



PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

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Department Report

- I. Summary of Community Plan
- II. Key Plan Recommendations
- III. Specific Land Use Recommendations
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- VI. Corrections
- VII. Compliance with Skagit County Code 14.08, Review of Subarea Plans
- VIII. Response to Oral Comments at May 10, 2007 Community Meeting

The purpose of this department report is to:

- Summarize the plan;
- Advise the Skagit County Planning Commission about consistency with the Growth Management Act;
- Report on progress toward resolving issues identified by the Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC);
- Add information about design standards for the Rural Village;
- Correct and clarify information reported in the Plan document;
- Specify how the Plan complies with County code requirements for subarea plans.

I. Summary of Community Plan

The Alger Community Plan is the first Rural subarea plan that the County has moved through the review process since the 1997 Skagit County Comprehensive Plan was adopted. As such, it seeks to maintain and enhance Rural policies and land use goals and does not propose any areas of Urban growth. The Bow Hill area in Alger has existing and proposed development that is urban in scale due either to pre-GMA rules or to development under tribal jurisdiction.

Buildout under current county zoning would nearly double the number of homes and residents of the Alger area. Although the County comprehensive plan, development regulations and land use/zoning map have been found to be compliant with the Growth Management Act, many residents feel a buildout scenario under current rules would not protect the rural character that they cherish, thus some of the recommendations that follow. Other residents believe some changes are warranted to allow additional residential development beyond that currently allowed.

The plan document is eligible for adoption at any time as it is not subject to the once-per-year batching requirement for comprehensive plan amendments. However, the land use changes must be grouped with the annual amendments. Planning and Development Services recommends that any Alger map designation changes endorsed by the Planning Commission be submitted to the Board of County Commissioners for annual comprehensive plan docketing, along with any code changes developed to accompany Rural Village design guidelines.

II. Key Plan Recommendations

Citizen Advisory Committee	Department Response
1. Seek to increase economic development opportunities which can serve the local residents, within the requirements of the GMA.	See table of land use designation changes for Rural Freeway Service and Rural Village Commercial
2. Seek to expand the allowances for and development of cottage industries and home-based businesses in Alger through appropriate regulatory amendments.	Expand the area zoned for commercial uses within the Rural Village.
3. Maintain and take actions which support downtown Alger as the major focal point of the community and seek to expand commercial development opportunities within the current village to the maximum extent possible under the GMA.	See additional discussion of Rural Village design recommendations
4. Carefully review the potential impacts on rural character from the development of Conservation and Reserve Developments (CaRDs) and review the requirements for CaRDs to ensure they achieve the protection of rural character for which they are intended, including preservation of the open space parcel or tract in perpetuity and consideration of allowing CaRDs only in instances where adequate tree cover and canopy can help screen the resulting clustered developments from public view.	Department work program priorities include CaRD analysis, possibly in 2008, if funded.
5. Work with the County, landowners, and associated agencies and interests to preserve important open space resources in Alger, especially seeking to link the significant natural habitats, recreational opportunities and open space associated with Blanchard Forest, Mt. Anderson, Baldy Mountain and Squires Lake.	The Skagit County Parks and Recreation Plan states that trail linkages are important throughout the County. A related open space/greenbelt planning process is aimed at Urban Growth Areas.
6. Work with Skagit County Department of Public Works to seek intersection improvements at Old 99 and Alger/Cain Lake Road to slow traffic on Old 99 and accommodate the large volume of traffic now moving east-west along Alger/Cain lake Road in a manner that provides the best fit for transportation safety and efficient movement of vehicles and pedestrians.	Public Works Traffic Engineering is currently reviewing the area between I-5 to SR9 and from Cook Rd to Whatcom County to possibly conduct a Traffic Safety Corridor Project with the Washington State Traffic Safety Commission and WSDOT to find low-cost safety improvements within the corridor. This intersection could potentially benefit should the Project move ahead. The traffic patterns through this intersection have changed dramatically in the last years. More traffic now travels East-West than North-South. However, the intersection is not aligned East-West and therefore, the stop control will remain as-is until either a re-alignment or re-construction can be accomplished. Traffic Engineering will continue to review traffic volumes and directions, speeds, and collisions on these roadways and work toward long-term solutions.
7. Increase monitoring and enforcement of land use activities authorized by Special Use Permits in the area with particular emphasis on noise and traffic impact mitigation measures.	Comment is noted by Planning & Development Services and will be communicated to decision-makers during budget discussion of code compliance resources.

Citizen Advisory Committee	Department Response
<p>8. Work with the US Postal Service to deter mail theft and consolidate mail delivery in the Alger area and ensure that the zoning code allows private postal service businesses in the RVC or RFS zones.</p>	<p>According to Skagit County Sheriff Rick Grimstead, the recommended approach is to use clusters of lockable boxes, ideally within sight of 1 or 2 homes. Most thefts occur where there is a solitary mailbox. Thieves follow the rural mail carriers as the carriers deliver the mail.</p> <p>The Sheriff’s Department provides education and outreach about identity theft and is willing to work with community groups in Alger if there is interest.</p>
<p>9. Coordinate with Skagit County to identify and correct the old survey errors and update the cadastral survey to reflect current private property and public right-of-way boundary alignments.</p>	<p>Skagit County Geographic Information Services staff is starting with Alger in its work program to improve registration of parcel lines with aerial photos.</p>
<p>10. Encourage Skagit County to expand recreational and open space opportunities at Squires Lake Park by acquisition of additional properties by fee simple ownership.</p>	<p>This goal was communicated to the Parks and Recreation Department for consideration in the next update of the County’s Parks and Recreation plan, due in the next year or two.</p> <p>Current parks capital projects in the Alger area: Donovan Park - playground, vault toilets, possibly a picnic shelter.</p>
<p>11. Skagit County should coordinate with Whatcom County on the review of development proposals in the northern Skagit/southern Whatcom County areas to ensure adequate consideration of traffic and environmental impact mitigation for new development which may have cross-jurisdictional impacts.</p>	<p>Other than SEPA, Skagit County Public Works has no mechanism in place to restrict development or impose fees for traffic impacts from projects in the county. Regarding Whatcom County, further investigation is warranted to see if adequate measures are in place to assure that Skagit County is properly notified of development proposals in Whatcom County that could impact Skagit.</p>
<p>12. Amend Skagit County Code (SCC) Chapter 14.16.100 to add “Laundromats” and “Automobile Repair” as Permitted Uses in the Rural Village Commercial (RVC) Zone (Alger-specific).</p>	<p>The Department recommends a shift to performance and design standards for regulating commercial development. These should be used in conjunction with broad categories of uses rather than lists of specific uses. The focus should be on managing impacts rather than the specific uses. Other uses that are either existing or proposed include: small woodworking or assembly, food processing, RV parks.</p>

III. Specific Land Use Recommendations

Each of the following recommended changes is to adopt a land use designation that is governed by state growth management law for Limited Areas of More Intensive Rural Development or LAMIRD (RCW 36.70A.070(5)(d)). The Alger Community Plan document includes a detailed methodology for evaluating each proposal in light of these rules. The LAMIRD criteria in state law are, by necessity, general in nature. The 2005 Update of the Skagit County Comprehensive Plan clarified that several of the existing land use designations addressed in this Alger Plan are among those that meet the LAMIRD criteria. The LAMIRD land use designations proposed for map changes are:

- Rural Freeway Service (RFS)
- Rural Village Commercial (RVC)
- Rural Intermediate (RI)

All Citizen Advisory Committee recommended land use changes are illustrated in Figure 11.

The proposals NOT recommended by the Citizen Advisory Committee are summarized at the end of this section with the committee's rationale.

A. Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) Recommended Land Use Changes

1. Commercial Proposals

a. Rural Freeway Service

Applicant: Robert Jarvis

CAC Recommendation:

The CAC recommended approval of the westerly 5.5 acres of the site unanimously. Rezoning the easterly 1.5 acres was rejected by 2 – 6.

Department Recommendation:

Two events have occurred in parallel with the CAC's work to finalize its recommend plan. First, during the deliberations over the 2005 update to the Comprehensive Plan, the Board of County Commissioners recommended that the entire I-5 corridor be reviewed comprehensively for commercial uses in unincorporated Skagit County, rather than making property-by-property commercial designations. A second factor is the renewal of discussions about sewer service in Skagit County provided by Samish Water District. This land use designation change to Rural Freeway Service should not move ahead until there is more clarity about each of these issues.

b. Rural Village Commercial

CAC Recommendation:

The CAC recommended approval of commercial zoning for the following sites and application of design criteria based on the analysis in the plan.

i. Pulver site

CAC Recommendation:

The CAC recommended approval of Rural Village Commercial for parcels P70380 and P70381 as shown in Figure 11. These two parcels total approximately 2.5 acres. During CAC discussions of this property, problems with misalignment of GIS map layers and distorted parcel outlines made it difficult to relate the parcel lines to the aerial photos.

The property owner asked that the commercial designation be extended further west to include the narrow strip of land that once was railroad right-of-way, P49075, 1.4 acres. However, the CAC expressed a preference to keep the extent of the commercial zoning to those parcels abutting Old Highway 99 and Abbey Place.

Department Recommendation:

Approve Rural Village Commercial for P70380 and P70381 as well as the railroad right-of-way, parcel P49075. If P49075 is left as residential, it could make it more difficult to achieve compatibility between residential and adjacent commercial uses, particularly in the case of rear access to commercial uses on P70380 and P70381.

ii. Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) parcel - P70370
WSDOT intends to cease operations at this 0.3 acre site and expressed interest in donating it to the County for park use.

CAC Recommendation:

The CAC does not recommend park use at this location due to its proximity to a tavern and road. The CAC did feel that commercial use here makes sense as long as the adjacent residential use is adequately buffered.

Department Recommendation:

Do approve as commercial subject to adoption of rural village commercial design guidelines.

iii. Skaarup parcels (P70361 and P70362)

CAC Recommendation:

The CAC recommended approval of Rural Village Commercial for both these parcels.

Department Recommendation:

The Department supports Commercial designation for these two properties and encouraged the CAC to consider this. However, during the time the CAC was working on the plan, it was not possible to get comments on this proposal from the property trustees following the death of the owner. Since the plan was drafted, these two properties have changed ownership and are undergoing renovation. The department would like to use the public hearing process as an opportunity to hear the CAC and community's views as to whether Commercial is the most appropriate long-term designation.

2. Residential Proposals

a. Alger Rural Village South/Old Highway 99 Limited RI

CAC and Department recommendation: Approve since it meets Logical Outer Boundary (LOB) and infill/outfill tests . See analysis on page 55 of the Alger Community Plan.

- b. Old High 99 East Limited RI
CAC recommendation:
Approve, limited to parcels close to Hwy 99

Department recommendation:

Deny based on absence of logical outer boundary and lot pattern.

Key requirements of LAMIRD to contain existing patterns of more intensive development are not met. Analysis of numerical compliance using adjacent area is, in this case, not justified, as there is no physical “logical outer boundary” defining the easterly side of the new area. Highway 99, together with Friday Creek Road, forms logical eastern boundary of existing RI area to the west. The easterly edge of the proposed RI expansion area is characterized largely by undeveloped land with forest cover and meadows. A majority of the lots here are in large parcels,

The lot pattern is large parcels for the most part. Existing smaller parcels are scattered along Old Highway 99 and do not by themselves comprise an area of more intensive development large enough to meet LAMIRD criteria.

B. Proposals Considered by CAC and Not Recommended for Approval

888 Alger Limited Thousand Trails Expansion of the Rural Village

The CAC did not support these proposals as each is considered to be out of scale with the community vision of rural character. See discussion in Alger Community Plan, pages 61-62 and 48-50.

- The 888 Alger Limited proposal for a shopping center and housing requires the creation of a new Urban Growth Area at the west side of the Alger interchange.
- The Thousand Trails proposal would create a developed area with as many housing units as the Town of La Conner and negatively impact tree-lined Friday Creek Road, which many consider to be the epitome of rural character in Alger. This proposal was submitted to the county as a comprehensive plan amendment application for Master Planned Resort (MPR) designation. MPR designation was intended to allow a significant expansion, including permanent residential structures. In action conducted in parallel with the Alger Community Planning process, the Skagit County Board of County Commissioners adopted the Planning Commission’s findings that this proposal does not meet the Master Planned Resort designation criteria, Ordinance #O20070009, September 10, 2007.
- Expansion of the Rural Village to the north, east, and south was considered and rejected by the CAC as not consistent with their vision for the village or not consistent with LAMIRD criteria.

IV. Rural Village Design

The CAC had some discussion of their preferences for the function and appearance of the Rural Village area. Their support for additional commercial zoning in the Rural Village generally was based on accompanying standards to manage that development to avoid a suburban strip mall appearance. The discussion of the specific standards was not unanimous. The consultant provided additional drawings after the CAC process was complete. The following text and drawings are intended to solicit additional comments during the Planning Commission public hearing process.

Alger Village Concept Plan

The concept plan for Alger Village provides a graphic compendium of the considerations the CAC recommend when new and/or redevelopment occurs in the commercially zoned area of the Village.

A Community Preference Survey was administered to members of the CAC. The survey displayed examples of different types/designs of commercial structures, street right-of-ways and community design features. Members were asked to respond to the images in degrees of desirability – positive and negative. The more positive design elements were then included in the development of several alternative concept plans for the Village. CAC members were asked to respond to these concepts. A final concept plan for the commercial core was developed that responded to their review and comments. There was general agreement among CAC members about the detailed design considerations discussed below and conceptually presented in Figures 12a and b.

Planning and design considerations focus on several important community issues:

- the intersection of Old Highway 99 and Alger-Cain Lake Road - to address traffic congestion, truck use of the highway and pedestrian safety;
- the size and architectural character of expanding or new businesses – to address scale, architectural character and appropriateness of development and the desire not to facilitate strip mall development;
- commercial parking – to consolidate parking and minimize driveway ingress and egress points along the highway; and
- use of the highway right-of-way - for pedestrian and landscaping amenities and surface water management.

Each of these issues is presented below along with design considerations and recommendations that address that particular issue.

Intersection Old Highway 99 & Alger-Cain Lake Road – Members of the CAC made the following observations. At the present time, traffic going north-south on Old Highway 99 does not stop at the intersection. Truck traffic is of concern as they bypass truck scales on I-5 and roll through the village. Traffic going east-west on Cain-Lake and Lake Samish Roads must stop at the intersection which is marked with stop signs and a flashing red light. During commuting times, traffic on both roads is significant and crossing of Highway 99 is difficult resulting in long backups on the cross road. Both roads are particularly wide at the intersection with marginal

striping. Pedestrian crossings are not provided. The following recommendations/actions were developed to help address their concerns.

- Keep the pavement width the same, except add turning lanes at intersection in the future as needed.
- Provide crosswalks in all directions.
- Add directed lighting to the intersection.
- Clarify traffic lanes with striping.

Size and character of expanding or new businesses – Members of the CAC discussed the types of new businesses that would be desirable as the village expanded as well as the character of the buildings that the business are housed in. It was generally thought that a strip mall effect was not desirable and that the buildings should take on the appearance of traditional rural buildings in the area. The following recommendations/actions were developed to help address their concerns.

- Individual buildings should be no larger than 6000 sq. ft, preferably less.
- Buildings should be arranged in varied, clustered masses (no strip mall development).
- Buildings located to the front of the parcel to strengthen village-like qualities.
- New buildings should emulate historic Skagit building vernacular architectural styles.
- Provide landscape planting buffers between commercial and residential uses.

Commercial Parking – Currently, parking is generally located to the front of buildings along the roads with ill-defined and wide vehicular entry and exit points. The parking areas are unstructured and surfaced with gravel. The following recommendations/actions were developed to help address this issue.

- Provide shared driveway access to improve safety.
- Locate parking to the side or back of buildings and consolidate into shared parking lots.
- Signs should be of appropriate size and material at entries.

The highway right-of-way – The width of the right-of-way for Old Highway 99 is 100 feet. The CAC felt that certain desired amenities could be provided within the right-of-way. The right-of-way is county regulated therefore allowing for a continuity of pedestrian and landscape features. In addition storm water management facilities that provide an aesthetically appealing form while performing a critical ecological and engineering function might be more difficult to implement on each individual private property. The following recommendations/actions were developed to help address the use of the right-of-way.

- Add pedestrian amenities.
 - Add pedestrian-friendly paths/sidewalk connecting businesses, particularly on the west side of the highway.
 - Add open space and small gathering spaces along the walk
 - Provide several footbridges over Silver Creek: one hung on the outside of the existing highway bridge and the other connecting with the Community Center south of the Creek.

- Provide landscaping.
 - Add large street trees planted at regular intervals (25' – 35') or in clusters.
 - Provide planting areas and pedestrian walks incorporated into parking areas. Integrate surface water management facilities into the right-of-way.
 - Locate biofiltration, raingarden and other facilities that address storm water retaining and treatment requirements.

Implementation

Growth is changing the character of established small towns and rural villages and their surrounding countryside throughout Washington, most notable in Western Washington along the I-5 Corridor. The CAC recognizes that growth will occur and does not want Alger to be gradually transformed into yet another bland and formless suburban entity. The Village Concept Plan (Figures 12a and b) attempts to put into a graphic image the ideas and desires of the community for their village as it infills and develops in response to the growth.

It is also understood that a shared responsibility is critical to the success of implementing these various recommendations into the design of new businesses and facilities in the village. Coordination and cooperation between County Departments (as the development and regulatory oversight agency), landowners and developers (who have a financial stake in making this area a success) and community members (who live and love their “sense of place,” their community) is essential to maintaining the rural character of the area while accommodating new businesses into the village.

Figure 12A

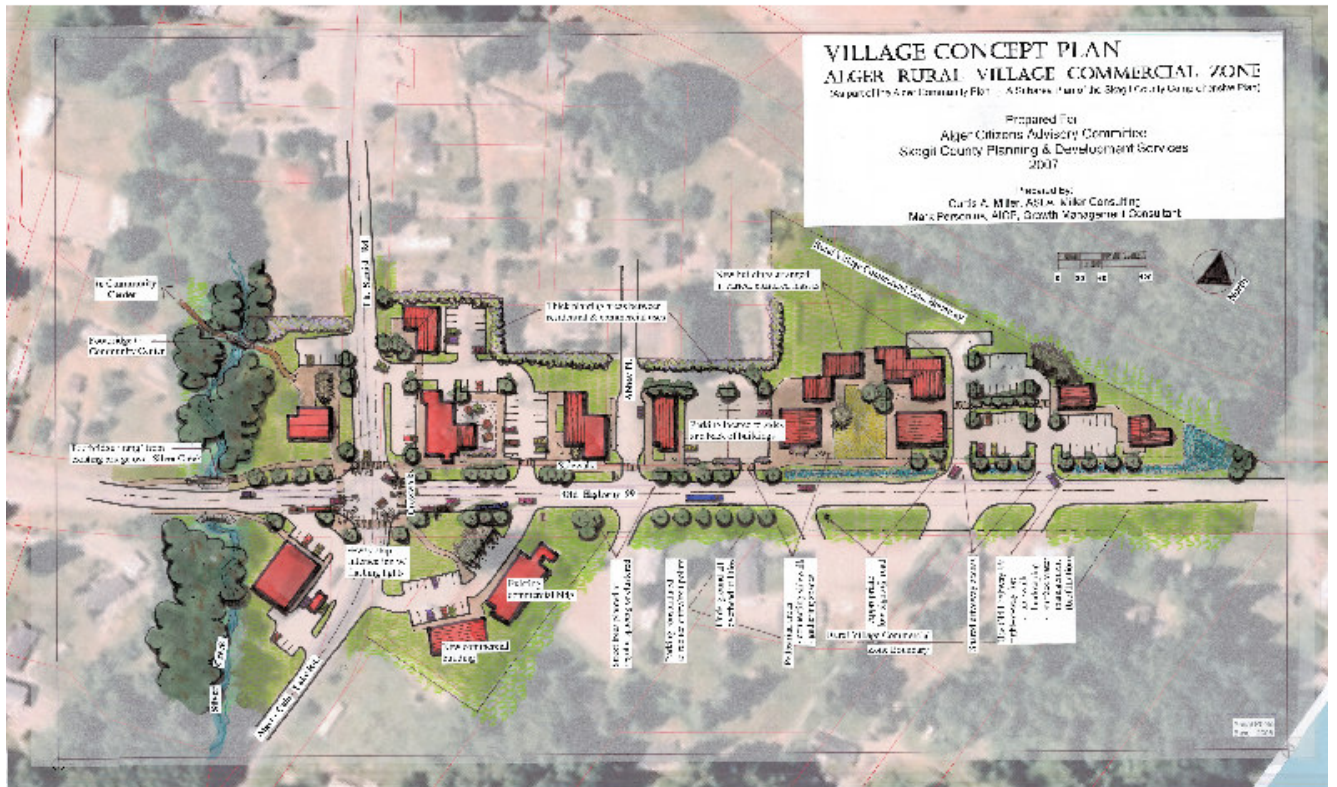
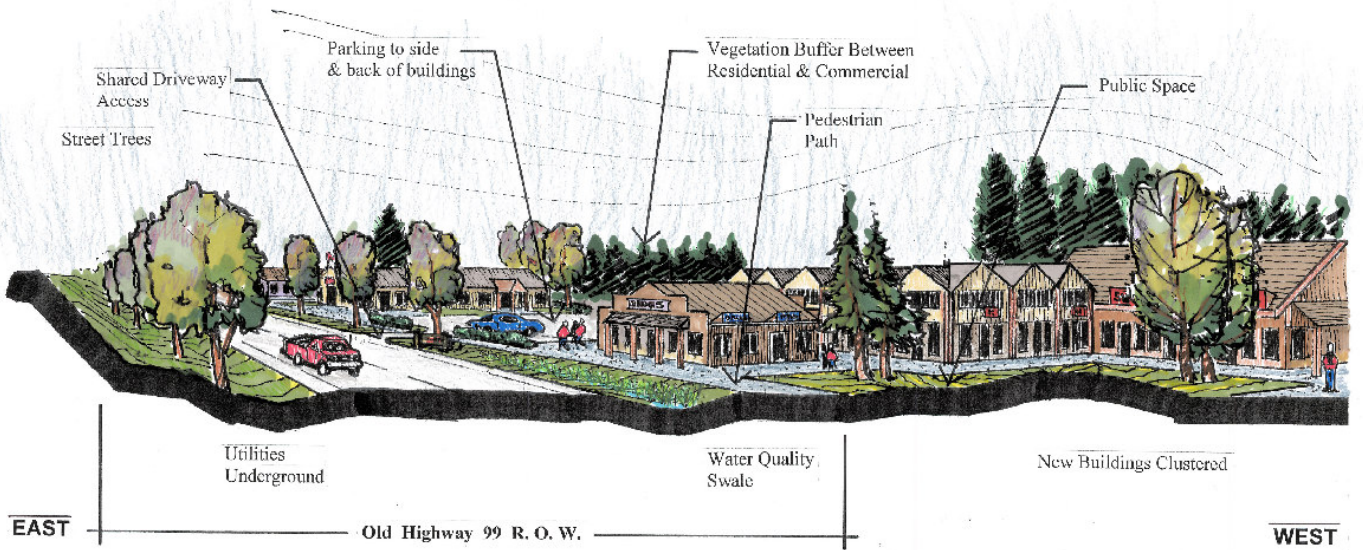


Figure 12B



ALGER RURAL VILLAGE COMMERCIAL ZONE

V. Environmental Update

Sewer - On-site Systems

The Alger plan document reports that

“There are no known significant on-site septic system failures in the Subarea.” P. 22

After the Utility section of the plan was developed, the Skagit County Department of Health adopted an On-Site Sewage Management Plan and updated On-Site Sewage Code, SCC 12.05 in keeping with state law. The Management Plan and code categorize a large portion of the Alger Community Planning Area as an Area of Special Concern due to the large number of sites with significant septic concerns and its location upstream from the Samish Bay shellfish beds. The status of systems is shown in the following map of Operations and Maintenance (O & M). Red sites are those with “unknown” septic system status.

The Management Plan lists the following factors for the Upper Samish (page 30):

Upper Samish River Watershed (Alger area):

- closed commercial shellfish beds in Samish Bay,
- threatened status of shellfish beds as indicated by marine water quality trends as indicated by DOH’s May 23, 2007, review of shellfish growing areas
- water quality monitoring data from Skagit County and Washington Department of Ecology indicates high fecal coliform counts,
- O&M data indicates high number of unknown OSSs.
- Proposed present status: Active Recovery

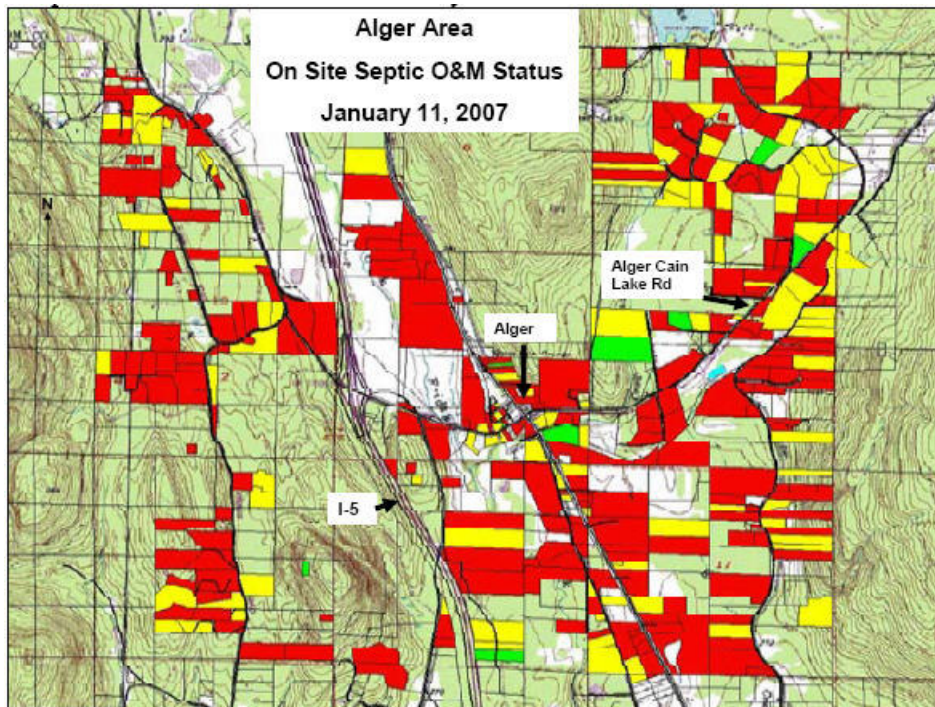


Figure 12 Upper Samish Watershed O&M status

Red = No septic system permit and no record of operations/maintenance (O & M) inspection

Yellow = Septic system permit but no record of O & M inspection; Green = Septic system permit and recent O & M inspection

White = no residence

With the adoption of amendments to the On-site System code on October 9, 2007, additional outreach actions will be conducted in order to minimize public health risk.

VI. Corrections

Alger Community Plan, page 11

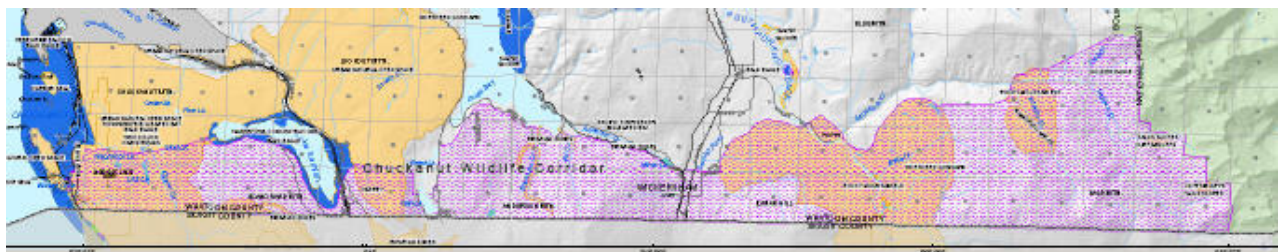
Table 1
Alger Subarea
Existing Comprehensive Plan Land Use Designations

Comprehensive Plan Designation	Acres	Percent of Total Subarea	Allowable Base Density
Industrial Forest NRL	407.37	3%	1 du/80 acres
Secondary Forest NRL	734.08	5%	1 du/40-20 acres
Agriculture NRL	658.22	5%	1 du/40 acres
Rural Resource NRL	1,570.01	11%	1 du/20-40 acres
Rural Reserve	10,323.96	72%	1 du/10 acres
Rural Intermediate	356.61	3%	1 du/2.5 acres
Rural Village Residential	92.85	1%	1 du/acre
Rural Freeway Service	7.75	<1%	na
Rural Business	6.54	<1%	na
Rural Village Commercial	4.23	<1%	na
TOTAL	14,161.61	100%	

Note: as of 2005 CaRD density bonuses may be available in Rural Resource NRL and Rural Reserve

Habitat Areas

The Alger Community Plan describes several wildlife habitat strategies for a large corridor extending east-west across the northern portion of the planning area. A group of non-profit organizations published a study called the Cascades to Chuckanut Conservation Strategy that identifies the values of this area. Whatcom County protects a portion of this corridor with a Habitat Conservation Area called the Chuckanut Wildlife Corridor, shown below.



Whatcom County Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas: Chuckanut Wildlife Corridor.

The Alger Community Plan erroneously states that Skagit County’s “proposed new critical areas ordinance (CAO) would allow the county to require corridor protection where habitat is identified, however, *the proposed CAO does not identify habitat conservation areas.*” The italicized portion is in error.

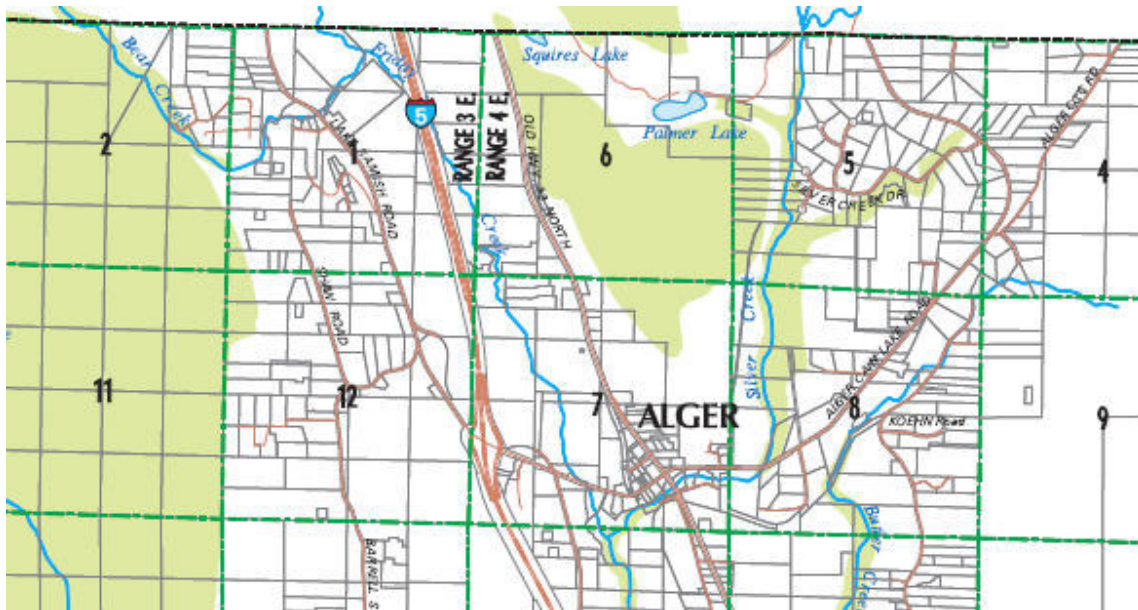
The intent of this section is to indicate that the County’s CAO does not have a Habitat Conservation Area that continues the Chuckanut Corridor on the abutting Skagit County side to the same extent as the Whatcom County corridor. Habitat protection in unincorporated Skagit County is provided as described below.

The existing and draft CAO identify the following nine species and habitats:

- 4) The following species and habitats have been designated on a site specific basis according to the official Habitats and Species and Habitats of Local Significance Importance Map.
- (a) Great Blue Heron nest sites;
 - (b) Vauxs Swifts Communal Roosts;
 - (c) Pileated Woodpecker nest sites;
 - (d) Osprey nest sites;
 - (e) Townsend Big-eared Bat communal roosts;
 - (f) Cavity Nesting Ducks breeding areas;
 - (g) Trumpeter Swan concentrations;
 - (h) Harlequin Duck breeding areas;
 - (i) Waterfowl concentrations. (Ord. 17938 Attch. F (part), 2000)

Language shown is from the draft update, which has only minor changes to the map title.

In addition to the nine species and habitats, areas mapped as Priority Habitat in the north Alger area are shown below.



Green shading indicates Priority Habitat Areas. Source: Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

VII. Compliance with SCC 14.08 for Review of Subarea Plan

Subarea plans are not subject to the same deadlines as annual comprehensive plan amendment petitions, but they must address the same issues of consistency with adopted plans. The Department responds below to the Plan's consistency with the County's Comprehensive Plan

14.08.020 Petition for amendments to the Comprehensive Plan/rezones.

- (4) A petition for a policy amendment shall include, at a minimum, the following information:
- (a) A detailed statement of what is proposed to be changed and why. **See Alger Community Plan in total, summary below.**
 - (b) A statement of anticipated impacts to be caused by the change, including geographic area affected and issues presented. **State Environmental Policy Act checklist attached.**
 - (c) A demonstration of why existing Comprehensive Plan policies should not continue to be in effect or why existing policies no longer apply. **No policy changes proposed.**
 - (d) A statement of how the amendment complies with the Comprehensive Plan's community vision statements, goals, objectives, and policy directives. **NA - The plan comprises the community vision statement, goals, objectives, and policy directives.**
 - (e) A statement of how adopted functional plans and Capital Facilities Plans support the change. **Items listed on page 17 of the Alger Community Plan need to be added to the county Transportation Systems Plan and future trails plan. These are summarized as: Improvements to Alger-Cain Lake Road/Old Highway 99 Intersection; speed control; reduction of conflicts involving bicycle, vehicles, pedestrians on roads without shoulders; and linkage of trails such as the Pacific Northwest Trail.**
 - (f) A statement of how the change affects implementing development regulations SCC Title 14 and the necessary changes to bring the implementing development regulations into compliance with the plan. **Recommended changes are:
For rural commercial zones proposed through a comprehensive or community planning process, recognize the long-term nature of such plans as distinct from a property-specific rezoning request by eliminating the requirement for building the commercial use within a set time period.
Revise the permitted uses in Rural Village Commercial per Alger Community Plan, or per Department Report.**
 - (g) A summary of any public review of the recommended change. **Public involvement activities are described on page 5 of the Plan document.**
- (5) A petition for a map amendment shall include, at a minimum, all of the requirements for a policy amendment, plus the following additions:
- (a) A detailed statement describing how the map amendment complies with Comprehensive Plan land use designation criteria. **Detailed analysis for each of the land use designation proposals is in the Plan document.**
 - (c) Any proposed rural areas and natural resource land map designation changes shall be supported by and dependent on population forecasts and allocated non-urban population distributions, existing rural area and natural resource land densities and infill opportunities. **None proposed**

SKAGIT COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

A. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Name of proposed project, if applicable:

Adoption of the Alger Community Plan (A Subarea Plan of the Skagit County Comprehensive Plan)

2. Name of applicant:

Skagit County
Planning & Development Services

3. Address and phone number of applicant and contact person:

Skagit County
Planning & Development Services
1800 Continental Place
Mount Vernon, WA 98273
Contact: Jeroldine Hallberg (360) 336-9410

4. Date checklist prepared: 7.20.07

5. Agency requesting checklist:

Skagit County
Planning & Development Services
1800 Continental Place
Mount Vernon, WA 98273

6. Proposed project timing or schedule (including phasing, if applicable):

Planning Commission public hearing, review and deliberation, and recommendation in Fall 2007.
Anticipated adoption by Board of County Commissioners in 2008.

7. Do you have any plans for future additions, expansion, or further activity related to or connected with this proposal? If yes, explain.

No.

8. List any environmental information you know about that has been prepared, or will be prepared, directly related to this proposal.

SEPA Checklist.

9. Do you know of pending applications for governmental approvals of other proposals directly affecting the property covered by your proposal? If yes, explain.

No.

10. List any government approvals or permits that will be needed for your proposals, if known:

Adoption by Board of County Commissioners as part of annual amendment to the Skagit County Comprehensive Plan.

11. Give a complete description of your proposal, including the proposed uses and the size of the project and site. There are several questions later in this checklist which ask you to describe certain aspects of your proposal. You do not need to repeat those answers on this page.

Proposed adoption of Alger Community Plan includes recommended rural zone changes and new policies related to development in the Alger Subarea. See Draft Plan for a complete description.

12. Location of the proposal. Please give sufficient information for a person to understand the precise location of your proposed project, including a street address, if any. If a proposal should occur over a range of area, please provide the range or boundaries of the site(s). Please provide a legal description, site plan, vicinity map, and topographic map if possible. While you should submit any plans required by the agency, you are not required to duplicate maps or detailed plans submitted with any permit applications related to this checklist. (Indicate if maps or plans have been submitted as part of a permit application)

See Draft Plan maps. The Alger Subarea is an approximately 20 sq. mile area in north central Skagit County.

B. ENVIRONMENTAL ELEMENTS

1. Earth

a. General description of the site (circle one): flat, rolling, hilly, steep, slopes, mountainous, other(describe).

The Alger Subarea contains a range of topography from flat creek valleys to rolling hills.

b. What is the steepest slope on the site (approximate % slope)?

80-90% cliffs exist on the Lookout Range heights south of Squires Lake, with various names in the north-central portion of the subarea. Some of this area is in what is proposed for expansion of the Squires Lake Park.

c. What general types of soils are found on the site (for example, clay, sand, gravel, peat, muck) ? If you know the classification of agricultural soils, please specify and note any prime farmland.

Primarily clayey and sandy soils.

d. Are there surface indications or history of unstable soils in the immediate vicinity? If so, describe:

Unstable or geologically hazardous soils in the area are very limited and are not subject to proposed land use or zoning changes.

e. Describe the purpose, type, and approximate quantities of any filling or grading proposed. Indicate source of fill.

Does not apply.

f. Could erosion occur as a result of clearing, construction, or use? If so, generally describe.

Does not apply.

g. About what percent of the site will be covered with impervious surfaces after project construction (for example, asphalt or buildings)?

Does not apply.

h. Proposed measures to reduce or control erosion, or other impacts to the earth, if any:

Existing Skagit County codes and standards related to erosion control would remain in effect for any new development authorized by this proposal.

2. Air

a. What types of emissions to the air would result from the proposal (i.e., dust, automobile, odors, industrial wood smoke) during construction, and when the project is completed? If any, generally describe and give approximate quantities if known.

If approved, the proposed density changes could allow for increased development activities on some parcels thus contributing to increased emissions from automobiles and other rural land use activities. These are not expected to be significant.

b. Are there any off-site sources of emissions or odor which may affect your proposal? If so, generally describe.

None.

c. What are the proposed measures to reduce or control emissions or other impacts, if any:

None.

3. Water

a. Surface:

1) Is there any surface water on or in the immediate vicinity of the site (including year-round and seasonal stream, saltwater, lakes, ponds, associated wetlands)? If yes, describe type, provide names, and, if known, state what stream or river it flows into.

The Alger Subarea includes Friday Creek, Silver Creek, Wildes Creek, Butler Creek and other smaller streams within the Samish River Basin.

2) Will the project require any work over or adjacent to (within 200 feet) the described waters? If yes, please describe and attach available plans.

No.

3) Estimate the amount of fill and dredge material that would be placed in or removed from surface water or wetlands and indicate the area of the site that would be affected. Indicate the source of fill material.

Does not apply.

4) Will surface water withdrawals or diversions be required by the proposal? Give general description, purpose, and approximate quantities if known.

No.

5) Does the proposal lie with a 100-year flood plain? Note location on the site plan, if any.

Portions of the Subarea along Friday Creek are within the 100-year floodplain. However, no parcels subject to proposed zone changes are within a 100-year floodplain.

6) Does the proposal involve any discharges of waste materials to surface waters? If so, describe the type of waste and anticipated volume of discharge.

No.

b. Ground:

1) Will ground water be withdrawn or recharged? Give general description, purpose, and approximate quantities if known.

No.

2) Describe waste material that will be discharged into the ground from septic tanks or other sources, if any (for example: domestic sewage; industrial, containing the following chemicals . . .; agricultural; etc.). Describe the general size of the system, the number of

such systems, the number of houses to be served (if applicable), or the number of animals or humans the system(s) are expected to serve.

No wastes will be directly discharged into the ground as a result of adoption of this proposal.

c. Water runoff (including storm water):

1) Describe the source of runoff and storm water and method of collection and disposal, if any (including quantities, if known). Where will this water flow? Will this water flow into other waters? If so, please describe.

Does not apply.

2) Could waste materials enter ground or surface waters? If so, generally describe.

Does not apply.

d. Proposed measures to reduce or control surface, ground, and runoff water impacts, if any:

Existing Skagit County codes and standards related to stormwater management would remain in effect for any new development authorized by this proposal.

4. Plants

a. Check or circle types of vegetation found on the site: All.

- deciduous tree: alder, maple, aspen, other
- evergreen tree: fir, cedar, pine, other
- shrubs
- grass
- pasture
- crop or grain
- wet soil plants: cattail, buttercup, bulrush, skunk cabbage, other
- water plants: water lily, eelgrass, milfoil, other
- other types of vegetation.

b. What kind and amount of vegetation will be removed or altered?

No vegetation removal will occur directly as a result of adoption of this proposal.

c. List threatened or endangered species known to be on or near the site.

None known.

d. List proposed landscaping, use of native plants, or other measures to preserve or enhance vegetation on the site, if any:

Landscaping standards for the Alger Rural Village Commercial zone are proposed as part of the Alger Community Plan.

5. Animals

a. Circle any birds and animals which have been observed on or known to be on or near the site:

All except shellfish.

birds: hawk, heron, eagle, songbirds, other

mammals: deer, bear, elk, beaver, other

fish: bass, salmon, trout, shellfish, other

b. List any threatened or endangered species known to be on or near the site:

Salmon.

c. Is the site part of a migration route? If so, explain.

Salmon streams include Friday Creek, Silver Creek and Butler Creek. Seasonal migration of deer, elk, bear and other mammals occurs within the Subarea.

d. Proposed measures to preserve or enhance wildlife, if any:

The Plan proposes increased coordination among Skagit and Whatcom County to ensure cross-jurisdictional impacts of new development are addressed, including potential wildlife migration impacts from new development.

6. Energy and Natural Resources

a. What kinds of energy (electric, natural gas, oil, wood stove, solar) will be used to meet the completed project's needs? Describe whether it will be used for heating, manufacturing, etc.

Does not apply.

b. Would your project affect the potential use of solar energy by adjacent properties? If so, generally describe.

Does not apply.

c. What kinds of energy conservation features are included in the plans of this proposal?

Does not apply.

d. What are the proposed measures to reduce or control energy impacts, if any?

Does not apply.

7. Environmental Health

a. Are there any environmental health hazards, exposure to toxic chemicals, including risk of fire and explosion, spill, or hazardous waste, that occur as a result of this proposal? If so, describe.

Does not apply.

b. Describe special emergency services that might be required.

Does not apply.

c. What are the proposed measures to reduce or control environmental health hazards, if any?

Does not apply.

8. Land and Shoreline Use

a. What is the current use of the site and adjacent properties?

Rural residential, isolated rural commercial uses and small-scale agriculture activities.

b. Has the site been used for agricultural purposes? If so, describe.

Portions of the Subarea are used for small-scale and hobby farming, growing of Christmas trees, animal husbandry, etc.

c. Describe any structures on the site.

Houses, barns, small-scale stores and cottage industries.

d. Will any structures be demolished? If so, what.

No.

e. What is the current zoning classification of the site?

Rural and NRL designated lands are present in the Subarea.

f. What is the current comprehensive plan designation of the site?

Rural and NRL designated lands are present in the Subarea.

g. If applicable, what is the current shoreline master program environment designation of the site?

Natural and Rural designations.

h. Has any part of the site been classified as an “environmentally sensitive” area? If so, specify.

See Alger Plan maps for location of critical areas. Critical areas include wetlands, streams, floodplains and very limited geologically hazardous areas.

i. What are proposed measures to ensure the proposal is compatible with existing and projected land uses and plans, if any?

Proposed land use/zoning changes which differ from current Skagit County Comprehensive Plan are analyzed for consistency with existing Comp Plan and GMA requirements for rural land designations, including LAMIRDs.

j. Approximately how many people would reside or work in the completed project?

Does not apply.

k. Approximately how many people would the completed project displace?

None.

l. What are proposed measures to avoid or reduce displacement or other impacts, if any?

None.

9. Housing

a. Approximately how many units would be provided, if any? Indicate whether high, middle, or low-income housing.

Does not apply.

b. Approximately how many units, if any, would be eliminated? Indicate whether high, middle, or low-income housing.

Does not apply.

c. What are proposed measures to reduce or control housing impacts, if any?

Does not apply.

10. Noise

a. What types of noise exist in the area which may affect your project (for example: traffic, equipment, operation, other)?

Typical rural noises include vehicles, rural cottage industries, chain saws, etc.

b. What types and levels of noise would be created by or associated with the project on a short-term or a long-term basis (for example: traffic, construction, operation, other)?

No significant increase in noise levels normally experienced in the Subarea today would be expected as a result of adoption of the Alger Plan.

c. What are the proposed measures to reduce or control noise impacts, if any?

Increased enforcement and monitoring of uses and activities approved by special use permit (such as racetracks, etc.) are proposed to control noise impacts.

11. Aesthetics

a. What is the tallest height of any proposed structure(s), not including antennas; what is the principal exterior building material(s) proposed?

Does not apply.

b. What views in the immediate vicinity would be altered or obstructed?

None.

c. What are the proposed measures to reduce or control aesthetic impacts, if any?

Rural village design standards are proposed for the Downtown Alger to encourage more landscaping, pedestrian safety and separation from vehicle traffic, as well as enhanced parking, signage and lighting regulations for new development.

12. Light and Glare

a. What type of light or glare will the proposal produce? What time of day would it mainly occur?

Does not apply.

b. Could light or glare from the finished project be a safety hazard or interfere with views?

Does not apply.

c. What existing off-site sources of light or glare may affect your proposal?

Does not apply.

d. What are the proposed measures to reduce or control light and glare impacts, if any?

None.

13. Recreation

a. What designated and informal recreational opportunities are in the immediate vicinity?

Blanchard Forest/Mountain hiking trails, Pomona Grange Park, Donovan Park, Samish Hatchery on Friday Creek, Squires Lake Park, Pacific Northwest Trail, and many other informal trails.

b. Would the proposed project displace any existing recreational uses? If so, describe.

None anticipated.

c. What are the proposed measures to reduce or control impacts on recreation, including recreation opportunities to be provided by the project or applicant, if any?

The Plan proposes increasing the size and scope of Squires Lake Park and hiking trails and improving connections between Squires lake trails and the Blanchard Mountain Forest trails.

14. Historic and Cultural Preservation

a. Are there any places or objects listed on, or proposed for, national, state, or local preservation registers known to be on or next to the site? If so, generally describe.

None known.

b. Generally describe any landmarks or evidence of historic, archaeological, scientific, or cultural importance known to be on the site.

Old logging sites.

c. What are the proposed measures to reduce or control impacts, if any?

None.

15. Transportation

a. Identify public streets and highways serving the site, and describe proposed access to the existing street system. Show on site plans, if any.

Major highways through the Subarea include I-5 and Old Highway 99. Many other rural county roads serve the area, including Friday Creek Road, Parsons Creek Road, Colony Road, Barrel Springs Road and others.

b. Is site currently served by public transit? If not, what is the approximate distance to the nearest transit stop?

Public transit service from SKAT serves the Subarea via regularly scheduled stops at the Shell station at the Alger/I-5 interchange.

c. How many parking spaces would the completed project have? How many would the project eliminate?

Does not apply.

d. Will the proposal require any new roads or streets, or improvements to any existing roads or streets, not including driveways? If so, generally describe (indicate whether public or private).

Yes. The Plan proposes design improvements to the Old 99/Alger-Cain Lake Road intersection in downtown Alger to improve public safety.

e. Will the project use or occur in the immediate vicinity of water, rail, or air transportation? If so, generally describe.

No.

f. How many vehicular trips per day would be generated by the completed project? If known, indicate when peak volumes would occur.

No significant increase in projected vehicle trips is anticipated to occur due to adoption of the proposal.

g. What are proposed measures to reduce or control transportation impacts, if any?

The Plan proposes design improvements to the Old 99/Alger-Cain Lake Road intersection in downtown Alger to improve public safety.

16. Public Services

a. Would the project result in an increased need for public services (for example: fire protection, police protection, health care, schools, other)? If so, generally describe.

No.

b. What are proposed measures to reduce or control direct impacts on public services, if any?

Restrictions on connection of rural land uses to sanitary sewer are already enforced within the Subarea.

17. Utilities

a. Circle utilities currently available at the site: electricity, natural gas, water, refuse service, telephone, sanitary sewer, septic system, other(describe).

Other than natural gas, all of the listed utilities are available within at least some portion of the Subarea.

b. Describe the utilities which are proposed for the project, the utility providing the service, and the general construction activities of the site or in the immediate vicinity which might be needed.
Does not apply.

C. SIGNATURE

The above answers are true to the best of my knowledge. I understand that the lead agency is relying on them to make its decision.

Signature: _____

Date Submitted: _____

D. SUPPLEMENT SHEET FOR NONPROJECT ACTIONS

(DO NOT USE THIS SHEET FOR PROJECT ACTIONS)

Because these questions are very general, it may be helpful to read them in conjunction with the list of the elements of the environment.

When answering these questions, be aware of the extent the proposal, or the types of activities likely to result from the proposal, would effect the item at a greater intensity or at a rate then if the proposal were not implemented. Respond briefly and in general terms.

1.How would the proposal be likely to increase discharge to water; emissions to air; production, storage, or release of toxic or hazardous substances; or production or noise?

The proposal could increase the amount of total development allowed in the rural zones within the Subarea, which, in turn could lead to increased demand for potable water, air emissions from increased vehicular trips and associated noise from isolated cottage industries. However, the total amount of development capacity for the Subarea would not increase significantly beyond that amount already authorized by the existing Skagit County Comprehensive Plan and associated development regulations.

2.How would the proposal be likely to affect plants, animals, fish or marine life?

Although the potential for slightly higher development densities in some isolated portions of the Subarea is part of this proposal, all development would be regulated by the Skagit County Comprehensive Plan policies and implementing regulations, including environmental and fish and wildlife habitat protection standards found in the County’s Critical Areas Ordinance.

Proposed measures to protect or conserve plants, animals, fish or marine life?

Maintain full compliance with the Skagit County Critical Areas Ordinance and other development regulations to mitigate the impacts of new development in rural areas (e.g., clearing and grading, stormwater runoff and erosion control).

3.How would the proposal be likely to deplete energy or natural resources?

The proposal could lead to slightly increased energy consumption and demand for new rural residential and limited rural commercial development in the Subarea. Slightly increased development potential in some isolated areas of the Subarea could lead to increased tree removal or logging of some parcels. However, no changes to current Natural Resource Lands (NRLs) are proposed as part of this proposed Plan.

Proposed measures to protect or conserve energy and natural resources are:

Maintain full compliance with the Skagit County Critical Areas Ordinance and other development regulations to mitigate the impacts of new development in rural areas (e.g., clearing and grading, forest practices act requirements, stormwater runoff and erosion control).

4. How would the proposal be likely to use or affect environmentally sensitive areas or areas designated (or eligible or under study) for governmental protection; such as parks, wilderness, wild and scenic rivers, threatened or endangered species habitat, historic or cultural sites, wetlands, floodplains, or prime farm lands?

The proposal could increase protection of environmentally sensitive areas and parks by proposing to expand Squires Lake Park in public ownership. Slightly increased development potential proposed in some isolated areas of the Subarea are not significantly impacted by environmentally sensitive areas. No changes to existing designated NRLs are proposed as part of this Plan.

Proposed measures to protect such resources or to avoid or reduce impacts are:

Maintain full compliance with the Skagit County Critical Areas Ordinance and other development regulations to mitigate the impacts of new development in rural areas (e.g., clearing and grading, forest practices act requirements, stormwater runoff and erosion control).

5. How would the proposal be likely to affect land and shoreline use, including whether it would allow or encourage land or shoreline uses incompatible with existing plans?

The proposed Alger Community Plan would slightly increase the development capacity of isolated areas within the rural Subarea. In total, residential capacity of potential rezone areas identified in the Plan could increase by a maximum of 69 dwelling units over a total area of more than 20 square miles affected by the Plan. These rezones (generally from Rural Reserve (RRv) to Rural Intermediate (RI) are concentrated along Old Highway 99 and well outside the adopted riparian buffer zones along environmentally sensitive Friday Creek. In addition the Alger Plan proposes to rezone several small isolated parcels from rural residential type use to rural village commercial and rural freeway service.

The proposed rezones in the Alger Community Plan are inconsistent with current adopted land use designations for these areas in the Skagit County Comprehensive Plan. However, supporting information and analysis are presented in the Plan that appear to mitigate any inconsistencies between the Comprehensive Plan and the GMA requirements for LAMIRD designations.

No changes to existing shoreline master program designations are proposed as part of this Plan. Nor are the land use designation changes sought in this Plan likely to subsequently affect or be inconsistent with existing shoreline rural designations in the Subarea.

Proposed measures to avoid or reduce shoreline and land use impacts are:

The proposed Alger Plan identifies both logical outer boundary and infill/outfill analyses that appear to satisfy the LAMIRD requirements of the GMA related to designation of these areas.

6. How would the proposal be likely to increase demands on transportation or public services and utilities?

Only minimally and insignificantly. The potential net increase in future development capacity is located within areas currently subject to both water and sewer service access. Although groundwater withdrawal is a concern within the “low flow” Friday Creek basin, the PUD operates a public water supply system that is planned for eventual connection to the Judy Reservoir surface supply source (located outside the Samish Basin) that could provide future service to the areas identified for development capacity increase. Sanitary sewer service is provided to portions of the Subarea through previous construction and operation agreements. Stipulations between the County and the sewer system operator limit connections to rural uses within non-Tribal owned properties in the Alger Subarea. The proposed Alger Plan reinforces this understanding and is consistent with its provisions.

There are no proposed urban growth area designations included in the proposed Alger Plan.

The potential for increase in vehicular traffic (directly attributed to this proposal) is insignificant given the current background traffic experienced in the Subarea.

Proposed measures to reduce or respond to such demand(s) are:

Adoption of an eventual Samish River Rule by the Washington DOE will likely place limits on future groundwater withdrawals within the Samish/Friday Creek Basin. In such a circumstance the PUD connection to the Judy Reservoir will become more likely to serve water demand unmet through limited groundwater withdrawals.

7. Identify, if possible, whether the proposal may conflict with locate, state or federal laws or requirements for the protection of the environment.

None known.

VIII. Response to Oral Comments at Public Meeting 5/10/2007

These questions and statements were from those who attended the final public meeting and were recorded on a flip chart.

1. Doesn't want to be in new RI area. How can she "get out" of the proposed designation?
Response: One cannot "get out" of a new designation. However, there is no requirement to divide one's property.
Do you have to pay for utilities (sewer, water) even if you don't hook up?
Response: no for sewer, yes for water
2. There's nothing about law enforcement in this 20 year plan.
Response: See mail theft issue. Also, new comments are welcome regarding law enforcement.
3. Water use from Friday Creek – why do some people have to pay for water and others do not.
Response: See map of areas served by water.
Is concerned about the cost of services for new growth on existing residences.
Response: Maintaining rural densities is one way to minimize the required services and their cost.
4. Who would pay for placing utilities underground?
Response: The party developing the property.
5. 160 acre commercial rezone request on Barrel Springs Rd – this is really out of touch. How can something like this even be considered?
Response: It is recommended that there be no further consideration of this proposal. See Plan for discussion of reasons.
6. Thank CAC members for work.
Response: Applause
Any communication with Whatcom County? Pollution from (Glenhaven) Cain Lake entering Silver / Friday creeks. Need to light a fire under DOE/Whatcom County about Cain Lake.
Response: Corrine Story, Environmental Health Director at the Skagit County Department of Health asked her Whatcom County counterparts and received this response from John Wolpers, Environmental Health Director, and his staff at Whatcom Health Department.
It appears there are a few connections, but not the majority.
Samish Water District encompasses all of Glenhaven development around Cain Lake
In the last couple of years there have been a half dozen or so connections of homes in close proximity to the main sewer line.
The Whatcom Campground is connected.
The Cain Lake area has many concerns due to the small lot sizes, poor soils, and non-conforming on-site systems. Staff would love to see all lots hook up to the existing sewer line but alas it does not appear to be so. Staff respond to all complaints and follow through with repairs.
7. Chuckanut Mountain Park District – does the plan address this?
Response: No, CAC discussed pros and cons of park district and decided not to address it as it was addressed by a separate process and organization. In addition, the boundary of the Alger Community Plan extends only part way up the east edge of the proposed district.
8. Cain Lake – Can sewer be extended to the Glenhaven development to take care of failing septic systems?
Response: See answer to #6.
9. The Health Department does inspections of septic systems.
10. Build out map – it over shows potential build out because it assumes each tax parcel is a certified lot – that's not necessarily the case.
Response: so noted.

11. Page 11 of the draft plan: Secondary Forest density is 1 unit per 20 acres, not 1 per 40.
Response: See Corrections section
Also you can't do a Conservation and Reserve Development (CaRD) in MRO areas.
There needs to be more flexibility in the CaRD ordinance for different lot sizes based on site variability.
Response: Need more specifics to understand question.
Objects to first-come, first-serve water allocations.
Response: Will convey this to staff working on water issues.
12. Can Alger residents get out of Whatcom County mail area?
Response: The Postal Service was asked about the possibility of having a post office in Alger. This particular question was not addressed. If community residents are concerned about this, it will take continuous concerted citizen action by an existing or new organization. One organization that exists in Alger is the Alger Improvement Association. Skagit County is supportive of efforts to organize neighborhoods; the extent of the support depends on funding. Emergency services/dispatch messed up.
Response: Will convey this to emergency services, but more specific information would help.
13. In order to obtain a permit to move house, she had to sign away the right to well – people must give up their well if water line comes in.
14. Where is the Department of Ecology testing station on Silver Creek? Is testing skewed by Palmer Lake (which is much cleaner than Cain Lake)?
Response: DOE testing site is below the Cain Lake Road bridge over Silver Creek, on the north side. Will convey question about data skewing to DOE.
15. If survey (written comments) differs from the draft plan, what happens?
Response: CAC takes survey results under advisement. Recommendation may differ based on a number of factors, including legal constraints. CAC members exercise their own best judgment after weighing all available information.
16. What say does the Citizen Advisory Committee have with the Board of County Commissioners? What are opportunities for residents to influence the planning process?
Response: This meeting was one opportunity; others are public hearing comment period – both written and in-person.
17. How will the community be informed of the subarea plan's progress when it goes to the Planning and Development Services department, the Planning Commission, and the Board of County Commissioners?
Response: Mailed notice of public hearing; web site; email; printed documents available at Alger Bar and Grill, other sites in community.
18. [Plan recommendation?] #10 – the Parks and Recreation Dept. should expand Squires Lake Park. Where would the property come from?
Response: Options for expansion include purchase from willing sellers, open space dedication if developable property is subdivided under CaRD rules.
19. The CAC on South Fidalgo was stacked by the Board of County Commissioners with real estate interests.