

10-20-2016 RECEIVED
OCT 20 2016
SKAGIT COUNTY
PDS

CP AMENDMENT PROPOSAL:

- Clarify the purpose and definition of CaRDs in the policies, plan and codes.
- Determine the contribution that CaRDs have made to rural development and analyze the long term impacts on rural development before permitting new CaRDs.
- Modify the policies, plan and codes to assure that CaRDs are NOT a way to circumvent the Comprehensive Plan and/or the GMA.

REASON/JUSTIFICATION:

The current Comprehensive Plan should be clarified to show the purpose of the CaRD, standards, locations permitted and any caps that may be needed on this kind of development.

DISCUSSION:

Conservation and Reserve Developments (CaRD) in Skagit County allows a doubling of development with certain conditions.

The CaRD was intended to be used to encourage clustering of infrastructure, including housing, wells, septic systems, shared access roads, etc. However, CaRDs have no upper limits and no standards to ensure the remainder (reserve) of the development is to be used for conservation. In fact, previous discussion with County staff reiterated that the “reserve” was for future development.

If the “reserve” is for conservation, open space and/or private recreation purposes there should be some certainty to achieve the goal. We recommend adding a requirement for a permanent conservation easement on the “reserve” portion, if this is the County’s policy.

If the “reserve” is for development, we recommend limiting the size and location of CaRDs to inside UGAs so that future development of the reserve does not create rural sprawl. The Growth Management Act (GMA) considers 4 units per acre a minimum for urban development.

In addition, we recommend considering a “cap” on the size of CaRDs in rural areas based on a relationship to the “reserve” area, if the “reserve” is for conservation.