

# PROPOSED Community Advisory Board response to Remand Question #2: Skagit Valley Tulip Festival Participation Criteria

## Criteria for Full and Lawful Participation in the Annual Skagit Valley Tulip Festival

### 1. Duration Requirements

To ensure coordination, support, and marketing across the diverse mix of over 5 gardens, multiple events, and hundreds of sponsors of the festival, the Skagit Valley Tulip Festival (SVTF) officially runs the month of April. However, as the festival's foundation is soil-dependent, the nature of the tulip crop dictates the event's exact timing. The flowering season may begin earlier or extend beyond April depending on crop viability and as such the festival has started as early as March and ended as late as May. Consequently, all partners, including gardens, art barns, food and retail sales, and other affiliated entities, should benefit and participate to attract visitors from March 1<sup>st</sup> to May 30<sup>th</sup>.

### 2. Participants

The inclusion of current participants, as sponsors or affiliates of the festival, is a fundamental principle of the SVTF. All existing stakeholders—such as gardens, art barns, food and retail sales, and other affiliated entities—are supported in maintaining their participation without hindrance if statutory compliance is met (i.e. health, safety, access, and parking). Grandfathering current parties ensures that they can continue their operations seamlessly and without restrictions that would curtail their business activities. As participation in SVTF is dynamic with entities regularly being added and changed, so should new businesses be permitted to participate without hindrance as long as the same statutory requirements are met.

### 3. Building Use Requirements

Farmers participating in the festival must retain discretion over the use of their buildings, such as barns. For example, if a barn is used to store farm equipment in the winter, it should be permissible for the farmer to transition its use during the festival period to support festival activities. This may include farm-to-table experiences, retail operations, or

other festival-related events. Flexibility in building use supports dynamic and innovative participation in the festival while protecting farmers' autonomy.

#### 4. Accessory Use Caps

To ensure equitable participation, accessory use caps limiting the number of days should not apply to SVTF partner operations between March and May. A cap would hinder participants from engaging in the festival's full duration and exclude them from offering additional accessory uses outside the festival. This could discourage participation altogether, which would be detrimental to the festival's mission. For this reason, accessory use caps should be waived for all SVTF partner operations during the peak festival period. This approach aligns with the SVTF's commitment to supporting both active and passive agritourism experiences on working farms, without exceptions or exclusions.

#### 5. County-wide Inclusion

SVTF is a county wide festival celebrating agriculture in the delta, upriver, and throughout Skagit County. As such, the entire county is invited to create events and support the festival on all Skagit lands including AG-NRL land.

#### Conclusion

The Skagit Valley Tulip Festival thrives on inclusivity, collaboration, and flexibility. Defining criteria for full and lawful participation must consider the duration of the festival, the inclusion of current stakeholders, the flexibility of building use, and waiving restrictive accessory use caps. By ensuring equitable and accessible opportunities for all interested parties, the SVTF reinforces its mission to celebrate the agricultural heritage and community spirit of Skagit County.