



PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

DALE PERNULA, AICP, DIRECTOR

JACK MOORE, CBCO, BUILDING OFFICIAL

Supplemental Staff Report

To: Skagit County Planning Commission and Interested Parties

From: Dale Pernula, AICP, Director

Date: November 12, 2013

Re: Response to Public Comments on 2012 Annual Comprehensive Plan Amendment Proposals:

- C-1. Amend Skagit County Comprehensive Plan to incorporate by reference the 2012 Skagit County Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan.
- C-2. Re-designate and rezone P118792, an approximately .3 acre parcel owned by Del Mar Community Service on which are located two water tanks, from Rural Resource-NRL (RRc-NRL) to Rural Reserve (RRv).
- C-3. Designate and zone 4 parcels (P74450, P103560, P103559, P74451), 1.5 acres in size, to Rural Business (RB).

The County received the following written and oral comments on the 2012 proposed amendments to the comprehensive plan, and land use and zoning map.

Name	Organization (if applicable)	Method	Proposal Description	Date Received
Public Hearing: Comments		Public Hearing	Transcription: November 5th Public Hearing Comments	11/05/2013
Good, Randy & Aileen		Written Document	C-1 Proposal to amend Skagit County Parks and Recreation Comp Plan	11/05/2013

Name	Organization (if applicable)	Method	Proposal Description	Date Received
Skagit County Parks & Recreation Advisory Board		Written Document	C-1 Proposal to amend Skagit County Parks and Recreation Comp Plan	11/05/2013
Stauffer, Ed		Written Document	C-1 Proposal to amend Skagit County Parks and Recreation Comp Plan	11/07/2013

C-1. Amend Skagit County Comprehensive Plan to incorporate by reference the 2012 Skagit County Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan.

Randy Good

Mr. Good opposes retaining Chapter 5 (Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation) in the Skagit County Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan. This matter was raised in the Board of County Commissioners docketing public hearing and was subsequently addressed by the Parks Advisory Board and the Department in the staff report (November 8, 2013). Skagit County Planning and Development Services and the Parks and Recreation Department’s recommend retaining Chapter 5.

Mr. Good finds fault with the public process requirements for trail projects. In response, Skagit County issued a memorandum which, among many items, addresses this particular issue:

Contents of Transportation Improvement Program (“TIP”)

The TIP must be consistent with and implements the county’s adopted comprehensive growth management plan and should include all the elements described in RCW 36.81.121:

- proposed road and bridge construction work and other transportation facilities and programs **deemed appropriate**, and for those counties operating ferries shall also include a separate section showing proposed capital expenditures for ferries, docks, and related facilities
- **any** new or enhanced bicycle or pedestrian facilities identified pursuant to RCW 36.70A.070(6) [the Comprehensive Plan’s Transportation Element] or other applicable changes that promote nonmotorized transit **[in addition, and in accordance with WAC 136-15-010, all trail projects meeting the definition of capital facility must be included in the TIP, except those contained wholly within a park, which should be listed as parks projects in the CFP]**
- how the county will expend its moneys, including funds made available pursuant to chapter 47.30 RCW (e.g. Special Pathways funds), for nonmotorized transportation purposes
- information as to how the county will act to preserve railroad right-of-way in the event the railroad ceases to operate in the county’s jurisdiction (Tim Holloran, October 24, 2013).

Therefore, Mr. Good concerns will be addressed when future capital and transportation projects are proposed.

Ellen Bynum

Ms. Bynum requests that printed copies of proposals be made available in the future. Comment noted.

Ms. Bynum believes that the Parks and Recreation Department has “morphed” into a conservation group. In response, the Parks and Recreation Department is a multi-disciplined organization which offers both passive and active recreational facilities and activities. The Department’s purpose is articulated in the Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan, which is summarized in the executive summary, and is consistent with the Growth Management Act, RCW 36.70A.070(8).

Liz McNett Crowl

Ms. McNett Crowl spoke in favor the Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan. She appreciated the work, effort, and thoroughness of the planning process the Parks Advisory Board went through. Parks and recreation helps us maintain our health and there is a strong correlation between the quality of life and economic growth. Ms. McNett Crowl pointed out that there is consensus that trails are viewed favorably through Skagit County public opinion surveys. And, the public did have a lot of opportunity to participate in the parks planning process. Comments noted.

Martha Bray

Representing the Skagit Land Trust, Ms. Bray testified that the Land Trust and Skagit County Parks have partnered on many projects pertaining to open space, wildlife habitat, and working farms and forests. Ms. Bray spoke in favor the Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan, more specifically, Chapter 5 and the goals addressing trails, natural resources, open space, and water access. Ms. Bray noted that numerous surveys and studies over and over again speak to how much citizens in Skagit County value open space and trails.

Carol Ehlers

Spoke in favor of parks and trails, but is in favor of due process and the relationship of one plan to another plan, as mandated by GMA. Ms. Ehlers testified in support of having the Planning Commission hold study sessions on proposals and requested that printed copies of proposals be made available. Furthermore, Ms. Ehlers indicated that trails on Fidalgo Island have created “trespassing” issues. Comments noted.

Jeroldine Hallberg

Ms. Hallberg spoke in support of incorporating by reference the 2012 Parks and Recreation Plan into the Skagit County Comprehensive Plan. In addition, the 2009 Countywide UGA Open Space Plan and the 2012 Parks and Recreation Plan are related and co-exist, and are complimentary to each other. Comments noted.

Ed Stauffer

Mr. Stauffer testified that he never received listserv notices about the Parks Advisory Board meetings. In response, the Parks and Recreation department created press releases and the four public meetings were well publicized in the Skagit Valley Herald. In addition, the meetings were on the department website, on the front page of Skagit County.net and advertised on local radio stations. There was written comment that was directly assimilated into the plan. The Park Advisory Board meetings have always been open to the public and are scheduled at the same time and on the same day of the month. They are advertised on the department website and the agenda allows time for public to comment and submit proposals. Skagit County Parks and Recreation has its own listserv that we encourage the public to sign on to.

Mr. Stauffer said that the Plan is 204 pages long and filled with “ideological ruminations.” In response, the Plan has certainly grown from 1972 when the population was much smaller and the parks department was in its infancy, with only 5 parks and two staff members. The Plan in 1998 and 2004 were of similar size, with almost identical information. The major adjustments include staffing changes, park acquisitions, demographic information, amenity modifications, and updated project goals.

Mr. Stauffer indicated that nowhere in the Plan is the term “open space” defined. In response, on page 3-6 of the 2012 Plan the open space parks are identified as “available for passive outdoor recreation, offering trails for viewing, parking and other limited improvements. Open space and undeveloped parks often allow for passive recreation opportunities in the way of sightseeing, picture taking, picnicking, beachcombing and other activities. Open space parks may also feature natural or conservation areas. Open space parks may also function as a greenbelt or view shed on which there is no public access.”

Mr. Stauffer indicated that the Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan doesn’t address the quality of life and lifestyle of rural residents. In response, the Plan is very much about the quality of life for all residents. In chapter 3, page 3-1, the plan says “a strong and healthy park system can open up a number of opportunities for people to enhance their lives. Physical recreation and fitness contributes to a full and meaningful life, helps keep people healthy, reduces stress, and promotes self-esteem and positive images. Participating in leisure activities and enjoying nature helps assist individuals in leading a balanced life.”

The Skagit County Parks and Recreation mission also helps keep property owners rights in good standing. Without Public Parks, the need to recreate would still be prevalent, putting pressure on privately owned properties.

Ellen Cooley

Ms. Cooley supports those comments made by Ed Stauffer. Comment noted.

Marie Erbstoesz

Ms. Erbstoesz is a member of the Skagit County Active Community Task Force and the Mount Vernon Urban Trails Committee, and is a health care and services provider. Parks and Recreation facilities and activities make a wonderful contribution to a community. Ms. Erbstoesz supports adoption of the Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan. Comments noted.

Parks and Recreation Advisory Board

The Skagit County Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan advances the goals established by the GMA. These goals include the retention of open space, the enhancement of recreational opportunities, the conservation of fish and wildlife habitat, better access to natural resource lands and water, and the development of parks and recreation facilities. Parks and Recreation plans must be updated every six years to remain eligible for grants. The Board unanimously recommends that the Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan be approved. Comments noted.

- C-2. Re-designate and rezone P118792, an approximately .3 acre parcel owned by Del Mar Community Service on which are located two water tanks, from Rural Resource-NRL (RRc-NRL) to Rural Reserve (RRv).**

Roger Noar

Mr. Noar introduced himself as the President of Del Mar Community Services and indicated that he supports the proposal. Comment noted.

Carol Ehlers

Ms. Ehlers indicated that she is on the Del Mar Community Services board. She supports the proposal. Comment noted.

Ed Stauffer

Mr. Stauffer testified that it makes sense and that plans should be corrected when there is an error. Skagit County's plan to prevent urban sprawl is working. Comment noted

- C-3. Designate and zone 4 parcels (P74450, P103560, P103559, P74451), 1.5 acres in size, to Rural Business (RB).**

No written comments or public testimony received.