

Chapter Two LAND USE

.....

OVERALL LAND USE - INTRODUCTION

.....

ISSUES, GOALS, AND POLICIES

Issues for this section were drawn from those identified in the Whatcom County: Next Generations Visioning Process and reinforced during the *Whatcom 2031* visioning process. Numerous meetings, surveys/questionnaires and other methods were used to identify what was important to people in Whatcom County.

Accommodating Growth

Community Value Statements encourage concentrating growth into urban areas. This allows for efficient provision of services and preservation of rural areas as quiet, open spaces where development pressures are not such that extraordinary regulations must be imposed. A distinct boundary is needed between rural and urban areas, discouraging sprawl, maintaining desired rural lifestyles, and conserving agricultural land.

Deleted: also encouraged

GOAL 2A: Ensure provision of sufficient land and densities to accommodate the growth needs of Whatcom County and protect the qualities that make the county a desirable place to live.

Policy 2A-1: Concentrate urban levels of development within designated urban growth areas.

Policy 2A-2: Draw a distinct boundary between urban and rural uses.

Deleted: Where existing development does not already prohibit it, draw

Policy 2A-3: Provide a range of land uses which considers locational and market factors as well as required quantities of land.

Policy 2A-4: Designate land uses that reflect the best use of the land.

Policy 2A-5: Provide predictability to property owners in land use designation.

Policy 2A-6: Allow appropriate development in existing small self-contained communities through the use of the "Rural Community" land use designation.

Deleted: Small Town

Policy 2A-7: Provide sufficient and appropriately located residential, commercial, and industrial lands.

Policy 2A-8: Include business/industry parks, tourist/resort areas and allowance for existing crossroads commercial areas within urban growth areas or limited areas of more intensive rural development.

Deleted: in commercial lands designations

Policy 2A-9: Retain existing rural and heavy industrial areas in the northwestern region of the county within urban growth areas or limited areas of more intensive rural development.

Policy 2A-10: Recognize the importance of tourism and its influence on the need for land for various types of development.

Policy 2A-11: Ensure that the development potential of contiguous lands in common ownership is not compromised when urban growth boundaries and/or LAMIRD boundaries (except in cases that create abnormally irregular boundaries) are designated. The term common ownership should include lands owned by the same persons or entities and also by affiliated companies with common ownership. This should be accomplished without expanding UGA and/or LAMIRD boundaries beyond that ownership and without bridging natural divisions of urban/rural land uses such as roads, rivers, and other natural features.

Policy 2A-12: Adoption of residential, industrial and commercial comprehensive plan or zoning designations in rural areas must comply with the criteria for "limited areas of more intensive rural development" in the Growth Management Act (RCW 36.70A.070(5)).

Deleted: intense

Resort Communities and Master Planned Resorts

The County's resort areas are important to the economic viability of the County's tourist industry and provide numerous and varied recreational opportunities for county residents and visitors. Historically important resort areas include Birch Bay, Point Roberts, Semiahmoo, and the Mount Baker winter recreational area. Resort communities provide recreational opportunities for residents of the surrounding areas.

Deleted: tourism

Deleted: the

Deleted: area

Deleted: New developments have expanded the role of the resort

Deleted: in providing

Deleted: and employment

GOAL 2B: Encourage the continued viability of existing resort communities and allow the development of new Master Planned Resorts in the future.

Policy 2B-1: Permit through the planned unit development process master planned resorts in settings of significant natural amenities within urban growth areas.

Deleted: Policy 2B-1: Support the economic viability of the County's tourist industry by permitting master planned resorts within urban growth areas through the planned unit development process.¶

Policy 2B-2: New large-scale resort development in rural areas outside of UGAs and outside established resort areas, should only be permitted as Master Planned Resorts and only when substantially in compliance with these policies and with RCW 36.70A.360.

Deleted: ,

- Policy 2B-3: Work with property owners in the resort communities to develop an understanding of the unique needs of these areas and evaluate land use regulations for their responsiveness to these needs.
- Policy 2B-4: New resort development and Master Planned Resorts should be developed consistent with the development regulations established for critical areas.
- Policy 2B-5: No new urban ~~land uses should be allowed in the vicinity of~~ Master Planned Resorts, except in areas otherwise designated as urban growth areas under the Comprehensive Plan.

Deleted: or suburban

.....

Regions of Whatcom County

Whatcom County is a large and diverse county. People living in different parts of the county have different priorities and understanding of what constitutes rural and urban lifestyles. It is important to citizens to emphasize these regional differences.

GOAL 2L: Recognize the important regional differences within Whatcom County.

Policy 2L-1: Use the subarea planning process to identify and support distinctions among different areas of the county.

Policy 2L-2: Retain and periodically update the adopted Subarea Plans (Lummi Island, Cherry Point-Ferndale, Lake Whatcom, Urban Fringe, Lynden-Nooksack Valley, Chuckanut-Lake Samish, Birch Bay-Blaine, Foothills, Point Roberts, South Fork Valley, and Eliza Island). Subarea Plans represent a long history of plan development in Whatcom County and provided the foundation for the county's first Growth Management comprehensive plan adopted in 1997.

a. Utilize a process which ensures consistency between the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan and subarea plans. The subarea plan update process should include the following steps:

1) Consistency Analysis. The County should review subarea plans based on the priority order in subsection "b" for gaps, overlaps, or inconsistencies. Topics include, but are not limited to, plan boundaries, growth forecasts, land uses, capital facilities and services, horizon year, and other appropriate issues.

2) Regional and Local Government Coordination. The County should consult and coordinate with cities where city-associated UGAs are included in subarea plan boundaries.

3) Public Participation. Each subarea plan update process will be based on a public participation program that addresses citizen input on the key issues associated with the subarea plan update.

4) Subarea Plan Amendment. Only those portions of existing subarea plans in conflict with the Comprehensive Plan are required to be amended. Local issues of concern or changed conditions may be addressed.

5) Comprehensive Plan Revisions. Where the subarea plan process recommends growth levels, growth boundaries, or other essential features, Comprehensive Plan amendments will be considered in conjunction with the subarea plan update process. Land capacity analysis may also be updated if appropriate.

b. Prioritize update of subarea plans. Subarea plans should be updated in the following order.

1) Post-GMA Subarea Plans addressing UGAs. These subarea plans should be amended during Whatcom County's 7-Year Review scheduled for completion in 2011. Subarea plans addressing UGAs associated with a city should be coordinated with the city's comprehensive plan update process.

2) Post-GMA Subarea Plans addressing Rural Areas. These subarea plans should be subject to a consistency review. If significant inconsistencies are found, these should be considered for potential update during Whatcom County's 7-Year Review scheduled for completion in 2011. Minor updates may be considered through the County's docket process in subsequent years.

3) Pre-GMA Subarea Plans. These should be updated in accordance with County department work programs or the docketing process. Priority criteria may be used to determine the order of update. Example criteria include:

a) whether update is needed for health, safety, or welfare concerns;

b) whether there is a city-associated UGA included in the subarea plan boundaries – in which case, the subarea plan update could be timed to be developed in association with or following city comprehensive plan update process;

c) whether the subarea plan would benefit from broader policy concepts to be completed in

advance or in tandem, such as agricultural land protection measures;
d) whether a significant policy objective would be met by amending the plan.

In the event there is an inconsistency between a Subarea Plan and the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan, the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan shall prevail.

Policy 2L-3: Emphasize forestry uses with some provision for rural and agricultural uses in the south and southeastern regions of the county.

Policy 2L-4: Support the rural economic base by permitting natural resource-based industries, cottage industries, forestry, fishing, and agriculture in rural areas, as well as commercial and industrial activity contained within designated Rural Communities.

Policy 2L-5: Emphasize agriculture in the north central regions of the county.

.....

RURAL LANDS – INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The purpose of the Rural Lands section is to provide direction for land use decisions in the rural areas of Whatcom County.

GMA Requirements

The state Growth Management Act (GMA) requires counties to include a Rural element in their comprehensive plan in accordance with RCW 36.70A.070. GMA defines rural lands as those that are located outside urban growth areas and which do not include designated agriculture, forestry, or mineral resource lands of long-term commercial significance. Agriculture, forestry and mineral resource lands are addressed separately in *Chapter 8: Resource Lands*.

GMA requires counties to provide for a variety of rural densities and uses in its rural areas, and to adopt measures to protect the rural character of the area, as established by the county. The GMA (RCW 36.70A.030(15)) defines “rural character” as “patterns of land use and development established by a county in the rural element of its comprehensive plan:

- (a) In which open space, the natural landscape, and vegetation predominate over the built environment;
- (b) That foster traditional rural lifestyles, rural-based economies, and opportunities to both live and work in rural areas;

Deleted: Expand

Deleted: supporting

Deleted: , and light

Deleted: allowing for some Small Towns in appropriate regions of the county

Deleted: Process¶
The issues, goals, policies, and action plans of the Rural Lands section were derived from the public input gathered and synthesized by the *Whatcom County: The Next Generations* Visioning Committee.¶

Deleted: RURAL LANDS - BACKGROUND SUMMARY

Deleted: ¶

Deleted: Maintaining the rural character and lifestyle is very important to Whatcom County residents. Typical uses in the rural areas include a mixture of low-density residential, pasture, agriculture, woodlots, home occupations, and cottage industries. The distribution of rural land use is adjacent to agricultural, forestry, and urban land uses and often provides a buffer between urban areas and commercial agriculture and forestry uses.¶ The population growth for Whatcom County from 2000 to 2022 is projected to be 68,103 for a total 2022 population of 234,917. This represents an increase of approximately 4,328 people in the areas of Whatcom County that are currently unincorporated and outside of permanent UGAs. In a study of the potential subdividable land in the areas of the County zoned Rural one dwelling/five acres (R5A) it was found that out of 85,588 acres inventoried, about 2/3 of the acreage was in parcels 10 acres or larger in 2002. This finding indicates that there is a potential for future land divisions in the rural portions of the county under current zoning regulations. Conceivably, the rural landscape could look different in the future if the current rural zoning is retained. ¶ People in Whatcom County, through the Visioning Process, defined rural character as a variety of low densities, open spaces, privacy, peace and quiet with less traffic noise and congestion than found in urban areas. Retaining a sense of community and maintaining local control in land use decisions were also components of rural identity.¶

RURAL LANDS - ISSUES, GOALS, AND POLICIES¶

- (c) That provide visual landscapes that are traditionally found in rural areas and communities;
- (d) That are compatible with the use of the land by wildlife and for fish and wildlife habitat;
- (e) That reduce the inappropriate conversion of undeveloped land into sprawling, low-density development;
- (f) That generally do not require the extension of urban government services; and
- (g) That are consistent with the protection of natural surface water flows and ground water and surface water recharge and discharge areas.”

GMA allows counties to designate “limited areas of more intensive rural development” (LAMIRDs) where more intensive uses have been established within their rural areas. Counties making such designations must adopt measures to minimize and contain the existing areas or uses of more intensive rural development.

Rural Character and Lifestyle

Whatcom County’s rural areas are characterized by a mixture of historic rural communities, pasture, agriculture, woodlots, home occupations, cottage industries, and disppursed commercial and industrial activities. The rural areas provide an important buffer between urban areas and resource lands, and the character of the rural areas is differentiated from the urban areas by less intensive uses and densities, and greater predominance of vegetation, wildlife habitat, and open space.

This plan recognizes that each rural area or community has a unique character in terms of established development patterns. The majority of the rural area is characterized by the types of visual environment and land uses traditionally considered rural, while a portion has been developed with more intensive uses – either smaller-lot residential, light industrial, or business uses. This plan, consistent with GMA requirements, supports limited more intensive rural uses, while preventing them from having a negative impact on the character of the less developed rural areas, or on adjacent resource lands.

GOAL 2DD: Retain the character and lifestyle of rural Whatcom County.

Policy 2DD-1: Concentrate the majority of growth in urban areas, and recognize rural lands as an important transition area between urban areas and resource areas.

Policy 2DD-2: Protect the character of the rural area in terms of natural landscape as well as rural lifestyles and economy, per the GMA definition of rural character (RCW 36.70A.030(15)). Protect and value clean water and air, the natural environment, forested lands, agriculture, parks, trails, and open space that provide for a high-quality rural lifestyle.

Deleted: County residents describe rural character and lifestyle as open space, quiet areas/privacy, largely agricultural and forestry orientation, peacefulness, sense of community, low-density population, less noise and congestion than found in urban areas, natural landscape, and greater self-determination of property use. With a rapidly increasing population in Whatcom County, maintaining the rural lifestyle currently enjoyed by county residents becomes more challenging. County residents generally believe that the current zoning and land use patterns of one or more houses per acre may not maintain the rural character of Whatcom County. ¶ One way of preserving rural lifestyle is allowing flexibility in design of subdivisions. One method is to enable and encourage cluster development. Another is to allow density transfers between parcels in rural areas and from rural areas to Urban Growth Areas. Both methods provide economic flexibility to the individual property owner, promote economical lot design, conserve natural resources and environmentally fragile areas, retain future options with respect to land use decisions, and maintain the low density “rural” character of the area. ¶ In addition, residents indicated that 45 years from today they would lik... [1]

Deleted: rural

Deleted: . In areas where existing development patterns do not already prohibit it, draw a distinction

Deleted: /rural uses to prevent urban sprawl

Deleted: ¶ Policy 2DD-2: . Adopt mandatory and incentive programs, such as purchase of development rights, transfer of development rights, and tax def... [2]

Deleted: rural

Deleted: areas and

Deleted: in

Deleted: areas

Deleted: where there are compelling reasons to do so

Deleted: , and allocate sufficient resources to achieve the desired outcome

Deleted: Policy 2DD-3: . Provide landowners with incentives and options to develop their property at densities that may be less than the underlying zone.¶ ... [3]

Policy 2DD-3: Encourage property owners to conserve forested areas, agricultural land, and open space by utilizing current-use taxation provisions (RCW 84.34).

Policy 2DD-4: Conserve open space, park land, and trails for recreational use, as well as to protect essential habitat such as riparian areas and wetlands.

Policy 2DD-5: Use an "Agriculture Protection Overlay Zone" designation in certain Rural zoned areas as a way to help achieve the goal of conserving and enhancing Whatcom County's agricultural land base.

Policy 2DD-6: In the "Agriculture Protection Overlay Zone" on parcels 20 acres and larger with Rural 5 acre and Rural 10 acre zoning, require non-agriculturally related development to be clustered where it would not create more conflicts with accepted agricultural practices, on a maximum of 25 percent of the available land with the remainder available for open space and agricultural uses. Development standards shall provide flexibility to achieve development potential in cases of natural limitations.

Deleted: Agricultural

Policy 2DD-7: Maintain the historic character and cultural roles of each rural area and community.

Deleted: Policy 2DD-7: Discourage new, fully-contained communities outside designated urban growth areas.¶
Policy 2DD-8: Encourage property owners to conserve forested areas, agricultural land, and open space by utilizing current-use taxation provisions (RCW 84.34).¶
Policy 2DD-9: Conserve open space, park land, and green links for recreational use, as well as to protect essential habitat such as riparian areas and wetlands.¶
Policy 2DD-10: Rezones from one dwelling unit per ten acre (R10A) zoning districts to one dwelling per five acre (R5A) zoning districts should be discouraged.¶

Policy 2DD-8: Allow more intensive uses in limited areas of more intensive rural development designated consistent with RCW 36.70A.070(5)(d), which provide public and commercial services and employment opportunities, while preventing them from spreading in patterns of sprawl development and having an adverse impact on surrounding rural areas and nearby resource lands, and protecting rural character.

Policy 2DD-9: Assure economic prosperity for rural areas and allow rural property owners reasonable use of their land by continuing to allow legal nonconforming uses.

Policy 2DD-10: Adopt incentive programs, such as purchase of development rights, transfer of development rights, and tax deferrals, to achieve desired land use policies in rural areas and in areas where there are compelling reasons to do so.

Deleted: People often choose to live in rural areas because they want to be more self-reliant and farther away from population centers, and often do not need or want many of the services provided in urban areas.

Rural Services

Development in rural areas should not receive urban levels of service except where necessary to protect public health, safety, and the environment. Services should be coordinated to ensure that rural areas receive appropriate services including law enforcement protection, fire protection, and emergency services. The Whatcom County Public Works Department maintains county roads. Most of the residential development

Deleted: provided

Deleted: residents include

Deleted: volunteer

Deleted: County roads are maintained by the county and public transit services are minimal. ¶ Usually the property owner or developer is responsible for providing water and sewer.

in rural areas uses individual on-site septic systems. Some drinking water is provided by on-site wells and in other cases it is provided by water districts or water associations.

Deleted: A growing concern is that as the rural areas become more populated, groundwater and surface water quality may diminish. Because one of the contributors to groundwater contamination is failing septic systems, proper installation and maintenance becomes very important

GOAL 2EE: **Ensure that rural areas are provided with services consistent with the rural character and that development patterns do not encourage an increased service level or degrade water quality.**

Policy 2EE-1: Recognize domestic water systems, volunteer fire protection, emergency services, law enforcement protection, transportation, public transit services and public utilities typically associated with rural development as appropriate services in designated rural areas. Rural services do not include storm or sanitary sewers.

Policy 2EE-2: Coordinate and plan public facilities, services, roads, and utilities to ensure that rural areas have appropriate and adequate rural levels of service necessary to maintain a rural lifestyle. Coordinate with rural service providers to ensure efficient and effective service to rural areas.

Deleted: Allow development in
Deleted: only when urban services are not required. ¶
Policy 2EE-3: Ensure that adequate on-site wells and on-site sewage and systems are properly installed, monitored, and maintained.¶
Policy 2EE-4: Discourage urban

Policy 2EE-3: Pursue measures through which new development would help pay for increased demands on critical rural services such as fire and emergency service.

Deleted: water and sewer

Policy 2EE-4: Prohibit extension or expansion of municipal public sewer systems outside urban growth areas or LAMIRDS except where it is necessary to protect public health, safety, and the environment, and when such services are financially supportable at rural densities and do not permit urban development.

Deleted: extensions or expansions to serve development outside of Urban Growth Areas, Small Towns, Resort/Recreational Subdivisions, and the Gateway Industrial Transportation Corridor,

Policy 2EE-5: Ensure that adequate on-site wells and on-site sewage and septic systems are properly installed, monitored, and maintained. Provide technical assistance to property owners, and require necessary improvements when needed to protect health, safety and environmental quality.

Deleted: in those limited circumstances shown to be

Deleted: basic

Deleted: public

Deleted: ,

Policy 2EE-6: Promote better land use practices and protect water quality by encouraging landowners and developers to investigate and implement innovative subdivision, septic system designs, and stormwater management.

Policy 2EE-7: Ensure county coordination with service providers to determine if new or infill development will have necessary services. Require concurrent review of new development to ensure adequate level of service at rural standards are available at the time of development.

Policy 2EE-8: Public services and public facilities necessary for rural commercial and industrial uses shall be provided in a manner that does not

permit low-density sprawl. Uses may utilize urban services that previously have been made available to the site.

Rural Employment Opportunities

Many residents in rural Whatcom County depend on cottage industries, home occupations, small businesses, and natural resource-based jobs for their livelihood. These types of businesses support the local economy and are compatible with the rural lifestyle desired by county residents.

Commercial and industrial uses located within Rural Communities, Rural Tourism, and Rural Business areas are also important contributors to the local economy, providing jobs and services to rural residents.

GOAL 2FF: Provide employment opportunities in the rural parts of Whatcom County.

Policy 2FF-1: Support small businesses, cottage industries, home occupations, resource-based, tourist, recreational, and other appropriate industries in the rural areas of Whatcom County. New rural commercial and industrial uses that are more intensive than those permitted within rural zones as home occupations or cottage industries should be located within designated Rural Communities and Rural Business areas.

Policy 2FF-2: Support resource-based industries that require only rural services, conserve the natural resource land base, and help maintain the rural character and lifestyle of the community. Assure adequate facilities, mitigation and buffers through development regulations.

Policy 2FF-3: Ensure that business operations do not adversely impact adjacent residential, agricultural or forest land, or compromise water quality and quantity.

Policy 2FF-4: Allow home-based occupations, cottage industries and small-scale tourist and recreational uses throughout the rural area provided they do not adversely affect the surrounding residential uses, agricultural uses, forestry uses, or rural character.

RURAL LANDS – LAND USE

Rural Designation

Lands designated as Rural include a variety of uses and densities. Traditionally, Whatcom County's rural areas have been characterized by a spectrum of uses ranging from farms and large-lot residential areas to recreational communities and small towns.

- Deleted: Light industry is another important contributor
- Deleted: . Currently, most ligh... [4]
- Deleted: small towns
- Deleted: light industry
- Deleted: neighborhood comm... [5]
- Deleted: Locate the resource... [6]
- Deleted: 5: Retain existing... [7]
- Deleted: neighbors,
- Deleted: , or infringe on produ... [8]
- Deleted: **Lummi Island**¶ [9]
- Deleted: mber
- Deleted: industries
- Deleted: providing necessary goods
- Deleted: , and
- Deleted: services. Today the... [10]
- Deleted: as well as Whatcom... [11]
- Deleted: tourist
- Deleted: activities have incre... [12]
- Deleted: and
- Deleted: tourist services in th... [13]
- Deleted: is expected to conti... [14]
- Deleted: impacted by limited... [15]
- Deleted: recreational
- Deleted: visitor traffic and ca... [16]
- Deleted: then travel back out... [17]
- Deleted: existing land
- Deleted: uses
- Deleted: and
- Deleted: provided for the futu... [18]
- Deleted: rural
- Deleted: industrial
- Deleted: development center... [19]
- Deleted: viability of small to... [20]
- Deleted: surrounding
- Deleted: rural
- Deleted: lands as well as to... [21]
- Deleted: residential
- Deleted: connections. At the... [22]
- Deleted: at full density due to... [23]
- Deleted: .
- Deleted: Camp Firwood is a... [24]
- Deleted: **Lake Samish**¶ [25]

The more intensive uses in that spectrum (commercial/industrial areas and residential areas with densities greater than one unit per acre) are contained within the boundaries of Rural Community, Rural Tourism, or Rural Business designations (LAMIRDs) and Rural Residential Overlays. The remainder of the rural areas are designated Rural and contain traditional rural residential and farm uses as well as small home-based and conditionally-permitted businesses. The rural character of the lands designated as Rural should not be compromised by the encroachment of more intensive development. Commercial and industrial uses in the rural areas not contained within a Rural Community designation must meet GMA criteria for small-scale tourism or isolated business uses (RCW 36.70A.070(5)(d)(ii) and (iii)).

The GMA does not set a maximum allowed residential density for rural areas. A large majority of the lands designated as Rural are zoned for one residence per five or ten acres, however, a small proportion has been developed under a zoning allowing lots smaller than five acres where public water service is available. These areas have their own unique rural character (as compared with the higher densities contained within LAMIRDs) and they serve to provide a needed variety of rural densities. However, it is important to maintain the character of the more traditional rural areas and prevent expansion of the smaller-lot rural areas beyond their traditional limits.

Goal 2GG: Designate Rural areas to contain a variety of uses and densities while retaining their traditional rural character.

Policy 2GG-1: Provide a variety of residential choices at rural densities which are compatible with the character of each of the rural areas.

Policy 2GG-2: The Rural designation should include areas of traditional rural uses and densities. While the large majority of the Rural designation is characterized by densities at or below one unit per five acres, 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), unless justified by the existing rural character of the area.

Policy 2GG-3 In the Whatcom County Code, the Rural and Rural Residential zoning districts should include Rural Residential Density Overlays that may be applied to areas within the Rural designation where smaller-lot rural residential development has already occurred. The overlay should allow for infill development with lot sizes consistent with those of surrounding lots, where public water service is available. The overlay should limit eligibility of lots based on the percentage of surrounding lots that are developed, and should establish a maximum density that may be achieved using the overlay. The Rural Residential Density Overlays should not be expanded into areas where smaller-lot development has

not occurred; such expansion is not consistent with maintaining the traditional character of the surrounding rural areas.

Policy 2GG-4: Uses and densities within the Rural designation should reflect established rural character. Rezones within the Rural designation should be consistent with the established rural character and densities in the general area of the proposed rezone.

Policy 2GG-5: Minimize potential conflicts of rural residential development near designated natural resource lands to prevent adverse impacts on resource land uses.

Policy 2GG-6: Provide landowners with incentives and options to develop their property at densities that may be less than the underlying zone, when necessary to protect critical areas and high-value resource lands.

Policy 2GG-7: Ensure that flexible development patterns such as cluster subdivisions effectively preserve open space and agricultural land and do not create the need for more intensive rural services.

Policy 2GG-8: Development within Rural designations should be consistent with rural character as described in this chapter.

Limited Areas of More Intensive Rural Development (LAMIRDs)

RCW 36.70A.070(5)(d)(i) through (iii) allows counties to designate limited areas of more intensive development (LAMIRDs) for three types of development patterns in the rural areas:

- Type I: "Rural development consisting of the infill, development, or redevelopment of existing commercial, industrial, residential, or mixed-use areas..." Existing development is defined as that which existed on July 1, 1990.
- Type II: "The intensification of development on lots containing, or new development of, small-scale recreational or tourist uses, including commercial facilities to serve those...uses, that rely on a rural location and setting..."
- Type III: "The intensification of development on lots containing isolated nonresidential uses or new development of isolated cottage industries and isolated small-scale businesses that are not principally designed to serve the existing and projected rural population and nonresidential uses, but do provide job opportunities for rural residents..."

Areas designated in this plan as Rural Communities are Type I LAMIRDs. Rural Tourism designations are Type II LAMIRDs and Rural Business designations are Type III LAMIRDs.

The purpose of LAMIRDs is to place limits on more intensive development and prevent it from adversely affecting the character of the surrounding rural areas. Rural Communities (Type I LAMIRDs) are areas characterized by more intensive uses at the

time Whatcom County began planning under GMA. Rural Tourism designations (Type II LAMIRDS) apply to lots that contain small-scale tourist uses. Rural Business designations apply to lots that contain isolated small-scale business. The criteria listed under Goal 2HH were used to designate Rural Communities and Rural Business areas (the Type I and Type III LAMIRDS) in 2010 and should be used to establish future Rural Tourism and Rural Business designations (Type II and III LAMIRDS) and to evaluate future proposed modifications to Rural Community, Rural Tourism, and Rural Business designations (Type I, II, and III LAMIRDS).

Goal 2HH: Establish LAMIRD Designation Criteria

Policy 2HH-1: Rural Community (Type I LAMIRD) designation criteria

A. Location Criteria. Rural Communities may be designated in an area that:

1. Was characterized by existing development more intensive than surrounding rural areas (residential or non-residential) as of July 1, 1990, and
2. Is not currently designated by the Comprehensive Plan as Urban Growth Areas (UGAs) or Resource Lands, and

B. Additional Location Criteria. The following may serve as additional criteria for Rural Community designation (relative to the specific circumstances of the area, and in combination with each other):

1. The existing (1990) residential built environment was more intensively developed than surrounding areas;
2. Public services are available to serve potential infill, such as adequate potable water and fire protection, transportation facilities, sewage disposal and stormwater control; or
3. The area is planned for more intensive development in a post-GMA local subarea plan.
4. Existing zoning prior to designation as a Rural Community, except existing zoning may not be a sole criterion for designation.

C. Outer Boundary Criteria. For land meeting the criteria described in A and B above, Rural Community boundaries must minimize and contain areas of intensive development and be delineated predominately by the built environment, and shall include:

1. Parcels that were intensively developed and characterized by the built environment (including water lines or other

utility lines with capacity to serve areas of more intensive uses) on July 1, 1990.

2. Parcels that on July 1, 1990 were not intensively developed may be included within Rural Community boundaries if they meet any of the following conditions:
 - a. Including the parcel helps preserve the character of an existing (built) natural neighborhood;
 - b. Including the parcel allows the logical outer boundary to follow a physical boundary such as bodies of water, streets and highways, and land forms and contours;
 - c. Including the parcel (or in limited cases, a portion of the parcel) prevents the logical outer boundary from being abnormally irregular;
 - d. Including the parcel is consistent with efficient provision of public facilities and services in a manner that does not permit low-density sprawl;
 - e. Including the parcel does not create a new pattern of low-density sprawl.

Policy 2HH-2: Rural Tourism (Type II LAMIRD) designation criteria

A. Location Criteria. Rural Tourism may be designated on land that:

1. Consists of one lot, or more than one lot, and
2. Is not currently designated by the Comprehensive Plan as Urban Growth Areas (UGAs) or Resource Lands, and
3. Is characterized by the intensification of development on lots containing, or new development of, small-scale recreational or tourist uses, including commercial facilities to serve those uses, that rely on a rural location and setting, but that do not include new residential development, other than a dwelling unit accessory to the business for use by the owner-manager or caretaker.

B. Additional Criteria The following serve as additional criteria for Rural Tourism designation:

1. The area may include pre-existing residential development, but not new (except for dwelling units accessory to the business for use by the owner-manager or caretaker), and
2. The area may serve more than the local existing & projected rural population, and

3. Public services and public facilities shall be limited to those necessary to serve the recreation or tourist use and shall be provided in a manner that does not permit low-density sprawl.

Policy 2HH-3: Rural Business (Type III LAMIRD) designation criteria

A. Location Criteria. Rural Business may be designated on land that:

1. Is not currently designated by the Comprehensive Plan as Urban Growth Areas (UGAs) or Resource Lands, and
2. Consists of a lot or small group of lots that either:
 - a. Contained past or current nonresidential uses and was located within a commercial, manufacturing, or industrial zoning district at the time of original county-initiated designation, or
 - b. Allow for new development of isolated cottage industries and isolated small scale businesses that are not principally designed to serve the existing and projected rural population and nonresidential uses, but do provide job opportunities for rural residents.

B. Additional Criteria.

1. A Rural Business designation on a lot or small group of lots containing nonresidential uses should be separated from other LAMIRD designations, regardless of type, by no less than one-half mile by public road, except where the other LAMIRD is separated by a major physical feature such as a water body, freeway, major road, or other physical feature.
2. In the event that the listed criteria result in the need to choose one proposed designation over another, preference is given to a proposed use that:
 - a. Provides the greatest number of job opportunities for rural residents.
 - b. Is located at a controlled public road intersection.

Rural Communities

Rural Communities are areas that have historically served as centers of activity and services for surrounding rural areas, or have been established as more intensive rural residential development. In many cases, they are served by public services and facilities, including schools, libraries, post offices, and/or public transportation.

These areas are Type I LAMIRDs and include small unincorporated towns and other areas where a concentration of commercial and public uses have been in existence since before the adoption of the GMA in 1990. Typically, these are mixed-use areas containing both residential and nonresidential uses developed at a greater intensity than is generally found in outlying rural areas. This more intensive development is contained within the boundaries of the Rural Community designations, preventing the expansion of more intensive uses and densities into the surrounding rural areas. Because undeveloped lots may be included within Rural Community boundaries, infill development is possible, but at an intensity consistent with the development that existed in 1990.

Areas designated as Rural Communities are: Acme, Birch Bay-Lynden & Valley View, Cain Lake, Custer, Deming, Diablo, Eliza Island, Emerald Lake, Fort Bellingham/Marietta, Glacier, Hinotes Corner, Kendall, Lake Samish, Laurel, Lummi Peninsula, Maple Falls, Newhalem, North Bellingham, Nugents Corner, Point Roberts, Pole & Guide Meridian, Sandy Point/Sandy Point Heights, Smith & Guide Meridian, Sudden Valley, Van Wyck, and Wisser Lake.

GOAL 2JJ: Designate areas of more intensive rural development that existed on July 1, 1990 as Rural Communities.

Policy 2JJ-1: Areas designated as Rural Communities shall meet the criteria stated in this chapter and the requirements of RCW 36.70A.070(5)(d)(i), which describes limited areas of more intensive rural development consisting of the infill, development, or redevelopment of existing commercial, industrial, residential, or mixed-use areas, including necessary public facilities and public services to serve the limited area.

Policy 2JJ-2: Boundaries of Rural Communities shall meet the criteria stated in this chapter, and the requirements of RCW 36.70A.070(5)(d)(iv), which requires limited areas of more intensive rural development to be clearly identifiable and contained within a logical outer boundary delineated predominately by the built environment as it existed on July 1, 1990.

Policy 2JJ-3: Additional Rural Communities shall not be designated, nor shall boundaries of Rural Communities be changed unless the area of the proposed addition meets the criteria stated in this chapter, and requirements of RCW 36.70A.070(5)(d) . Designated Resource Lands should not be redesignated as Rural Communities.

Policy 2JJ-4: Development or redevelopment within Rural Communities should be consistent with the character of the existing area and consistent with the size, scale, use, or intensity of the development that existed on July 1, 1990.

Policy 2JJ-5: Lands inside Rural Community designation boundaries that are within low-density residential zones (one residence per five acres

or less density) or resource zones, or are federally owned, should not be re-zoned to allow more intensive uses and densities.

Policy 2JJ-6: Land uses within Rural Communities, except for industrial uses, should be principally designed to serve the existing and projected rural population.

Policy 2JJ-7: Encourage future public participation activities to develop additional planning goals and policies specific to residents' needs and preferences in individual Rural Communities.

Rural Tourism

Whatcom County's scenic rural areas are enjoyed by residents and tourist alike. Small scale recreation or tourist uses that rely on a rural setting provide income opportunities for rural residents and contribute to the local economy. GMA allows counties to designate new Type II LAMIRDs for new small-scale recreation and tourist uses. The Rural Tourism designation limits and contains such uses, which can be more intensive than surrounding rural uses.

GOAL 2KK: Provide opportunities for small-scale recreational or tourist uses in rural areas.

Policy 2KK-1: Lands designated for Rural Tourism shall meet the criteria stated in this chapter, and the requirements of RCW 36.70A.070(5)(d)(ii), which describes limited areas of more intensive rural development consisting of the intensification of development on lots containing, or new development of, small-scale recreational or tourist uses, including commercial facilities to serve those uses, that rely on a rural location and setting, but that do not include new residential development (other than a dwelling unit accessory to the business for use by the owner-manager or caretaker).

Policy 2KK-2: Designated Resource Lands shall not be redesignated as Rural Tourism.

Rural Business

Many businesses have been established in commercial and industrial zones outside of Rural Community areas. These uses, which are more intensive than those found in surrounding rural areas, provide commercial services and job opportunities for rural residents. The Rural Business designation permits uses to continue while preventing the spread of businesses in sprawl development patterns.

GMA allows counties to designate new Type III LAMIRDs for new isolated small-scale businesses. To ensure that these uses remain isolated and do not lead to strip development, criteria for Rural Business designation include spacing requirements from other Rural Business designations as well as Rural Communities.

The areas designated Rural Business under Type III guidelines are: Birch Bay-Lynden & I-5, Blue Canyon, Guide Meridian Border Crossing, North Lake Samish & I-5, Slater & Elder, Van Zandt, and Welcome.

GOAL 2LL: Designate Rural Business areas to limit and contain nonresidential uses.

Policy 2LL-1: All lands designated Rural Business shall meet the Rural Business designation criteria stated in this chapter, and the requirements of RCW 36.70A.070(5)(d)(iii), which describes limited areas of more intensive rural development consisting of the intensification of development on lots containing isolated nonresidential uses or new development of isolated cottage industries and isolated small-scale businesses.

Policy 2LL-2: Uses in the Rural Business designation need not be principally designed to serve the existing and projected rural population and nonresidential uses, but provide job opportunities for rural residents.

Policy 2LL-3: Designated Resource Lands shall not be redesignated as Rural Business.

▼

Special Study Areas

Lake Whatcom

Lake Whatcom is the drinking water source for approximately half of Whatcom County. Recent studies on Lake Whatcom indicate water quality in the lake has declined. Oxygen levels in Lake Whatcom are declining to lower levels, and are declining faster than in the past. In 1997, the Washington State Department of Ecology listed Lake Whatcom as an impaired water body and place Lake Whatcom on the Federal Clean Water Act 303(d) list because of low oxygen levels. The 303(d) listing requires the establishment of a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) that designates loading capacity of the lake such that there will be no measurable change in oxygen levels from natural lake conditions. The TMDL goals will require a variety of planning, pollution prevention, pollution reduction and technical approaches. Meeting the TMDL goals will be required in order to stabilize water quality in Lake Whatcom.

A significant cause of declining oxygen levels has been from residential development in the watershed. Past development permitted by the City of Bellingham and Whatcom County has led to increased phosphorus loading into the lake, which in turn has led to lower oxygen levels in the lake. Past poorly managed forest practices may have led to significant increases in phosphorus loading to the lake.

In November/December 1992, a joint resolution was passed by the Bellingham City Council, Whatcom County Council, and Water District 10 Commissioners, which

Deleted: Transportation Corridor Gateway Industrial¶

The Gateway Industrial area is a transportation related corridor supporting transportation related warehouse and other uses, some of which have located in an area between the rail line and Interstate-5. The property is not used or suitable for resource use and is not particularly suitable for residential development. The area is characterized by existing development but lacks significant utility service to warrant an urban designation at this time.¶

Goal 2MM: Maintain the existing development in the Gateway Industrial area and confine further development to warehouse and transportation/auto travel related activities.¶

Policy 2MM-1: Encourage local utility purveyors to serve the Gateway Industrial area.¶

Policy 2MM-2: Allow in-fill in the Gateway Industrial area subject to adequate road capacity, water supply and sewer service or the ability to utilize septic systems. Limit other services to rural service levels.¶

Guide Meridian¶

The Guide Meridian is unique for several reasons. North of the Bellingham urban growth area, the Guide travels about 12 ½ miles, through Lynden, to the Canadian border. Truck traffic increased at all Whatcom County border crossings from 1991 to 2001. As the Blaine truck crossing becomes more and more overcrowded, with long waiting times, the Guide is becoming a more and more attractive truck crossing alternative. Canadian Customs & Revenue and the B.C. Province are working together on a plan to convert the north-bound, Lynden - Aldergrove Canadian border station to a 24 hour commercial vehicle crossing to accommodate demand imposed by commercial growth in the lower mainland. U.S. Customs is considering a similar action for their facility, southbound.¶

Annual auto trips declined at all Whatcom County border crossings from 1991-2001 as the result of a weak Canadian dollar. However, when the Canadian dollar is strong, increased auto traffic at the Blaine Peace Arch crossing can make the Lynden-Aldergrove crossing n... [26]

Deleted: The primary

Deleted: d

Deleted: Poorly

Deleted: can also lead

reaffirmed this position with six general goal statements and a set of specific goal statements in various categories. The specific goal statements for urbanization were the following:

- Prevent water quality degradation associated with development within the watershed.
- Review and recommend changes in zoning and development potential that are compatible with a drinking-water reservoir environment.
- In addition to zoning identify and promote other actions to minimize potential for increased development in the watershed (i.e. land trust, development rights, cost incentives, etc.).
- Develop specific standards which reduce the impacts of urbanization, such as minimal lot clearing; clustered development to reduce infrastructure; collection and treatment of stormwater before entering the lake.
- Develop appropriate interlocal agreements with governing agencies to prohibit the potential for additional development once an agreed upon level is set.

The joint resolution included goals for watershed management that extended beyond urbanization. Goals were included for stormwater management, on-site waste systems, conservation, forest management, spill response, hazardous materials transport and handling, data/information management, education/public involvement, and other topics. A joint strategy was agreed to for developing specific plans to meet the adopted goals. Eight high priority goals were selected first and plans have been completed and jointly adopted for each of the goals.

In 1998, the City, County, and District 10 formalized their joint commitment to protect and manage the lake through the joint adoption of an interlocal agreement and allocation of funding toward protection and management efforts in the watershed. A five-year program plan was developed for ten program areas. Specific priority was placed on activities related to watershed ownership, stormwater management, and urbanization/land development.

The watershed contains four developed areas: the City of Bellingham, which straddles the upper portion of the northern-most basin of the lake; Geneva, which is immediately south and east of Bellingham's city limits and is part of the city's urban growth area; Hillsdale, which is immediately north and east of Bellingham's city limits and is also part of the city's urban growth areas; and the Sudden Valley Rural Community. In addition, it includes a variety of other zones, including resource, rural, and residential rural zones. Over 75% of the watershed is in Forestry zoning and more than 73% of the current land use is forestry.

Deleted: suburban

In 2003, there were approximately 2,730 existing dwelling units in the Lake Whatcom watershed located outside of the Bellingham UGA. Under the zoning adopted in January 2004, the gross potential build-out in this area is about 6,507 total dwelling units. Therefore, even under the more restrictive zoning adopted in January of 2004, there could be a significant amount of new development in the watershed.

Water and sewer service are provided by Water District 10. Capacity problems in the district's sewer line, which serves Geneva and Sudden Valley, have caused overflows into the lake in the past. An aggressive program to preclude stormwater infiltration has eliminated the overflow problems to a large extent. In addition, the district has a contractually limited flow capacity to Bellingham. The Lake Louise Road sewage interceptor was constructed in January 2003 to carry waste water from Sudden Valley and Geneva and serves as a complement to the Lake Whatcom Boulevard trunk line. The interceptor was designed to service full build-out of Sudden Valley and Geneva.

There are several pending subdivisions in the area which are being proposed at less than full density but which will increase the overall development level outside of urban areas to a significant degree.

In 2004, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Board on Natural Resources adopted the Lake Whatcom Landscape Plan. This plan provides additional protections on state managed lands within the Lake Whatcom watershed. The plan provides additional protections on streams and potentially unstable slopes on normally included in forest practices in Washington State. If the DNR exchanges land from the watershed the protections provided by the plan would not be applicable to the new owner.

In 2006 the Whatcom County Council approved funding to study reconveyance of DNR managed County Forest Board Lands.

Chapter 11: Environment, contains more discussion of Lake Whatcom issues and includes additional goals and policies related to watershed management, stormwater, and water quality.

GOAL 2MM: **Prioritize the Lake Whatcom area as an area to minimize development, repair existing storm water problems, specifically for phosphorus, and ensure forestry practices do not negatively impact water quality. Provide sufficient funding and support to be successful.**

Deleted: 2PP

Policy 2MM-1: Work with property owners to find acceptable development solutions at lower overall densities than the present zoning allows.

Deleted: 2PP

Policy 2MM-2: Develop a storm drainage utility district or other funding mechanism to deal with the unique problems of development in a drinking water watershed.

Deleted: 2PP

Policy 2MM-3: Recognize that all users of Lake Whatcom water have an interest in the resource and should share in the cost of its protection.

Deleted: 2PP

Policy 2MM-4: Work cooperatively with the City and Water District 10 to identify, review, and, as appropriate, recommend changes to existing monitoring programs that will address the needs of the various jurisdictions. Place a particular focus on the information needed to evaluate the impacts of additional development in the watershed. Include an analysis of the diversion from the Middle

Deleted: 2PP

Fork of the Nooksack. Coordinate effort with the Lake Whatcom Management Committee process.

Policy ~~2MM-5~~: Evaluate and pursue, as appropriate, the use of incentives to encourage voluntary lot consolidation, transfer or purchase of development rights, current use taxation, and participation in open space conservation programs.

Deleted: 2PP

Policy ~~2MM-6~~: Do not allow density bonuses within the Lake Whatcom Watershed.

Deleted: 2PP

Policy ~~2MM-7~~: Work cooperatively with the City and Water District 10 to develop benchmarks to determine the effectiveness of management options; when goals have been achieved; or when additional actions are necessary.

Deleted: 2PP

Policy ~~2MM-8~~: Continue to develop and refine structural and non-structural best management practices (BMPs), both voluntary and required, to minimize development impacts within the Lake Whatcom watershed.

Deleted: 2PP

Policy ~~2MM-9~~: Work to keep Whatcom County Forest Board and Forest Purchase lands within the Lake Whatcom watershed in public ownership, and support managing forestry on said lands in a manner that minimizes sediment and phosphorus yields from streams.

Deleted: 2PP

Policy 2MM-10 Encourage the location of public services such as schools, libraries, and post offices, within Rural Communities that would likely reduce the vehicle miles traveled within the watershed.

Private Parcels Surrounded by National Park or National Forest

There are a number of private parcels in Whatcom County which are completely surrounded by National Forest and National Park land. Some of these have houses built on them, primarily for seasonal use, but most represent mining patents and are used, or have been used, only for mining. The majority of these parcels are located in the Mt. Baker area or the Slate Creek area near the eastern border of the county with their access primarily by Forest Service roads.

When interim zoning was established for Whatcom County in 1972, these parcels along with a majority of the rest of the county were zoned general protection (GP). This zoning allows single-family houses on one acre lots and a multitude of other uses mostly subject to the conditional use process. As final zoning has been established around the county as part of the subarea planning process, only these exclave parcels and the Lummi Reservation remain under interim zoning.

GOAL 2QQ: Continue to recognize private parcels surrounded by National Park or National Forest as part of Whatcom County's jurisdiction.

Policy 2QQ-1: Increase the potential for land exchanges, and other voluntary mechanisms, in order to reduce the checkerboard ownership and jurisdictional patterns within eastern Whatcom County.

Subdivisions on the Lummi Reservation

There are at least 2,086 parcels on the Lummi Reservation, many of which are owned by non-Indians. As Federal policy has changed and tribal lands have been allowed to be removed from trust to fee status, state and county regulations have become applicable. The County has made efforts to work closely with local tribes on land use directions. The requirements of Growth Management cannot be applicable to reservation trust lands, even when a checkerboard pattern has developed. It is the full intent of this County, when possible, to continue working cooperatively with area tribes on land use, watershed planning, utility planning and the coordinated water system plan. Most platted areas have sewer, which is provided by the Lummi Sewer District.

GOAL ~~2NN~~: **Seek resolutions that satisfy the requirements of Growth Management, the needs of the non-tribal residents and the goals of the Lummi Nation.**

Deleted: 2RR

Policy ~~2NN~~-1: Work with the residents and the Lummi Nation to establish adequate water and sewer for the existing platted lots.

Deleted: 2RR

Policy ~~2NN~~-2: Whatcom County will administer land use policy on fee lands and prohibit discriminatory land use practices.

Deleted: Recognize subdivided areas on the Lummi Reservation as limited areas of more intense rural development if they meet the criteria of RCW 36.70A.070(5). ¶
Policy 2RR-2: .

Deleted: 2RR-3

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN DESIGNATIONS MAP

The Comprehensive Plan designations map (**Map 8**) is intended to provide direction for future land use decisions in Whatcom County. It is officially adopted as part of this document. Because of the scale of the map, specific boundaries are identified on maps in the County Planning and Development Services office.

Comprehensive Plan Designation Descriptors

These descriptors are intended to be general in nature. More specific criteria and explanation will be incorporated into subarea plans.

Title: **Urban Growth Areas**

Purpose: To denote where future urban growth may occur.

Definition: Areas characterized by urban growth that have adequate existing public facility and service capacities; areas characterized by urban growth that ~~can~~ be served ~~adequately by a combination of both existing public facilities and any additional public facilities and services that are provided by either public or private sources~~; and lands adjacent to areas characterized by urban growth.

Deleted: may

Deleted: with urban

Deleted: in the future

Locational Criteria: First urban growth may be located on lands characterized by urban growth that have adequate existing public facility and service capacities; next urban growth may be located on lands characterized by urban growth that can be served adequately by a combination of both existing public facilities and services and any additional public facilities and services that are provided by either public or private sources; and finally urban growth may be located on lands adjacent to areas characterized by urban growth.

Title: **Urban Growth Area Reserve**

Purpose: To denote lands which appear to be suitable for future inclusion in an adjacent and contiguous Urban Growth Area when the need arises and adequate public facilities and services can be provided, and other issues identified in the comprehensive plan are addressed.

Definition: Areas that are not yet suited for urban growth but are logical areas in which the urban area would likely grow beyond current growth allocations after being properly designated as an Urban Growth Area.

Locational Criteria: Areas adjacent and contiguous to Urban Growth Areas in which urban development would likely occur beyond current growth allocations.

Title: Major Industrial Area / Port Industrial Urban Growth Areas

Purpose: To reserve appropriate areas to attract heavy industrial manufacturing uses and provide employment opportunities while minimizing land use conflicts and off-site impacts.

Definition: Land area for large-scale heavy industry that has a high impact on the surrounding neighborhood and environment.

Locational Criteria: Industry should be located in areas adequate for its use away from residential centers, but within reasonable commuting distance; near transportation facilities and services.

Title: Master Planned Resort

Purpose: To recognize and contain resort areas that existed on July 1, 1990, or permit new master planned resort areas that depend on a setting of significant natural amenities.

Definition: Historic or new planned unit development that is self-contained and fully integrated, in a setting of significant natural amenities, with primary focus on destination resort facilities consisting of short-term visitor accommodations associated with a range of developed on-site indoor or outdoor recreational facilities.

Locational Criteria: Resorts may be located in urban or rural areas within a setting of significant natural amenities.

Title: Rural Community

Purpose: To recognize centers of rural commercial and public services and smaller-lot residential areas that existed on July 1, 1990 and limit and contain more intensive rural land uses within logical outer boundaries.

Definition: Small towns and other historic centers of rural activity containing residential and nonresidential uses developed at a greater intensity than surrounding rural areas.

Locational Criteria: Portions of rural areas that were characterized by more intensive rural development in 1990.

Deleted: -

Deleted: Title: Small Towns - Rural ¶
Purpose: To acknowledge locations remote from urban centers that support the local economy by providing goods and services to residents and tourists.¶
Definition: Small communities with mixed tourist commercial, residential, resort, or public land uses.¶
Locational: Existing small community or resort centers with adequate services.¶
Criteria: including water and sewer which can be cost-effectively provided; near existing transportation routes; characterized by commercial uses and higher densities than surrounding rural areas.¶

Title: Crossroads Commercial - Rural¶
Purpose: To provide commonly desired goods and services near unincorporated or small population centers.¶
Definition: Small concentrations of businesses meeting local area service needs. Such uses as gas stations, neighborhood general stores, and restaurants would be included.¶
Locational: Central to rural populations; commercial areas should be located near¶
Criteria: arterial routes and fulfill a need for goods and services in that area.¶

Title: Resort and Recreational Subdivisions - Rural¶
Purpose: Recognize the existing mixture of recreational and residential development of resort and recreational subdivisions and ensure that future growth can be serviced appropriately.¶
Definition: Resort and Recreational Subdivisions are large subdivisions originally created to primarily serve recreational or resort land uses and that continue to attract and maintain such uses.¶
Locational: Existing large scale recreational subdivisions.¶
Criteria:¶

Title: Suburban Enclaves - Rural¶
Purpose: To ensure efficient land use by allowing in-fill at suburban densities in areas already characterized by such development.¶
Definition: The suburban enclaves are comprised of rural residential areas that are not urban or likely to develop into urban areas during the planning period.¶
Locational: Areas characterized by development at densities averaging one unit per¶
Criteria: acre and served or ¶ ... [27]

Title: Rural Tourism

Purpose: To recognize small-scale recreational and tourism businesses in rural areas, and to limit and contain more intensive rural development on those lots.

Definition: Lots containing nonresidential uses developed at a greater intensity than other rural areas.

Locational Criteria: In a rural location and setting upon which the recreational or tourism use relies.

Title: Rural Business

Purpose: To recognize isolated businesses in rural areas and to limit and contain more intensive development on those lots.

Definition: Isolated lots or isolated small groups of lots containing nonresidential uses developed at a greater intensity than surrounding rural areas.

Locational Criteria: No less than one-half mile from other Rural Business, Rural Community and Rural Tourist designations, unless separated by a major physical feature.

Deleted: -

Title: Rural

Purpose: To provide opportunity for a variety of low-density residential development including cluster development with the flexibility to practice farming or forestry, or operate a home occupation or cottage industry; to retain a sense of community. Also to encourage agriculture and forestry activities through the use of incentives.

Definition: Allows one dwelling unit per five or ten acres, (or a higher density where that density has been established) with less traffic noise and congestion than in urban areas; low-density population; open space; privacy; largely forestry and agriculture oriented; rural level of services.

Deleted: two,

Deleted: ,

Deleted: , but encouraging ten acre development;

Locational Criteria: Low residential density; areas with physical environmental constraints; areas characterized by full and part-time forestry and agriculture, but not designated as commercial resource lands.

Deleted: One unit per two acre zoning is limited to previously developed areas or as in-fill development only.

Title: Agriculture - Resource Lands

Purpose: To recognize and promote agriculture in Whatcom County and protect prime agricultural soils and productive agricultural lands from conversion to other uses. To prevent conflicts between residential and agricultural uses.

Definition: Commercial agriculture lands located on parcels 40 acres or larger, with one dwelling unit per 40 acres allowed.

Locational Criteria: Soils identified as prime agricultural soils; large parcels; existing commercial agricultural uses.

Title: Rural Forestry - Resource Lands

Purpose: To provide flexibility in use, enabling the landowner to live on the land and practice forestry and forestry-related industry.

Definition: Lands used primarily for growing trees with some low-density residential development.

Locational Criteria: Lands useful for growing trees for commercial timber production; usually located within public service districts; accessed by private roads built to Whatcom County development standards or public roads; low-density residential development; land parcels generally 20 acres or greater in size; property often in tax deferred status.

Title: Commercial Forestry - Resource Lands

Purpose: To provide land base for commercial forestry activities and provide predictability of future land use to forest land owners.

Definition: Land primarily devoted to commercial timber production.

Locational Criteria: Land primarily devoted to growing trees for long-term commercial timber production; located outside public service districts such as fire and water; accessed by private or state forest roads; parcels generally 40 acres or larger in size; land in tax deferred status.

Title: Mineral Resource Lands - Resource Lands

Purpose: To ensure a long-term supply of mineral resources and provide predictability in land use.

Definition: Lands of long-term commercial significance for the extraction of minerals.

Locational Criteria: Proven mineral resources of long-term commercial significance, low density rural areas, designated Agricultural lands generally with Non-Prime Farmland Soils and when demonstrated to be of higher value as a mineral resource than as an agricultural resource; and designated Forestry lands of higher value as a mineral resource than as forestry resource.

Title: Public Recreation

Purpose: To provide the public with open space and recreational opportunities; to protect conservation areas.

Definition: Areas with unique scenic or recreational amenities.
Locational Criteria: Parcels owned or managed by public or private agencies for recreational or conservation use.

Title: Special Study Areas

Purpose: To indicate areas where regional planning efforts are a high priority and necessary in order to address important local issues in greater detail.

Definition: Includes the Lake Whatcom Watershed and certain areas within the Lummi Reservation.

.....

[Re-number Goals and Policies in the remainder of Chapter Two as needed.]

.....

Chapter Five UTILITIES

.....

Policy 5N-3: Transmission pipelines are discouraged in urban growth areas and areas of intense rural development which would render such pipeline siting inappropriate.

Deleted: , small towns, crossroads commercial,
Deleted: other

.....

Policy 5P-3: Discourage extension of urban levels of water service to areas not designated as urban growth areas or Rural Communities, except in those limited circumstances shown to be necessary to protect basic public health and safety and the environment and when such services are financially supportable at rural densities and do not permit urban development.

Deleted: , industrial areas (including
Deleted: Gateway Industrial Transportation Corridor), Small Towns or Resort/Recreational Subdivisions

.....

Policy 5T-1: Discourage extension of sewer lines in areas not designated as urban growth areas or Rural Communities, except in those limited circumstances shown to be necessary to protect basic public health and safety and the environment and when such services are financially supportable at rural densities and do not permit urban development.

Deleted: , Small Towns, Resort/Recreational Subdivisions,
Deleted: the Gateway Industrial Transportation Corridor, unless there are serious
Deleted: or environmental concerns

Policy 5T-2: For those areas designated as Rural Communities and wishing to infill, work with the communities to create sewer and water

Deleted: for inclusion
Deleted: a Small Town or Resort/Recreational Subdivision

districts as necessary to manage both utilities. Public water and sewer service shall be limited to areas where existing lot sizes and development patterns make public water and sewer appropriate and shall not be extended outside of the boundaries of the Rural Community.

Deleted: Small Town or Resort/Recreational Subdivision

Policy 5T-3:

Assist sewer and water districts in environmental review and mitigation and in preparing grant applications to obtain package sewer services that can be developed in a phased and cost-effective manner to serve designated Rural Communities.

Deleted: Small Towns, Resort/Recreational Subdivisions, and industrial areas (including the Gateway Industrial Transportation Corridor)

.....

Chapter Six TRANSPORTATION

.....

Policy 6D-4:

Direct transportation planners to evaluate positive and negative impacts to the productivity of resource based industries when planning transportation corridors. Transportation improvements in areas designated "Resource Lands" should be constructed to facilitate the operations of those affected areas and industries.

Deleted: creating new, or expanding existing,

.....

Policy 6D-6:

Encourage new housing developments to be located in urban growth areas to help provide a sense of community and safe, non-motorized transportation to community facilities and public transit nodes.

Deleted: and small towns

.....

Policy 6N-5:

Coordinate with Whatcom Transportation Authority to establish rural transit service in unincorporated areas, including Rural Communities, consistent with county land use plans, based on cost effectiveness, location of major trip generators, distance between generators, and the needs of transit-dependent individuals.

Deleted: Small Towns and Crossroads Commercial areas

.....

Policy 6P-4:

Support commercial and industrial development adjacent to major transportation corridors, including I-5 and rail and air facilities within urban growth areas, as long as such facilities do not reduce safe, efficient movement of vehicles in Whatcom County.

Deleted: existing

.....

Chapter Seven ECONOMICS

.....

Policy 7K-2: Designate adequate zoning to allow business and industrial development where it is needed and most appropriate.

Deleted: , including the Interstate-5 corridor

Policy 7K-3: Locate new commercial or industrial development along Guide Meridian within designated urban growth areas, Rural Community LAMIRDs, and Rural Business LAMIRDs in a manner that does not disrupt the Guide's regional transportation function.

Deleted: at key intersections

.....

Chapter Nine RECREATION

.....

Specialized Recreation Areas

Specialized areas include nature interpretative centers and small park sites, including those related to Urban Growth Areas, Rural Communities, and neighborhood developments.

Deleted: small towns

.....

RECREATION - ACTION PLAN

.....

9. In keeping with policies in other chapters of this plan, develop a mechanism for ensuring the provision of neighborhood parks in accordance with appropriate standards when residential areas are developed outside of incorporated areas. In the residential UGAs not associated with cities, and in Rural Communities, mechanisms are needed for acquisition, development and subsequent maintenance and operations. Community Associations and Park Districts are options to be explored.

Deleted: suburban enclaves

Deleted: small towns

.....

Chapter Ten DESIGN

.....

BACKGROUND SUMMARY

Sense of Place

.....

Among the elements which define a sense of place and which are particularly essential to examine, protect, and enhance are Places, Spaces, Focal Points, Gateways, Corridors, Connections, Edges and Transitions. All of these are perceptual elements common to most every natural or built place. They are among the most important and dynamic elements of an environment which enable us to distinguish, qualify, and identify one place as separate from another yet related to the whole. These elements can be perceived or applied to design of a diversity of land uses typical to Urban Growth Areas, or Rural Communities; maintenance of the integrity of our rural setting; sensitive utilization our natural resource lands - aquifer recharge areas, agricultural lands, forest lands, and our waters; and they are among the integral structural components of site-specific environments we design to accommodate our recreational activities, housing, public facilities and transportation facilities.

Deleted: , Small Towns, Crossroads

.....

GOAL 10B: As Rural Communities evolve, utilize design tools and decisions which are sensitive to and compatible with the positive character of the surrounding natural setting.

Deleted: Small Towns

.....

Gateways, Corridors, and Connections

Gateways, corridors, and connections are important as we pass from one identified place to another. The act of entering or leaving is an essential element in establishing the sense of place. Whatcom County is blessed with a number of natural corridors and important gateways such as the I-5 entry from Skagit County through the Chuckanut Mountains or the U.S./Canadian border crossings. Opportunities and problems should be recognized, associated with the following:

- human and natural gateways
- viewpoints and vistas
- river and stream corridors
- wildlife corridors
- utility easements
- traffic noise
- commercial signage
- links between urban growth areas and Rural Communities

Deleted: small towns

County residents describe rural character and lifestyle as open space, quiet areas/privacy, largely agricultural and forestry orientation, peacefulness, sense of community, low-density population, less noise and congestion than found in urban areas, natural landscape, and greater self-determination of property use. With a rapidly increasing population in Whatcom County, maintaining the rural lifestyle currently enjoyed by county residents becomes more challenging. County residents generally believe that the current zoning and land use patterns of one or more houses per acre may not maintain the rural character of Whatcom County.

One way of preserving rural lifestyle is allowing flexibility in design of subdivisions. One method is to enable and encourage cluster development. Another is to allow density transfers between parcels in rural areas and from rural areas to Urban Growth Areas. Both methods provide economic flexibility to the individual property owner, promote economical lot design, conserve natural resources and environmentally fragile areas, retain future options with respect to land use decisions, and maintain the low density "rural" character of the area.

In addition, residents indicated that 45 years from today they would like to see 75% to 90% of the land (excluding National Forest and National Park land) in Whatcom County zoned for use as rural, forestry, and agriculture lands. Currently, over 92%of the land in unincorporated Whatcom County is zoned rural, forestry or agriculture.

Policy 2DD-2: Adopt mandatory and incentive programs, such as purchase of development rights, transfer of development rights, and tax deferrals, to achieve desired land use policies in

Policy 2DD-3: Provide landowners with incentives and options to develop their property at densities that may be less than the underlying zone.

Policy 2DD-4: Support cluster housing in rural subdivisions.

. Currently, most light industry is located along Guide Meridian, along the Interstate-5 corridor, or in urban areas. Expanding light industry in other parts of the county would generate revenue for local school districts and increase the tax base. Results from the Visioning Process encourage the establishment of a Business/Light Industrial Park or Rural Industrial areas in the eastern part of the county where appropriate as long as the industry does not negatively impact surrounding uses or the environment and/or degrade water quality. The intent is to provide job opportunities close to unincorporated urban growth areas

neighborhood commercial businesses in Small Towns throughout Whatcom County.

Policy 2FF-3: Limit strip development and the size and number of Crossroads Commercial businesses to avoid traffic problems.

Policy 2FF-4: Support

Page 9: [6] Deleted ssklutz 3/15/2011 4:04:00 PM

Locate the resource-based industries near small towns or crossroads communities. Resource-based industries with up to fifty employees may be approved by conditional use, provided that the industry processes agricultural or forestry products that are predominantly locally grown.

Page 9: [7] Deleted ssklutz 3/15/2011 4:04:00 PM

5: Retain existing tourist/resort/small town commercial designations throughout Whatcom County.

Policy 2FF-6

Page 9: [8] Deleted ssklutz 3/15/2011 4:04:00 PM

, or infringe on productive agricultural and forest land

Page 9: [9] Deleted ssklutz 3/15/2011 4:04:00 PM

Lummi Island

Whatcom County includes four islands within its exterior boundaries. Chuckanut Island is a small island which is a nature preserve, Portage Island is under Lummi Nation jurisdiction; however, Lummi Island and Eliza Island have resident populations.

Lummi Island, which is 8.8 square miles and served by a ferry from the mainland, has had an adopted land use plan since 1979. Approximately half of the island is a steep lowland mountain which is planned and zoned for forestry uses. The other half is rolling lowland area which has been designated for low density residential development varying from one unit per three acres to one unit per five acres depending on location relative to an aquifer. The general results from the Visioning Process reflected a desire for Lummi Island to maintain its present planning, but to have better enforcement of the zoning regulations. Open spaces and thoughtful development of the land were important to them in the context of the existing rural zoning. Adoption of an updated Lummi Island Subarea Plan is anticipated by 2004.

Goal 2GG: Recognize Lummi Island as a unique area that does not readily fit within the urban - rural categorization.

- Policy 2GG-1: Consider the possibility of including crossroads commercial services for Lummi Island.
- Policy 2GG-2: Encourage cluster housing and other innovative development techniques on Lummi Island.
- Policy 2GG-3: Encourage provision of transit service to Lummi Island.

Small Towns and Crossroads Communities

Whatcom County has several unincorporated areas that can be characterized as crossroads communities and small towns. Population ranges from a few houses or just a store, to self contained communities of a few hundred people. These communities grew up serving the agricultural and ti

Page 9: [10] Deleted slklutz 3/15/2011 4:04:00 PM

services. Today the areas are characterized by grocery, fuel, food service, churches, some lodging, community halls and service facilities. Schools and fire stations often are located in these areas or nearby. In addition to serving the agricultural and timber community, some of these areas have taken on a new role, that of serving the tens of thousands to hundreds of thousands of tourists which visit Mount Baker and the foothills for both winter and summer recreation.

Northeastern Towns

Glacier and Maple Falls are the closest towns to Mount Baker. The communities are within the greater Vancouver, B.C. recreation area and serve a regional population of more than 1.5 million Canadian residents

Page 9: [11] Deleted whatcom 4/19/2011 9:34:00 AM

as well as Whatcom County and out-of-area tourists to the Mount Baker recreation area. Increasing

Page 9: [12] Deleted whatcom 4/19/2011 9:34:00 AM

activities have increased the demand for additional food, fuel

Page 9: [13] Deleted whatcom 4/19/2011 9:34:00 AM

tourist services in the northern small towns, including restaurants, motels and rental housing. This increased demand

Page 9: [14] Deleted slklutz 3/15/2011 4:04:00 PM

is expected to continue. Thus the northeastern towns provide vital support for the tourist industry which is a significant part of the County economy. The towns, existing and

County and see tourist activity both winter and summer. By some accounts, tourist activity can be double the base activity for local businesses. The boundaries of both Acme and Deming have been sized based on the areas characterized by existing development and logical extensions of the present service areas. As with the small towns farther east, adequate water supplies and fire service are available or obtainable and on-site sewer can support limited infill and intensification. Ability to serve requirements will assure that facilities and utilities are available to serve proposed new development. Deming appears particularly suited to the type of small scale

Page 9: [19] Deleted

siklutz

3/15/2011 4:04:00 PM

development contemplated by the County's recommended new rural industrial use provisions. Deming is located in a flood plain, and development should be consistent with the County Flood Hazard Reduction Program. Acme is situated in a flood hazard and alluvial fan hazard area, and development should be consistent with the Nooksack Flood Hazard Reduction Program and any alluvial fan hazard programs associated with Jones Creek and other alluvial fans in the area.

Western Towns

Custer is a small unincorporated population center, formed at a major crossroads along a main railroad line early in the county's history. Custer has retained a small town character and a certain visual charm because of its older, dense, commercial center, and has legal status as a "Town" under state law. As with the small towns farther east, adequate water supplies and fire service are available or obtainable and on-site sewer can support the limited expansion contemplated. Ability to serve requirements will assure that facilities and utilities are available to serve proposed new development.

Goal 2HH: Ensure the economic

Page 9: [20] Deleted

whatcom

4/19/2011 9:35:00 AM

viability of small towns in rural areas for their importance in serving

Page 9: [21] Deleted

siklutz

3/15/2011 4:04:00 PM

lands as well as tourist activity.

Policy 2HH-1: Identify the communities of Glacier, Maple Falls, Custer, Deming, and Acme as Small Towns with commercial centers catering to local residents and tourists.

Policy 2HH-2: Designate approximate town boundaries based on the areas characterized by existing development and logical extensions of the present service areas.

- Policy 2HH-3: Expansion of Small Town designations should only be approved if appropriate in-filling is occurring a logical outer boundary can be established in accordance with RCW 36.70.070(5).
- Policy 2HH-4: Encourage development that promotes alternative modes of travel such as walking, bicycling, and public transit.
- Policy 2HH-5: Encourage cottage industries, home occupations, light industry, crossroads commercial, and other retail businesses in small towns.
- Policy 2HH-6: Work with Whatcom Transportation Authority (WTA) to develop bus service connecting the small towns with employment and retail centers.
- Policy 2HH-7: Support the preservation of the historic character and cultural resources listed in the National Register of Historic Places at Newhalem, Diablo, and other Seattle City Light managed properties.
- Policy 2HH-8: Retain existing zoning in small towns and allow in-fill subject to adequate road capacity, water supply and sewer service or the ability to utilize septic systems. Limit other services to rural service levels.

Crossroads Commercial

Crossroads commercial centers include Van Wyck, Hinote's Corner, Nugent's Corner, and others shown on the map. These areas provide necessary goods and services to the surrounding rural areas. The commercial centers have been designated to reflect existing facilities and logical service areas. Fire and water service capability are the principle constraints on development and County development regulations will require a certificate of service availability from the local fire district as a condition of commercial development in the crossroads commercial centers. Adequate water for fire flow is a component of adequate service.

GOAL 2JJ: Reflect the existing facilities and service areas in Crossroads Commercial designations.

- Policy 2JJ-1: Require proof of adequate fire, water, sewer or septic, and road service capability as a condition of commercial development in the Crossroads Commercial centers.
- Policy 2JJ-2: Locate Crossroads Commercial designations at existing crossroads where commercial uses exist in accordance with RCW 36.70A.070(5).
- Policy 2JJ-3: Minor expansion amendments to Crossroads Commercial designations should only be approved if appropriate in-filling is

occurring and a logical outer boundary can be established in accordance with RCW 36.70A.070(5).

Policy 2JJ-4:

Infill should be visually compatible with the surrounding rural area and the conversion of undeveloped land into low-density sprawl developments will be discouraged. The county will also protect against conflicts with the use of agricultural, forest, and mineral resource lands designated under RCW 36.70A.170. The county will support the opportunities for small-scale, rural-based employment and self-employment; permit the operation of rural-based agricultural, commercial, recreational, and tourist businesses that are consistent with existing and planned land use patterns. Businesses must foster the private stewardship of the land and preservation of open space; and enhance the rural sense of community and quality of life (RCW 36.70A.011).

Resort and Recreational Subdivisions

Outside the urban growth areas of the county are several areas which were originally developed as resort or recreational communities. The principal features of these sites are existing plats or lots, often with substantial recreational development, but without the density, population or services which would enable development as a city at this time. The recreational subdivision designation has been applied to four main sub-regions of Whatcom County; Point Roberts, Mount Baker Foothills, Eliza Island and the Lake Whatcom area.

Point Roberts

Point Roberts is a 4.9-square-mile peninsula extending south from lower British Columbia. A comprehensive subarea plan was completed in 1990 and revised in 2001. While the zoning in the 1990 Subarea plan reflected a largely platted and patchwork pattern, the 2001 revised Subarea Plan served to bring consistency to the zoning classifications while focusing commercial development into a Town Center located on Gulf Road.

While the Canadian influence is recognized throughout Whatcom County, the relationship is particularly strong in Point Roberts where the economy and level of development activity are driven by the strength of the British Columbia economy. Point Roberts had a large day visitor population estimate of between 10,000 to 15,000 in 2001. According to the Census, there were 1,820 housing units in Point Roberts in 2000. Seasonal residents accounted for approximately 70% of the population in 2000 (Whatcom County 2001 Point Roberts Subarea Plan, p.18).

The Point Roberts Water District purchases its water from the Greater Vancouver Water District (GVWD) and is limited to a maximum usage of 840,000 gallons per day. Based on this limitation, the Washington State Department of Health has approved up to 2,048 total connections to the water system. In 2001, there were approximately 1,825 water connections, leaving approximately 223 new connections available. It is estimated that

the water district will have adequate supply for the near term; however, service capacity for the 20-year planning horizon may require re-evaluation of current allocations, systems operations, or possible revision of the GVWD contract. The water district also manages a community drain field that serves the Point Roberts Marina. Much of Point Roberts is served by on-site sewage systems; however if public sewer service were available to the resort and recreational areas, development potential is estimated at approximately 2,400 dwelling units, accounting for vacant lots within previously platted land as well as undeveloped land.

Mount Baker Recreational Region

Between 1968 and 1978, approximately 5000 second home sites, trailer lots or units were platted or constructed within the Mount Baker Foothills region of Whatcom County. Rising popularity of outdoor recreation, expanded public facilities and the five-hour round trip travel time from Vancouver to the Mount Baker ski area fostered a market demand for overnight lodging. With few resort or cabin units available prior to 1968, recreation subdivisions, camper clubs and condominiums were developed to fill the demand. In addition, during this period the British Columbia government placed a moratorium on the private purchase of B.C. land for recreational use. This policy, combined with substantially lower land prices in neighboring Whatcom county and crowded recreation facilities in Canada, persuaded many Canadian citizens to buy land here for both recreation and investment.

A number of recreational subdivisions are located within the Mount Baker region, the Glen at Maple Falls, Mount Baker Rim, Snowline, and Glacier Springs.

Snowline and Mount Baker Rim border the Mount Baker National Forest, just east of Glacier. The subdivision of Snowline has approximately 300 lots on 68 acres. It has about 199 dwelling units occupied mostly for recreational use. Mount Baker Rim has approximately 520 lots, with at least 239 developed with cabins or manufactured homes. Remaining lots are either vacant or used as sites for recreational vehicles. Snowline and Mount Baker Rim are served with public water by Whatcom County Water District 14. There is no sewer service and lots utilize individual or community septic systems.

Glacier Springs is located along Canyon Creek, a few miles west of the town of Glacier. It is comprised of a 95 acre recreational subdivision with 285 lots of record, but presently with about 52 developed lots. It does not have sewer service but is served water by the Glacier Springs Water Association. Permanent use of this subdivision is limited by the presence of an alluvial fan arising from Canyon Creek.

Approximately one mile southwest of Maple Falls on Mount Baker Highway is the Glen at Maple Falls, a resort community of 1,220 lots and used primarily for travel trailers mounted on permanent foundations. The Glen at Maple Falls consists of a mix of year-round and seasonal residents. The community is served by a private water association and relies on individual or community septic systems.

Lake Whatcom Region

- Policy 2KK-1: Require unplatted areas to obtain "ability to serve" letters from schools, water and fire districts and demonstrate adequate road capacity in order to receive county approval for new development. In addition, any new building permits on existing lots must be able to demonstrate that the water service is available to provide adequate water as a precondition to the issuance of a permit.
- Policy 2KK-2: Recognize the diversity of the different developments and the differing goals of the residents while working with the community associations to establish common ground.
- Policy 2KK-3: Work with property owners within the developments around Cain and Reed Lakes to develop an alluvial fan hazard management plan.
- Policy 2KK-4: Where appropriate, pursue voluntary density reduction through incentives such as voluntary lot consolidation.
- Policy 2KK-5: Expansion of Resort and Recreational Subdivision designations should only be approved if appropriate in-filling is occurring and a logical outer boundary can be established in accordance with RCW 36.70A.070(5).

Suburban Enclaves

The suburban enclaves are comprised of rural residential areas which are not urban or likely to develop into urban areas during the planning period. These include Chuckanut, North Bellingham, Lake Samish, and Fort Bellingham, as well as other small non-conforming areas located throughout the county.

Chuckanut/North Bellingham

Chuckanut and North Bellingham both share a close proximity to urban areas and an historic development pattern significantly below the four units per acre considered "characterized by urban growth". In both cases, the historic development patterns and parcelization are at about one unit per acre. In the Chuckanut area, steep slopes provide significant limits to future development, as do shoreline regulations. Schools, roads, water and fire service are or can be made available to the present community and would not be unduly taxed if development within the defined areas were to continue at the present and historic patterns.

Local communities, Bellingham for the Chuckanut area and Ferndale for North Bellingham, have reviewed the potential for urban scale development and incorporation into the urban growth boundary. In both cases the cities concluded that incorporation in the urban growth areas was not appropriate.

Lake Samish

Lake Samish grew up as a recreational lake with many small lots used for summer cabins. Over time the individual lots were sold and the area is developing a sizeable permanent population. The lake is close to but not within the Bellingham Urban Growth Area. Rural residential densities accurately reflect the existing parcelization along the lake and along the road immediately adjacent to the lake. Within this pattern, approximately 68 percent of the Samish enclave is already developed at more than one unit per acre densities. Portions of the Lake Samish area were re-designated from Suburban Enclave to Rural in 2003.

The Samish Water District provides sewer service to the homes around the lake and delivers the sewage to the City of Burlington in Skagit County. Because of concerns regarding use of direct surface water withdrawals from Lake Samish as a primary source of drinking water, there has been discussion of converting the district to a water and sewer district. There are presently four small water associations in the area with the majority of homes relying on withdrawals from the lake or private wells.

Fort Bellingham

Fort Bellingham is an area that lies on the bluff at the north end of Bellingham Bay, straddling both sides of Marine Drive. Its western boundary is the Lummi Reservation and Nooksack Delta area. Its northeast boundary is generally the Curtis Road/airport area and the Cliffside neighborhood. It includes Smith Gardens, a major flower-growing operation; a generally developed neighborhood on the bluff; a large underdeveloped area; an undeveloped lowland area which is part of the Nooksack Delta, and the community of Marietta on Marine Drive. In 2002, there were approximately 306 dwellings within the 587 acre Suburban Enclave.

Additional Areas

Additional areas have been included as Suburban Enclaves as depicted on **Map 8**. These areas all share a common pattern of previously platted lots. Map designations have been made to confine development within existing boundaries or zones. Allowing in-fill of the enclaves would have a negligible impact on the otherwise natural resource related land uses, and would result in the most efficient long term use of these historically patterned areas. The total acreage of Suburban Enclaves is approximately 1.6% of the non-federal land in unincorporated Whatcom County.

GOAL 2LL: **Identify suburban enclaves which are unlikely for inclusion in future urban growth areas at this time.**

Policy 2LL-1: Require new developments to provide "letters of service" availability from water, school and fire districts prior to final plat approval.

Policy 2LL-2: Confine development to existing zoning in suburban enclaves and allow in-fill subject to adequate road capacity, water supply and sewer service or the ability to utilize septic systems. Limit other services to rural service levels.

- Policy 2LL-3: Work with major landowners and neighbors in these areas to ensure any future development is compatible with its surroundings and utilizes the land in an efficient manner.
- Policy 2LL-4: Minor expansion amendments to Suburban Enclave designations should only be approved if appropriate in-filling is occurring and a logical outer boundary can be established in accordance with RCW 36.70A.070(5).

Transportation Corridors

Gateway Industrial

The Gateway Industrial area is a transportation related corridor supporting transportation related warehouse and other uses, some of which have located in an area between the rail line and Interstate-5. The property is not used or suitable for resource use and is not particularly suitable for residential development. The area is characterized by existing development but lacks significant utility service to warrant an urban designation at this time.

Goal 2MM: **Maintain the existing development in the Gateway Industrial area and confine further development to warehouse and transportation/auto travel related activities.**

Policy 2MM-1: Encourage local utility purveyors to serve the Gateway Industrial area.

Policy 2MM-2: Allow in-fill in the Gateway Industrial area subject to adequate road capacity, water supply and sewer service or the ability to utilize septic systems. Limit other services to rural service levels.

Guide Meridian

The Guide Meridian is unique for several reasons. North of the Bellingham urban growth area, the Guide travels about 12 ½ miles, through Lynden, to the Canadian border. Truck traffic increased at all Whatcom County border crossings from 1991 to 2001. As the Blaine truck crossing becomes more and more overcrowded, with long waiting times, the Guide is becoming a more and more attractive truck crossing alternative. Canadian Customs & Revenue and the B.C. Province are working together on a plan to convert the north-bound, Lynden - Aldergrove Canadian border station to a 24 hour commercial vehicle crossing to accommodate demand imposed by commercial growth in the lower mainland. U.S. Customs is considering a similar action for their facility, southbound.

Annual auto trips declined at all Whatcom County border crossings from 1991-2001 as the result of a weak Canadian dollar. However, when the Canadian dollar is strong, increased auto traffic at the Blaine Peace Arch crossing can make the Lynden-Aldergrove crossing more attractive. Additionally, the city of Abbotsford is a significant

urban area located just north of the Sumas border crossing. Both auto and truck traffic crossing the border at Sumas can utilize the Guide Meridian as a route to Bellingham and Interstate 5.

The Washington State Department of Transportation is projecting international traffic loads that will warrant up to a five lane configuration within the 20 year planning horizon of this plan (*Washington State Highway System Plan 2003-2022*, Feb 2002, p. K-9). For this reason, the Guide Meridian is designated a "major transportation corridor".

The designation is designed to alert the community to the proposed expansion and to guide planning appropriately. County plans should limit direct access to the Guide and should call for building setbacks that will permit the needed widening without destroying new buildings. Acquisition of right-of-way for widening would be through appropriate state processes once the corridor studies are completed.

Presently, along the Guide, numerous commercial service establishments exist which provide services to the surrounding countryside and to the traveling public. The areas are characterized by existing commercial growth and a mix of urban and rural facilities. The creation of water service areas to obtain commercial fire flow and development standards to require the creation of frontage roads or co-located drives to reduce the direct access to the Guide will reduce the potential for future conflict while permitting reasonable uses of existing lots. In addition, the Guide Meridian Corridor is designed with a depth intended to permit a substantial setback for all buildings (at least 100 feet from the present centerline) to permit the state to conduct its corridor study and right-of-way acquisition without interference from new buildings.

GOAL 2NN: Designate Guide Meridian as a Major Transportation Corridor.

Policy 2NN-1: Establish land use regulations within a transportation corridor 660 feet on either side of the existing right-of-way to provide for arterial connection, frontage road requirements, appropriate land uses and super-setbacks to facilitate and promote through traffic along the Guide.

Policy 2NN-2: Protect private property rights from right-of-way acquisition through just compensation or other appropriate means.

Policy 2NN-3: Limit levels of residential growth along the Guide except in community urban areas where adequate public facilities are available. Identify alternative land uses to reduce the potential for conflict with state and international plans.

Policy 2NN-4: Provide for a variety of land use alternatives with controlled access and concentrated centers at or branching off from existing intersections.

Policy 2NN-5: Between Hemmi Rd. and W. King Tut Rd., between the Wiser Lake area and Lynden and from Lynden north to the limited commercial area at the border, maintain the existing agricultural zoning designations.

- Policy 2NN-6: In cooperation with the Washington State Department of Transportation, plan for access management along the length of this corridor in order to maintain acceptable traffic flow in terms of safety, capacity, and travel speed while still providing an appropriate level of access.
- Policy 2NN-7: Consider additional industrial development if there is a demonstrated community need, appropriate in-filling is occurring and a logical outer boundary can be established in accordance with RCW 36.70A.070(5).
- Policy 2NN-8: With citizen involvement, develop design criteria and appropriate uses along the Guide Meridian corridor (300 feet on each side of the right-of-way, excluding the road itself) that minimize impacts on local communities.

- Title:** **Small Towns - Rural**
- Purpose:** To acknowledge locations remote from urban centers that support the local economy by providing goods and services to residents and tourists.
- Definition:** Small communities with mixed tourist commercial, residential, resort, or public land uses.
- Locational:** Existing small community or resort centers with adequate services,
- Criteria:** including water and sewer which can be cost-effectively provided; near existing transportation routes; characterized by commercial uses and higher densities than surrounding rural areas.
- Title:** **Crossroads Commercial - Rural**
- Purpose:** To provide commonly desired goods and services near unincorporated or small population centers.
- Definition:** Small concentrations of businesses meeting local area service needs. Such uses as gas stations, neighborhood general stores, and restaurants would be included.
- Locational:** Central to rural populations; commercial areas should be located near
- Criteria:** arterial routes and fulfill a need for goods and services in that area.

Title: Resort and Recreational Subdivisions - Rural

Purpose: Recognize the existing mixture of recreational and residential development of resort and recreational subdivisions and ensure that future growth can be serviced appropriately.

Definition: Resort and Recreational Subdivisions are large subdivisions originally created to primarily serve recreational or resort land uses and that continue to attract and maintain such uses.

Locational: Existing large scale recreational subdivisions.

Criteria:

Title: Suburban Enclaves - Rural

Purpose: To ensure efficient land use by allowing in-fill at suburban densities in areas already characterized by such development.

Definition: The suburban enclaves are comprised of rural residential areas that are not urban or likely to develop into urban areas during the planning period.

Locational: Areas characterized by development at densities averaging one unit per

Criteria: acre and served or partially served by public roads, sewer or water, or other public services or facilities.

Title: Transportation Corridors – Rural

Purpose: This designation is designed to alert the community to proposed transportation corridor related expansion and to guide developments appropriately.

Definition: Transportation Corridors are areas in demand for transportation related services and improvements where planning is underway or is anticipated.

Locational: Land not used or suitable for or residential development. Areas

Criteria: characterized by existing transportation-related development but lacking significant utility service to warrant an urban designation at this time.