LAND AND SHORELINE USE

- a. **What is the current use of the site and adjacent properties?**

Not applicable. This is a non-project proposal.

- b. **Has the site been used for agriculture? If so, describe.**

Not applicable. This is a non-project proposal.

- c. **Describe any structures on the site.**

Not applicable. This is a non-project proposal.

- d. **Will any structures be demolished? If so, what?**

Not applicable. This is a non-project proposal.

- e. **What is the current zoning classification of the site?**

Not applicable. This is a non-project proposal.

- f. **What is the current comprehensive plan designation of the site?**

Not applicable. This is a non-project proposal.

- g. If applicable, what is the current shoreline master program designation of the site?**

Not applicable. This is a non-project proposal.

- h. Has any part of the site been classified as an "environmentally sensitive" area? If so, specify.**

Not applicable. This is a non-project proposal.

- i. Approximately how many people would reside or work in the completed project?**

Not applicable. This is a non-project proposal.

- j. Approximately how many people would the completed project?**

Not applicable. This is a non-project proposal.

- k. Proposed measures to avoid or reduce displacement impacts, if any:**

Not applicable. This is a non-project proposal.

- l. Proposed measures to ensure the proposal is compatible with existing and projected land uses and plans, if any:**

Not applicable. This is a non-project proposal.

9. HOUSING

- a. Approximately how many units would be provided, if any? Indicate whether high, middle, or low-income housing.**

Not applicable. This is a non-project proposal.

- b. Approximately how many units, if any, would be eliminated? Indicate whether high, middle, or low-income housing.**

Not applicable. This is a non-project proposal.

- c. Proposed measures to reduce or control housing impacts, if any:**

Not applicable. This is a non-project proposal.

10. AESTHETICS

- a. What is the tallest height of any proposed structure(s), not including antennas; what is the principal exterior building material(s) proposed?**

Not applicable. This is a non-project proposal.

- b. What views in the immediate vicinity would be altered or obstructed?**

Not applicable. This is a non-project proposal.

- c. Proposed measures to reduce or control aesthetic impacts, if any:**

Not applicable. This is a non-project proposal.

11. LIGHT AND GLARE

- a. What type of light or glare will the proposal produce? What time of day would it mainly occur?**

Not applicable. This is a non-project proposal.

- b. Could light or glare from the finished project be a safety hazard or interfere with views?**

Not applicable. This is a non-project proposal.

- c. What existing off-site sources of light or glare may affect your proposal?**

Not applicable. This is a non-project proposal.

- d. Proposed measures to reduce or control light and glare impacts, if any:**

Not applicable. This is a non-project proposal.

12. RECREATION

- a. What designated and informal recreational opportunities are in the immediate vicinity?**

Not applicable. This is a non-project proposal.

- b. Would the proposed project displace any existing recreational uses? If so, describe.**

Not applicable. This is a non-project proposal.

- c. Proposed measures to reduce or control impacts on recreation, including recreation opportunities to be provided by the project or applicant, if any:**

Not applicable. This is a non-project proposal.

13. HISTORIC AND CULTURAL PRESERVATION

- a. Are there any places or objects listed on, or proposed for, national, state, or local preservation registers known to be on or next to the site? If so, generally describe.**

Not applicable. This is a non-project proposal.

- b. Generally describe any landmarks or evidence of historic, archaeological, scientific, or cultural importance known to be on or next to the site.**

Not applicable. This is a non-project proposal.

- c. Proposed measures to reduce or control impacts, if any:**

Not applicable. This is a non-project proposal.

14. TRANSPORTATION

- a. **Identify public streets and highways serving the site, and describe proposed access to the existing street system. Show on site plans, if any.**
Not applicable. This is a non-project proposal.
- b. **Is site currently served by public transit? If not, what is the approximate distance to the nearest transit stop?**
Not applicable. This is a non-project proposal.
- c. **How many parking spaces would the completed project have? How many would the project eliminate?**
Not applicable. This is a non-project proposal.
- d. **Will the proposal require any new roads or streets, or improvements to existing roads or streets, not including driveways? If so, generally describe (indicate whether public or private).**
Not applicable. This is a non-project proposal.
- e. **Will the project use (or occur in the immediate vicinity of) water, rail, or air transportation? If so, generally describe.**
Not applicable. This is a non-project proposal.
- f. **How many vehicular trips per day would be generated by the completed project? If known, indicate when peak volumes would occur.**
Not applicable. This is a non-project proposal.
- g. **Proposed measures to reduce or control transportation impacts, if any:**
Not applicable. This is a non-project proposal.

15. PUBLIC SERVICES

- a. **Would the project result in an increased need for public services (for example: fire protection, police protection, health care, schools, other)? If so, generally describe.**
Not applicable. This is a non-project proposal.
- b. **Proposed measures to reduce or control direct impacts on public services, if any.**
Not applicable. This is a non-project proposal.

16. UTILITIES

- a. **Circle utilities currently available at the site: electricity, natural gas, water, refuse service, telephone, sanitary sewer, septic system, other.**
Not applicable. This is a non-project proposal.

- b. Describe the utilities that are proposed for the project, the utility providing the service, and the general construction activities on the site or in the immediate vicinity which might be needed.**

Not applicable. This is a non-project proposal.

C. SIGNATURE

The above answers are true to the best of my knowledge. I understand that the lead agency is relying on them to make its decision.

Signature: Karl Johnson

Date: February 14, 2012

D. SUPPLEMENT SHEET FOR NON-PROJECT ACTIONS
(do not use this sheet for project actions)

Because these questions are very general, it may be helpful to read them in conjunction with the list of the elements of the environment.

When answering these questions, be aware of the extent the proposal, or the types of activities likely to result from the proposal, would affect the item at a greater intensity or at a faster rate than if the proposal were not implemented. Respond briefly and in general terms.

1. How would the proposal be likely to increase discharge to water; emissions to air; production, storage, or release of toxic or hazardous substances; or production of noise?

These county-initiated amendments would only affect existing Comprehensive Plan designation criteria for the Rural Intermediate and Rural Village Residential zones, which have already undergone environmental review as part of comprehensive updates in 2007 and 2000 and original adoption in 1997. Any future development resulting from the proposed amendments is not likely to result in any significant increase in discharges, emissions, production or release of any of the above, beyond what is already occurring or permitted.

Proposal C-1 should result in no net increase of discharges or emissions by requiring or encouraging any potential future rural up-zone to extinguish a commensurate number of existing development rights elsewhere in the county. Any specific development resulting from these amendments shall be subject to all applicable codes, regulations and statutes from the local, state and federal jurisdictions.

2. How would the proposal be likely to affect plants, animals, fish, or marine life?

The proposed C-1 amendment could benefit the above by transferring potential development on lands with significant natural habitat (such as in the floodplain) into areas more suitable for development that would fewer impacts to plant, animal and fish habitat. The proposed C-2 amendment is not likely to have any significant effects on any of the above.

3. How would the proposal be likely to deplete energy or natural resources?

The proposed amendments will not result in any significant depletion of energy or natural resources beyond what is already occurring or permitted. Proposal C-1 is specifically designed to help move development potential off of natural resource lands.

4. How would the proposal be likely to use or affect environmentally sensitive areas or areas designated (or eligible or under study) for governmental protection; such as parks, wilderness, wild and scenic rivers, threatened or endangered species habitat, historic or cultural sites, wetlands, floodplains, or prime farmlands?

The proposed C-1 amendment would only reduce potential impacts on environmentally sensitive areas by helping to transfer development potential from those areas to areas that

are more appropriate for development. Any specific development resulting from these amendments shall be subject to all applicable codes, regulations and statutes from the local, state and federal jurisdictions.

Proposed measures to protect such resources or to avoid or reduce impacts are:

Any development resulting from the proposed amendments shall be subject to all applicable codes, regulations and statutes from the local, state and federal statutes. The proposed C-1 amendment would only reduce potential impacts on natural resources and environmentally sensitive areas by helping to transfer development potential from those areas to areas that are more suited for development.

5. How would the proposal be likely to affect land and shoreline use, including whether it would allow or encourage land or shoreline uses incompatible with existing plans?

The proposed county-initiated amendments are intended to increase consistency and compatibility of potential future land use changes with the Comprehensive Plan. Any specific development resulting from the amendments shall be subject to all applicable codes, regulations and statutes from the local, state and federal statutes including the Shoreline Management Master Program.

Proposed measures to avoid or reduce shoreline and land use impacts are:

Any possible use or effect from any specific development resulting from the amendments shall be subject to all applicable codes, regulations and statutes from the local, state and federal jurisdictions including the Shoreline Management Master Program.

6. How would the proposal be likely to increase demands on transportation or public services and utilities?

In and of themselves, the county initiated proposals would not likely increase demands for transportation or public services and utilities beyond levels already anticipated and planned for in the Comprehensive Plan and related implementation measures.

Proposed measures to reduce or respond to such demand(s) are:

Proposed amendment C-1 should result in no net increase of demand for such facilities and services in the future. It could serve to concentrate future rural development in some areas presently provided such services (at rural levels-of-service) and commensurately reduce future potential demand for such services elsewhere in the rural county. Requirements for new development in Skagit County include provisions to ensure that transportation facilities are provided in a timely manner to address increased transportation demand. Any possible use or effect from any specific development resulting from the amendments shall be subject to all applicable codes, regulations and statutes from the local, state and federal jurisdictions.

7. Identify, if possible, whether the proposal may conflict with local, state, or federal laws or requirements for the protection of the environment.

No conflicts are anticipated. The County is currently initiating a separate study of implementing a Transfer of Development (TDR) program that could complement (and/or help implement) the intent of proposal C-1. The proposals, in total, are intended to ensure greater consistency with the Growth Management Act, as well as internal consistency between the Comprehensive Plan and the Land-Use/Zoning Map. The proposals do not conflict with any federal, state or local laws.

