Skagit County Planning and Development Planning Intern

Gil Gepte
Western Washington University

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Internship Title: Long-Range Planning Intern

Organization Worked For: Skagit County Planning and Development Services

Student Name: Gil Oswald Zhaxael T. Gepte

Internship Dates: 3/10/23  6/9/20

Faculty Advisor Name: Tammi Laninga

Department: ENVS

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STUDENT SIGNATURE

DATE: 6/8/20
Internship Report

I. Student/Intern Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name: Gil Oswald Zhaxael T. Gepte</th>
<th>W#01405173</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Major: Urban Planning and Sustainable Development</td>
<td>Concentration: Environmental Policy Specialization</td>
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<tr>
<td>Internship Title: Long-Range Planning Intern</td>
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<tr>
<td>Period of Internship: March 2023 - June 2023</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average Hours Per Week: 20 Hours</td>
<td>Total Hours Worked: 150</td>
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II. Host Institution Information

| Institution Name: Skagit County Planning and Development Services | |
| Institution Address: 1800 Continental Pl, Mount Vernon, WA 98273 | |
| Institution Mission: To be recognized as a premier county in Washington State for providing professional leadership, operational excellence, timely assistance, and maximum efficiency in service delivery to our customers. | |
| Supervisor Name: Sarah Ruether | Supervisor Title: Long-Range Planning Manager |
| Supervisor Contact Information: Sarah Ruether, Long-Range Planning Manager Skagit County Planning & Development Services 1800 Continental Place Mount Vernon, WA 98273 (360) 416-2025 | |

III. INTRODUCTION

This internship report reviews my experiences and the first-hand knowledge I gained in the professional planning field. During my time as a Long-Range Planning Intern for Skagit County I was under the close supervision of Sarah Reuther, Long Range Planning Manager of Skagit County's Planning and Development Services Department.

IV. DESCRIPTION OF DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Below is the job description found on the Skagit County Jobs Page:

Under close supervision of Department staff, assists with special research and data collection in the Planning & Development Services department. The intent of this position is to provide an opportunity for students or recent graduates to gain practical experience working in a planning department.

The Department will be flexible to accommodate scheduling of the internship and work hours. This internship is part-time 20 hours a week and can be flexible to the student’s schedule. This is primarily an on-site position and will only occasionally allow off-site work from home.

- Salary upon hire is $16.35/hr. (Range 5 Step 1 on the General Salary Schedule)

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS:
Assists Department staff with data collection, research, report writing, presentations, public outreach, and field work in the long-range planning work group.

Interns may have the opportunity to attend an array of meetings and events, including Planning Commission workshops, public hearings, Skagit Council of Government meetings, community meetings, and training opportunities like webinars and local conferences.

Possible projects include:

- Collection of data from past permits on critical areas protected and restored. This may involve some fieldwork to confirm findings from permit data.
- Land use survey of Skagit County’s UGA and LAMIRDS – this will involve fieldwork and GPS to record data on site and then download once back in the office.
- Assistance with public outreach events as part of the upcoming Comprehensive Plan update
- Field work to verify non-motorized transportation network,

V. OUTCOMES

Working in the Skagit County planning office exposed me to a wide variety of individuals working in the department ranging from the Department of Emergency Management to Natural Resources. Furthermore, my internship exposed me to the collaborative nature of planning work. I had the privilege of collaborating with department staff and other professionals on various projects. This teamwork provided valuable insights into effective communication, coordination, and the importance of building strong professional relationships. Through my interactions with colleagues, I gained a deeper appreciation for the interdisciplinary nature of planning and the significance of collective efforts in achieving successful outcomes.

During my time with Skagit County, I engaged with a variety of assignments. I began my first assignment for the department by compiling previous and current comprehensive plan amendments from the county into an organized and easily navigable document. This required me to go through 20 years of Comprehensive Plan amendment resolutions and ordinances. Another focus of my work for the department is to provide support for the upcoming Comprehensive Plan updates for the county. This encompassed conducting thorough research and meticulously assessing the comprehensive plan verbiage, outreach strategies, timelines, and website updates of other counties and cities.

In the appendix below, there is a link to a folder that includes copies of the various reports and handouts I have worked on.

VI. ASSESSMENT

Overall, my experience with Skagit County exceeded my expectations and been extremely beneficial. It has given me opportunities to listen to passionate individuals in engaging and high-level discussions. My work there allowed me to experience my first Planning Commission meeting, immersing myself in a piece of the important work that planners do. Being surrounded by such professionalism and structure has given me a strengthened understanding of its importance in moving forward to my future as a planner. I am extremely grateful for the patience and flexibility of my supervisor Sarah Ruether, recognizing the
demands of my commitments in school and extracurricular activities. The department was very accommodating to my schedule and needs.

My professional career has just begun, just scratching the surface, and I have already learned so much. The invaluable lessons and relationships that I have cultivated with my colleagues in the department have been special. For the first time in my life, I don’t feel so lost and out of place. Embarking on an exciting milestone in my professional career, I find myself in a remarkable position to finally apply the invaluable lessons and insights gleaned from my urban planning program to tangible real-world projects. This presents a unique opportunity to make a positive impact on both the built environment and the surrounding community, forging a harmonious relationship between the two. Throughout my formative college years, I diligently honed my critical thinking abilities, sharpened my communication skills, and developed a comprehensive understanding of planning through the lenses of equity, environment, and economy. This wealth of experience has seamlessly bridged the gap between my academic studies and the internship opportunity, ensuring that I am well-prepared to embrace this fulfilling journey.

I am fortunate to continue my work with Sarah Ruether and Skagit County’s Planning and Development Services beyond graduation; December 2023 will be my end date.
VIII. APPENDICES

Google Drive Folder Link to Gil’s report and handouts for Skagit County

I. Skagit County Comprehensive Plan Amendments and Resolution Inventory

II. Comprehensive Plan Handout

III. Complete Docket – Public Comments

IV. LAMIRDS Handout

V. Permit Timeline and Completion Process Handout

VI. Planning Commission Training Inventory Report

VII. Temporary Event Inventory Research Report

VIII. Thurston Agritourism

IX. Planning Commission Minutes

X. Mobile Homes Affordability – OR and CA Single Family Zoning Report

XI. Live – Comprehensive Plan Outreach Research Report