



M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Whatcom County Council

THROUGH: J.E. "Sam" Ryan, Director

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

DATE: October 5, 2010

SUBJECT: Rural Element Update

At its September 28 meeting, the County Council Committee of the Whole voted to remove draft policies that referenced R-2A zoning. Staff believes that in order to accomplish Council's objective of retaining R-2A zoning and density overlays outside LAMIRDs (in the "Rural" land use designation), it is important to have policies in place that establish these areas as part of the rural character of Whatcom County apart from the designated "more intensive" areas. We propose the following wording:

Policy 2GG-2: The Rural designation should include areas of traditional rural uses and densities. While the majority of residential development in this area has occurred at densities less than one dwelling per five acres. ~~Generally, residential densities less than one dwelling unit per five acres are considered traditional rural densities, however the Rural designation may also include rural residential areas where higher densities have been established. More intensive development should be contained within Rural Community, Rural Tourism, or Rural Business designations, which are limited areas of more intensive rural development (LAMIRDs).~~

Policy 2GG-4: Rezoning within the Rural designation should be consistent with the established rural character and densities within the area proposed for rezoning. ~~Rezoning from one dwelling unit per ten acre (R-10A) zoning districts to one dwelling per five acre (R-5A) zoning districts, and from one dwelling per five acres (R-5A) to one dwelling per two acres (R-2A) are not consistent with maintaining the traditional character of the surrounding rural areas and should be discouraged.~~

If you have any questions regarding the Rural Element update, please contact Gary Davis at extension 50246.