

**Chapter One
INTRODUCTION**

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Population Projections

Projections of future population size are an essential component of land use planning. As required by RCW 36.70A.110, in 2007, the Washington State Office of Financial Management developed a 20-year population projection for Whatcom County. The OFM projections for 2029 are provided in Table 3 below:

Table 3. OFM Population Projections for Whatcom County

	OFM Population Projections for 2029	Average Annual Growth Rate 2009-2029	Average Annual Population Growth 2009-2029	Total Population Growth 2009-2029
Low	216,300	0.66%	1,265	25,300
Medium	258,448	1.77%	3,372	67,448
High	318,832	3.35%	6,392	127,832

Source: *Whatcom County Countywide Population and Employment Extrapolations and Scenarios*, Memo, Berk and Associates, February 9, 2009

Note: The OFM population estimate of 191,000 in 2008 was utilized as a starting point for calculating the average annual growth rates and average annual population growth figures in this table.

The Growth Management Act requires that the County plan for a 20-year population growth that is based upon the growth management population projection by the office of financial management (OFM). The county and each city must include areas and densities sufficient to permit the urban growth that is projected to occur for the succeeding twenty-year period.

The County's 2029 population projection of 247,755 is within OFM's range and therefore requires no further justification. The rationale for using this figure, which is close to OFM's medium projection, include: an overall slowing trend for growth in Washington State and Whatcom County, ensuring an adequate land supply to accommodate growth, the need to plan for growth and the need to protect the quality of life and natural resources in Whatcom County. This population projection is selected for planning purposes only and does not obligate the County to encourage growth. Given past population trends and the requirements of GMA, planning for population growth, whether it occurs or not, is critical for the quality of life, protection of natural resources and economic health of Whatcom County.

Table 4 shows how the total projected 2029 population would be distributed assuming: 1) that all of the UGAs have been annexed into existing cities; 2) that each urban area receives a share of the county's overall growth; and 3) that the portion of growth to urban areas is approximately 85% of county-wide growth, with the balance to unincorporated rural Whatcom County (areas outside the UGAs, including rural and resource lands). The 2008 population estimates – and, by extension, the 2029 population projections – rely on OFM estimates that were based on 2000 census figures. After the 2010 census data were released, OFM revised its population estimates for the years between 2000 and 2010. As shown in Figure 1, the revised estimate for the total 2008 County population is more than 6,000 persons higher than the one used to develop the Table 4 population projections. OFM did not provide revised estimates for the UGA (or non-UGA) population in the years between 2000 and 2010, but Figure 1 shows an estimate of the non-UGA population assuming the proportion of non-UGA population held constant at about 32% of total County population in those years. The revised OFM estimates are shown in Figure 1 for illustrative purposes only; neither these estimates nor any projections based on them are adopted in this plan. The projections used in Table 4 and elsewhere in this plan will be revised using the most current OFM estimates and projections during the next UGA review, due in 2016.

Outside the UGAs there is a large number of undeveloped tax parcels. While it is not clear exactly how many of these tax parcels are legally buildable lots, the total number of potential new dwelling units could theoretically accommodate population growth in excess of the rural population projection. However, because adequate land capacity is available for growth within urban growth areas, growth is not forced into the rural areas. Through the monitoring process described in Policies 2S-5 and 2DD-1 of this plan, the County will evaluate development activity in comparison with these urban and rural growth projections and take action as necessary to address discrepancies if any are identified.

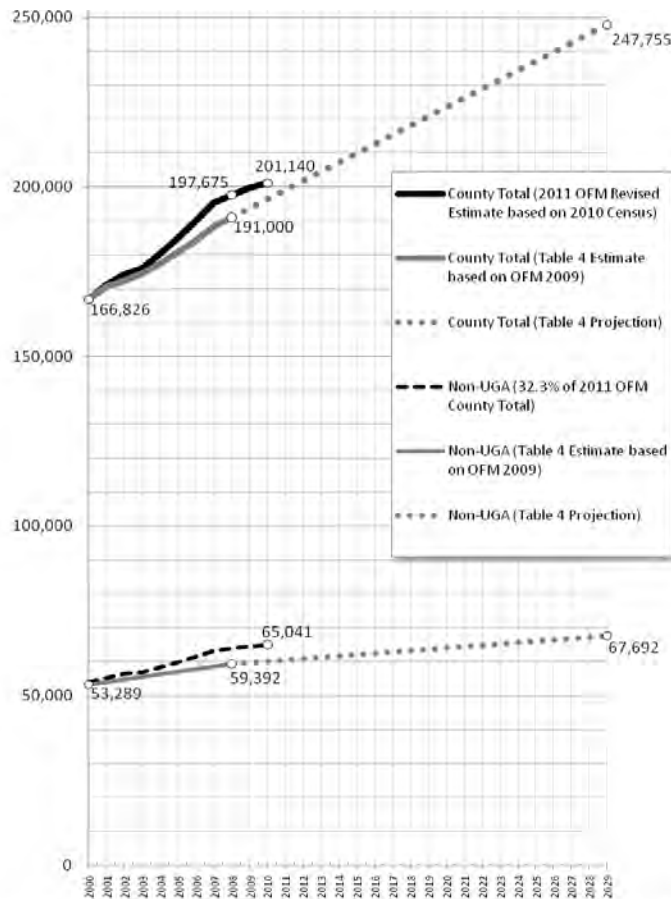
Table 4. Whatcom County Population Projections and Distribution

		2008 Population- (Cities and unincorporated UGAs)	Projected 2029 Population	2008-2029 Net Growth
Bellingham		89,284	111,761	22,477
Birch Bay		5,290	9,115	3,825
Blaine		4,667	8,916	4,249
Columbia Valley		3,924	5,000	1,076
Everson		2,395	3,623	1,228
Ferndale		12,019	20,707	8,688

Lynden		11,613	16,788	5,175
Nooksack		1,137	2,081	944
Sumas		1,279	2,072	793
Subtotal		131,608	180,063	48,455
Unincorporated Rural Whatcom County		59,392	67,692	8,300
Total Whatcom County		191,000	247,755	56,755

Source: Washington Office of Financial Management (April 1, 2009)

Figure 1. Revised OFM Population Estimates and Adopted Population Estimates



Sources:
 WCCP Chapter One, Table 4; Table 5 from 2005 WCCP (2000 Non-UGA figure does not include Birch Bay and Columbia Valley UGAs)
 WA OFM :
http://www.ofm.wa.gov/pop/intercensal/ofm_april1_intercensal_estimates_2000-2010.xlsx
http://www.ofm.wa.gov/pop/smallerarea/data/xlsx/sacp_2011_usa10p.xlsx
 Whatcom County PDS
 March 2012

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Chapter Two
LAND USE

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OVERALL LAND USE - INTRODUCTION

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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.

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.

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.

- 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.
- 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)).
- Policy 2A-13 Allow for adequate economic development to provide economic sustainability, adequate employment opportunities, and services in and for the rural areas.

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.

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 .

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.

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.

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GOAL 2S: Ensure adequate land supply is provided to accommodate twenty years of growth within urban areas.

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Policy 2S-5: Annually monitor land capacity by compiling annual reports from the cities on development activity, and comparing that data with adopted growth projections for the urban growth areas. Coordinate with the cities to amend growth projections, or amend urban growth area densities or boundaries if, over several years, the data indicate that growth is occurring at a significantly different rate than adopted projections.

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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;
- (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. In its findings preceding the GMA, the legislature states that rural counties must have flexibility to create opportunities for business development and must have the flexibility to retain existing businesses and allow them to expand.

Rural Character and Lifestyle

Rural Whatcom County is the portion of the County not planned for either urban or resource use and its character differs from that of the County's urban and resource areas. While agriculture and forestry are practiced in the rural areas, it is generally on a smaller scale than in the resource areas that are set aside specifically for those purposes. 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.

Small unincorporated communities have existed in the rural areas for many decades but have not become urban centers. Land uses in these communities are more intensive than those in the surrounding rural areas, and provide rural residents places to shop.

eat, play, etc, and access public services such as schools, libraries, and post offices without having to travel to cities. The businesses in these communities are important contributors to the economy of Whatcom County. Even outside these settlements, residents of the rural areas have established home occupations, cottage industries, and small-scale businesses that are an important part of the County's traditional rural economy.

Historically, rural Whatcom County has been a place of great variety. Residential densities vary greatly from homes on 10 or 20 acre lots to lots smaller than one acre in the rural communities and neighborhoods that have been established over the years. The scale and intensity of rural businesses varies from the home occupations, cottage industries, and resource-based industries to the more intensive commercial and manufacturing uses, though the County's largest commercial and industrial uses have been established in the urban areas.

Whatcom County's rural lifestyle is one where residents enjoy views of a green landscape dotted by homes and barns, and have an appreciation for clean water and air. Residents can work and shop in small rural communities, or earn a living on their own rural lands, but these enterprises do not detract from the overall sense of openness and predominance of the landscape in the rural area. Rural Whatcom County has long been a place to raise children with the values of hard work and responsible stewardship of the land, and where residents can grow food and livestock for themselves or for market. While rural property owners do not expect to be provided with urban-level services, they enjoy a quality of life and sense of self-sufficiency not ordinarily found in the urban areas.

In the rural element of this chapter, Whatcom County establishes policy consistent with the findings of the legislature and with the above vision of rural character and lifestyle that will:

- Help preserve rural-based economies and tradition lifestyles,
- Encourage the economic prosperity of rural residents
- Foster opportunities for small-scale, rural-based employment and self employment,
- Permit the operation of rural-based agriculture, commercial, recreational, and tourist businesses that are consistent with existing and planned land use patterns,
- Be compatible with the use of the land by wildlife and for fish and wildlife habitat,
- Foster the private stewardship of the land and preservation of open space, and
- Enhance the rural sense of community and quality of life.

~~Whatcom County's rural areas are characterized by a mixture of historic rural communities, pasture, agriculture, woodlots, home occupations, cottage industries, and dispersed 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 per the population projections in Chapter 1 of this plan, and recognize rural lands as an important transition area between urban areas and resource areas. ~~Annually monitor~~ By February 1 of each year the department will publish a report that monitors residential development activity outside the urban growth areas during the previous year and compares that data with the adopted population growth projection for those areas. If it is apparent that growth occurring outside the urban growth areas is inconsistent with adopted projections, the County shall take action to address the discrepancy. Actions may include changing the allocation of the projected population growth during the comprehensive plan update required per RCW 36.70A.130(1), or changing development regulations to limit growth outside the urban growth areas. In addition, as the County and cities review the capacity for growth in the urban growth areas, the county should coordinate with the cities to ensure that policies are in place that are consistent with encouraging growth in the urban areas and reducing demand for development in rural 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.~~

Policy 2DD-2: Protect the character of the rural area through the County’s development regulations. In addition to the policies of this plan that provide measures governing rural development, the following County’s key development regulations are incorporated into this plan by reference to assure that the plan contains measures to protect rural character:

- A. Measures to contain or otherwise control rural development and reduce the inappropriate conversion of undeveloped land into sprawling, low-density development:

1. Limit the expansion of areas of more intensive development and higher rural densities through Policies 2A-8, 2A-9, 2DD-1, 2DD-8, 2GG-2, 2JJ-1 through 8, 2KK 1 and 2, 2LL-1 through 4, and 2MM-1 through 4 of this plan.
 2. Provide options to reserve areas of land suitable for agriculture, forestry, or open space through lots clustering in the following Zoning Code provisions, adopted herein by reference:
 - a. WCC 20.32.305, .310, and .320, Lot clustering, Residential Rural District;
 - b. WCC 20.34.305, .310, and .320, Lot clustering, Rural Residential Island District;
 - c. WCC 20.36.305, .310, and .320, Lot clustering, Rural District;
 - d. WCC 20.71.350, .351, and .352, Lot clustering, Water Resource Protection Overlay District.
 - ~~Maintain and enhance commercial agricultural activity and further protect open space resources by requiring cluster development within rural areas characterized by soils suitable for farming, through WCC 20.38 Agriculture Protection Overlay, adopted herein by reference.~~
 - ~~Assure that no subdivision, commercial development or conditional uses be approved without a written finding that service providers have adequate capacity to serve the development and that no County facilities will be reduced below applicable levels of service as a result of the development through WCC 20.80.212 Concurrency, adopted herein by reference.~~
 3. Prohibit short subdivisions outside of urban growth areas and limited areas of more intensive rural development that would require extension of public sewer except for health or safety reasons through the following Whatcom County Land Division regulations adopted herein by reference:
 - a. WCC 21.04.090, Sewage Disposal, Short Subdivisions
 - b. WCC 21.05.090 Sewage Disposal, Preliminary Long Subdivisions
- B. Measures to assure visual compatibility of rural development with the surrounding rural area:
1. Ensure that the visual landscapes traditionally found in rural areas and communities are preserved through

limitations on structural coverage of lots in the following Zoning Code provisions, adopted herein by reference:

- a. WCC 20.32.450 Lot coverage, Residential Rural District;
- b. WCC 20.36.450 Lot coverage, Rural District.

2. Require that lots developed under the lot clustering option be designed and located to be compatible with valuable or unique natural features as well as physical constraints of the site through standards provided in the following Zoning Code provisions, adopted herein by reference:

- a. WCC 20.32.310 Lot clustering design standards, Residential Rural District;
- b. WCC 20.34.310 Lot clustering design standards, Rural Residential-Island District;
- c. WCC 20.36.310 Lot clustering design standards, Rural District;
- d. WCC 20.71.351 Lot clustering design standards, Water Resource Protection Overlay District.

3. Protect the aesthetic assets of the rural areas and soften the impact of structures through landscape buffers and setback requirements provided in the following Zoning Code provisions, adopted herein by reference:

- a. WCC 20.80.200 Setback requirements;
- b. WCC 20.80.300 Landscaping.

4. In the Point Roberts Rural Community, regulate visual aspects of development through the standards in the following Zoning Code provisions, adopted herein by reference:

- a. WCC 20.72.350 Building setbacks/buffer areas, Point Roberts Special District;
- b. WCC 20.72.651 Facility design, Point Roberts Special District;
- c. WCC 20.72.653 Tree canopy retention, Point Roberts Special District;
- d. WCC 20.72.654 Site design/view corridors, Point Roberts Special District.

C. Measures to protect critical areas and surface and groundwater resources:

1. Protect the functions and values of critical areas (geologically hazardous areas, frequently flooded areas, critical aquifer recharge areas, wetlands, and habitat conservation areas) and the ecological processes that sustain them, through WCC 16.16 Critical Areas provisions, adopted herein by reference.
2. Minimize the adverse effects of discharges from on-site sewage systems on ground and surface waters through WCC 24.05, adopted herein by reference.
3. Preserve and protect unique and important water resources through development standards in WCC 20.71 Water Resource Protection Overlay District, adopted herein by reference:
4. Protect surface and ground water resources through stormwater management standards established in the County's Development Standards per WCC 20.80.630 and 12.08.035 and referenced in the following Zoning Code provisions, adopted herein by reference:
 - a. 20.32.656 Drainage, Residential Rural District;
 - b. 20.34.659 Drainage, Rural Residential-Island District;
 - c. 20.36.656 Drainage, Rural District;
 - d. 20.37.655 Drainage, Point Roberts Transitional District;
 - e. 20.44.652 Drainage, Recreation and Open Space District;
 - f. 20.59.704 Drainage, Rural General Commercial District;
 - g. 20.60.655 Drainage, Neighborhood Commercial District;
 - h. 20.61.704 Drainage, Small Town Commercial District;
 - i. 20.63.654 Drainage, Tourist Commercial District;
 - j. 20.64.655 Drainage, Resort Commercial District;
 - k. 20.67.653 Drainage, General Manufacturing District;
 - l. 20.69.655 Drainage, Rural Industrial and Manufacturing District.

5. Assure that subdivisions meet requirements for critical areas, shoreline management, and stormwater management through the standards in the following Whatcom County Land Division regulations, adopted herein by reference:
 - a. WCC 21.04.034 Application Procedures, Short Subdivisions
 - b. WCC 21.05.037 Hearing Examiner Notice Hearing and Decision, Preliminary Long Subdivisions
 6. Limit water withdrawals resulting from land division through the standards in the following Whatcom County Land Division regulations, adopted herein by reference:
 - a. WCC 21.04.090 Water supply, Short Subdivisions
 - b. WCC 21.05.080 Water supply, Preliminary Long Subdivisions
 7. Regulate groundwater withdrawals by requiring purveyors of public water systems and private water system applicants to comply with Washington State Department of Ecology ground water requirements per WCC 20 24.11.050, adopted herein by reference.
 8. Limit phosphorus entering Lake Whatcom and Lake Samish due to the application of commercial fertilizers to residential lawns and public properties through WCC 16.32, adopted herein by reference.
 9. Protect vital drinking water, sensitive habitats, and recreational resources within the Department of Ecology's designated Western Washington Phase II Municipal Stormwater Permit area and the Lake Whatcom watershed by prohibiting illicit discharges to the county's stormwater collection system through WCC 16.36 Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination Program, adopted herein by reference.
- D. Measures to protect against conflicts with the use of agricultural, forest, and mineral resource lands:
1. Ensure separation of new residences from agricultural and forestry uses through setback requirements in the following Zoning Code provisions, adopted herein by reference:
 - a. WCC 20.80.255 Agricultural District, Supplementary Requirements;

- b. WCC 20.80.256 Forestry districts, Supplementary Requirements;
 - c. WCC 20.80.258 All districts, Supplementary Requirements.
2. Ensure separation of businesses from agricultural uses through setback requirements in the following Zoning Code provisions, adopted herein by reference:
- a. WCC 20.59.600 Buffer area, Rural General Commercial District;
 - b. WCC 20.60.550 Buffer area, Neighborhood Commercial District;
 - c. WCC 20.61.600 Buffer area, Small Town Commercial District;
 - d. WCC 20.63.600 Buffer area, Tourist Commercial District;
 - e. WCC 20.64.550 Buffer area, Resort Commercial District;
 - f. WCC 20.67.550 Buffer area, General Manufacturing District;
 - g. WCC 20.69.550 Buffer area, Rural Industrial and Manufacturing District.
3. Require that all discretionary project permits within one half mile of areas designated in this plan as Rural, Agriculture, Commercial Forestry, or Rural Forestry, or within 300 feet of areas designated as Mineral Resource Lands, be subject to disclosure practices in the in the following Whatcom County Code provisions, adopted herein by reference:
- a. WCC 20.40.662 Use of Natural Resources, Agriculture District;
 - b. WCC 20.42.652 Use of Natural Resources, Rural Forestry District;
 - c. WCC 20.43.662 Use of Natural Resources, Commercial Forestry District;
 - d. WCC 20.14.02 Right to Farm;
 - e. WCC 20.14.04 Right to Practice Forestry;
 - f. WCC 20.14.16 Mineral Resource Land Disclosure.

- 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.
- Policy 2DD-7: Maintain the historic character and cultural roles of each rural area and community.
- 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.~~ Reduce the inappropriate conversion of undeveloped land into sprawling, low density development in the rural area by establishing clearly defined boundaries for these areas as well as criteria for creating or changing those boundaries consistent with RCW 36.70A.070(5)(d).
- 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.

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 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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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~~outside the County's urban and resource areas 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. 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~~includes areas of traditional rural uses and ~~densities. While the large majority of the Rural designation is characterized by gross residential~~ densities at or below one unit per five acres ~~the Rural designation may also include rural residential areas where higher densities have been established. To reduce the inappropriate conversion of undeveloped land into sprawling, low density development in the rural area, m~~More intensive development ~~should~~shall be contained within Rural Community, Rural Tourism, or Rural Business designations, which are limited areas of more intensive rural development (LAMIRDs), and predominantly residential areas with established densities greater than one unit per five

~~acres shall be contained in Rural Neighborhood designations. 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-43: 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-54: Minimize potential conflicts of rural residential development near designated natural resource lands to prevent adverse impacts on resource land uses.

Policy 2GG-65: 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-76: 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-87: Development within Rural designations ~~should~~shall 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—Areas~~ 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—Areas~~ 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—area~~ helps preserve the character of an existing (built) natural neighborhood;
 - b. Including the ~~parcel—area~~ 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—area~~ (or in limited cases, a portion of the parcel) prevents the logical outer boundary from being abnormally irregular;
 - d. Including the ~~parcel—area~~ is consistent with efficient provision of public facilities and services in a manner that does not permit low-density sprawl;
 - e. Including the ~~parcel—area~~ 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.

~~3.4.~~ Does not exceed 20 acres.

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. Contain ~~ed-past-or-current~~ nonresidential uses and ~~was~~ is 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-shall~~ 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.

In keeping with the legislature’s finding that rural counties must have the flexibility to retain existing businesses and allow them to expand, Whatcom County strives to keep Rural Communities vibrant and prevent economic stagnation. On lots where businesses existed in 1990 in Rural Communities, businesses can expand to sizes greater than existed in the area in 1990, provided the expansion is otherwise consistent with the character of the area in 1990 in terms of uses or intensity.

Areas designated as Rural Communities are: Acme, Axton & Guide Meridian, 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 Wiser 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 Within the Rural Communities, encourage adequate economic development to provide current and future residents' employment needs, and provide rural residents places to shop, eat, and access to public services.

Policy 2JJ-45: ~~Development or redevelopment~~ Wwithin Rural Communities ~~should development or redevelopment in terms of size, scale, use, or intensity shall~~ 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-56: On lots in a Rural Community where businesses existed on July 1, 1990, businesses may expand beyond the size or scale of businesses of a similar type in the area on that date. The expansion must be consistent with the character of the Rural Community in 1990 in terms of use or intensity. The use being expanded shall be consistent with the general types of uses that existed in the area on July 1, 1990, and the expansion shall not cause a need for additional public facilities in the area.

Policy 2JJ-567: 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-678: Land uses within Rural Communities, except for industrial uses, should be principally designed to serve the existing and projected rural population.

Policy 2JJ-789: 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: On lots in a Rural Business area where businesses did not exist on July 1, 2012, the new businesses shall be “small-scale” as described in the development regulations. On lots where businesses existed on July 1, 2012, development regulations should not hold the business to a “small-scale” standard.

Policy 2LL-~~23~~: 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-~~34~~: Designated Resource Lands shall not be redesignated as Rural Business.

Rural Neighborhoods

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 that allows 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.

This plan recognizes the unique qualities of these established Rural Neighborhoods and contains them within boundaries that reflect the extent of these areas in 2011. Unlike the Rural Communities, these areas are not LAMIRDs.

GOAL 2MM: **Designate Rural Neighborhoods to recognize and contain rural areas that have been established with predominantly residential uses with higher densities than surrounding rural areas.**

Policy 2MM-1 Areas zoned for densities greater than one dwelling per five acres shall be contained within Rural Neighborhood boundaries. Rural Neighborhood boundaries shall not be expanded beyond those established in 2012, which were drawn to include areas that were developed at higher rural densities in 2011.

Policy 2MM-2 In the Whatcom County Code, the Rural and Rural Residential zoning districts may include Rural Residential Density Overlays that may be applied to areas within the Rural Neighborhood 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 shall limit eligibility of lots based on the percentage of surrounding lots that were developed in 2011, and shall establish a maximum density that may be achieved using the overlay. The Rural Residential Density Overlays shall not be created or expanded outside of Rural Neighborhoods or 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 2MM-3 Rural Neighborhoods are designated adjacent to Urban Growth Areas only in areas where developed densities exceeded one dwelling per 2.5 acres in 2011, and there is little potential for efficient urban development in the future.

Policy 2MM-4 Urban governmental services shall not be extended into a Rural Neighborhood unless such extensions are 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.

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

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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.

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 (Type I LAMIRD)

Purpose: To recognize rural development consisting of the infill, development, or redevelopment of commercial, industrial, residential, or mixed uses areas ~~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.

Policies on the definition and locational criteria for Rural Communities are found under Goals 2HH and 2JJ in this chapter.

~~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.~~

Title: Rural Tourism (Type II LAMIRD)

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

Policies on the definition and locational criteria for Rural Tourism designationss are found under Goals 2HH and 2KK in this chapter.

~~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 (Type III LAMIRD)

Purpose: To recognize isolated businesses in rural areas and development on lots containing isolated nonresidential uses or new development of isolated cottage industries and isolated small-

scale businesses, to limit and contain more intensive development on those lots.

Policies on the definition and locational criteria for Rural Business designations are found under Goals 2HH and 2LL in this chapter.

~~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.~~

Title: Rural Neighborhood

Purpose: To recognize and contain rural areas that have been established with predominantly residential uses with higher densities than surrounding rural areas.

Policies on the definition and locational criteria for Rural Neighborhood designations are found under Goal 2MM in this chapter.

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.

Policies on the definition and locational criteria for Rural designations are found under Goal 2GG in this chapter.

~~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.~~

~~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.~~

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.

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

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**Chapter Four
CAPITAL FACILITIES**

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GOAL 4H: Coordinate with non-county facility providers such as cities and special purpose districts to support the future land use pattern promoted by this plan.

Policy 4H-1: Establish interagency planning mechanisms ~~and interlocal agreements~~ to assure coordinated and mutually supportive capital facility plans from special districts, cities, and other major non-county facility providers which are consistent with this and other chapters of the comprehensive plan.

Policy 4H-2: In consultation and coordination with special districts, cities, and other major non-county facility providers, review and update as appropriate capital facility plans supporting UGAs in conjunction with GMA 7-Year Review and 10-Year UGA Review.

Policy 4H-3 The 7-year comprehensive plan review and update process should demonstrate that the urban growth areas are served by urban levels of fire protection facilities and service. If the level of service standard adopted by the County can not be provided over the 20-year planning period, then re-designation of UGAs to rural designations should be considered.

Policy 4H-4 Urban levels of service for fire protection shall be a response time of 8 minutes 80% of the time when the department covering the urban area has staffed the fire station. When the fire station is not staffed the response time shall be 10 minutes 80% of the time, or a WSRB Rating of 6.

Rural levels of service for fire protection shall be a response time of 12 minutes 80% of the time when the department covering the rural area has staffed the fire station. When the fire station is not staffed the response time shall be 14 minutes 80% of the time, or a WSRB Rating of 8.

Staffed station shall be a fire station that is staffed 24 hours a day 7 days a week 365 days a year. Staff may be paid, volunteer, or combination of the two.

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