

Mount Baker Foothills Sub-Area Plan Update 2007 Economic Development and Diversification - Policy Submittal(s)

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The following proposed policies and code revisions are submitted for committee review and inclusion in the Draft Sub-Area Plan as deemed appropriate by the consultant within the stated intent of the proponents to create and diversify the economic opportunities for home based business in the rural zones by allowing appropriate additional uses that are dependant upon rural character and open space for their success and appeal.

Rural Recreational and Open Space District (Proposed) (RROS) Comprehensive Plan Overlay Designation

Establish an RROS District Comprehensive Plan Overlay Designation in Rural Zones within the Mount Baker Foothills Sub-area that would encourage and allow proposals from the private sector commensurate with an approved application meeting all other applicable requirements of Chapter 20.44 and/or 20.36 and/or a separate codification of the Whatcom County Code for the purpose of creating one or more of the following:

- Natural systems education and/or interpretative areas
- Healing and/or Wellness retreat centers and/or interpretative facilities
- Facilities for the performance, appreciation and/or teaching of the arts and crafts
- Conference facilities and/or retreat centers for religious, meditative or educational purposes
- Natural systems education centers, informational centers, cultural and/or historical interpretative centers, and museums
- Allow any combination of the uses designated above

Directives to Studio Cascade

Consider codifying the RROS zoning within WCC 20.36 and/or Consider revising the Purpose statement and provisions of WCC 20.44 to include language supportive of the intent of this policy in rural zones within the Mount Baker Sub-area or codify as a separate and distinct zoning designation within the code as deemed appropriate

Consider providing an adequate supply of RROS zoning to encourage private investment in these types of business in the Mount Baker Foothills Sub-area during the 20 year planning period. Consider requiring a review on an annual or semi-annual basis to ensure land supply is being provided commensurate with demand.

Consider limiting available supplies incrementally to control demand and the amount of RROS zoning that can be provided annually. Example: the overlay will apply to the rural zones within the sub-area to encourage a broad land base from which to choose but only ____ gross acres may be rezoned per year under the guidelines of the RROS zoning criteria, etc.

Consider provisions to limit the total area allowed for development ensuring that the total land base included in the proposal is primarily set aside and undeveloped – consider further limiting RROS zoning by requiring dedications of land or consolidation of development rights into the developable portion – in this way ensuring the preservation of large areas of undeveloped rural areas in every project. This method would allow applicants to voluntarily and permanently remove these lands from the developable land base but not from the local tax base and create a positive means to ensure the preservation of rural lands for future generations.

Consider creating a “stop loss” provision in the codification of the RROS zoning designation such as ___% of the total rural land base in the sub-area etc. As deemed appropriate and consistent with the committees intent to provide additional resources for economic diversification and development while maintaining rural character, open space and preserving options for future generations.

Allow the following amenities as part of the administrative approval process in proposed RROS Zoning:

Codify the following provisions to allow the creation of private Retreat Centers and/or Educational meeting and/or conference facilities, Information Centers, Healing centers and/or Cultural and/or Historical interpretative facilities in the Mount Baker Foothills Sub-Area that can accommodate large groups for weekends or temporary retreats to study ecology, congregate, celebrate, meditate, conduct religious worship, learn or teach alternative methods of healing, learn, teach, perform or appreciate the arts and crafts or gather to appreciate the beauty of nature, culture and/or History.

1. Allow Overnight facilities including campgrounds, cabins and/or hostels; provided, that said facilities shall not solely involve recreational vehicles, cabins or hostels – are designed for temporary use by groups and individuals as would be consistent with public facilities of a similar nature in the Rural zone and are limited to accommodate a set number of occupants as may be determined by the total land base included in the proposal and defined as part of the permitting process
2. Allow Restrooms, picnic shelters, tool and equipment storage, informational kiosks and similar buildings or structures normally associated with low intensity park development and interpretative areas as an accessory use.

Additional Considerations

Proposed Whatcom County Code Revisions

Chapter 20.36 - Rural (R) District

.151 Public and Community facilities including police and fire stations, libraries, community centers, public or private recreation facilities, Informational centers and other similar noncommercial uses, excluding correction facilities.*

.153 Churches, meeting places, educational and religious training ~~institutions~~ facilities, retreat centers, summer camps, informational centers and cemeteries.

.175 Indoor and outdoor, live commercial entertainment; provided, that: (1) The use is located within a Rural 40-Acre (R10A) District, and upon at least 10 contiguous acres of land