

To: Planning Commission Hearing -- Tuesday, May 1, 2012
From: June Kite – Friends of Skagit County
Re: Comprehensive Plan Amendments 2012

#1 - Citizen Map amendment – Ritchie – adjacent to Swinomish Channel - 5.5 acre parcel from Ag-NRL to Rural Reserve. This parcel was created with the Skagit Beach Community and with a covenant restricted to single-family use only. The maps identify the dike and shows the lot is located between the dike and the channel and soils not suited for agriculture uses. Current use indicates a barn and horse pasture.

The Planning Department concludes that there was an error in the initial designation and recommends approval and there is agreement here. ***

#2 – Jensen/Peck – Two 5 acre parcels that once was a single 10-acre parcel with 1 residential building. These 2 lots are adjacent to the Rural Intermediate zone that is south of the Bay View Rural Village with a gravel road on the south boundary of the R-I zone. There is discussion in the packet information addressing Rural Intermediate as well as the Rural Village as being LAMIRDS. It includes logical outer- boundaries based on the built development of 1990 with adoption of GMA. What is not known from the Department analysis is what the built development is today. How many undeveloped lots remain in the current designation that would allow for “in-fill” development before boundary extension is needed?

The department concludes the Bay View Road constitutes a logical boundary but is concerned about the potential risk for continued, incremental expansions. And IF the Proposed County Initiated amendment 3C-1.3 regarding Transfer of Development Rights be adopted where does that development go? The current policies when applied would first require a community plan to make that decision.

*** This proposal should be held over until decisions have been made regarding the County’s proposed amendments and sub-area plans are adopted for Bay View Village and LAMIRDS.

Attachment D – County Initiated Amendment – 3C-1.3 Rural Intermediate

“Under the Rural Study Areas policies in the Plan Implementation and Monitoring Element, some RI density may be appropriate . . . but only after completion of the necessary community plan.”

Items c) proposed revision -- “expansions will only be considered through . . . state mandated periodic Update . . . or proposed as part of a **community sub-area plan**) **supports existing policy.**

Item d) proposed revision – “*any proposed expansion of RI . . . must consider and evaluate the use of transfer of development rights . . . or other mechanisms to facilitate density transfer*” (introduces TDR’s and again such a **expansion must first have a community sub-area plan**)

3C-1.8 Rural Village – Community Planning Process is the preferred method – Chapter 12
Item d) – Proposed revision – **repeats Item d) for Rural Intermediate.**

The Transfer of Development Rights (**TDR's**) is currently being studied but is far from adoption. TDR's are viewed as an urban technique to increase allowable densities by sending development rights from rural density to UGA's receiving areas where increased density is desired, as in multiple housing units of mixed uses projects.

Purchase of Development Rights (PDR's) is an established program in Skagit County where funds are used to Purchase development rights to prevent conversion of prime agricultural land to non-ag uses. Where a PDR's program is in place the TDR program creates conflict and confusion for rural areas.

The County Initiated Amendments are premature and should be postponed until the Bay View Village and Rural Intermediate Community Plans have been appropriately processed and adopted and boundaries and densities established. Only after a community plan shows no existing undeveloped parcels for infill would there be a need to expand the boundary.

3. Lake Eric Trucking – Re-designate 35 acre from Rural Resource to Rural Reserve. The parcel is located on the east side of Rosario Road. It is forested and undeveloped. It is contiguous to a parcel with MRO (Mineral Resource) gravel mining that requires ¼ mile separation for development activities. This would limit any development to the most southern portion of the parcel. Comp Plan Policy 3A-2.4 encourages CaRD as the preferred on rural and resource lands. The CaRD would place a large portion of the 35-acre parcel into continued forest management Open Space status.

X The West side of Rosario Road in Rural Intermediate and overlooks Bowman's Bay. Drainage problems are a big concern, as the neighborhood and the County Drainage Utility can attest to. Any soil disturbance, whether forest practices or residential development, must be monitored utilizing Critical Areas Ordinances.

Question??? What is the status of the South Fidalgo Sub-area Plan and was this parcel part of any discussion on the rural lot designations? A large part of the costal property is designated Rural Intermediate. It is of interest to know how many of the parcels have existing development and how many are undeveloped??

With Envision 2060 in the forefront of the news and the stated intent of the unified government agencies to have 90% of the new population located in the cities, it is a question of how planning tends to accomplish this?? Why is the Board of County Commissioners not proposing a Comp Plan Policy amendment for this? What Code for monitoring are being proposed and used by the county and cities? How many substandard lots have been created since adoption of the Comprehensive Plan? How many lots are undeveloped through out all of Skagit County?

There is no need to expand any boundaries until these questions have been answered.

Respectfully submitted – June Kite, Friends of Skagit County.