



Agritourism Policy Options Engagement Results

Summary | May 27, 2022

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Introduction and Summary

Policy Options

Skagit County is reviewing what agritourism means to the County’s agricultural community, rural residents, and other interested participants. Agritourism is generally considered "a commercial enterprise at a working farm, ranch, or agricultural plant conducted for the enjoyment of visitors that generates supplemental income for the owner." (UC Davis)

Following a [situation assessment](#), a [public survey](#), and [focus groups](#) in 2021, a [policy options paper](#) was developed in spring 2022 to address what types of agritourism could be a focus of potential Skagit County Zoning Code updates.

The County allows for farm stands, U-pick, bed and breakfasts, and temporary events. Not all are well-defined. Some have vague regulations, and enforcement can be challenging. Further, some uses that are not allowed in a permanent manner, e.g. restaurants, tasting rooms, and weddings, have been requested through dockets, and are addressed to consider how they may be a fit for Skagit County. Based on a survey and focus groups, and a review of agritourism activities in Skagit County and across the region, agritourism types that are a focus of the policy evaluation include: Farm stands, U-Pick, Farm stays, Tasting Rooms, Restaurants, Weddings, Seasonal Events – Festivals, Farm to Table, and Farm Tours.

The policy paper addresses options for where/how to allow agritourism uses including:

- **Current Code Option:** The zoning code as it stands today.
- **Option A Accessory Agritourism:** Under Option A there would be targeted changes to use allowances in the zones where most of the County’s agriculture is located. It would address the range of agritourism above. Size, frequency, and compatibility measures would be addressed. It would build on the current code and fit within existing policies.
- **Option B Agritourism Overlay:** Option B would establish an overlay zone including portions of resource and rural zones where additional agritourism activities could be allowed.
- **Option C Rezone Small Scale Recreation and Tourism:** Option C would allow rezones of parcels on a case by case basis to Small Scale Recreation and Tourism (SRT) which allows for some of the more intensive agritourism uses.

A summary of the use allowance is provided in **Error! Reference source not found..**

Exhibit 1. Use Allowances by Option

Activity	Option A Accessory Agritourism	Option B Agritourism Overlay	Option C SSRT Rezone
Zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ AG-NRL, RRc-NRL, RRv 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Base: AG-NRL, RRc-NRL, RRv ▪ Overlay: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lands fronting a Major Collector and higher ○ Lands served by a Group A water system ○ Lands that are a minimum of 0.5 mile from a LAMIRD or UGA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rezone to SSRT using criteria (like overlay criteria at left; but incremental, site specific)
Accessory Agritourism Uses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ U-Pick ▪ Farm Tours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Retain current allowances as Agricultural permitted accessory uses. ▪ Improve definitions and permit procedures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Same as Option A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Not applicable. Meant for small properties that are more intensive in nature.
Seasonal Roadside Stand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Retain current allowances as Seasonal Roadside Stand (300 s.f. permitted accessory and 5,000 s.f. AD or HE) ▪ Improve definitions and permit procedures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Same as Option A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Retail uses are currently permitted.

Activity	Option A Accessory Agritourism	Option B Agritourism Overlay	Option C SSRT Rezone
Bed and breakfast, farm stay, temporary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to allow permanent farm stay like a Bed and Breakfast. Allow as a permitted accessory use in AG-NRL, RRc-NRL, and RRv. Consider a programmatic permit in these zones similar to other agritourism uses. Regarding temporary farm stays (e.g., RV), ensure the use is self-contained and temporary. A programmatic permit would be required. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Same as Option A. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bed and Breakfast uses are currently permitted.
Food Service: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farm to Table, Temporary Food Service Tasting Rooms 	In AG-NRL, RRc-NRL, and RRv: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allow temporary farm-to-table events as permitted accessory activities with a programmatic permit. Allow limited food service as a permitted accessory activity with low-risk foods¹ and no seating as part of farm stands or farm-based business. The use would be addressed in a programmatic permit. Allow small tasting rooms (3,500 square feet) provided grapes/hops/fruit of 10 acres are grown onsite. The use would be subject to a hearing examiner special use permit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allow temporary farm-to-table events as permitted accessory activities with a programmatic permit. Allow Food Service as a Small Food Establishment (Category 1, 0-75 seats) as an administrative special use if on a site of at least 20 acres. Allow small tasting rooms (3,500-5,000 square feet) provided produce of certain size is grown onsite and on parcels with at least 40 acres in size. Sites 20-40 acres would require a hearing examiner special use permit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restaurants are currently permitted.
Wedding Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allow with an administrative special use permit as a Temporary Use with a programmatic permit provided it is happening in already developed area/existing barn. Limit number per year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allow year-round wedding facility with a hearing examiner special use permit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not specified. Add as an administrative special use.

To help shape a preferred option Skagit County and BERK Consulting, Inc. shared options at the project website and at some meetings in March 2022. A 2022 online survey was also posted on the project website asking about the policy options: <https://www.skagitcounty.net/Departments/planningandpermit/AgtourismMain.htm>. Activities and results are shared below.

¹ Low risk foods include things like baked goods, espresso, etc. More details are provided here: <https://skagitcounty.net/HealthFood/Documents/AppSeasonalLowRisk.pdf>.

Meetings

The County advertised two virtual workshops in the morning (8:30 am) and evening (6 pm) on March 30, 2022. The agritourism options were shared, and a live poll was conducted using an online platform (<https://www.mentimeter.com/>). About 40 persons attended in the morning session and 20 in the evening session, excluding staff and consultants.

Exhibit 2. Morning Session Screen Shot

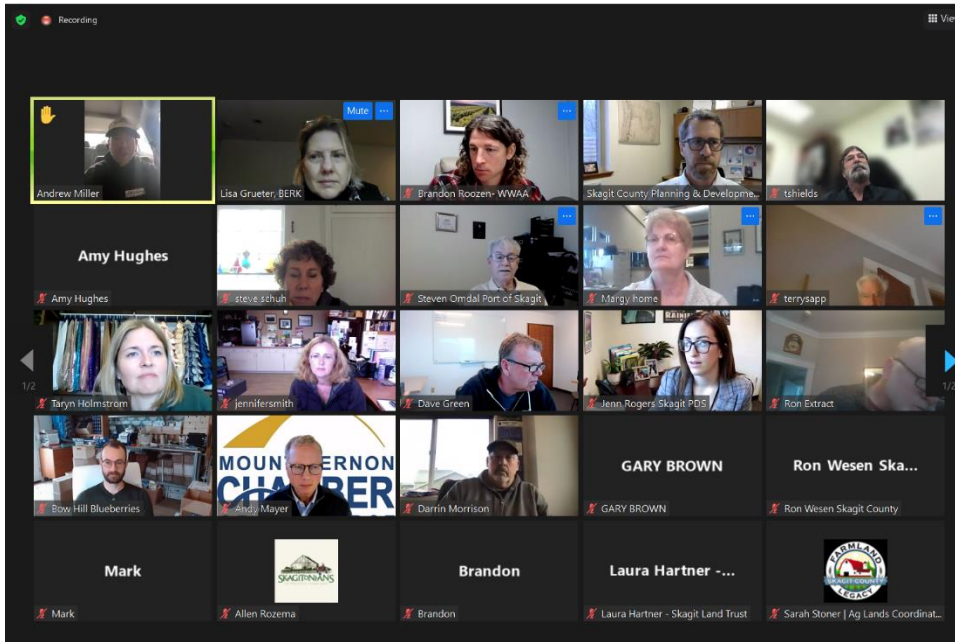
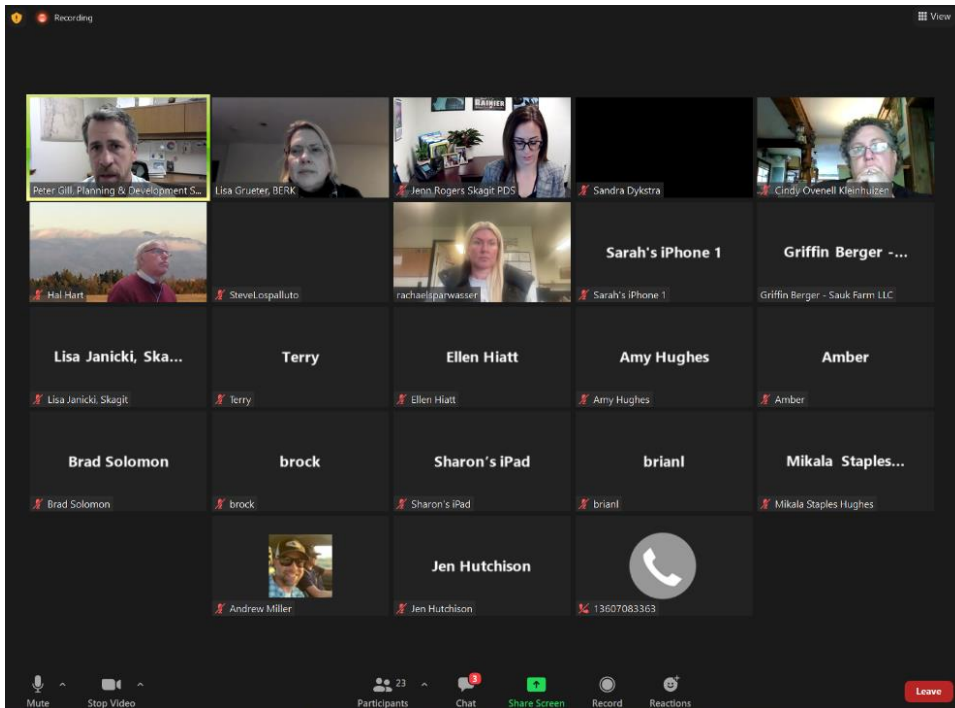


Exhibit 3. Evening Session Screen Shot



Survey

A survey was posted by March 30, 2022 and held open for about a month. About 235 participants took the survey. Each of the agritourism uses and options were described and the level of agreement or disagreement asked. The survey tool noted the zip code of where respondents took the survey (see Appendix A), and this is summed for each question. There were opportunities to share open ended responses. These open ended responses are presented “as is” but exclude expletives. Survey questions are in full in Appendix B.

Themes

Based on the survey, many respondents were comfortable with elements of Option A focusing on accessory uses to agriculture. Some key themes include:

- **Goals:** Most felt the top goals for agritourism code options are to ensure that agritourism promotes rural character, has a relationship to onsite agriculture, and that agritourism uses have adequate water, septic, and parking infrastructure.
- **Farm Stands, U-Pick, and Farm Tours:** Most supported retaining and improving current allowances and providing for updated parking standards. Commenters supported farmstands as integral to Skagit County but wanted to ensure that traffic and parking did not impact agriculture.
- **Tasting Rooms, Restaurants:** While many thought an accessory allowance for food and tasting rooms was appropriate, many had suggestions for whether seating and the combo of food and tasting rooms should be allowed.
- **Weddings:** Most supported the idea of wedding facilities as an accessory use. Respondents shared ideas about the need for conditions to ensure proper operation.
- **Small temporary uses – Farm to Table:** Allowing farm-to-table with a programmatic permit was supported by most respondents.
- **Permit Process:** Most of the potential improvements to the permit process were supported particularly updated application forms, exemption from land use permits certain seasonal/low-intensity activities and establishing maximum parking to avoid unnecessary conversion of agricultural land.
- **Other:** Additional open ended comments touch on all of the various uses, permitting approaches, and concerns about either supporting businesses and farmers or protecting farmland.

Selected Open Ended Responses

Parking must be of low impact design. Pavement is a huge negative on our farmlands. We are not doing 1 / 40 if we also allow a paved farmstand area.

Farmstands, U-pick, and Farm Tours are a real advantage we have here in Skagit County. Encourage them! Do not tie up the applicants for permits...

I have concerns about farm stays in RV's, as it would be difficult to impossible to monitor how long people stay.

Maximum number of RVs should relate to size of property. Being able to generate rental income could help smaller farmers.

Restaurants/tasting rooms: Why no seating? This is a nonstarter for our business

What about making the allowances based upon existing infrastructure such has parking bathrooms and potable water.

...I think a restaurant is inappropriate for ag properties, but a small tasting room might fit well. Size of parcel should not limit eligibility.

Farms make beautiful venues for weddings and may help small farms afford to stay in operation.

The noise is the biggest impact that wedding venues have on the neighboring properties. There should be some time and noise level restrictions.

I think rezoning (for weddings and other agrotourism) could be allowed on a case by case basis, but only if there is a requirement to have the majority of the land still in ag production.

Annual self-certification seems an unnecessary burden. Every three years would suffice to attain goals.

Don't make it too complicated!

I do not want farmland land permanently lost due to rezoning.

Providing programmatic and well defined permits and codes will help ensure limited impacts on Commercial Agriculture.

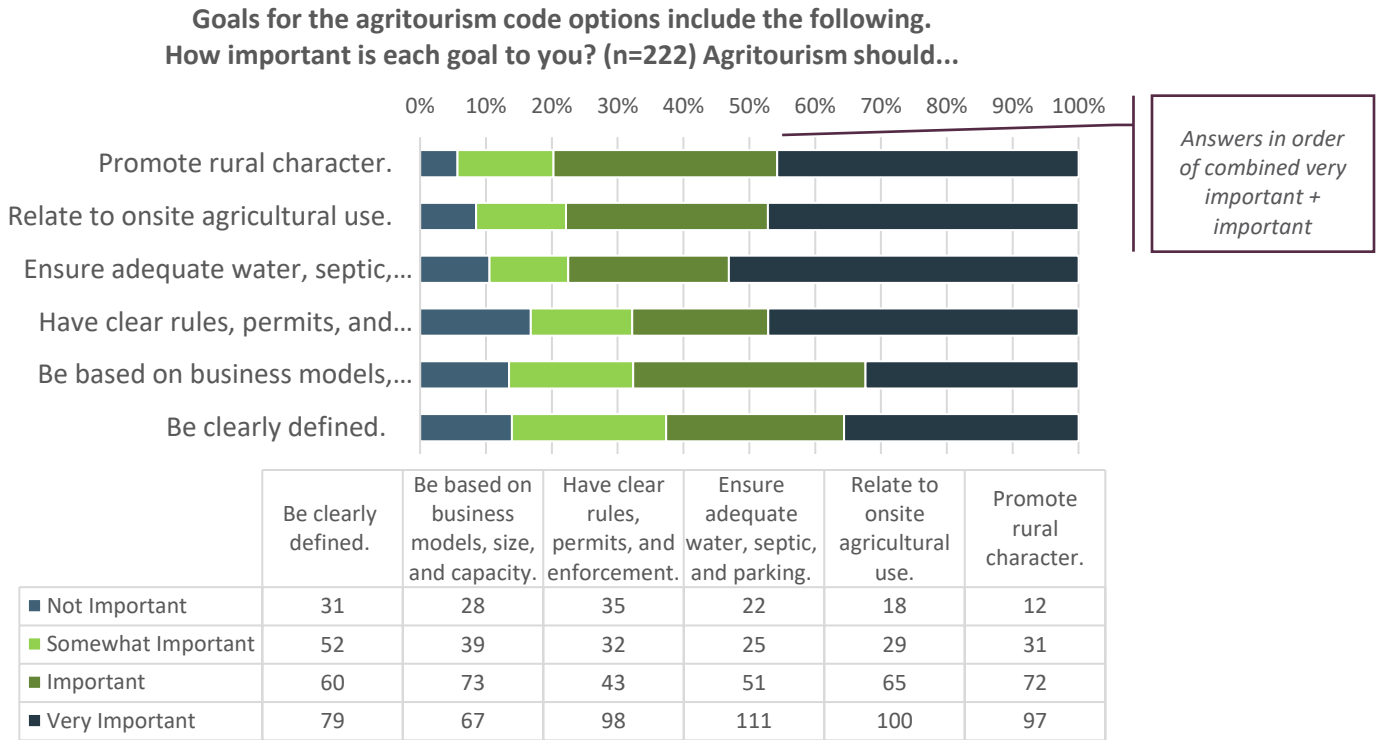
Results

GOALS FOR THE AGRITOURISM CODE OPTIONS

The survey and meeting polls shared the policy option goals below, and asked the level of importance to participants:

- **Each desired agritourism use should be defined** in the Skagit County Code and clearly identify associated activities that are agritourism in nature.
- Each agritourism use should have a **relationship to onsite agriculture**, particularly in zones that are designed to promote long-term commercial agriculture (AG-NRL and others), consistent with the County Comprehensive Plan and Growth Management Act.
- In rural zones, agritourism uses should promote **rural character** as established in the County Comprehensive Plan and Growth Management Act
- The agritourism allowances should be based on an **understanding of business models** and their size and capacity.
- Permit criteria and conditions should be developed for **adequate water, septic, and parking**.
- Agritourism activities should be subject to **clear rules and permits as well as enforcement**. This may include renewable permits and scaled fees.

Exhibit 4. Survey – Goals for Agritourism Code Options. How important is each goal to you?

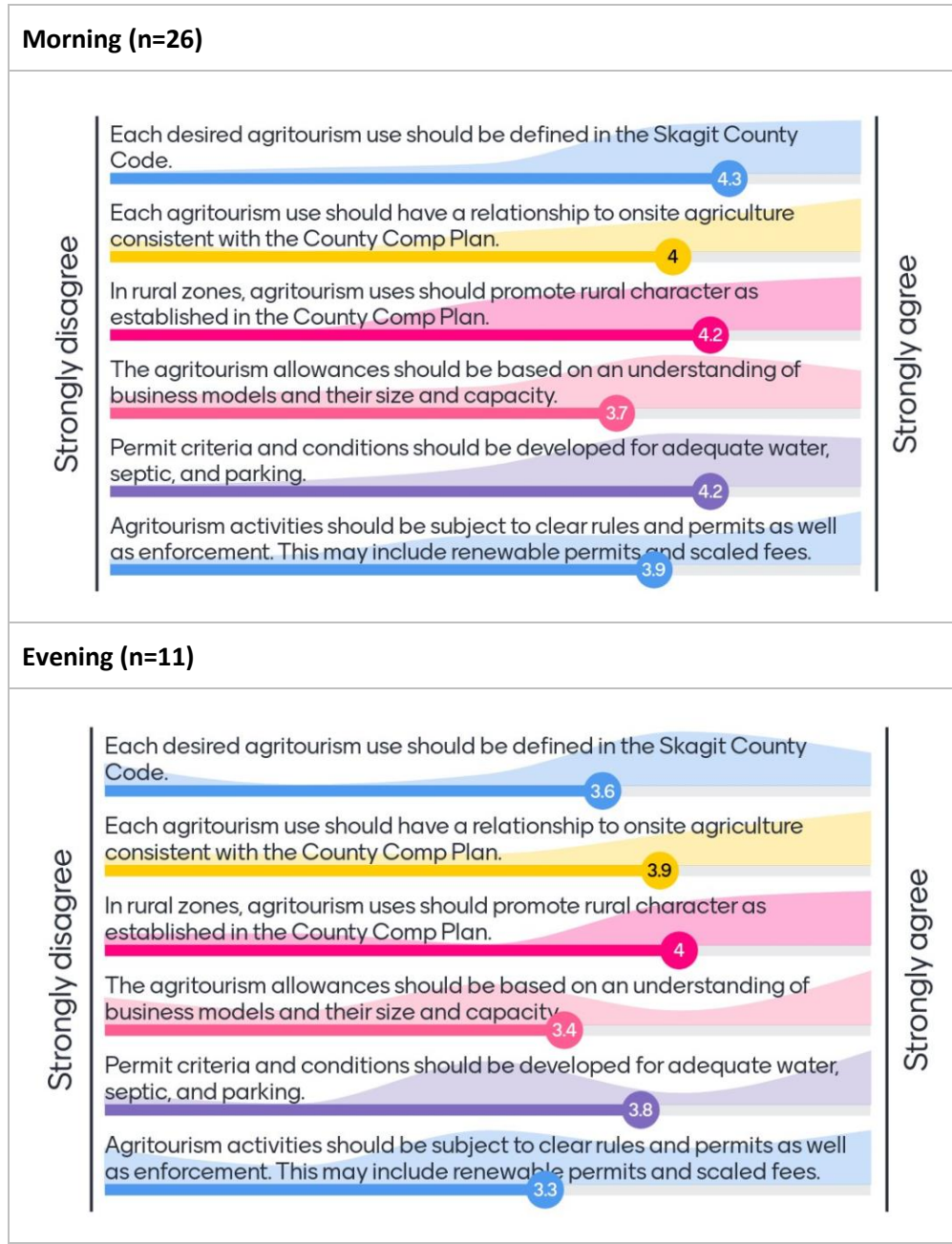


Survey respondents identified rural character, connection to onsite agriculture, and adequate facilities for agritourism uses (e.g., water, septic, parking).

The number of respondents taking the survey in Skagit County zip codes was 96. Their responses in the top 3 most important are the same as the overall number of respondents. See Appendix A.

A similar poll was taking at the virtual meetings on March 30, 2022, and results differed slightly. In addition to rural character and to agriculture connections and adequate facilities, having clear definitions was also desired. See Exhibit 5.

Exhibit 5. Top Agritourism Code Goals – Workshops Poll



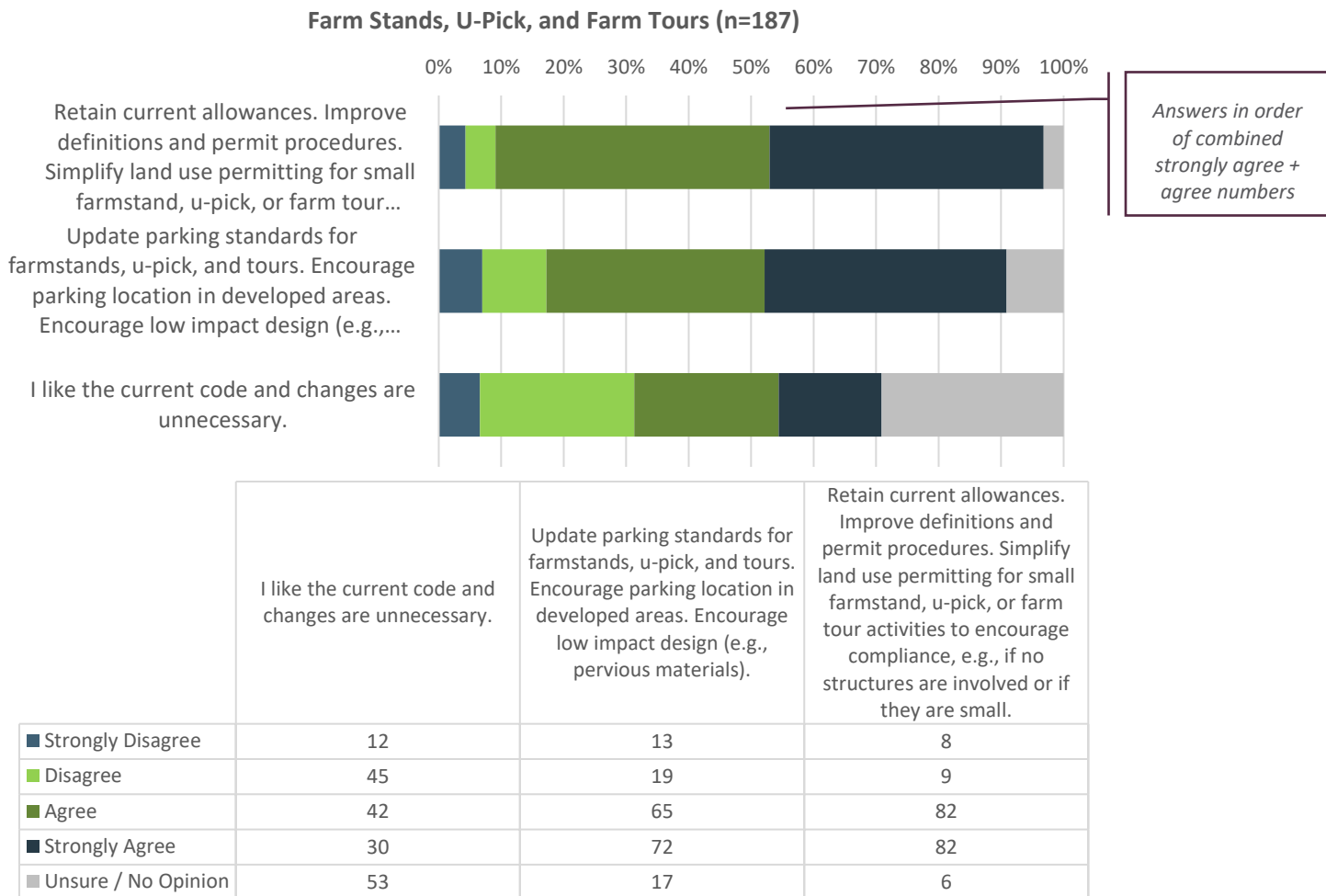
FARM STANDS, U-PICK, AND FARM TOURS

Skagit County allows farm stands called “seasonal roadside stands” in most rural and resource zones. The permits are tiered: 300 square feet outright permitted, 2,000 square feet allowed by administrative special use, and 5,000 square feet allowed by hearing examiner special use. Parking must be located onsite; parking may be required at 1 stall per 300 square feet as a retail activity. U-pick and farm tours are allowed as accessory uses to farm in most rural and resource zones.

Studies have shown that over half of customers of farm stands are local. They may have up to 500 visitors a year by themselves. U-pick operations could support about 400-2,000 customers per year (size 1-5 acres) depending on the type of crop and acres planted. Farm tours could attract up to 2,000 visitors depend on class sizes and seasonal use.

Most survey respondents suggested retaining and improving existing allowances and updating parking standards. See Exhibit 6.

Exhibit 6. Farm Stands, U-Pick, and Farm Tours: Following is a snapshot of new policy proposals for farmstands, u-pick, and tours – tell us what you think.



The number of responses from persons taking the survey in Skagit County zip codes equaled about 85. The level of importance was in a similar order as all respondents. See Appendix A.

Open ended responses on farmstands, u-pick and farm tours showed support for the activities in general with some concerns about farmstand size and parking, not impacting farmers and the communities with traffic. Some wanted to ensure the permitting was limited and businesses supported.

Exhibit 7. Comments – Farmstands, U-pick, and Farm Tours

Comments: Share your ideas for Farmstands, U-pick, and Farm Tours
5000 sq feet seems ample unless parking has to be in that footprint, in which case footprint could be larger. However, permeable vs impermeable surfaces matter for many reasons. Paved parking areas should not be allowed for this reason. We don't want to pave our farmlands for the sake of agritourism; " Encourage low impact" is not a code. It is a get out of jail free pass to do whatever someone wants. Use quantifiable language such as " Parking must be of low impact design". Pavement is a huge negative on our farmlands. We are not doing 1/ 40 if we also allow a paved farmstand area
5000 square feet is much too big. I think the maximum size for a farmstand should be 1500 square feet.
Additional farmstands, u-pick operation or farm tours adds more stress to our local roads and farm land, both of which are already stressed. It is very difficult for our current farmers to continue ag production given the current situation, so anything additional just makes it more difficult. The fact is that if things stay frozen as they are, those who are currently in business will do better because of competition. Let's help those of us who are already in business stay in business and not create more challenges for those of us who already have difficulty navigating the current environment.
All of this appears to be a solution in search of a problem. ...
Asking multiple questions when only one answer is allowed makes this difficult.
Big support for small farm stands that feed the locals. U-pick too. Tours, ho hum....
Clearly mark where one should park
Creating more rules and codes will encourage larger traffic of peoples and vehicles toward business located in Ag regions. I recommend encouraging farm stands and agritourism in non Ag NRL areas. Agritourism should be adjacent to towns/development and UGA.
Don't ruin small stands Let them be
Farm tours should not be included in this category. Farmstands and u picks are not necessarily agritourism events whereas tours always are.
Farmstands, U-pick, and Farm Tours are a real advantage we have here in Skagit County. Encourage them! Do not tie up the applicants for permits as long as permits for housing are currently being tied up -- permits are taking months & months now. Employ a few more people to handle the permit requests in Mount Vernon, please!
Farmstands: parking requirement should be scaled to their demand, perhaps a sliding scale parking requirement that can be adjusted over time(?). I recognize this may require additional resources for monitoring or coordinating some level of reporting, but at the end of the day we are an agricultural community, and if we have too much regulation before small startup farmstands that also add a level of character in our community, I believe we would be missing that point.
Government has become too burdensome. The land owner should have the right to do what they see fit. Governments role should be to help the land owners conduct business as they see fit. I would like to see less regulations no one knows better how to be responsible with the land, better than the owner.
Have plenty of rest rooms around so bicyclists, and all people can enjoy being there. Have more frequent and up-to date signage, labeling crops in the fields. Label organic fields. Give organic fields top advantages and bonuses of some sort to encourage more of them."
I believe all of the above are crucial for our area, we need to celebrate small farms. The more access to small farms and U-pick the better connection to the local people, and importance of keeping and protecting the local growers. This is a better way to honor the local environment and those that Farm.
I do not want farmland land lost permanently due to rezoning.

Comments: Share your ideas for Farmstands, U-pick, and Farm Tours

I love all the local farm stands, the fresh choices are great. I love supporting my local community

I love it, so long as they are owned by farmers who live in Skagit county

I love them! They provide venues to enjoy the farm areas and obtain fresh produce. They lend a small town feel to the valley and allow for educational conversations at times.

I think sharing agriculture with the community is important, but I am wary of turning farmland into parking lots. That is not the way.

In all cases conversion of agricultural production land to other uses, parking, drain fields, etc. should be restricted, monitored and enforced

Include restrictions on night lighting that are compatible with the Model Ordinances of the North American Illuminating Engineers Society and the International Dark Sky Org. 5000 sq. ft. permanent building with parking for 17 cars should only be allowed on very large acreages and with design standards that keep it human scale, compatible with rural development patterns, etc.

I've seen too many acres of tillable farm ground converted into oversized farm stands, significantly larger than temporary stands adjoining. The county needs a standard which requires a high percentage of products sold in farm stands to be produced on the farm in which the stand is located.

Leave them alone and let them be a blessing to the farmer and the public.

Love the Farmstand, U-pick and Farm Tours business concepts. Parking, traffic and visitor accommodation are currently a problem as Skagit Valley becomes better branded for Agritourism. Permitting and enforcement are crucial for larger business models, but small farm stands should not be overburdened with new costs and regulations.

Open it up but enforce local sales. There is no good reason for Snow Goose to sell baskets from Africa or lawn furniture

Operating regulations for farmstands and on farm sales come from WSDA. Ask the owners of farmstands to work on the definitions and permit procedures, including parking recommendations. ; Because farming is the principal activity on Ag-NRL lands, it is disingenuous to opine as to possible number of visitors to activities that are secondary to farming. PD&S should stop trying to emphasize regulations that would permit activities that are the exceptions to farming, rather than strengthening protection for prime ag soils and farming operations. Any other activity on Ag-NRL or rural lands with farm activities must remain seasonal and limited. If Skagit entrepreneurs want to showcase Skagit food and farms they should consider developing a Skagit Food & Farm Center near the current food production businesses that operate around the airport business center which also houses WSU Skagit Extension Offices.

require truth in advertising re organic vs nonorganic produce/crops

Shuttle buses between nearby farms on special festival type days, with enough parking to allow for people to get out of their cars.

Similar to Downtown MV's pop up shop we should have simplified permits for younger/minority farmers to encourage having u-pick or a farm stand with little infrastructure so they can try it out before fully committing

Stay off my land. County needs to get off my property and out of my small business that I already pay taxes for

Thank you for keeping communication going so well.

The are good for the county. Encourage them and make minimal ones easy to start without having to get a permit.

There should be some definitions or standards for the percentage of products actually produced on the farm as many farmstands resell produce or products from other businesses.

These businesses are a wonderful part of our county's culture. They add healthy food and healthy activities for our residents and guests. They are an essential part of Skagit County and should be supported but not made onerous to operate.

They are great and there's opportunities for young people to work, learn and possibly become farmers to continue the beautiful farmlands in Skagit County.

Comments: Share your ideas for Farmstands, U-pick, and Farm Tours

This is just more government over reach which will result in more taxes, and more government employees; farmers and farm tour operators will locate their stands and tours where tourist traffic is high and/or next to their crops. We don't need government interference in these matters.

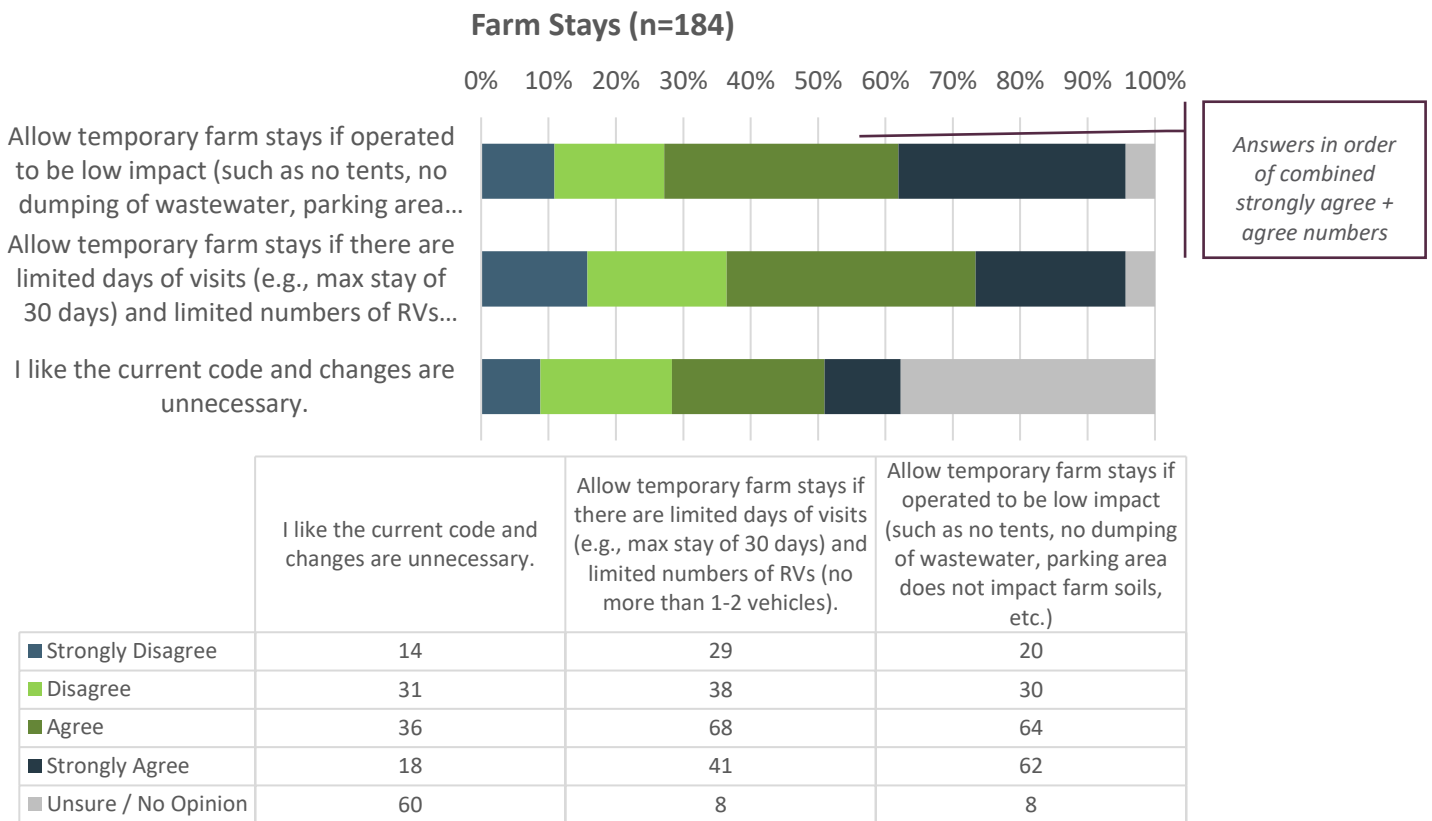
We all love farmsteads and U-pick.

FARM STAYS

Skagit County allows bed and breakfast operations with administrative special use permits. Similar uses include farm stays, which are accommodations on a working farm. A producer could request approval of a bed and breakfast on their farm. If a bed and breakfast is operated year-round on weekends, for example, there could be about 520 visitors per year. A type of overnight stay that is not directly addressed in the Skagit County Code is a temporary farm stay with an RV, popularized by Harvest Hosts.

A question asked about options to allow for farm stays as a temporary activity with a maximum number of days and with low impact standards (no wastewater dumping, limiting parking area). Respondents tended to agree with allowing temporary farmstays with low impact standards. See Exhibit 8.

Exhibit 8. Following is a snapshot of new policy proposals for temporary farm stays – tell us what you think.



Those responding to the survey from computers in Skagit County equaled about 84 with a similar order of options and importance. See Appendix A.

Open ended responses elaborated on ideas for ensuring farmstays are compatible such as days allowed, number allowed, etc. See Exhibit 9.

Exhibit 9. Farm Stays- Open Ended Comments

Comments: Share your ideas for Farm Stays.
30 days is too long. If it's an on-site RV it's like a tiny house . How will you know if it's a semi permanent rental or the visitors rv?
Actually I think there could be more than one or two RVs at one spot.
Allow tents.
Don't disrupt current rulings
Farm stays are a way for people to reconnect to a healthy, hard-work lifestyle. These can be very helpful to folks that need this type of contrast to their current lifestyle. In addition, it is a great way for people to try out this lifestyle and decide if it is what they want to do in the future. We will always need farmers, keep this option open so people who want to become farmers can find out and get hooked.
Farm stays should be more accommodating for the people staying with shorter stay limit.
Farm stays should have direct connection to farm work or agricultural farm teaching activities, not just be another rv park venue.
Given that B&Bs are already allowed it's difficult to see why changes are needed. Allowing agricultural areas be used as campgrounds or RV parks is not acceptable.
Harvest Hosts model is a good idea. Very structured.
i am concerned the county would have the appearance of mobile park sites peppered around the valley. enforcement of how many rv's , size and length of stay would be very difficult to monitor for compliance. you are putting neighbors in the position to police their neighbors on the length of stay of each visitor.
I do not like the idea of farm stays.
I do not want farmland land permanently lost to rezoning.
I don't like the idea of having RVs staying at the farms.
I don't think RV's should be allowed under the "bed and breakfast " definition.
I have concerns about farm stays in RV's, as it would be difficult to impossible to monitor how long people stay. Some will abuse the allowance and end up as long-term to permanent residents. RV sites are not well-monitored by the County and there are sites without septic/sewage.
I have more general comments about including the needs of farmworkers in this planning effort. In this case, please analyze the potential impact of farm stay policies on the supply of affordable housing for farmworkers. What conflicts would be presented by allowing RV uses for tourism, but perhaps not for farmworkers?

Comments: Share your ideas for Farm Stays.

I like the maximum length of stay rule -- it seems to encourage the intended outcome and help prevent long-term mobile home parking and often their eroding/undesirable condition. Can this be adequately monitored?

I'm opposed to rv parks except where zoned

Keep it simple encourage rather than restrict and tax

Look at Seattle and PLEASE do not allow the RV meth labs/drug houses to build up here through innocence or ignorance!

max stays should be a week or less - 30 days too long

Maximum number of RVs should relate to size of property. Being able to generate rental income could help smaller farmers. Same nighttime lighting comment as above (use modern dark sky protective standards. And see the American Medical Association on the health dangers of 5000K street lights as Mt. Vernon uses.

Minimal tent stays should be allowed, depending on the land and owner's agreement to keep the impact on the neighbors sane...low noise levels, no wild parties, etc...the kind of thing you want in your neighborhood as opposed to the sort of thing you see in wild party movies."

No farm stays.

No RVs and limited day stays to 7.

No RVs, please!

Not necessary to disallow tents, many young people don't own rv's, maximum stays should be 10 days or less.

Open this up as long as there is no net loss of farmland and farm stays are contained to existing building or parking areas. No chain hotels but let farmers rent their parking areas or fields or convert existing buildings into AirBNBs. "

Our current farm stands and farm visit activities already create parking and traffic issues. This concept should be no different than that of winery tourism areas. If overnight stays are permitted, then the farm should be permitted for complete visitor accommodation, including toilet facilities and zoning for parking and building just like any other business model in Skagit County. Farms should not be treated differently or with any less regulation or enforcement than other business models. I am not a supporter of temporary farm stays unless the same building code regulations are adhered to as with other business models in Skagit County. I don't like the RV idea at all. Structures and events must be inspected and permitted with facilities that accommodate visitors for onsite toilets, parking, sanitation, etc.

People have a right to use their property as they see fit as long as it isn't hurting the public.

RVs are a great way to stay, they should be permitted...but if complaints of poor conditions arise they should be addressed.

RVs should not be allowed at all unless they are special vehicles to transport horses or boats etc. for guests that stay in a room They don't fit the rural ag character of the County. 30 days stay is longer than a regular vacation stay and should not be allowed without special permission.

Skagit revised its nuisance vehicle code over the past years to prevent people living in RVs. There may be a way to allow farmstays, but forcing a selection of two choices here is not appropriate. An uninformed reader may think these might be the only way to allow temporary farmstays. ; Skagit reviewed and rejected farmstays some years ago due to the compliance requirements for farmers (hosts). Again, the principal use for prime ag soils in the Ag-NRL zone and some rural

Comments: Share your ideas for Farm Stays.

zones with these soils is farming and food/fiber production. RVs and camping should happen in zones designated for their use, not Ag-NRL and rural lands that are also farms.

The farm owner should have the right to do as they please.

The government needs to stay off my land

There should be no random stays without adequate restrooms, water, septic. and farmland should be not be damaged in any way. Use nonfarmable land for these stays

There shouldn't be an issue with tents if there are bathrooms available.

These are very poorly written questions.

We allow Air BB's. Seems similar

What a wonderful possibility! Let's do it!

What farmers do with their property is not your business.

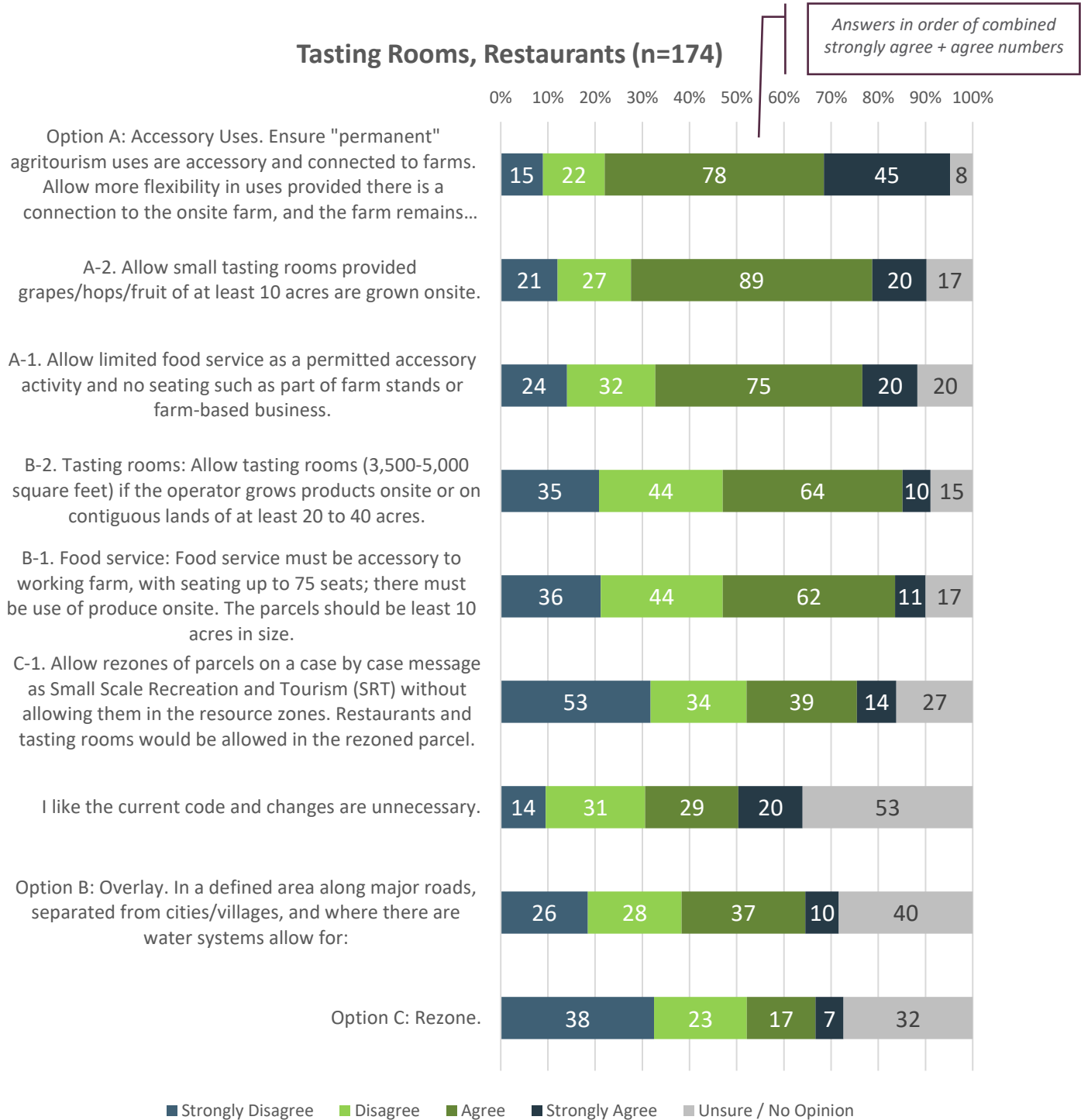
Work to more closely examine the impact of a long-term (30 days) stay by an RV. Perhaps consider a limit of a maximum of 10 consecutive days, with a break of 2-3 days, after which another 10 consecutive days might be permitted.

TASTING ROOMS, RESTAURANTS

In Skagit County, currently, restaurants and wineries, breweries, or tasting rooms are allowed in several urban zones, rural commercial zones, or rural industrial zones, but not in agricultural resource zones or rural residential zones. Where allowed by County land use regulations, permits are required to operate or build a restaurant or tasting room. Stormwater review would be required for parking areas. Building permits are required for new or altered structures. The Health Department requires permits for food.

The State of Washington allows one tasting room on premises with a winery. The typical size for tasting rooms varies from less than 100 square feet to over 2,000 square feet. As of 2019, tasting rooms in Washington had an average number of monthly visitors of about 924 (x 12 months would equal over 11,300 annually).

Exhibit 10. Following is a snapshot of new policy proposals for tasting rooms or restaurants – tell us what you think.

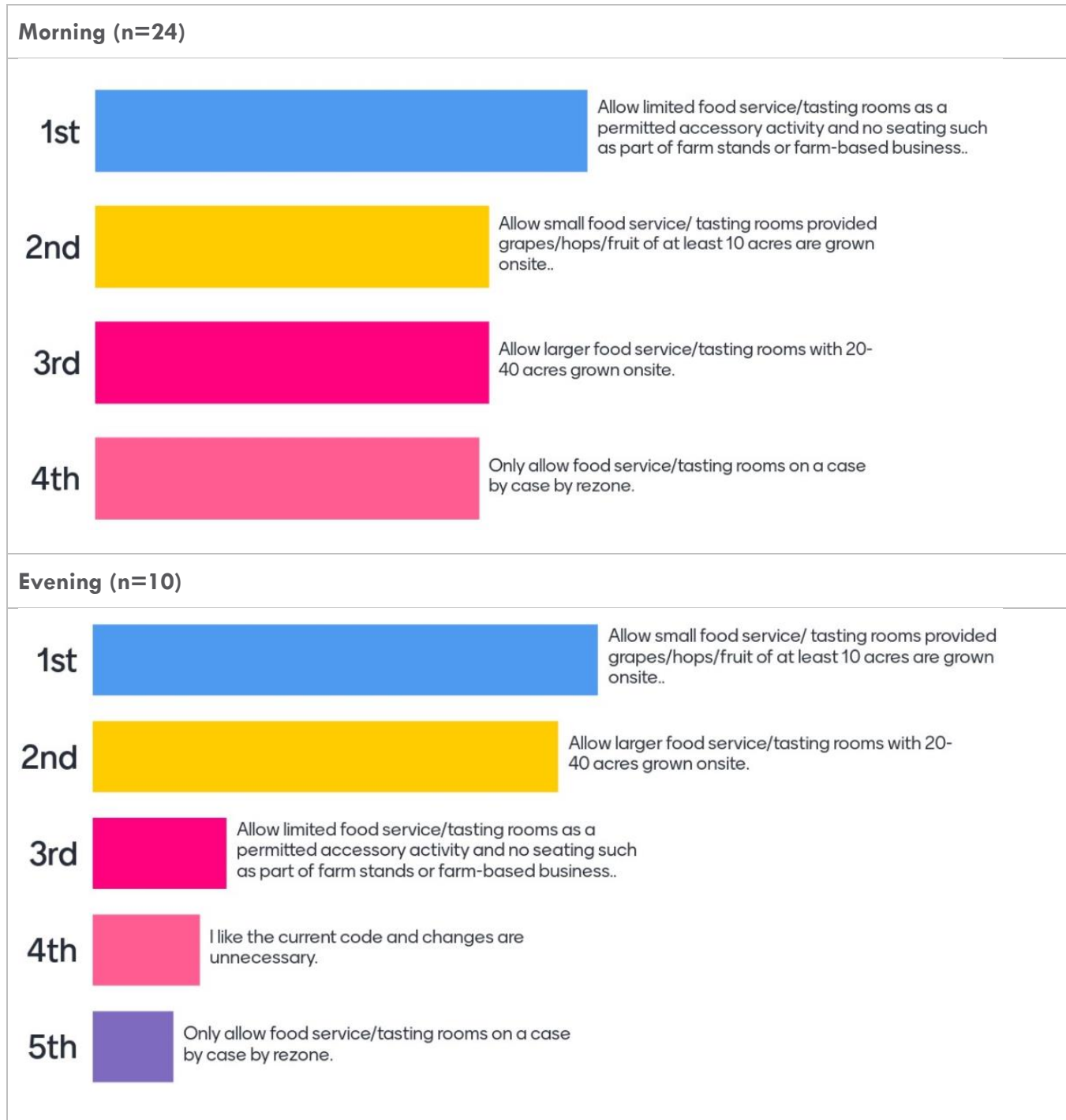


Those responding to the survey from computers in Skagit County equaled about 79 with a similar order of options and importance. See Appendix A.

The policy options varied in ideas about allowing smaller or larger restaurants and tasting rooms depending on the connection to agriculture. Survey respondents generally gravitated to options that focused on such uses as

accessory and limited in size and associated with onsite agriculture. Meeting respondents also gravitated to similar options. Based on morning meeting feedback an option of continuing the current code was added to the evening poll (a current code option was part of the online survey). See Exhibit 11.

Exhibit 11. Relationship to Ag: Food Service/Tasting



Comments at the meeting indicated concerns about the accessory option not identifying seating, asking about options for food trucks, and questioning the ability to eat as well as task, and the acreage sizing for tasting rooms. See Exhibit 12.

Exhibit 12. Meeting Comments Related to Food and Tasting Rooms

Meeting Chat Morning and Evening
Ron Extract : Why no seating? This is a nonstarter for our business
Ron Extract : That's not a tasting room.
Margy home : Where would occasional food truck onsite fit in?
Dave Green : Does one of these options allow seating?
Ron Extract : Also why 10 acre minimum? What about smaller parcels?
Ron Extract : I'm sorry to say that none of these options, as presented, would really work for our business.
Bow Hill Blueberries : Ten acre minimum leaves us out too
Adam Pearson : +1 to Ron's question about 10 acre min. Sounds arbitrary.
From Amy Frye : Maybe it should just be 25% then, to account for smaller parcels?
Jason Vander Kooy : my only concern is, will existing agriculture practices be protected? if I'm spraying my crop, pumping manure, or harvesting late hours? I'm all for sharing our agriculture, but I don't need more headaches.
Laura Hartner - Skagit Land Trust : Am I reading this correct that the current 1st choice would allow seating for food service except in the case of a farm stand, which would have food service and no seating?
Dave Green : Doesn't seem realistic to offer tasting without seating
Ron Extract : There are numerous smaller lots grandfathered into the ag zone. The owners of these are among those who would be most in need of options for adding value and should not be excluded.
Taryn Holmstrom : None of these options are appealing and leave a lot out of the conversation.
Bow Hill Blueberries : What about making the allowances based upon existing infrastructure such as parking bathrooms and potable water
Adam Pearson : How is larger lots defined? Thanks!
terrystsapp : No choice for "not allowed" as is current law
jennifersmith : I agree with Jason. Production agriculture is what this is all about. It needs to be at the heart of all of these discussions.
Andrew Miller : Jason is a great neighbor
Darrin Morrison : The protection exists via the RIGHT TO FARM ACT - BUT the farmer is a single person with a single voice and to be "that guy" who spreads manure on someone's "big day" is going to be painful
Jason Vander Kooy : thanks Andrew!

Meeting Chat Morning and Evening

Andrew Miller : So is Darrin (from the Skagit Acres side)

Brad Solomon : Where does Skagit Acres fall in the options?

Terry : Is there an options to grandfather existing businesses such as these?

Andrew Miller : RCW 4.24.830 defines agritourism

A wide range of comments offered ideas for alternative conditions on seating, parcel size, supporting facilities, and concern about not displacing or harming agriculture. See Exhibit 13.

Exhibit 13. Open-ended Survey Comments – Food Service/Tasting

Comments: Share your ideas for Tasting Rooms and Restaurants.

"B" is better but only along major roadways? If the infrastructure is decided to be sufficient, why not allow overlay off of main roadways?

"C" is a slippery slope - this could be a great way to accomplish best of both A and B but maybe there should be restrictions on how long the rezoning lasts. Revisit the rezoning every five years or the rezoning expires with the sale of the land and application must be re-submitted to ensure it is working out. "

A small place in the country should be able to operate a business. Permitting them to death isn't the answer. Charging thousands of dollars to be able to serve food with wine isn't the answer. You would think you would want people drinking wine or ciders to eat something with it.

Allow when parcel is at least 5 acres, not 10. Parcels should only need to be 5 acres.

Big difference between a restaurant and tasting room, I think a restaurant is inappropriate for ag properties, but a small tasting room might fit well. Size of parcel should not limit eligibility.

Can only weigh in for rezoning if clarification on: how long and how much cost does rezoning process take - for an uncertain outcome? It's not an equitable solution, if at all, for many.

Current code is adequate but does not include appropriate monitoring and enforcement. Skagit County expects neighbors to monitor and report on violations. This becomes an environment where code is consistently violated on the "ask forgiveness not permission" standard. This needs to change

Defining land size for any of the agritourism options is overreach. The best way to manage the size of the agritourism operation is to ensure compliance with existing federal, state, and county laws/requirements for public water use, waste, parking and safety. If these are enforced, it will manage all the other aspects of agritourism.

Denying seating in a winery tasting room is simply ridiculous. Has anyone reading this ever been to a restaurant or tasting room that didn't have seating? Would you go to one? Drink at one? Eat at one? What effect will this have, except to shut down winery tasting rooms or rural food service establishments? Will all the tasting rooms currently on Ag-NRL land that have seating be required to remove it? If not, this is a great way to discourage new businesses from moving to the county while looking the other way for businesses that never asked for permission in the first place. This is one of the most bizarre pieces of policy I've ever read. And God forbid someone with a disability shows up and needs to sit down to eat a slice of pie. There's no way, if this was codified, it could stand up in court as justifiable. "

Comments: Share your ideas for Tasting Rooms and Restaurants.

Farm land should remain in production. Don't allow development on agricultural land. Tasting rooms, restaurants can be adjacent, it shouldn't replace or negatively impact growing crops

Farms grow food. Being able to experience agriculture by way of eating that food is in benefit to all. Let's allow guests to sit down and connect and experience a farm operation via a meal.

Food and tasting rooms are in direct conflict to ongoing agriculture

Food requires monitoring more

Hopefully this doesn't turn into a Disneyland of farming where there are restaurants lining every road and the farms are hidden, pushed out, or just for show.

I do not consume alcohol. I urge the brewers to advertise & encourage the non-alcoholic beverages' availability on their signage & menus.

I do not want farmland permanently lost to rezoning.

I don't know how many Skagit wineries or breweries grow the produce needed for their products. If most do, I would be in favor of requiring them to. However, if most do not grow their own grapes, hops, etc. because of the difficulty in growing them here, then I would not want them to be required to grow their own produce.

I like parts of each plan but not one comprehensive plan does all. Generally "A" is the right idea but too restrictive. A blanket statement of 10 acres of grape/fruit/hop production is unrealistic for us as small scale hop farmers. On less than an acre we can produce enough hops for a small brewery's annual needs. This is not comparable for grapes or fruit.

I love the idea of Tasting Rooms and Restaurants on farms, but they should be treated same as winery regulations, subject to all building, parking and utilities regulations.

I support what local farmers want to do, but I'm concerned about outside corporations taking advantage of zoning flexibility to change the character of our agriculture zones

I think policies should protect and foster modest scale restaurant opportunities in existing pocket commercial locations within the farming areas. Encourage "farm to table" menus and connections. Otherwise, strongly limit incentives for on-farm facilities, to prevent over-supply and disruption to farming activities. Consider potential conflicts with needs for farmworkers.

I think the minimum size of the farms that would be able host tasting room and food service should be reduce to at least 5 acres. There are many small farms with the only way to make them economically viable is to offer some sort of value added process or offer another service like a tasting room or food service.

If land is zoned rural ag, then the assumption is the land is going to be farmed for money. Why not go solve the meth or gang problems first."

I'm not into turning "tasting rooms" into restaurants. They are two different things. Start with the food, not the drink. Farms serving their produce in meals, with a glass of wine on the side.

It feels like these proposed changes are linked to acreage size. I don't want to see a minimum acreage. And I don't think that water studies need to be done for parking areas. I want to see landowners have as much right as possible. The owners should be trusted more to be good stewards of their land.

Comments: Share your ideas for Tasting Rooms and Restaurants.

Its difficult to agree with these proposed policies because they are tied to specific usage of their agricultural acreage. Why not permit a tasting room for a vintner who grows grapes on 8 acres for a single type of wine? How many vintners or hop-growers do we (are we likely to) have in the county? I'm not sure these policies are fitting to our region specifically, and I don't know if they are arbitrary. Generally, I would like open the doors for tourism and see less restriction on the option on the part of the land owner, provided that they have environmental and health and safety checkboxes marked. If these policies are too defined, we risk strangling entrepreneurial thinking on the part of our land owners.

Let small business owners run their own business

Limiting parcel size shuts out a large number of farmers in the county from pursuing potential value-added agricultural opportunities. Why 20 acres or 10, if a 5 acre parcel like Bow Hill Blueberries can be as much of a draw as it has been. It feels very arbitrary.

My only concern is an increase in people driving under the influence.

My wife is an excellent cook and would like to start such a business, but it is not permitted in our area. Also our farm is only 1/2 an acre, but with the vacant .75 acre lot next door we could put a nice restaurant in that would be loved by the community and offer such an experience. SO PLEASE leave out the restrictions on farm size.

No restaurants with parking. There are plenty downtown and surrounding areas.

Part of what makes Skagit County so special is that fact that there are a lot of working farms and a very strong rural setting. This is a critically important part of our culture that we DO NOT want to change. We should NOT make changes that will impact this special feeling and experience. If too many things are changes, we become something that is not sustainable from who we are now.

People can use their property for the benefit of themselves and the public without being permitted to death.

Putting "restaurants" and paved parking areas throughout Skagit county does not seem like a good plan.

Restaurants are not allowed uses on farmlands or other resource lands. Exceptions liked the Farmhouse were grandfathered in. The options listed are sprawl. The calculations for tasting room attendance applies an annual daily average as an actual per day estimate. Bad analysis.; Again, under GMA the primary use of Ag-NRL soils in Skagit as well as other rural resource based counties is farming. Oregon implemented this same standard 28 years before GMA passed in WA State. While there are always exceptions and codes are changed under pressure from various interests, the state clearly wanted counties to identify and protect all resource lands. Pointing to non-rural counties where tasting rooms and restaurants have been developed because farming is no longer viable is not an accurate analysis of Skagit's current farming scene, nor should it be considered desirable if we want a regionally secure food production base.

Restaurants in a pleasant natural setting, with views of nature and good food are a rare thing to find these days due to overregulation and zoning restrictions. Yet they are perhaps some of the most desirable places to eat.

rezoning case by case if that rezoning requires a full environmental and economic impact review so all neighbors and THE ENVIRONMENT are considered in the rezoning.

Tasting rooms and restaurants should be in town.

Tasting rooms and restaurants should be in urban areas, not on prime agricultural lands

Tasting rooms and small snacks for purchase ok. No restaurants.

Comments: Share your ideas for Tasting Rooms and Restaurants.

Tasting rooms are acceptable to the extent the tasting involves a product produced from crops primarily grown onsite. Restaurants and wine bars are urban uses and belong in urban growth areas.

Tasting rooms are already out of control in this county. The illusion that quality wine grapes can be grown here has led many people to waste their time and fortune on a few acres of wine grapes and winery/tasting room. The winery/tasting room has no customer draw without the vineyard but since the vineyard cannot grow grapes that will produce wine the customers will buy the system falls apart UNLESS the farm does what they all do in this county and that's buy their grapes from somewhere else. We don't need this kind of resale pollution going on here. We don't need this kind of con job being pulled on our customers.

The above wording in relationship to size, duration and permanence is too restrictive.

The county did such a poor job of locating marijuana retail stores...

The focus should be on providing a good and healthy food experience, in a natural environment, and maintain the quality of the neighborhood, while NOT destroying the environment. If a business can accomplish that, then they should get a permit."

the form does not allow you to delete an answer

The overlay option is arbitrary and likely to relegate operations in areas devoid of the very experience that they hope to imbue - one of farmland and scenery. "

There should be no such use in a residential zoned area.

These are horribly written questions, any decisions made on this data is proof positive of backing into a predetermined policy. Acreage minimums are nonsensical, forcing wineries to grow 10 acres of grapes they can't use bc they suck is a WASTE of farmland. If a small business owner can show a connection to local ag, either from their own F-1 or through supply chain LET THEM OPERATE.

This is where this all becomes difficult.

This survey is worded to presume the county government has a say over what owners do with their land, when all the county should be doing is making sure landowners stop subdividing the arable land into tract housing.

when it is stated as an ""accessory use"" and ""primary use"" to agriculture does that mean just less than 50%? and is that in revenue ? or space? my concern is the valley starts to look like Woodinville with faux farms set up as wedding venues.

WEDDINGS

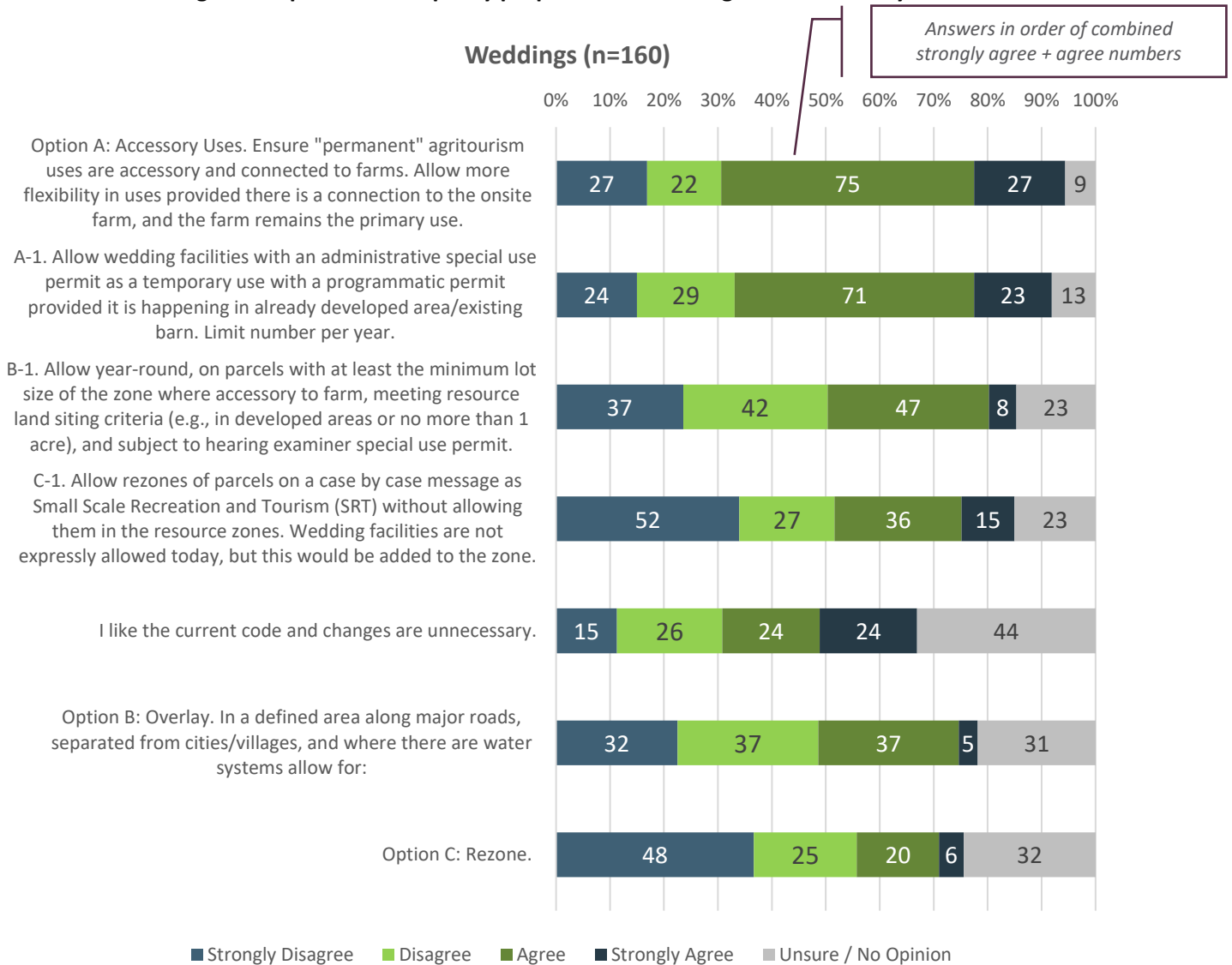
Skagit County allows temporary uses in agricultural and rural areas, if related to agriculture. Wedding facilities have not been allowed as temporary uses to date in the county.

Weddings may attract around 250 guests on average and depending on if it is allowed as a temporary or year-round 6,000-13,000 visitors per year.

Agritourism uses may be allowed under state laws if they are compatible with the onsite agricultural use (size, scale, intensity) and if located in an already developed areas or less than 1 acre in size; some counties allow wedding activities in existing barns or as temporary uses limiting size and frequency.

The question asked about options that allowed wedding activities as temporary or permanent activities. Most supported the idea of wedding facilities as an accessory use. See Exhibit 14.

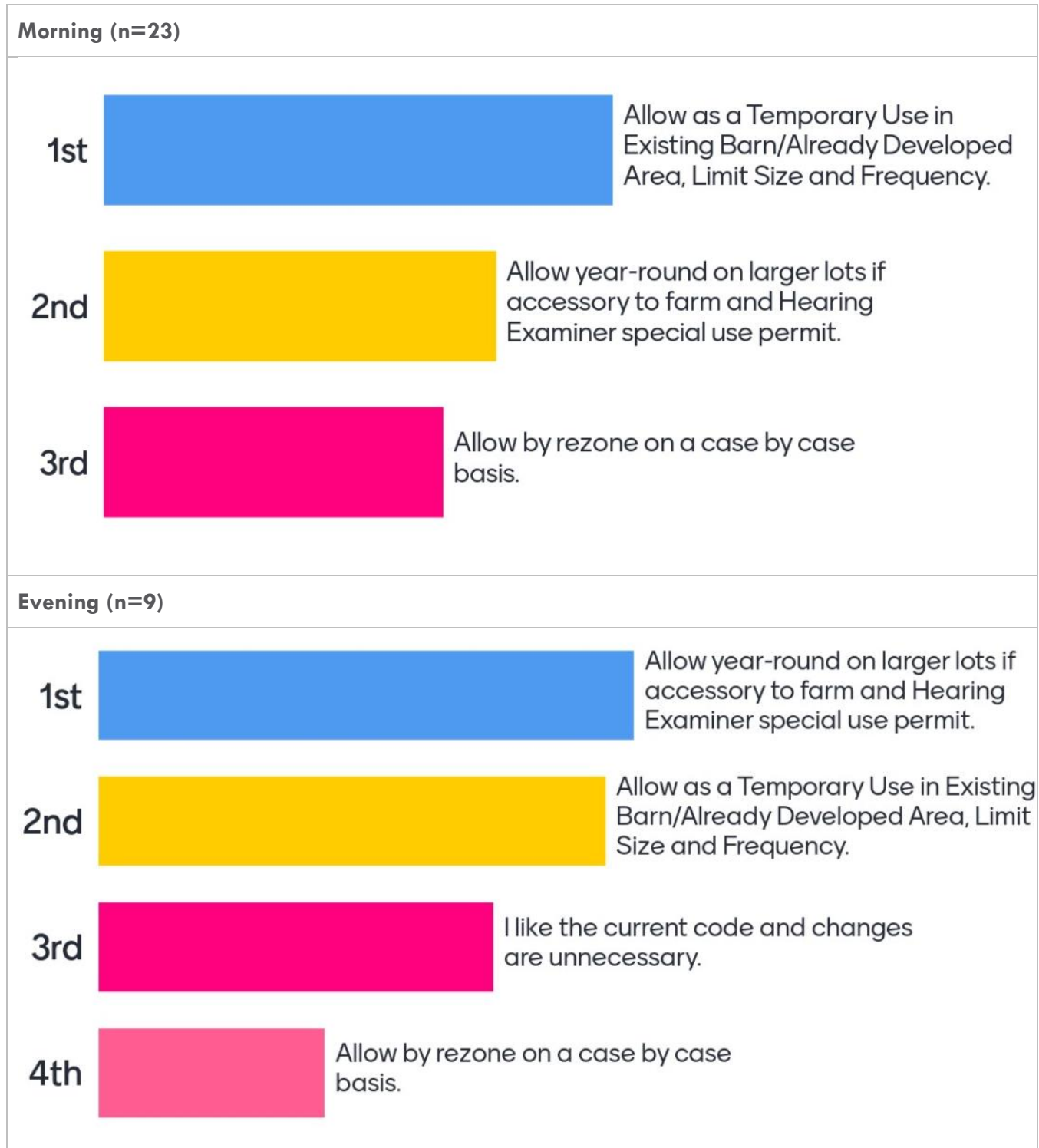
Exhibit 14. Following is a snapshot of new policy proposals for weddings – tell us what you think.



Those responding to the survey from computers in Skagit County equaled about 75 with a similar order of options and importance. See Appendix A.

Meeting respondents varied with some more comfortable with weddings as a temporary use and some considering permanent uses in existing structures with a greater permit review process. See Exhibit 15.

Exhibit 15. How would Wedding Venues be compatible with Agriculture?



Open ended comments shared ideas about the need for conditions to ensure proper operation with some more comfortable with accessory or temporary uses and others comfortable with year-round activities provided supporting facilities are addressed. Some felt allowing for weddings was supportive of farmers and others were concerned about impacts to agriculture. See Exhibit 16.

Exhibit 16. Open Ended Comments – Weddings

Comments: Share your ideas for Weddings.
Actually enforce Penalties to business that aren't following the current rules.
All event venues need to show a connection to local ag. Full stop. If they can do that, let them run as many events as they want.
Allowing occasional weddings as a temporary use seems ok, turning farms into event facilities does not.
Barn/site owners should not be restricted on the time or frequency or type of commercial use of their property.
Big market for Skagit Valley. I like the idea of farm weddings, but structures and events must be inspected and permitted with facilities that accommodate visitors for onsite toilets, parking, sanitation, etc. No pop-up wedding venues. Take care of the surrounding agriculture and land use.
Defining land size for any of the agritourism options is overreach. The best way to manage the size of the agritourism operation is to ensure compliance with existing federal, state, and county laws/requirements for public water use, waste, parking, and safety. If these are enforced, it will manage all the other aspects of agritourism.
Far too disruptive to rural settings, because of the music, dancing, drinking, parking.
Farms make beautiful venues for weddings and may help small farms afford to stay in operation.
For land to be used for a family/friends wedding is always a good use of a property, but if you want to become a wedding venue you should get the property rezoned with limited requirements.
For the past several years we have had a wedding venue in our neighborhood which is zoned Ag-NRL. The property is about 5 acres and is rented for events, primarily weddings. There is no other apparent agriculture. Before the pandemic there was a wedding most weekends in the summer months. Almost every Saturday afternoon through the evening until 11pm there was amplified music and announcements from the events. It is not compatible with a rural residential farm area. The noise is the biggest impact that wedding venues have on the neighboring properties. There should be some time and noise level restrictions. We are both farming and living next to other farms in our area. We live with the noise of tractors, irrigation pumps, propane cannons, etc. during the usual working hours. It's unfair that we are subjected to this accessory use noise during the time when many of us want to enjoy a Saturday evening in our yards.
Great idea. Warn participants that many farms have natural odors.
i am very concerned that Skagit county farms will be transitioned into wedding factories. the money brought in by a wedding venue is so large and tempting to an investor. planting a 'beautiful' crop suitable for events and dismissing a true working farms value. it will forever alter the fabric of a working farm valley - please be very careful what you grant as permissible use. if you start rezoning properties as permanent wedding venues how does that effect the working farm neighbors - they didn't build their lives next to an ever rotating party .
I do not want farmland permanently lost to rezoning.

Comments: Share your ideas for Weddings.

I fear the impact would not be good in agriculture areas.

I have 29 acres, I'm not a farmer I shouldn't have to plant a crop to do something with MY land.

I think rezoning (for weddings and other agrotourism) could be allowed on a case by case basis, but only if there is a requirement to have the majority of the land still in ag production. I DO NOT want to see farmland permanently converted to other zones. Option A1: I like the idea of a special use permit, but we should allow more than 1 per year.

If permanent, allow for micro weddings, intimate weddings, or elopements only. Less than 25 people and less than 10 cars.

If special use is already in place, require limited term permits with periodic review and reversion to original zoning criteria should ownership of the property change

In some wedding venues, folks may wish to enjoy open-air views as opposed to being confined inside a barn/other building. Also, a large canopy may suffice if weather dictates and suitable efforts to secure the canopies down are accommodated.

Larger groups require closer monitoring

Option A insures that only farmers or their offspring can get into the wedding venue business. This is highly discriminatory.

Out of time.

Part of what makes Skagit County so special is that fact that there are a lot of working farms and a very strong rural setting. This is a critically important part of our culture that we DO NOT want to change. We should NOT make changes that will impact this special feeling and experience. If too many things are changes, we become something that is not sustainable from who we are now.

Recreational space is too broad of a term.

Rezoning are "carve outs" of existing agricultural lands. I oppose Option C

Should not impact or replace the growing of crops, should happen in land that isn't usable as farmland

Size and frequency of such events should be limited. Neighboring properties should not be frequently impacted by noise and traffic ; it would not match the rural character.

Skagit County's largest economic driver is commercial agriculture. Any activity that compromises the ability of production agriculture in any way should not be allowed. In other areas where agri-tourism is predominant there are no remaining large scale food producers. Skagit's prime ag soils should be identified and protected per GMA, not used for activities that can happen in other areas of the county.

Sorry, not into them.

This can be a great way for farmers to add income, and create jobs. Just ensure adequate food safety, rest rooms, hand washing facilities, parking.

Comments: Share your ideas for Weddings.

We approached the county to use our own 2 acre parcel for weddings years ago. We were told that there was no way to make it legal. This is unacceptable. We feel that providing wedding venues on old farms is a great service to our county. It's a service that is in great need. Updating, remodeling, and keeping these old buildings from falling down is very expensive! Weddings offers a way to keep these historic structures standing. I do not believe there should be a minimum acreage size or maximum. There should be as little studies or inspections needed as possible. The landowner is taking the risk. And they should be trusted to do what is right to take care of their land and buildings and keep the people safe. By setting all these rules it feels as if the county wants mechanisms of enforcement. I would like to see a very simple code change which allows wedding facilities to be allowed on agricultural zone land. And allow the landowner to facilitate that as they see fit.

Wedding venue are in direct conflict with ongoing agriculture in ag NRL

Weddings are high impact events. However, they do offer a valuable revenue stream. Where already existing structures are used and special use/accessory permits allow on a limited basis, yes.

Weddings are not Agritourism. They should not be classed as agriculture. Many states have already decided this, we should follow suite. Permitted use for each event should be required if this comes to 'pass'.

Weddings are not related to agricultural land use and incompatible with commercial agricultural land use because of the large amount of parking required at one particular time.

Weddings bring in non-agricultural people and damage the land and add traffic with no benefit.

Weddings can be tricky due to the noise, traffic, and drunken behaviors. However, they also can be a good thing. I believe we should have flexibility on what is allowed, and how it is allowed, with some of the onus of behaving well on the individual party through permits by each wedding party with deposits to ensure compliance of forfeit the deposit. Of course the facility would also need to provide for the capability of a quiet peaceful setting with appropriate sound barriers and well placed speaker systems.

Weddings should not interfere with nearby farm operations. They should have to sign something similar to a "right to farm" agreement when applying for a conditional use permit. They should not have a say in what the farmer does or does not do on the day of the wedding.

Weddings should occur in churches not impacting agriculture.

Weddings, reunions, etc. should be allowed for the sole purpose of providing farmers with added income to help maintain farms, farmlands and related-practices. Farming classes should be encouraged.

SEASONAL EVENTS – FESTIVALS, FARM TO TABLE, FARM TOURS

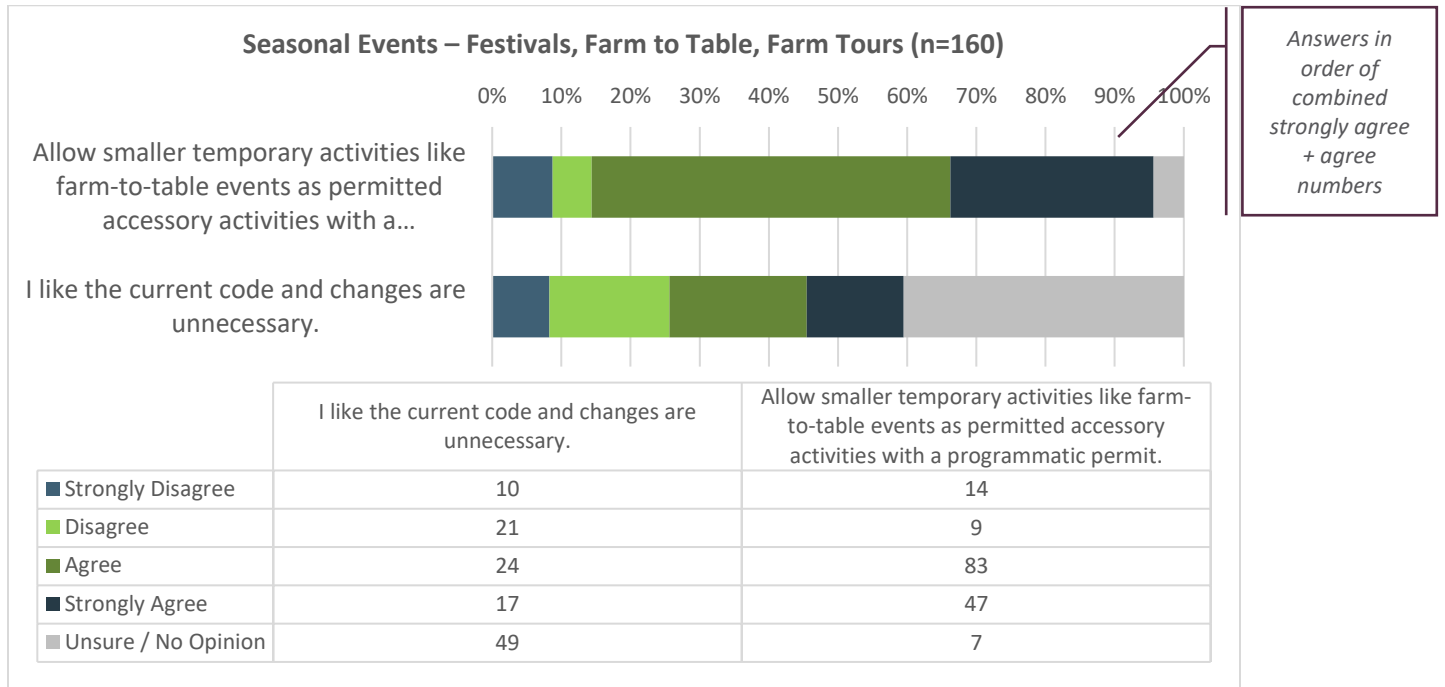
Seasonal festivals may celebrate harvest and other agricultural activities. Skagit County allows festivals and events with administrative special use permits, and special temporary use standards. If controlled in terms of duration and scale and restoring primary agricultural use of the property, they can fit with long-term agricultural use.

In Skagit County, the festival of farms has attracted 20,000 attendees and the Tulip Festival 300,000. Temporary events must have parking fully contained onsite, and not use of any road right-of-way. This could be a concern for damage to agricultural soils; a shuttle service to the event could be used.

A Farm to Table event is a smaller and can average 130-200 people per event. Some smaller events could potentially be permitted as an accessory use with a programmatic permit.

A question asked about opinions on allowing smaller activities like farm-to-table with a programmatic permit, and most found it agreeable. See Exhibit 17.

Exhibit 17. Following is a snapshot of new policy proposals for small temporary uses – tell us what you think.



About 75 persons took the survey in Skagit County and had similar results as the overall survey respondents. See Appendix A.

Open ended responses shared thoughts on the allowances for small events and the permitting of them. See Exhibit 18.

Exhibit 18. Open Ended Comments – Seasonal Events

Comments: Share your ideas for Seasonal Events.

Allowances for such things should be allowed. Sane and reasonable rules established that fit the desired goal of fun events while not disturbing the environment or neighbors.

Consider the impacts of large seasonal events on the needs and activities of farmworkers. Otherwise, I feel that there should be more opportunities for the public to park and observe farming without having to pay. I.e. expand off-street or shoulder parking in selected areas.

Define "Programmatic". Also, many of these options contain terms that are subject to bureaucratic interpretation. Should be more specific.

Do not allow damage to existing crop lands. Use other land for these events

Farm to table events are a great idea. Structures (temporary or permanent) and events must be inspected and permitted with facilities that accommodate visitors for onsite toilets, parking, sanitation, etc.

Comments: Share your ideas for Seasonal Events.

Farm to table is a nonsensical term. Almost all food comes from a farm, including the food sold under the golden arches. Marketing terms don't belong in government regulations. What exactly is a "farm to table event"?

Farms benefitting from the seasonal festivals such as tulip town or roozengaard should have to pay some yearly traffic impact fees for the additional traffic they generate. Parking counts should be reviewed on a yearly basis based on the year priors attendance to make sure there were no issues that needed to be addressed.

Festivals should happen in cities that have the infrastructure to handle the crowds not on agricultural land that produces food.

I do not want farm land lost to rezoning.

i like the idea of infrequent farm to table events. small and low impact events that engage the public with the land and connect the farms and their product to the general public. a once or twice a year at any given property seems tolerable for neighbors as well

I notice that you have not included CSA farms as agritourism. I have a lot of interactions with CSAs and I can tell you that many of them involve customer participation in some part of the farming / harvesting process. Also many CSA farms have interactions where their customers can visit the farm, tour the fields when picking up their order. It would seem to me that this would definitely qualify more as agritourism than a customer picking out produce in a self serve road side stand.

If changing the rules would make it easier for people to hold these events then I would support it. If the point of changing these rules is to make it easier for the government to regulate and control them and I feel it would be best to leave the rules as they are.

I'm in favor of them

Limit the number of permits of this type per year.

Not into the biggies. They disrupt the local flow and are environmentally damaging.

Out of time.

Permits should be quick and easy to obtain.

Same answer stop permitting these people to death. Stop charging exorbitant permit fees operating costs are bad enough.

Seasonal agri-tourism is a wonderful continuous financial boost for the little farmer as well as the community. Look at our tulip fields! We should include a more broad spectrum of our local farmers. Skagit Valley has so many diverse farming products, we are really missing an opportunity to show case our unique style as well as the abundance of our farm land.

Simply allowing these events could open the door to a lot of traffic and disturbance of the rural character in the County. Number of such events should be limited to a certain number per year for each ag business.

Temporary events have been held in Skagit County on farms and as part of Skagit County Extension activities for many years. We may need guidelines for temporary activities on farms, that focus on conserving the farm, farming activities and soils. These should first be developed with a farm owner committee, not county planning staff. ; The temporary, once a year events held on farms in the valley need no additional regulation. Proposed activities that occur on a schedule and/or involve large numbers of people may need to have a programmatic permit, but this should be developed using a cumulative impact analysis to determine the frequency, size, scale of temporary events. Farm-to-table for 200 people

Comments: Share your ideas for Seasonal Events.

with 100 plus vehicles is not small scale. Again, these activities MUST be considered and allowed ONLY as secondary activities to farm production.

The more seasonal activity on farmland the better. The more economic activity in Skagit County the better. The more visitors to Skagit County from Seattle that see what a beautiful place this is and that we aren't a bunch of rednecks that need Seattle telling us how to run our businesses the better for legislation that impacts us. Economic development funds should be made available to cover expenses related to large festivals that bring ACTUAL economic benefit to Skagit County (instead of whatever it is the EDASC does with all that money).

The tulip festival is very over promoted and under served with parking, traffic control and restroom facilities.

These events only enhance our understanding of agriculture and Skagit's farm goods - good things. Clear traffic and respectful parking practices - also a good thing!!

They draw a lot of people. It's important to manage parking.

Tulip Festival is one big cluster ...! I tried to get to a Mt Vernon restaurant last week. It took a half hour to get from the freeway off ramp to Kincaid. There should have been police to facilitate traffic movement. We made a bee line to College way and back onto the freeway. Screw this.

what's a programmatic permit?

Wonderful idea.

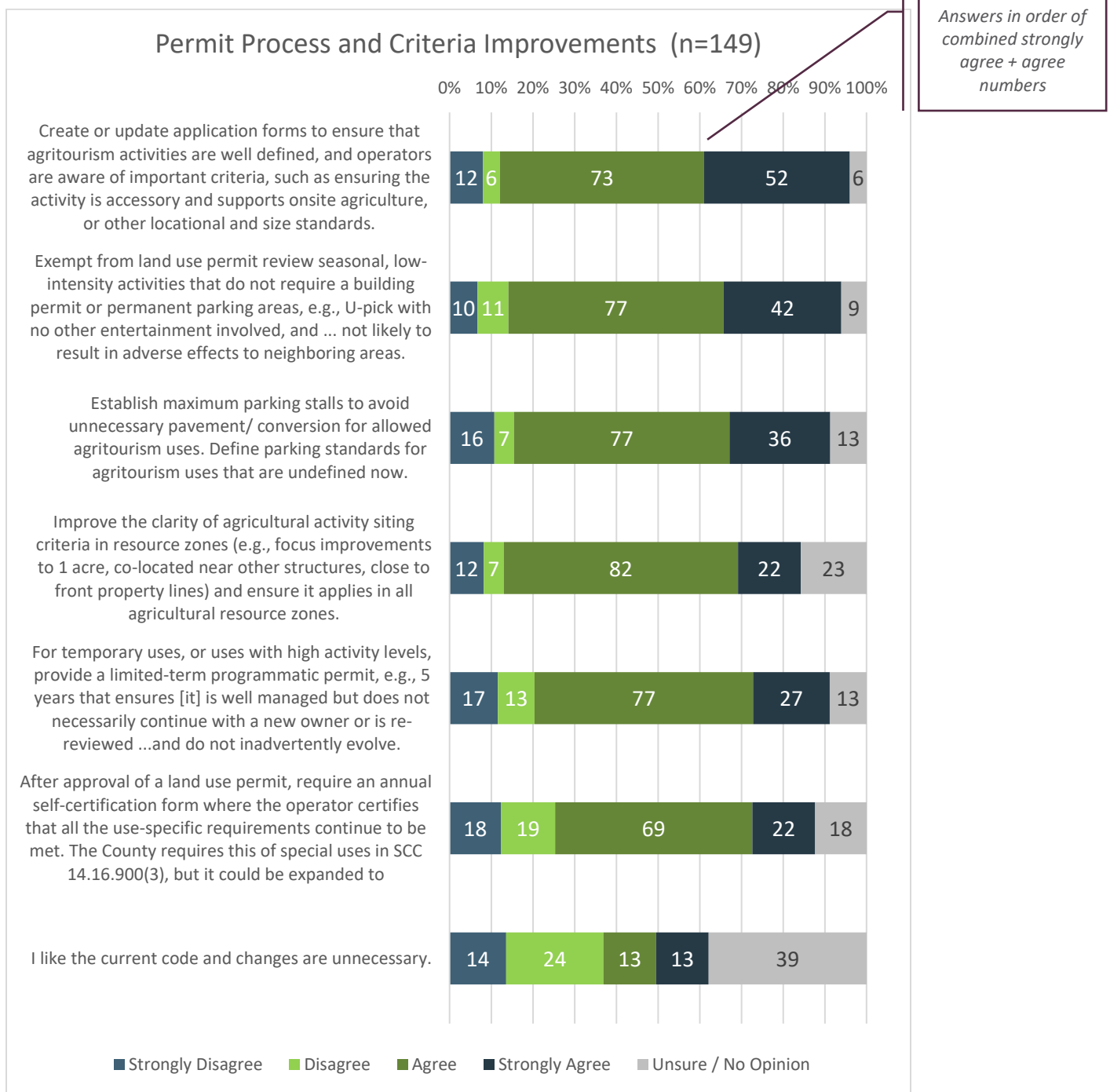
Your estimate of tulip festival attendance is low. Allowing that festival to run 30 days equates to an assault on local residents, due to clogged roads, constant barrage of media hype, and inability to carry on our normal lives during the month of April, an important month of nature in bloom, which benefits only specific families or groups. Amend the code to stop the entitled from fleecing the local residents! As a retired farmer, I don't consider green house flowers an agricultural commodity. Tulip festival should be limited to 10 days, Absolutely no farmland should be used for parking area for retail sales (Roozengaarde, Tulip Town, Garden Rosalyn) Code must be rewritten to protect us from these burdensome festivals.

PERMIT PROCESS AND CRITERIA IMPROVEMENTS

Clear application and review procedures, combined with amended definitions and standards, should assist with code enforcement efforts. As well, ensuring adequate staff resources for code enforcement will be necessary. To ensure that the permitting process is fair and effective Skagit County could adjust its procedures.

Most of the potential improvements to the permit process were supported particularly updated application forms, exemption from land use permits certain seasonal/low-intensity activities and establishing maximum parking to avoid unnecessary conversion of agricultural land. See Exhibit 19.

Exhibit 19. Following is a snapshot of new policy proposals for development standards and permit procedures – tell us what you think.



About 72 persons took the survey in Skagit County and had a similar order of options and agreement. See Appendix A.

Open ended comments gave feedback on areas of focus on permitting and programmatic permits, as well as enforcement. See Exhibit 20.

Exhibit 20. Open-Ended Comments – Permit Process and Criteria.

Comments: Share your ideas for the Permit Process and Criteria.

1. I think u-pick is a reasonable use that could be exempt from land use permitting, how is it determined what is an adverse effect to neighboring areas? How much leverage would neighbors have to limit any activities that disturb the peace and quiet in their neighborhood.

2. Self certification only works if there are inspections. "

Annual certificates should not be required of responsible businesses. But there those who have too many incidence of complaints or infractions should have to undergo this process."

Annual self-certification seems an unnecessary burden. Every three years would suffice to attain goals.

Clear is great and wide is better. Code paths are important AND onramps need to be generous and allow business owners the flexibility to be successful as they pivot to stay viable.

Consider charging permit applicants to fund code enforcement resources/position. By their nature many of the things being considered occur on nights, weekends, and holidays when County staff are unable to verify/witness violations.

County has a hard time enforcing existing regulations on farmlands...i.e. there are substandard farmworker housing areas all over. Although I like these ideas the reality is unless someone complains, there will be a lot of nonconforming uses

Don't make it too complicated!

Don't overburden property owners!

Every time a new permit is required it makes it more difficult for a small business to get started. I've been through the ringer with this already and I just cringe when it comes to getting a permit. I do things with common sense and I've done well with that. I know a lot of people don't. So there must be some flexibility for people who do things well vs people who just make a mess of everything. Not sure how a government agency can handle this ambiguity, but the current system is too tough and rigid.

Focus on the big operators and events

I believe when it comes to the permit process, transparency and customer service is key from the county. Upon a determination, there should be clear and understandable explanations for the decision and the county should provide the technical assistance for correction if applicable.

I do not want farmland land permanently lost due to rezoning.

I greatly disagree with the notion that, under someone's direction, we as farmers should adopt new definitions, a new catch word for the same thing that we have always done? "Agritourism" just doesn't apply to all the farms you're trying to cover. Farm direct marketing has been around forever. Agritourism is a subcategory of farm direct marketing and you need to treat it that way. Most farm stands that I know of would not qualify as Agritourism. Probably about half the u picks in Skagit would make it as Agritourism facilities. You just can't expect to indiscriminately make up legislation lumping all farms in Skagit who direct market on the farm as Agritourism.

I request that you consider allowing the consolidation of nearby, non-contiguous parcels to form a 40 acre lot for the purpose of allowing a residence to provide for security and general operations.

I ridiculous joke

Comments: Share your ideas for the Permit Process and Criteria.

I would like the permits to be simple without any fees. We already pay too much taxes. I would like them to not need to be updated annually. The permits should have very little minimum or maximum criteria. So that the businesses can grow as needed without interference by the government. Use the permit to allow the landowner to state what business they plan to conduct on their own property. And then allow them to change their business model as needed without interference by inspectors and government officials.

If enforcement and staffing is a problem, increase the permit fees to help cover the costs

Include in the criteria night lighting standards that are compliant with current model codes for rural areas.
https://www.darksky.org/wp-content/uploads/bsk-pdf-manager/16_MLO_FINAL_JUNE2011.PDF

One example is gravel parking with French drains can be a better alternative to paved parking.

Out of time.

Perhaps a Transfer of Development Rights process? Penalizing productive farmsteads created long before the advent of zoning and subdivision regulations is contrary to the GMA policy of conserving agricultural lands and encouraging the agricultural economy cited at least six different times in this study. "

Permit and enforcement is mandatory

permit reviews and enforcement seem to be a major problem in the county. enforcement in particular. even when a property is cited for violations there are often no ramifications or actions. i have seen this demonstrated on multiple properties i am adjacent to. it requires neighbors to be the watchdogs and makes for an unneighborly relationship. so more activity levels you allow the more abuse of those levels will occur . when i first move to Skagit county 10 years ago i thought - why aren't there more venues and events. we are so close to the city - wouldn't it be a great draw. but the more time i am here i gain a better understanding of how fragile this ecosystem is. the bigger entertainment footprint you allow , the closer the valley resembles the Woodinville area.

Providing programmatic and well defined permits and codes will help ensure limited impacts on Commercial Agriculture. However, allowing a self certify or no background/feasibility review for applicants will certainly open opportunity for Non-compliance. Code enforcement is not very stringent in rural areas of Skagit county currently.

Respondents to questions should be able to remove selections completely. This does not appear to be possible. Requiring a land use permit for activities that are related to farming operations, seems like a money-maker for PD&S rather than anything that would help a farmer's bottom line. In other areas where permits are required for agri-tourism activities the criteria for the activity to be very much secondary to the farm operations and farming is the focus. The questions asked here do not appear to have been constructed with GMA requirements in mind.; Shouldn't any new permit for an activity be subservient to code that strengthens the ability of farmers to farm and to protect soils from conversion to any other uses? Skagit County should determine how many acres of Ag-NRL and rural zones that were farmed have already been converted to other uses and then make decisions about what activities might be possible. We are allowing incremental loss of Ag-NRL soils each year and have NO plan to mitigate and/or prevent these losses. Creating permits that encourage conversion of farmland to other uses does not comply with the intent of the Growth Management Act.

Skagit County should create a permit system that will charge users a fee that will pay for an enforcement agent for Skagit County Agritourism. Everyone is tired of agritourism not following the rules and impacting our rural spaces of which we the farmers get no compensation for.

The overriding goal should be to save our crop land and not allow development or damage to these lands. Do events on land that doesn't grow crops. Save or farmland!

Comments: Share your ideas for the Permit Process and Criteria.

This survey takes more time than I expected. It requires discussion with some experts present.

Touting farm areas as a tourist destination in a re-imagine policing and homeless crisis climate without addressing farmstead security consequences is a major oversight of this study. I own a working farm close by the Humane Society homeless encampment north of Burlington. Trespassing, vandalism, and theft was commonplace even prior to the camp's establishment. I farm over 70 acres, but because my feedlot area (established early 1900's and out of the floodplain) is on a less than 40 acre parcel, a residence or caretakers quarters is not permitted.

OTHER COMMENTS

Additional open ended comments touch on all of the various uses, permitting approaches, and concerns about either supporting businesses and farmers or protecting farmland. See Exhibit 21.

Exhibit 21. Open Ended – Other Comments, Questions or Concerns

Comments: If you have other comments, questions, or concerns, please tell us about them here.

Ag tourism has the potential to create a additional problems for the country. Traffic, sanitation, safety and equity.

Agricultural lands in the County are already seeing storage facilities that have no connection to farm activities sit on ag lands. I'd rather see development of ag tourism than that, but it needs to be clearly defined and limited in order to avoid large out of area businesses to come in and create large scale tourism and entertainment businesses. Strengthen the ability of ag related businesses to provide farmstays and limited food service and events, so that we can keep the rural character of the County that attracts visitors in the first place.

Any requirements should be in plain language (i.e., not just referring back to complex codes). No permitting requirements for small (<10 acres?) farms or activities involving <25 people at a time. Allow short term tent camping (see HipCamp or similar). Clarify whether yurts are acceptable for short-term (camping/farm-stay) uses.

As the owner of a historic dairy farm, we would very much like to see land uses, in agricultural land change. We provide a great service to our community and without the ability to hold events and weddings we could not afford to upkeep the buildings on this property. We would like to see the land use on agricultural land change to allow weddings. Without groundwater studies for parking areas. Also older historic building should not require sprinklers and septic systems should be allowed as needed. I would like to see the permitting process be very simple without these. And compliance generally be left to the landowner. We own the property and should be trusted to be good stewards of our own property. Please keep in mind that the landowner owns the property and the county and the community do not. The landowner should be the final authority on his own property.

Bird watching and field viewing sites, photography and painting/sketching areas would draw tourists and would enhance educational and environmental protection goals but have not been addressed.

by local government infringement."

Farmland is vital to our area and needs to be protected, along with allowing farmers opportunities for money making alternatives.

farmland should be farmland - when you define accessory use on farmland that should be a strict and limited definition. i think the public perception of an accessory use is that it is significantly small - is the counties definition of accessory anything under 50%?. please limit these accessory uses you are allowing to a small percentage to be assured farming

Comments: If you have other comments, questions, or concerns, please tell us about them here.

remains the large MAJORITY of the property use. 51/49 % proportions is too large in favor of the entertainment use. please limit the accessory to a small % to limit the focus on entertainment and keep the primary focus on farming . more inline with 80% farming /20% entertainment

focus on providing food, not entertainment. Focus on locals not tourists. Maintain food providing farms over bulbs. You cant eat bulbs.

Good luck! The ideas presented are worth investigating. The advantage of our beautiful Skagit Valley is nature. Not shopping.

Good survey but difficult to take without sound prior knowledge of results of present policy.

Growth must be severely limited. Zoning should not change. After all what is the point in zoning if money can change it? Agricultural land is precious and has to be protected from other use.

Has the County considered tourism for other resource lands, such as shellfish farming (example - Taylor Shellfish with store and restaurant) or forest resource lands (example - Pilchuck Tree Farm with recreational uses)?

I love the Skagit valley farms and recognize their potential. I wouldn't mind small-scale additions and improvements to what is already there; however, I would never approve any plans to begin larger scale tourist development on and around the farms, as that would lead to a drastic, impersonal change in the character of the region. Having a zillion permits and codes and personnel to enforce them reeks of big government, which many people are sick of -- perhaps including the farmers of Skagit Valley. Let's improve things while keeping the down-home flavor of this area intact and keep hoards of people from ruining the charming "smallness" of the area. I was witness to the tremendous changes in Napa Valley from 1970 through the present, and the sight of limos full of wine-drinking tourists is less than enchanting.

I was struck by a personal coincidence this week of having learned about and reviewed this agritourism report on the same day I witnessed tulip farmworkers hold a strike and vote to unionize, just before the tulip festival. I have looked and find little to no evidence that the interests, needs, and opinions of farmworkers have been considered in the planning process. Nor do I see that farm labor is represented in the County's ag planning and advisory services. Having worked in the fields as a youth in Skagit Valley in the 1960's, I have a deep respect for the multiple generations of immigrant farmworkers who have built a community here and have contributed mightily to our agricultural economy. Please find better ways to include these people in your planning process and consider their long-term needs in these policy proposals. Thank you. [name]

I would love to also see signs that indicate what crops are being grown in fields that border roads. I often wonder what the farm is growing. I had an idea of having local school student design the signs with illustrations of the fruits/veggies and get them interested in agriculture in their county!

If you travel the world, some of the best food you can buy, in terms of flavor and health, come from street vendors. And in many cases the regulations on them are few or non-existent. The quality comes as a result of reputation and need to compete.

In all cases Skagitonians to Preserve Farmland speaks for me."

In order for farming to be profitable some farmers may need and want to expand there business to include tourism. My concern is that we will then find tourists wanting to move here. I would hate to see us lose our quality of life living in this beautiful country like environment and become another congested urban community.

It all sounds great until we look lose our ruralness to parking areas, restaurants, huge farm stands that sell far more than ag products etc. Start slow and low impact and see how it goes. Huge changes make more space for the big players to

Comments: If you have other comments, questions, or concerns, please tell us about them here.

come in and commercialize and pave our farmlands. Does not help small farmers. There is not an idea here if having a permanent, year round farmers market with stalks, farm to table restaurants etc. That may help limit how much farmland we use for parking lots.

Just to echo things I've already said, too many regulations make it impossible for a small business to get started. Some of the best business start small.

Keep Farmers Farming. Let Napa Valley do Agritourism.

Most important is to protect farmland from being rezoned or developed.

My strongest concern is preserving as much farmland and wild areas as we have, and especially don't want increased use of land next to wild areas, like the housing building going on next to Skagit Trust land at the east end of College Way.

Need to clarify "rural character" and who will be assessing that for individual cases. Food service/tasting ties to local agriculture is critical. Weddings are problematic and I think a cap is needed on # of wedding venues (across scales) valley-wide.

No.

Please consider researching and creating proposed changes that support protection of prime ag soils for farming. Agritourism has been adopted mainly when the commercial farming businesses have been compromised and large contiguous land bases have been divided, economically compromising food production and profits. Skagit County's strength is in its prime soils land base and continued farming economy. Skagitians oppose anything that compromises this diversified agricultural economy.

Regenerative, Sustainable Organic Agriculture is extremely important to encourage as it is to educate the farmers and the public about the benefits. Our precious topsoil must be improved with bio activity and amended to capture more carbon. The health and wellness benefits to consumers (and farm workers) and the planet of this husbandry is immense.

Respect private property rights above all. Legislating or permitting encroaches on this private property. We are not to tie the hands and rights of a property owner with coercion

Skagit County needs to add similar codes and enforcement for Eco Tourism and Aqua Tourism. Actively supporting farms is a good thing, but there are other wonderful forms of tourism in the County that should be included in the county's efforts. Aqua Tourism and Eco Tourism are a huge draw for visitors, but their importance is not highlighted or actively promoted. This leaves Anacortes outside of the Skagit Valley tourism effort. Don't make that mistake.

Survey is too confusing and concepts insufficiently explained to yield meaningful input. Did you test the validity of the survey. Way too in the weeds...

Thank you for doing this work. I'm out of time and not sure if I can save progress and resume later.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. I appreciate the extra effort the County has taken to ensure public involvement.

Thank you!

Thanks for asking for our input.

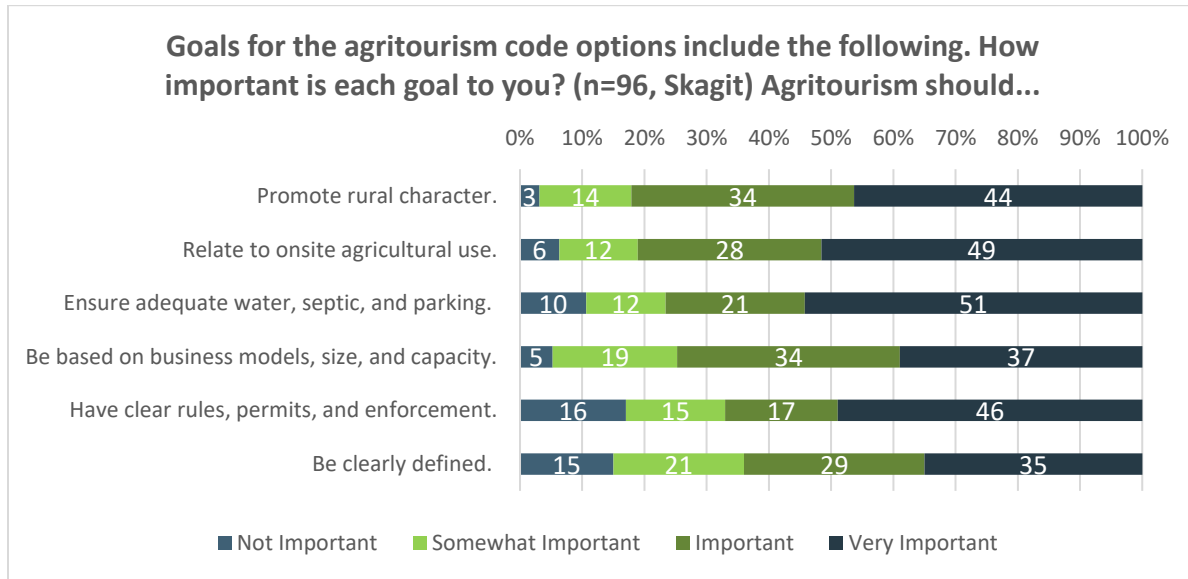
Comments: If you have other comments, questions, or concerns, please tell us about them here.

There is more than one way to ensure a good experience that does not harm the community or natural resources. Be a little more creative in the way you put together new regulations and it will be a true win for the community."

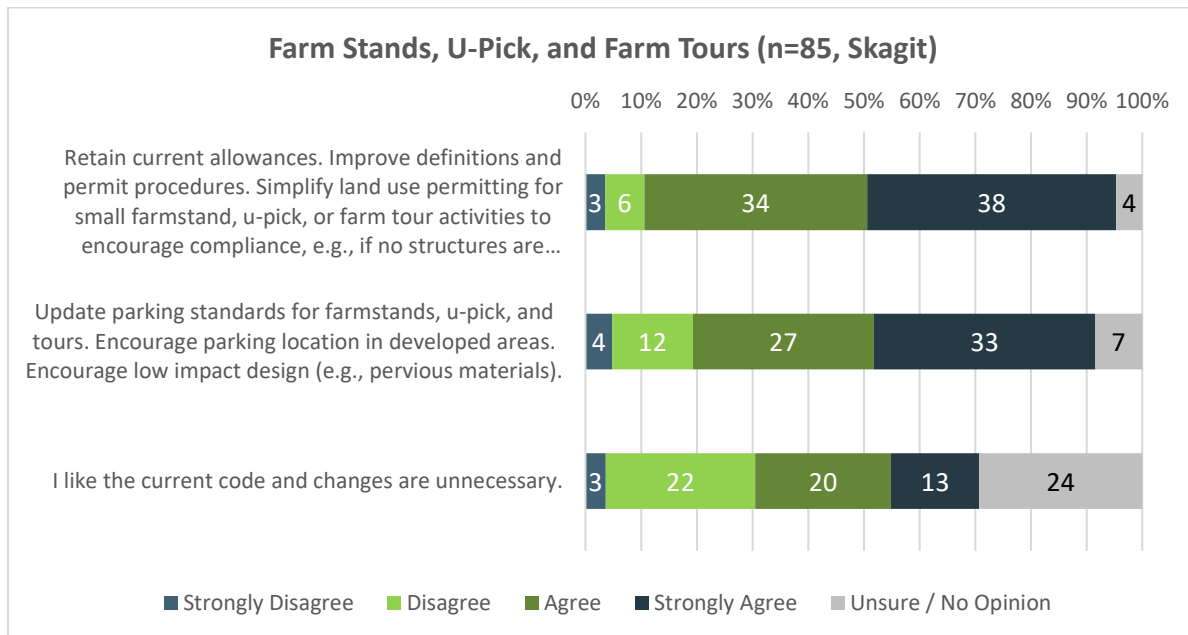
This survey is a bit confusing in places.

APPENDIX A. RESPONSES IN SKAGIT COUNTY

The County’s public survey platform identifies by zip code the location where a survey is taken. Overall, about 107 respondents took the survey within Skagit County. Not all persons answered all questions. It is important to note that persons taking the survey from other locations may live in Skagit County and work elsewhere, or were otherwise in another location for travel, or own property in the County and have an interest. Thus, responses from neighboring counties or elsewhere may still reflect local opinions. Responses for those taking the survey in Skagit County are shown below. Results are similar in direction to the overall group. All results are presented with the most important or highest agreement are presented first.



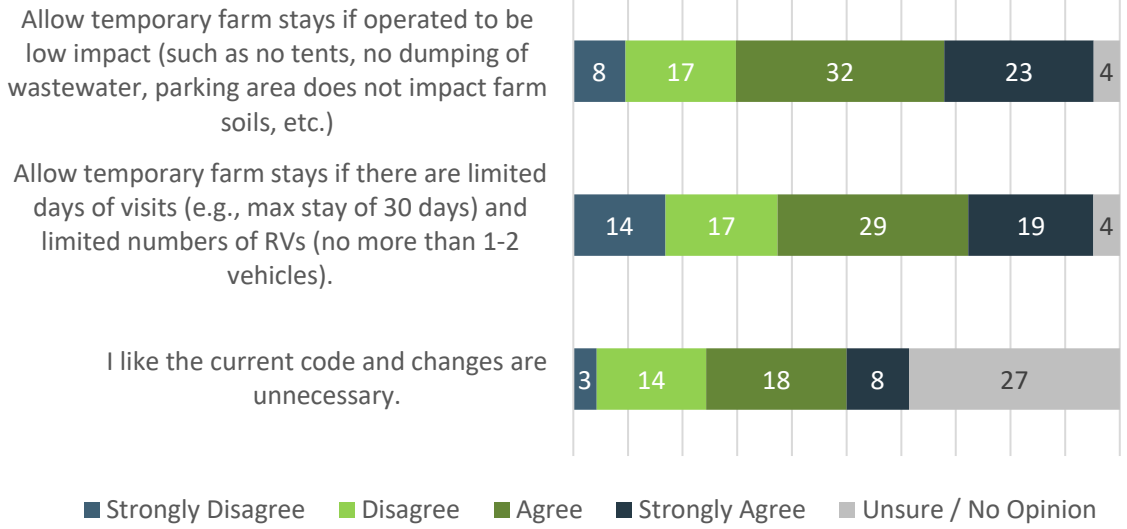
Results presented in order of highest combined importance (important/very important) at the top.



Results presented in order of highest combined agreement (agree/strongly agree) at the top.

Farm Stays (n=84, Skagit)

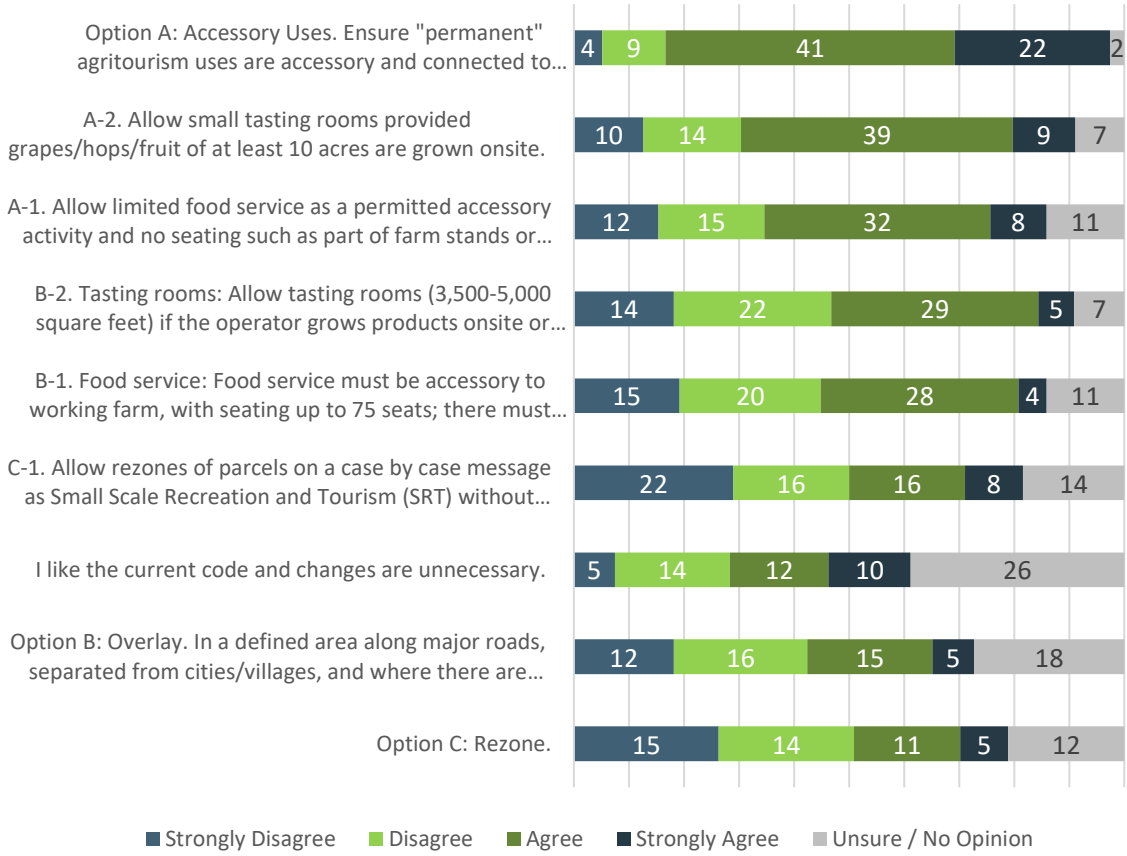
0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%



Results presented in order of highest combined agreement (agree/strongly agree) at the top.

Tasting Rooms, Restaurants (n=79, Skagit)

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

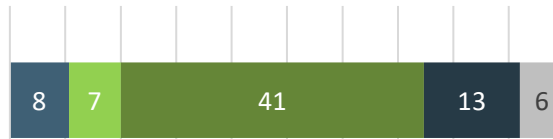


Results presented in order of highest combined agreement (agree/strongly agree) at the top.

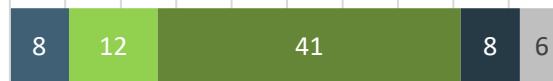
Weddings (n=75, Skagit)

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

Option A: Accessory Uses. Ensure "permanent" agritourism uses are accessory and connected to farms. Allow more flexibility in uses provided there is a connection to the onsite farm, and the farm remains the primary use.



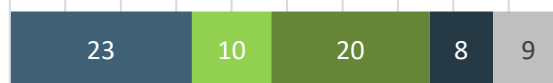
A-1. Allow wedding facilities with an administrative special use permit as a temporary use with a programmatic permit provided it is happening in already developed area/existing barn. Limit number per year.



B-1. Allow year-round, on parcels with at least the minimum lot size of the zone where accessory to farm, meeting resource land siting criteria (e.g., in developed areas or no more than 1 acre), and subject to hearing examiner special use permit.



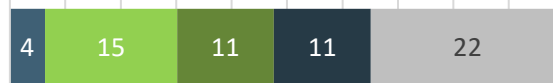
C-1. Allow rezones of parcels on a case by case message as Small Scale Recreation and Tourism (SRT) without allowing them in the resource zones. Wedding facilities are not expressly allowed today, but this would be added to the zone.



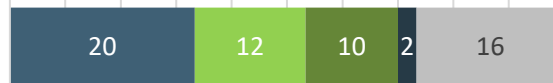
Option B: Overlay. In a defined area along major roads, separated from cities/villages, and where there are water systems allow for:



I like the current code and changes are unnecessary.



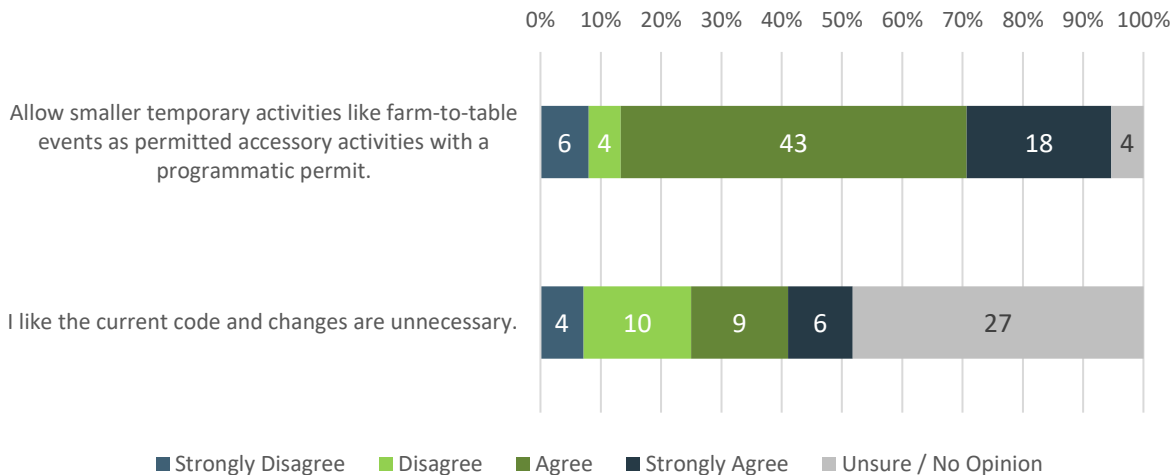
Option C: Rezone.



■ Strongly Disagree ■ Disagree ■ Agree ■ Strongly Agree ■ Unsure / No Opinion

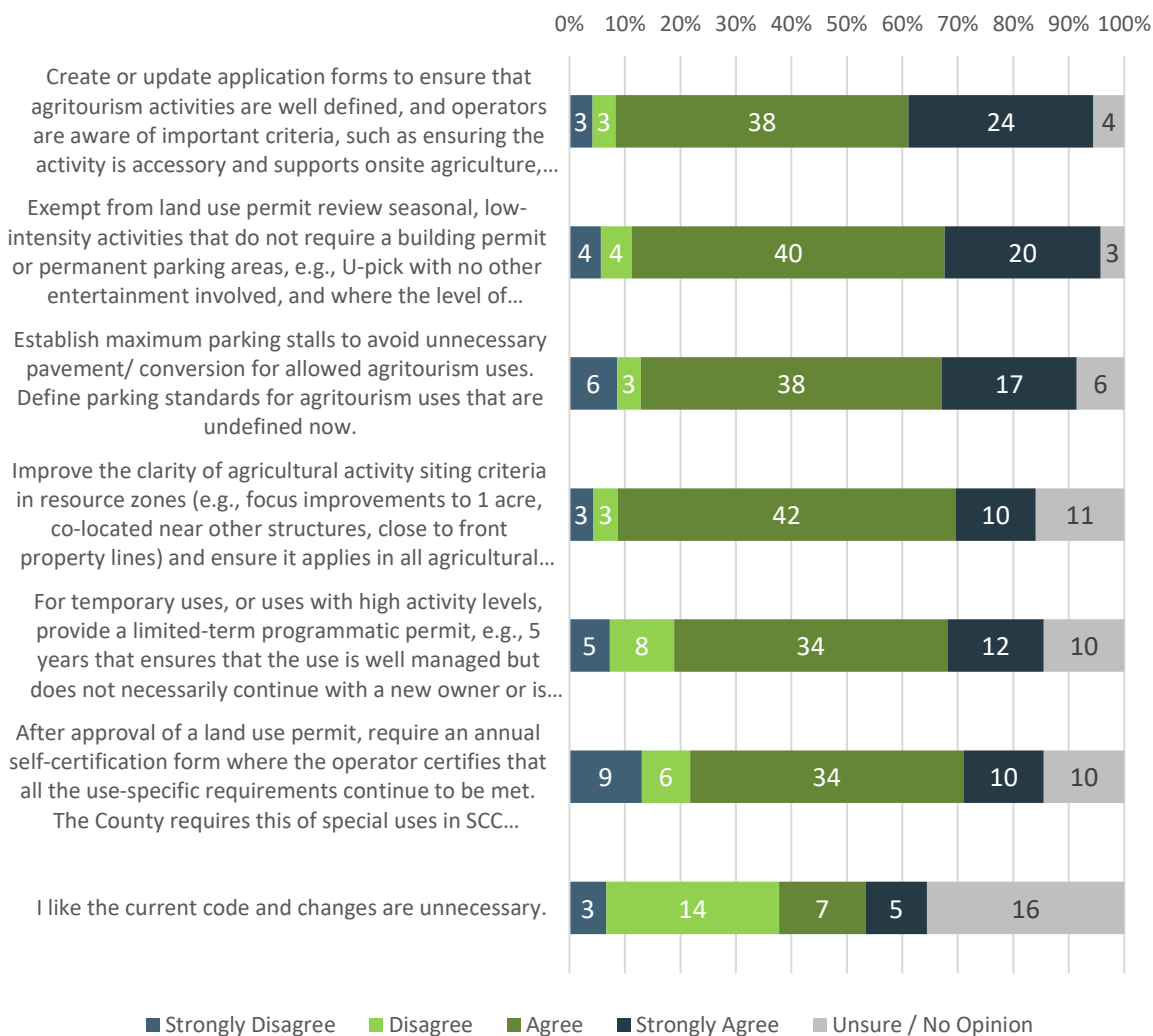
Results presented in order of highest combined agreement (agree/strongly agree) at the top.

Seasonal Events – Festivals, Farm to Table, Farm Tours (n=75, Skagit)



Results presented in order of highest combined agreement (agree/strongly agree) at the top.

Permit Process and Criteria Improvements (n=72, Skagit)



Results presented in order of highest combined agreement (agree/strongly agree) at the top.

APPENDIX B: SURVEY QUESTIONS

Skagit County Agritourism Study



Background

Skagit County is reviewing what agritourism means to the County's agricultural community, rural residents, and other stakeholder and how future agritourism policies will fit the Comprehensive Plan vision and the Growth Management Act resource land protections.

Staff conducted an exploration and analysis of agritourism in Skagit County which resulted in a report on the economics of agritourism, a current assessment of County

policies, and case studies from similar jurisdictions. The study addressed the current situation with farmstands and value added activities, agricultural recreation, and options for other types of agritourism such as potential food service on farms, wedding venues, temporary event spaces, etc.

An agritourism policy options report was released recently to address a range of agritourism concepts and objectives. The report includes a comparison of policies in terms of opportunities, strengths, and weaknesses. The County will use host public meetings and use the survey below to take feedback on the policy options report.

Based on feedback from this report, a legislative proposal will be developed for consideration by Skagit County. This will allow the County to propose amendments to the Comprehensive Plan, zoning map, and development regulations to address agritourism.

Agritourism Survey

Take our Agritourism Policy Concepts Survey!

Introduction

Following a situation assessment and community engagement efforts in 2021, Skagit County has developed Policy Concept options, available to [review here](#)

(https://www.skagitcounty.net/PlanningAndPermit/Documents/agtourism/Options_AGT%20Intent%20and%20Scale%20and%20Options_2022_0315_rev.pdf). Agritourism related uses under review include:

- Farm stands
- U-Pick
- Farm stays
- Tasting Rooms, Restaurants
- Weddings
- Seasonal Events – Festivals, Farm to Table, Farm Tours

Code options look at different options for where/how to allow the agritourism uses.

Current Code Option: The zoning code as it stands today.

Option A Accessory Agritourism: Under Option A there would be targeted changes to use allowances in the zones where most of the County's agriculture is located. It would address the range of agritourism above. Size, frequency, and compatibility measures would be addressed. It would build on the current code and fit within existing policies.

Option B Agritourism Overlay: Option B would establish an overlay zone including portions of resource and rural zones where additional agritourism activities could be allowed.

Option C Rezone Small Scale Recreation and Tourism: Option C would allow rezones of parcels on a case by case basis to Small Scale Recreation and Tourism (SRT) which allows for some of the more intensive agritourism uses.

This survey asks your opinions on different agritourism code options. Your input will help the County and consultants refine the options and develop a proposal that would be taken forward for Planning Commission and Board of County Commissioner Review. **The survey will take about 15 minutes. Thank you for your time!**

Questions

1. Agritourism Uses:

Goals for the agritourism code options include the following. How important is each goal to you?

	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important
Each desired agritourism use should be defined in the Skagit County Code and clearly identify associated activities that are agritourism in nature.	<input type="radio"/> Not Important	<input type="radio"/> Somewhat Important	<input type="radio"/> Important	<input type="radio"/> Very Important
Each agritourism use should have a relationship to onsite agriculture, particularly in zones that are designed to promote long-term commercial agriculture (AG-NRL and others), consistent with the County Comprehensive Plan and Growth Management Act.	<input type="radio"/> Not Important	<input type="radio"/> Somewhat Important	<input type="radio"/> Important	<input type="radio"/> Very Important
In rural zones, agritourism uses should promote rural character as established in the County Comprehensive Plan and Growth Management Act	<input type="radio"/> Not Important	<input type="radio"/> Somewhat Important	<input type="radio"/> Important	<input type="radio"/> Very Important
The agritourism allowances should be based on an understanding of business models and their size and capacity.	<input type="radio"/> Not Important	<input type="radio"/> Somewhat Important	<input type="radio"/> Important	<input type="radio"/> Very Important
Permit criteria and conditions should be developed for adequate water, septic, and parking.	<input type="radio"/> Not Important	<input type="radio"/> Somewhat Important	<input type="radio"/> Important	<input type="radio"/> Very Important
Agritourism activities should be subject to clear rules and permits as well as enforcement. This may include renewable permits and scaled fees.	<input type="radio"/> Not Important	<input type="radio"/> Somewhat Important	<input type="radio"/> Important	<input type="radio"/> Very Important

2. Farm Stands, U-Pick, and Farm Tours

Skagit County allows farm stands called “seasonal roadside stands” in most rural and resource zones. The purpose of a farm stand (seasonal roadside stand) is to offer onsite products for sale. The Skagit County Zoning Code (SCC 14.16.400) limits the size of a seasonal roadside stand to between 300 and 5,000 square feet. The permits are tiered: 300 square feet outright permitted, 2,000 square feet allowed by administrative special use, and 5,000 square feet allowed by hearing examiner special use. Parking must be located onsite; parking may be required at 1 stall per 300 square feet as a retail activity.

U-pick and farm tours are allowed as accessory uses to farm in most rural and resource zones. U-pick operations allow customers to pick their produce in the fields. Farm tours allow visitors to see the farm as is for educational or recreational purposes.

Studies have shown that over half of customers of farm stands are local. They may have up to 500 visitors a year by themselves. U-pick operations could support about 400-2,000 customers per year (size 1-5 acres) depending on the type of crop and acres planted. Farm tours could attract up to 2,000 visitors depend on class sizes and seasonal use.

Following is a snapshot of new policy proposals for farmstands, u-pick, and tours – tell us what you think.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Unsure / No Opinion
Retain current allowances. Improve definitions and permit procedures. Simplify land use permitting for small farmstand, u-pick, or farm tour activities to encourage compliance, e.g., if no structures are involved or if they are small.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Update parking standards for farmstands, u-pick, and tours. Encourage parking location in developed areas. Encourage low impact design (e.g., pervious materials).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I like the current code and changes are unnecessary.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Share your ideas for Farmstands, U-pick, and Farm Tours

3. Farm stays

Skagit County allows bed and breakfast operations with administrative special use permits. Similar uses include farm stays, which are accommodations on a working farm. A producer could request approval of a bed and breakfast on their farm. Bed and breakfasts are allowed to have up to 5 rooms. Between 2 and 10 people could be onsite at any time in a bed and breakfast. If a bed and breakfast is operated year-round on weekends, for example, there could be about 520 visitors per year.

A type of overnight stay that is not directly addressed in the Skagit County Code is a temporary farm stay with an RV, popularized by Harvest Hosts. Following is a snapshot of new policy proposals for temporary farm stays – tell us what you think.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Unsure / No Opinion
Allow temporary farm stays if there are limited days of visits (e.g., max stay of 30 days) and limited numbers of RVs (no more than 1-2 vehicles).	<input type="radio"/> Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/> Disagree	<input type="radio"/> Agree	<input type="radio"/> Strongly Agree	<input type="radio"/> Unsure / No Opinion
Allow temporary farm stays if operated to be low impact (such as no tents, no dumping of wastewater, parking area does not impact farm soils, etc.)	<input type="radio"/> Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/> Disagree	<input type="radio"/> Agree	<input type="radio"/> Strongly Agree	<input type="radio"/> Unsure / No Opinion
I like the current code and changes are unnecessary.	<input type="radio"/> Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/> Disagree	<input type="radio"/> Agree	<input type="radio"/> Strongly Agree	<input type="radio"/> Unsure / No Opinion

Share your ideas for Farm Stays.

4. Tasting Rooms, Restaurants

In Skagit County, currently, restaurants and wineries, breweries, or tasting rooms are allowed in several urban zones, rural commercial zones, or rural industrial zones, but not in agricultural resource zones or rural residential zones.

The State of Washington allows one tasting room on premises with a winery. The typical size for tasting rooms varies from less than 100 square feet to over 2,000 square feet. As of 2019, tasting rooms in Washington had an average number of monthly visitors of about 924 (x 12 months would equal over 11,300 annually).

Where allowed County land use and building permits are required to operate or build a restaurant or tasting room. Stormwater review would be required for parking areas. Building permits are required for new or altered structures. The Health Department requires permits for food. To serve food, public water connection is required. Adequate septic service is also required.

Following is a snapshot of new policy proposals for tasting rooms or restaurants – tell us what you think.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Unsure / No Opinion
Option A: Accessory Uses. Ensure "permanent" agritourism uses are accessory and connected to farms. Allow more flexibility in uses provided there is a connection to the onsite farm, and the farm remains the primary use.	<input type="radio"/> Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/> Disagree	<input type="radio"/> Agree	<input type="radio"/> Strongly Agree	<input type="radio"/> Unsure / No Opinion
A-1. Allow limited food service as a permitted accessory activity and no seating such as part of farm stands or farm-based business.	<input type="radio"/> Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/> Disagree	<input type="radio"/> Agree	<input type="radio"/> Strongly Agree	<input type="radio"/> Unsure / No Opinion
A-2. Allow small tasting rooms provided grapes/hops/fruit of at least 10 acres are grown onsite.	<input type="radio"/> Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/> Disagree	<input type="radio"/> Agree	<input type="radio"/> Strongly Agree	<input type="radio"/> Unsure / No Opinion
Option B: Overlay. In a defined area along major roads, separated from cities/villages, and where there are water systems allow for:	<input type="radio"/> Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/> Disagree	<input type="radio"/> Agree	<input type="radio"/> Strongly Agree	<input type="radio"/> Unsure / No Opinion

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Unsure / No Opinion
B-1. Food service: Food service must be accessory to working farm, with seating up to 75 seats; there must be use of produce onsite. The parcels should be least 10 acres in size.	<input type="radio"/> Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/> Disagree	<input type="radio"/> Agree	<input type="radio"/> Strongly Agree	<input type="radio"/> Unsure / No Opinion
B-2. Tasting rooms: Allow tasting rooms (3,500-5,000 square feet) if the operator grows products onsite or on contiguous lands of at least 20 to 40 acres.	<input type="radio"/> Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/> Disagree	<input type="radio"/> Agree	<input type="radio"/> Strongly Agree	<input type="radio"/> Unsure / No Opinion
Option C: Rezone.	<input type="radio"/> Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/> Disagree	<input type="radio"/> Agree	<input type="radio"/> Strongly Agree	<input type="radio"/> Unsure / No Opinion
C-1. Allow rezones of parcels on a case by case message as Small Scale Recreation and Tourism (SRT) without allowing them in the resource zones. Restaurants and tasting rooms would be allowed in the rezoned parcel.	<input type="radio"/> Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/> Disagree	<input type="radio"/> Agree	<input type="radio"/> Strongly Agree	<input type="radio"/> Unsure / No Opinion
I like the current code and changes are unnecessary.	<input type="radio"/> Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/> Disagree	<input type="radio"/> Agree	<input type="radio"/> Strongly Agree	<input type="radio"/> Unsure / No Opinion

Share your ideas for Tasting Rooms and Restaurants.

5. Weddings

Skagit County allows temporary uses in agricultural and rural areas, if related to agriculture. Wedding facilities have not been allowed as temporary uses to date in the county.

Weddings may attract around 250 guests on average and depending on if it is allowed as a temporary or year-round 6,000-13,000 visitors per year.

Agritourism uses may be allowed under state laws if they are compatible with the onsite agricultural use (size, scale, intensity) and if located in an already developed areas or less than 1 acre in size; some counties allow wedding activities in existing barns or as temporary uses limiting size and frequency.

Following is a snapshot of new policy proposals for weddings – tell us what you think.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Unsure / No Opinion
Option A: Accessory Uses. Ensure "permanent" agritourism uses are accessory and connected to farms. Allow more flexibility in uses provided there is a connection to the onsite farm, and the farm remains the primary use.	<input type="radio"/> Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/> Disagree	<input type="radio"/> Agree	<input type="radio"/> Strongly Agree	<input type="radio"/> Unsure / No Opinion
A-1. Allow wedding facilities with an administrative special use permit as a temporary use with a programmatic permit provided it is happening in already developed area/existing barn. Limit number per year.	<input type="radio"/> Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/> Disagree	<input type="radio"/> Agree	<input type="radio"/> Strongly Agree	<input type="radio"/> Unsure / No Opinion
Option B: Overlay. In a defined area along major roads, separated from cities/villages, and where there are water systems allow for:	<input type="radio"/> Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/> Disagree	<input type="radio"/> Agree	<input type="radio"/> Strongly Agree	<input type="radio"/> Unsure / No Opinion
B-1. Allow year-round, on parcels with at least the minimum lot size of the zone where accessory to farm, meeting resource land siting criteria (e.g., in developed areas or no more than 1 acre), and subject to hearing examiner special use permit.	<input type="radio"/> Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/> Disagree	<input type="radio"/> Agree	<input type="radio"/> Strongly Agree	<input type="radio"/> Unsure / No Opinion

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Unsure / No Opinion
Option C: Rezone.	<input type="radio"/> Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/> Disagree	<input type="radio"/> Agree	<input type="radio"/> Strongly Agree	<input type="radio"/> Unsure / No Opinion
C-1. Allow rezones of parcels on a case by case message as Small Scale Recreation and Tourism (SRT) without allowing them in the resource zones. Wedding facilities are not expressly allowed today, but this would be added to the zone.	<input type="radio"/> Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/> Disagree	<input type="radio"/> Agree	<input type="radio"/> Strongly Agree	<input type="radio"/> Unsure / No Opinion
I like the current code and changes are unnecessary.	<input type="radio"/> Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/> Disagree	<input type="radio"/> Agree	<input type="radio"/> Strongly Agree	<input type="radio"/> Unsure / No Opinion

Share your ideas for Weddings.

6. Seasonal Events – Festivals, Farm to Table, Farm Tours

Seasonal festivals may celebrate harvest and other agricultural activities. Skagit County allows festivals and events with administrative special use permits, and special temporary use standards. If controlled in terms of duration and scale and restoring primary agricultural use of the property, they can fit with long-term agricultural use.

In Skagit County, the festival of farms has attracted 20,000 attendees and the Tulip Festival 300,000. Temporary events must have parking fully contained onsite, and not use of any road right-of-way. This could be a concern for damage to agricultural soils; a shuttle service to the event could be used.

A Farm to Table event is a smaller and can average 130-200 people per event. Some smaller events could potentially be permitted as an accessory use with a programmatic permit.

Following is a snapshot of new policy proposals for small temporary uses – tell us what you think.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Unsure / No Opinion
Allow smaller temporary activities like farm-to-table events as permitted accessory activities with a programmatic permit.	<input type="radio"/> Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/> Disagree	<input type="radio"/> Agree	<input type="radio"/> Strongly Agree	<input type="radio"/> Unsure / No Opinion
I like the current code and changes are unnecessary.	<input type="radio"/> Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/> Disagree	<input type="radio"/> Agree	<input type="radio"/> Strongly Agree	<input type="radio"/> Unsure / No Opinion

Share your ideas for Seasonal Events.

7. Permit Process and Criteria Improvements

Clear application and review procedures, combined with amended definitions and standards, should assist with code enforcement efforts. As well, ensuring adequate staff resources for code enforcement will be necessary. To ensure that the permitting process is fair and effective Skagit County could adjust its procedures.

Following is a snapshot of new policy proposals for development standards and permit procedures – tell us what you think.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Unsure / No Opinion
<p>Improve the clarity of agricultural activity siting criteria in resource zones (e.g., focus improvements to 1 acre, co-located near other structures, close to front property lines) and ensure it applies in all agricultural resource zones.</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>Establish maximum parking stalls to avoid unnecessary pavement/ conversion for allowed agritourism uses. Define parking standards for agritourism uses that are undefined now.</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>Create or update application forms to ensure that agritourism activities are well defined, and operators are aware of important criteria, such as ensuring the activity is accessory and supports onsite agriculture, or other locational and size standards.</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>Exempt from land use permit review seasonal, low-intensity activities that do not require a building permit or permanent parking areas, e.g., U-pick with no other entertainment involved, and where the level of visitors is not likely to result in adverse effects to neighboring areas.</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Unsure / No Opinion
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After approval of a land use permit, require an annual self-certification form where the operator certifies that all the use-specific requirements continue to be met. The County requires this of special uses in SCC 14.16.900(3), but it could be expanded to all agritourism uses that require a land use permit (potentially including exempt uses). This can ensure locational or operational standards continue to be in place and avoid expansion of uses from less intensive to more intensive without review. This form could include an annual fee and be reviewed by code compliance staff.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Unsure / No Opinion

For temporary uses, or uses with high activity levels, provide a limited-term programmatic permit, e.g., 5 years that ensures that the use is well managed but does not necessarily continue with a new owner or is re-reviewed periodically. This also can ensure uses do not inadvertently evolve.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Unsure / No Opinion

I like the current code and changes are unnecessary.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Unsure / No Opinion

Share your ideas for the Permit Process and Criteria.

Additional Comments

If you have other comments, questions, or concerns, please tell us about them here.

Sidebar Content

COMPLETE

Situation Assessment

Skagit County staff conducted a situation assessment to define current agricultural activities in Skagit, agricultural economic trends, engage with local farmers, and document case studies from similar jurisdictions. The situation assessment report was completed in 2021 and can be viewed [here](#)

(https://www.skagitcounty.net/PlanningAndPermit/Documents/agtourism/Skagit%20Co%20Agritourism%20Situation%20Assessment-Final_2021_0913.pdf).

LIVE

Policy Options

Using information gathered during the situation assessment, staff compiled definitions for agritourism activities and several policy options the Skagit County Board of Commissioners could pursue on agritourism. The County is now collecting feedback from the community and relevant stakeholders on which policy options would be preferable.

PLANNED

Legislation

With feedback from the community and stakeholders, staff will develop legislation and code language to present to the Skagit County Planning Commission. The Planning Commission will deliberate on the options and approve a recommendation to be sent to the Board of County Commissioners.

PLANNED

Adoption

After the Planning Commission approves a recommendation, the Skagit County Board of Commissioners will deliberate and vote to approve a policy/policies on agritourism.

Documents

- **Agritourism Policy Options Report**
(https://www.skagitcounty.net/PlanningAndPermit/Documents/agtourism/Options_AGT%20Intent%20and%20Scale%20and%20Options_2022_0315_rev.pdf) (3/15/22)
- **Agritourism Situation Assessment**
(https://www.skagitcounty.net/PlanningAndPermit/Documents/agtourism/Skagit%20Co%20Agritourism%20Situation%20Assessment-Final_2021_0913.pdf)(9/13/2021) – Now includes updated Skagit County producer demographics, public engagement survey, local discussion groups, and a new agriculture map.
- **2021 Survey Results**
(https://www.skagitcounty.net/PlanningAndPermit/Documents/agtourism/AgritourismSurveyResults_2021-0519.pdf)
- **Focus Group Summary**
(https://www.skagitcounty.net/PlanningAndPermit/Documents/agtourism/Agritourism_FocusGroupSummary_2021-0519.pdf)
- **Public Outreach and Engagement Plan**
(https://www.skagitcounty.net/PlanningAndPermit/Documents/agtourism/Agtourism%20Outreach%20Plan_2021_0114.pdf)

Name

Email

Address
