Planning & Development Services

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Notice of Availability

including written comment period, and public hearing

Proposal Information

Publish date:	October 15, 2026
Proposal name:	Critical Areas Ordinance Amendments
Documents available:	https://www.skagitcountywa.gov/services/planning-and-building/community-planning/critical-areas-ordinance-amendments/
Lead Agency:	Skagit County Planning & Development Services
Contact Person:	Leah Forbes, Senior Planner
Public hearing Body:	Skagit County Planning Commission
Public hearing Date:	November 17, 2026 at 6:00 p.m.
Written comment deadline:	November 19, 2026 at 4:30 p.m.
Deliberations Date	December 15, 2026 at 6:00 p.m.

Proposal Description

Skagit County Planning and Development Services is proposing amendments to the Critical Areas Ordinance to comply with a Final Decision and Order issued by the Growth Management Hearings Board regarding a recent appeal of the critical areas ordinance updates. In particular, the GMHB found that the Critical Area Ordinance's fixed-width buffers, which did not meet the recommendation of a size equal to "Site Potential Tree Height" (SPTH), lacked a mechanism to prevent a net loss of ecological functions where SPTH exceeded the distance of the fixed-width buffer.

Skagit County Planning and Development Services is proposing to amend SCC 14.24.530 to address the Growth Management Hearings Board's Final Decision.

Separate from the changes proposed to comply with the GMHB decision, PDS is also proposing to modify the maximum disturbance limits under SCC 14.24.140, Reasonable Use Exception, to accommodate reasonable development on lots that exceed 1-acre.

More information and documents related to the proposal are available at the website above.

SEPA Threshold Determination

On May 15, 2025, Skagit County issued a SEPA Determination of Non-Significance for the 2025 Periodic Comprehensive Plan update, including the Critical Areas Ordinance. Skagit County determined that this proposal does not have a probable significant adverse impact on the environment. An environmental impact statement was not required under the State Environmental Policy Act, RCW 43.21C.030(2)(c). The determination was made after review of a completed environmental checklist and other information on file with the lead agency and is available upon request and at the above listed website. Pursuant to SCC 16.12.210, no administrative appeal process is available for this legislative action.

How to Comment

Option 1: Email comments are preferred and must be sent to pdscomments@skagitcountywa.gov with the proposal name ("Critical Areas Ordinance Amendments") in the subject line. Include your comments in the body of your email message rather than as attachments.

Option 2: Paper comments must be printed on 8½x11 paper and mailed or delivered to:

Planning and Development Services
Comments on "Critical Areas Ordinance Amendments"
1800 Continental Place
Mount Vernon WA 98273

All comments must be received by the deadline referenced above and include your full name and mailing address. Comments not meeting these requirements will not be considered.

Option 3: You may also comment in person. If you wish to provide verbal testimony, please send an email to pdscomments@skagitcountywa.gov, with your name, phone number, and include a request to be added to the speakers list in the body of the email. Public hearing testimony is usually limited to three minutes, so written comments are preferred.

Anyone who plans to attend the public hearing and has special needs or disabilities should contact Planning and Development Services at (360) 416-1320 at least 96 hours before the hearing to discuss and arrange any special accommodations.

Transmitted to Skagit Herald: October 13, 2026

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