



## M E M O R A N D U M

**TO:** Whatcom County Planning Commission

**THROUGH:** David Stalheim, Director

**FROM:** Wain Harrison, Long Range Planning Supervisor  
Gary Davis, AICP, Senior Planner

**DATE:** July 1, 2009

**SUBJECT:** Rural Element Update Packet Materials

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PDS staff is forwarding to the Planning Commission draft amendments to the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan (WCCP) text and maps, WCC Title 20 Zoning, and the county's official zoning maps. These drafts are based on the requirements of the Growth Management Act (GMA), public comments, and direction given by the Planning Commission at its April 23 and May 14 meetings. The Planning Commission's July 9 agenda is dedicated to a public hearing on these materials; the July 23 agenda is set aside for Commission deliberation. The information packet contains the following materials:

### **LAMIRD Report**

This document profiles each of the areas affected by the 2005 Growth Management Hearings Board decision that found Whatcom County out of compliance with GMA. These affected areas are within a noncompliant WPPC land use designation, a noncompliant zoning district, or both. The profiles are accompanied by a map of the proposed zoning changes with the proposed limited areas of more intensive rural development (LAMIRD) boundary shaded (within the shaded area the proposed WCCP land use designation is either Rural Center or Rural Business; outside the shading, the proposed designation is Rural). The report also contains appendices with the study maps showing development patterns within the affected areas, and spreadsheets that estimate the approximate acreage within current and proposed land use designations and zoning districts.

### **Proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendments**

Shown here are proposed changes to the Rural Lands section of Chapter 2 Land Use, as well as proposed changes to other portions of the plan to ensure consistency. Proposed changes to the Rural Lands section (starting on page 4) include:

- Updated vision of rural character in Whatcom County

- Goals and policies for new Rural Center, Rural Tourism, and Rural Business land use designations, which are LAMIRDs per GMA requirements
- Designation and boundary criteria for the new designations
- Deletion of current noncompliant designations Small Town, Crossroads Commercial, Resort/Recreational Subdivision, Suburban Enclave, and Transportation Corridor

### **Proposed Comprehensive Plan Maps**

- New maps of each affected area showing proposed Rural Center and Rural Business LAMIRD land use designations; all of the affected areas outside the proposed LAMIRDs are proposed for Rural land use designation

### **Proposed Zoning Code Amendments**

This shows proposed zoning code changes designed to keep the county's development regulations in rural zones consistent with rural character. Only the passages of the code with proposed changes are shown; a ". . ." indicates where current language between those passages is skipped and is not proposed to be changed. Proposed changes include:

- In rural and residential zones, new lot sizes smaller than five acres would only be allowed within Rural Center Type I LAMIRDs
- New ten-acre density is proposed to be added to the list of densities in the Rural Residential (RR) district
- New language is proposed that requires consideration of cumulative impacts for administrative and conditional uses in the Rural (R) and Rural Residential (RR) zones
- A new Rural Industrial-Manufacturing (RIM) zoning district is proposed, permitting resource-based industrial and manufacturing uses within Rural Center and Rural Business LAMIRDs

### **Proposed Zoning Map Amendments**

These maps show proposed zoning districts in each of the affected areas. Areas with proposed changes are shown in crosshatching, with label boxes that indicate the proposed zoning on top and the current zoning below in parentheses.

### **Public Participation Process Summary**

This document was prepared by project consultants Makers Architecture, describing the public participation process between September 2008 and March 2009, and summarizes the views expressed during that process.

If you have questions regarding these materials, please call Gary Davis at 676-6707 ext. 50246.