

Responses to Specific Comprehensive Plan and Code Comments Rural Lands

Comment	Page	Response
<p>The original data used for calculating urban and rural population growth percentages may be in error.</p> <p>Note: these urban and rural growth calculations are discussed on p. 23-25 of the Integrated SEPA/GMA Report.</p>	p. 179	<p>The comment on p. 179 correctly notes that the state Office of Financial Management (OFM) in March of 2005 updated its population data for 1991 – 1999. The table included as Attachment 1 shows revised population data for Skagit County, including revised urban/rural growth percentages, based on those revised OFM estimates. Also included is the estimated urban/rural population growth percentage for 2005, based on OFM population data for that year, as supplemented by County permit data for the unincorporated portions of the UGAs.</p> <p>OFM cautions not to use its data to make year-to-year comparisons. However, the 10-year period from 1995 to 2005 is instructive (1995 is the earliest year for which Skagit County has calculated population growth increases for the unincorporated UGAs based on permit data). During that time span, an estimated 77% of new population growth located in urban areas, and 23% located in the rural area (see Attachment 1). This can be viewed as evidence of the success of the County’s Comprehensive Plan and development regulations at channeling growth to urban areas.</p>
<p>“In 1997 when we adopted our first comprehensive plan, we estimated that there would be 39,000 people living in unincorporated lands outside the UGAs by 2005...It is now 2006 and 46,455 people are living outside of cities.”</p>	p. 599	<p>The comment on p. 599 provides a misleading comparison of population estimates from 1997, 2000, and 2005. The comment refers to estimates of future, rural (non-UGA) population from the 1997 and 2000 Comprehensive Plans. Both are contained in Table 4 from the 1997 plan (Attachment 2). The commenter compares those projections to a more recent estimate of unincorporated population in 2004 – although the comment cites that number as a 2006 figure. The implication is that actual growth has widely exceeded earlier projections.</p> <p>However, the comment is comparing apples and oranges. The population figures contained in Table 4 were based on County estimates of the size and growth of the rural (non-UGA) population over time. By contrast, the 2004 population figure cited</p>

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		<p>by the comment is for the entire unincorporated area, including the unincorporated UGAs and rural (non-UGA) area. Of course this is a larger number than the non-UGA total alone would be.</p> <p>The second problem is that the County does not have a reliable way to determine the rural, non-UGA population for any given point in time. (That was true at the time of the Table 4 estimates as well). Census and OFM data are not reported in geographic units that match UGA boundaries. The County attempted to determine the urban (incorporated plus unincorporated UGA) and rural (non-UGA) populations based on 2000 Census data, but found that assigning Census block data inside or outside of UGA boundaries was simply too difficult. So for purposes of tracking urban and rural growth, it selected the method used in the 2001 Growth Management Indicators report, which is to calculate unincorporated UGA population <i>growth</i> based on issuance of residential building permits. Although we don't know the size of the rural vs. urban population at a given point in time, we now have a reliable way of determining annual growth in those two population numbers.</p>
<p>Acknowledge GIPAC as a subarea plan committee in the section titled Public Involvement on p. 5 of Draft Comprehensive Plan Chapter 1, Introduction & Summary. Continue to list Fidalgo and Guemes Island subarea plans until complete.</p>	<p>p. 181 p. 784</p>	<p>These are reasonable suggestions. Proposed edits to implement them are shown in Attachment 3.</p>
<p>More effective land management is needed around County's rural lakes...</p> <p>Note: This comment</p>	<p>p. 118</p>	<p>The commenter suggests that the water quality of Clear Lake would be better protected if certain lands surrounding the lake were in a rural residential designation (presumably Rural Village Residential) rather than the present designation of Ag-NRL. However, impacts on adjacent water</p>

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refers to the designation of certain lands on the southern end of Clear Lake.		bodies is not a designation or de-designation criterion for Rural Village Residential or Ag-NRL. Additionally, impacts from Agricultural activities are regulated through the Critical Areas Ordinance.
Amend policy and code for the Small Scale Business designation (formerly Cottage Industry/Small Scale Business), to allow sale of products “primarily” produced on site. See Draft Comprehensive Plan, Chapter 3, Rural Element, Policy 3C-9.2, and SCC 14.16.140(2)(d).	p. 1683	This is a reasonable suggestion. Proposed amendments to policy and corresponding code language are included as Attachment 4.