



Planning & Development Services

1800 Continental Place ▪ Mount Vernon, Washington 98273
office 360-416-1320 ▪ pds@co.skagit.wa.us ▪ www.skagitcounty.net/planning

Fully Contained Communities – FAQ

1. What is a Fully Contained Community?

A fully contained community is a master planned community that is created outside of existing urban areas. The developments are intended to contain a mix of jobs, services, recreation, and housing types. The density is intended to be that of an established city rather than a suburb. The development of these planned communities are governed by the State Growth Management Act, under [RCW 36.70A.350](#).

2. What does the Growth Management Act require of an FCC?

- Impact fees to help pay for new infrastructure such as sewer, water, schools, libraries, Fire and Police services.
- Transit oriented site planning and walkability.
- Buffers, or space between the community and adjacent lands
- A mix of uses to offer jobs, housing, and services to new residents
- Affordable housing available to a broad range of income levels
- Stormwater, critical areas, and similar environmental protections
- Regulations to ensure that urban growth will not expand into adjacent non-urban areas
- Mitigation of impacts to designated natural resource lands

3. Are there examples of FCCs in Washington state?

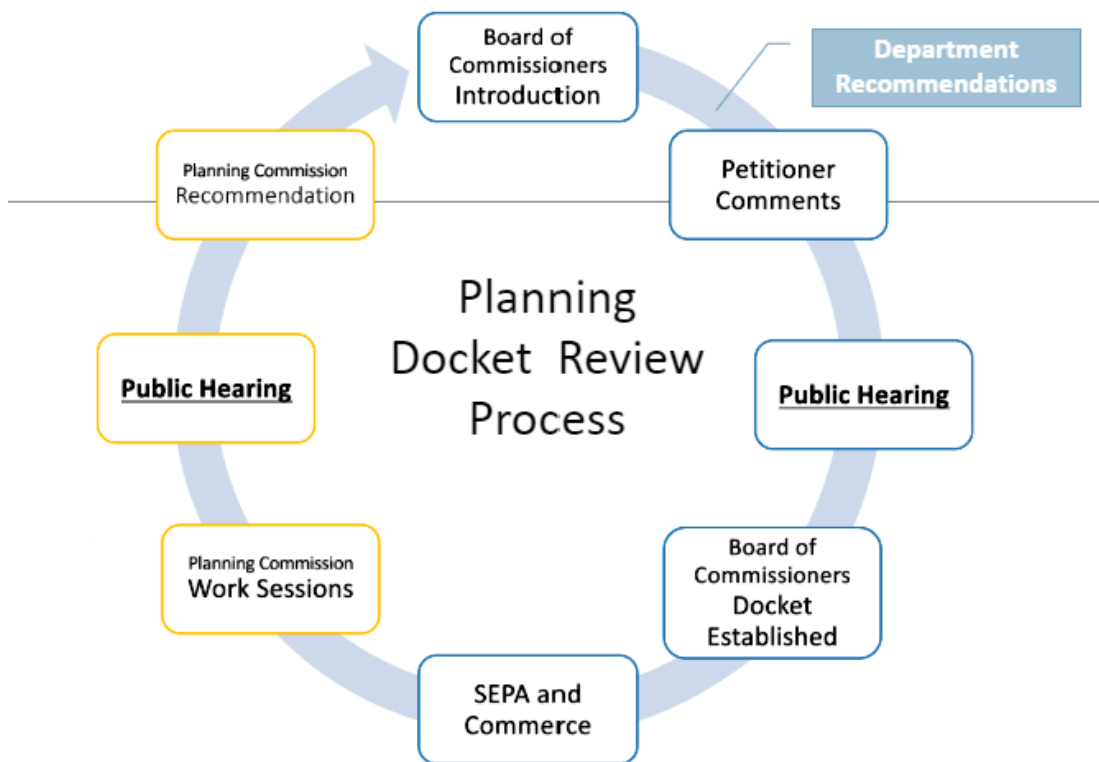
Yes, there are at least three fully contained communities in Washington state: [Issaquah Highlands](#), [Tehaleh](#), and [Snoqualmie Ridge](#). Snoqualmie Ridge was planned before the Growth Management Act was enacted and has different development regulations.

4. Is this the same project as Avalon?

No. The FCC proposal is a “non-project proposal” which means there is no designated site or plan for an FCC in Skagit County. The proposal requests changes to the Skagit County Comprehensive Plan and to establish criteria by which a future FCC development could be permitted.

5. Is the County pursuing a FCC?

The County is reviewing a petition from Skagit Partners, LLC to allow for Fully Contained Communities through the annual Comprehensive Plan process. Below is the typical Comprehensive Plan Amendment Process:



6. Why does Skagit County want to grow?

Population growth in our region will continue whether the community wants it or not. The growth estimates adopted by the County and Cities in 2016 estimate the population will grow by approximately 35,000 people by 2036.

The existing growth is evidenced in our low housing vacancy rates. Skagit County has one of the lowest housing vacancy rates in the state at less than 1%. This low of a vacancy rate ensures housing prices continue to rise at rates that are unaffordable to many of the county’s population.

In order to slow sprawl into rural and agricultural lands, the county is looking at strategies to encourage density in urban areas.

7. What is the 80/20 population split about?

Since 1992 there has been a Countywide Planning Policy to encourage population growth in urban rather than rural areas. 80% of the new population growth should be in the Urban Growth Areas while 20% is in the unincorporated County. Currently 36% of the population resides in the unincorporated areas of the County.

8. What is an Urban Growth Area?

An [Urban Growth Area](#) is an area designated by Skagit County within which urban growth is encouraged and outside of which growth can only occur if it is not urban in nature. A municipal UGA consists of the city as well as the area the city is expected to annex. Skagit County has designated the following Urban Growth Areas:

- Anacortes
- Bayview Ridge
- Burlington
- Concrete
- Hamilton
- Mount Vernon
- Sedro-Woolley
- Swinomish

9. Don't the Countywide Planning Policies Need to be Amended?

Yes. State law requires that a population reserve is established before a fully contained community can be permitted. Every eight years the County and Cities negotiate the estimated population that they can accommodate in the next 20 years. Each city and the County are allocated a certain percentage of the total population.

10. Is the Board of County Commissioners voting on allowing FCCs in 2021?

No. More study of the likely impacts of a fully contained community is necessary. The County is going through the environmental review process. This is likely to take a full year.

11. Are my tax dollars paying for this?

No. The cost of the study is paid for by the petitioner of fully contained communities, Skagit Partners, LLC.

12. What is an EIS?

An Environmental Impact Statement is a statement on how a proposed project or policy will impact the community. For this purpose, “environment” is defined as both the natural landscapes and existing physical infrastructure along with the relationship of local communities with those landscapes. This can include impacts on water quality, roads, schools, services, and economic aspects. Impacts can be either positive or negative and generally the EIS will include strategies to mitigate for those impacts.

13. Will I be able to provide public comment before the County Commissioners vote?

Yes, the EIS process includes a public comment period once the determination is published, and when the draft is available for review. The County will notice the public as to when the comment period will start and end.