

# Agritourism

## Work Session – Proposed Agritourism Code Amendments

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Agritourism Website:

<https://www.skagitcounty.net/departments/planningandpermit/agtourismmain.htm>



# Agritourism Background

- **2023** PDS works through the legislative process with the Planning Commission.
- **January 2024** BoCC issues a moratorium on the acceptance of permit applications for certain and activities on Ag-NRL Lands.
  - The BoCC directed the PDS Director to develop a process that will allow landowners to document asserted existing non-conforming use through entry into a Voluntary Compliance Agreement (VCA).
- **June 2024** BoCC passed a resolution remanding the proposed agritourism code changes to the Skagit County PDS and Planning Commission.
- **2025** PDS convened a Community Advisory Group to provide recommendations on proposed Agritourism code changes that address remand criteria.



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# Resolution & Remand Criteria

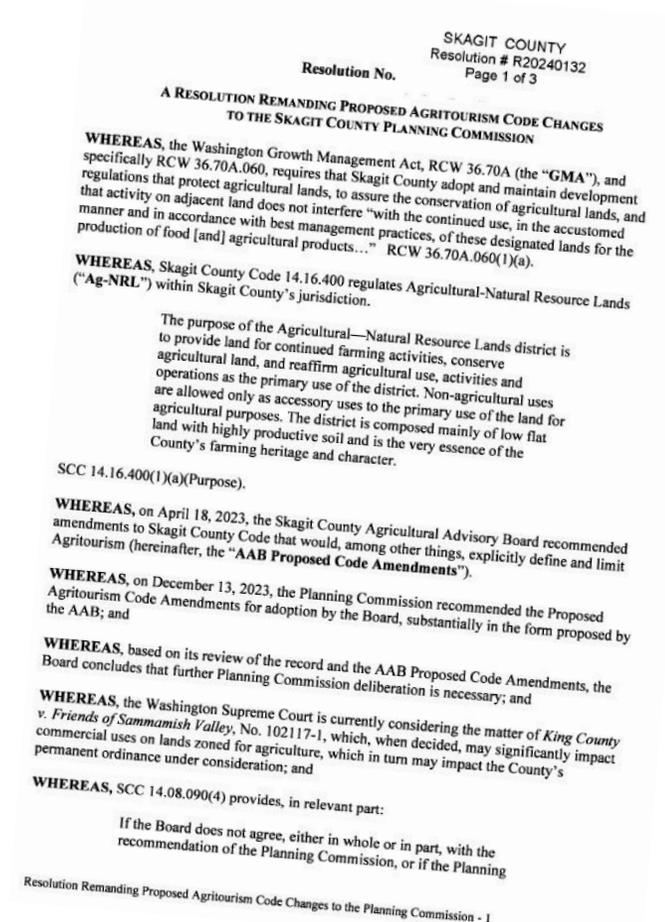
## Resolution #R20240132

### Remand Criteria Topics:

1. Define Agritourism & clarify activity scope
2. Criteria for Tulip Festival participation
3. Treatment of East County vs Delta areas
4. Temporary use/events in Ag-NRL zones
5. Consistency with WA Supreme Court decision



Agritourism Remand: <https://www.skagitcounty.net/Common/Documents/LFDocs/COMMISSIONERS000030/00/00/43/000043d6.pdf>



# Existing Agritourism Uses

- Non-conforming agritourism uses established prior to the moratorium had opportunity to enter into a Voluntary Compliance Agreement (VCA) with Skagit County.
- Existing operations that have entered into VCA with County are not subject to new Agritourism code unless operations are proposed to change or expand.



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# Overview of Agritourism Amendments

- Agritourism definition, purpose, and intent.
- 3 levels of Agritourism based on attendance and frequency of events.
- General limitations and performance standards.
- Prohibits Limited Event Venues, restaurants, music venues, concerts, and regularly occurring celebratory gatherings (e.g., weddings) in the Agricultural-Natural Resource Lands zone.



# Agritourism Definition

- a) Agritourism provides opportunities for working farms and ranches to preserve and promote Skagit County's agricultural lands. Agritourism allows for educational and experiential activities that are related to, and supportive of, agricultural production. Agritourism helps agricultural producers keep working lands in production by diversifying and enhancing their income. Agritourism activities must be secondary and related to an existing agricultural use.



# Agritourism Definition (cont.)

- b) Agritourism is separate and distinct from farm-based businesses and agricultural support services.
- c) There are three categories of agritourism: Agritourism 1, Agritourism 2, and Agritourism 3.



# Levels of Agritourism

Agritourism Type	Max Number of Guests Allowed	Max Number of Days Allowed
Agritourism 1 (Permitted Use)	50	10
Agritourism 2 (Administrative Special Use)	100	35*
Agritourism 3 (Hearing Examiner Special Use)	As Conditioned	As Conditioned

✱Planning and Development Services has revised this number from 24 days of agritourism activities allowed to 35 days.



# General Limitations; Performance Standards

- Must be carried out by the owner or operator of working farm or ranch.
- Cannot result in conversion of agricultural land.
- Cannot degrade rural character.
- Cannot interfere with surrounding farming operation.
- Artificial lighting and noise generated from Agritourism activities must be consistent with General Performance Standards (SCC 14.20).
  - Studies may be required by the Director.



# General Limitations; Performance Standards

- Parking cannot use road right-of-way, cannot result in conversion of agricultural land, and must meet parking requirements of SCC 14.26.
- Agritourism uses must demonstrate concurrency with the County road segment and road intersection level of service standards.
- Access to and from a county road used by the public must be permitted by Public Works, including any conversion of a previously established farm access.



# Limits on Agritourism 2 or 3

- Existing and primary commercial agricultural use has must have generated an average gross income of at least \$500 per acre per year over the previous three years.
- Must comply with the annual self-certification requirements identified in SCC 14.51.080.
- Agritourism 3 use cannot include farm to table activities.
- Applicant must sign an agreement, on a form provided by the Director that they will comply with all the requirements of SCC 14.18.407.



# Zones Proposed to Allow Agritourism

- Agricultural – Natural Resource Lands (Ag-NRL)
- Rural Resource – Natural Resource Lands (RRc-NRL)
- Rural Reserve (RRv)
- Rural Intermediate (RI)



# Renaming Temporary Events to Limited Event Venues

- “Temporary Use Events” currently allows up to 24 events per year, with permits that do not expire annually or require renewal.
  - Term “temporary” is misleading.
- Proposed name “Limited Event Venues” more accurately reflects the nature and frequency of these activities.
- Amendments also clarify that events at permitted uses such as churches, restaurants, grange halls, community centers, and parks are not regulated as Limited Event Venues.



# Prohibited Uses in Agricultural – NRL Zone

Proposal would prohibit the following in the Agricultural – Natural Resource Lands zone:

- Limited Event Venues
- Restaurants
- Music Venues & Concerts (added after PC recommendation)
- Regularly occurring celebratory gatherings (e.g., weddings)



# Planning Commission Recommendations

## Planning Commission Recommendation #1

- Recommends amending Agritourism definition to clarify that agritourism activities must be secondary to, and supportive of, agricultural production.
- PDS supports the intent of the Planning Commission's proposed revisions and recommends a revised definition that is more concise and consistent with the language in the proposed agritourism performance standards



# Planning Commission Recommendations

## Planning Commission Recommendation #2

- Planning Commission recommends requiring Agritourism 1 uses to obtain an Administrative Special Use Permit rather than allowing them as outright permitted uses.
- PDS recommends retaining Agritourism 1 uses as permitted uses, subject to the requirement that the operator sign an agreement affirming compliance with all applicable provisions of the agritourism code.



# Planning Commission Recommendations

## Planning Commission Recommendation #3

- Planning Commission recommends removing SCC 14.18.407(3)(a)(x), which would have allowed additional Tulip Festival-related activities for up to 30 consecutive days.
- PDS supports removing this section and recommends increasing the allowed days for Agritourism 2 uses from 24 to 35 to improve flexibility and fairness.



# Planning Commission Recommendations

## Planning Commission Recommendation #4

- Add music venues and concerts to the list of prohibited uses under SCC 14.13.100(2)(d) for the Agricultural-Natural Resources Zone. PDS supports this addition.

## Planning Commission Recommendation #5

- Recommends that PDS return the Limited Event Venue use to the Commission for further review and consideration, including the potential removal of the use from rural zones.
- PDS will be working on amendments to SCC 9.08 – Outdoor Public Music Entertainments, Amusements, and Assemblies and intends to receive the Planning Commission’s input on those amendments.



# How to Comment

- **Public comment** period opens Thursday **March 26, 2026** and will close on Wednesday, **April 15, 2026 at 4:30pm.**
- Three options – mailing, emailing, or attending the **public hearing** on **April 13, 2026 at 1:30 pm.**
  - Mail to 1800 Continental Place, Mount Vernon, WA
  - Email to [pdscomments@co.skagit.wa.us](mailto:pdscomments@co.skagit.wa.us)
- Please provide your full name and address for any submitted comments.
  - **April 28 at 2:15 pm – BoCC Deliberations**



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