

Town of La Conner



Resolution No.

A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF LA CONNER EXPRESSING OPPOSITION TO NEW FULLY-CONTAINED COMMUNITIES.

WHEREAS, RCW 36.70A.210 obligates each county and all cities located within that respective county to develop countywide planning policies, which are defined as written policy statements used to establish a countywide framework from which county and city comprehensive plans are developed and adopted pursuant to the Growth Management Act. The framework is intended to ensure that the comprehensive plans remain consistent with each other as required by the Act; and

WHEREAS, on November 26, 2002, Skagit County, and the cities and towns of Skagit County entered into a Framework Agreement that established the parameters for decision making related to the Countywide Planning Policies ("CPP's"); and

WHEREAS, the Framework Agreement provides that policy decisions, including the content of the CPP's, should be arrived at by consensus; if unanimous consent cannot be achieved, then a dispute resolution process is established to resolve disputes. If the dispute resolution process fails, a population-weighted vote is to be taken which is binding; and

WHEREAS, compliance with the Framework Agreement is mandatory, and no party may unilaterally amend the CPP's. The adoption of a new CPP or amendment of an existing CPP must follow the procedures set forth in the Framework Agreement; and

WHEREAS, under the Growth Management Act ("GMA"), a local government's comprehensive plan must remain consistent with the CPP's; and

WHEREAS, Skagit Partners, LLC has submitted a proposal to Skagit County to amend the Skagit County Comprehensive Plan, Development Regulations, and CPP's to establish a process for consideration and approval of one or more Fully Contained Communities; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with the GMA and RCW 36.70A.350, a Fully Contained Community ("FCC") is a private housing development that is similar in size and density as a city. FCCs do not have a local or municipal government to provide

police, fire, road repair, storm water drainage, parks, or any other urban services typically performed by cities; and

WHEREAS, Skagit County has docketed Skagit Partners, LLC's proposed comprehensive plan amendment, but has taken no action on the proposed CPP amendments; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to RCW 36.70A.350, a county electing to establish a new community reserve shall do so no more often than once every five years

WHEREAS, Skagit Partners' proposal, while still incomplete, has assumed that its proposed FCC will have a population of 8,500 and has requested a population reserve in that amount to be dedicated to its proposed FCC development, and

WHEREAS, the state Office of Financial Management develops population projections for the state and each county, and each county and city planning under the GMA are obligated to provide sufficient capacity of land suitable for development; and

WHEREAS, Skagit Partners, LLC's proposal utilizes its own un-reviewed population projections, and seeks to have Skagit County establish a community reserve population; and

WHEREAS, the cities within Skagit County have adequate developable land to meet growth targets, and there has been no objective evidence prepared by a non-biased source that would suggest the existing urban growth areas, which have capacity for additional population density through amendments to development regulations, are in any way incapable of accommodating the populations established by the state; and

WHEREAS, Skagit Partners' description of their proposed FCC development describes the new community as including a "a new school, new community center for indoor and outdoor recreational activities, lake and lake-front public park, and miles of trails, natural open space, and wildlife corridors. A centerpiece of the new community will be the existing award winning Avalon Links Golf Course" and,

WHEREAS, Skagit Partners describes the market demographic for its proposed community as "couples with financial resources, just beyond child rearing years"; and

WHEREAS, Skagit Partners states that its "research indicates that a new fully contained community will draw additional population that would not otherwise come to reside in Skagit County"; and

WHEREAS, Skagit Partners' proposed community will exacerbate the housing crisis in Skagit County, and fail to create affordable housing; and

WHEREAS, the CPP's previously established that Urban Growth Areas with a population of over 1,500 "shall have as a minimum one commissioned law enforcement officer per 1,000 population served; and

WHEREAS, the Town of La Conner contracts with the Skagit County Sheriff's Office for law enforcement services, and would likely see its law enforcement costs rise as a consequence of the development of FCC's that also rely on Skagit County for law enforcement services; and

WHEREAS, adequate urban services, including groceries, dining, entertainment, and household goods will not be available in the proposed FCC development, which will require residents to travel outside of the development to obtain necessary goods and services; and

WHEREAS, the area in which the proposed FCC development is to be located is served with inadequate surface roads, and there are dangerous traffic conditions along I-5 at the Cook Road Exit and Bow Hill Area, all of which will be exacerbated by the proposed FCC and which will ultimately requiring the expenditure of taxpayer funds to address these problems; and

WHEREAS, the Puget Sound Regional Council, a regional planning agency that includes all mayors, county executives, commissioners, and councilmembers of member jurisdictions which develops policies and coordinates decisions about regional growth, transportation and economic development planning within King, Pierce, Snohomish and Kitsap counties, endorsed Vision 2050, the region's plan for growth. Included in Vision 2050 is the objective to "avoid new fully contained communities outside of the designated urban growth area because of their potential to create sprawl and undermine state and regional growth management goals"; and

WHEREAS, fully contained communities will be the primary driver leading to a loss of the rural character of Skagit County and a transformation of the county to a suburban environment, with a corresponding loss of agricultural lands forever.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF LA CONNER:

That the Town Council of the Town of La Conner expresses its opposition to new fully contained communities.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Town of La Conner urges Skagit County to submit all proposed additions or amendments to the Countywide Planning Policies to the GMA Committee for appropriate review by the GMA Steering Committee and the GMA Technical Advisory Committee prior to committing to the review of an amendment of the Skagit County Comprehensive Plan.

Adopted by vote of the La Conner Town Council this day of October, 2021.

Mayor Ramon Hayes