

Skagit County Agritourism – BoCC Public Comment Summary Matrix

Disclaimer: Skagit County has reviewed all public comments submitted regarding the proposed Agritourism code amendments. The table below provides a high-level summary of the comments received and includes additional context and explanations to help inform the Skagit County Board of County Commissioners. This summary is provided for informational purposes only and does not represent final decisions or policy actions.

Comment #	Comment Summary	Response
1	Term “regularly occurring celebratory gatherings” is not clearly defined. It is unclear what frequency would qualify as “regularly occurring,” and whether this applies to all tiers of agritourism, including Tier 1 (limited to 10 days per year), or only to higher-intensity uses under Tier 2 and Tier 3.	Regularly occurring celebratory gatherings includes events similar to weddings, parties, music venues, or concerts that are not related to agriculture and are proposed to be prohibited in the Agricultural–Natural Resource Lands zone.
1, 17	The inclusion of “weddings” as an example of prohibited activities on Ag NRL raises questions about whether certain types of gatherings are being restricted based on their label rather than their actual impact.	Natural Resource Lands are protected under the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA) and Skagit County’s Comprehensive Plan. Limiting agritourism activities to those directly related to farming, preventing the conversion of farmland, and establishing regulations to minimize impacts on adjacent farms are intended to maintain consistency with the GMA and the County’s Comprehensive Plan.
1	The proposal restricts conversion of agricultural land for parking, while also requiring that all parking be accommodated on-site. How should small farms balance these requirements in a way that both complies with parking standards and preserves agricultural land?	Parking areas can be located on fields and areas that have already been converted through legal means. SCC 14.26.030 also allows parking plans which could include off-site parking areas with a shuttle service.

Comment #	Comment Summary	Response
1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 9, 13, 14, 16, 17, 21	Comments raising concerns that proposed amendments are too restrictive and should allow more tourism uses, such as wedding venues, in order to bring more profit to farms and other local businesses.	Natural Resource Lands are protected under the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA) and Skagit County's Comprehensive Plan. Limiting Agritourism activities to those directly related to farming, preventing the conversion of farmland, and establishing regulations to minimize impacts on adjacent farms are intended to maintain consistency with the GMA and the County's Comprehensive Plan. The County is proposing to allow limited event venues in zones outside of those designated as Natural Resource Lands.
10, 22, 23	Comments suggesting that SCC 9.08 – Outdoor Public Musical Entertainments, Amusements, should be updated with more clarity that specifies what kind of events are allowed.	Skagit County PDS is planning to update SCC 9.08 in a future amendment process.
18	Clarify what constitutes a non- agricultural commercial activity on Ag-NRL, particularly activities which may be co-sponsored by non-profit or community groups with a farm as a membership benefit or fundraising activity.	The proposed agritourism code addresses both commercial and non-commercial agritourism activities. Agritourism amendments and SCC 9.08 are not intended to capture private events.
18, 22	Clarify and distinguish public festivals/events from other agritourism permits.	Skagit County will be working on code amendments to SCC 9.08 Outdoor Public Musical Entertainments which will provide clarity on the allowance of one-time events, such as festivals.
18	Concern over the use of the word "venue" in the new title for "temporary events" which shifts the meaning of the title from the activity to the location.	PDS is proposing to change the title of Temporary events to Limited Event Venues as they allow 24 events, which is not temporary but rather often functions as a limited venue. Other than changing the title of the use, PDS is not proposing to change the definition, restrictions or other limitations of this use.
18	Language regarding Voluntary Compliance Agreements should be added.	Typically code is written with a focus on new development unless it is regarding non-conforming uses. PDS is creating case files for each Voluntary Compliance Agreement that will be discoverable the Skagit County Property Search within the permit history for property that has an approved Voluntary Compliance Agreement.

Comment #	Comment Summary	Response
19	Comment concerned about allowing Agritourism activities in rural and natural resource lands and whether the proposed amendments are consistent with the Growth Management Act and the King Co, et. Al. v. Friends of Sammamish Valley State Supreme Court case.	Staff developed the proposed amendments by reviewing recommendations from the Agritourism Community Advisory Group and the Agricultural Advisory Board and reviewed the amendments for consistency with the Skagit County Comprehensive Plan, Washington State Growth Management Act, and applicable Growth Management Hearings Board cases.
20	Suggestion to create code that allows more flexibility of agritourism uses for parcels that are smaller, land locked, and split zoned or split jurisdictional that do not conflict with ongoing farm activities.	The proposed code was written to allow agritourism uses that are clearly secondary and related to an existing agricultural use. Parcels that are split zoned or are split by a jurisdictional boundary may be allowed additional uses within the area that is not zoned Agricultural – Natural Resource Lands that are allowed within the other zone or city/town jurisdiction.
10, 19, 22, 23	Comments regarding how the County will enforce Agritourism code requirements and permit conditions.	<p>Skagit County retains the authority to perform ongoing monitoring and evaluation of compliance with established conditions of approval per SCC 14.18.407. Agritourism special use permits are subject to SCC 14.51.070 and can be revoked if applicant fails to meet conditions of the special use permit, including compliance with any requirement set forth in SCC 14.18.407.</p> <p>Skagit County also has a code enforcement team which investigates code compliance complaints including any Agritourism Special Use Permit violations.</p>
22	Recommends annual self-attestation process for Agritourism 1 activities.	PDS is proposing to require a form for Agritourism 1 uses that may include a self-attestation process. PDS has not proposed an annual reoccurring self-attestation process.
23	Allow festivals to enter into a Voluntary Compliance Agreement similar to pre-existing agritourism businesses.	Skagit County will be working on code amendments to SCC 9.08 Outdoor Public Musical Entertainments which will provide clarity on the allowance of one-time events, such as festivals.